

The Relationship And Interaction
Between
The Plays And Autobiographies Of Sean O'Casey

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the
University of London

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ABSTRACT

The plays and autobiographies of Sean O'Casey are generally considered in isolation from each other as being two not only distinct, but also largely independent areas within his work. This thesis, however, embodies an approach to O'Casey's creative work as an organic whole, of which both the autobiographies and the plays are essential and interrelated parts.

The writing of the autobiographies did not take place in isolation from the plays, but evolved over a period of time which was also central, and crucial, to the development of the author's work as a playwright; and each of the autobiographical volumes was written, in part or whole, while

he was working too upon a play, or even plays. Since both the plays and the autobiographies are the product of the same creative imagination, the writing of plays and autobiographies contemporaneously

must have, inevitably, presented countless opportunities for mutual influence between the natures of the plays and the autobiographies. And by re-integrating the autobiographical volumes into the main-stream of O'Casey's work in the order and position (with regard to the plays) in which they were written, it can be seen that such opportunities for mutual influence not only arose, but were very often utilised by the author to very great artistic effect.

But the plays and autobiographies seem to have influenced each other in manifold ways and upon different levels, and the relationship

between them is not confined to that central period of the author's work during which the autobiographical volumes were written, but involves also all the ^{extant} plays which were completed before the first autobiographical volume was begun, as well as all the plays which were only begun after the last autobiographical volume was completed.

Indeed, as viewed through the changing perspective of the relationships of the autobiographies to successive individual plays, the overall relationship and interaction between the plays and autobiographies of Sean O'Casey can be seen not only to evolve in a definite and coherent, if complex, pattern, but also to assume gradually the power of being a prime force in directing the course of his dramatic work, and of being a chief source of inspiration in his creative life as a whole.

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NOTE

Throughout this study page references to the texts of the autobiographies are to the St. Martin's Library two volume edition of the collected autobiographies: Sean O'Casey, Autobiographies, London, Macmillan, 1963.

Autobiographies I comprises:

I Knock at the Door (1939), Pictures in the Hallway (1942),
Drums under the Windows (1945).

Autobiographies II comprises:

Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well (1949), Rose and Crown (1952),
Sunset and Evening Star (1954).

And page references to the texts of the plays from The Shadow of a Gunman up to and including Time to Go (but excluding Kathleen Listens In, Mannie's Night Out, The End of the Beginning, and A Pound on Demand) are to The Collected Plays Volumes I-IV, (London, Macmillan, 1949-51).

Volume I (first published 1949, reprinted 1950) contains:

The Shadow of a Gunman, Juno and the Paycock, The Plough and the Stars.

Volume II (first published 1949, reprinted 1950) comprises:

The Silver Tassie, Within the Gates, The Star Turns Red.

Volume III (1951) comprises:

Purple Dust, Red Roses for Me, Hall of Healing.

Volume IV (1951) comprises:

Oak Leaves and Lavender, Cock-a-Doodle Dandy, Bedtime Story,
Time to Go.

Introduction

O'Casey's career as a playwright spans some thirty-nine years from the writing of his earliest extant play, The Shadow of a Gunman, in 1922,¹ to the publication of his three last plays, Behind The Green Curtains, Figaro in the Night and The Moon Shines on Kylenamoa in 1961. For a period of some twenty-three of these thirty-nine years, - from the commencement of work on the first chapter of I Knock at the Door in 1931 to the publication of Sunset and Evening Star in 1954 - he was also involved in work upon his autobiographies. Not only did that period form a very considerable portion of O'Casey's career as a dramatist, but it also formed an almost exactly central one, beginning, as it did, nine years after the writing of The Gunman and, ending seven years before the publication of the final plays.

In the past, it seems, there has been a tendency to regard the plays and autobiographies as belonging to two quite separate areas in the author's work. Dr. David Krause in his, now standard, critical study of O'Casey's life and work has, for example, confined his comments upon the autobiographies to one fairly short section of the final chapter, completely isolated from the study of these plays as such. Of course, the autobiographies too have had their critics and champions, but then studies of the autobiographies tend, for their part, to eliminate the plays from their reckoning. And Dr. Ronald Ayling in compiling a symposium of critical thought upon O'Casey³, seems to have reflected this general tendency to mark off two distinct areas in O'Casey's work by his placing of criticism relating to the autobiographies in a short section separate from that of the lengthy one devoted to the "Drama".

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1. For evidence of dates relating to the writing of the plays and autobiographies see the chapters below on the individual works in question.
 2. Sean O'Casey, The Man and his Work, London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1960
 3. Sean O'Casey, Modern Judgements edited by Ronald Ayling, London, Macmillan

Perhaps Professor William A. Armstrong has done most to bring consideration of the plays and autobiographies more closely together. For in his articles "History, Autobiography and The Shadow of a Gunman",⁴ "The Sources and Themes of The Plough and The Stars"⁵, and "Sean O'Casey, W.B. Yeats and the Dance of Life"⁶ (particularly in connection with Nannie's Night Out), he has used information and episodes from the autobiographies to throw light upon the artistry and artistic effects of the plays. In such articles, however, his main concern remains with the plays.

Naturally, since the career of O'Casey was so long, and his works not only abundant but also so varied and so rich, a high degree of critical specialisation is not only inevitable, but also essential if the qualities in the individual works are to be brought out and appreciated fully. And, naturally, since O'Casey's vocation was fundamentally that of a dramatist, it is again not only inevitable, but desirable and essential that critical attention be generally focused upon the plays.

But it does seem too that there is a place for the study of the plays and autobiographies in conjunction with each other.

Such a study involves not simply the picking out from the autobiographies of certain episodes, themes, opinions, or characteristics of style which seem to be related to the substance and style of the plays;^{6a} but the viewing of the autobiographies, both collectively, and individually, in the context within which they were written - the context of the development of O'Casey's creative work as a whole .

4. William A. Armstrong, History, Autobiography, and "The Shadow of a Gunman" Modern Drama Vol. II No. 4, Kansas, 1960

5. "The Sources and Themes of "The Plough and the Stars", Modern Drama Vol. IV No. 3, Kansas, 1961

6. "Sean O'Casey, W.B. Yeats and the Dance of Life" (1966), Sean O'Casey, Modern Judgments pp. 131-142

6a. A survey of the relationship between O'Casey's plays and autobiographies on this level has been ably carried out by Joanne Irene Kregosky in a thesis entitled "O'Casey's Autobiographies and their Relationship to his Drama", which was submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Alberta, for the Degree of Master of Arts, October 1968.

Once the autobiographies are viewed both collectively and individually from the perspective of the plays written before, after and alongside them, a complex and evolving, but seemingly coherent pattern of relationship emerges, with not only individual plays and autobiographies directly contributing material and inspiration and artistic purpose to each other, but with the actual form and nature of the autobiographical work, as manifested . . . in successive volumes, interacting with the form and nature of the drama, as manifested in successive plays. And gradually, it seems, through relationship and interaction with the individual plays, the autobiographies, both individually and collectively, become a very real force directing the course of O'Casey's plays during this most crucial, central phase of his work.

And it seems too as if the writing and nature of the autobiographies were not only a prime force in the directing of the development of O'Casey's career as a playwright, but had themselves taken their origins from within his dramatic career, and were themselves shaped in and evolved through the relationship and interaction with the plays.

And as the intricate relationship between the plays and autobiographies progresses, not only does it reflect the qualities and characteristics (and also the faults) of the individual plays, but it also reveals the autobiographical volumes more and more in the light of being essentially works of art, and reveals too the author as a thorough and consummate artist, both in terms of creative instinct and in creative skill.

For the relationship and interaction between the plays and the autobiographies is essentially the relationship and interaction of art with art, and not of art with historical and autobiographical fact.

The theory that O'Casey was as a dramatist "a realist of the most uncompromising kind", whose plays "are all 'slices of life' in the strictest and most literal sense of the term"⁷, is manifestly inapplicable to any of his plays

7. A.E. Malone, The Irish Drama, London, Constable, 1929 pp. 218, 213 - 4

from The Silver Tassie onwards, and has been generally discredited even in connection with the early plays written in Dublin. And even The Shadow of a Gunman, which is perhaps the least complex and most naturalistic, as well as the earliest, of O'Casey's major plays, and which is, apparently, particularly rich in historical and autobiographical detail, has been shown by Professor Armstrong to make consistently imaginative and artistic use of its material. With regard to the play's historical and social element and interest, Professor Armstrong writes that:

....O'Casey certainly does provide a realistic cross section of life in a Dublin slum in 1920, and...the play certainly acquires greater significance when it is related to the social and political history of that year. But even where O'Casey's representation is closest to social or historical fact it exhibits a distinctive tone and colouring imparted by his imagination in obedience to a dramatic design. 8

And although Professor Armstrong regards "the personal element in the play" as being "more important than the historical one"⁹, yet he emphasises the personal experiences which helped to form the substance of the play were also "modified and intensified"¹⁰ for very precise and artistic purposes within the scheme of the play. And he concludes that, far from being simply a documentary on Dublin life in a certain year, The Shadow of a Gunman achieves, through its careful treatment of historical and autobiographical material "a mythopoeic level of meaning" which "brings it into contact with what Yeats called the anima mundi, the world of ideal passion".¹¹

If the artistry of the plays has been vindicated however, the very term "autobiographies" may suggest a much more direct and factual approach to the author's experience than was to be found in the plays, but this is misleading. For the autobiographies no less than the plays carefully select, arrange and colour "facts" according to the dictates of artistic imagination and design, and

8. William A. Armstrong: 'History, Autobiography, and "The Shadow of a Gunman"' Modern Drama, Vol. II, No. 4. Kansas, February 1960. p. 417

9. ibid p. 417

10. ibid p. 421

11. ibid p.424

indeed, within the broad outlines of the events of the author's life, the creative process of turning fact into art is almost the same within the autobiographies as it is within the plays. The autobiographies of O'Casey are indeed very much the autobiographies of a dramatist - not simply in that their narrative describes the life of a dramatist, but in that they are themselves very much the product of a dramatic imagination, and it is peculiarly fitting that the artistic creativity and skill which was so bound up with the life of the author, should have such a large part in the description or depiction of that life.

The imaginative qualities of the autobiographies are evident from the very outset, for the first autobiographical volume I Knock at the Door begins with an account of the author's own birth, an event which he, clearly, could not have remembered. The narrative then goes on to describe the mother's thoughts on the birth of her son, and then, as she remembers the death of a previous child, it presents in great detail, events and conversations that took place several years before the author was born¹².

The autobiography's imaginative detailed recreation of events which the author could not possibly have personally remembered is rendered possible by the "objective" presentation of the subject or "hero" of the work. The entire span of the autobiography (with the exception of a few telling psychological and unintentional lapses into the first person) is written in the third person, surely a dramatist's device, for the O'Caseyan figure of "Johnny" (to become "Sean" in later volumes) is thus given a three-dimensional existence independent of the author. He is visualised in the context of relationships with his mother,

12. For a detailed examination of the nature and form of "A Child is Born" - the first chapter of the first autobiographical volume - and its significance in the context of the relationship and interaction between the plays and autobiographies see Chapter Seven Part II on Within the Gates and I Knock at the Door

family and neighbours. And all the while the third-person device gives O'Casey scope for the dramatist's authorial insight into the minds of characters other than "Johnny's". By this means sentiments are expressed and events are described that "Johnny" could know nothing about.

Furthermore, in the light of a retrospective adult wisdom, and with the dramatist's eye for implications and patterns in experience, O'Casey notes historical and personal significances which are unnoticed by, or are totally bewildering to the child Johnny. For with all that compassion and keen observation which O'Casey displayed in his Abbey plays, he implicitly, and yet unmistakably, points out all the injustices and ironies in Irish life and politics, at a time when Ireland was under British rule. O'Casey is relating his own early life, but the dramatist's vision cannot fail to use this personal experience as an expression of much that is "universal" in the process of growing up, and also ^{of} much that is of social and historical significance.

Also I Knock at the Door possesses many other characteristics of the dramatic form. "Johnny's" childhood is visualised in scenes, each with their own settings, themes and dialogue. Dialogue, in particular, forms a very substantial part of this first volume of autobiography, helping to convey as it does in drama, information as to the setting and background of the story, and information as to the character of the speakers. The spontaneity of the dialogue in the autobiography is facilitated by O'Casey's omission of the usual punctuation of direct speech in favour of a simple dash (-) to introduce the words of each speaker in turn. The effect is that of dramatic dialogue.

And O'Casey, in his autobiography, revels in "characters" and character portrayal, while also much in evidence are what might be termed "dramatic symbols", as well as O'Casey's favourite technique of juxtaposing two incidents or opinions in order to let one comment revealingly upon the other without the direct intervention of the authorial voice.

As time went on the nature of the autobiographical volumes was to change and was to become much less consistently "dramatic", but the autobiographies were

never completely to lose their artistic and dramatic qualities, or their fundamentally artistic and dramatic approach to the depiction, rather than description, of the life of the author.

It might, then, be thought that the term "autobiographies" is an inaccurate or misleading one. Certainly it was not a term which the author usually used without qualifying it. His letters during the period in which I Knock at the Door was written reveal him to have been perfectly well aware that he was writing in an artistic form, but somewhat at a loss to put a name to that form. And he refers to the work variously as "the semi-biography", "my peculiar biography", 'a "curious autobiography", "biographical sketches", "fantastic pages of biography", and comments:

I have often been asked to write my "reminiscences", but alas!.. this I don't seem able to do. I find that anything I want to say about myself must take a colour & a form which seems to hunt all editors away from me. 14

Moreover, when I Knock at the Door was completed he was far from blind not only to its intrinsically artistic form and characteristics, but also to its intrinsically artistic merits. And he wrote to a friend,

Remember saying some time ago that I should write nothing but works of art?

Well, since then I've written a lot of stuff that had nothing to do with Art; but a new book by me (dealing with my life up to twelve years of age...), called "I Knock at the Door", is coming out in March, & I think it has something in common with a work of art. But has it? How do I know? I don't know; I simply feel it has; but I may be a helluva long way out in my reckoning. I feel you'll like it (again I don't know), & will say, "O'Casey has done something at last!" 15

The artistic form and achievement of the autobiographies do not, however, invalidate them as an account of the author's life, for there are

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13. See chapter seven Part II on Within The Gates and I Knock at the Door
 14. Letter to Horace Reynolds, 5th May 1937: The Letters of Sean O'Casey Volume I, Edited by David Krause, New York, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1975. p. 667
 15. Letter to Brooks Atkinson, 19th January, 1939, Letters Vol. I p.771

many levels of "truth" in autobiography. And, particularly in connection with the life of a creative artist, an imaginative rendering of experience can perhaps be much closer to the ^{deepest} "truth" of that life than would a straight-forward "factual" account. ^{in any case,} Autobiography, ^{if it is to be at all} meaningful, must involve a selection and ordering events in order to bring out patterns in experience that can only be viewed in retrospect, and then only viewed through the eyes of the author. And provided that O'Casey's autobiographies are based upon his life, and that they are artistic interpretations of his life, rather than artistic fabrications, they can lay claim to being autobiography as well as art. And that the autobiographies were very deeply rooted in his life, can be seen from the way in which O'Casey himself seemed to re-live the past within the autobiographical volumes. This is very apparent from the qualities of the autobiographies themselves, and, as time went by, from the kind of influence which they exerted on the plays. But the author himself makes a revealing comment upon this ultimate test of the validity of the autobiographies when, writing a "A Child of God", a chapter of I Knock at the Door, he comments:

It brought me back to the days when life was largely pain
& Church & Sunday School and a lot of laughter & some
vision in dreams. 16

And so it is that while facts do form much of the raw material of both the plays and autobiographies of O'Casey, in neither the plays nor the autobiographies do hard corroborated facts constitute the achievement of, or even provide the main interest in, the work.

In play and autobiography alike, experience and fact are refined, or distilled, into art. And this means that the relationship between the plays and the autobiographies is itself ^{something} of the utmost artistry and creativity and rarity, for it essentially involves the refining or distilling of further

art out of art. The initial process of refining or distilling art out of experience is left far behind in the writing of the original plays or the autobiographies, and the relationship and interaction between the two works concerns only the end - products of previous artistic processes.

Thus the relationship and interaction between the plays and autobiographies are not ^{SIMPLY} to be traced in terms of verifiable, historical or biographical "facts" that seem common to both, nor in terms of identifying and comparing "facts" in the autobiographies with artistically expressed counterparts in the play, nor even in an assessment of the similarity of the artistic processes within the plays and the autobiographies. But ultimately, even essentially, the relationship and interaction of the plays and autobiographies operate upon the level of the transmission of artistic images of experience, forms of artistic expression, artistic inspiration, and even artistic being, from one artistic form into another. And in his use and development of this relationship and interaction, the author reveals himself more than ever to be a thorough and most consummate artist.

The relationship and interaction between the plays and the autobiographies are not only extremely complex but they evolve gradually over the course of O'Casey's career. But they do seem to form distinct and coherent patterns when approached through the successive plays .

Viewed in this way the study of the relationship and interaction between the plays and autobiographies can be divided into three parts: The relationship involving those plays which were written before O'Casey began work on the autobiographies - the "pre-autobiography" plays; the relationship and interaction between the autobiographies and those plays which were, in part or whole, their "contemporaries" in time of writing; and the relationship involving those plays which were written after the autobiographies were completed - the "post-autobiography" plays.

The "pre-autobiography" plays are The Shadow of a Gunman, Kathleen, Listen In, Nannie's Night Out, Junno and the Paycock, The Plough and The Stars, The Silver Tassie. The plays, being completed before O'Casey is known to have been even contemplating the writing of autobiography, were subjected to no influence whatsoever from the writing of the autobiographies. But, much of their substance - and very many of their qualities and characteristics were later to be caught up and reworked within the autobiographies. And the ways in which the substance and artistry of the individual plays were incorporated into the autobiographical volumes reveals much as to the natures and achievements of the original plays and of the author's attitudes towards them.

The pre-autobiography plays collectively were perhaps, too, partly responsible for inspiring the writing of, and determining the nature of, the autobiographies. But this ^{consideration} falls within the scope of the middle section of the study, in which is examined the period of O'Casey's work in which he was engaged upon the writing of the autobiographies.

This section follows the chronological order not only of the writing of the plays, but naturally too that of the writing of the autobiographical volumes. In this phase of O'Casey's work influence and material could pass not only from play to autobiography but, increasingly, from autobiography to play also. It is thus in this section of the study that the interactive aspect of the relationship is to be seen in operation - and in operation not only in terms of the exchange of material and inspiration, but in the reaction of the writing and nature of the two kinds of work one upon the other. Not only do such relationships and interactions determine the nature of the individual plays and influence too the nature of the individual autobiographical volumes, but collectively ^{the} interactions between the plays and autobiographies are of enormous influence in determining the whole course of this central period of the playwright's career, and thus of his career as a whole.

The groups of plays and autobiographies through which can best be studied the evolving pattern of the relationship and interaction between the

autobiographies and plays in this phase of O'Casey's career are:

Within The Gates - I Knock at the Door (the chapter concerning this relationship is divided into two parts in order to reveal the two distinct kinds or levels of relationship which potentially exist between the individual and the volume of creative writing Windfalls is also taken into account); autobiographies and their contemporary plays, The End of the Beginning and A Pound on Demand (two plays studied as a post-script to the relationship between Within The Gates and I Knock at the Door); I Knock at the Door - The Star Turns Red; Pictures in the Hallway - Purple Dust - Red Roses for Me; Red Roses for Me - Drums under the Windows - Oak Leaves and Lavender; Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well - Cock-a-Doodle Dandy; Rose and Crown - Hall of Healing, Time to Go, Bedtime Story; The Bishop's Bonfire - Sunset and Evening Star.

The relationship between the autobiographies and plays which were not begun until after all the autobiographical volumes were completed naturally consists solely of an influence exerted upon these plays by the autobiographies. The "post-autobiography plays" comprise The Drums of Father Ned, Behind the Green Curtains, Figuro in the Night, The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoc

PART ONE

THE "PRE-AUTOBIOGRAPHY" PLAYS.

Chapter I

The Shadow of a Gunman

The earliest of O'Casey's plays to survive in a final form,¹ The Shadow of a Gunman, was written several years before its author began his autobiographies;² yet a seemingly direct and remarkable relationship was later to develop between them. There are obvious correspondences between the play and three of the six autobiographical volumes; but what is initially the most distinctive feature of the relationship is the concentration of a vast number of detailed and

¹ O'Casey wrote several plays before The Shadow of a Gunman. In Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well, pp. 95 - 6, 98, he names and describes four such plays: The Robe of Rosheen, The Frost in the Flower, The Harvest Festival and The Crimson in the Tri-Colour. All were believed to be lost, but after O'Casey's death his literary executor, Dr. Ronald Ayling, found a holograph draft of The Harvest Festival amongst the author's papers. See "A Note on Sean O'Casey's Manuscripts and His Working Methods", p. 359.

² The Shadow of a Gunman was written in April - November, 1922. In a letter dated 10th April, 1922, O'Casey (then using the name Sean O Cathasaigh) wrote to Lennox Robinson, at that time Manager of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, informing him that:

I am gathering together the material for "On The Run"; (i.e. the play that was later to be called The Shadow of a Gunman) and have actually started it.

(The Letters of Sean O'Casey Vol. I, p. 101)

And in a letter dated 17th November, 1922 he wrote, again to Lennox Robinson:

I have just completed 'On The Run'. It is a tragedy in two acts - at least I have called it so.

(Letters Vol. I, p. 105)

The play was accepted for production at the Abbey and was first performed there, with no revision other than the change in title, on 12th April, 1923.

There is some evidence that O'Casey was contemplating, or even writing, a specifically autobiographical work in October 1929. It is fairly certain, however, that the writing of I Knock at the Door, the volume which emerged as the first of the "Autobiographies" proper, dates back to 1931. For a detailed examination of the beginnings and early development of the writing of the autobiographies (including evidence of the first volume's dates of composition) see the chapters below on Within The Gates - I Knock at the Door - The Star Turns Red.

sustained correspondences with The Gunman within two consecutive sections of one autobiographical volume - the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" chapters of Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well. It is as if the body of the material of the play is, to a very considerable degree, holding together - or even being held together - as such when included in the autobiographies.

Furthermore, not only does The Gunman's material largely hold together as an entity within the autobiographies, but there is also a strong indication that it was more or less withheld from the autobiographies until the autobiographical narrative reached a point at which virtually all aspects of that corpus of material could be exploited in the same place, at the same time, to the greatest possible extent, and for the greatest possible effect. The play was in existence before any of the volumes of autobiography, and if such matters were governed by sheer probability, rather than by artistic design, it would have been likely to have most influenced, or contributed to, the early volumes, which are closest to it in date of composition. Yet it is only in two sections of the fourth volume, which was begun almost a quarter of a century after the play,³ that the substance of The Gunman appears in such striking detail and abundance. Moreover, there is clear evidence within the texts of the autobiographies themselves that the withholding of the bulk of the play from the volumes prior to Inishfallen was not due to the author's unintentional overlooking of, or lack of interest in, The Gunman at the time when these earlier volumes were written. For although by far the major part of the material was kept back until Inishfallen, various isolated references to the play had previously been incorporated into the autobiographies. And, minor though these correspondences be, they are clearly derived directly from The Gunman,

³ Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well, which was published in 1949, was, it seems, written in late 1944 - 1948. (For evidence of these dates see chapter below on Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well - Cock-a-Doodle-Andy).

and in their very presence prove that the author in writing the early volumes had not "forgotten" the play; that echoes from it still rose in his mind; and that he could and did make new and artistic use of these echoes when he so wished.

No correspondences are to be found between The Gunman and I Knock at the Door, but Pictures in the Hallway describes how a "Stop Press" is the means whereby the Casside family learn of the death of Parnell (pp. 181 - 3), and this recalls the dramatic device of the "Stop Press" which in Act I of the play informs the characters on stage, and through them the audience, of the death of Maguire (Collected Plays Vol. I pp. 121 - 2). The autobiography's account of the Irish response to the news of Parnell's death is further linked to The Gunman in that it draws upon the same biblical quotation⁴ as is used in Davoren's final speech in the play. In connection with the death of Ireland's champion O'Casey writes in Pictures in the Hallway that "a golden bowl was broken, a silver card loosened, and a wheel broken at a mighty cistern" (p. 181), and Davoren in The Gunman laments: "Oh, Donal Davoren, shame is your portion now till the silver cord is loosened and the golden bowl be broken" (pp. 156 - 7). In Pictures in the Hallway too Johnny's Uncle Tom, a devout Protestant loyal to the English throne, quotes: "the seventeenth verse o' the second chapter o' the first o' Pether, ... Fear God, honour the King," as the reason why Irishmen should join the British Army (p. 200), while in the play Mrs. Grigson describes how her Orangeman husband, in an attempt to placate the raiding Black and Tans:

put the big Bible on the table, open at the First Gospel of St. Peter, second chapter, an' marked the thirteenth to the seventeenth verse in red ink - you know the passages, Mr. Shields - (quoting): "..... Fear God. Honour the King".
(Act II. pp. 149 - 50)

⁴ "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern". (Ecclesiastes XII 6)

In Drums under the Windows further correspondences with the play arise. The phrase "Oh, Cathleen ni Houlihan, your way's a thony way!" is twice used in connection with the patriot Arthur Griffith and his rivalry with the poet Yeats (pp. 416, 418), while in The Gunman the same words form the ironic refrain of the "Gael" Seumas Shields (p. 96 and passim). Also in the same volume of autobiography an old man looting the shops on the outbreak of the Easter Rising exhorts a fellow-looter to "Have a look for a box marked pyjamas - I always had a notion of wantin' to feel how they felt on a fella" (p. 654), while in the play Shields, complaining of the cold, expresses a similar curiosity: "You'd want a pair of pyjamas on you. (A pause). Did you ever wear pyjamas, Donal? What kind of stuff is in them?" (Act II p. 129).

And if the existence of these few but clear references to the play, occurring as they do in isolation from each other and all within the volumes preceding Inishfallen, indicates that it was artistic design, rather than a chance overlooking of the play, which accounted for the reservation of most of the material of The Gunman for a specific place in the autobiographical scheme; then this impression seems confirmed by the fact that after the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" chapters of Inishfallen no further use is made of the play's substance.⁵

⁵ In a later chapter of Inishfallen, "Blessed Bridget O'Coole", the words "when a silver cord was sundered or a golden bowl was broken" do occur (p. 113), but they do not here seem directly related to the play. The Gunman may have been responsible for the initial introduction of this imagery from Ecclesiastes into the autobiographies, but once introduced (in the first chapter of Pictures in the Hallway, and in a context which draws too upon another detail of the play's material - see above) the biblical images take on an identity independent of the play, become almost a tradition in their own right, and are used several times as a paraphrase for "death". For a further instance in which they are used independently of the play's influence see Pictures in the Hallway p. 250.

And so it seems that the material of The Gunman was largely reserved for, exploited to the full, and exhausted within, that particular part of the autobiographical scheme which came to take actual shape in the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" chapters of the fourth volume.

The precise nature of those artistic considerations which were initially responsible for the keeping together of the major part of the material of the play, and for its eventual inclusion in the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" sections of Inishfallen, was probably simple enough. The autobiographies, both individually and collectively, possess a definite chronological and historical scheme, and this scheme is most particularly strong in the first four volumes. From the early pages of I Knock at the Door to the closing pages of Inishfallen Irish political history provides not just the background for, and part of the substance of, the autobiographical narrative, but also helps to give that narrative artistic shape; for the successive events involved in Ireland's gradual emergence as an independent nation are portrayed as exerting a strong influence upon, even as inextricably bound up with, the development of the life and destiny of Johnny/Sean. The Gunman itself depicts a specific period which has already, albeit recently, "historic" when the play was first produced. And set in Dublin in May 1920, it derives much of its inspiration and plot from the troubled political atmosphere and violent events in the city at that time. Given the importance of the historical element in both the autobiographies and the play, it is only natural that if the material of The Gunman were to be treated on any significant scale within the autobiographies, it would be included at the point in their historical scheme which accorded most closely with the play's own period setting. And, indeed, the most obvious, and perhaps most basic, use to which the material of The Gunman is put in the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" chapters of Inishfallen concerns the depiction, even the epitomising, of Irish life during the 1919 - 21 guerilla-warfare period of the Anglo-Irish War of Independence.

And in this connection it is noteworthy that those few details from the play which were previously reworked in the autobiographies are not themselves of any exact historical nature and could, therefore, be readily transposed into the different historical time-schemes of Pictures in the Hallway and Drums under the Windows.

But if initially the bulk of The Gunman's material was kept together and included in Inishfallen in order to fulfil a role in the historical scheme of the autobiographies, the actual reworking of the material soon exceeds the limits of this rather narrow purpose.

For The Gunman, no-matter how strong the historical interest in its material, is not simply an account of historical events, but essentially a work of art; and as such it employs the author's creativity, literary techniques, and the dramatic form, in order ultimately to express concerns which transcend a particular time and place.⁶ The autobiographies too are fundamentally artistic, as opposed to straight-forwardly factual, in nature,⁷ and perhaps partly because they seem to respond not simply to the historical material of The Gunman, but to The Shadow of a Gunman itself in virtually all its aspects as a work of art and as a play. And it seems that within two chapters of Inishfallen the autobiographies not only utilise the period - setting of the play and the incidents of its plot; but, very much more significantly, they employ the dramatic mode of dialogue and presentation of character, and proceed also to draw directly upon The Gunman's very words, its themes, its imagery, its characters and its structure and techniques. And if in one respect it might be said that "The Raid" in particular, despite the organic role which it plays within the historical scheme of the autobiographies, is not fully integrated into Inishfallen, it is because of the noble "fault" that by

⁶ For an examination of The Gunman's intrinsically artistic nature and, in particular, its artistry in the use of historical facts, see: William A. Armstrong, 'History, Autobiography, and "The Shadow of a Gunman"' Modern Drama Vol. II No. 4, Kansas 1960.

⁷ See introduction

virtue of its link with the drama, it exhibits, in its use of dialogue, in its superb evocations of scene, and in its vigour and immediacy of characterisation, outstanding and sustained "dramatic" qualities - qualities which had been marvellously apparent in almost every section of I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway, but which, except in one or two chapters of the third volume (notably in the "Behold, My Family is Poor" section, again a chapter under the direct influence of a play⁸), were seldom to appear in such a marked fashion in the subsequent volumes, including Inishfallen.

Moreover, the spirit of creativity inherent in The Gunman and in its treatment of its material seems positively to inspire Inishfallen in its treatment of the play. And when this new impetus is added to the autobiographies' own very considerable potential as a medium for creative expression, the result appears, in effect, to be the creation of a new work of art out of a work of art.

The degree of creativity, and also of sheer skill, revealed by the author in the re-working of The Gunman within Inishfallen is indeed great. The many individual details and elements of the play are not simply reproduced in the autobiography but are, with the utmost artistic sensitivity, adapted, developed and recombined to perform new functions in the context of the autobiography.

The basis for what turns out to be Inishfallen's complex re-working of the play is, of course, the adoption of the period, setting and general plot of the play into the narrative of the autobiography. In this connection the relationship between the two works is at its most obvious.

Both the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" sections of Inishfallen are set in rooms in Dublin tenement houses . . . some time during the period

⁸ See chapter below on Nannie's Night Out.

1919 - 1921, and both acts of the play are set in a Dublin tenement room in May 1920. "Hail and Farewell" describes Sean's attempts to become a writer, some of the trials and tribulations he endures in the process, and his resolution to leave home and find more congenial surroundings and company in which to work. And "The Raid" tells of him, settled in his new lodgings, experiencing a night-time raid which is carried out by British troops including Black and Tans. He personally is not injured in the raid, but a fellow inhabitant of the house is very surprisingly arrested. Similarly the action of the play presents the various distractions endured by Davoren, a would-be poet who has misguidedly moved into his present lodgings in order to find quietness conducive to his work; and the plot culminates in a raid upon the house, at night, by British troops including Auxiliaries and Black and Tans. Davoren himself is not harmed but, unexpectedly, another person in the house is taken prisoner.

And within this large overall framework of correspondence in the period, setting and general outline of the events presented in the autobiographical chapters and The Gunman, some smaller incidents described in the chapters can be seen to be virtually identical to incidents in the play. Occasionally, even, this near identity in detail of incident is underlined by a distinct textual correspondence. For example: when in "The Raid" troops are first about to enter the house, Sean hears:

A volley of battering blows on the obstinate wooden door, mingled with the crash of falling glass that told Sean the panels on each side of it had been shattered by hammer or rifle-butt. (p. 40).

And this clearly recalls both in the action and in the incidental detail and wording the play's printed stage-direction describing the arrival of troops at the door of the house:

(There is heard at street door a violent and continuous knocking, followed by the crash of glass and the beating of the door with rifle butts.

(Act III, p. 146)

However, it is a measure of the creativity employed in the reworking of The Gunman that even such brief direct correspondences in both incident and text are far from common. And it rapidly becomes apparent that even Inishfallen's basic reworking of the period, setting and plot of the play is not quite so straightforward as it first appears. A wealth of details in Inishfallen are clearly derived from the play, but in the process of inclusion in the autobiography they have been placed in slightly different contexts, given slightly different implications, and retold, as it were, in slightly different words. For example: when Sean in "The Raid" asks a soldier, on guard outside the house, the reason for the arrest of the prisoner and the cause of the tumult around the door, the reply is:

- An awrsenal! Rear of th' ouse, an' awrsenal
discovered! 'Nough gelignite to blow up 'ole
neighbourhood. (p. 50).

And although this is action and wording is strongly reminiscent of, or strongly alludes to, the portion of the play in which Mrs. Grigson runs in to tell Davoren and Shield of the reason for Minnie's arrest:

They're after gettin' a whole lot of stuff in Minnie's
room! Enough to blow up the whole street, a Tan says!
(Act II, p. 152).

yet the passages are far from identical. And with regard to text and plot as with regard to many other aspects of the play, the autobiography reworks many and various threads of The Shadow of a Gunman, but it reworks them into its own design.

Part of the actual raid sequence described in "The Raid" provides a sustained illustration of this continuous reweaving of detail, and, resulting creative independence from The Gunman, even when the action, and something of the wording, of the autobiographical narrative seems to have been derived from the very heart of the play. The events in "The Raid", which begin with the entry of the raiders into Sean's room and end with Sean's departure into the street, (pp. 48 - 9), are

founded upon the incidents which take place in Act II of the play while the raider is present in Davoren's and Shield's room. (pp. 147 - 9).

There is an immediate discrepancy between the narrative of the autobiography and the plot of the play in that although both the room in the autobiography and the room in the play are entered by members of the British forces engaged on a raid, Sean's room is entered by an officer and two soldiers of the Regular Army while Davoren's is invaded by an Auxiliary, a member of the feared and hated Irregular force. And since both play and autobiography have previously made it clear that a visit from "Tommys" or regular soldiers during a raid is infinitely preferable to a visit from Irregular troops such as the Black and Tans⁹ with the autobiography, in addition, referring to the Auxiliaries as the most dreaded visitors of all¹⁰ - the initial appearance in "The Raid"

⁹ Seumas. If we come through this I'll never miss a Mass again! If it's the Tommys it won't be so bad, but if it's the Tans, we're goin' to have a terrible time.

(The Gunman Act II, p. 146)

Which were they - the Tommys or the Tans? Tans, thought Sean, for the Tommys would not shout so soullessly, nor smash the glass panels so suddenly; they would hammer on the door with a rifle-butt, and wait for it to be opened. No; these were the Tans.

(Inishfallen p. 40)

¹⁰ Yet Sean knew that the house must be alive with crawling men, He guessed that a part of them were the Auxies, the classic members of sibilant and sinister raiders. The Tans alone would make more noise, slamming themselves into a room, shouting to shake off the fear that slashed many of their faces. The Auxies were too proud to show a sign of it. The Tommys would be warm, always hesitant at knocking a woman's room about; they would even be jocular in their funny English way, encouraging the women and even the children to grumble at being taken away from their proper sleep.

(Inishfallen p. 41)

While the Black and Tans were recruited in England from men from the ranks of the British Army who were demobilised in 1918, the Auxiliaries were recruited from ex-officers of the Army and had the distinction of being under no civil or military jurisdiction.

of an Army Officer, instead of the Auxiliary of the play, is of some importance and to some artistic purpose. And, indeed, the entry of the Officer in Inishfallen seems to be designed as an anti-climax preparatory to, and thus increasing the ultimate shock of, Sean's unexpected but imminent encounter with a Tan; whereas in the "original" series of events in the play, all the shock of the encounter with a raider is felt with the initial entry of the Auxiliary.

However, the Auxiliary of the play has made his mark upon "The Raid", or rather has contributed to its artistic effect. For Sean, while waiting in terror for his room to be raided, has previously been thinking about the Auxiliaries, and his descriptions of the Auxies as "the classic members of sibilant and sinister raiders" who "would lift a corpse from a coffin to search for a gun" and whose presence he believes he can sense in the silent house, greatly heighten the atmosphere of tension which the author is creating in this part of the chapter. And although the embodiment of Sean's fearful imaginings - an actual Auxiliary - enters not his room but the room of Shields and Davorens in the play, yet the play's Auxie and the autobiography's Army Officer are related in that the Army Officer is depicted with "a torch in one hand, a revolver in the other", just as the Auxiliary in The Gunman is seen to be holding a "revolver in one hand and electric torch in the other". Furthermore, Sean does not entirely escape the attention of the Irregular Troops amongst the raiding party, and when, on the "decent" Officer's orders, he is about to leave the house, he almost bumps into a Tan whose subsequent actions are derived from those of the Auxiliary in the play.

"Twisting the gun in his hand" the Tan of "The Raid" subjects Sean to a ruthless interrogation similar to that which the Auxiliary, who terrifies Shields by "Displaying his revolver in a careless way", inflicts upon the two men in the play. The Tan questions Sean about his politics and, finding little else to object to, says

menacingly: "Well you're an Irishman, anyway - you can't deny that!", whilst in the play the Auxiliary threateningly asks Davoren "You're not an Irishman, are you?".

But an important difference is to be found even in these closely related incidents. Sean, while being fearful of the Tan, prompt enough to call him "sir", and eager enough to say, truthfully, that he is not a "Sinn Feiner", straight-forwardly agrees with the Tan that he is "an Irishman, right enough" and refuses to comply with the Tan's order that he "shout To Hell with Ireland". Sean's response is a proud and brave one, despite his apprehension:

Sean fell silent. God damn him if he'd do that!
He knew his face was white; he felt his legs
tremble; but he fell silent, with a stubborn look
on his face. (p. 49)

In marked contrast, however, the cowardly Davoren and Shields anglicise their Gaelic names when the Auxiliary asks for their identity; Davoren responds equivocally to the question "You're not an Irishman, are you?" by answering "I - I - I was born in Ireland"; and both Davoren and Shields, if only given the chance, would surely, in placation of the Auxiliary, send cries of "To Hell with Ireland" reverberating around the house. Highly significantly, considerations of the characterisation of Sean in the autobiography, differing as it most obviously does from the characterisation of Davoren and Shields in the play, have thus dictated that the autobiography adapt the material and dialogue of the play in this way.

A final similarity and dissimilarity between the two related raid sequences occur in that Sean, Davoren and Shields are all rescued from their interrogator, but by different means: Sean is saved by the intervention of the Army Officer, Davoren and Shields are saved by the appearance of Mrs. Grigson, who unwittingly informs the Auxiliary that there is whisky in the basement of the house.

And as with incident so with regard to theme also Hail and Farewell and Inishfallen, draw heavily upon the play and reveal a certain awareness

of its actual phraseology, yet develop and use the material which they have derived from The Gunman for purposes often subtly different from, and sometimes quite independent of, the purposes for which it was used in the original play.

A notable instance of this adaptation of themes concerns the attitudes to war and politics which are expressed in Inishfallen and The Gunman. Initially the two autobiographical chapters which are related to the play follow the play in its contention that in political strife it is always the ordinary people - non-combatant and at heart politically uninvolved - who suffer most. And, in a passage of "Hail and Farewell" in which he meditates on the present conflict and the plight of the people, Sean at first echoes sentiments expressed by Shields in a series of speeches made in Act II of the play. Sean thinks that:

The people were getting a little tired of the fighting.
 The sovereign people were having a tough time of
 it from enemies on the left and friends on the right.
 Going out for a stroll, or to purchase a necessary, no-
 one knew when he'd have to fall flat on his belly, to
 wait for death to go by, in the midst of smoke and fire
 and horrifying noises. (p. 34).

And Shields would agree, for in the play he says:

It's the civilians that suffer; when there's an ambush
 they don't know where to run. Shot in the back to
 save the British Empire, an' shot in the breast to save
 the soul of Ireland. (p. 132).

Sean regards militant patriotism as commendable in theory but as a totally different matter when put into practice.

Gun-peals and slogan cries were things happy enough
 in a song; but they made misery in a busy street, or
 along the quiet, unassuming walks of a village. (p. 34).

And likewise Shields, who has himself advocated militancy, now finds the real manifestation of violence distasteful:

/ Davoren. I remember the time when you yourself
 believed in nothing but the gun.

Seumas. Ay, when there wasn't a gun in the country;
 I've a different opinion now when there's
 nothin' but guns in the country. (p. 131).

Also both Sean and Shields perceive something of the sinister irony of the religious implications in the conflict. But it is at this point that the autobiography begins to develop the theme in a direction not explored at all in the play.

Initially the divergence between play and autobiography can be seen in terms of the demands of characterisation. Sean, now uncommitted to any church, and to be described later in Inishfallen as "in politics, a Communist; and in religion, a Rationalist" (p. 196), sees the war in wide terms of

Christian Protestant England and Christian Catholic Ireland
 banging away at each other for God, for King, and
 Country. All forgot, for the time being, the deeds alleged
 to have been done in Russia, so that they could show, in a
 ripe example, what Christ's faith, hope, and charity could
 do in a private and confidential war of their own. Christ's
 faithful soldiers and servants were busy bestowing the chrism
 of death upon each other. (p. 34).

While Shields as a "Gael" and as a staunch, if superstitious, member of the Roman Catholic Church comments specifically upon the admixture of fanatical Catholicism and fanatical Nationalism which constitutes the Republican outlook:

...The country is gone mad. Instead of counting their beads now they're countin' bullets; their Hail Marys and paternosters are burstin' bombs - burstin' bombs, an' the rattle of machine-guns; petrol in their holy water; their Mass is a burnin' buildin'; their De Profundis is "The Soldiers' Song", an' their creed is, I believe in the gun almighty, maker of heaven an' earth - an' it's all for 'the glory o' God an' the honour o' Ireland' (p. 131).

Yet more than a simple consideration of characterisation is involved, for Inishfallen's hint of a defensive attitude towards Communism, and the suggested comparison of the deeds of the Communists with the deeds of supposed Christians, reveal a relationship between the autobiography and plays other than The Gunman. On the whole "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" suggest an element of political partisanship on the part of the author which is totally absent from The Gunman. The Gunman does not justify or glorify political violence in any cause, but instead

remains true to one of its central themes in revealing how such violence encroaches upon the lives of ordinary people and precipitates those lives into tragedy. The play makes no mention of Russia or of Communism. And it contains no suggestion that the author takes one side or the other in the Anglo - Irish conflict; for if the Auxiliary's behaviour is ruthless and the raid savage, ruthless and savage also are the tactics of Maguire the Republican, who carries bombs designed to maim and kill, and who sets up an ambush, again with killing in mind. And if Tommy Owens vaunts fearfully patriotic sentiments they are seen to be, in the context of his character and the play, not only platitudinous but false and dangerous. Moreover, if Minnie is arrested by British troops it is the Republicans who ambush the lorry on which she is being taken away, and who begin the violent skirmish in the midst of which she meets her death. Nor is Minnie's death the outcome of any actively political commitment on her part, for she dies primarily for love rather than for patriotism: in protecting Davoren, whom she mistakenly believes to be involved in the Republican movement, rather than in defending her own rather hazy notions of Republicanism which she has derived from 'lovely poem(s) on Ireland an' the men o' '98". Ultimately she is not so much the victim of the English as the victim of Davoren's self-esteem, self-delusion and lack of responsibility towards others, and of a political and violent climate created by both sides in the conflict-a climate in which circumstances and actions can suddenly take on terrible implications and consequences, and in which innocent lives can so easily be embroiled and finally lost.

But while "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" do reflect something of the pacifism of the play - notably in part of Sean's meditation in "Hail and Farewell" (the part which echoes several of Shields' thoughts) and in the conclusion of "The Raid" which (derived from the play in theme but not in incident) depicts a massively inhuman military tank

towering threateningly over the people and their lives - yet at specific points in the chapters the political neutrality of the author seems certainly to waver.

It must be emphasised that the views expressed in both of the autobiographical chapters are consistently put forward as Sean's thoughts and are thus, in one sense, all "dramatic" or characteristic; and that Sean's existence at one and the same time as both a literary character and a figure autobiographically representative of the author necessitates some caution in attributing a particular opinion to Sean, or to the author, or to both. But while in "Hail and Farewell" it would seem to be in character for Sean, as an ex-Republican and opponent of British imperialism, to wish "piously", upon hearing Republicans firing upon British troops, that "God make their eyes keen and their hands steady!" (p. 34); and even in character for him in "The Raid" to say that many men helped the Republicans by distributing ammunition and smuggling arms and that "If it wasn't for his own poor sight, he'd probably be doing it himself" (p. 40); yet in certain passages O'Casey, the author, introduces into the two chapters themes very much akin to his thinking as expressed in his work of the late 1930's onwards, and alien to his thinking as expressed in his plays written in the 1920's (including The Gunman). And so it appears that in writing Inishfallen in the mid to late 1940's O'Casey builds upon and develops, and at times diverges from, the themes of the original play in order to introduce concerns which preoccupied not "Sean" of the 1920's so much as the author at the time of writing Inishfallen. A certain passage which occurs in "The Raid" is of particular interest in this respect:

What had been lost was found; what had been dead came to life again. The spirit beneath the coat brocaded, with slender sword quivering, had come into being again, not in brocade, but in rags; not with sword or dainty phrases, elegant in comedy and satire, but with bitter curses, blows as hard as an arm can give, and a rank, savage spit into a master's face. Fought, these frantic

fools did, led by Larkin and by Connolly; fought till the day-star arose in their shivering hearts, the new and glorious light, the red evangel, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, manifested in the active mind and vital bodies of men and women and little children. And now something stronger than bare hands was in the battle. Many a spear-point flame from a gun frightened a dark corner or a shadowy street, making armed men in khaki or black crouch low in their rushing lorries, firing rapidly back at the street grown shadowy again, or the corner now darker than ever before. (p. 39).

This view of The War of Independence as an armed continuation of the workers' struggle against the employers in The Dublin Lock Out Strike of 1913 is not to be found in The Gunman. Indeed its concern with heroism in the cause of the workers rather than with the anti-heroic aspects of the nationalist struggle relate it to The Star Turns Red (published in 1940) and to Red Roses For Me (published in 1942) - both of which present symbolic and, to differing extents, idealised pictures of the 1913 Lock Out - rather than to The Gunman, Juno and the Paycock and The Plough and the Stars. And an indication of the directness of the thematic relationship of this passage with The Star Turns Red, in particular, is that in expressing The Star's philosophies, the passage draws upon its imagery and diction also. The use in the passage of biblical and religious references and of such phrases as "the day star" and "the red evangel" to describe the dawn of social awareness is absolutely characteristic of The Star Turns Red. Furthermore, in one specific instance there appears to be a direct textual link between "The Raid" and The Star, for the words "What had been lost was found; what had been dead came to life again", basically derived as they are from the parable of the prodigal son,¹¹ seem perhaps, in the context of the passage, to take their more immediate literary origin from words derived from the same biblical context but spoken by Red Jim in The Star: "My comrade was dead, and is alive again; he was lost,

¹¹ "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke XV. 24).

and is found!".¹² And it is possible too that the reference in the passage to "The spirit beneath the coat brocaded, with slender sword quivering" reveals a brief point of contact between "The Raid" and Oak Leaves and Lavender - another politically partisan play which was written in the early - mid 1940's,¹³ and which in its Prelude and closing sequence presents ghostly dancers in eighteenth century costume (the men each with "a shadow of a sword, slender as a needle",¹⁴) as representatives of England's glorious military past.

Again, however, it must be stressed that, despite "Hail and Farewell's" and "The Raid's" developments and divergences from The Gunman into political opinion, the initial dramatic influence exerted over these two sections by The Gunman - an influence which endows them with a dramatic quality quite rare in Inishfallen - remains constant. And the very strength of this influence can be seen from the fact that all opinion expressed in the two chapters is dramatised by being framed within the supposed thoughts of Sean, while elsewhere in Inishfallen opinions - and many political opinions among them - are often expressed directly in the authorial voice and at much greater length.

But if the dramatic influence of The Gunman does save "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" from the direct expression of the partisanship of the author, yet the impression remains that even by the placing of politically partisan opinions in Sean's mind the author is forfeiting much of the sense of the wide, apolitical and, in that respect, unqualified, sympathy for human beings and the human condition which pervades and enriches The Gunman.

¹² Collected Plays Vol. II, P. 304.

¹³ For evidence of the time at which Oak Leaves and Lavender was written see the chapter on the play itself, below.

¹⁴ Collected Plays Vol. IV, p. 6

Yet in sharp contrast with any artistic loss which might be felt in the autobiography's treatment of certain themes of the play, is the sense of Inishfallen's enormous artistic gain over The Gunman in the autobiography's development and more systematic use of the symbolism which is inherent in the play.

"The Raid" begins with a description of how "The cold beauty of the frost glittered everywhere outside, unseen, unfelt, for the slum was asleep" (p. 37) while Sean, in reflective mood, lies awake looking through his window^{at} the squalor of the streets, and contemplating the kind of lives which are led within the walls of the dirty and decayed tenement houses. Act II of the play begins in almost identical circumstances with Davoren, who is seated in his tenement room, being, according to the stage-direction, "Attracted in thought towards the moon, which is shining in through the windows" (p. 125), and led to lament over the contrasting wretchedness and loathsomeness of his immediate surroundings. The frost of "The Raid" and the moon of the play are both symbols of natural beauty contrasting with the poverty and ugliness upon which Sean and Davoren are brooding, and the symbol in the play seems to have inspired the inclusion of the equivalent symbol in the autobiography.

A little later in the play the moon, which has been associated with beauty and poetry and, by contrast, with the "horrors" of the slum-room and "an ugliness that can only be destroyed" (p. 125), is used to make a contrast with the political unrest of the city as Shields comments: "How peaceful the heavens look now with the moon in the middle; you'd never think there were men prowlin' about tryin' to shoot each other" (p. 131). And it is precisely this kind of repetition of a basic image, with successive revelations of new facets of its significance, which is caught up and developed much more extensively in "The Raid".

The first occurrence of the frost symbolism in the chapter combines Davoren's contrast - between the beauty of the moon and the ugliness of

tenement surroundings - with Shields' contrast between the moon's serenity and the violence abroad in the streets; for while the beauty of the frost throws into relief the meanness of the streets which Sean sees through the window, it contrasts too with the fact that "everyone knew that death with his comrade, the inflicter of wounds, roamed the darkened streets" (p. 37). "The Raid" resumes the symbolism of the frost - and combines it with something of the original moon - symbolism of the play - after the raid sequence when Sean is forced to leave the house, and on doing so finds that:

It was very cold, and by the timid gleams from a waning moon Sean saw that path and road were white with a covering of rich rime frost. (p. 49).

Here the natural beauty of the frost and moon not only contrasts with the unnaturalness of circumstances in which people are turned out of their homes in the middle of the night; but in its whiteness the moonlit frost creates a visual effect of throwing into relief the shapes of the "Groups of people ... standing, huddled up against the railings of the houses", and by its coldness, ironically, seems to be inflicting a further hardship upon these ill-clad inhabitants of the slums, the women of whom

were trying to coax warmth into their fearful and shivering children by wrapping flimsy rags round their shoulders, and tucking the little ones under them into their arms. (p. 49).

The sight of a military tank moving along the street provokes the next reference to the frost, and in this connection it is the purity of the colour, and the innocence of the natural origin of the frost which are contrasted with the dull colouring, obscene ugliness, and malicious purpose of the man-made monster:

Along the road, over the calm, quiet chastity of the white frost, slid a diamond-shaped tank, looking like a dirty, dangerous, crawling slug, machineguns sticking out from slits, like ugly protruding eyes staring at the cowering people. (p. 50).

And when the arrested prisoner is brought from the house, the frost forms a contrast of serenity and beauty with the pain and anguish of human political affairs:

Amid a group of soldiers with rifles at the ready marched a thin forlorn figure, but the lips in the pale face were tight together, and the small head was held high. Peering closer, Sean saw that handcuffs kept the two small hands locked together, and that from one of them red blobs were dripping on to the white frost on the path, leaving little spots behind like crimson berries that had fallen on to snow. (p. 50).

But if the contrast of natural beauty with unnatural suffering initially creates a beautiful image of red berries upon snow, that sense of beauty is soon about to disappear, and the final paragraph of the chapter describes a scene engulfed by increasing desolation. The brief excitement as the prisoner is taken away, in the midst of his patriotic fervour and in the "glory" of the beam of the searchlight, dies away. And for the inhabitants of the house the waiting in the cold street drags on. The impression of the blood upon the frost changes both in actuality and implication, and as excitement gives way to despair so "the red specks in the rime turned brown and lonely". (p. 50).

The whiteness of the frost and the paleness of the moon now present the effect of a dreamlike, almost supernatural sense of desolation:

Heads that had lifted bent again, and all was quiet once more. A bleak dawn at last began to peel the deeper darkness from the sky, and the scene crept into a ghostly glamour, brightened by the pale faces of the waiting people; the pale moon sinking deeper into a surly sky, and the rimy frost on pathway, road, and roof grew whiter. (pp. 50 - 1).

But it is in the concluding sentence of the chapter that the culmination of the frost-imagery occurs. Here the frost gathering to itself all its former implications of beauty, purity, tranquility and innocence - all of which have formed a contrasting, ironic or indifferently desolate background to human sufferings previously described - provides, as it were, the climactic action as well as the climactic image of the chapter. For now at last the frost appears to lose its indifference to,

and immunity from, suffering, and succumbs as a victim to the relentless tank, which, though manufactured and nominally controlled by men, now in its mechanical destructiveness spares nothing and is accountable to no-one.

Dirty-yellow-clad figures moved into the whiteness from one dark doorway, to move out of it again into another blacker still; while the brown, slug-like tank crept up and down the road, charring the dainty rime with its grinding treads - the new leviathan that God could ne'er control. (p. 51).

And so "The Raid" ends as it began with a description of the frost - a symbol which seemingly took its origins from the moon symbolism at the beginning of Act II of the play, but which, both in the variety of its implications and the frequency of its occurrence, is developed far beyond the original symbolism of The Gunman. The play's initially effective but, beyond one minor repetition, unsustained use of its moon symbol is expanded in Inishfallen into a whole chain of varied yet related, cumulative images. And this sequence of interrelated images, in that it conveys and emphasises the delicate and successive changes of atmosphere in "The Raid", and so links together various points throughout the course of the chapter's narrative, contributes considerably to the impression of "The Raid" as a well-structured and unified whole.

The degree of artistry with which O'Casey, in effect, integrates the symbolism of the play into "The Raid" is equalled, perhaps even outdone, in connection with the inclusion within the autobiography of the characters of the play. The reworking into "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" of the roles and qualities of The Gunman's characters is not immediately apparent, but it certainly does seem to take place. This unlikely, sounding process does not necessarily evince or pre-suppose any specific conscious design on the part of the author, for the delineation of character and the qualities of individual characters are at the heart of The Gunman (and also of the other major plays written in Dublin - Juno and the Paycock and The Plough and the Stars), and are so inextricably bound up with the play's words, actions and themes that the use, for any

purpose, of a mere fragment of the play's material would almost inevitably bring with it associations of character. And since O'Casey draws heavily upon the substance of the play in "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid", the forceful characters of the play were virtually sure to find their "own" way through into the autobiography. But if the hidden presence of The Gunman's characters within "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" do not necessarily reveal any conscious artistry on the part of the author, they do reveal something which may ultimately be of more significance - his supreme sensitivity (whether it be conscious or unconscious) to the fine details and effects of the original play, and his supreme creativity (again conscious or instinctive) in developing those details and effects for a new artistic purpose.

The reworking into Inishfallen of the many aspects of the characterization, role and significance of Minnie Powell is central to "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid", just as Minnie herself was, and is, at the centre of the play. But so very subtle is her presence in, and influence upon the two autobiographical chapters that Professor Armstrong, while writing in the strongest terms of her essential importance in the thematic design and ultimate achievement of the play, regards her as being totally absent from the autobiography:

The contrast between Davoren and Shields and Minnie Powell raises The Shadow of a Gunman to a tragic level. This major design is reinforced by several lesser but parallel contrasts. Like Davoren and Shields, most of the other men in the play are intent on vanity or self-preservation; only the women show themselves capable of courage and charity like Minnie Powell's.

..... The Shadow of a Gunman is skillfully constructed to create a contrast between the masculine and the feminine character as stern as that elaborated in Juno and the Paycock. The most significant difference between The Shadow of a Gunman and O'Casey's autobiography lies in the substitution of Minnie Powell for Mr. Ballynoy. No less than Yeats' Countess Cathleen and Synge's Deirdre, Minnie Powell treads the thorny way of Cathleen ni Houlihan: Shields' catch-phrase is more relevant than he will ever realize. It is this mythopoeic level of meaning which makes The Shadow of a Gunman much more than "a commentary upon the warlike conditions of the city during

the year 1920,⁽¹⁵⁾ and brings it into contact with what Yeats called the anima mundi, the world of ideal passion, to which the tragic heroine aspires even at the cost of her physical destruction.¹⁶

Certainly in straight forward terms no character by the name of Minnie Powell appears in Inishfallen, nor is any one character in "Hail and Farewell" or "The Raid" her exact counterpart in characteristics, action or fate. But the absence of Minnie from the autobiography seems possibly to be much more apparent than real. For if Minnie's life, qualities and tragedy are regarded as being, in the final analysis, representative of those of a specific social class rather than those of one individual person and personality (whether or not that personality ultimately represents mankind as a whole); then the circumstances of her life, her characteristics her nobility, her heroism, and the role which she performs not only in the incidental plot, but also in the thematic structure of the play, can influence and be assimilated into the autobiography without her actual "physical" "personal" presence. This view of Minnie as ultimately, and perhaps even essentially, a representative of a particular class is given credence by two stage-directions within the text of the play itself. The author says, in these directions, that "she is at ease in all places and before all persons, even those of a superior education so long as she meets them in the atmosphere that surrounds the members of her own class" (Act, I, p. 105); and that "like all of her class, Minnie is not able to converse very long on the one subject;" (Act I p. 107).

¹⁵ A quotation from Andrew E. Malone writing about The Shadow of a Gunman in The Nineteenth Century and After (April 1925).

¹⁶ William A. Armstrong: 'History, Autobiography, and "The Shadow of a Gunman"', p. 424 (Italics mine). In this article Professor Armstrong defends the artistry and artistic merit of The Gunman against the school of criticism, headed by Andrew E. Malone, which regards the chief characteristic of O'Casey's early plays as being "photographic realism". In this context Professor Armstrong regards the autobiography as being more factual than the play in terms of the author's own experience, and employs Inishfallen's account of the raid in order to illustrate just how far the play itself had moved from the realms of historical and autobiographical fact into those of art.

And by comparing Minnie's qualities with those of the working class heroines of Juno and the Paycock and The Plough and The Stars, O'Casey's other major plays of the same period, it can be seen that despite their differing names and the "personal" detail and colouring of the exact circumstances of their lives, all embody precisely the same fundamental qualities - qualities of a practical and realistic outlook on life, and an inherent awareness of, and respect for, love and the preservation of life as the chief values in human existence. Moreover, they all possess a courage which, in the assertion of these values amidst a violent and hostile political situation - a situation which is none of their making - leads them to suffering and even to death. Indeed, in the light of the subsequent plays, and bearing in mind too the general merits of the female characters of The Gunman when compared with the general demerits of the play's male characters, it appears that Minnie's role as a representative can be defined even further as being concerned not so much with the qualities of the working class as a whole, but with those of the women of that class.

If, then, Minnie is to be ultimately regarded as a representative figure rather than as a purely personal figure it seems that many aspects of the portrayal of her might also fit possible literary portrayals of other characters of the same class. And what O'Casey in writing "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" seems in effect, if not in conscious design, actually to do is to dissect the characterisation and role of Minnie into its many constituent parts, and to adapt and dovetail these parts individually within the characters and situations depicted in the two chapters. In this way he recreates and even develops within the autobiography virtually all aspects of the portrayal and role of Minnie, without having Minnie herself present in the play, and without employing any one character as a direct substitute for, or counterpart of her.

Furthermore, in tracing the influence of the characterisation and role of Minnie upon the presentation of various characters in the chapters, it becomes apparent that these characters are extremely complex in their origins, for not only do they combine aspects of Minnie's portrayal with their own independent identity within the autobiography, but also they possess attributes and significances drawn from characters in the play other than Minnie. It seems, therefore, that the translation of Minnie's presentation and role into Inishfallen is, in effect, and strangely enough, at the heart of something of an imaginative re-expression and realignment of the attributes, significances and roles of almost all the characters in the play.

Mr. Ballynoy of "The Raid" shares many of the tribulations which Minnie endures in the play, and also certain very specific but limited aspects of her characterisation. Because of the obvious parallel between her arrest and his, and since the autobiography echoes in connection with him the sense of several phrases which are used in the play in connection with Minnie, he is the most obviously, although far from the most importantly, related character to Minnie. His courage and enterprise are, for most of the time, ironically underestimated and denigrated in very much the same way as Minnie's are. Sean thinks of him as "the thin and delicate husband of Mrs. Ballynoy" (p. 40), and Mrs. Ballynoy herself describes him as "bein' born timid, with a daisy in his mouth" (p. 45); while Minnie is described by Shields as:

an ignorant little bitch that thinks of nothin' but jazz dances, fox-trots, picture theatres an' dress ... I wouldn't care to have me life dependin' on brave little Minnie Powell - she wouldn't sacrifice a jazz dance to save it. (Act I, pp 129 - 30).

Consequently the arrests of both Mr. Ballynoy and Minnie and the revelation of their apparent involvement in the political struggle cause great surprise amongst their neighbours, and in some measure illustrate the theme that surprising qualities can be found in unlikely

people. Sean exclaims: "Good God - the prisoner was the timid, insignificant Charlie Ballynoy who took no interest in politics!" (p. 50), and Mrs. Grigson cries, as Minnie is taken out of the house, "God to-night, who'd have ever thought that of Minnie Powell! God to-night, who'd think it was in Minnie Powell!" (Act II, pp. 153-3).

Both Mr. Ballynoy and Minnie are arrested for the possession of explosives and both cry "Up the Republic" as they are taken from the house on to an army lorry outside. But here the similarities cease. Mr. Ballynoy does not perform the tragic role of Minnie for he does not share her death. Moreover, he was actively involved in political and violent conflict and made and stored bombs, unlike Minnie, who, innocent of any real part in the conflict, simply removed some bombs to her room that they might not incriminate the man she loved. And so even were Mr. Ballynoy to die at the end of "The Raid", his death would not have the profound or representative tragic potential of Minnie's death, but would ultimately be only as noble or as representative as the political cause for which he worked and died. Certainly O'Casey's opinion of the worthiness of the Republican cause, and of its methods during the War of Independence, seems to have wavered a little between the writing of the play and the writing of Inishfallen. But even so Mr. Ballynoy's death in committed patriotism could not possess the same ironic and tragic undertones as the death of the brave but deluded Minnie. And in that aspect of his portrayal which presents him as a committed and active Republican Mr. Ballynoy seems to be related much more to Maguire of the play than to Minnie. Maguire is a "soldier of the I.R.A" who takes part in, and is killed in, an ambush. He is also the real owner of the bombs over which Minnie loses her life. The fact that no-one else in the play suspects him of being a terrorist is a further link between him and Mr. Ballynoy. Another character in the play who seems to contribute to the portrayal of Mr. Ballynoy is Mr. Gallogher. The apparent

timidity, insignificance and "thin forlorn" appearance (p. 50) of Mr. Ballynoy are in total contrast to the force and assurance of both Minnie and Maguire, but timidity, insignificance and forlornness are are positively embodied in Mr. Gallogher, "a spare little man with a spare little grey beard and a thin, nervous voice" (Act I, p. 114), who is overpowered by the physical presence of the "massive" Mrs. Henderson.

The manifestly feminine aspects of Minnie and of her presentation in the play seem to be assimilated into the autobiographies portrayal of Mr. Ballynoy's wife.

On the level of correspondence in action and circumstance Mrs. Ballynoy's arrival in Sean's room with the firm intention of seducing him could be a development from Minnie's equally determined efforts to strike up an attachment with Davoren - although Minnie's attitudes were much more romantic than the casual ones of Mrs. Ballynoy and her designs considerably more innocent. Both Mrs. Ballynoy and Minnie are initially unwelcome visitors who force their presence upon their male hosts. Furthermore, both are impervious to the men's hasty warnings as to what the neighbours might think of their conduct. Davoren, alarmed at Minnie's suggestion that she should tidy up his room, tries to forestall her by warning that: "the people of the house would be sure to start talking about you", but Minnie is unperturbed: "An do you think Minnie Powell cares whether they'll talk or no?" (Act I, p. 110-1). Similarly Sean tries to rid himself of Mrs. Ballynoy's embarrassing presence by saying "someone might be prowlin' round an' see an' think th' worst" but, again, to no avail: " - Ay, she said; bad minds, th'lot o' them - that's why I've locked th' door". (p. 44).

But it is on a thematic and abstract level that the portrayals of the two women seem most importantly related. The femininity and beauty of both are contrasted with, and throw into relief the gloom and poverty

of their tenement surroundings. Shields refers sarcastically to Davoren's idea of Minnie as "A Helen of Troy come to live in a tenement!" (Act II, p. 130), while Sean thinks of Mrs. Ballynoy as "A rose of Tralee, ... a lovely rose of the tenements". (p. 44). Also both women introduce concerns of love and life which contrast with the hatred and destruction evinced in the political struggle.

And just as Minnie is unidealised and seen by the dramatist to be in many respects a product of her upbringing and environment, so too the portrayal of Mrs. Ballynoy does not lose touch with reality, and although Sean is very much aware of her startling beauty, he does not fail to notice that her hand is "reddened by the soda she used in the washing of clothes". (p. 45).

Mrs. Ballynoy's presentation as, like Minnie, a woman of the working class and a woman of the tenements is very important, for in "The Raid" it is she, rather than her husband, who gives insight into the profound dignity and nobility inherent in the "ordinary" and seemingly most unlikely person - an insight given by Minnie in the play. Unlike Minnie, of course, Mrs. Ballynoy does not give her life to protect anyone and her defence of her husband when he is arrested recalls not a deed of Minnie's, but of Mrs. Henderson's who is said to fight with the soldiers when Minnie is arrested. But it is in her religious reverie - contrasting as it does so strongly with her ardently amorous preoccupations - that she reveals how the sense of poetry, reverence, worship and vision can be present in the apparently most earthy and unspiritual of persons. And she is endowed by the author with the utterance of one of the most beautiful and poetic passages in Inishfallen and, indeed, in the autobiographies as a whole. She is dignified in the tenderly poetic terms and tones in which she expresses her reverie just as Minnie is dignified by the noble instincts and actions which led to her death. And Mrs. Ballynoy's retention of her Dublin accent in the passage ensures that in the revelation of her inherent nobility she, like Minnie, will

not lose touch with the reality of tenement life, and that her worthiness will be seen as a natural and representative part of her class and background.

Ah! she said suddenly, looking away into a dream distance; it's good to be near one of your own: th' only two protestants in th' house, not countin' me husband. Of the crowd, not countin' him, only two who have th' proper way o' worshippin', an' are able to foresee th' genuine meanin' of th' holy text.

- There's me for you, said Sean, thinking neither you nor your husband bothered about religion one way or another.

- Then you're sadly mistaken. I can't remember a year we missed feelin' the curious chantin' glow in th' air of a Christmas mornin', an' us on our way to church. In a proper mood, an' that was often, I could see what you'd think's th' star, ashine on the tip of the spire's top; an' me ears can hear th' dull plod of the three camels' feet in th' deep sand, bearin' the' three kings with th' three rich gifts from Persia, or some other place in th' wilds of a far-away world; an' all th' time an anxious man seekin' shelter for his good woman, with the valleys levelled an' th' hills hidden be th' fallin' snow, dyein' her rich dark hair grey with it's fallin' flakes, a sly soft carpet for her sandalled feet, an' sore they were from th' sting in its frosty tenderness; while the tired Joseph thrudged demented behind, wondherin' if they'd find their lodgin's only on the cowl'd, cowl'd ground. But God was good, an' found the shelther of a stable for the bewildered, half-perished man, with his thin gown sodden, his toil-marked hands a hot ache, an' his poor feet blue with the bitther penetration of th' clingin' snow; an' after Joseph had shoed th' puzzled animals to a safe an' ordherly distance, th' little fella was soon snug in a manger on top o' warm heaps of sainfoin, thyme, rosemary, an' lavender.

- You're wrong there, said Sean; for how in such a bitther season could anyone come on spring and summer plants like those?

- I dunno, she murmured, unless God turned th' hay an' th' sthraw into th' sweet-savourin' herbs. But it's far better not to thry to go into them things. Are you afraid to look at me, or what? She ejaculated, turning away from her dream;

(pp. 45 - 6).

But other facets of Mrs. Ballynoy's portrayal have more in common with other characters from the play than with Minnie. In so far as she disturbs and irritates Sean by her silly questions: " - Eh!

Are you there, or did they take you? Are you gone, or are you asleep, or wha'?" (p. 43) she resembles Shields with his interruptions of Davoren's meditations at the beginning of Act II: "Donal, Donal, are you awake? (A pause) Donal, Donal, are you asleep?" (p. 126). The unwelcomeness of her visit is comparable not only to that of Minnie's visit to Davoren in Act I, but also to that of Mrs. Grigson's visits to Davoren and Shields in Act II. And Sean's inclination to wish in her presence "that the Auxies had stayed a little longer" (p. 44) seems to echo Davoren's exclamation to Shields about Mrs. Grigson: "For God's sake tell her to go to hell out of this - she's worse than the Auxsie". (p. 151). Curiously enough Mrs. Ballynoy's loyal references to the Protestant faith even suggest a slight connection with the play's portrayal of Mr. Grigson, who makes his Protestant loyalties known to the other inhabitants of the house as well as to the raiding Tans.

And if the autobiography's disclosure of Mrs. Ballynoy's spiritual worth is related to that of Minnie in the play, it is not attended by the same tragic results. The tragic vein in Minnie's portrayal seems to have been elsewhere in the two autobiographical chapters - although even there it does not actually encompass a death.

On the surface there might seem much dissimilarity and little relationship between Minnie and the portrayal of Sean's brother Michael in "Hail and Farewell", yet there is a strong link between them. For Sean pays tribute to the former bravery and potential merit of his now drunken, degraded and vicious brother, and nobility and heroism have been found in this unlikely man just as they are in Minnie. In times gone by Michael revealed that he had the makings of an artist, also he has "saved more than ten lives" by risking his own life to save drowning men, and has received no official honour or recognition for it. And being once a man of principle, he had always been loyal to the workers' cause in which he believed and "Never ... would he don the dark motley of backleg or scab". And though disgusted by Michael's present condition

and determined to live no longer under the same roof with him, Sean himself must concede that Michael's face had once "lit up with a courage that he could never summon to himself" and that "Had he had his due, a streak of red ribbon would be glaring from his faded coat now". (pp. 36 - 7).

If Minnie's death was basically that of an ordinary person caught up in forces which she did not understand, Michael Casside too is a victim of forces beyond his control. But whereas the play allows Minnie to die swiftly as an attractive and courageous figure, the autobiography develops the tragedy of the ordinary person into a long drawn out and squalid process. Michael, had he died in the rescue of a drowning man, would have been, like Minnie, an attractively courageous figure, but he lives on, and lives on to see his talents ignored and to become an embittered, envious and drunken man. The tragic emotions of futility and sense of loss and waste that are generated by the death of Minnie are now fully in evidence in connection with the wasted life of Michael. And so it seems that in "Hail and Farewell" O'Casey is choosing to develop the representative yet heroic nature of Minnie's tragedy by extending it to include a representative and unheroic social statement of how lives can be destroyed by forces wielding powers other than physical death:

Sean stared down at the gaping mouth, the once well-formed face, now miscast with many evil markings, the frizzly moustache caked into horrid lumps with stale, dried droppings of beer, the seamed forehead, and the twisted cheeks: how could anyone who saw, say that that repellent figure bore on its breast the red badge of courage! Perhaps the sign of the sword was equal to the sign of the cross, for here lay stretched a fellow who risked laying down his life many times, not for friends, but for those whom he did not know, and, having saved them, would never see again. Those shapely hands of his were never made for the cankered pastime of handling pints. Clever and cunning, they did many things in their time, from holding a hawser, carrying new-baked creosoted railway sleepers, hot and stinging, to guiding the delicate movements of pencil and pen. God's curse on today's way of the world! It was not that this prone man in younger days had

digged in the earth to bury his talents there: no;
 he had been quietly robbed of them by the careless
 and criminal indifference of teachers, spiritual pastors,
 and masters, who had thoroughly buried them for him.

Curse of God on the way of the world today!

(p. 37).

This translation of Minnie's tragedy into the more explicit sociological terms of Michael's tragedy is typical of "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid", which not only interpret the material of the play in politically overt way far from the spirit of The Gunman itself; but also, largely through the "thoughts" of Sean, crystallise into precise verbal statements the social implications which arise from the lives and actions of characters portrayed in the play.

And so it seems that, like almost all other aspects of her portrayal and role in the play, something of the essence of Minnie's tragedy does find its way into the autobiography. And there, again like almost all other aspects of her presentation, it is reworked and assimilated so thoroughly into the concerns of Inishfallen, that virtually no immediate attention is drawn to its origin in the play.

One respect, however, in which the role of Minnie is not translated into the autobiography is that concerning her part in the contrast of male and female attitudes and values which is so notable in the play. Her tragic status is made over to a man, Michael Casside, and something of her unexpected courage bestowed upon another male character, Mr. Ballynoy. And while Mrs. Ballynoy expresses some purely feminine features of Minnie's characterisation, such as her beauty; her innate quality of poetic vision, which is equivalent to the qualities and values which ennoble Minnie, is shared by Sean. The absence from "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" of this particular contrast between male and female attitudes, however, indicates just as surely as do the chapters' adaptation and development of other aspects of Minnie's role, to what extent the author is intent on reworking the play to a new artistic design.

The characterisation and actions of Mrs. Ballynoy do indeed, as do those of Minnie, contribute to one part of a central contrast in "The Raid". But this central contrast in the chapter illustrates a theme of the conflict of creative and destructive forces which is inherent in life and experience, and the positive half of the contrast is not exclusively a female preserve, for Sean contributes to it also. The entire central portion of "The Raid" which concerns Mrs. Ballynoy and Sean is contrasted with the opening and closing sections of the chapter which concern, respectively, Sean's terror at the prospect of a raid, and the actual raiding of the room and the raid's aftermath.

Sean and Mrs. Ballynoy themselves seem to comment on experience's continuous oscillation between life and death. On first appearing, scantily dressed, in Sean's room Mrs. Ballynoy professes her reluctance to be seen by him for "it wouldn't be good to go from one extreme to another on an identical night" (p. 43). But life, and thus the events portrayed in O'Casey's work, very often moves "from one extreme to another" not only "on an identical night" but in an "identical" moment. And soon Sean, thinking to himself that "In the midst of death we are in life" (p. 47) yields totally to her charms.

"The Raid's" explicit concern with the continuous struggle of the powers of life and death (spiritual life and death as much as physical life and death) reflects Inishfallen's date of composition, for the theme is characteristic of O'Casey's works later than The Gunman, Juno and The Paycock and The Plough and The Stars. In fact, the life/death contrast seems as a central thematic design to have taken over from the contrast of male and female values so evident in these three early major plays and evident in Nannie's Night Out also.

In some respects it is a development from the early plays' contrasts of male and female attitudes, for the assertion of the cause of life in the face of danger, sorrow and death had been an integral part of the women's half of the contrast. What the author does in later works

(and the process is already beginning to be seen in the characterisation of Fluther in The Plough and the Stars) is to bestow a vision of the true values of life, and the courage to assert those values, upon male as well as female characters. Hence in plays from The Silver Tassie onwards (although in connection with this play other special factors are in operation also) the human values with which all O'Casey's works are fundamentally concerned are expressed through the portrayal of heroes or, more usually, a "consortship" of hero and heroine, rather than through the portrayal of a heroine. And hence too the transference in Inishfallen of Minnie's tragic role to a male character, and the sharing between Mrs. Ballynoy and Sean of Minnie's qualities as an instinctive champion of Life.

If "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" seem to seize upon text, plot, themes, imagery and character portrayal in The Gunman and almost instinctively to employ these aspects of the play and of its material for their own ends; the final seal seems to be set on what is, in effect, the composite and virtually complete reworking of the play when the integral structure and techniques of The Gunman are used to provide the basis for the structure and techniques of, in particular, "The Raid".

In matters of structure, however, as with the reworking of other aspects of the play "The Raid" does not simply re-produce the pattern established in the play, but adapts it to its own purpose. In fact, from a strictly aesthetic point of view the structure of "The Raid" might be seen as something of an improvement upon that of the play.

That the construction of The Gunman has its faults is far from being unapparent; for although the play possesses a clear thematic design and a powerful culmination in tragedy, yet the series of incidents which illustrates these themes, and eventually leads up to the climax, is rambling, and loosely structured and the author's management of individual "scenes" and situations is occasionally clumsy.

When O'Casey (under the name of Sean O Cathasaigh) wrote to Lennox Robinson on the 9th of October, 1922, he described the then uncompleted On the Run, which was to become The Gunman, as dealing with:

The difficulties of a poet who is in continual conflict with the disturbances of a tenement house and is built on the frame of Shelly's phrase: "Ah me, alas, pain, pain ever, forever". 16a

And although in theme and tragic climax the play has outgrown this simple formula, yet the structure of its action remains curiously undeveloped from it. For the mechanics of the plot of The Gunman consist basically of little more than a long string of "visits" paid to Davoren by various other characters, with only Davoren's continuous presence on stage and the simple device of the repetition of Davoren's "catch-phrase" from "Prometheus Unbound": "Ah me, alas, pain, pain ever, forever", and also of Shields' "motto": "Oh, Kathleen ni Houlihan, you way's a thorny way", to relate the various scenes in the play.

Act I's opening passage of dialogue between Davoren and Shields is disturbed by the "visits" of Maguire and Mr. Mulligan, the landlord. And after Shields himself leaves the stage Davoren faces no fewer than four more visitors: Minnie, Tommy Owens, Mrs. Henderson and Mr. Gallogher. And Act II proceeds in the same manner. Both Davoren and Shields remain on stage throughout this act but the dialogue between them is punctuated by four separate "visits" from Mrs Grigson, who, on two of these occasions is joined by her husband, by a very brief reappearance of Minnie, and by the "visit" of the Auxiliary. It is characteristic of the rather undisciplined nature of the play that of the visitors in Act I (six in all) only one of them, Minnie, appears at all in Act II; while neither Mr. or Mrs Grigson, the chief visitors in Act II, have appeared previously - although Mrs. Grigson's voice has been heard replying to Mrs. Henderson's questions about the "Stop Press":

Davoren, as the one who receives all these diverse visitors and who reacts to the situations which they create, should, by his constant presence on stage, in theory, weld together, and so unify, the succession of events in the play. But, in practice, does this only to a limited degree, for the role of Davoren within the actual mechanics of the play's plot, structure and overall thematic design, is curiously paradoxical. Davoren, by his very presence in Shields' room, is the instigator and thus, in theory, the unifier of the series of events in the plot. But at the same time his personal weaknesses - his characteristic inconsistency, conceit, propensity for self-delusion, disinclination to accept any responsibility, and, most importantly of all, his (in the words of the author) "unquenchable tendency towards rest" (p. 93) - are in practice as in theory, absolutely essential to the central thematic contrasts, and humour and irony of the play, and, furthermore, to the play's tragic ending. The overall design of the play's action and themes thus dictates that Davoren be physically present on stage throughout the play in order to provoke and unite the play's action; yet at the same time they rely heavily upon the fact that Davoren's character is introspective, lethargic, passive and vacillatory. In short, they demand that he remains on stage throughout the play, but they also demand that his personality be of a kind which in itself creates and sustains little dramatic interest. Davoren's continuous presence on stage is not enough in its own right to keep alive the interest and action of the play from moment to moment; and so in compensation for this the general impetus which drives the plot of the play forward, and largely keeps interest in the play alive, must continually come from outside Davoren and largely from outside the room which seems to form his world - hence the stream of visits of the lively and loquacious characters who very effectively upstage Davoren. And so in terms of the sheer mechanics and structure of the play a kind of vicious circle of cause and effect

arises, in which Davoren's constant presence on stage constitutes an attempt to unify the diverse incidents, which are increasingly brought in to diversify the potential monotony of his constant presence on stage.

A further basic weakness in the structure of the play is its division into two acts when the climax of the play, and most of its significant action, occur towards the latter half of the second act - that is just before and during the raid sequence. Presumably the play was written in two acts either because at this point in his early career the dramatist was intent on writing a "full-length" play, or because he found it impossible to make the second act self-contained as a one-act play. In the action of the play as it stands, preparation has to be made in order that the tragic climax might be brought about, and this preparation necessitates a preceding act. Yet, unfortunately, the necessary preparation is, in itself, not enough to fill with interest an entire act, and hence this too - together with Davoren's characteristic lethargy and his continuous presence on stage - compels the introduction of many minor characters of interest in their own right.

It must be remembered that The Gunman was one of the very earliest of O'Casey's plays and the first of his own plays to be professionally performed. Moreover, despite his childhood enthusiasm for watching and even acting in Shakespearean scenes and Boucicault melodramas, his knowledge of the actual craft of writing a play came not so much from seeing plays in performance as from reading them in books. Many years later he was to write, with regard to his "evolution as a playwright":

Before the production of "The Gunman", I had been to the Abbey twice, and saw Gogarty's "Blight" with a one - acter that I've forgotten; and "Androcles and the Lion". And these two were seen as in a glass darkly, for I was in the cheap seats, and couldn't see well, so far away I learned more from / reading plays than from seeing them on the stage. ¹⁷

¹⁷ Letter to Horace Reynolds, 11th February 1938, Letters Vol I, pp. 700 - 1.

In the light of these considerations it is not remarkable that there should be some clumsiness in the play's construction. And on seeing The Gunman in performance he must, in spite of the enormous success of the Abbey production, have been quickly aware, as others were, of its structural shortcomings (as well as of its compensatory strength in character portrayal).

As soon as the play was in production at the Abbey, Joseph Holloway, a regular patron of Abbey performances, was writing of it in his journal:

The author, Sean O'Casey, set himself to character sketch rather than to write a well-knit-together play.¹⁸

And shortly afterwards, on making personal acquaintance with O'Casey, Holloway records how O'Casey told him of some initial ideas for the writing of a new play (which was later to become The Plough and the Stars), and how O'Casey had said

... it would be more a character study. He was strong on character and weak on construction and could write dialogue with ease.¹⁹

Obviously by now O'Casey was very much aware of his characteristic strengths and weaknesses, even at this early point in his career.

Certainly Holloway's journals seem to suggest that there was, in Dublin theatre-going circles, much discussion of The Shadow of a Gunman. The play was revived at the Abbey in August 1923 and Holloway writes in his journal entry for August 7th of that year.

After The Shadow of a Gunman, I walked home with Dudley Digges and saw him into a tram at Lansdowne Road. He went down to meet Sean O'Casey at the Abbey, and had a chat with him about his play, as to the advisability of turning it into a one-actor (sic) piece for the States. O'Casey said, "You'll have to do so yourself as I am too lazy to do so."....²⁰

¹⁸ Joseph Holloway: "Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre, A Selection from his unpublished journal Impressions of a Dublin Playgoer," Edited by Robert Hogan and Michael J. O'Neill, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1967. Entry for Thursday April 12th, 1923. P. 215

¹⁹ ibid. Entry for Friday April 27th, 1923, p. 217

²⁰ ibid. p. 219

"One-actor" is, presumably, a slip or misprint for "one-acter", and the suggestion made by Digges²¹ perhaps implies some doubt as to whether The Gunman really required a two-act structure. O'Casey's laconic reply to the suggestion does not necessarily mean that he was unsympathetic to the remark or dismissive of any of its possible implications, for such apparently indifferent replies seem characteristic of him immediate verbal reaction to comments upon, or criticisms of, his plays in his earlier career.²² And there is actually in existence some evidence that O'Casey remembered Digges' suggestion that The Gunman be turned into a one-act play. At least in a letter of 22nd July 1932 he wrote to Digges:

I have written a One Act Comedy⁽²³⁾ which might interest you I think I remember you saying years ago that a one act play would be useful in the U.S.A.²⁴

That a very particular awkwardness in the structure of the action of The Gunman was also discussed in Dublin can be seen from Holloway's record of a conversation with O'Casey in which:

We spoke of The Gunman and "Maguire" and Knocksedan with regard to the time that should elapse.²⁵

The fault is fairly obvious when the play is read although it can, and with surprising ease, be overlooked in the excitement of a performance. Maguire is seen alive in Davoren's and Shield's room during the first few minutes of Act I, but before the end of the act (with no break in the stage-time of the play) not only has he already been killed while setting up an ambush in Knocksedan, but news of his death is being spread by a "Stop Press" which is being sold on the streets.

²¹ Dudley Digges (1879 - 1947) was an Irish actor who was a member of Frank and William Fay's Irish National Players during 1902 - 03. In 1904 he went to New York and appeared with the Theatre Guild from 1919 to 1930.

²² Holloway, for example, later in his journals, records O'Casey's answer of "'I want to make money!'" to a woman who was questioning him about his motives in writing The Plough and the Stars. The play had just received one of its early and disrupted performances.

²³ A Pound on Demand

²⁴ Letters Vol I, p. 446

²⁵ Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre. Journal entry for Sunday, February 4th, 1926 p. 255

Of course O'Casey would need no Dublin theatrical enthusiasts to tell him of the weaknesses of The Gunman, and as his career progressed (most noticeably with the major plays Juno and The Plough) he revealed increasing skill in his handling of three and then four acts, a much greater ease in the management of the movement and entrances and exits of his characters, and, in The Plough, he broke away from the single-set and used a different set for each of the four acts. But the evidence of Holloway's journals suggests how much O'Casey's attention must have been, from the outset of the play's production, drawn to certain of its deficiencies.

And it is in "The Raid", written so many years later, with the writing experience of all those years behind him, that he seems, almost uncannily, in effect to have "corrected" or obviated many of those flaws of the original play.

The rambling structure and diversified interest of The Gunman is compacted into one "act", which progresses through five distinct, yet very closely related and very carefully controlled, "scenes" - Sean's solitary meditations (which can be sub-divided into his reflections before the threat of a raid, and those after), Mrs. Ballinoy's visit, the entry of the soldiers, the encounter with the Tan, and the aftermath of the raid. Each of these scenes basically corresponds to a scene in the play (the entry of the soldiers and the encounter with the Tan, atypically derive from the same scene) and most synthesise action and details from several scenes.

Various "advantages" which are indigenous to the form of O'Casey's autobiographical prose, but which are not present in the play, contribute to this development of a neat, compact structure out of the less satisfactory structure of The Gunman.

The dilemma of Davoren's, in one sense necessary yet in another sense restrictive, continuous presence on stage is simply resolved; or rather does not even arise, in "The Raid". For although Sean is, like

Davoren of the play, "on stage", as it were, throughout "The Raid", yet his continuous presence is inherent in the medium of the autobiographies, and thus not at all obtrusive or contrived as it can tend to be in the play. And since the author, as autobiographer, can and does without difficulty chronicle in prose every turn of Sean's thoughts, Sean, unlike Davoren, never seems inactive or uninteresting, even when simply lying in bed thinking over the happenings of the day. Moreover, the fact that all events in "The Raid" are viewed through Sean's eyes, and commented upon in his own voice, means that the events described in the chapter are unified by being related in Sean's consciousness, and this is, in practical terms, a greater force for unity than is, even in theoretical terms, the continuous physical presence of Davoren in the play.

With regard to the problem of the plays division into two acts - with the first act largely providing preparation for the action of the second - the autobiography also easily provides a solution. For in "The Raid" O'Casey has taken the heart of the action of the play and has concentrated it into one autobiographical section as a "one-act", self-contained short-story. For although well integrated into the scheme of Inishfallen, in describing incidents in Sean's experience and a period of Irish history, and although related to "Hail and Farewell" in that chapters are related to the same play, yet "The Raid" might well be read independently as a short-story - the prose equivalent of a one-act play - and has many of the characteristics of such. It has a setting totally described within, and exclusive to, its own pages within the autobiographies, and the characters which it depicts do not, with the obvious exception of Sean, appear elsewhere in the autobiographies - and the character of Sean himself does not, in this section, require any particular explanation or acquaintance. Also the incidents take place on one night without any time lapse, like the playing time of a one-act play, and this is surely evidence of an influence from the dramatic form of a one-act play.

The reshaping of the play into a compact and unified "one-act" short-story which eliminates clumsy mechanics such as the Maguire incident was not, of course, to be done without the sacrifice of certain actions and aspects of the plot of the play; and some of the apparent discrepancies between the plot of the play and the narrative of the autobiography can be seen as the outcome of, or contributing factors to, the firmer structure of the autobiography. For example, measures seem to be taken, or "advantages" seem to exist in the narrative, to eliminate the necessity for an "Act I" to provide preparation for "The Raid". Unlike Minnie, Mrs Ballynoy is not to give her life for anyone and so there is no need in the autobiography of a visit from a Maguire figure in order to provide incriminating evidence over which the heroine might be arrested. This discrepancy with the plot of the play also obviates the vexed matter of how to reveal the suspicious nature of the Maguire - figure's activities - something which requires the implausible and "anachronistic" stop-press incident in the play. Also the amorous encounter between Sean and Mrs. Ballynoy is, despite its passion, a basically casual one and this obviates the difficulty experienced in the play, in which the romantic relationship between Minnie and Davoren has to be prepared and made to seem, on Minnie's side, convincing enough for her to risk her life for him. O'Casey perhaps experienced difficulty on this score in the play since the play includes perhaps a hint that a further meeting between Davoren and Minnie took place between Acts I and II. For towards the beginning of Act II Shields says "when I was comin' in this evenin' I saw Minnie Powell goin' out". (p. 129), while Act I, seems to end with Minnie rushing to get back to work after her dinner-hour. Since in "The Raid" no letter to the I.R.A. will create panic the visit of the letter's author Mr. Gallogher and of his patroness Mrs. Henderson can be omitted. And since Sean, unlike Davoren, is not regarded as a gunman on the run there is no need of a stream of visitors

such as *The Landlord*, Tommy Owens, Mr. Gallogher, Mrs. Henderson and Mr. Grigson to testify to the common belief in that assumption.

It may seem that "The Raid" pays dear for its shape and unified structure in that it loses much of the incidental excitement and human colour of the play - for although structurally weak, The Gunman is undeniably rich in dramatic spirit and in portrayal of character. But this "loss" is deceptive, for the abundance of correspondences in incident and in details of character portrayal between the play and Inishfallen reveals just how many of the threads of the play the author has caught up in the autobiography, although in their creative reworking not all of them are given the same prominence in the new design as they originally had in the pattern in the play. Also "The Raid's" achievement of structural compactness without the loss of a great deal of material from the play is aided by yet another indigenous and even "unfair" "advantage" of the prose form of the autobiography over the play in that material which is not amenable to the tighter structure of "The Raid", but is too valuable to lose completely, can be included in the preceding chapter "Hail and Farewell", which unlike "The Raid" seems not to possess any definite sense of artistic shape or structure beyond that of its narrative's simple sequence of events. And here it seems as if "Hail and Farewell" is somehow playing a special but supporting role in the achievement of "The Raid's" compact structure. "Hail and Farewell" is fundamentally related to "The Raid" in that both draw most of their being and substance from The Gunman, but in the context of Inishfallen it is an individual section in a volume consisting of many sections. And in its, in one sense, deep affinity with "The Raid" and yet, in another sense, independence from it, it can perform something of a "first act" to "The Raid" without detracting from "The Raids" artistic unity. In its role as a "first act" to "The Raid" it reveals, for example, Sean to be, like Davoren, a writer and, like Davoren too, a writer working in difficult circumstances. And the quarrel and fight

between Sean and his brother over Sean's work seems to be a reflection, in much more serious and violent terms, of Shields' disrespectful remarks upon, and disruptions of, Davoren's work. These expressions of very important details from the play apparently found no place in the more rigorous and controlled structure of "The Raid", but their inclusion in "Hail and Farewell" means that they were not lost to the autobiographies as a whole.

Overall the impression is given that in "The Raid", with the help of "Hail and Farewell", the author uses a compressed form of The Gunman's structure in order to exert much more control over the contents and various aspects of the play; and instead of allowing them to take their own course is very much more aware of how individual detail can be made to contribute to, rather than detract from, the composite design of the work. "The Raid's" recurring imagery of the frost, for example, which was developed from the symbolism of the moon at the beginning of Act II of the play, is developed as a unifying force in "The Raid", whereas in the play the symbolism is quickly allowed to lapse.

And in his use within "The Raid" of many of the dramatic techniques of The Gunman he seems, again, to be, in effect, imposing a greater discipline upon the material of the play.

The techniques of "juxtaposition" employed in the play help to convey the contrasts which form the major themes in the work, and are in themselves extremely effective - hence no modification or development is needed in the actual nature of the techniques themselves when they are used in "The Raid". But the repeated use of these devices in the play does tend to make the already long loose structure of The Gunman seem looser still; and the development which takes place in "The Raid" is the subjection of these devices to a firmer artistic control which uses them to reinforce, rather than to help dissipate, the compactness and clarity of the structural design.

In The Gunman juxtapositions of character and character, and of character and incident, follow hard upon each other's heels and reveal, respectively, the contrast of male and female values, and the gulf of irony which separates the words of certain characters from their actual deeds. An example of the juxtaposition of character with character in the play concerns the contrast in the behaviour of Davoren, Shields and Minnie after the bombs have been discovered and the raid is about to take place. Davoren and Shields are almost paralysed with fear while Minnie becomes calm and decisive and takes the bombs to her own room. (Act II, p.p. 144 - 6). A typical example of the use of juxtaposition of character and incident for an ironic undercutting of words by action occurs when Shields and Davoren in the midst of boasting of the religion and philosophy which make them respectively, "strong in time of trouble and brave in time of danger", are suddenly plunged into "the violent fear of a nervous equality" as shots are heard outside the house. (Act II, p132-3).

A further technique of the play, however, rather than simply being used repeatedly, does seem to exploit repetition as an integral part of its artistic effect, and in so doing makes a definite contribution to the structure and shape of the play. Unfortunately this technique - the continual changing and contrasting of dramatic moods - does not contribute to, or constitute, an artistic design in The Gunman as a whole, since it is only to be seen really and consistently at work in Act II of the play.

But within Act II the continual variations in the dramatic mood form, throughout the act, a sequence of rises and falls in tension which varies the interest of, as well as linking within its own scheme, the numerous events in the act. This eventually helps to sweep the play along to, and to contribute to the effect of, its culmination in the death of Minnie, and then takes it on, through the climax, to a quiet conclusion in Davoren's rueful recognition of his own weaknesses of character, and in Shields' expression of completely undisturbed personal complacency.

Part of Act II's sequence of concerted rises and falls in tension will exemplify the whole: Mr. Grigson's drunken and comic rendering of "The Orange Lily" is cut short by the startling sounds of the approach of a lorry, sounds which create the fear of an imminent raid. Davoren's feverish attempts - at first unseccessful - to find the incriminating letter which is in his possession add to the tenseness of the situation, as do the speculations of Grigson, Mrs. Grigson and Shields as to what might happen next, and Grigson's volunteering of the information that Tommy Owens has been boasting in a public bar about his acquaintance with Davoren and of Davoren's political connections. Meanwhile Davoren is still unable to find Mr. Gallogher's letter, and the noise of shots and cries in the lane at the back of the house increase the tension still further. Mr. and Mrs. Grigson promptly return to their own room, and Shields joins Davoren in his concern about the letter. The finding and destruction of the letter remits, the tension, and Shields' expression of the belief that he has heard the lorry going away relieves the atmosphere even more. It is in this momentary anti-climax of calm, however, that Shields suggests that Davoren looks in the bag left by Maguire. In an instant the bombs are found and Davoren and Shields are plunged into a blind and abject terror far exceeding the fear which they felt before. And they remain in this state of agonized semi-consciousness, the actual raid becoming more and more imminent, while Minnie arrives and leaves taking the bombs with her, and as the actual raid begins.

The play's device of juxtaposition is used to great effect in "The Raid", and is adapted to "The Raid's" own themes. No longer is it used to contrast male and female values or to contrast ironically words with deeds, but it is now used to convey the contrast and struggle between the forces of life and death. Moreover, while the juxtapositions of character and character and of character and incident in the play form themselves into a long drawn out string of events, the use of juxtaposition in

"The Raid" takes the powerfully compact form of one large central contrast between the natural impulses of life celebrated in the Mrs. Ballynoy episode, and the unnatural and deathly fears described in the episodes which precede and follow it.

"The Raid" also adopts the play's device of a continuous generation and manipulation of mood and tension. But even in this respect there is something of positive development from the play, for while the structuring effect of the technique is only seen in the final half of the play, it is employed throughout "The Raid". And since, by its very nature, the written prose form evokes and communicates far more readily than the dramatic form the various psychological reactions of a silently meditative character, and the slightest changes in the atmosphere of a silent house; the autobiography adds its own poetic subtlety, thus its own dimension, to the use of the technique.

Moreover, in accordance with the apparent trend in "The Raid" to bring together all aspects of The Gunman into a compact, structured and concerted whole, the autobiography seems, in effect, to combine or compound the two major kinds of technique which are used independently of each other in the play. The result of this is that the Mrs. Ballynoy episode which, through the juxtaposition of event and event, has already been placed at the heart of the action and structure of the chapter and in a key position in the chapter's basic thematic contrast; is, through the careful evocation and control of differing moods, now placed too at the very hub of a very distinct pattern of "moods" or atmospheres.

The sequence of changes in mood is, in "The Raid", divided into three distinct "atmospheric" episodes, each of which corresponds to an episode in the thematic scheme of the chapter, and which do not cut across the boundaries of the "scenes" which constitute the structure of the plot.

The first begins in, and consists of, subtle variations upon, the "uneasy silence" of the sleeping "slum". (p. 37).

All the inhabitants of the house, save Sean, were, though aware that "death ... roamed the darkened streets" (p. 37), already in a weary sleep: "for in sleep the slimy roof above them had slid aside, and left the stars but a hands breadth out of reach" (p. 40). Sean himself is succumbing to drowsiness when suddenly he is awakened, and the latent unease of the atmosphere of the house is brought alive, by the sound of motors braking outside, by the beam of a searchlight turned full on the house, and by the noise of hammering on the front door:

A raid! All the winsome dreams of the house had vanished; sleep had gone; and children dug arms and legs into the tensing bodies of their mothers. (p. 40).

The tension is sustained for several minutes and gradually increased as Sean begins to speculate that the raiders must be the hated Tans; as, through the otherwise silent house he hears a man almost noiselessly escape out of the back door; as the front door falls open with a crash to the raiders; as he thinks of the tortures that the Tans inflict on their victims; and as he imagines the house, now as silent as ever, to be "alive with crawling men, slinking up and down the stairs, hovering outside this door or that one, each with a gun tensed to the last hair with a ready finger touching the trigger". (p. 41). Then tension relaxes just slightly as sounds of hammering are heard at the back of the house and Sean surmises that the "carpenter's shop" there is being broken into. Then steps are heard following the man who seemed earlier to make his escape.

Sean could sense the women, and, maybe, the men, praying while the hammering lasted, to cease at once when the silence came again, for it wouldn't serve them to let the Auxies hear them trying to talk to God. (p. 42).

The silence resumes and with it tension increases again: "These silences were the worst: during the hammering one knew where they were; throughout the silences one didn't". (p. 42). Then follows a passage vividly descriptive of an intense psychological horror:

... they might be anywhere; might be opening his very own door snakily, softly, now; some of them might be even in the room, for their black uniforms fitted the darkness they loved, and black juices, smeared over their cheeks and brows, mixed them cosily with the darker shadows of the night. Any moment a brilliant torch might blind his slatted eyes, and a string of shouted questions blast his ear; a pressed-in, cold pistol-barrel make a tiny livid rim on his naked chest. He tried to forget thought, making his mind one with the darkness, losing his fear in the vastness of space; but it was no use, for thought never got farther than that the Tans were there, and his mind came back to think of how it would feel to have a bullet burning a swift channel through the middle of his belly. (p. 42).

The sound of the engine of a motor being started does nothing to allay his fear but, if possible, increases the tension even further because it possibly forbodes a trap:

"He lay there for what seemed a long time, the sweat of fear damping his body, and making him shiver. Stay still; don't move; not a stir; some of them might still be just beyond the door". (p. 43).

Lying "for what seemed a longtime" and sweating with fear Sean senses that, at last his end has come. The climax of the terrible suspense seems to be approaching:

Stay still; don't move - some-one was beside the door. He heard the handle giving a faint, brassy murmur. Soon a black-clothed arm would thrust itself within, and a shot might go off that he would never hear. He silently squirmed deeper into the bed, and left the rest to God. (p. 43).

The intruder, however, is not a Tan but Mrs. Ballynoy. In the moment of anti-climax all tension and fear completely disappear, the first "atmospheric episode" of the chapter is over and as Mrs. Ballynoy launches into her seduction of Sean the second and central "atmospheric episode" begins.

Consisting overall of a period in which fear and thoughts of death yield to thoughts of life - a bright panel, as it were, between the two dark panels of the moods of the preceding and subsequent scenes - the episode moves through its own smaller variations in mood. It proceeds through Sean's vexation at her presence and embarrassment at her beauty,

and through Mrs. Ballynoy's first flush of ardour, to her haunting and poetic religious reverie. This in turn yields to a bawdy song, and to Sean's total response to her overtures:

... half mad himself now, he gripped her like a vice, and sank his fingers into her flesh.
(p. 47).

But at precisely this point the atmosphere again changes completely

Then they suddenly went still as death, listening; listening to the whine of a motor-engine cruising down the road outside. The another shrill, threatening whine followed that, and another, the last, till they mingled into one shrill, threatening whine that went echoing round the walls of the old house. (p. 47).

And the final "mood" phase of the chapter is underway. Tension is created as Mrs. Ballynoy leaves and the troops arrive, is relieved a little when the raiders are seen to be regular soldiers, and is renewed and doubled as Sean encounters the Tan. The tension again relents as Sean is rescued from the Tan, and the sense of fear gradually changes to an impression of hopelessness as he joins the other inhabitants of the house who are waiting in the cold street. Momentary excitement arises when Ballynoy is arrested, but this yields to an even deeper despair than before, as the cold bleak night turns into an even colder and bleaker dawn, and the presence of the patrolling military tank forbodes menace and even doom.

And so it is that, by what amounts to a strengthening of the basic weaknesses in the construction of the play and a simultaneous exertion of much firmer control over its techniques, the author provides "The Raid" with a structure and sense of shape which are at once, greater than, and thus independent of those achieved in The Gunman, yet essentially akin to and derived from the play.

And so it seems that in "The Raid" he completes that process, which began in "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" as a utilisation of the play's historical background and material, and which gradually emerged in "The Raid", aided by "Hail and Farewell", as being in effect, an exhaustive

re-expression and creative development of The Gunman as a whole - period, setting, wording, incident, themes, imagery, characterisation, structure and techniques.

The reworking of The Shadow of a Gunman within Inishfallen seems much too subtle and intricate to have been consciously deliberate, but at the same time much too precise and detailed to have been entirely simple coincidence. Certainly some very real and definite instinct or impulse seems to have been at work in the author's creation from the heart of a play, which was already at least twenty-two years old, of a new and ultimately independent piece of art. It is almost as if in "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid", and finally in "The Raid" alone, the autobiographical medium is being used to find some additional fulfilment for the artistic achievement of the original play.

All of O'Casey's plays possess some kind of relationship with the autobiographies, but only two, Kathleen Listens In and Nannie's Night Out - both written within about two years of the writing of The Shadow of a Gunman - seem basically to possess the same kind of relationship with the autobiographies as does The Gunman. And the markedly differing ways in which this relationship is expressed in connection with Kathleen Listens In and Nannie's Night Out seem to throw some light upon the driving force behind the effectively complete and creative translation into Inishfallen of The Shadow of a Gunman.

Chapter Two

Kathleen Listens In

In comparison with the marked intensity of the relationship between The Shadow of a Gunman and the autobiographies, the links between Kathleen Listens In and the autobiographies initially seem slight and insignificant.

Few immediately discernible correspondences are to be found between Kathleen and the autobiographies; and such direct correspondences as do seem to exist are not apparently concentrated and reworked together within one specific place in the scheme of the autobiographies, but are scattered, without any seeming sense of pattern or interconnection, in several sections of the third and fourth volumes, and also in one section of the sixth. Moreover, extremely important aspects of Kathleen seem to be ignored within the autobiographies, and so even if all, or the majority, of the similarities that do exist between this play and the autobiographies were to be concentrated in one place, within one of the volumes, there would still not emerge that impression of the exhaustive reworking of a complete play which seems to be at the heart of The Gunman's relationship with the autobiographies.

Yet it may be that Kathleen's relationship with the autobiographies differs not fundamentally in kind from that of The Gunman, but only in the degree to which it finds actual expression within the autobiographies. Important and unmistakable references to Kathleen, though few and widely scattered, do occur in the autobiographical volumes, and they are reworked creatively, although not, on the whole, concerted, to new purpose and effect there. Also, although not all of the major aspects of the play are represented or reworked in the autobiographies, a sufficient number of them - its text, its symbolism, its 'fantasy' manner, and its portrayal of its heroine - do appear as to admit of little doubt that the relationship between Kathleen and the autobiographies, be it strongly or weakly

expressed, does not simply concern stray echoes or half-remembered fragments of a play, but the form and concept of Kathleen Listens In as a complete play.

Written at some time between April and September 1923¹ and subtitled "A Political Phantasy in One Act", Kathleen Listens In is a satirical allegory of the struggle for power within the early and precarious Irish Free State. At the time in which it was written and performed it was absolutely topical. The Free State had been brought into being with the signing of the Home Rule Treaty in December 1921, but almost as soon as the hostilities between England and Ireland over Irish self-government ceased, Civil War broke out in Ireland. The Republicans,

¹ In Inishfallen pp. 143-4 O'Casey describes how "Sean" began Cathleen Listens In as a positive action to stave off his disappointment at the poorness of his financial reward from the first Abbey production of The Gunman (which actually took place on the 12th, 13th, 14th April 1923).

.... Less than four pounds! And he had bargained in his mind for twenty at the least. Dimly he began to realise that the Abbey Theatre would never provide a living. It was a blow, a bitter disappointment. It looked as if things would allow his talent to perish too. What was he to do? One thing, and one thing only - go forward. He had put his hand to the plough, and he wasn't the one to look back. He would start a new play that very night.

So he had, and he called it Cathleen Listens In,

The play had been completed by "the second week of September 1923", for Gabriel Fallon - an ex-Abbey actor and once a friend of O'Casey's - recalls that at that time:

I noticed the cast of a new play on the Call Board. Was I in it? I was. That all important point settled I saw that it was entitled Kathleen Listens In and that its author was Sean O'Casey.

(Gabriel Fallon: Sean O'Casey the Man I Knew, London, Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1965 p. 13).
Kathleen Listens In was first produced on 1st October, 1923 at the Abbey Theatre.

under De Valera, opposed the Free-State and its adherents, and fought for absolute political independence from England. They also strongly opposed the Treaty's Partition of the country into the twenty-six counties of the new Free State and the six counties in the North which were to remain under British rule. The Civil War was bitter, and continued until De Valera announced the end of official Republican resistance in May 1923.² But even when the War was officially over the chance of peace and political stability in Ireland was an extremely fragile one. And according to the account of Professor J. C. Beckett - an eminent authority on Irish History - although De Valera had officially called off hostilities:

it was beyond his power to control the forces that years of irregular warfare had unloosed, and the threat of violence remained part of the background of Irish political life.³

It is this "threat of violence" and very likely imminence of yet another, and possibly even more bitter, Civil War that forms the very serious basis and theme for the often very comic fantasy of Kathleen Listens In.

Set in "The Garden before the house of the O Houlihan Family" in the time of "The Present" (p. 278)⁴ the play depicts Mr. and Mrs O Houlihan (who represent the Free State Government) trying to set their home to rights, and to give it a few touches of obvious respectability and social

² In view of the official conclusion of the Civil War in May 1923 and the issues raised in the play, it seems probable that the writing of Kathleen actually began in that month as opposed to the month of April 1923. O'Casey in Inishfallen has written that work on the play began after he received his royalties from the production of The Gunman, which took place in mid-April, but it is more than likely that he did not receive his payment until May.

³ J. C. Beckett: A Short History of Ireland, London, Hutchinson University Library, fourth edition, paperback 1971, p. 168.

⁴ Page references in connection with the play are to the text as it appears in Feathers from the Green Crow Sean O'Casey, 1905 - 1925, edited by Robert Hogan, London, Macmillan, 1963.

status. In their efforts they are hindered by a number of vociferous suitors (The National Party, a socialist, a Free Stater, a Republican, a business man and a farmer), who vie with each other for the attention and favour of the O Houlihans' daughter, Kathleen (Ireland). Kathleen herself is too engrossed in the preoccupations of her rise in social status (Ireland's emergence as a self-governing nation, and the recognition of her as such by other nations) to regard any of her importunate admirers as anything other than a nuisance. Also her health is very uncertain (that is, the political instability of Ireland after the Civil War) and liable to break down at any moment (that is, the possibility of another Civil War). But her suitors can forbear neither from their clamorous pursuit of her, nor from their incessant quarrelling amongst themselves. The calm of the O Houlihan household is also disrupted by the activities of "The Man in the Kilts" (The Gaelic League), an eccentric old lodger in the house who insists that everyone in it speak in Irish, and by the activities of "The Man with the Big Drum" (the militant Protestants of Ulster), who appears on the other side of the garden fence and proceeds to beat a drum and to sing an Orange hymn.

Like The Shadow of a Gunman, Kathleen was completed several years before its author began the autobiographies, and so the material of the play was available for use in all of the autobiographical volumes. The first apparent direct correspondence between Kathleen and the autobiographies, however, does not occur earlier than in the third autobiographical volume, Drums under The Windows, which was written about twenty years after the play. But despite the lapse of time this first link with the play seems authentic enough, since not only does it recall the portrayal of a particular "character" in the play; but also it is set within a longer passage which possesses, albeit, initially

⁵ For evidence that Drums Under the Windows was written in 1942-4 see chapter below which includes an analysis of the relationship between Red Roses for Me and Drums Under the Windows

independently of the play, Kathleen's quality of combining a fantastical manner with a serious Irish political theme. Within the autobiography's long and fantasised description of a Nationalist pageant - a pageant which, as a whole, is used, in the context of the historical and thematic scheme of the volume, to symbolise the growth of National feeling in Ireland in the years leading up to the 1916 Easter Rising - appears the following individual symbolic figure:

Mary Ni Hayadawn, in a pony and trap, her tender voice ever calling on the Irish people to come to these yellow, white, and green sands, catch hands, and sing, The cuckoolin is i cumen in in Gaedhilge.

(p. 502).

And this passage, in its employment of an allegorical figure to express the promotion of the Irish Language as a token of National independence, and in its description of the figure as encouraging the Irish to use Gaelic in the singing of a fanciful and irrelevant song, (as opposed to making any positive and realistic use of it as a living language), is strongly reminiscent of the play's presentation of "The Man in the Kilts". "The Man in the Kilts", who, in the allegory of the play, represents the Gaelic League at the time of the early Free State, trains and compels the other characters in the play to sing:

Kay kirheh thoo lesh eg casoo nah mo,
Eg cassoo nah mo, eg casoo nah no;
Kay kirheh thoo lesh eg casoo nah mo,
Mar dulsey dolsey dayro!⁶ (p. 286 and passim)

And through these efforts he earns the appellation of "that dulsey dolsey gazebo" (p. 288), a title similar to the name of "Mary Ni Hayadawn" in the autobiography, since she too seems to have derived her patronymic from the inconsequential chorus of a song.

⁶("Who will you put with me tending the cattle/Tending the cattle, tending the cattle/who will you put with me tending the cattle,", the last line being a meaningless refrain).

It is in connection with the Gaelic language too that all further correspondences between Kathleen and Drums Under The Windows arise.

Closely following Mary Ni Hayadawn in the Nationalist procession is, indeed:

Eoin Mac Neill aswing in a sedan-chair,
 carried by an Ulster man, Connaught man,
 Leinster man, and a Munster man, one at
 each corner. The grille in front of the chair
 was closed to keep the sun out, the panels were
 decorated with a profusion of higheroglyphical
 reports from the annals of the four musters,
 and a placard on each door-panel warned all
 whom it would concern to open the door softly.
 (p. 502).

Unlike Mary Ni Hayadawn and "The Man in the Kilts" Eoin Mac Neill was, of course, not a symbolic or allegorical figure but a personality from real life. However, since the real Mac Neil was a well-known Gaelic enthusiast, and had indeed been the first to suggest the foundation of the Gaelic League - which was actually set up by Douglas Hyde in 1893 - there is an immediate connection between him and "The Man in the Kilts" of the play. Moreover, in order to express what O'Casey regards to be the ultra-esoteric and erudite nature of Mac Neill's preoccupations with Gaelic scholarship and culture, and his attendant total ignorance of the lack of concern for the needs and lives of ordinary Irish people, the author describes Mac Neill's mode of conveyance in the fanciful procession with details which not only make him appear to be as eccentrically and unrealistically "Gaelic" as "The Man in the Kilts", but which are the kind of terms in which Miceawl O Houlihan of the play describes "The Man in the Kilts'" lodgings within the O Houlihan house:

It's the curiouesest room you ever seen! You'd
 lose your way in it, the way he has it filled
 with passages goin' in an' out, an' round
 about - taken he says from the Book o' the
 Yella Cow, or somethin'. An' he has all the
 walls destroyed with comical figaries that he
 calls fibulas, turks an' crosses o' cong; ...
 (p. 285).

The sense of the authenticity of the individual relationships with the play of Drums' representation of Mary Ni Hayadawn and the

description of Mac Neill's "sedan-chair" is further enforced by the fact that the two symbols occur so very closely together in the prose of the autobiography (they are separated by only two sentences). This proximity suggests that Drums had, in its representation of the first symbol, struck a very definite chord in the play and that one image from the play suggested and gave rise to another.

Drums continues its relationship with the Gaelic concerns of the play, however, in a much more intermittent and minor fashion. Actual verbal echoes of the play do find their way into Drums but in the process they are divorced from their original significance. Words which are used in the play both humorously, in a whimsically fantastic context, and seriously, in order to convey satirically a precise political criticism, are exploited solely for humour or whimsicality within passages of fantastic prose in Drums. In the play the Gaelic phrases which Joey and Johnny of "The National Party" venture ingratiatingly in conversation with "The Man in the Kilts": "A chara, .. agus is misheh lay mass more" (p. 280) (being really the opening and closing formula of a letter "friend ... I remain respectfully yours"), and which they offer to Kathleen as a piece of considered advice:

If you want to be up to th' top o' th' mornin',
Is misheh lay mass more, acushle ma chree !" (p. 282)

are humorous and whimsical out of the context of their normal use in real life, but also convey a deeply serious criticism of so-called Nationalists. For O'Casey, himself a self-taught and fluent Gaelic speaker, deeply distrusted the motives and sincerity of those professed Nationalists who, possessing only the most superficial acquaintance with the Gaelic language, yet took pains to use and display such phrases as they knew. Such a combination of ignorance and pretension is to be found in Joey's and Johnny's use of Gaelic phrases and this brands them, or rather, since they are figures representing the National Party, brands many Nationalists in real life, as being not genuinely dedicated to the Nationalists cause.

Something of the actual words of the Gaelic phrases as they appear in the play, and also something of the twist of fantasy and nonsense with which they are used there, are repeated and incorporated in Drums when O'Casey describes "the huge calamatic Mishelaymassmores towering sky-high" (p. 565), which Sean sees to be amongst the vegetation of the "real" Garden of Eden during his fantasy "visit" there. (The "visit" itself, which is described in the "Green Fire on the Hearth" chapter of the volume, symbolises the influence upon the development of Sean's thought by his reading of the works of "Shaw, Darwin, Frazer, and France" (p. 562), notably of Shaw). And later in Drums "Mishe Lemass More" is described as being, on the defeat of the 1916 Easter Rising, one of the twelve "Blessed Saints" of Ireland (p. 664). Here the satirically humorous word play is upon the Gaelic phrase in connection with the name of Sean Lemass, who was later to become De Valera's second-in-command in the Republican party in the Free State Dail, and Minister of Industry and Commerce in the 1930s.

The precise and serious implication behind the inclusion and use of the Gaelic words in the play is, however, to be found, severed from any echo of the play's actual text or fantastical manner in the "Lost Leader" section of Drums. This chapter concerns the dismissal of Dr. O'Hickey from the Chair of Irish at Maynooth College, because of his strenuous efforts to have the study of the Irish language accepted as an essential subject at the New University. Sean regards O'Hickey as one of the truest lovers and champions of the Irish language, and therefore, of the Irish nation, and personally attempts to gather support for him. But his efforts meet only with indifference, or with fear of the disapproval of the Bishops, on the part of Gaelic Leaguers and supposed Republicans. And in arguing about the matter with a particular Republican, or rather, "a Sinn Feiner who had plussed himself into a Republican" (p. 523), Sean receives this final reply which

- We're with him in spirit, said the Republican unctuously. No I have work to do for the Sinn Fein Bank, and I must be off, so slan leat, he said, speaking the only Irish words he knew. (p. 525)

If the apparent correspondences between Kathleen and Drums Under The Windows are not very numerous, tend to be scattered in distribution, and are not individually of major proportions, yet they seem authentic enough, and collectively they involve a surprising number of the play's aspects: its presentation of a "character" (or its personification of particular attitudes to the Irish language), its symbolism, its strain of fantasy, its actual words, and one of its themes. And the overall implication of the presence and nature of these correspondences - seems to be that Kathleen Listens In is in Drums Under the Windows exerting an influence, no matter how small or even infinitesimal, upon the autobiographies, and that this influence involves not simply the play's material, but something of Kathleen's nature and being. Furthermore, seemingly direct correspondences with the play occur too in the next autobiographical volume, Inishfallen, Fare thee Well; and, though they tend still to be scattered in their distribution - as opposed to being worked for concerted effect in any one place in the volume - and though, collectively, they do not represent more aspects of the play than did the earlier correspondences, they are more numerous and, individually, more extensive than their predecessors in Drums. And naturally, because of this they seem to embody more of the play, and to contribute more to the autobiographies.

Inishfallen begins its relationship with Kathleen Listens In by picking up the Gaelic phrase "is misheh lay mass more" which has twice occurred in Drums. But now the words are used not simply for a momentary spark of humour, but within a context of sustained political fantasy and satire very much like that of the play, and also against a historical background which approaches in time the period of the

play; for O'Casey describes preliminary and ill-fated negotiations over Irish Home Rule in terms of "the long and lone chain-letter of dearsirsiamfaithfullyyoursismishelimeasmor between Lloyd George at-home in London and Ayamonn De Valera half-at-home in Dublin".(p. 54). And as the fantasy account of these negotiations continues-an account which takes the form of De Valera's conduction of Lloyd George through a geographical, historical and mythological tour of Ireland - De Valera and Lloyd George actually seem to be confronted by a symbolic personage from the play.

As they approach Ulster the two politicians see:

On a fence at the mouth of the Pass ... a short, sturdy man. He was soberly dressed in neat black cloth, a trim bowler hat on his head, with a blue-and-orange feather stuck pertly in the band of it. A thumb to keep the place was inserted into a bible he had on his knees. Time and again the man would open the book, look at it, then shout up to the Mountains of Mourne coming down to the sea, saying Be ye studfast, immovable, always abounding in the wurrk of th' lord! Then, standin' up to attention, he sang,

Th' Pope's gut his curdinals all in a row,
Th' lame, th' blind, the daff, en' th' dumb;
They're comin' tae Ulster with saint So-and-so,
Tae silence th' boast of th' prutestant dhrum.

Lero, lero, all so quaro,
Lut th' damned papists with sucrements come;
With our guns all akimbo, we'll send them to limbo -
Says Wullie-boy Scutt an' Dickie McCrum! (p. 56)

Lloyd George's opinion on hearing the song is that "this fellow is better left to himself" and together he and De Valera flee from the scene and back into "safer fields". And it is in this way that the autobiography presents the fact that the Home Rule Treaty, signed in December 1921, provided for the "temporary" retention of six counties of Ulster under direct British rule until a Boundary Commission could report on the matter. In the play the issue of the Partition of Ireland is depicted in a very similar way. Just as the internal squabbles in the O Houlihan's Free State garden reach a crescendo the seeming prototype of the Orangemen in Inishfallen arrives on the scene.

The Orangemen (appears outside the garden beating a big drum and singing).

Come let us all with heart an' voice,
 Applaud our lives' defender;
 Who at th' Boyne his valour show'd,
 An' made his foes surrender.
 To God above th' praise we'll give,
 Both now an' ever after,
 An' bless th' glorious memory
 Of William that crossed th' water.

(p. 296)

He is not as elaborately described as his successor in the autobiography, but his sudden and intimidating appearance "outside the garden", that is, on the boundary with Ulster, seems to have suggested Inishfallen's description of his counterpart's stance on the "fence" dividing Ulster from the rest of Ireland. Also like Inishfallen's Orangeman he sings a defiant Orange song, and his actual beating of "a big drum" perhaps "inspired" his successor to sing of "the prutestunt dhrum" which can never be silenced.

The play's mode of political fantasy, coupled with one of the allegorical incidents in the plot, seems to have given rise also to a further important passage of symbolic description within the historical scheme of Inishfallen. The autobiography in its depiction of the bitter quarrel which raged amongst the members of the Dail Eireann⁷ in 1921 as to whether the terms of the Home Rule Treaty should be accepted - a quarrel which led to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1921 - appears to recall scenes at the end of the play in which the 1923 Free State seems about to sink into a further Civil War.

Inishfallen describes the 1921 conflict in the following terms:

There could be no reunion. Ireland was there in the midst of the revelling quarrellers, her chaplet of crepe, worn for the dead who died for Ireland, going askew; there she stood distracted, or ran from Billy to Jack, shouting order order, unity unity, discipline discipline, unheard in the storm of each side shouting at the other, stamping her little foot on the floor for a silence that never came, till she sank, tired and wordless, on to the floor, anointed with the spits dribbling from the angry, twisted mouths of her own devoted

⁷ A Constituent Assembly of Irish M.P.s (who were originally elected to Westminster in the General Election of 1918) which was set up in Dublin by Sinn Fein in 1919.

children. The Kellys, the Burkes, and the Sheas
were at one another's throats. (p. 722)

In the play too, Ireland, in the person of Kathleen, suffers most at
the hands of those who profess to love her most. The noisy claims,
protestations and squabbles of her rival suitors cause her to feel
faint:

...The Free Stater (shouting). Give's a kiss,
give's a kiss, Kathleen.

The Republican (shouting). Don't be a fool,
Kathleen, don't be a fool - it's th'
kiss o' Judas, it's th' kiss o' Judas!

The Farmer. Let me put me arm round you,
Kathleen, an' you'll feel all right.

The Business Man (shouting) Come for a walk,
Kathleen, an' we'll combine business
with pleasure!

Tomaus (looking down the road). Here's th'
doctor comin' in his gig.

Kathleen. Mother, mother, I don't know
what's comin' over me - I feel as if I
was goin' to faint!
(The doctor runs in and feels her pulse).

The Doctor. Put her to bed, put her to bed!
(Kathleen is helped in by Mrs. Houlihan.
The crowd follows trying to hold Mrs.
Houlihan back.)

The Free Stater. Ay, houl on there, Mrs. Houlihan;
one minute, one minute.

The Republican. One word about the Republic
before you go, Kathleen - it'll only take
me five or six hours to say it.

The Farmer. Ay, keep back there, keep back there;
I've a message for Kathleen that can't wait.

Miceawl (hooshing them back). Ay, will yous
all go to hell ou' o' this, an' let
th' little girl get a minute's peace?

(pp. 294 - 5).

And at the end of the play they totally ignore the Doctor's advice
that:

She's very weak, but she'll pull round after a bit, if she
gets perfect quietness: A whisper may prove fatal - she'll
need perfect peace and quietness for the rest of her National
life. (p. 295).

and devote themselves to "Noise, confusion and shouting" (p. 297).

Although the corresponding symbolic incidents are not bound within exactly the same historical contexts in the two works, yet the contexts are closely related, concerning as they do almost identical political situations which come into being within two years of each other.

But as the narrative of Inishfallen continues, its time-scheme naturally approaches nearer and nearer to the exact period presented in the play.

Inishfallen's account of the very early beginnings of the Free State, just before the Civil War, describes how:

The provisional government of the Free State began to cajole and coax the people to the grandeur of their state by sending telegrams in green envelopes, painting the postal pillar-boxes a richer green while tailors worked night and day making green uniforms for the new Free State Army. Erin was becoming the green isle in fact as in figment. (p. 73).

This expression of the Free State's attempts to make some show of its nominal independence seems to recall the play, during the course of which Miceawl endeavours to paint the door of his house green. (p. 282).

But just as the historical narrative of Inishfallen comes to treat the period which forms the precise setting of Kathleen - the early days of the post-Civil War Free State - and, therefore, just as it seems that the play and autobiography will be likely to have most in common, a deep rift breaks between Inishfallen and Kathleen as to their author's fundamental view of the Free State.

Initially the two works have been in agreement that the terms of the Treaty of 1921, which established the Free State, were the best that Ireland could obtain from England at the time. Within the allegory of the play Miceawl O Houlihan complains of the troubles and criticism (that is The Civil War) which ensued when he sold the "family cow" (that is, when he relinquished the hope of complete Irish independence and sovereignty) for the best price he could get:

All along o' sellin' the family cow, as who' have a better right to sell it than us? What'll I sell it for, says I. Ass all you can, says they; but it's a bit ould now an' a little shaky, an' you'd better take whatever you'll get, says they, or you might get nothin'. Twenty pouns, now, wouldn't be a bad price, says they. An' because I sold the cow for 19, 19 an' 11½ with a postidge stamp thrun in, they want to make out that I gave the beast away. (p. 289).

And in Inishfallen, in the naturalistic description of the departure of Michael Collins⁸ and Arthur Griffith⁹ for Home Rule negotiations in England, the same basic opinion is given:

So Mick Collins went on to the boat with his companion, Arthur Griffith, to do battle for Ireland, though both of them were unsuited, either in knowledge or experience, for the fight; went forward for as much as Ireland was prepared to receive; went forward to get as much as they could out of the cunning Lloyd George and Winston Churchill; to get as much as any man, or group of men, could have got out of things as they were then. (p. 59).

But in all other respects the author's attitudes to the Free State as expressed in Inishfallen are diametrically opposed to his views as expressed in the play. The whole point and purpose of the play is to illustrate that no matter how unsatisfactory the Free State might be, it is at least better than any form of government which could be established by the irrational and unrealistic policies of the myriad parties and groups (including Nationalists and Republicans) which are struggling for its downfall. In the allegory of the play the continuation of the Free State provides the only hope that Ireland will not be torn apart by a Civil War even bitterer and bloodier than that which has only just ceased. Inishfallen, however, takes as one of its major themes the argument that the Free

⁸ The leader of the Republican Army during the Anglo-Irish War of Independence, and later killed fighting for The Free State Government in the Irish Civil War.

⁹ Arthur Griffith, founder of the Sinn Fein movement, and De Valera's Vice President in the Sinn Fein at the time of Home Rule Negotiations.

State and its establishment was the fountainhead of all the evils of modern Irish society, and not only a betrayal of Ireland's ancient heritage of culture and of her traditions and dignity as a nation, but a specific betrayal also of the men of 1916, who gave their lives for an ideal of an Irish Nation and society far loftier than that of the Free State. Indeed, in Inishfallen this argument forms not only a major, perhaps the most major, political and historical theme, but also, throughout the book, contributes most strongly to the central theme of Sean's increasing personal disillusionment with Ireland - the theme which culminates in Inishfallen's closing words:

Inishfallen, fare thee well! Forever!

Although the themes inherent in Kathleen's depiction of the Free State are completely contradictory to those inherent in Inishfallen, it is curious how various symbols and details seemingly from the play continue to find their way into the autobiography. It is as if the external 'shells' of play's symbolism and action remain unaltered but emptied of their old implications and refilled with the exactly anti-thetical themes of Inishfallen.

In Inishfallen the re-affirmation of the Free State after the disruption of the Civil War is described with great bitterness in a passage which seems to be directly in the voice of the author, rather than dramatised as the thoughts of Sean:

Then, while a host of Irish harps were sounding Let Erin Remember the Days of Old at a mass meeting, the new politicians and people decided that they must become genteel, with really nice manners, to show how fit for self-government they were. So all who could, and many who couldn't, spare the money, got themselves fitted adequately for the short black jacket and the black tie, and the tailed coat with the white tie for more formal functions. The cruiskeen lawn was rejected for the cocktail glass, and long, anxious questions of precedence troubled many simple souls. The women employed experts making out blue-prints to see how far their bodices could be lowered and still be consonant with diocesan doctrine and Dublin's desperate need of attraction. The teachers of up-to-date and old-world dancing were working night and day educating the vulgar hilarity of jig and reel from the joints of the adventists to the new Irish aristocracy, so that grace and a sweet easiness might take their place. Now it became a question of dignity and poise rather than one of enjoyment

bred out of gaelic prancing in the dances of the wilder Irish. The ways of the dook snooks were the better ways, so all of Dublins grander folks were feverishly fitting themselves into the cast-off manners and minor deportment of the English. Every house with curtains on the windows and an old clock on the stairs was a frenzied hubbub of endeavour to find the right way to refined demeanour. (p. 128-9).

In Kathleen such staunchly and traditionally Nationalistic criticisms are expressed, and in very, very similar terms; but in the context of the situation presented in the play they are laughed at as being exaggerated, and out of touch with reality; and, moreover, they are even depicted as being, in the final instance, disruptive and dangerous. When Johnny and Joey of "The National Party" complain to Miceawl about:

Poppies in a pot in th' centre o' th' table! The next thing you's'll be puttin' a crown o' roses an' thistles round th' head o' Henry Gattan. You's'll grow shamrocks or you's'll grow nothin'! (p. 278).

they are judged, in the context of the play to be comically and idiosyncratically narrow-minded. And when they threaten to break up Miceawl's household, their narrow-mindedness assumes proportions of a savage intolerance and emmity:

Spendin' seven hundhred years of our life shovin' half o' th' strangers (i.e. the English) out o' th' front door, an' now we're to let you bring in t'other half th' back way - If you go on as you're goin', we'll not leave a Saint or a Scholar in your Jazz Band Government. (p. 278).

Their demands that Miceawl remind himself of his national identity and of past struggles by singing "Th' Soldier's Song" before an' after Meals, and by reading "a chapter o' Mitchel's Jail Journal every night before goin to bed" are made to seem comic and hopelessly retrospective in view of the fact that Miceawl himself is busy with plans for a hydro-electric scheme for Ireland's rivers. The Nationalists' attitude of:

We think what we thought, we say what we said, we stand where we stood seven hundhred years ago; the world may change but Ireland'll never alter. (p. 279).

is unrealistic, self-indulgent and out-of-date. Even their appeal for Miceawl's attention on the grounds that they "went to school with Kathleen" and "we learned our first lesson together in Easter Week" meets with a further sharp rejoinder that Ireland is now a modern state which must survive or perish in a modern world.

Yous all went to school with Kathleen; people that don't know how to read an' write went to school with Kathleen! You learned your first lesson in Easter Week! Well, she's learned a lot since then. She's studyin' matematics now; she can't be always stuck at her ABC. (p. 281).

Neither they nor the Republican, whose present for Kathleen is "a picture I painted of herself in 1916 in everlastin' oils" (p. 291), are depicted as able to respond to the challenge of Ireland's future. Of course, a remembrance of things past is far from incompatible with the modern life and progress of a nation, but the play does not even touch upon this compromise between the old and the new.

The inept attempts at social consequence which O'Casey regards as epitomising Free State society and which, as such, he satirises so scathingly in Inishfallen, as being rife among the rising classes of Free State society, have also been noted and treated symbolically in the play. Miceawl admonishes other characters not to call him "Mick", and worries about what the neighbours think of him. (p. 281). Mrs. Sheela O'Houlihan organises "Gawden Pawties" (p. 290) and wears "a fancy Crepe de Chine blouse" the extravagance and glamour of which contrast with her "rough skirt" and "heavy boots" (p. 284). And Kathleen herself is "Listening In" to the modern outside world, as presented by The British Broadcasting Company on 2LO, and is practising her "Foxtrots and Jazzin' so as to be ladylike when I make me deboo into the League o' Nations". (p. 282). Also she is reported to shun Jimmy, the socialist workman, because he cannot play the piano. (p. 290). Yet whereas in Inishfallen exactly such preoccupations and pretensions are seen as indicative of an extremely serious betrayal of Irish history,

nationhood and ideals, in the spirit of the play they are seen rather 86
as a somewhat comic measure of Ireland's pathetic status as a new
political nation, and of her desperate need to gather around herself
some shreds of dignity and credibility.

Inishfallen too seems to make use for its own thematic ends of the
most fundamental symbolism of the play, that of the play's presentation
of Ireland in terms of a house. Moreover, certain precise details of
Miceawl's symbolic house seem to reappear in the autobiography and suggest
that here again there is a genuine connection between the autobiography
and the play, despite their manifest contradiction of each other in
terms of opinion.

The house of the play has "two windows, resembling church windows"
(p. 278). These denote the Roman Catholic Church's support of the
Free State, and were initially regarded as an asset by Miceawl and his
wife, but they prove to have been not so much of an advantage after
all:

We'll all get our death o'cold if the windows isn't put
in soon. We thought that because they were like church
windows they'd respect them, but they didn't leave one
that they didn't put in. (p. 288)

But the play, and thus the author, makes no judgement as to whether
the influence of the church within the Government be good or bad. In
Inishfallen, however, the same image of a house with church-windows
becomes the vehicle of Sean's view, and also of his intense disgust,
that, in the early years of the Free State, Irish national pride has
yielded before a popular, sentimental and stultifying obedience to
the Church.

Almost as long as Sean could remember, the life of Ireland
was lived in a hall whose walls were roof-high stained-
glass windows, nationally designed; but these were giving
place to to glass that gave back the colours of pietistic
twist and glossied tantrum. The window where Wolfe Tone
had shone in his sky-blue coat and bright epaulettes of a

Brigadier, now showed the wan figure of Bernadette raptly listening to the Bells of St. Mary's; in the one which had Robert Emmet in his gay green coat, carrying a plumed hat in his hand, stood now the black-clad, smiling-faced Father Malone in his new Sunday hat. (p. 235).

The reference to the depiction of Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet, Irish national heroes, within the stained glass of the windows of the house actually recalls more "house" symbolism from the play, for Johnny of the National Party, describing the patriotic work he has done in trying to keep memories of the past alive in Miceawl's house, says

look a th' years I spent there paintin' life size pictures for him, without takin' even time to run home for me meals - Sarsfield in th' kitchen, Robert Emmet in th' drawin' room, an' Wolfe Tone on th' ceilins (p. 279).

But in the play such portrait - painting is presented as eccentric and anachronistic, whereas in the autobiographies the loss of the symbolic images of Wolfe and Tone is regarded as nationally tragic and degrading.

The attitudes which lie behind Inishfallen's different interpretations of the play's symbolism are, though diametrically opposed to the play, absolutely representative of the critical views expressed about "modern" (that is, post Civil War) Ireland in those plays of O'Casey's which were written at the same time as, or after, Inishfallen - notably in Cock-a-doodle Dandy, Time to Go, The Bishop's Bonfire and The Drums of Father Ned. And just as Inishfallen in reworking the political situation of The Gunman reflects the author's contemporary political views of the 1940's rather than those which he held in the 1920's when the play itself was written, so it seems that while reworking the symbolism of Kathleen Listens In it is replacing his earlier opinions with more recent ones. But the process is much more complete in connection with Kathleen than it is in connection with The Gunman.

It is not hard to appreciate why O'Casey's views on the Free State should differ so radically between play and autobiography. Kathleen was first and foremost a topical play, written at a time of grave national danger, and with a most definite and urgent didactic

message. Years later the playwright, in his introduction to Kathleen 88
when it was first published, stated that the play

... was written specifically to show what fools these mortals were in the quarrelling factions soaking Ireland in anxiety and irritation after the Civil War. I imagined that satire might bring some sense to the divided groups so busy practicing (sic) envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness: it didn't do it.¹⁰

Whether O'Casey was in 1923 entirely happy with the Free State and its Government or not, Ireland's only hope of peace and of any future as a nation clearly rested with them; and this fact, dissociated from any vestiges of personal political partisanship, is what the play imparts.

When, however, very many years later, he came to write retrospectively, within Inishfallen, of the same period of Irish life, he was not confronted by an appalling and potentially tragic contemporary situation, but saw, since a new Civil War had been avoided, only Free State Ireland's placid and complacent progress in a direction that he personally deplored. And freed from the overruling considerations of the realities and necessary expediences of the national situation in 1923, he can now give vent to personal political sympathies and ideals.

The contradiction between Inishfallen's view of the early Free State and that given in Kathleen is, therefore, entirely understandable. But in terms of the relationship between the play and the autobiographies it drives a great wedge between the two works. Inishfallen's adaptation of some of the apolitical themes of The Gunman in accordance with its own political themes was an adaptation or development of the play, in that it at least based some of these innovations upon themes of the play. (For example, Sean's and the autobiography's implicitly communistic condemnation of the hypocrisy of Christians who war against

¹⁰ "Kathleen Listens In" Tulane Drama Review Vol. 5, No. 4 June 1961
p. 296

each other is founded upon Shields', and the play's, recognition of the ironies which result when religion becomes involved in political strife). Moreover, Inishfallen did, in very important passages in "The Raid", retain and perpetuate the apolitical spirit of the play - as, for example, in the closing sequence of the chapter in which the inhabitants of the house are, through political strife in general rather than through the actions of the British Army in particular, forced to spend the night miserably in the cold street. But Inishfallen does not adapt or develop the central political themes of Kathleen Listens In. It ignores them or, if it takes them into consideration at all, negates them. In some instances an autobiography's direct negation of a particular theme, or reversal of a particular quality, of a play might itself constitute a kind of relationship, for the autobiography might take its opposite course in direct reaction to, and, thus, as a result of the influence of, the course taken in the play. But there is no reason why this should be the case in connection with the political themes of Inishfallen and Kathleen. All that seems to have happened is that O'Casey's preoccupations and, therefore, his political views, were, for quite logical reasons, different when he wrote the two works.

But the block against the re-expression, within the historical scheme of Inishfallen, of the political argument which is at the heart of Kathleen does preclude any possibility that the play might find within the autobiographies that kind of exhaustive and concerted re-expression that is accorded to The Gunman.

However, although the main themes of the play, which solely concern the affairs of the Free State in the 1920s, are left out of the autobiography, a minor theme, which concerns the Nationalists' attitude to the Irish language, and which is not necessarily so bound to the period of the play, did find its way into Drums Under the Windows. It seems to have been readily assimilated there since Drums, unlike Inishfallen, deals with a period of Sean's/O'Casey's life in which he

was actively involved with various Nationalist movements, and records his progressive disillusionment with their outlook and motives. And had not the play's other criticisms of the Nationalists been so involved with the events of the early 1920's, perhaps some of them might have ^{been} reworked within the largely critical context of Drums. But the precision of their historical background precluded them from the time-scheme of Drums Under the Windows, just as surely as the precise nature of the political view which they express precluded them from Inishfallen.

And so, though a direct and very important relationship does seem to exist between Kathleen and Inishfallen in the autobiography's use of the play's symbolism, the influence of the play upon the autobiographies remains, in Inishfallen, incomplete. And the next volume of autobiography Rose and Crown contains no recognisable correspondence whatever with Kathleen. It seems that whatever influence Kathleen might have had on the autobiographies has exhausted itself in the peculiarly susceptible, yet insusceptible, medium of Inishfallen.

But in the final autobiographical volume, Sunset and Evening Star, a volume which is neither peculiarly rich in fantasy nor concerned with the historical period of Kathleen, the influence of the play seems to assert itself once more, and Kathleen Listens In does, in effect, at last achieve a very real measure of sustained, albeit inevitably still limited, creative development and re-expression within the autobiographies.

It is with the sudden appearance of the heroine of the play, Kathleen herself, in the unlikely context of the argumentative prose of the "Rebel Orwell" chapter of Sunset, that the relationship between the play and the autobiographies flowers. And in its flowering it totally transforms the hitherto artistically unpromising chapter, and provides one of the highlights of the entire volume. Thus about thirty years

after it was written¹¹ the play in achieving its most satisfactory measure of re-expression in the autobiographies, also makes its most positive and creative contribution to them.

That the Kathleen ni Houlihan who appears in Sunset and Evening Star is most definitely Kathleen of the play can clearly be seen in the marked distinction between her and all the other types of Kathleen ni Houlihan figures which previously appear in the autobiographies.

O'Casey, of course, did not create the initial symbolism concerning Kathleen ni Houlihan. As a personification of Ireland she is frequently found in patriotic poems and ballads, in which any description of her appearance and worldly circumstances is traditionally an allegorical expression of the political fortunes of Ireland at a given point in history.

Furthermore, appearing so frequently as she did in poems and ballads, Kathleen ni Houlihan became a literary as well as a political figure. She was much favoured by the nine-teenth century Irish Romantic poets, such as James Clarence Mangan, who drew upon older poems as sources of their own representations of her. In this way a stock of instantly recognisable poetic references to her and her attributes came into being. It was W. B. Yeats who, in several poems, but most particularly in his play, Cathleen ni Houlihan, (written and first performed in 1902), perhaps most consolidated all the traditional imagery and allegory concerning Kathleen. Significantly, however, while his play was a culmination of the traditional symbolism concerning Kathleen ni Houlihan, it became, in its turn, part of that tradition, and thus an accessible source from which other writers, such as Denis

¹¹ Sunset and Evening Star was written in 1951/52 - 1954. See chapter below on The Bishop's Bonfire and Sunset and Evening Star.

Johnston in The Old Lady Says 'No!'¹² could draw for their own and often satiric purposes.

In Kathleen Listens In, however, O'Casey does not make use of any reference to Yeats' play nor does he depict Kathleen as the Romantic heroine of nineteenth century, (and the fact that her unrealistic admirers insist on regarding her as such is one of the comic ironies of the play). Instead he creates his own version of a Free State Kathleen ni Houlihan. And O'Casey's Kathleen, who is a would-be "modern" young woman of delicate health and uncertain temper, and who is pestered by importunate and inconsiderate suitors, is an extremely witty, appropriate, and characteristically unheroic O'Caseyan symbol for an emerging political nation which is not quite prepared for its new role in the world.

But both traditional and Yeatsian Kathleen ni Houlihan are very much in evidence in the autobiographies which, seemingly quite independently of the play, employ various images of Kathleen ni Houlihan in order to reflect, not simply the political condition of Ireland at various times in her history, but also Sean's own changing attitudes towards the Nationalist movement and his country.

The very first image of Kathleen ni Houlihan to be found in the autobiographies occurs in Pictures in the Hallway, and is naturally a poetic and heroic one, since it is used in connection with the young Johnny's growing sense of an idealistic attraction towards Nationalism.

He went back into the darkened room, sat down, leaned his elbows on the table and his head in his hands. He glanced at the little smoky lamp and fancied that it had changed to a candle - a tall, white, holy candle, its flame taking the shape of a sword; and, in its flaming point, the lovely face of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan. (p p. 360 - 1)

¹² Written in 1926, only three years after Kathleen Listens In, The Old Lady says 'No!' is of great interest in connection with O'Casey's play, for it too makes satirical use of Kathleen ni Houlihan symbolism in order to contrast the old myth of the ideal Ireland with the modern reality of the early Free State.

And Drums Under the Windows, concerned as it is not simply with Sean's 93
changing views of the nationalist movements, but also with the growing
national consciousness of pre-1916 Ireland, uses some traditionally
poetic images of Kathleen to denote the degree of patriotic hope
abroad in the land. And though unpoetical manifestations of Kathleen
enter the volume as Sean himself becomes alienated from certain sections
of the Nationalist movement, yet the volume ends with the romantic image
of a Kathleen triumphant in the spirit born in the Rising, even though
the Rising itself was doomed to failure:

But Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan, walks firm
now, a flush on her haughty cheek. She hears the
murmur in the people's hearts. Her lovers are
gathering around her, ... (p. 665 - 6).

In the autobiographies, as opposed to the play, O'Casey not
only draws implicitly on Yeatsian depictions of Kathleen ni Houlihan,
but often, in the text, associates her name with that of the poet
because of Yeats' tributes to her in his works. A notable instance of
this occurs in a chapter of Drums entitled "A Song of a Shift", which
describes the uproar which ensued when J. M. Synge's The Playboy of the
Western World was first produced at the Abbey Theatre. Yeats, as a
Director of the Theatre, is much criticised by pietistic and "patriotic"
members of the Gaelic League, who know nothing about literature. But
O'Casey creates a character "Donal O' Murachadha, The young man from
Tourmakeady", to defend Yeats in terms of Yeats' own
championship of Kathleen ni Houlihan in the play Cathleen ni Houlihan
and in the poem "Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland".

He who denies to Yeats the name of a poet is a liar in his
ignorance. You all shouted another way when you listened
to his Cathleen ni Houlihan. No-one has sung a finer song
about Cathleen ni Houlihan than Yeats; no-one has fashioned
her into a holier symbol:

The yellow pool has overflowed high up on Clooth-na-Bare,
For the wet winds are blowing out of the clinging air;
Like heavy flooded waters our bodies and our blood;
But purer than a tall candle before the Holy Rood
Is Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan. (p. 516)

O'Casey's own characteristic developments of the symbol of Kathleen ni Houlihan within the autobiographies, as opposed to the straight forward use of the symbol as handed down through poetic tradition, present a less poetically attractive but more realistic figure - but still a figure distinct from Kathleen of the play.

In "Mild Millie", a character of Drums, he is able, just momentarily, to reconcile the real Ireland with the poetic ideal. But "Mild Millie" is a very special and complex creation with a literary history of her own - a history which may involve Kathleen Listens In but not exactly Kathleen of the play herself¹³ - and all other distinctively O'Caseyan Kathleens in the autobiographies are unambiguously depicted as women of the slums. In one instance he contrasts the Romantic image of Kathleen ni Houlihan with his own image of her. This is done in order to illustrate the differences in nature and outlook between the middle-class Irish Volunteer movement and the largely Working-class Irish Citizen Army:

Now there were two Cathleen ni Houlihans running round Dublin; one, like the traditional, in green dress, shamrocks in her hair, a little brian-boru harp under her oxster, chanting her share of song, for the rights and liberties common to all Irishmen; they who fight for me shall be rulers in the land; they shall be settled for ever in good jobs shall they be, for ever, for ever;⁽¹⁴⁾ the other Cathleen coarsely dressed, hair a little tousled, caught roughly together by a pin, bare-footed, sometimes with a whiff of whiskey off her breath; brave and brawny; at ease in the smell of sweat and the sound of bad language, vital and asurge with immortality.

(pp. 608 - 9)

But even a Kathleen of the slums, is not necessarily Sean's friend in the autobiographies. At times, indeed usually, she embodies and

¹³ See below in connection with the relationship between Nannie's Night Out. and the autobiographies.

¹⁴ A satiric reference to the words of Cathleen ni Houlihan in Yeats' play who says that those who die for her "...shall be remembered for ever,/... shall be alive for ever,/... They shall be speaking for ever,/... The people shall hear them for ever". W. B. Yeats: Collected Plays, London, Macmillan, second edition 1952, reprinted 1969 Cathleen ni Houlihan p. 86.

and voices all the ignorance, prejudice and spite of the mob against the greatest Irish men and particularly against Irish writers. Sean first encounters her in this guise when he sees "The Poor Old Woman" (one of Kathleen ni Houlihan's traditional manifestations) noisily and ignorantly protesting outside the Abbey Theatre about the production of The Playboy of the Western World (p. 509). But as time passes it is to be Sean himself whom she attacks and whom she drives from Ireland. For when in Inishfallen, a performance of Sean's play The Plough and the Stars is described as meeting with abuse and violence on the part of the audience, it is Kathleen herself who embodies all the intolerance of the vituperative "patriotic" opponents of the play:

For the first time in his life, Sean felt a surge of hatred for Cathleen ni Houlihan sweeping over him. (15)
He saw now that the one who had the walk of a queen could be a bitch at times. She galled the hearts of her children who dared to be above the ordinary, and she often slew her best ones. She had hounded Parnell to death; she had yelled and torn at Yeats, at Synge, and now she was doing the same to him. What an old snarly gob she could be at times; an ignorant one too. (p. 150).

At the end of Inishfallen Sean leaves behind Cathleen, daughter of Houlihan, ... untidy termagent, brawling out her prayers" (p. 245).

And, accordingly the next volume of autobiography Rose and Crown contains not one reference to a Kathleen ni Houlihan of any kind.

But in Sunset and Evening Star one Kathleen ni Houlihan is to follow Sean to England. Not the unpleasant figure that Sean thankfully left behind him at the end of Inishfallen, but the young, semi-sophisticated Kathleen that the author left behind him in the play of very many years before. Apart from the basic correspondences in appearance, manner and outlook between Cathleen of Sunset and Kathleen of the play, (and the total lack of similarity between her and the earlier Kathleen ni Houlihan of the autobiographies), Cathleen of Sunset declares her dramatic origins by bringing with her a sense of drama, which transforms the customary polemical prose of Sunset into

¹⁵ Another reference to Yeats' play, in which "The Poor Old Woman" is said to be transformed, through the love of her supporters, into "a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen". ibid. p. 88

a long passage of dramatic dialogue and episode of dramatised incident. Furthermore, she declares her dramatic origins as being specifically in Kathleen Listens In, for she also brings with her the atmosphere of fantasy and symbolism which provided her natural habitat in that play.

Somewhat surprisingly Kathleen is brought into the autobiography in the context of the author's indignation over George Orwell's hostile review of Drums Under the Windows. The review,¹⁶ from which O'Casey quotes, suggests that some Irish writers, including O'Casey, make a career out of the denigration of England, yet are more than happy to live and make their money "in the country which is the object of their hatred". (p. 544). O'Casey interprets the tenor of the argument as being the cry "Get outa me country!". With regard to his nationality he replies that "O'Casey could no more help being an Irishman than Moses could help being a Jew", that he pays more to Britain in taxes than he receives from her in income, and that although he has no liking for certain aspects of England (such as Orwell and friends), yet he has "a great and consuming love for England's culture" and knows "England's history better than that of his own country" (p. 544 - 5). Not one to suffer insults in silence, he devotes the chapter "Rebel Orwell" not just to a reply to Orwell's criticism, but to a vehement and personal counter-attack.

In the course of the chapter he corrects Orwell on a specific point of criticism of Drums Under The Windows. It concerns an image of a traditional, triumphant Cathleen ni Houlihan which appears in connection with the 1916 Rising; and O'Casey describes, how, in the article

His (Orwell's) voice rises to a special scream when he describes Cathleen ni Houlihan marching along singing what he thought to be an Irish 'Nationalist' song:

Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,

¹⁶ Which appeared in The Observer, 28th October 1945.

March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death for their native land.

Get outa me country!.. We won't let you sing these ballads, breathless with hatred of England, here! But this ballad breathed love for England, for it was written, not by an Irish Nationalist, but by Tennyson. It is sung by Maud in the poem of the same name, known to most, but unknown to England's great defender, Orwell.

(pp. 545 - 6).

O'Casey interprets Orwell's criticism as a direct insult to his nationality: "Cromwell's massacre of Irish citizens is to be changed to a massacre of Irish writers by angry English reviewers". And then suddenly the bitterly argumentative prose positively blossoms into dramatic dialogue, allegory and fantasy, with Sean and fellow countryman "Donal o' Murachoo" discussing the matter as they tramp through wind and sleet towards the shelter of the very comfortable inn and refuge of exiled Irishmen the "Rose and Crown". The symbolism is as clear as that of O Houlihan's house in the play.

The imaginary character "Donal o' Murachoo" is perhaps "related" to that "Donal O' Murachadha" "The young man from Tourmakeady" who defended Yeats so stoutly against the attacks of the Gaelic League in Drums Under the windows. At any rate he is staunchly Irish, and after it is explained to him that Orwell has a personal grudge against Sean who had refused to write a recommendation of Orwell's book A Clergy Man's Daughter,¹⁷ Donal reassures Sean that "Let Boyos like Orwell say what they like, ... there will always be a spot of green in an Irishman's eye". (P. 547).

Together they take refuge from the uncongenial climate (that is, the way of life in Ireland) in the "Rose and Crown" (England) which "looks trim, looks cosy, and the two of us near perished". Settling down comfortably and drinking hot whiskey, they look around and notice

¹⁷ See Letters, Vol I, p. 541, letter dated 11th February 1935, to Norman Collins the publisher of Orwell's book.

Orwell and "a gossop-writer in an evening paper" who had, apparently, also crossed swords with Sean. (pp. 547 - 8).

But another Irish refugee is about to arrive in the warmth of the "Rose and Crown". Since the argument against Orwell's review has now turned into a major defence of O'Casey's pride in his nationality, and since Orwell had objected specifically to a passage in Drums Under the Windows concerning Kathleen ni Houlihan, it is perhaps not without significance that the new visitor should be Kathleen herself. The presence in the scene of Donal O' Murachoo who, as Donal O'Murachadha in Drums Under the Windows, had quoted Yeats' poem 'Red Hanrahan's song about Ireland', which extolled the beauties of "Kathleen the daughter of Houlihan", is seemingly more than mere coincidence also. And it seems that in her appearance in the autobiography, Kathleen of the play is drawing together several threads from the autobiographies. Indeed, though she is "herself" not directly related to any of the previous Cathleen ni Houlihans of the autobiographies, she is the last of the autobiographies' Cathleen ni Houlihan figures, and as such the depiction of her in Sunset is the culmination of an artistic tradition in the autobiographical volumes. Cathleen of Sunset is a little older, a little more attractive, and more confident of her charms, than she was in the play, for, having finished her "Listening In", she is now a thoroughly independent young woman and a little more sophisticated in the ways and wiles of the world. Nevertheless, she has retained her Dublin accent and manners. Her health, so delicate in the precarious post Civil-War Free State of 1923, seems now robust. After all, Civil War had not broken out again, and on Easter Monday 1949, before the writing of Sunset, Eire was officially declared a Republic. Ireland had proved to herself, and to the outside world, that she could maintain herself in independence and could govern her people; and the

nation's advancement into political self-confidence and stability had enabled O'Casey, in his allegorical portrayal of her, to develop the ailing and querulous Free State Kathleen of the play into a much more lively and colourful "character" in Sunset:

Sean looked, and saw a bright young lady tripping into the lounge. She was dollied up regardless, in a suit of steel-blue faille, gold-threaded, shimmering with large standaway pockets and narrow velvet belt. Over all, she wore a coat of smooth velour de fouine, lined with brilliantly blue silk, having a winged collar and voluminous sleeves. Handsome she looked, and handsome she knew she was, and, oh, the sight entrancing! (p. 548)

Her fashionable appearance somewhat disturbs Donal, who prefers an ideal, poetic image of his country, and who, perhaps, like the Republican in the play, had painted a picture "of herself in 1916 in everlastin' oils". In Drums Under The Windows, as Donal O'Murachadha, he had, after all, paid tribute to Yeats for fashioning Cathleen ni Houlihan into a holy symbol in his poetry. Understandably his emotions on seeing her in England are mixed.

- It's Cathleen ni Houlihan! ejaculated Donal, fear in his eyes, and pride in his voice. As handsome a heifer as ever, though not quite as slender as she used to be. Look at her varnished nails, her clouded eyelashes - they don't fit in with her past manner of modesty. Among the English she shouldn't shape herself like that - nylons too! Doesn't look a bit like as if she came out of a cloud of disaster and woe!

- You don't expect her to come here dressed as she's shown on an Abbey Theatre poster, do you?

- Her get-up doesn't seem suitable, Sean, considering the way so many poets wrote about her; it does Ireland disservice. She looks too loud and gay to worry respect out of the English. Aw, she's seen us! She's making straight for us! (pp. 548 - 9).

And her manner is no more self-effacing than her appearance:

Over she came with a twittering run, a musical motion rippling her legs and hips, her fresh face flushed and smiling, her hands outstretched.

- I seen yous, the pair of yous, the minute I waltzed in; and glad I am that I won't be a bird alone here. I was lost alone in the hotel I'm in, and so I run down in a taxi to have a quick one here to warm me up a bit. Welcome to the Rose an' Crown, me rattlin' boys from Paddy's land. Well, how are yous? Why the silence? Aren't yous goin' to ask me to sit down. (p. 549).

Donal is "made almost mute by the new look of his mystical love", but she is irrepressible, having abandoned her traditional and poetic role with a vengeance:

Whisper, lads - don't call me Cathleen. I'm over here incognito, and known now as Lady Shan Van Vogue⁽¹⁸⁾. Got a bit tired of being a tall, white candle before the Holy Rood.⁽¹⁹⁾ A real lady, mind you, and she slapped Donal on the shoulder. Isn't either of yous goin' to ask me if I have a mouth on me? Mother o' God, its a cold welcome I'm gettin'. (p. 549).

Despite her new found vitality, she is, in manner, speech and social aspiration essentially that same Kathleen who in the play sharply tells the sermonising Nationalists:

Oh, for God's sake go away, an' done be annoyin' me. I have to practice me Fox Trots and Jazzin' so as to be lady-like when I make me deboo into the League o' Nations. (p. 282).

Asserting the independence and pride of Irish nationhood (and thus playing a large part in O'Casey's argument against Orwell), she maintains that she need no longer "watch every step" she takes in England nor "do reverence to ould rusty partialities". And as regards the critical eyes of Orwell and friend, who are watching her closely, she says, "with a lovely toss of her head", "Let them watch! ... they'll see something they'd like to have at home". She then rejects Sean's offer of a warm lemonade and asks for a "tidy gin with a slim splash of lime in it". (p. 549 - 50).

But the modern Kathleen has her problems too. And here she takes on a new significance. Leaving aside his quarrel with Orwell for a moment, O'Casey turns his attention to the quality of life in Ireland itself. And although, as has been seen, he stoutly defends his pride in his nationality, yet this does not prevent him from criticising Ireland most bitterly. And now he portrays Kathleen ni Houlihan,

¹⁸ Pun on "Shan van vocht" (Little Old Woman), a traditional poetic term for Ireland.

¹⁹ See Yeats poem "Red Hanrahan's song about Ireland" previously quoted by "Donal O' Murachadha in Drums
"But purer than a tall candle before the Holy Rood
Is Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan." (p. 516).

symbol of Ireland, as being driven out of Ireland by the oppressive
rod of Irish "piety" which is fostered by an alliance of church,
business and state: 101

I had to come or go outa me mind, off me head -
go demented, I mean. She gracefully sipped at
the warm gin Sean had brought her. I came over
here for a harmless flutter, for a little of what
I fancy. The homeland's nuts on rushing towards the
first house in heaven. A twice-nightly business now,
and quite a few doin' well on it, thank God. (p. 550).

She has sensed in Ireland those very same life-denying forces that O'Casey
deplores, satirises, and attacks in his later autobiographies and the plays
Cock-a-Doodle Dandy, Time to Go, The Bishops Bonfire, The Drums of Father
Ned, Behind the Green Curtains and Figuro in the Night. Like Sean of
the autobiographies, and the young people in Cock-a-Doodle Dandy and Behind
The Curtains, she feels compelled to go into exile in England in order to
live life to the full.

This aspect of her portrayal, as is her part in the author's
refutation of Orwell, is thus entirely independent of the play Kathleen
Listens In. As in Inishfallen, O'Casey is using the symbolism of the
play to express, not the original themes of the play, but his concerns and
preoccupations at the time that the autobiography is being written.
And so it is that even in Sunset, in which Kathleen Listens In makes its
most significant and sustained contribution to the autobiographies and,
thereby, receives its most significant and sustained creative re-expression,
the actual reworking of the play remains incomplete.

Cathleen having expressed her satisfaction that she is now in
England, the concern of the passage soon reverts back to Orwell who
together with "Gossip" is "vaporising" and addressing the assembled
company. They exhort those who are listening to drive the Irish out of
the country, and out of books and plays also. But a chorus of English
voices rises from the rest of the bar to assure the Irishmen that they
are welcome. An Irish song is called for, and Donal sings in order to
show, as Cathleen says, that "we're Irish without shame to ourselves, or

danger to anyone else". (p. 552). And as Donal's song celebrating the joys, sorrows and hopes of Ireland progresses through its seven stanzas, it becomes clear that the author is making a categorical statement, not just to Orwell, but to all whom it may concern, that, come what may, and despite his own passionate criticisms of his native land, he loves the essential Ireland, and is proud to be Irish. The final verse of the song proclaims.

So all round me hat, I wear a band of green ribbon O,
 Zone of our faults, our fights, our love an' laughter gay;
 All that Eire is or was is woven in that ribbon O,
 An' there it stops till life is dead an' time has ebb'd away.

(p. 552).

It is a statement of enormous importance within the thematic and autobiographical scheme of Sunset; for, as the last volume of autobiography, Sunset and Evening Star must draw some final general conclusions as to the nature and guiding principles of Sean's/the author's life, personality and philosophies. O'Casey announces his abiding love for the essential Ireland, which is midway between the unrealistically ideal Ireland of the fanatics, and the unheroically "real" manifestations of modern Irish life that he had himself repeatedly presented and attacked in play and autobiography. And in making this declaration it is fitting that he should, in effect, develop from Kathleen Listens In an image of his country which, unlike most other Cathleen ni Houlihan figures in his work, is at once "real" and lifelike enough to disconcert many sentimentally patriotic illusions, yet sufficiently attractive to remain distinct from, and even contradict, the prevailing attitudes and values of modern Irish society. Cathleen of Sunset represents the kind of Ireland which could follow Sean/the author into exile.

All in all it seems that if the influence of the play Kathleen Listens In upon the autobiographies was intermittent, yet it was persistent, as if the play were repeatedly thrusting itself forward for some kind of creative re-expression. There seems to be further evidence for the

existence of such an influence from the play, and for its strength and persistency, in that correspondences do not only exist between Kathleen 103 and the autobiographies, but between Kathleen and another play also. Cock-a-doodle Dandy, which was written in part contemporaneously with, and in part just after, Inishfallen,²⁰ seems to derive, perhaps directly, perhaps through the medium of the autobiographies, its symbolic setting of Ireland as a house and garden, complete with flag-pole and Tricolour, from Kathleen Listens In. Other features of Cock-a-doodle Dandy recall the earlier play also. Cock-a-Doodle Dandy's presentation of Shanaar strongly recalls that of "The Man in The Kilts". Both are eccentric men, described as "very old", who wander, apparently at will, across the scene of the plays, and who each attempt to force the objects of their own private obsessions upon the attention of others. Also, the pre-occupations of both men are bound up with nonsensical utterances in somewhat esoteric languages, which mean nothing at all to the other characters. "The Man in the Kilts", representing the Gaelic League, insists that everyone sing the Gaelic song "Key kirheh thoo lesh eg cassoo nah mo": while Shanaar, a kind of self-appointed itinerant sage and preacher, attempts to cast out devils by using invocations in his own personal version of "Latin". "Oh, rowelum randee, horrida aidus, sed spero specialii spam! ... Oh, dana eirebus, heniba et galli scatterum in multus parvum avic asthorum!". (Collected Plays Vol IV, p. 142). And perhaps too the Gaelic tinge in Shanaar's "Latin": "eirebus ... avic asthorum" denotes a very close relationship between him and "The Man in the Kilts". But the kinship of "The Man in the Kilts" and Shanaar is most evident from the identical nature of the reactions which both meet with in their respective plays. When actually present they are treated by their neighbours with the utmost deference. But in their absence they are referred to, respectively as a "crooked" "oul cod" (Kathleen p. 287) and a "lustrous oul' cod of a

²⁰ See chapter including a study of the relationship between Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy below.

prayer-blower" (Cock-a-doodle Dandy, p. 148). The use in Cock-a-doodle Dandy of conversation between the two men Michael Marthraun and Sailor Mahan a basic structural device, into which the main events of the play are fitted as "interruptions", is reminiscent of the way the structure of Kathleen's action is founded upon the conversation between Miceawl O Houlihan and his neighbour Tomaus Thornton. Cock-a-Doodle Dandy is also akin to Kathleen in its use of fantasy as its chief mode of expression.

Although Cock-a-doodle Dandy draws upon some of the basic symbolism and structure of Kathleen, it does not, any more than does Inishfallen, incorporate its themes. Both plays depict an Irish Free State but, that of Cock-a-Doodle Dandy is the "modern" Free State with which, by the 1940's, G'Casey had long been disillusioned. And so despite its contribution to Cock-a-Doodle Dandy's symbolism, character-portrayal, and structure, and despite their kinship in the mode of allegorical fantasy, Kathleen Listens In is not completely transposed into the later play. That the inspiration and influence of Kathleen was not exhausted within Cock-a-Doodle Dandy can be seen from the fact that it emerged again and sought re-expression in Sunset. Indeed it seems that with regard to theme Cock-a-Doodle Dandy might in its turn, have exerted an influence upon the "fate" of the play and its material; for Cock-a-doodle Dandy in portraying as its heroines three young, lively girls who are forced to leave Ireland to escape from drudgery, suspicion, bigotry and ignorance - all fostered by an alliance of Church, State and business - might have contributed to the development of the portrayal of the Kathleen figure of the play into the portrayal of the Cathleen figure of Sunset. Certainly the themes of Cock-a-Doodle Dandy are akin to those bound up with Cathleen's reappearance in the autobiography.

And so even if Cock-a-Doodle Dandy is taken into account Kathleen was never, in effect, unlike The Gunman, reworked in one place as a

complete and concerted whole, although enough aspects of the play seem to have persisted in presenting themselves to the creative consciousness of the author, and to have found enough creative re-expression, to suggest that if, as was the case with the reworking of The Gunman, a suitable niche could be found within the framework of the autobiography, virtually the whole play would have been transplanted and would have blossomed there. But whereas The Gunman, which was already "historical", albeit recently historical, when it was written, Kathleen was exactly topical, and the change over the years in the author's outlook upon the Free State meant that Kathleen in its entirety could not find the same kind of fitting and secure place within the historical framework of the autobiographies that The Gunman was to use to such great creative effect. Also Kathleen's fantastical manner might have, to a certain extent, precluded it from certain naturalistic contexts in the autobiographies. But since the autobiographical volumes do themselves make considerable use of fantasy, do admit and rework, even within historical contexts, symbols and fantastical events from the play, this is not such a drawback to the complete reworking of the play as is the discrepancy between the political views expressed in the play and those of the autobiographies. Indeed, the atmosphere and mode of political fantasy and historical fantasy for which Drums in particular is remarkable would have been, as far as manner is concerned, perfect ground for the transplanting of the play. But the precise period settings of the two works did not coincide and thus did not allow more than a few very brief scraps of the play actually to be incorporated into the volume. And, in any case, even if the historical period depicted in Drums had corresponded with the period of Kathleen there would still have been, as between Kathleen and Inishfallen a conflict of the topical with the historical.

It seems then that potentially the relationship between Kathleen Listens In and the autobiographies is exactly of the kind that exists

within the autobiographies' reworking The Gunman, with, seemingly, the play as a whole, as an artistic entity, pressing for re-expression.

The difference between the actual relationship between The Shadow of a Gunman and the autobiographies (as it emerges in Inishfallen), and the actual relationship between Kathleen Listens In and the autobiographies (as it emerges in Drums Under the Windows, Inishfallen and Sunset and Evening Star), is essentially one of varying degrees of expression rather than of basic kind.

As in the reworking of The Gunman, there is no reason to suppose that O'Casey deliberately set out to re-express Kathleen within the autobiographies and, as can clearly be seen in connection with Kathleen, the framework or concerns of the autobiographies were not contrived or altered in order that they might accommodate the play and its material. But by the author's conscious design, or not, The Gunman and Kathleen do exert an influence on the autobiographies and that influence seems, in effect, to tend towards a complete re-expression of the plays.

The reason why these plays should exert this kind of pressure upon the author and his creative consciousness is not particularly apparent in connection with The Gunman, but with regard to Kathleen it seems a little clearer and appears to be bound up with O'Casey's dissatisfaction (conscious or otherwise) with his achievement in the original play.

O'Casey once wrote: "I can never be peaceful or content about the work I do. I never seem to be satisfied. Maybe, it is just as well".²¹ And Kathleen Listens In seems to have had an usually disappointing and frustrating history.

²¹ This was written in connection with I Knock at the Door in a letter of November 1938 (date supplied by Editor) to George Jean Nathan.
Letters Vol. I, p. 758

The play was decidedly not popular in performance. In Inishfallen

O'Casey writes of the play being

received in dead silence, in a silence that seemed to have a point of shock in its centre. Not even a cold clap of a hand anywhere. They all got up from their seats and silently filed out of the theatre. He was the one and only playwright to have had a play received in silence by an Abbey audience; the only one to be deprived of even a single timid hand-clap. (p. 91).

Gabriel Fallon who played the part of "The Man in the Kilts" in the original and only Abbey production of the play largely corroborates this account:

Throughout the performance of Kathleen there was much sectional laughter. Hardly more than ten per cent of the audience laughed together. The effect on the stage was slightly unnerving. In a flash it became clear what was happening. You laughed when my party fell under O'Casey's lash; I laughed when your party caught it. Both of us tried to laugh when the other fellow's party was made to squirm. And then slowly but surely all the laughing died away. When the curtain came down there were a few dispirited hand-claps obviously intended for the players. During the week things were a little better; the laughter was more general: but it was obvious that Kathleen Listens In was not likely to appear amongst the Abbey Theatre's revivals. It never did.²²

In Inishfallen O'Casey attributes the apparent failure of the play in performance to "malice of afterthought" on the part of a politically intolerant audience, and defends his integrity and defiance in terms of an affirmation to "Go on, go on! Forever he would go on seeing through his own eyes, hearing with his own ears, speaking with his own tongue". (p. 144). But it seems that even if he were happy with the play politically he was not satisfied with it artistically, for in a letter to Lady Gregory on the 22nd February 1925 he refers to his sending "in to the Theatre the beginning of the week the Revised Version of "Kathleen Listens In".²³ If the play had been perfectly satisfactory in the first

²² Gabriel Fallon, Sean O'Casey the Man I Knew, p. 14

²³ Letters Vol I, pp. 132 - 3.

place there would have been no need to revise it. Or perhaps it is that the revision of the play concerned bringing the political situation depicted in the play up to date. Perhaps from very early in its history the purely topical element in the play had been something of a problem.

About one year before he began Kathleen Listens In he had apparently submitted to the Abbey Theatre a topical play (now lost) about the political situation during the Civil War. And from the author's description of this play (in a letter to Lennox Robinson, Manager of the Abbey Theatre) it seems that in form it might have had much in common with the slightly later Kathleen:

I am sending you, herewith, an allegorical play in one act dealing with the present situation in Ireland - from my point of view. A hope is buoyant in my breast that you may be willing and able to produce it - if suitable - before the season closes. It is critical of many things, and touches humour here and there. There is no doubt that it would be very interesting, and would probably be the recipient of an equal amount of applause and deprecation.²⁴

In his reply dated 15th April 1922 Lennox Robinson wrote:

The Directors and I have read your play and like a great deal of it - its humour and the element of phantasy in it. At the same time it is too definite a piece of propaganda for us to do it - even if our season was not just at an end, and it may be completely out of date in a few weeks time. I hope you will try us again with a play that is not so topical of the moment.²⁵

²⁴ Letter dated 10th April, 1922, Letters Vol I, p. 100. The Editor of the Letters, Professor Krause, notes that this letter refers to

... "The Seamless Coat of Kathleen," originally written as an allegorical tale of the same title which appeared in Poblacht Na h - Eireann (Republic of Ireland), 29th March, 1922; reprinted in Feathers from the Green Crow (1962). It is based on the biblical theme of the tossing of dice for the seamless garment of Christ, in this instance the seamless garment of Kathleen ni Houlihan. The play was never performed. (ibid, p. 100, Editors note 1).

²⁵ ibid p. 101.

From the evidence of these letters as to the nature of the earlier play, it seems that Kathleen Listens In might have been in some respects something of a topical successor to the no-longer topical "The Seamless Robe of Kathleen", and it may well be that by 1925 the pertinency of Kathleen itself to the current political situation needed some reconsideration.

But whether O'Casey was dissatisfied with the artistry of Kathleen or simply frustrated by its topicality, it seems clear that he was disappointed with the play, for he virtually suppressed the manuscript of it for many years. Although he did possess copies of the play, he was wont to claim consistently that he did not know of the existence of any. And when texts of the play were compiled or obtained from other sources he was far from eager that they be published. It was only after his death that copies of Kathleen (and also of Nannie's Night Out another play that O'Casey seemed eager to regard as lost and a play which strangely, and perhaps significantly, was to have its destiny in the autobiography bound up in something of the destiny of Kathleen) were found to have been in his possession. Dr. Ronald Ayling, his literary executor, writes:

It was interesting that several typescript copies of Kathleen Listens In (1923) and Nannies Night Out (1924) were among O'Casey's papers, for he had long denied knowledge of their whereabouts. It is true that the former was first published in June 1961, thirty-eight years after its stage premiere in Dublin, in the pages of The Tulane Drama Review; and the following year both sketches were printed in Robert Hogan's collection of the dramatist's early writings, Feathers from the Green Crow. Yet in neither case did the author provide the texts, and he was only reluctantly persuaded to allow them to be printed because the editors stressed their historical interest for O'Casey scholars. Of the typescript copies of them among his papers it is likely that one or more were presented to him by students who had pieced together a text from fragmentary acting scripts extant in the Abbey Theatre Library; but there are also carbon copies of the original typescripts of both together with changes that were made for their stage

Perhaps O'Casey kept the manuscripts to himself because he intended to rewrite the plays. He is known to have done such a thing in connection with a play entitled The Cooing of the Doves, which he submitted to the Abbey at the same time as Kathleen Listens In, and which, though he regarded it as being, "as a play",²⁷ "definitely better" than Kathleen, was rejected whereas Kathleen was accepted.²⁸

²⁶ Ronald Ayling "A Note on Sean O'Casey's Manuscripts and his Working Methods", p. 360.

The text of the play which the article refers to as being published in the Tulane Drama Review appears in Vol. 5 June, 1961, No. 4, pp 36-50 under O'Casey's name and with a preface by him. The text was compiled by Robert Hethman who, in his accompanying article entitled Great Hatred, Little Room (ibid. pp 51 - 5) describes how he found a set of "sides" for the play "in the Abbey Theatre's script closet", and how by collating these "sides" he:

produced a manuscript of Kathleen Listens In which O'Casey has now given permission to publish - muttering all the while about "damned American searchers". (pp 52 - 3).

Hethman's text of the play does not differ significantly from that published by Robert Hogan in Feathers from the Green Crow.

²⁷ See Inishfallen, p. 103

²⁸ The Cooing of Doves, which O'Casey describes (Inishfallen p. 103) as "full of wild discussions and rows in a public-house" and as "later ... used to form the second act of another play", was, by his, own account, in fact, used in the second act of The Plough:

"The Cooing of Doves, the play rejected by the Abbey Theatre, now formed the much-praised second act of the play: (i.e. The Plough) the stone the builders rejected, though not a cornerstone was an essential part of the building; the Abbey was fallible. (Lady Gregory, alone of the others, remembered, and when I went to visit her she mentioned how happily The Cooing of Doves welded into the heart of another play. It went in with but a few minor changes.)

"Memories of a Farewell to Ireland, The New York Times, December 4, 1960, reprinted as "The Plough and The Stars in Retrospect (1960)" in Blasts and Benedictions, Articles and Stories by Sean O'Casey edited by Ronald Ayling, London, MacMillan, p. 98.

At all events it seems to have been in the autobiographies rather than in another play (despite the very significant links between Kathleen and Cock-a-Doodle Dandy) that O'Casey consciously or unconsciously attempted, and found a measure of, new fulfilment for his disappointing play.

With regard to The Shadow of a Gunman there seems to be no real evidence as to whether or not O'Casey was happy with the play, although it is known that he was aware of criticisms of the play's structure. Whether these would be sufficient to lead him to rework the entire play is doubtful, but, on the evidence of the history of Kathleen Listens In, it seems that in some important respect O'Casey must have been dissatisfied with The Gunman, and that in the reworking of the play in the autobiographies he did, in effect, express, and perhaps even allay, that dissatisfaction.

In connection with the relationships between the autobiographies and The Gunman and between the autobiographies and Kathleen it must ultimately remain a matter of speculation as to whether or not the author consciously sought to perfect these plays within the autobiographies, or as to whether the concerted reworking of The Gunman in Inishfallen, and the attempted reworkings of Kathleen in Drums, Inishfallen and most notably in Sunset were the products solely of his creative instincts.

With regard to the relationship between the autobiographies and Nannie's Night Out, however, it seems that there was a real degree of awareness on the author's part as to his use of the autobiographies as a medium for the creative re-expression, even creative fulfilment, of plays which had not, as they were originally written, exhausted the full potential of their material, or attained their finest possible artistic expression.

Chapter Three

Nannie's Night Out

Written as it was in the summer of 1924¹ and first performed at the Abbey on September 29th, 1924, Nannie's Night Out was neither in time of composition nor in date of production the immediate successor to Kathleen Listens In. Yet although the writing and presentation of the major work Juno and the Paycock occurred between them, there are certain bonds between these two plays, and perhaps it was because of these bonds that their ultimate "fates" were to become linked in the medium of the

¹ In a letter dated July 22nd, 1924 O'Casey wrote to Lady Gregory:

'I am working at "Penelope's Lovers",' (i.e. the original title of Nannie's Night Out)
(Letters Vol, I, p 113)

and on Friday, July 25th, 1924, Joseph Holloway, having spoken to O'Casey in the vestibule of the Abbey theatre, noted in his journal:

O'Casey told me he has a one-act play nearly finished. He can write dialogue easily enough, having no difficulty in doing so, but construction does not come so easily with him. It is a very long one-act, and he has been cutting it down as much as he can.

(Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre p. 234)

By the 3rd of September 1924 the play with a new title, 'Irish Nannie Passes' had been submitted to the Abbey Directors; for in a letter of that date Lady Gregory wrote to O'Casey:

'I have just had the real pleasure of reading "Irish Nannie" - a fine and witty piece of ironical comedy - I look forward to seeing it on the stage. L. Robinson says he saved Nannie's life - and I applaud him - I should not easily have forgiven her death

(Letters Vol I, p. 116)

The reference to Lennox Robinson "saving Nannie's life" is connected with the changing of the ending of the play. In the original version of the ending, Nannie was to die onstage, whereas in the version performed by the Abbey, the play ends with Nannie being arrested and taken off to the police station.

For O'Casey's views on the different endings see below.

autobiographies. Kathleen Listens In and Nannie's Night Out were the only one-act plays of O'Casey's to be performed during the "Abbey" phase of the playwright's development; and after the initial production neither was revived by the Abbey company. They are the only two of O'Casey's "Abbey" plays to be set in "The Present" as opposed to, at the time of writing and production, the recent past. And in a sense they are companion pieces - although probably not written as such - in so far as each examines a complementary aspect of the early Free State: Kathleen examining the weaknesses of the political situation and Nannie the weaknesses in Free State society. Moreover, the author was seemingly disappointed with both of the plays. He pretended that he did not possess a manuscript of either Kathleen or Nannie, and was well pleased to have the world believe that the plays were lost

What is particularly interesting, however, in connection with Nannie, is the explicit and well-documented record of the author's dissatisfaction with this play, while his dissatisfaction with Kathleen is a matter of inference and conjecture. Furthermore the author stated not only his disappointment with Nannie but his positive intention to re-write it or rework it; and in the light of such statements there must be a strong suggestion that O'Casey's complete and superb re-working of the play, as one chapter within an autobiographical volume, reveals at least some degree of conscious design on the part of the author.

O'Casey's lack of enthusiasm for, even dislike of, Nannie's Night Out seems to go back even to the time when it was first written and produced. Gabriel Fallon writes:

Well, he (i.e. O'Casey) didn't think a great deal of the play when he wrote it but this I attributed - and still attribute - to the fact that his mind was blindly grappling with bigger things.²

² Gabriel Fallon Sean O'Casey the Man I Knew p. 41

In fact, although Fallon does not mention it here, even as O'Casey was writing Nannie, the next play, The Plough and the Stars, was already taking shape in his mind; for in the letter to Lady Gregory in which he informs her that he is 'working at "Penelope's Lovers"' (i.e. the first draft of Nannie) he continues, by saying: 'but have not yet started the more ambitious play "The Plough & the Stars"'.³ Joseph Holloway was speaking to O'Casey before the evening performance of the play on October 4th 1924 and noted that "O'Casey doesn't much care for the farce himself, now that he sees it on the stage".⁴ And very many years later Robert Hogan in speaking of Kathleen Listens In and Nannie's Night Out with the author found that O'Casey:

still prefers "Kathleen" and thinks "Nannie" rather negligible. O'Casey is no longer interested in the kind of play that "Nannie" is; his later plays have been in the fantastic manner of "Kathleen".⁶

His dissatisfaction with "Nannie" seems to have been greater than with Kathleen, because even if he was discontented with both plays, at least Kathleen had its overtly fantastic, and to some extent experimental, manner to recommend it and "justify" its existence,⁷ whereas Nannie, if he regarded it as a failure, was a failure in the largely naturalistic manner in which he had already succeeded triumphantly in Juno and the Paycock, and in which he was to excel again in The Plough and The Stars.

In his account in Inishfallen of "Sean's" Abbey plays he again refuses to attach any interest or merit to Nannie. He describes at some length the circumstances surrounding the writing of, and the audience

³ Letter dated 22 July 1924. Letters Vol I, p. 113

⁴ Impressions of a Dublin Playgoer, Journal Entry for October 4th, p. 239.

⁶ Feathers from the Green Crow, Dr. Hogan's introduction to the text of Nannie's Night Out, p. 301

⁷ O'Casey later used Kathleen Listens In as ammunition in his battle with the critics over the manner and merits of his later plays such as Cock-a-doodle Dandy. In his introduction to the text of Kathleen, as it appeared in The Tulane Drama Review (Vol. 5 No. 4, 1961), he wrote:

The one interest Kathleen Listens In has for me is that it is a "phantasy," done after my first play at the Abbey, showing this form was active in my mind before the "major" realistic plays were written, tho' most critics maintain that phantasy began after I left Dublin. This, of course, is what they want to believe, and so, God be with them. (p. 36).

response to, Kathleen, and defends his integrity in writing that play.

But Nannie is dismissed in this fashion:

Passing by his third play,⁽⁸⁾ a one-act work called Nannie's Night Out, a play no-one liked, except A. E., otherwise known as George Russell, who thought it O'Casey's best work; an opinion that didn't bother Sean, for he knew A.E. knew nothing about the drama, and felt it a little less; Sean found himself attending the rehearsals of his fourth one, a full-length drama.⁽⁹⁾
(p. 146)

But in a letter written to The New York Times on the 8th of December 1925, he had actually defended the play against the claim made by J.J. Hayes, in an article in the same newspaper on November 15th, 1925, that Nannie was a failure when performed. He describes Hayes' statement that: "Nannie's Night Out went west because the principal character spent most of her time off-stage, and the minor character failed to be interesting", as being "not even on the horizon of fact". And maintains that:

The play was held back because Sara Allgood, who played Nannie magnificently, at the time was suffering from her throat, and the author would permit no other artist to take her place.

The Abbey Directors finally allowed the author to withdraw the work because he felt the character of Nannie deserved the richer picture of a three-act play.

These are the facts, and they can be proved in spite of statements of "J.J.H."¹⁰

From this letter, then, it seems apparent that any "failure" in the play was seen by the author rather than the public, and that at the heart of the author's discontent with the play was the feeling that he had not done justice to the potential stature of the play's heroine, Nannie. Furthermore, this letter reveals that even as Nannie's Night Out was receiving its very first production, he had determined to rectify his own, and the play's, injustice to Nannie by presenting her with "the richer picture of a three-act play".

⁸ The reference to Nannie as "Sean's" "third play" is an error. The author has previously and correctly, written of Juno and the Paycock as "The third work, a full length play" (Inishfallen, p. 145)

⁹ i.e. The Plough and the Stars, O'Casey's fifth play to be performed at the Abbey.

¹⁰ Letter published in the New York Times 27th December, 1925. Reprinted in Letters Vol I, p. 160. (*Italics O'Casey's*).

On reading the play for the first time Lady Gregory had seemingly glimpsed the potential of the characterisation of the heroine, for in a letter to O'Casey, congratulating him on the play, she expresses her pleasure that Nannie is not to "die" at the end of the play as O'Casey had originally intended, and comments, almost prophetically as it happened, " - Perhaps she may come into another play one day -".¹¹ And indeed he himself seems to have been already contemplating Nannie's return even at so early a stage for Gabriel Fallon, seemingly referring to a time very shortly after O'Casey had completed the play or, possibly, even before it was finished, states that: "He (O'Casey) had told me of a play which he would write called The Red Lily for which the Nannie of this one-act work was merely a prototype".¹² And Fallon suggests that this preoccupation with Nannie's new work was one of the "bigger things" that was distracting the author's attention from the original version of the play.¹³

After Nannie's Night Out was finished and performed, however, O'Casey seems to have proceeded almost immediately with the actual writing of The Plough, a play which he had had in mind for several months.¹⁴ But the idea of a play entitled The Red Lily with Nannie as the heroine was still with him after The Plough had been completed, for in her journal entry for January 10th, 1926 Lady Gregory records the following piece of conversation with O'Casey:

I told him "A.E.," who I had been in to see, had praised his Lizzie's Night Out, (sic) the hint of the beautiful under all that disorder and drunkenness. That is the character he thinks of using in a new play, The Red Lily, but he isn't writing just now,¹⁵

¹¹ Letter dated 3rd September (1924) from Lady Gregory to O'Casey. Letters Vol I, p. 116.

¹² Gabriel Fallon: Sean O'Casey the Man I Knew p. 41

¹³ ibid p. 41. See above.

¹⁴ As early as in May 1924 O'Casey was certainly thinking of writing a play entitled The Plough and the Stars. The writing of it began in about October 1924 and was completed in August 1925. For evidence of these dates see chapter on The Plough below.

¹⁵ Lady Gregory's journals 1916-1930. Edited by Lennox Robinson, London, Putnam, 1946. p.95.

As it happens he was never to write a play with that title, although it does seem that the original idea of this new play for Nannie was increasingly becoming bound up with the idea for a play which was to emerge as Within The Gates. In a newspaper interview given by O'Casey in Dublin and published in The Observer on the 22nd November, 1925, (before the above conversation between O'Casey and Lady Gregory) he told the reporter: "My next play will be The Red Lily - about a prostitute. I wonder if that will suit them (i.e. the critics)?!"¹⁶ And so he was already considering the devotation of what began supposedly as "Nannie's" new play to a heroine who was a prostitute - which Nannie as she appeared in Nannie's Night Out was not, but which Jannice, the heroine of Within The Gates was to be.

Very shortly after his leaving of Ireland and his arrival in London early in March 1926, he told another newspaper reporter of his ideas for new plays including "one called The Red Lily, about a fallen woman".¹⁷ And it seems that Within the Gates, written in England in 1928-33,¹⁸ actually preserves within its text the title of the proposed play. In Scene IV of Within the Gates, when the dying Jannice is despairing of God's mercy, The Dreamer comforts her with the words: "He will find room for one scarlet blossom among a thousand white lilies!"¹⁹

But quite apart from this possible "Red Lily" evolutionary link between Nannie's Night Out and Within The Gates, a strong case has been made, based firmly on the evidence of the texts of the plays themselves, for a direct and seemingly very sound connection between the plays.

¹⁶ The interview is reprinted in The Sting and The Twinkle edited by E. H. Mikhail and John O'Riordan (London, Macmillan, 1974) pp. 21-23, quotation from pp 22-3. The Sting and the Twinkle identifies the reporter who conducted the interview as J. L. Hodson.

¹⁷ An interview published in The Daily Graphic, 6 March, 1926, p. 2. Reprinted in The Sting and the Twinkle pp. 25-6, quotation from p. 26.

¹⁸ See chapter below which includes a study of Within the Gates and I Knock at the Door.

¹⁹ Collected Plays Vol II, p. 230.

In the course of his article "Nannie's Night Out"²⁰ Dr. Ronald Ayling poses the question as to whether O'Casey ever did "paint the larger canvas" (or "richer picture") that he once promised for Nannie. Dr. Ayling believes that in some respects he did so, and puts forward the theory that:

the young whore, Jannice, in Within the Gates owes much to the character of Irish Nannie. There are certainly striking similarities in the dialogue of each (both will "die dancing die game") and in their attitudes to life and death.²¹

Continuing the comparison he points out that both Jannice and Nannie were formerly ill-treated by one of their parents and that both, as young women, are devoid of home and friends. Both suffer from a heart-complaint, and both oscillate between "moods of fear and gaiety". Also there is a comic episode in which Nannie dances with the three old suitors in a manner similar to Jannice's behaviour with the four Newspaper Readers in Scene III of Within the Gates. But in her hardness and fierceness Nannie resembles Jannice's mother the Old Woman, rather than Jannice herself. And Dr. Ayling does warn that

one should not exaggerate the parallels between Nannie and Jannice; the latter creation is a far more complex figure; indeed, for comparisons with Nannie one can look back to earlier characters like Maisie Madigan or Bessie Burgess, as much as forward to figures like Jannice or the wild girls in Cock-a-Doodle Dandy.²²

Yet although, as Dr. Ayling's study reveals, the character of Nannie might well have exerted an influence on the characterisation of Jannice in Within The Gates, the study of the play in connection with the autobiographies very strongly suggests that it was not ultimately in Within The Gates, nor indeed in any other play of O'Casey's, that Nannie was to be given the scope to achieve her full stature. But it is within the autobiographies, in a chapter of Drums Under the Windows, written as

²⁰ Ronald Ayling "Nannie's Night Out" Modern Drama Vol V No. 2 Kansas 1962 pp. 154 - 163.

²¹ ibid p. 157

²² ibid p. 158

it was 18 - 20 years after the original play,²³ that O'Casey presents Nannie in her long - promised "richer picture". And in doing so he draws upon, and thus also re-expresses something of, Kathleen Listens In, the other Free State play with which he was personally discontent.

The evidence that "Mild Millie" and the "Behold, My Family is Poor" section of Drums are, in essence, Nannie and her "richer picture" lies completely within the chapter itself. But the evidence is strong; for Mild Millie is manifestly of the very same flesh and blood as Nannie, and within "Behold, my Family is Poor" virtually every detail of the play Nannie's Night Out, has been adapted or developed with meticulous care in order to contribute to one artistic end - that of throwing into sharp relief, and thereby enhancing, the portrayal and significance of its heroine.

Even without any knowledge of the fact that O'Casey had been dissatisfied with Nannie's Night Out, and had intended to write a new work for its heroine, there can be little doubt that there is a dramatic influence directly at work upon, and within, "Behold, My Family is Poor", and furthermore, that that influence comes specifically from Nannie's Night Out. For although it is integrated into the general scheme and narrative of Drums under the Windows as, nominally, simply one of the series of chapters which make up the volume, "Behold, my Family is Poor" possesses a consistent and distinctively strong dramatic quality which marks it out from the other sections of the same book. The whole of "Behold, my Family is Poor" is devoted to a specific scene and one complete episode, and its "action" proceeds without any break or interruption in its time-scheme, and at a pace reminiscent of the "playing-time" of ^{a scene of} a play.

²³ Drums Under The Windows was apparently written in 1942 - 4 (See chapter including study of Drums Under the Windows below).

Also this chapter contains long passages of dramatic dialogue, and neither its setting nor its characters--with the obvious exception of Sean who himself adopts a fairly passive role in this section - are to be found or referred to again in any other part of the autobiographies. And since no play other than Nannie's Night Out, and, indirectly, through Nannie's Night Out, Kathleen Listens In, possesses any correspondence or relationship with the chapter; and since every one of the correspondences with Nannie which can be found in the whole six volumes of the autobiographies are concentrated within it; there seems little doubt that the direct dramatic influence at work upon "Behold my Family is Poor" is the influence of a specific play - Nannie's Night Out.

The first definite step taken in the chapter in order to rework Nannie's Night Out, and to provide greater scope for the portrayal of Nannie, seems to be the placing of the heroine of the episode firmly and consistently at the centre of the "stage" of the chapter - a position only intermittently held by Nannie in the original play.

Nannie's frequent absence from the actual Abbey stage during the course of the performance of a play in which she was supposed to be the heroine, and which was named after her, had not passed without comment. Holloway noted in his journal that his friend - the playwright T.C. Murray had suggested after the first performance of Nannie that

"The wooing of Polly" would be a more fitting name for O'Casey's farce than the one given it. Nannie only flits in and out of the piece, but the wooers are ever present.²⁴

And Dr. Ayling in his article "Nannie's Night Out" points out that his comment was particularly astute since the play had, in its first draft, been called "The Lovers of Penelope" and had indeed been built around the story of the shop-keeper Polly Pender and her three admirers. He also cites evidence that in this early version of the play Nannie was

²⁴ Joseph Holloway's Journals, a section of the entry for September 29th 1924 which is not published in Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre but which is quoted by Dr. Ayling in his article "Nannie's Night Out" p. 154

Presumably the potential of the character of Nannie was gradually recognised by the author, and her portrayal and role in the play outgrew the original formula and, in growing, changed the nature, emphasis and title^{of} the play. But even though Nannie and her story are at the centre of the thematic design of the play in its final version, the interest and action of the play are still, as apparently in the early draft, mostly sustained by, Mrs Polly Pender, the antics of her three elderly suitors, and incidents which take place in her shop. The actual speaking part of Polly Pender is as long, even slightly longer than that of Nannie, and save for two short pauses she is on stage for the entire duration of the play, while Nannie appears only in fitful intervals. In the autobiography O'Casey greatly reduces the role of Mrs. Pender, and of other "rival" characters who tended to overshadow and to divert attention from Nannie in the play; and so in one respect at least he completes the evolution of the character of Nannie. For having risen from a minor comic role in the first draft of the play, to a nominally central, yet in practice unsustainable, tragi-comic role in the final form of the play, she emerges finally as the indisputably major character around whom revolves all the interest, action and thematic significance of "Behold, my Family is Poor".

The autobiography's scaling down of characters other than Nannie is, however, undertaken with much care and skill. And the very fact that

²⁵ Dr. Ayling quotes (p. 155) from an article by Raymond Brugère who was a friend of O'Casey's at the time that the play was written:

... Dans la première ébauche, la pièce devait s'appeler "Les Amoureux de Pénélope, "et Nannie n'était qu'un personnage secondaire, fournissant un épisode comique.

(Raymond Brugère, "Sean O'Casey et le Theatre irlandais". Revue Anglo-Americaine, III, février, 1926).

some characters from the play other than Nannie do reappear in the autobiography, albeit often in a slightly different guise, is strong evidence to suggest that a reworking of the play as a whole, rather than a reworking of the portrayal of Nannie in isolation, is being carried out.

The diminution of the role of Mrs. Pender - Nannie's main rival for attention in the play - begins with the shifting of the setting of the Nannie/Millie episode from the "shop" of the play to the "slum-streets" of the autobiography. The shop is, after all, Mrs Pender's home-environment and consequently in the play Nannie has to spend much of her time outside the shop and, in effect, "off-stage" while Mrs. Pender remains almost constantly on stage. In the autobiography the situation is reversed. Mrs Pender's role in the chapter is actually reduced to that of "the woman who owned the little sweet and vegetable shop at the other corner of Hutton's Lane" (p. 471), who is alarmed when the crowd watching Millie's wild dance take advantage of the uproar to pilfer fruit and vegetables on display outside her shop. She does, however, retain some of her identity from the play. In the autobiography she suffers from the theft of her fruit and vegetables while in the play a doll is stolen from her shop, and later she is threatened with robbery at gunpoint. And that the shopkeeper in the "Mild Millie" episode is given a small "speaking part", although she is not given a name, does seem to ^{be} attributable to her erstwhile possession, as Polly, of a major speaking part in the play. In the autobiography she complains:

- Oh! isn't it a nice thing to see me little property scattered and mangled and bruised and battered and stolen right undher me eyes, ... by misbegotten savages takin' advantage of a poor woman, lit up with a little dhrink, thryin' to show her love for Ireland in an innocent an' unnatural way! An' ne'er a polisman within bugle-call of the place to even puzzle them in their pilferin'! (p. 472).

And the contents of this speech seem related to sentiments expressed by Polly Pender in the play. Mrs. Pender has complained of the scantiness of her resources: "Now an' again a coin comin' in between

a finger an' thumb", (p. 310)²⁶ and, when the doll is stolen, angrily , cries: "It's no laughin' matther ... a shillin' afther walkin' out o' th' shop ... It'll take a lot o' hoppin' about before I make a shillin' profit ... If you think it funny for devils like them to be comin' into th' shop, I can tell you I don't." (p. 318). Like the shopkeeper in the autobiography she is sympathetic to the drunken heroine of the piece. And also, after a theft, she has the same reason to complain of the absence of the police force: "Well, God Almighty, isn't that the limit! And no sign or light of a bobby, ..." (p. 317).

Mrs. Pender's suitors Oul Johnny, Oul Jimmy and Oul Joe, whose ridiculous vanity and antics were, in the play, an ironically comic contrast to the tragic aspects of Nannie, virtually vanish from the autobiography. In the play it seems as if the balance between tragedy and comedy is not a fine one, and that the episodes involving the suitors tend at times to plunge the play into farce which dissipates, rather than throws into relief, the tragic tension of the play. In the autobiography, however, no comic distractions are allowed to mar the presentation of Millie's tragedy. But one non-comic aspect of the roles of the suitors, that of illustrating society's callous attitude towards those who become its victims, is retained, and is bestowed upon the "Lamp lighter" and "One-eyed driver" of the cart who appear in the chapter. The suitors in the play/in which she dies on stage are seemingly unmoved by Nannie's fate. Jimmy remarks "It's very hard to have any sympathy for that class o' people", (p. 329), and in the version in which Nannie is arrested, openly savage sentiments are expressed: Johnny says "It ud be a God's charity if that wan got about ten years!", and Joe states "There's wan consolation - they'll knock hell out of her when they get her to the station!" (p. 333).

²⁶ Page references to Nannie's Night Out are to the text as it appears in Feathers From the Green Crow.

In the autobiography similarly callous remarks are made as Millie lies unconscious in the street.

- " - What's goin' on over there? asked the lamplighter of the one-eyed driver, as he paused in the lighting of his lamp beside him.
- Some dhrunken bitch or other thryin' to get us to fight for Ireland.
 - Eh? Fight what, fight who, where, when?
 - Here, now th' British, I suppose.
 - Maybe it's fightin' she wants! Fightin' a feed would be more'n her line." (p. 472).

The function of the Ballad Singer in the play of singing "When will the day break in Erin" as a comment upon the condition of Ireland is to some extent taken over in the autobiography by the doleful fife-player who tearfully plays Moore's "The harp that once thro' Tara's halls" - a song which is highly significant in the context of the scene, but which is not used for the same ironic effect as is the ballad in the play. Of the Ballad Singer's final and most important role (in the first version of the ending) as justifier of Nannie, denouncer of society and prophet of a new order, Dr. Ayling has written:

Here is the searing indignation of the Dreamer (i.e. of Within the Gates) and of Red Jim (i.e. of the Star Turns Red); it is not only the voice of protest but one of prophecy, too. This hint of a better future is rare in the plays O'Casey wrote while he lived in Dublin. The Singer has become, in the best sense of the term, the committed mouthpiece of the author. His "profession" is also significant, of course, for he looks forward to the more articulate singers of life, the Dreamer and the Messenger (i.e. of Cock-a-Doodle Dandy), in later plays.²⁷

In "Behold, my Family is Poor" this aspect of the Ballad Singer is attributed to Sean himself. He seeks to justify Millie's way of life and to affirm that she is still "a child of Mary" (p. 467). And while the Ballad Singer prophesies, in a social sense, that "It's a long time, but th' day's comin' ... th' day's comin' ...", (p. 330) so Sean prophesies, in a political sense, "We'll have our own again, ... - one day". (p. 469). It might be thought that no character would be so well-qualified as Sean to be what Dr. Ayling describes as "the committed mouthpiece of the

²⁷Ronald Ayling: "Nannie's Night Out" p. 162

the author" in either the "best" or worst "sense of the term": but, as will be seen in considering the development of the portrayal of Nannie into the portrayal of Millie, the author's attitude to Millie and the way in which it is expressed are much more complex than his attitude and its fairly direct mode of expression in the play. Whereas the Ballad-Singer has the last word on the social themes of the play and on the opinions of the author, Sean of the autobiography is open to contradiction from no less a personage than Millie herself. It is another aspect of Nannie's/Millie's growth in stature as a personality in the autobiography that she can argue and reason "for herself", about herself and society, and that the author can "dramatise" some of his thoughts within her instead of relying upon a "committed mouthpiece" of a Ballad-Singer, who must undergo a very hasty and unconvincing conversion indeed in order to express directly what the author wishes to be said. (Throughout the rest of the play the Ballad Singer whines and complains of his hard lot, and is seemingly quite unprepared to be at all sympathetic to Nannie).

Having prepared something of the background of the "richer picture" for Nannie, by careful changing of the perspective in which other characters from the play will appear, and by clearing a larger space for her in the centre of the composition, the new portrait of Millie/Nannie is painted in.

Millie clearly takes her origin from Nannie, but as with all other aspects of the play the character and portrayal of Nannie are skilfully developed for inclusion in "Behold, my Family is Poor". And despite many obvious parallels between the descriptions of Nannie and Millie, and between the accounts of their lives, nothing is, as it were, taken over "ready made" from the play. The autobiography does not repeat the text of the play, nor does it present exactly the same actions and effects as those in the play; but consistently uses its own words and makes its own adaptations. "Behold, My Family is Poor" is very much a creative reworking of Nannie's Night Out.

The author's care to develop rather than reproduce the play, and his subsequent complete avoidance of textual repetition from the play, can be seen in connection with the corresponding descriptions of the physical appearance of Nannie and Millie. In each description the general impression of shabbiness and poverty is the same, and the two figures are obviously related; but the passages are far from verbatim and important developments are being made in the presentation of Millie even on this most obvious level of relationship between her and Nannie. On Nannie's first entrance the stage direction states:

(Irish Nannie enters singing. She is about thirty years of age, well made, strong, and possibly was handsome before she began to drink. Her eyes flash with the light of semi-madness; her hair is flying about her shoulders. Her blouse is open at the neck. A much damaged hat, containing flowers that once were brightly coloured, but are now faded, is on her head. Her manner, meant to be recklessly merry, is very near to hysterical tears; a shawl is hanging over one arm.) (p. 307)

In the autobiography Millie's arrival on the scene is described as follows:

A young woman, hatless, a jagged skirt just reaching to her knees, showing a pair of hardy, well-shaped legs, with feet thrust deeply into a man's pair of rusty rough-leather Blucher boots came unsteadily down the street. A dark-green shawl dangled from her shoulders, and a scaly basket, holding one stale fish, was hooked over her left arm. She sat down on the stone steps leading to the doorway from which Ella's furniture had been carried.

It's Mild Millie, thought Sean, and fairly sober for once in her life. He stole a glance at her, and could plainly see, by her torn and half-open blouse, that the line from her chin to her throat was fine, and went curving grandly into a bosom that was rich and firm and white. She had hips, too, that would have made a Hebe happier. Her hair, ruffled with neglect and dulled with the dust of the street, grew in thick clusters, and was as black as a raven's wing. And all these feminine assertions were jewelled with large black eyes, the sparkle of the pupils undimmed, though the delicate whites of the iris were now finally stained with thin wavy streaks of scarlet bloodshot. A handsome lass, thought Sean, and well-dressed would make many a fine man long to dance attendance on her. (pp. 462 - 3).

And so it is that despite the similarity of the first general impressions of the two women, the description of Millie is greatly developed into a whole paragraph specifically stating her physical beauty,

which remains much in evidence despite the kind of life which she leads. While Nannie "possibly was handsome before she began to drink", Millie is still very handsome indeed. Also she is a little younger than Nannie; later describing herself as "well over twenty-two" (p. 466) as opposed to Nannie's "about thirty", and her youthfulness seems, in comparison with Nannie, further emphasised in that, unlike Nannie, she is not said to possess a child. When she first appears, she is becomingly "fairly sober" whereas Nannie is not portrayed as anything other than totally inebriated. Moreover, there is no suggestion of "semi-madness" or "hysterical tears" about Millie. All these distinctions are important for together they give Millie a surprisingly yet genuinely romantic quality and even dignity. And they prepare her, without loss of her credibility as a "real" character, for the symbolic role which she is to assume at the end of the chapter.

But, meanwhile, still on an initial level of characterisation the history of her life is firmly related to Nannie's. Nannie's account of her life is vouchsafed in fragmentary speeches as she whirls into, and out of, the shop:

Nannie's no home Wan place is as good as another to Nannie. When Nannie was a chiselur any oul' hall she could find was Nannie's home - afther gettin', maybe, a morguein' from her oul' wan(p. 309).

Irish Nannie's out again, kept her crippled oul' fella for two years a jib of a crane fell on his back workin' on th' docks, an' smashed his spine; two weeks' half pay he got from th' stevedore, an' then th' bastard went bankrupt ... an' Nannie kep him for two years an' he lyin' on his back (p. 314)

... Nannie kep' her oul' father for years, an' he lyin' stretched out not able to stir a hand or foot ... good money she earned for him, when it was to be got; an' bad money when there was nothin else knockin' about ...
(p. 321)

Since, in the autobiography, all interest and action is focused on Millie, and since she is, at first, sober, she gives in conversation with Sean a more detailed and ordered account of her life. Yet in broad outline it is the same account as Nannie's.

Me mother kicked th' bucket when I was a yearling, an' me father had to drag me up as well as he could till he hurt his spine on the quays tryin' to move a weight it 'ud take a gang to shift, for he was over six foot, powerful, and a spend thrift of his energy. So for five years or more he dwindled away on th'one bed we had, for we pledged all we had to keep things goin'; for he got no recompense for his hurt, bein' told it was again' th' rules to do what he done.

- And didn't St. Vincent de Paul's help you a little?

- Them, is it? and she cocked her nose scornfully. You'd want to be a crawler, an' deny yourself the right to live, to get anything outa them. But wait till I tell you: I got a job at seven shillin's a week, and minded him when I came home o' nights; but one night, an' me asleep, some bright angel or another stole in an' took him, leaving' me to face th' world an' loneliness. (p. 466).

The inclusion of extra details, such as the proud refusal to accept aid from charity, help to paint a fuller picture of Millie than of Nannie, and, once more, development from the play is taking place.

In their present mode of life Nannie or Millie are not unknown to the policeforce, and both share a contempt for the police, even though the constables of Nannie's day represent an Irish Free State, while Millie contends with those representing British law and order. Nannie's first words, heard even before she appears on stage are:

This is Irish Nannie; out o' jail again an' lookin' for throuble; let them send along their Baton Men, Nannie's got a pair of mits that'll give them gib! (p. 306).

And thus begin her taunts and threats which are to be repeatedly offered to any policeman who may be within earshot. Her recent two months in Mountjoy jail, by no means her first spell of imprisonment were as a result of her "assault an' batthery on a Polisman ... me an' him had a hard sthruggle ... Th' same boyo'll think twiced before pullin' Irish Nannie again", (p. 308) and she is out for revenge over this arrest. She has enormous physical strength: "They're not bringin' a chiselur to school when they're bringin' Nannie to th' Polis Station. Five o' them it took, an' she sthrapped on a sthratcher, th' last time to bring her in!" (p. 309). And, understandably, her presence is something of a deterrent to solitary constables. At one point she is heard to shout boastfully: "There's th' Dublin Bobbies for yous ... Th' minute he

clapped eyes on Irish Nannie off he skeeted Irish Nannie put th' fear o' God in his heart!" (p. 320). And when, in the second version of the ending of the play, she is finally arrested the deed requires "three o' th' biggest Bouseys in th' Force", and even so she is scarcely subdued and is heard to be shouting "I'll swing for wan o' yours yet ... " (p. 332).

Although no reference is made to Mountjoy in connection with Millie she has clearly been arrested in the past, and has certainly taken on Nannie's reputation of being an arch-opponent of policemen. And when she intervenes to defend Sean against the officious behaviour of policemen who are warning him to move his sister's furniture off the street, the policemen themselves show that fear of Millie which Nannie boasts about in the play. Their words substantiate Nannie's claims as to their previous difficulties in effecting her arrest:

- Take no notice of her, sergeant, said the constable, fearfully and warningly; it's Mild Millie - a terrible female, powerful woman, takin' ten men to lug her to the station when she goes wild with red biddy;²⁸ take no notice, for God's sake. A fearful female would have the pair of us on the broad of our backs in th' mud of the streets while you'd be winkin'! (p. 465).

And Millie's threats to them are strongly redolent of those of Nannie, while her presence is just as uninviting:

- Push off, th' pair of yours, warned Millie, hitching a porter bottle from a back pocket of her skirt, and lowering a slug out of it; push off to where there's genuine trouble, before this red biddy takes effect, or yours'll have something harder than a few scraps of furniture to shift to the station. It's you, you ignorant yucks, that breed th' trouble; g'on now, she shouted after them, for they had turned and walked away as if they hadn't laid an eye on her or heard a word she said, If it hadn't been she added, turning to Sean and sitting down on the damp steps again, that the red biddy wasn't stirrin' in me bowels, its afther wipin' the dirty sthreeets clean I'd ha' been with th' pair o' them! (p. 46).

Certain actions of Millie's in the course of the section can also be seen to derive from the role of Nannie. Both women dance wildy,

²⁸ Red Biddy: a mixture of cheap wine and methylated spirits.

although Millie's dance takes a different form and significance, and both are encouraged in their dancing by a crowd which gathers to watch. Both women sing, although in Millie's case it is simply a snatch of the sentimental song "Killarney" denoting the onset of drunkenness and of a more violent exposition of patriot fervour, while Nannie's renderings of "She's an oul' fashion'd lady with oul' fashion'd ways," accompany her spells of dancing and provide pathos and humour in the song's sentimentality and in its incongruity with her wild appearance and friendless existence.²⁹ Both Nannie and Millie also become involved in attempted thefts; Nannie unwittingly foiling the attempt by whirling the gunman off his feet in a furious dance, and Millie, equally unwittingly, helping the thieves by attracting general attention towards herself in the spectacle of her wild dance. In the first version of the ending of the play Nannie collapses while dancing and dies onstage, and at the end of "Behold, my Family is Poor" Millie too collapses from the exhaustion of a dance, but although she becomes unconscious she is not said to be about to die. The version of the ending of the play in which Nannie died onstage is not believed to have been performed at the Abbey, but it is said to have been, and to have remained O'Casey's

²⁹Professor William A. Armstrong, in his article "Sean O'Casey, W. B. Yeats and the Dance of Life", (included in Sean O'Casey, Modern Judgements, edited by Ronald Ayling, London, Macmillan, 1969), p. 135, points to a very special significance in Nannie's song:

In O'Casey's play, Nannie is not overtly connected with Cathleen ni Houlihan, but she is associated with another traditional embodiment of the Irish spirit, the 'shan van vocht', the 'little old lady', who is evoked by the song Nannie frequently sings about the 'oul' fashioned lady with oul' fashioned ways', who 'wears no fine clothes' but has something in her that 'makes her divine' ... Curiously but significantly, the gunman terms Nannie, who is not old, an 'oul' rip' ...

If the song does indeed carry this significance it is of great interest in connection with the development of Millie into an overtly symbolic figure. See below.

favourite version.³⁰ It seems that in writing the autobiography and painting Nannie's "richer picture" he chose to retain something of his favourite and original conception of the ending, now totally beyond the influence or jurisdiction of the Abbey Directorate.

One of the most fundamental ways in which the presentation of Millie differs from that of Nannie is with regard to the emotions which the respective portrayals of Nannie and Millie are calculated to arouse.

In the play Nannie is presented as a figure above all to be pitied. And since this appeal for pity must anticipate the critical response of those people who would condemn real-life Nannies as unworthy of sympathy, the author goes out of his way to make Nannie's plight as patently pitiable as he can. Early in the play it is made known that she is suffering from a severe heart-complaint and might die at any moment, and this certainly colours the audience's/readers reaction to her. Furthermore her history is a sad one. And against this background of unrelieved gloom, of a dismal past and of impending death, her desire for gaiety and love of life are to be seen as ennobling. And in rendering her as a noble figure they render her also as a character worthy of pity, and as a fitting subject for tragedy.

Somewhat unfortunately, however, the chief means by which the playwright chooses to evoke pity for her is the too direct one of putting piteous speeches into her own mouth. It is perhaps technically regrettable that apart from the Ballad Singer, who suddenly develops a social conscience at the end of the play, and Mrs Pender, who is generally sympathetic to her, Nannie has no-one who can describe her plight for her. And her appearances in the play are too brief to allow her actions or way of life to speak for themselves. Of course, her friendlessness and isolation are part of

³⁰ See Ronald Ayling's article "Nannie's Night Out" p. 160. When Dr. Ayling wrote to O'Casey and expressed the view that the version of the play in which Nannie dies onstage is the finest, O'Casey replied (in a letter dated May 1st, 1962): "I think you are right ... The first version I wrote is, in my opinion, by far the best".

her tragedy, but by placing the pleas for pity in her mouth the author seriously undermines the effectiveness of his portrayal of her courageous qualities, and gives her an unwarranted aspect of sentimentality and self-pity. It is she who must tell of her fatal illness:

I'm dyin' on me feet ... th' spunk has me nearly done
for ... th' prison docthor thold me th'oul' heart
was crocked, an' that I'd dhrop any minuteI'm
afire inside ... no-one cares a curse about Irish
Nannie. (p. 309).

And from then on it is she who must pause in her pursuit of merriment and outbursts of song to comment upon the misery of her life to remind everyone of her imminent death, and to state that she has done worthy deeds in the past and now, on the strength of them, deserves some respect and consideration:

She's an oul' fashion'd lady with oul' fashion'd ways,
an' a smile that says welcome to you - Nannie kep' her
oul' father for years, an' he lyin' stretched out not
able to stir a hand or foot Well, we've only to
die wanst, an' Nannie'll die game, die game, die game! (p. 321)

The culmination of the author's imposition upon her of this burden of self-justification, and consequent semblance of self-pity, is reached when she realises (in the first version of the ending) that she is actually dying:

For God's sake, some o' yous go for a priest ... I
stuck be me oul' fella th' whole time he was crippled,
till he died, till he died, till he died. (Screaming
feebly). I don't care, I don't care, I'll die game,
I'll die game!
(feebly) Tho' she wears no fine clothes, nor no rich
... silken hose ... still there's something ... that makes
.... her ... di ... vine ... Jesus, I feel me heart
stoppin' Is there ne'er a wan to go for a docthor?
... Th' priest, th' priest ... God'll not be too hard
on poor Irish Nannie ... poor Irish Nannie, ... say a
prayer, will you ... some O' yous ... Nannie's goin' ...
she's goin. ... She'll die game, she'll die ... game. (p. 328).

It is not that Nannie does not deserve abundant sympathy but that the dramatist, by putting much of his appeal on her behalf within her own mouth, does not do justice to her character and to her potential stature as a tragic figure. And when, after her death, he does engage another character, The Ballad Singer, to speak for her, the Singer's passionate argument that Nannie and "th' like o' them" are helpless victims of society and not to be blamed for living "any way they can" (p. 330) is,

while being very moving in itself, finally destructive of any vestige of **133**
dignity or self-respect that had previously been left to Nannie as a
potentially heroic character in her own right.

In complete contrast, however, is the portrayal of Millie. She is proud and independent and any pity for her must be tempered with respect. If the author did not do justice to the character and qualities of Nannie, he now compensates for it in the portrayal of Millie. Millie is not said to be in imminent danger of death and thus she is not an immediately pathetic figure; yet the circumstances of her life are grim enough to mark her out as a potentially tragic one. She is a more fully dramatised character than Nannie of the play in that the author allows Millie to express sentiments true to the large conception of her character rather than confining her to the direct expression of his own specific attitudes and criticisms of society.

Instead of begging for sympathy she is the only person in the episode who is capable of showing practical kindness and sympathy to others - an indication of her strength of character and of her self-possession. When sober, she speaks kindly to the tired Sean and invites him to lean on her shoulder and sleep. She also protects him from the officiousness of the policemen and sends them on their way. Yet when she collapses in the street no help is forthcoming for her. Even Sean leaves the scene as quickly as he can. Unlike Nannie, if she were dying she would not be surrounded by prayers.

In the autobiography the author is aided technically in his finer portrait of Nannie/Millie by the existence of the character of Sean. For although Sean is not an embodiment of the authorial voice but a dramatised character, yet while remaining within the boundaries of his characterisation, he can, naturally enough, express views sympathetic to those of the author. He can, moreover, draw from Millie, in conversation (as opposed to Nannie's semi-hysterical unsolicited speeches which volunteer personal information), the history of her life and her feelings about the

way in which she lives. He, not Millie, can then provide the gloss upon the piteousness of her circumstances, and she can then actually refute his views and reject his sympathies. In this way the author is introducing his own attitudes into the scene and yet re-enforcing instead of dissipating the impression of Millie's tremendous pride and independence. For example, Millie laughs at the idea that she had once been "a child of Mary" but Sean pays an impassioned and sincere tribute to her spiritual worth:

- Never fear, he said quietly, when her derisive laughter had ceased, you're a child of Mary still, in spite of polis and the red poteen. Righteousness isn't a badge on the breast, but a living glow in the heart, like the core of flame in a smoking fire. The lives we have to live are bound to stain the skin with pitch that defileth; but one smile from God, Millie, and we are again as Namaan was when he had washed in the waters of Jordan. (pp. 467-8).

This is, of course, a real theme of the chapter and a genuine belief of the author. It is a fuller more poetic exposition of Nannie's simple faith that "God'll not be too hard on poor Irish Nannie". But Millie, in accordance with her bitter experience of life, and in accordance too with her pride, utterly rejects Sean's (and the author's) sympathy and theology: "Don't be talkin' rot! she said sharply. I know better".

Then follows her own assertion of how she lives by her own values:

I have me times of fear an' darkness till I'm lit up with th' spirit, an' then I live where few can rise to; an' when I'm hoarse singin', I lie down in th' corner of some dark sthreat, far from th' walled-in woe of a room; an' tell me who has a better bedspread than the uncomplainin' sky holdin' onto crowds of drunken stars dancin' mad for my diversion as long as I elect to keep me eyes wide open. (p. 468).

Millie is this totally transformed from the wretched Nannie-like victim of society into a person of poetic vision, who can rise above the material world and who has found her own salvation. The phrase "lit up with th' spirit" is ambiguous and in this context might just as easily refer to the Holy Ghost as to alcohol. This status of being one possessed of

poetic vision is the highest state of grace that O'Casey can accord to his characters in the plays of his middle and later period.

And although "Behold, my Family is Poor" derives from a play of the early period yet the autobiography which contains it was written in 1942 - 4 very shortly after Philip O'Dempsey and Jack O'Kiligain, the heroes of Purple Dust (published in 1940), and Ayamonn Breydon in Act III of Red Roses for Me (published in 1942) had asserted the reality and soul-saving properties of a Blakean-type "vision", unobscured by selfinterest or materialism.

Such vision is specifically denied to the unfortunate Nannie, for the Ballad Singer, as if in stark and deliberate contradiction of Millie's visionary qualities, has said of her:

May God look down on th' spirit of our poor sither,
that, feelin' th' wind, maybe got no message from it;
that lookin' up at th' sky, maybe seen no stars; that, look
lookin' down at th' earth, maybe, seen no flowers.
Rememberin' th' bitterness of th' shocks her poor
body got, may God give th' soul of our sither th'
sweetness of eternal rest!
(p. 329).

Millie's flat contradictions of this speech from the play are too marked to be coincidental. It seems as if in painting the finer portrait the author deliberately increased Millie's stature by giving her something of the mysterious quality of a visionary. And when she collapses in the street her eyes remain open - "seeing nothing - or, maybe, seeing all things". (p. 473).

Nannie's somewhat humbler role of victim-of-society is, however, not lost to the autobiographical episode, but it is not embodied in Millie. Instead it is attributed to Ella, Sean's sister, who does not appear in person in the scene, but whose furniture has been put out on to the street after her eviction from her home, and

who thus directly provides the reason why Sean happens to be standing outside a tenement house in the Summerhill district of Dublin on a cold damp evening. And it is her plight which, strangely enough, in view of the fact that this is "Millie's" chapter, directly accounts for the title "Behold, my Family is Poor" (although in a wider sense Sean is as much of the social and national family of Millie as he is of the personal family of Ella). It is, in fact, the story of Ella which does much to integrate the "Behold, my Family is Poor" section into the mainstream of the autobiography. The account of her courtship, her unfortunate marriage, and her decline into poverty and wan, is given gradually through the first three volumes of the autobiographies. In Drums Under the Windows her husband Benson, grows dangerously insane and is taken away to lunatic asylum where he later dies. After Ella and her five children are evicted from their home, they go to live with Sean and his mother, and later move into some deplorable rooms in a cottage for which Sean and his mother help to pay the rent. Not long after the episode described in "Behold, My Family is Poor" Ella dies and is given "the poorest funeral" that even that poor "neighbourhood ever saw or ever heard of" (p. 490).

The story of Ella, who was once beautiful well-read, musically gifted, and fully qualified as a teacher is, like the story of Michael Casside in the "Hail and Farewell", one of talents wasted. Once Ella chose to marry "beneath her", Society would not, even could not, save her from destitution and degradation.

The very direness of the poverty afflicting Ella and many others is expressed with especial force in "Behold, My Family is Poor" in that Millie materially destitute as she is, actually pities such as Ella and regards her own way of life as infinitely superior. It is inconceivable that Nannie would be capable of such a process of clear-sighted reasoning as this: Sean asks,

- But, Millie, is this a sensible way of life for one so fairly gifted as yourself?
- Show me a bether one, you, will you? Who owns the poor stuff you're guardin'?
- My sister.
- Married?
- Yes, but husband dead.
- Children?
- Five of them.
- An' why was she hunted out of th' room she had?
- She couldn't afford the rent.
- There y'are, you see. Is she any betther off than mild-mannered Millie? You daren't say she is. I wouldn't bend me back to carry away what I see in front of me. I don't pay any rent for my room, but th' landlord knows betther than to hunt me out of it. (p.467)

Millie has a thorough knowledge of the society in which she lives, and it is a most searing condemnation of that society - a degree of condemnation not even approached in the play - that not only must natures of the calibre of hers resort to drink and violence in order to avoid succumbing as a total victim to the social order; but that having made their terrible escape, they can yet feel genuinely able to pity the wretchedness of those such as Ella, who, in pursuing their ordinary, law-abiding, "decent" lives, have, in fact, succumbed to society and are

Having, in the autobiography, placed Nannie/Millie in the centre of the stage, and having, with great care, endowed her^{with} a dignity and a self-possession that were not hers in the play, the author adds the final span to her stature as an heroic personality by making explicit in Millie the potential symbolism which remained largely unexploited with regard to Nannie of the play.

That Nannie does have some potential as a symbolic figure seems clear. She is known as "Irish Nannie", and if the name itself suggests that she represents or is connected with some aspect or element of her country, this idea seems borne out by the words of the ballad which opens and closes the play, and which provides an ironic comment on her life and death/arrest:

"For Ireland is Ireland thro' joy an'
thro' tears. Hope never dies thro'
they long weary years;
Each age has seen countless, brave hearts
pass away,
But their spirit still lives on in they
men of today." (p.303, p.330)

Irish Nannie is, then, one of the "brave hearts" who is to "pass away" amid the unheroic and uncharitable new Irish Free State society, and the old indomitable spirit of Ireland which she has helped to keep alive, will now die with her since, as the play shows, there are no "men of to-day" capable of keeping alive the ancient ideals. An earlier title of the play - Irish Nannie Passes - makes clearer the link with the ballad; but this title was changed by the Abbey to Nannie's Night Out, referring to her release from Mountjoy Prison. Perhaps this new title was adopted since in the Abbey production of the play Nannie is thought not to have died on stage and thus did not "pass away" as the earlier title suggests.

Professor Armstrong has suggested that the portrayal of Nannie might also be associated with a traditional image of Ireland as the "shan van vocht" or "little old lady", and that this association is manifested chiefly in her song "she's an oul' fashion'd lady with oul' fashion'd ways,....."³⁰

But on the whole it seems that within the play relatively little overt use is made of Nannie's inherently symbolic role although in a short story published in The Irish Statesman November 29th 1924³¹ (two months after the first performance of the play) O'Casey clearly suggests that Nannie was meant to be most definitely a symbolic figure. The story, which is set in a Labour Exchange, bears a relationship with the play in that it debates the question raised in Nannie's Night Out as to the desirability and usefulness of the Free State Government's attempts to teach Gaelic to half-starved children.³² In the story the author has his spokesman character "Jack" brush aside the implication that Gaelic is somehow mysteriously linked with "the soul of Ireland" and has him declare

Ah, the soul of Ireland, "" is as apparent here (ie in the Labour Exchange) as it is at a meeting of the Fainne. It speaks just as truly in the wild words of a drunken spunker as it does in the jubilant cooing of President Cosgrave at a banquet in the Metropole; or the innocent babbling of President de Valera on a platform in Ennis. It gleams vividly from the brilliant realism of Joyce as it sparkles radiantly from the lovely imagery of Yeats.))

³⁰ See note 29 above.

³¹ "Irish in the Schools" reprinted in Feathers From the Green Crow

³² In the play Mrs. Pender remarks of Robert, Nannie's son: "It's a wondher they wouldn't do something for poor little kiddies like him, instead o' thryin' to teach them Irish". (p321)

³³ Feathers From the Green Crow p.265

The reference to "the wild words of a drunken spunker" (that is a drinker of methylated spirits) must surely recall the presentation of Nannie, a theme of whose play he is elaborating upon in the story. Nannie was, then, intended to represent "the soul of Ireland" but this was only partially achieved in the play. The true fulfilment of the intention is to be found in the autobiography in which Millie becomes, through the influence of Kathleen Listens In, unequivocally Cathleen ni Houlihan herself, the embodiment of the very being and fate of Ireland. But in order to reveal Nannie/Millie in her full symbolic status, still more calculated adaptations of the play were necessary. And in the autobiography he changed the period of the play and of Nannie's life in order to give Millie a background historically more congenial to the development of her own significance.

The play is firmly set in the "Present", that is in the patently unheroic days of the 1924 Free State. And as part of its critical function the play makes many once-topical references to the nature and preoccupations of the Free State Government. For example, apart from the controversial reference to the compulsory teaching of Irish in schools, a "newspaper" account of a "Heated Scene in th' Doyle" (Dail Eireann, the legislative assembly) is read by one of the characters, (p.305) and the squabble described does not reveal that body in a good light. Also pertinent reference is made to the Free State Government's abundant use of Irish names and titles which were incomprehensible to most people, but which were supposed to give an impression of independent nationhood. (p.305). There is a mention too of "this new divorce bill" (p.305). And Nannie herself refers to the Government "cuttin' down th' Oul Age Pensions" and describes the political parties of Free Staters and Republicans alike as "a lot of rubbidge", in comparison with whom "Th' poor Tommies", of the days of British Rule, were infinitely superior. (p.314).

Had O'Casey wished to do so he could have "reserved" the play and its material (as he seems to have done in connection with The Gunman), for inclusion within the chronological scheme of Inishfallen. The material could there have retained its original 1924 setting, and, since, unlike Kathleen Listens In, Nannie presents an extremely critical and disillusioned view of the Free State, it would have been thematically perfectly at home in Inishfallen. But he chose instead to rework the play within the chronological scheme of Drums Under the Windows, the autobiographical volume which ends with an account of the 1916 Easter Rising. The "Behold, my Family is Poor" chapter of Drums is not, in itself, given a specific date as to its setting; yet in the sequence of the book it well precedes the account of the storm over the Abbey Company's first production of J.M. Synge's The Playboy of the Western World, and in real life the first performance of Synge's play took place at the Abbey on January 26th 1907. Set, therefore, in the early years of this century, "Behold my Family is Poor" portrays an Ireland still under the direct rule of the English Crown; an Ireland often despairing of ever controlling its own destiny, but an Ireland too beginning to take pride in its own culture and history, and beginning to look for "freedom" again. In terms of traditional Irish literary conventions these years constituted a time when Kathleen in Houlihan might be beginning to seek out her "friends" again and to regain her good looks. (Yeats' play Cathleen ni Houlihan was actually written and produced in 1902, and although it has, itself, a historical setting of the rebellion of 1798 it was clearly meant to be a reflection of the contemporary spirit of nationalism abroad in the land.) Such an Ireland with the Rising of 1916 before it rather than behind it provides a setting in which Nannie/Millie can be a prophetic figure heralding a glorious if tragic future, whereas, Nannie, in the "modern" 1924 setting of the play has, at best, the

less romantic role of representing the inglorious death of the past.³⁴

Not only does the author seemingly choose in the autobiography a particularly propitious historical setting for a more romantic and more explicitly symbolic presentation of Nannie/Millie, but in order to prepare the ground for this kind of portrayal of the heroine, he also sets the action and narrative of the chapter in a place which can provide a nationally and politically symbolic background to the episode.

In contrast to this, the shop-setting of Nannie's play is devoid of symbolism of any kind except perhaps for the appearance at the end of the play of stars which "seem to be peering through the window into the darkened shop" (p. 330) and which perhaps denote the old ideals to which Nannie alone was faithful.

The setting of the chapter in a street of a tenement area in Summerhill, as opposed to the play's simple setting of a "shop in a working class district" (p. 303), is itself rich in potential symbolism of British Imperialism and the decline of Ireland under direct British Rule.

³⁴ But, characteristically of the reworking of Nannie in "Behold my Family is Poor" - in which little of the original play is not re-expressed in some form or another - even something of the political concerns and setting of the play seem to creep into the manifestly different political themes and historical setting of the chapter. For example, although the chapter is set in a period of direct British rule, with the British Government responsible for Irish poverty and social injustice, yet the autobiography does not lose or ignore the Free State play's implication that the Irish poor are no better off under an Irish Government than they were under a British one. This implication finds its way into the chapter in the guise of Sean's qualms as to the motives and social-conscience of so-called Irish Nationalists who advocate political independence as the cure-all for Ireland's ills. The Gaelic League of which he is a member is orientated towards the middle-class, and he has been reprimanded for not wearing a collar and tie at meetings. (p. 460). Moreover, Ella and her five children have just been evicted from their wretched home not by an English landlord, but by an Irish one, who is moreover, "A boyo, ... who's all-in-all with the Gaelic League, and out for a free Ireland!" (p. 462)

These tenements were originally smart town houses built by the rich Anglo-Irish aristocracy in Georgian times, but when the north of the city became no longer fashionable the rich left for the south side of the river, leaving behind their once-splendid houses, which then decayed and were partitioned into one and two room dwellings for the Irish poor.

Against this generally and inherently symbolic background O'Casey begins to sketch in precise symbolic details, as he would do in the setting of a symbolic play. The few wretched household goods which belong to Sean's sister Ella and which, after her eviction from her home, are lying on the pavement awaiting collection, not only suggest appalling misery and want, but the fact that some of them are even coloured a patriotic red, white and blue (for Ella is a Protestant and loyal to the English throne) with one dirty and stained rug sporting a motif of the Union Jack, and two other rugs being "made of strips torn from old soldiers' trousers" (p. 461), implies that British rule has been responsible for, or, at least, has failed to avert, the destitution and hopelessness which have engulfed many members of the Irish lower classes.

And as the chapter proceeds, so the symbolism continues, and becomes increasingly more overt and involves action as well as details of the setting. Opposite from where Sean is sitting are premises of the coach-building firm of Huttons, who for many years have built coaches for the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. As he wearily dozes an element of fantasy is introduced into the chapter, and he seems to see a parade of figures from Ireland's past. This vision or dream, which Mild Millie seems to share, provides a symbolic pageant of Ireland's history, a history of some splendour but also of betrayal, as, one after another, rich and titled men sold Ireland and Irish freedom for more riches and more titles from the British. And all the while the magnificence and wealth suggested by these figures is contrasting with the rottenness and ruin of the tenements and the poverty of Ella's furniture put out on to the street — a rottenness, ruin and poverty which some of these noble figures,

by their treachery, had helped to create.

Moreover, throughout the "scene" the royal coat of arms bearing the lion and unicorn " - a little the worse for the weather now - " (p. 468) is looking down from the gateway of Hutton's factory, and is proclaiming itself as the veritable - if now itself a little time-worn - symbol of British dominion over the soiled and shabby surroundings.

Reference is made by Sean and Millie to the Act of Union, the act of 1800 which had deprived Ireland of all independence from Britain and which had abolished the Irish Parliament. It is clear that Sean and Millie believe this to be at the root of all the evils that have since befallen Ireland. Sean says that "the Union led us into the shadows", while Millie maintains that "Th' same Union has destroyed us all!"

(p. 468). Together they muse on the political fate of Ireland, and again, in the context of the political themes and significance of the chapter, a review of Ireland's tragic history is given. Irish patriots are mentioned, praised and mourned by Millie: Grattan, Parnell, Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet. And she laments the betrayal of Parnell, the only man who might have freed Ireland from the English yoke and who was to many Irishmen, as to Millie, the "uncrowned king" of Ireland.

(pp. 468-9)

Sean joins her in her sorrowings and together they deplore the influence on Ireland of the policies of British politicians: Balfour, Salisbury, Gladstone, Disraeli, and Randolph Churchill. Sean voices the hopes of the nationalists, and prophesies future glory for Ireland, that "one day or another, our rags will glow like a burning bush, set alight by God himself", and that " - We'll have our own again, ...

- one day". (p. 469). But Millie rejects these hopes of better days. She believes that the nation has sunk beneath subjection and has dissipated all its real moral strength in fatuous dreaming. "It's bellied out with braggin' we all are, an' that's what has us so low".

(p. 469). There appears to be little hope for Ireland now. Millie

states that "There's nothin' for it but hard drinkin'" (p. 464), and suddenly it seems as if her own addiction to drink has become symbolic of the whole country's desire to forget its sorrows. Rain comes, and night begins to fall. The poor streets become even grimmer, the fate of Ireland, by implication, seems to become even more dismal. The old fife-player mournfully plays "The harp that once thro' Tara's halls", a song lamenting the lost glory and spirit of Ireland's greatness, and he sheds tears as he does so. Sean meditates on what to him, as to the reader, seems to be an image of the ignominy of Ireland's plight:

We all feel it, thought Sean, feel it in the deep heart's core, however poor and wretched we may be: they feel the hatred due to that which has turned Ireland's glory into a half-forgotten fable; from Hyde³⁵ himself down to this poor devil tumbling patiently in misery and want. (p. 470)

In this context Millie's wild and drunken dance is unmistakably a symbolic gesture of rebellion, perhaps even a symbolic prefiguration of the 1916 Easter Rising, an account of which is to form the climax of, and to close, the volume as a whole:

- Hey, you, there! Millie shouted towards the ragged fifer, play up something less like the wind blowin' through the boneyard, an' show th' English lion an' unicorn that Ireland isn't even half-way outa step with life!

When he saw the strength of her body, and sensed the glitter in her eyes, the old fifer changed quick from the solemn tune to the lively reel of The Grain of Wheat, sending the notes out to scatter themselves gaily on the heavy air. Millie rushed headlong across the road and faced the massive lion and unicorn frowning down from Huttons lordly gate. She commenced to dance, slowly at first, till she thought she had caught the time of the tune, then, with a sharp yell, her legs and body began to fasten fiercely in to the swift time of the reel. She moved sideways to the left, then sideways to the right, gesturing her body in a way she imagined added style to the gay music; advancing and retreating with her head held high, her hands bunching up her skirts so that her firm, white legs were out of them up to her thighs. She sent

³⁵ Douglas Hyde: Founder of the Gaelic League.

a venomous spit as high as she could up towards the British arms, twirling round with frantic shakes of her head, letting a yell out of her every few moments as a condiment to the swirling notes of The Grain of Wheat ...

No heaviness in her clumsy boots kept her from whirling round at the end of each bar of music like a humming-top when it had passed from the speed of a sl  ep to that showing its speed plain, its hum louder and more menacing; so she spun, stopping occasionally to face the lion and unicorn, to bring a foot down with a wild stamp to the ground, and send another spit flying up at the British arms (p. 470 - 471).

A crowd gathers; some of the onlookers join in Millie's dance and "sending spit after spit on to the wall over which strutted the symbolic animals of England's greatness, the rest of the crowd cheering whenever any of the moisture was carried to the wall anyway near them". (p. 471).

But, again very significantly, Millie's dance, nobly defiant in its way, is degraded by her own countrymen - just as it was the Irish, not the English, who betrayed and destroyed Parnell, and just as, in the play, the Irish Free State, and not the British Government, is shown as betraying and destroying Irish ideals. The "one-eyed driver" who has arrived to help Sean with Ella's furniture watches Millie lasciviously; some members of the crowd utilise the diversion caused by her dance in order to steal from a small shop nearby, and the lamp-lighter who comes on to the scene is totally indifferent to, and incognisant of, "what ... who, where, when" Ireland should fight. (pp. 471 - 2). And eventually Millie's dance of defiance ends, as indeed the 1916 Rising was to do, in exhaustion and defeat as, she falls unconscious before the British Arms which continue to dominate the setting. The driver of the cart comments:

She's bet, ... bet to th' world. The glitter of her eyes is glazed, and she's sunk down there - see that dark blob on th' ground again: th' wall to th' left of th' gate? That's her. (p. 472).

And as if to humiliate her further, adds: "What a chance for a fella if she hadn' lay down in such a public place!"

But now it can be seen that Millie represents Ireland just as much, even more, in her defeat, degradation and loneliness as she did in her defiance and exaltation. Moreover, like Ireland, she keeps her potential loveliness whatever her present circumstances.

Sean went over near to where she lay, and looked down on her: a huddled mass of torn clothes and mud. There, too, though, was the mass of dark hair, the white legs still showing under the tattered skirt, the firm, full breasts now rising and falling all too swiftly, the shapely hips hidden in the hunched-up skirts, the rich, black eyes wide open, seeing nothing - or maybe, seeing all things - and the drink - stained breath coming in painful pants from the scarlet mouth. (pp. 472 - 3).

Thoughts begin to crystallise in Sean's mind as to her significance, and the scene culminates with his recognition and acknowledgement of the symbolic implications which have been steadily increasing throughout the episode:

She loves Cathleen ni Houlihan, he thought, in her own reckless way. In a way, she is Cathleen ni Houlihan - a Cathleen with the flame out of her eyes turned downwards. The feet of this Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan, are quiet now, but none have bent low and low to kiss them.

Her courage breaks like an old tree in a black wind, and dies.

The pure tall candle that may have stood before the Holy Rood, was sadly huddled now, and melting down into the mire of the street, beneath the British lion and unicorn. (p. 473).

And Sean, like all the other witnesses of the dance, now quietly goes on his way

He turned away, and mounting the car, bade his one-eyed friend drive off with his sister's salvaged goods.

A Cathleen ni Houlihan in defeat is of interest to no-one. And it is upon this desolate sight of Millie lying in the mud of a deserted street that, as at the end of the play, "The curtain slowly falls".

It is with and through this presentation of Millie as Cathleen ni Houlihan, embodiment of the fate and spirit of Ireland, that O'Casey finally pays full tribute to the full potential and significance of Nannie

of the play. This fulfilment of Nannie/Millie as a dramatic character, however was not achieved without a great deal of painstaking effort and very delicate and careful adjustments and developments to very many details of the original play.

Perhaps in presenting Millie as Kathleen ni Houlihan and thus fulfilling the potential of Nannie and her play, O'Casey is drawing upon the symbolism inherent in his other unsatisfactory one-act play of his Abbey period Kathleen Listens In. Of course he uses Kathleen ni Houlihan symbolism independently of Kathleen in the autobiographies; and the kind of romantic figure which Millie, despite the life-like presentation of her character, ultimately, even basically, is, does not correspond to the unromantic, although much more "socially acceptable" image of Kathleen in the play. But it does seem that, related in several ways as the two plays are, the general symbolism of Kathleen is contributing to the fulfilment of Nannie's Night Out, and that, indirectly it is thus achieving a measure of new creative expression for itself. In fact, if "Behold, my Family is Poor" does contain something of Kathleen Listens In, then it includes the very first manifestation of Kathleen's persistent, yet incomplete, relationship with, and influence upon, the autobiographies. As if Kathleen, which could, seemingly, find little ready re-expression in its own right within the framework of much of the autobiographical narrative, was seizing on this opportunity to achieve some re-expression of itself by contributing to another play which had already found a place in the autobiographical structure.

Apart from the possible influence in the symbolic portrayal of the heroine, a possible correspondence between Kathleen and "Behold, my Family is Poor" can be seen in that the song "The harp that once thro' Tara's halls" which does not appear in Nannie but which, in the chapter, is played on the fife by the old man (and the words of which are quoted by the author), has previously appeared, sung by the Nationalists Joey and Johnny, in Kathleen Listens In. Moreover, when

it is sung in the play, the singers are said, in a stage direction to "go out slowly, following each other step by step, singing colorously".

(p. 282), and the old man who plays the tune in the chapter is described as "moving slowly dolorously playing ... " (p. 470).

It is just possible that here the autobiography is echoing, no matter how briefly, the text of Kathleen. It is just on the bounds of possibility too that the use of the omnipresent and ever-present "Lion and Unicorn" symbol in "Behold, My Family is Poor", derived some spark of inspiration from Kathleen, for in that play Joey and Johnny demand of Miceawl O Houlihan: "Are you goin' to pull down that Lion an' Unicorn that's hangin' over th' fireplace, jeerin' at everybody?" (p. 278).

But even if the symbolism of Kathleen and that of "Behold, my Family is Poor" are not directly related to each other in the chapter itself, they were to become so in the course of the autobiographies. In making explicit Millie's portrayal as a Kathleen ni Houlihan figure O'Casey adapts the phraseology of Yeats' poem "Red Hanrahan's song about Ireland".

In a way, she is Cathleen ni Houlihan - a
Cathleen with the flame out of her eyes
turned downwards. The feet of this Cathleen,
the daughter of Houlihan, are quiet now,
but none have bent low and low to kiss them.

Her courage breaks like an old tree in a
black wind, and dies.

The pure tall candle that may have
stood before the Holy Rood, was sadly
huddled now, ... (p. 473)

and a verse of the same poem is quoted a little later in Drums Under The Windows by Donal O'Murachadha who defends Yeats against the attacks of the Gaelic Leaguers. (p. 516). In Sunset, when Donal reappears it is in connection with the episode in which Kathleen of the play reappears too and she, also repeating the imagery of the poem, remarks that she "Got a bit tired of being a tall, white candle before the Holy Rood". (p. 549).

And so, perhaps, the "fate" of Nannie and Kathleen and of their respective heroines are linked, even intertwined in the autobiographies. But even if influence from Kathleen Listens In did help to inspire O'Casey in "Behold, my Family is Poor", and in his enrichment, even fulfilment, of his new symbolic portrait of Nannie/Millie, even this influence is not allowed to take its own course but is channelled with the utmost artistic control into the design and achievement of the chapter as a whole - that of the reworking and creative development of the play Nannie's Night Out to provide a setting worthy of Nannie herself.

CHAPTER FOUR

JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK

In 1957, on hearing that his play Juno and the Paycock was to be translated into the Hungarian language, O'Casey wrote to an Hungarian periodical and described his pleasure at the news. But he also remarked that:

Juno and the Paycock is now a faraway effort. Since its writing, I have written fifteen other plays and eight other books, so that this drama-star is away down on the horizon of a past life, and now,¹ to me, shows so faintly as to be hardly visible. .

This professed lack of interest in Juno is quite characteristic of the attitudes which, in the later part of his career, he not infrequently expressed towards his early works. Irritated by the tactics of personally hostile critics, many of them Irish, who would unreservedly praise the merits of his "realistic" Abbey plays, such as Juno, in order to deprecate, by contrast, the developments in his later works, O'Casey himself went to the other extreme of defending his late plays by passing harsh or dismissive judgements on his earlier ones. From the evidence of the relationship which exists between Juno and the Paycock and the autobiographies it seems that he had a real and lasting regard for the play and an appreciation of its merits.

¹From an introduction to Juno and the Paycock for Hungarian readers, published in Tajekoztato (Budapest), October 1957 and reprinted with the title "O'Casey in Hungarian Costume" in Blasts and Benedictions pp 135-7 quotation from p136

Certainly Juno was not at all "a faraway effort ... away down on the horizon of a past life" when he was writing the autobiographical volumes. Its unmistakable influence can be seen at work in all six of the autobiographies - that is in no fewer than six of those "eight other books",² which, he claimed, had helped to blot it from his remembrance. Moreover, the nature of Juno's relationship with, and contribution to, the autobiographies appears to suggest the author's basic satisfaction with the achievement of the original play. The play itself was written in October - December 1923,³ and the writing

² Apart from the autobiographies, O'Casey, in fact, published three "books" (as opposed to plays) between the writing of Juno, and the writing of the article in 1957. In 1934 he published Windfalls, a volume of essays, verses, short stories and two one-act plays; and in 1937 The Flying Wasp, a collection of essays was published. The third "book", The Green Crow appeared in America in 1956 and in London in 1957. It is composed of essays, including some from The Flying Wasp, and of stories from Windfalls.

³ In a newspaper interview published as "Sean O'Casey sees London: Irish Dramatist's First Visit to England", in The Evening Standard (London) 5th March, 1926, p4 and reprinted in a shortened version "How a tenement dweller studied the stage" in The Sting and The Twinkle. O'Casey himself said: "Cathleen Listens In, was done at the Abbey, but it was so badly received that I went almost broken-hearted, without going behind even to thank the artists. And that same night in my attic I sat down to write Juno and the Paycock, ..." (pp. 24-5) Kathleen Listens In was first performed at the Abbey on October 1st 1923

Juno might have been in O'Casey's mind for some time before this, however, for Gabriel Fallon in his book Sean O'Casey the Man I Knew p.17 recalls that: "He(i.e. O'Casey)

had been telling me for some time about a play he had mapped out, a play which would deal with the tragedy of a crippled I.R.A. man, one Johnny Boyle I do not know how much of this play he had completed by the time that the first night of Kathleen sent him, dismal but determined, home to his room in '422'.... (But) I understand him to say that the first line of the new play which had hitherto evaded him came to him now without difficulty and that he had tapped it out on his typewriter....." The play must have been completed by the end of 1923 for on Thursday, January 3rd, 1924 Joseph Holloway noted in his Journal: "At the Abbey I saw Sean O'Casey who said he handed in a new three-act play last week" Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre, p. 224. At such a time the "three-act play" in question could only have been Juno. Juno received its first performance at the Abbey Theatre on 3rd March 1924.

and publication of the autobiographies span a period from the writing of the first chapter of I Knock at the Door in 1931 - eight years after the writing of the play - to the publication of Sunset and Evening Star in 1954 - thirty-one years after the writing of the play.

And the way in which Juno and its material are treated in these volumes differs radically from the treatment which, in effect or by design, was successfully accorded to The Gunman, and Nannie in the autobiographies and which also formed the basic approach, albeit less successfully, to the rewording of Kathleen Listens In.

Instead of apparently re-expressing, or attempting to re-express, the entire play complexly and compactly within the autobiographies, the author's approach to, and treatment of, Juno in the autobiographies is decidedly analytical. Instead of developing enriching the implications of the play within the autobiographies and, in a sense, thus furthering its achievement, he, quite on the contrary, "simplifies" Juno, and dissipates much of its original significance and achievement by breaking the play down into its two basic elements, and by reworking these independently of each other.

If the conscious, or unconscious, motive behind the re-expression - or in the case of Kathleen, the attempts to re-express - all aspects of The Gunman, Kathleen and Nannie as new artistic wholes within the autobiographical framework was seemingly the desire to compensate for the author's inherent dissatisfaction with the achievement of the original plays, then, it seems that by contrast, the analytical and more diffuse reworking of Juno suggest that the author was, and remained, content with the achievement of Juno in its original form. This does not mean, however, that the autobiographies' reworking of Juno and its material is haphazard, or without creative design or effect. In fact the separate reworkings of the plays two main elements follow very definite artistic patterns within the autobiographies - patterns which, both individually and collectively, are as distinct as, if different from, those involved in the reworking of The Gunman, Kathleen and Nannie.

All the correspondences which derive from the Irish Civil War period-setting and Dublin background of Juno are found exclusively within three consecutive sections of Irishfallen: "Into Civil War", "Comrades", and "The Clergy Take a Hand". And the inclusion of such correspondences within these sections conforms to the chronological, historical and political sequence and design of the autobiographies, just as does the inclusion of material from The Gunman into the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" chapters of the same volume. But one of Juno's major themes which does much to allow the play to transcend its specific historical period and local setting - the theme of the qualities and griefs of motherhood - is to be found expressed, in incidents, words and terms very closely related to the play, in every one of the six volumes of autobiography, regardless of those volumes' varying backgrounds of time and place.

So precise is the analysis of Juno into its two constituent elements within the autobiographies, that in contrast it becomes apparent just how completely the play itself has fused together, or has even derived its very nature and being from the fusion of, two kinds of experience - that which is bounded by time, place and personality, and that which transcends them. Perhaps this achievement, within the very essence of Juno, of a virtually perfect reconciliation of the particular with the universal was that very quality which gave the author real and lasting satisfaction with the play, and which, therefore, kept him from attempting consciously or unconsciously, a rival or compensatory re-expression of the play within the autobiographies.

Since he has attained near perfection in the play the author does not, even cannot, in the medium of the autobiographies build further upon the achievement of the play, for its own sake: instead he reverses the process, and breaks down the achievement of the play, so that the resulting elements or fragments might be used to enrich the autobiographies in, as it were, the autobiographies' own right. Of course the attempted composite and creative reworkings of The Gunman, Kathleen and Nannie are part of the autobiographies: their initial inclusion within the autobiographies is subject to the limits imposed by the general, established thematic and artistic design of the autobiographies, and, once included, are fully integrated into, and greatly enrich the fabric of, the autobiographical volumes. Yet if there is bound up with these reworkings any trace of a desire to re-express, and perhaps add a new dimension to, an entire play, it may be said that the reworking of these three plays has an end to some extent independent of the autobiographies. In the reworking of Juno, however, there is no trace of this, and consequently there is a much greater sense of the subordination of the play and its material to the dictates of, and to the

achievement of ^{the} autobiographies. This does not mean that the reworking of Juno is any less creative than the reworkings of The Gunman, Kathleen or Nannie, or that, all in all, it is very much less comprehensive or complete. It is basically that the creativity in the reworking of Juno and its material is directed to different ends; and that in the pursuance of these ends the play and its material become, and remain, fragmented. The three Civil War chapters of Inishfallen, "Into Civil War", "Comrades", and "The Clergy Take a Hand", while possessing very many individual correspondences with Juno and the Paycock, often diverge very much from the play in the actual outline of their narrative and in their thematic concerns, and seem entirely independent of the play in their artistic designs. The three chapters each present a differing but complementary aspect of the Civil War, and a definite artistic pattern is discernible not only within the chapters individually, but over the chapters collectively, for they seem in design and theme to make up something of a trilogy within the historical scheme of the autobiographies.

"Into Civil War" gives an outline of historical events leading up to the war, and expresses the author's opinions upon these. Then it moves on to a "dramatised" episode which is designed to express how the real tragedy of civil war manifests itself in the suffering of the innocent. The author draws attention to the consciousness and precision of his artistic design in connection with this episode when he describes the incident at the end of the chapter (Mr. Moore mourning his dead wife) in terms of being:

A tiny vignette of the Civil War: the big church, with the light on the altar; the chalky statues of glum saints, green, blue and brown, gawking down at the figure of an old man kneeling beside the coffin that held what remained of one who had been his lifelong comrade. (p.84)

The chapter's opening direct narration, in an authorial voice (not "Sean's" voice), of the events which placed Ireland on the brink of civil war (p. 73) is in nature, design and purpose quite independent of Juno. Beyond the preliminary statement that the play is set in Dublin and that the "Period of the play (is), 1922" (p. 2)⁴ no historical background information is directly given in Juno. It is the importance of the historical scheme within the structure of the autobiographies which accounts for the presence within the chapter of a passage describing the acceptance of the Treaty, the consequent splitting of Ireland into two factions - The Free Staters under Griffith, and the Republicans under De Valera - and the very earliest days of the Free State. Yet despite its independence from the play in form and purpose, the description does make use, as part of its fabric, of one detail from the play. And the comment that with the setting up of the Free State "tailors worked night and day making green uniforms for the new Free State Army" (p. 73) seems to recall Mrs. Madigan's taunt to "Needle" Nugent, the tailor, in the play that he is

a real throe Die-hard an' live-soft Republican, attendin' Republican funerals in the day, an' stoppin' up half the night makin' suits for the Civic Guards! (Act II p. 58).

Soon the historical account, which began fairly neutrally, is suffused with the author's very bitter political opinions about the War. These passages of explicit opinion are in nature and form totally alien to Juno which consistently presents themes through characterisation and dramatised incident. Moreover, the opinions themselves are, at this point in the chapter, of an infinitely more politically dogmatic and partisan nature than are the apolitical attitudes of the author in the play. Yet such passages, in "Into Civil War", of which the following is typical, do draw heavily upon the play for certain of their themes and images:

⁴ Page references to the text of Juno and the Paycock are to Collected Plays Vol. I

Here and now, the slick slogan of the clergy that civil war and all deforming crimes were in the mind and way only of those who forgot God was to be mocked at by catholic murder, catholic gunfire, and catholic torch setting flames to the homes of catholic people. Here were those, now on the threshold of battle, who had not forgotten God; who went to Mass as regular as clock-work; who had deep-cut circles in the flesh of their fingers with the never-ending twisting of rosary beads. What atheism, the clergy said, had brought to Russia, catholic Christianity had brought to Ireland. Catholics who had been steeped in the Faith from the very cradle; who had listened to every papal encyclical and episcopal pastoral; who could find their way to confession blindfolded; who acknowledged with a bumper of bows the divine headship of the see of Rome; holy men who had the excuse of neither atheism nor paganism; yet here they were, feverishly getting ready to shoot one another in forehead and back; to torture opponents when they got a chance; to hurry a different opinion from a hasty court-martial to a quick end by a firing-squad. Righteous catholic Irishmen were about to get busy making their land a nation once again; showing, if it ever needed to be shown, that good practising catholics are very much as other men are, and sometimes a damned sight worse; that all the countless supernatural and spiritual advantages they boastfully possess do not give them any lead in grace over others, and do not fix on catholic natures any other spiritual or natural bridle than those which check the desperate anger that may try to assert itself in the heart of any common atheist or communist. The papal yellow and white rage is worse than the rage of the red, for it is tireless in its enmity, and its revenge is swift as lightning, or as slow as the crawl of a snail through a thicket of tough grass - according to the chances conditions may put before it.

.....
 Each day it grew worse, till half the hands fingered the triggers of rifles; the other half of the hands tightened on the butts of revolvers; and those who had neither nursed a hand-grenade in every pocket. To God and Ireland true; for they still went to Mass, to confession, and recited their rosaries ad lib. (pp.73-4)

While not exactly a defence of Communism this passage suggests that, despite the virulent attacks made by the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church upon their ideological arch-enemy Communism, the Church itself fosters more violence and malice than does the Communist cause. And as in the reworking of The Gunman, the author in Inishfallen is placing a gloss of personal political opinion upon a situation which he has viewed apolitically in the original play. And material derived from Juno is here being used to express a theme typical of Inishfallen, and of a period of O'Casey's work later than that of the original play.

Anti-Catholicism and references to Communism apart, however, the passage does seem to draw upon the play, and to assert directly facts and themes which are found in the play in a dramatised form. For example, that practising Roman Catholics did kill each other in the Irish Civil War is seen in the play in that the superstitiously hyper-pious Johnny bears a responsibility for Robbie Tancred's death, and Tancred was presumably a Catholic himself for he is given a Catholic funeral.

The passage's use of "rosary-beads" as an image to convey the professed piety of those who are participating in the killing continues through the three Civil War chapters, and thus becomes part of the artistic design of those chapters. But the origin of the image lies in an incident in the play. For as Johnny is about to be taken to his death, his ruthless killers ask him with, in their own terms, genuine and scrupulous pious concern: "Have you your beads?" And Johnny, recognising the awful portent in the question cries out frantically: "Me beads! Why do you ass me that, why do you ass me that?" (Act II p.84).

Gradually in "Into Civil War" passages of historical narrative and opinion in the author's voice begin to yield to ideas expressed as Sean's thoughts and scenes witnessed through Sean's eyes. A dramatic element is thus introduced in preparation for the main "dramatic" episode of the section - the story of Mrs. Moore.

The entire Mrs. Moore episode is much more closely related to the manner and spirit of the play than is the first part of the chapter, for, like the play it uses the recognisably human terms of character and incident to illustrate the horror of Civil War. This shift from direct to dramatised opinion is integral to the artistic scheme of the chapter itself, and clearly distinguishes the design of the chapter from that of the play. For whereas the play consistently dramatises

its themes the chapter falls into two complementary parts - the second part illustrating in human terms the themes, opinions and historical circumstances which have been expressed directly in the first.

As well as being closely related to Juno in manner and spirit the "Mrs. Moore" episode, of all the dramatised episodes contained in the three Civil War chapters, includes the greatest number of individual details from the play. It uses these details, however, to form a narrative independent from the plot of the play. It is as if the author breaks the plot and substance of the play into pieces, and views the resulting individual details of the play through a kaleidoscope. The portrayal, in the autobiography, of the character of Mrs. Moore and of the events attendant upon her death is a new synthesis of the fragments of the play.

Initially Mrs. Moore of "Into Civil War" is related to Mrs. Tancred of the play for she is said to live "above in the two pair back" (p.81) of Sean's house, while Juno describes Mrs. Tancred as living in "the two-pair back" (p.55) of the Boyles' tenement. And the description of Mrs. Moore

with her gentle, even handsome, face, that hovered unsteadily over the rushing, unreasonable agitation of the times like a trembling star in a turbulent sky. Her finely-made hands, their grace peering out even through the deep seams of age and toil...(p.81)

seems to be an elaboration upon a stage-direction's description of Mrs. Tancred as "a very old woman, obviously shaken by the death of her son". (Act II p.53)

Yet Mrs. Moore's trust in votive lights, - she "had lighted candle after candle to St. Anthony" (p.81) - relates her to Johnny who tends two votive lights, "The wan inside to St. Anthony isn't enough, but he must have another wan to the Virgin here!" (Act I p.8) And in her case as in his, votive lights seem to be of no avail in averting that which she most fears. "St. Anthony, busy with higher things, hadn't bothered his head about her" while Johnny's light before the picture of the Virgin" flickers for a moment, and goes out" (Act III p.83) a few seconds before his murderers enter the room.

But, unlike Johnny, she is herself uninvolved in the fighting and the object of her prayers is "the safety of her little household". And her innocence of bloodshed and her concern for her family relate her once more to Mrs. Tancred but also to Juno. Unlike the grief of these two women in the play, however, Mrs. Moore's sorrow is not that of the death of a son, and she does not play a direct part in the autobiographies' main development of the archetypal "motherhood" theme of the play - for the emphasis in this chapter appears to be upon her as an innocent victim of the Civil War rather than specifically upon her as a grieving mother - but in so far as her suffering is caused by her children's involvement in the war she is still very much of the kinship of Mrs. Tancred and Juno:

her two sons, who were Republicans, had been thrown into jail; their sister had quickly followed them; then this girl's sweetheart, a Republican, too, had been found on a lonely country road, more than just dead, for his belly had been kicked in, his right eye was a purple pulp, an ear had been partly shot off, and now, jagged and red-edged, stood out like a tiny fin from the side of his head, his mouth a cavity of bloody fluid, floating bits of broken teeth, while to make sure that there would be no chance of escape back into the

everyday world, his body had been systematically punched full of gaping bullet-holes, so that the boy gave a lively insight and oversight of what can be done when the twitching hands of the killed twist a rosary in harmony with the twisting of companion rosaries in the hands of the killer. (p.81)

The reference to rosary beads recalls Johnny's last few moments on stage. But the savage killing of the sweetheart of Mrs. Moore's daughter suggests, in its awful and hideous detail, not the death of Johnny but of Mrs. Tancred's son:

...Seven wounds he had - one enterin' the neck, with an exit wound beneath the left shoulder-blade; another in the left breast penetratin' the heart, an '.....'(Act 1 p4)

And the finding of the body "on a lonely country road" seems to echo the phrase "on the side of a lonely country lane" (Act II p54) which is how Mrs. Tancred describes the place where her son's corpse was found. Strangely enough Mrs. Moore, when her sorrows become too great to bear, is eventually found, like Tancred, lying dead by the roadside "on the streaming pavement of a windy turning" (p.81). But although the circumstances of her death correspond in one particular to those of Tancred's there are also distinct dissimilarities between the characters and between the kinds of death they die. Mrs. Moore is an innocent victim of the political struggle, whereas Tancred was an active Republican and had once been the leader of an ambush in which it is known that a man was killed; and, again unlike Tancred, Mrs. Moore does not die from physical wounds but as a result of the mental anguish caused by her worry over her children:

So worn out, in the end, with a life daily tested to the full, the kindly soul of the old woman found rest only in restlessness. One night, while her old husband slept, she had wandered out into a windy, sleety night, to be found the morning after, stretched calmly out, indifferent to the stinging rain and the bustling wind,.. (p.81)

And the general thematic effect of Mrs. Moore's death is thus, not that of Tancred's, but as if Mrs. Tancred herself were to die of grief after the news of the death of her son.

Mrs. Moore dies and so the autobiographical episode, like the play, contains a funeral, although one is the funeral of an innocent victim of the war, the other the funeral of the Republican Tancred.

With another kaleidoscopic twist (a "dark kaleidoscope" as O'Casey calls one of the sections of Drums Under the Windows) upon the incidents and characters of the play, Mrs. Moore is no longer the mourner but the mourned and now Mr. Moore her husband assumes the role of the mourner - the role related to that of Mrs. Tancred and Juno of the play.

Everything was embedded in a damp, dark-grey mist, spitting out a contemptuous shower of pointed sleet now and again, when Sean and a few neighbours walked beside the old man, behind the closed-in hearse, carrying the body of what had been his wife from the mortuary to the church. Sons and daughter were refused a parole from prison by the Free State Government, so they couldn't come to mingle their excited sorrow with the old man's bewildered grief; and, unable to do more, Sean and four or five neighbours had turned out to act as guards and hedge the old man's sorrow in between them.... (p.82)

In manifestation of his grief Mr. Moore has clad himself poorly against the cruel weather and "with head held up, seemed to be gladly taking any discomfort the rain and wind could give him" (p.82). And in a dialogue initiated by Sean it is his turn to express simply, but very movingly, a grief as deep as that experienced by the mothers in the play. (As in Inishfallen's reworking of The Gunman the autobiography, unlike the play, does not give the women the sole prerogative of family feeling, compassion, love and nobility.)

-You should ha' brought an old overcoat of same kind with you, Mr. Moore, said Sean.

-I wouldn't ha' felt easy if I hadda, Sean, said the old man; not after what happened the other night when who you know lay so soaked an dead chilly the livelong night on the hard road, an' no-one mindin'. If I only hadda known.

-Well, put on your hat at least, advised Sean. It isn't good for a man of your age to go uncovered this weather.

-No, not yet. It's the one way I can show her I'm sorry I slep' while she was dyin'; the one token of respect I can offer her now.

-But, insisted Sean, if she knew, she'd be the first to tell you to do it.

-She does know, the old man said, knows well. An' by standin' up to what I'm standin' up to now, she knows I'd ha' willingly laid down with her on the cold ground in all the sleet fallin' an' all the wind blowin', the time she was dyin' alone, if only I'd known; if only I hadda known. (p.82-3)

The lament that his loved one "lay so soaked an' dead chilly the livelong night on the hard road, an' no-one mindin'. If I only hadda known" even recalls something of Mrs. Tancred's very words:

"..he was me only child, an' to think that he was lyin' for a whole night stretched out on the side of a lonely country lane, with his head, his darlin' head, that I often kissed an' fondled, half hidden in the wather of a runnin' brook." (Act II p.54)

And in autobiography as in play the tragedy of the living moves on even as the dead are being mourned. In the play Johnny is visited, ominously, by the "Mobilizer" while prayers for Robbie Tancred are being said outside in the street, and in Inishfallen "A lorry carrying two Republican prisoners, surrounded by Free State soldiers" passes the hearse and mourners, and turns into Mountjoy Jail (p.83)

Sean, himself a mourner at Mrs. Moore's funeral, now lapses into thought once more about the ironies of the Civil War (pp 83-4) and also about the new attitudes fostered by the Free State society, "Sturdy stalks of petty power were springing up, and blossoms of privilege would soon be bright on them, petalled with scarlet thorns to keep envious, pulling hands away". (p.84)

And this theme, so typical of Inishfallen as a whole, colours the subsequent description of the treatment which Mrs. Moore receives at the hands of the church, and leads the autobiography to develop for itself an idea only barely touched upon in the play. For Mrs. Tancred's brief contention that even though her son is to be buried "like a king" by his Republican comrades, she will have to "go on livin' like a pauper" (Act II p.54) is expanded in the autobiography into an incident in which Mrs. Moore, who has much in common with Mrs. Tancred, fails to go on living and is actually buried "like a pauper". And in its description of the funeral the autobiography not only explicitly condemns the Church's and Society's obsession with wealth and social privilege, but also implicitly condemns Republicans, such as Tancred and his comrades and Mrs. Moore's own children, who are so bound up in their own narrow political concerns that they completely ignore the issue of social injustice, and say and do nothing as to the plight of the poor. The contrast between Mrs. Moore's insignificant funeral and the funeral of the Republican Tancred with its hymns, public procession, and wreaths is very sharp, and though not directly referred to in the autobiography this contrast might too have been instrumental in the writing of the passage which describes the arrival of Mrs. Moore's body at the church:

They stopped at Berkeley Street Chapel, took the coffin from the hearse, carried it into the church porch. A priest in cassock, surplice, and stole came dashing out, carrying a bucket and brush, muttered a few Latin invocations with bored celerity, scattered a few swift drops of water over the coffin, and ran swiftly back into church again. If the pathetic, careworn body in the coffin had been a countess, hell's bells

wouldn't have kept an archbishop
 from sprinkling the holy water sweetly,
 saying the prayers slow, giving the
 reception an elegant and ornate look
 - God giving the lady value for her
 money and rank. Hurry up, hurry up;
 they carried the coffin into the church;
 sacristan pointed hurriedly where to put
 it; ran off, then; for the look of the
 mourners promised no tip. Hurry up.
 Then they went out, the old man staying
 behind to pray, and keep her company
 for a little longer. Hurry up. (p.84)

The lack of interest of the Republicans in what are, to the author,
 here as in the play, the real issues of Irish nationhood and Irish life,
 is again implied when Sean, expressing concern that Mr. Moore might
 "catch his death" in his wet clothes, is asked by "a neighbour":

-what's the odds, if he does aself?
 ...his children are so busy with
 themselves that they have time only
 to notice now and again that he's still
 there. If he catches it bad, the wind
 an' the rain'll be after doin' him a
 good turn. (p.84)

And so with its "tiny vigrette of the Civil War", its tableau of
 the figure of an old man kneeling beside the coffin that held what
 remained of "one who had been his lifelong comrade" ends "Into Civil War",
 a chapter which is ultimately independent of the play but which selected,
 rearranged and developed fragments of the plot, images, characterisations,
 and themes of the play in order to give substance to, and to enrich,
 its own thematic purpose and its own artistic design.

The literary considerations of the three Civil War sections and
 their independence from the play, can be seen again in the link between
 "Into Civil War" and the subsequent chapter "Comrades", for the last
 word of the closing phrase of the former "one who had been his lifelong
 comrade" immediately becomes the title of the latter. And there is an
 essential irony here also in the use of the same word to denote, in

"Into Civil War", the lifelong bond of love existing between husband and wife and, in "Comrades", the short-lived loyalty which did not prevent men who fought together against the British Black and Tans, from killing each other in the Civil War. And it is not insignificant with regard to the chapters' basic lack of artistic "commitment" to the re-expression of Juno, that this use of the word "comrade", to make a precise contrast between the lifelong comradeship of love in marriage and the short-lived sharing of political loyalties, is derived not from Juno (which uses the word in a different context)⁵ but from The Plough and the Stars.

For Nora Clitheroe pleading, in Act III of The Plough, after the rising has already broken out, that her husband leave the fight and return home with her, answers his charge of "D'ye want me to be unthru to me comrades?" by saying: "I want you to be thru to me, Jack.....I'm your dearest comrade; I'm your thruet comrade..... They only want th' comfort of havin' you in th' same danger as themselves."⁶

The chapter "Comrades" is composed of a sustained dramatic episode concerning the Republican Lanehin and Mick Clonervy, once a Republican colleague of Lanehin, but now a Colonel in the new Free State Army. And although something of the dramatic spirit of the chapter might be attributable to Juno with its previous dramatisation of events typical of the Civil War, "Comrades" draws very little upon the actual material of the play, and possesses its own very distinct artistic structure and techniques.

⁵see below, with reference to the final appearance of Johnny in the play and the death scene of Lanehin in the autobiography.

⁶The Plough and the Stars Collected Plays Vol I Act III p.234

The overtly artistic and literary nature of the chapter is quickly seen when the narrative abandons all semblance of autobiographical verisimilitude by describing, in dramatic terms, scenes which "Sean" himself does not witness. "Comrades" begins with a conversation between Sean and Mick Clonervy near Stephen's Green (pp.84-6), a conversation which the author uses to convey more criticisms of the Free State and its preoccupations with power and privilege. The conversation is abruptly concluded when a boy on a bicycle(who, it transpires is Lanehin) throws a grenade at a house nearby, and Clonervy and two colleagues seize bicycles and give chase. Sean retires to the quietness of Stephen's Green to ponder on events. And the omnipresent author has now a free hand with the story and can switch the attention of the narrative backwards and forwards between Sean and the chase. In so doing he makes use of a highly conscious literary device by which the very natural behaviour of the ducks, mating in Stephen's Green and seen there by Sean, can be, at intervals, juxtaposed, by way of implicit comment, with the highly unnatural behaviour not only of man about to kill man but of ex-comrade about to kill ex-comrade.

There were the two of them again! The brown duck, like a maid hid in a franciscan habit, spurting forward when she felt the pursuer coming too close; waddling swift from the temptation following her obstinately and unerringly in the desire of the drake, brilliant as a courtier in a gay king's garden. Sean's glance followed them till both were hidden behind a curtain of flowering currant.

-Turn right round, Lanehin, shouted the Colonel; right round till we all get a full look at you! Stretch your arms out each side of you, along the top of the wall, and rest like that till we're ready for you. Stir an inch, and we'll plug you full of holes, you creeping, cowardly, murdering bastard!
(pp.89-90)

The entire opening sequence of the chapter, the conversation between Sean and Clonervy, and the throwing of the grenade owe nothing to the material of Juno beyond, perhaps, one tiny and very curious detail: for Lanehin is said to hum the tune of "Home to Our Mountains from Il Trovatore" (p86) just before he throws the grenade, and in Act II of the play Juno and Mary sing a song entitled "Home to Our Mountains" (p.51).

The exciting bicycle chase of Lanehin through the Dublin hills by Clonervy and two "plain-clothes men" (pp.87-8) with the narrative of the chapter focusing alternately upon the thoughts and feelings of the pursued and the pursuers (as well as once reverting back to the scene in the park where Sean is sitting), is in substance as in technique entirely independent from Juno. And it is only as the chapter approaches its climax, as Lanehin falls exhausted from his cycle, and desperately seeks cover amidst the inhospitable landscape (p.88), that "Comrades" begins to make any real use of details from the play.

In some ways Lanehin now begins to be portrayed as something of a counterpart to Johnny Boyle. Both are young; Lanehin being "only twenty-two. Not even that, for there was a month and more to go yet" (p.88) and Johnny being "something younger" than his sister's twenty-two years. (Act I p7). And Lanehin's physical and mental agony as, now on foot, he begins to stumble away from his pursuers and over hilly ground covered with gorse and heather, can be equated with Johnny's previous sufferings from physical wounds and present mental anguish, as, throughout the play, he tries to evade his pursuers and restlessly awaits the inevitable retribution for his betrayal of Tancred. In common, too, with Johnny, Lanehin has a kind and solicitous mother whose care and advice he has hitherto disregarded. Juno had begged on "bended knees" that Johnny might not join the Republican movement and

"go agen the Free State" (Act I p.7) and Lanehin for his own part remembers, now:

How often he was angry when his mother used to say. You look dead tired Kevin; you really ought to go to bed. Oh, God! If he was only at home now with the old woman urging him to go up and lie down and have a good sleep! (p.89)

Unable to move a step further he is finally confronted by his pursuers, and now for the first time recognises amongst them his ex-comrade:

Mick Clonervy, sergeant of his company when they had both fought the Tans; a colonel now in the Free State Army; promotion, sure! Sell his own mother for a yellow tab. (p.89)

Clonervy has, during the chase, already identified the bomber as "Lanehin. Captain of the crush I was in when we were fightin' th' Tans" (p.88), and thus as in Johnny's betrayal of Tancred, and as in the execution of Johnny, in his turn, by other Republicans, the situation and theme of ex-comrade killing ex-comrade are firmly established. Also the autobiography like the play suggests that an element of personal jealousy plays some part in the bitterness of the conflict; for Lanehin had, in the Republican forces, been Captain to Clonervy's rank of Sergeant, and the betrayed Robbie Tancred had been "Commandant of the Battalion" as opposed to Johnny's post of Quarter-Master (Act II p.55).

As it becomes more and more obvious that he is going to die Lanehin's situation and words become more and more closely related to the situation and words of Johnny when cornered by the two "Irregulars" in Act III of the play. Faced by their armed captors both boys plead for their lives, Lanehin arguing the extenuating circumstance that the grenade he threw did not do "a lot of damage" (p.90), and Johnny

begging for leniency because he had previously lost his arm "for Ireland". (p.84) But both pleas are met with sharp reminders that pitiable as the plights of Lanehin and Johnny now are, they brought that plight upon themselves by performing actions which were calculated to result in the killing or maiming of others. Clonervy tells Lanehin that as a result of the grenade:

"only one of us had an eye knocked into a jelly,
and another got his chest rieved asunder",

and the Second Irregular reminds Johnny that "Commandant Tancred", whom Johnny has betrayed, "lost his life for Ireland".

Most importantly both autobiography and play now place great emphasis on the word "comrade". In the play Johnny begs:

I'm an oul' comrade - yous wouldn't shoot an oul' comrade.

Second Irregular. Poor Tancred was an oul' comrade o' yours, but you didn't think o' that when you gave him away to the gang that sent him to his grave. But we've no time to waste; come on - here, Dermot, hitch his arm....

Johnny. Are yous goin' to do in a comrade?.....
Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me! Mother O' God, pray for me - be with me now in the agonies o' death!....Hail, Mary, full o' grace.....the lord is....with Thee. (p.84)

Johnny's appeal on the grounds of comradeship is in vain and The Irregulars "drag out Johnny Boyle, and the curtain falls". When the curtain rises again the time is about an hour later, and news is about to be brought that Johnny's corpse has been found.

In Inishfallen Lanehin's repeated appeals on the grounds of comradeship are similarly ineffectual. In the autobiography, however the curtain does not fall until Lanehin is dead:

-I'm an old comrade of yours, Mick, the young man pleaded.

-Sure I know that well, said the Colonel heartily, and I'll say this much - for the sake of oul' times, we won't let you suffer long.

-Jesus! whimpered the half-dead lad,
 you wouldn't shoot an old comrade, Mick!
 The Colonel's arm holding the gun shot
 forward suddenly, the muzzle of the gun,
 tilted slightly upwards, splitting the
 lad's lips and crashing through his chattering
 teeth.

-Be Jesus! We would, he said, and then he
 pulled the trigger. (p.91)

Without explicit comment Irishfallen instantly juxtaposes an incident
 happening at precisely that moment, in Stephen's Green:

-Looka, Ma! shrilled a childish voice
behind Sean; looka what th' ducks is doin'!

Sean turned swift to see a fair young mother,
her sweet face reddening, grasp a little boy's
arm, wheel him right round, saying as she
pointed out over the innocent lake: Look at
all the other ducks, dear, over there on
the water!

The drake had reached his goal, and he was
quivering in the violent effort to fulfil
God's commandment to multiply and replenish
the earth.

Thus in a chapter entirely contained within its own artistic
 framework O'Casey uses a scene from Juno to provide the climax of, and
 point to, a dramatic episode, the narrative of which had hitherto been
 virtually unrelated to the play. Again the autobiography is selecting
 from Juno material which it can fashion entirely to its own ends.

But in one respect "Comrades" might just possibly compensate for
 something that the author regarded as missing in the final form of the text
 of the play. And if this is so it is the only instance of the auto-
 biographies performing such a function in their relationship with Juno.

Reputedly in O'Casey's original conception of the play and in the
 text of the play as it was submitted to the Abbey Theatre, the death
 of Johnny was portrayed on stage. Gabriel Fallon writes:

During one of our conversations he told me
 that when he submitted Juno and the Paycock
 to the Abbey it had an additional scene which
 the directors cut. He gave me the impression
 that he was rather aggrieved at this. I
 asked him what the scene was and he told me
 it was the shooting of Johnny Boyle which
 took place in darkness in a roadside setting. 7

And it is just possible that O'Casey's aggrievement found satisfaction very many years later in the inclusion of Lanehin's death-scene in "Comrades", related as it so clearly is to Johnny's last appearance in the play, but differing from the performed and published version of the scene in the play in so far as Lanehin dies "on stage".

"The Clergy Take a Hand" completes the trilogy of Civil War chapters, and its thematic design complements and provides something of a culmination of the thematic design of the two previous chapters. For while "Into Civil War" describes the suffering and death of the innocent in the war, and "Comrades" describes the suffering and death of the guilty, "The Clergy Take a Hand" ends with a dramatised episode which explicitly contrasts the suffering and imminent death from poverty and disease of an innocent young girl, with the death of Captain Wogan, an active participant in the war who is guilty of shooting a man before he himself was shot. (p.100)

In its overall structure "The Clergy Take a Hand" returns to the pattern of "Into Civil War" in that it begins with passages which narrate the history of the war and express the author's opinions directly, and then moves on to an episode which presents the author's beliefs "dramatically" as in the play.

The themes of the first part of the chapter are a development of "Into Civil War"s criticism of the political involvements of the Roman Catholic Church and of the brutality which such involvement seems to inspire. For example, the chapter describes how the Catholic Clergy, having judged that a victory of the Free State over the Republicans would be propitious for the advancement of the clergy's own authority in Ireland, deemed it proper to condemn the Republicans whom they had once encouraged, and how the Bishop of Blarney reputedly incited Free State

troops to murder Republican prisoners who were being held in state jails. The theme and tenor of the chapter at this point is entirely characteristic of the autobiography, and not at all characteristic of the play, yet the play is not quite forgotten and almost uncannily, O'Casey, in his anti-clerical argument, does once almost echo the text of Juno, for enumerating the treacheries of the Irish Catholic clergy he writes:

The bishops again! The men of Ninety-Eight; the Fenians; Parnell; and now the unfortunate Republicans in the Irish jails recommended to the hangman, or to a firing squad. A way of thought that seems to be nothing new to the Vatican bishops. (p.94)

While in Juno, Captain Boyle says:

...the clergy always had too much power over the people in this unfortunate country.... Didn't they prevent the people in "47" from seizin' the corn, an' they starvin'; didn't they down Parnell; didn't they say that hell wasn't hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish the Fenians? (Act I p.25)

However, Boyle's remark is in the context of the play, designed to reveal more about his character than about the political situation in Ireland. At this point in the play he, work-shy as ever, is terrified at the prospect that "Father Farrell" has found him a job. Later, when Boyle is believed to have inherited a substantial sum of money, and is no longer in imminent danger of being forced to work, his views on the clergy have completely changed, and he reports to Joxer (Act II p.38) a conversation in which he has stoutly defended the clergy against the criticisms of "Needle" Nugent - precisely the same criticisms which he himself has previously expressed.

But minor as such tiny and apparently superficial and inconsequential points of correspondence between the play and autobiography are, they do illustrate the extent to which the autobiography is, despite the basic independence of its themes and structure, looking to Juno as a source

Anti-clericalism abates for a while in "The Clergy Take a Hand" so that the author might include in this chapter an account of how "Sean" had begun to write plays and to submit them to the Abbey. While being of considerable interest and importance in the scheme and context of the autobiographies, this part of the chapter has no connection with Juno. But the relationship between the play and "The Clergy Take a Hand" really begins when the autobiography embarks upon a "dramatic" episode of incident, characterisation and dialogue. Sean is interrupted in his thoughts about his plays when he hears "The young girl below ... coughing again" (p. 98). The wretched living conditions described, as Sean "thinks" about the young girl and her family (pp. 98-9), mark a return to the explicit social themes introduced in connection with Mrs. Moore at the end of "Into Civil War", and as in the earlier chapter the clergy and Republicans are judged to be equally indifferent to poverty: "the priests as far as Sean could see, were chary of crossing the border into the hidden horridness of a slum" (p.99) and, "the tram-conductor", a character who in the first four volumes of the autobiography, represents a staunchly Republican viewpoint, is completely unimpressed by the situation and fate of the young girl. (pp. 101-2).

The visit of the girl's brother to Sean, in order to borrow the fee for the ambulance which will take the girl to the Hospice for the Dying, is juxtaposed with the advent of "the tram-conductor" with the news of Captain Wogan's death. And it is in the description of Captain Wogan and the circumstances of his death that Juno makes its marked but limited contribution to the episode.

The tram-conductor's announcement as he bursts into the room:

"He's found! ... found at last! Young Captain Wogan:
 away in a lone country lane, beyond Finglas ... (p.100)

unmistakably recalls the opening lines of the play which announce the finding of the body of Robbie Tancred:" on a little bye-road, out

beyond Finglas, he was found" (Act I p.4). And in the ensuing catalogue of Wogan's wounds: "his belly kicked in, ears frayed, an eye gouged out, and the nose broken, with a bullet through his brain as an amen", Inishfallen again recalls the way in which Tancred's wounds have been catalogued in the play: "Seven wounds he had....." (Act I p.4)

Wogan as a committed and active Republican shares not only Tancred's political convictions but also bears a similar guilt to Tancred's: "Wogan shot a man before he himself was shot" (p.100), Sean comments, and in the play Mrs. Tancred says of her son, on her way to his funeral, "I'm told he was the leader of the ambush where me next door neighbour Mrs. Mannin, lost her Free State soldier son." (Act II p.54).

But the "dramatic" episode of "The Clergy Take a Hand" draws material not only from Juno but also from two other of O'Casey's works - the play The Plough and the Stars, and a short story from Windfalls. And the way in which the chapter, for its own thematic ends, combines details from Juno with details from The Plough and Windfalls, demonstrates once again the total subjection of the material of Juno to the independent structure and purposes of the autobiographies. The "Captain Wogan" aspect of the scene is derived from Inishfallen, but the "Young Girl" whose fate is juxtaposed with that of Captain Wogan has a positive literary history in her own right, since long before Inishfallen was written she had appeared, under the name of "Mollser" in both The Plough and the Stars (produced and published in 1926) and in the short-story "A Fall in a Gentle Wind", which was published in Windfalls in 1934. And the portrayals of Mollser or the "Young Girl" in play, story and autobiography are very much interrelated. ⁸

⁸ For a detailed analysis of this interrelationship see the chapter on The Plough and The Stars.

the chapter - the passage in which the Republican "tram-conductor" sweeps aside the matter of the innocent girl's impending death through a poverty which is beyond her control, and can express concern only about Wogan's death in a political struggle which Wogan freely chose to join - is based upon, and developed from, a passage not from Juno but from "The Plough". In Inishfallen the climactic dialogue occurs as Sean watches the young girl being taken from the house to die in the Hospice:

Sean went to a window, and looked out on the street.He saw the red-shirted men go down the stone steps, on to the pathway, out to the wide-open door of the ambulance, carrying on the stretcher a flicker of life away from where a ruddier life had at last refused to live along with it. All Sean could see was a thin, frail hand, white as snow, clawing timidly at a brown blanket tumbled over the stretcher; a thin, white hand paying its last respects to the life it was losing.

- What's up, what's wrong? asked the tram-conductor,
.....

- A citizeness being brought to the Hospice for the Dying to hand over a life that has lived too long.

- What's amiss with her?

- Consumption.

- That's not much to get excited about. We have more stringent things to think of today than a case of simple consumption.

- She was very young - just on the verge of womanhood; and, one time, she was handsome and gay.

- Aw, what signifies that, Sean? That sort o' things a daily occurrence in these places. You ought to be well used to them things be now. She's a lucky lady compared with poor Jack Wogan
(pp. 101-2)

The "original" dialogue in The Plough takes place in a tenement during the Easter Rising when a British soldier arrives to escort the coffin of the already-dead Mollser out of the house:

Corporal Stoddart. Was she plugged?

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The Covey. Ah, no; died o' consumption.

Corporal Stoddart. Ow, is that all? Thought she moight 'ave been plugged.

The Covey. Is that all? Isn't it enough? D'ye know that more die o' consumption than are killed in th' wars? An' it's all because of th' system we're livin' undher?

Corporal Stoddart. Ow, I know. I'm a Sowcialist moiself, but I as to do my dooty.

(Collected Plays Vol I p249)

The chapter, and with it the trilogy of Civil War chapters within the historical scheme of Inishfallen, concludes with Sean's invocation to St. Patrick - an invocation which seems to epitomise the irony and the hopelessness of the Civil War situations presented, with the aid of Juno, and examined within "Into Civil War", "Comrades", and "The Clergy Take a Hand":

Saint Patrick, thought Sean; holy saint Patrick,
pray for us! Dear saint of our Isle; the isle
of bullets, beads, and bombs.

Beads round every rifle sending a bullet to kill
a man; beads twined round every rope, prepared
to hang another.

Upon thy dear children bestow a sweet smile.
The tear and the smile.

The tear was there, all right; so what we want,
now, Saint Patrick, is a smile, a sweet smile.

So Saint Patrick, jewel of the Gaels, pack all
your troubles in your oul' kitbag, and
smile, smile, smile. (p.102)

The imagery derived from Juno of rosaries or "beads", to denote the entanglement of religion with the killing, thus remains to the last in the Civil War chapters; but, as with all other details from the play which are reworked within the chapters, it also remains firmly subordinated to the autobiographies' own artistic design.

Juno's concern with the qualities of motherhood as expressed through the presentation of the mothers in the play, chiefly of Juno herself, can be found to be present within every one of the six autobiographical volumes. But, again, as with the historical aspect of the play, the "motherhood" theme of the play is not re-expressed for its own sake, but is utilised as a part of a previously determined purpose and design in the autobiographies. It is as if the influence of the play is invited into the autobiographies to perform specific functions, rather than that the play, as it were, finds its own way into the autobiographies and re-asserts itself there.

In Sunset and Evening Star the author describes some of the motives which led him to write his first volume of autobiography, and which were to become part of the pattern and purpose of the autobiographies as a whole. Amongst the foremost of these^{is} the desire to keep alive the memory of his mother, and to pay tribute to her:

First weave in a sable tapestry would be the colourful form of her whose name was Susan, ragged dame of dames, so quietly, so desperately courageous. Life couldn't get rid of her till she died. She went on going forward to the end, ignoring every jar, every misfortune, looking ahead as if she saw a great hope in the distance. A dame of dames, a patient, laughing stoic. Always forward, with her gleaming black eyes, her set mouth, forever smitten with a smile; ragged and broken-booted, still looking forward as if she saw freedom and everlasting truth beside her...Thirteen children, and only five surviving. Next door to a Niobe.....

Now he was handling I Knock at the Door, his first biographical book, which would give her life for an hour again;... (pp.515-6)

The portrayal of the qualities and griefs of "Mrs. Casside" as a mother are, in the autobiographies, therefore, in exact fulfilment of such a commitment undertaken by the author, and form a notable part of the pattern of the works.

It seems however, that he does not draw directly on memories of his mother in his presentation of her, but that she becomes in the autobiographies very much a dramatic character, as does the author himself as "Sean". And from this dramatic presentation of her springs, it seems, both her fundamental relationship with Juno, the heroine of the play, and her ultimate independence of her. For in his creation of Juno, the compassionate, courageous woman who is the provider and sustainer of life in the Boyle household, and who derives her name, on a symbolic level, from the Roman goddess of women and childbirth, he must surely have written out of the love and respect which he had for his own mother, who had died only a few years before and whom he regarded as sharing the sorrows of another classical "mother" figure - Niobe.⁹ And this dramatisation of the qualities of his mother in the character of Juno seems to have influenced, in turn, the portrayal of "Mrs. Casside" in the autobiographies, a figure within a literary form who explicitly represents his own mother, and who thus possesses an identity in the books which is independent of Juno.

The central importance of the theme of motherhood in the autobiographies, particularly in the early volumes, can be seen from the outset. And the relationship between the portrayal of Mrs. Casside and that of Juno can be seen from the outset also. I Knock at the Door begins with a description of childbirth:

In Dublin, sometime in the early 'eighties, on the last day of the month of March, a mother in childpain clenched her teeth, dug her knees home into the bed, sweated and panted and grunted, became a tense living mass of agony and effort, groaned and pressed and groaned and pressed, and pressed a little boy out of her womb.....(p.3)

⁹Mrs. Susan Casey died on the 9th November 1918 aged 81. The play Juno was written in October-December 1923.

This is the condition over which the classical Juno presided as a protective goddess, furthermore, both Mrs. Tancred and Juno refer in the play to the pains of childbirth which they regard as nothing in comparison with those which they experience on the death of a son:

Ah, what's the pains I suffered bringin'
him into the world to carry him to his
cradle to the pains I'm sufferin' now,
carryin' out o' the world to bring him
to his grave!

(First spoken by Mrs. Tancred Act II p.54,
repeated by Juno Act III p.87)

And as the first chapter "A Child is Born" proceeds it becomes clear that Mrs. Casside too has experienced not only the pangs of childbirth, but also the sorrows which beset a mother on the death of a child - the sorrows that form a bond between Juno and Mrs. Tancred in the play. Mrs. Casside has lost two young sons, both named John, before the Johnny of the autobiography is born. On the second of these deaths the author portrays her as thinking that God "Might have let this occasion of the chastening of those whom he loveth slide aside from the smiting of her harmless innocent baby" (p.10), and this thought, both in its half-reproach of the Divine Powers, and in its essential trust in the existence and goodness of God, is reminiscent of Mrs. Tancred's and Juno's cry "O Blessed Virgin, where were you when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets....." (Act II p.55, Act III p.87, respectively). Mrs. Casside and Juno in particular are closely related in the profundity and strength of their personal faith, albeit that there is a nominal difference between them in that Mrs. Casside is a Protestant and Juno a Roman Catholic. Perhaps Juno was portrayed as a Catholic in order to make her more representative of the working-class women of Dublin. At a time of great grief, on the death of her husband, Mrs. Casside believes that:

Just as Juno in the midst of her sorrows - the death of her son, the news that her daughter, Mary, deserted by Bentham, is to have a child, and the knowledge that her efforts to keep her family and home together have come to nothing - refuses to question the existence of God and states that: "We'll want all the help we can get from God an' His Blessed Mother now!" (Act III p. 86).

The bond of sympathy which eventually unites Juno and Mrs. Tancred in the play (Juno says "Maybe I didn't feel sorry enough for Mrs. Tancred when her poor son was found as Johnny's been found now - because he was a Die-hard! Ah, why didn't I remember that then he wasn't a Diehard or a Stater, bu only a poor dead son! It's well I remember all that she said - an' it's my turn to say it now". (Act III p. 87) is shared by Mrs. Casside also and she in turn can sympathise with other bereaved mothers. For when in Pictures in the Hallway her sons Archie and Johnny can express only irritation or disappointment on the occasion of the death of the Duke of Clarence - in so far as the death in the royal family led to the cancellation of a "charity concert" in which Archie and Johnny were to appear - Mrs. Casside is genuinely sympathetic towards the remote and royal mother:

"-It's a shame, she went on sighing again, as she sipped her tea, it's a shame that the young prince died, for they say he was the best beloved son of his sorrowin' mother, and a prime favourite with the poor old Queen. (p. 197).

But Mrs. Casside finds an even closer affinity with Juno and Mrs. Tancred in the loss of a grown up son. The death of Tom Casside is described in Drums Under the Windows. Unlike Johnny Boyle and Robbie Tancred, he is not a victim of political violence, and thus his death does not

express the irony, futility and tragedy of Civil War as do the deaths of the sons in the play. But the basic sorrowings of the mother in the autobiography are those of the mothers in the play.

Mrs. Casside stared at the stiff form lying prone in the bed, effectively out-braving the brazen world now. She seemed not to be able to recognise what was stretched out there, her bright dark eyes blinking rapidly to impede the tears that were pushing a way out of them, her brave humorous mouth aquiver like summer lightning in a violet sky.

- My poor dead son, she said, suddenly running over and kissing the mouth she hadn't kissed since it was the fresh dewy mouth of a boy. Ah! My poor dead Tom, my poor dear son is dead! And Sean was hard set now to keep his face from twitching and his tears from falling, for he knew full well that out of all who knew Tom, she alone it was who suffered the dearly-sorrowful agony of his going. (pp.439-40)

Mrs. Casside's cries of "My poor dead son...My poor dear son is dead!" indeed echo the play, in which the words "my son", "poor son", "poor dead son" form almost a refrain. Mrs. Tancred refers to her own son and to Mrs. Manning's Free Stater son as "dead darlin' sons" (Act II p.54), and again to her own son as "me darlin' son" (p.55). And Juno says of Tancred "God help his poor oul' creature of a mother, for no matter whose friend or enemy he was, he was her poor son" (p.55). When news is brought to Juno of Johnny's death she cries "it's me son, me own son" (Act III p.86). As she prepares to see the body of "me poor dead son" (p.87), she realises with renewed force that Robbie Tancred "wasn't a Diehard or a Stater, but only a poor dead son!", and laments in her turn the death of her own "darlin' son" (p.87).

If inspiration for the characterisation of the mothers in the play (especially Juno) originally derived from the author's admiration of his own mother, and if inspiration and creative influence flowed from the portrayal of the literary character Juno into the presentation of Mrs.

Casside in the first, second and third volumes of the autobiography, yet the chain of creative influence does not end with Mrs. Casside. For the presentation and characterisation of Mrs. Casside in I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway seems to have inspired and contributed very directly to the portrayal of Mrs. Breydon, Ayamon's mother, in the play Red Roses for Me, which was written in 1941-2, after the completion of Pictures.¹⁰ And Mrs. Casside of the first three volumes of autobiography also inspires a series of portraits of other mothers in the fourth, fifth and sixth volumes.

It is highly significant that this series of portraits in the autobiographies begins only after the death of Mrs. Casside herself has been described - that is, only after Mrs. Casside can no longer play her own part in the narrative and thematic scheme of the autobiographies. And as if by way of compensation for the disappearance of Mrs. Casside as a character from the autobiographies, the author translates her attributes, and her sorrows, as a mother into the lives of other women. And in doing so he translates his tribute to the qualities of his own mother into a tribute to the qualities inherent in motherhood. Thus he creates, in the final three volumes, a strong sense of the sympathies and sufferings which unite mothers of all lands and of all times - such a theme as is touched on in the play in the bond of understanding which Mrs. Tancred finds for Mrs. Manning, and Juno, in turn, finds for Mrs. Tancred, when they each are bereaved of a son.

Later in the same volume in the chapters entitled "Blessed Bridget O'Coole" and "Where Wild Swans Nest" he describes his first visit to Lady Gregory's house, Coole Park. And during this visit Lady Gregory describes

¹⁰ See chapter below which includes a study of the relationship between Pictures in the Hallway and Red Roses for Me.

to him the circumstances of the death of her son, (Major Robert Gregory, an airman who died in the First World War, and about whom W.B. Yeats wrote the poem "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death"):

Once,...they passed through a room where the blue mountains of the Barony of Loughrea nodded in at the great bow-windows; ...halting his steps, Sean paused in front of a young, broad-shouldered man with an open and courageous face.

- My dear son, she murmured softly, my dear, dear son, lost leading his air-squadron over de Italian battlefield. For months and months I had dreaded it, for I knew de German planes were well ahead of ours in design and swiftness.

He wished he hadn't paused before the picture. What the hell could he say to her? He gave a quick glance, and saw that holy tears were racing down the wrinkled channels of her cheeks.

(p.117)

Again there is in the words "My dear son,...my dear, dear son" the echo of the refrain-like laments of Juno - laments which are beginning to become a refrain in the autobiographies also.

When Sean does attempt to console Lady Gregory he speaks, however, about the waste of youth in war, a theme relevant to Juno, but here much less specifically related to Juno than to a later play Oak Leaves and Lavender - a play much closer to Inishfallen in its date of composition, and itself seemingly very closely connected with O'Casey's knowledge of the circumstances of Major Robert Gregory's death.¹¹ The "motherhood" theme evinced in the incident is taken up again in the following volume Rose and Crown. With this volume the theme of the "universality" of the sorrows of motherhood is becoming very apparent. Drums Under the Windows has described the mourning of the Irish working class mother, Mrs. Casside, for her dead son, and Inishfallen has portrayed the equally heartfelt sorrow of Lady Gregory, a mother from the ranks of the Irish aristocracy. Now in a chapter of Rose and Crown entitled "Wild Life in New Amsterdam", Sean, on a visit to U.S.A., attends

¹¹ See the chapter below which includes a study of Oak Leaves and Lavender in relation to the autobiographies.

a small dinner party given by an American business man and his wife, and finds himself in the midst of all that he chooses to regard as symbols of middle-class materialism and nouveau-riche vulgarity of taste. But, a little to his own surprise, he is to find that the lady of the house is not without feelings deeper than her love of social status and of material possessions. Moreover, the incident in which her sorrow is revealed is not only closely related in situation and theme to the incident in which Lady Gregory's grief has been expressed, and in theme to the incident in which Mrs. Casside mourns her son Tom, but the relationship is explicitly expressed by the author himself. And the successive incidents seem designed to form links in a special chain running throughout the volumes of autobiography:

He (Sean) thanked his hostess, and on his way out, he stopped to look at a photograph of a clear-faced, handsome young man hanging on the wall.

- A handsome lad, he said; who may that be now?
- He was my son, said a quivering voice, my elder born. Everyone said that he was a very clever lad, and everyone liked him. He died more than a year ago of some fever, of pneumonia; oh, I don't know what - he just died on me!

Sean turned to look, and saw the plump body quivering and tears running down the rouged cheeks. She, too, had the immovable pearl of sorrow in her breast. Just as he had seen long ago Lady Gregory looking at her son's picture, while the tears ran down her face. Cover his face; mine eyes dazzle; he died young. This vulgar woman, agog with her possessions, for all the way she strutted proudly through them, would, Sean saw, willingly give up the gleam and glitter of silver, of mahogany and walnut, could she but have her son again; the son thought to be so clever, the one everyone liked. Oh, my son! Would God I had died for thee, my son; oh, my son! How many mothers have anguished the air with the same cry! His own mother over her dead Tom. (p.438 italics mine)

And again there is the refrain of "Oh, my son!..... oh, my son! "

recalling both the play and previous autobiographical volumes.

The final incident expressing the sorrows of motherhood and the universality of those sorrows occurs in Sunset and Evening Star, and is set in England at the time of the Second World War.

Sean, making his contribution to the war effort "as well as he could, addressing envelopes and delivering circulars, for one thing", finds himself "at the door of a Totnes bungalow to deliver a circular notifying a meeting":

The door half opened, and he saw half of a middle-aged woman standing there, crying silently; crying deeply. Mechanically, Sean extended the letter; she made no movement to take it; she didn't look at it; just looked aimlessly before her, crying silently. - Notice of a meeting, he mumbled, trying to think how he could get away quietly.
 - I don't want it, she said, tonelessly; don't want anything now. Just got a telegram telling me son's killed; killed, an' us doesn't know how or where. No grave of his own even, for us heard they are buryin' em in bundles now, an' us doesn't know where; doesn't know where. Crying silently and deeply, she slowly and silently shut the door. (pp.580-1)

The period of the incident - the second World War - together with its theme of the waste of youth in war, which O'Casey goes on to elaborate, link it with the play Oak Leaves and Lavender (the play with which the Lady Gregory incident also possesses an affinity), and also relate the passage to the chronology and concerns of the final volume of autobiography. But the theme of motherhood too is strong and reveals the influence of Juno and of the portrayal of Mrs. Casside in the autobiography.

The presentation of the incident in the dramatic terms of situation and dialogue, especially in a volume in which dramatised passages are far from abundant, also strongly implies that the influence of a play, or plays has been at work. And the "dramatic" presentation of the scene

also identifies it further as the next, (in fact the last) link in the autobiographies, sequence of scenes - all dramatised - which depict the kindred sorrowing of kind and bereaved mothers.

Thus, both with regard to the reworking of the topical, historical and local aspects of the play within three consecutive sections of Inishfallen, and with regard to the reworking of the play's theme of motherhood, the relationship between the autobiographies and Juno and the Paycock is a thoroughly artistic and creative one - despite the fragmentation of the substance of the play, and the placing of those fragments into diverse contexts and episodes within the six autobiographical volumes.

But if the fragmentation of the play and the use and dispersal of its material in accordance with the dictates of the autobiographies do not prevent a creative reworking of Juno and the Paycock, perhaps they do prevent or hinder a comprehensive one. That is, that perhaps the reworking of Juno, no matter what form that reworking takes, does not involve every aspect of the play.

Certainly, although the autobiographies make much of the two main elements in the play - the Civil War element, which is centred upon Johnny and Robbie Tancred, and the "motherhood" element, which is centred upon Juno and Mrs. Tancred - there are other aspects of the play which do not necessarily fit completely within either of these two general "categories" of the play's material and concerns: for example, the characterisation and machinations of Captain Boyle and Joxer, and the vivid portrayal of Mrs. Madigan - "ignorant, vulgar and forward, but her heart is generous withal" (Act II p.47). Although in the play the presentations of Boyle, Joxer and Mrs. Madigan often interact with, and,

as it were, generally provide a "human setting" for the characters associated with the concerns of the Civil War and motherhood, yet they do not themselves touch the heart of these themes, but have a being independent of them. Consequently Boyle, Joxer and Mrs. Madigan are not brought into the autobiographies in connection with the main elements of the play.

What is interesting, however, is that they are not allowed to be totally lost to the autobiographies; for there is, within the autobiographies' reworking of the play, a rudimentary third element concerned simply with the "personal" reappearances of Boyle, Joxer and Mrs. Madigan. That is, they reappear complete with all aspects of the personality which the author created or evolved for them in the play, but detached from the particular themes and settings with which they were associated in the play. It is as if the author lifts them from the play, puts them within a completely new context or situation in the autobiographies, and not only allows their personalities to remain intact there, but to some extent actually seems to rely upon the reader's previous acquaintanceship with, and thorough knowledge of, the characters, in order to achieve a calculated effect within the autobiographies. The process seems to be a kind of shorthand in character-portrayal. This is an entirely new development in terms of the relationship between the autobiographies and the plays, for although characters clearly derived from The Gunman, and the heroines of Kathleen and Nannie, certainly and very importantly find their way into the reworking of their respective plays, yet the author entirely re-creates their personalities within the autobiographies, and certainly does not assume, as part of the artistic effect of the autobiographical volumes, that the reader has already made their acquaintance in the original plays.

The use of "known" literary characters from the plays within the autobiographies is only barely perceptible in connection with Juno, but it is worthy of attention because it prefigures an extremely important aspect of the relationship between the autobiographies and The Plough and the Stars.

Captain Boyle of Juno and the Paycock does make something of an appearance in the autobiographies, but not under his own name. Strangely enough, he "appears" in connection with the autobiographies' portrayal of Bugler Benson, Sean's brother-in-law. In the "Hail, Smiling Morn" chapter of I Knock at the Door, Sean's sister Ella, thinking, on her wedding morning, of how her bridegroom will look in his uniform at the ceremony, decides that he will seem like:

a peacock turned into a moving man,....A broad-shouldered body, short, thick, and sturdy legs, and a jerky and conceited way of walking like a peacock turned into a moving man. (p.62)

To anyone who knows the play Juno and the Paycock this description would seem immediately to conjure up the figure, and personality of Captain Boyle, Juno's "Paycock" of a husband who

"carries himself with the upper part of his body slightly thrown back, and his stomach slightly thrust forward. His walk is a slow, consequential strut" (Act I, p. 10)

and who described by Juno as "sthruttin' about from mornin' till night like a paycock!" (Act I, p. 9).

And again, anyone who knows Juno and the Paycock and Captain Boyle of old, will realise that this resemblance of "Bugler Benson" to the Captain suggests, quite rightly as it transpires, that Benson will not make the best of husbands.

The introduction of the "peacock" image of Captain Boyle into "Hail, Smilin Morn" might also, indirectly or directly, account for

the inclusion within the same chapter of the song "The Anchor's Weighed".

The haunting words of this ballad, as sung by a street singer, accompany, and bode ill for Ella as, ignoring her mother's opposition to the unfortunate marriage, she leaves home for the ceremony:

The anchor's weighed, the anchor's weighed,
Farewell, farewell, remember me,
(p.69)

Used to brilliant effect in the chapter, the song itself had been associated in the author's mind with Captain Boyle. For Joseph Holloway in his journal entry for Thursday, August 20th 1925 records the following comments by O'Casey on Act II of Juno:

O'Casey informed us that the lines that the "Captain" recites were written by a man named Buckley who thought he could write verse. he is thinking of taking out Buckley's "poem" and giving the "Captain"¹² a verse of "The Anchors Weighed" instead.

The substitution was not made in the play, but perhaps through the agency of ^{the} 'Paycock' image of Boyle one verse and a chorus of the song found their way into I Knock at the Door instead.

But if a semblance of Captain Boyle appears in I Knock at the Door in connection with the portrayal of a character of the autobiographies, in Drums Under the Windows, not only do Joxer Daly and Mrs. Madigan appear, but they appear under their own names. They are to be seen amongst a large crowd of other "literary" figures from popular Irish songs and literature, who are protesting, in Drums Under the Windows, against the Abbey production of Synge's The Playboy of the Western World:

¹²Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre, p.245

.....Camac and Williams with letters after their names; and Conn the Shaughraun, Arranna-pogue, the minstrel boy home from the wars, Joxer Daly, Maisie Madigan, impudent Barney O'Hea, the village blacksmith in his Sunday best,..... (p.510)

Together these characters voice Irish popular ignorance, prejudice and spite, and again to some extent the author is relying upon the readers previous acquaintanceship with Joxer and Mrs. Madigan in the play, in order that the reader might judge for himself how valid are likely to be their pronouncements on the artistic merits of Synge's play.

The appearances, brief as they are of Boyle, Joxer and Mrs. Madigan in the autobiographies supplement the autobiographies' extensive reworking of the Civil War and "Motherhood" elements of Juno and this does suggest that although the autobiographies do not rework all the aspects of the play together in one specific place as an individual entity, yet they do, over the course of their six volumes, touch upon, or draw upon, more or less all aspects of the plays.

It seems, then, that the image of Juno as a complete play still stands behind the relationship between Juno and the Paycock and the autobiographies, even though that relationship itself seems primarily to exist as the result of the autobiographies drawing upon the play in order to fulfil and enrich their designs and purpose, rather than as the result of the play as a whole seeking the aid of the autobiographical medium that it might fulfil a hitherto unfulfilled design and purpose of its own.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Plough and The Stars

The relationship between The Plough and the Stars and the autobiographies seems basically akin to that between the autobiographies and Juno. No attempt, successful or unsuccessful, seems to be made, and no desire, conscious or unconscious, seems present to rework The Plough as an entity within the autobiographies; but instead various constituent elements of the play are reworked in isolation from each other and are used creatively to contribute to the thematic and artistic schemes of all six volumes of the autobiographies. And the implication in the reworking of the Plough is, as it was in connection with that of Juno, that the author was in his creative consciousness largely satisfied with the achievement of the original play, and thus felt no need to use the medium of the autobiographies in order to re-express the play as a whole, or to add a new dimension to that achievement.

But if the relationship between The Plough and the autobiographical volumes is basically of the same kind as the relationship between the autobiographies and Juno, yet it has advanced or developed a little from it in that The Plough is broken down by the autobiographies into rather more elements than Juno was. Also the patterns, within which the individual elements of The Plough are distributed and reworked in the scheme of the autobiographies, are less distinct than those concerning the reworking of the elements of Juno. These developments seem directly to reflect the fact that The Plough itself is a more complex play than Juno. Developments in the reworking of individual plays in the autobiographies tend to be manifestations of developments within the nature of the plays themselves.

The autobiographies make rather wider use of the historical material

of The Plough than they do of that of Juno, for although all references to the historical and political background and events of The Plough are included within the historical scheme of one volume, Drums Under the Windows, they are not concentrated within one particular place (such as the three consecutive Civil War chapters in which the historical material Juno was reworked) but seem to be reworked in three different contexts, and in three different places.

The time scheme of the play covers a period from 1915-16, and The Plough basically weaves together three strands of history or historical events: The World War of 1914-18, the growth of the militant Irish National movements in the years leading directly up to 1916 with its Easter Rising, and the events and repercussions of the 1916 Rebellion itself - as seen through civilian eyes. This weaving together of the three strands of history not only provides the pattern of the play's plot and its thematic concerns, but is also, in its own right, one of the greatest achievements of the play. In the autobiography, however, the strands are largely, although not quite entirely, unpicked from their composite pattern in the play and reweven individually. The play's material which relates to the Great War is reworked in passages of straightforward historical narrative in "The Bold Fenian Men" section of Drums Under the Windows, while that material which relates directly to Irish Nationalism and Nationalist militancy is reworked in connection with Sean's membership of various Nationalist groups, and is to be found scattered throughout the volume, but most markedly in sections entitled "Hora Novissima", "Under the Plough and the Stars", "Prepare, Everyone with Weapons" and "In this Tent the Republicans". That aspect of the play which relates to the experiences of civilians during the Easter Rising is reworked in "The Bold Fenian Men" in the account of Sean's experience as a non-combatant during Easter week 1916.

Although he integrates it completely into the historical scheme of the autobiography and also into the autobiographical account of Sean's "personal" life, O'Casey does not always seem to make such obviously artistic use of the historical material of The Plough as he did of that of Juno (within the artistic structure of the trilogy of Civil War chapters in Inishfallen). And at times it may even seem as if the historical narrative of Drums Under the Windows is based purely and directly on O'Casey's memories of the events of the period. But although the author himself experienced life in Dublin during those same years, and presumably wrote the original play itself in the light of that personal experience, yet it seems that in writing Drums in 1942-4¹ he did not, on the whole, draw directly upon memories of personal experience in 1908²-16, but rather upon images of that experience as presented by the play written in 1924-5.³

¹For evidence of the period during which Drums Under the Windows was written, see the chapter below which includes a study of this volume.

²1908: that is, the year in which O'Casey himself joined The Irish Republican Brotherhood and first became actively involved in the militant Nationalist movement.

³The Plough and the Stars seems actually to have been written in October/November 1924 - August 1925, although the idea for the play had been forming in the author's mind for several months before that.

In his journal entry for May 20 1924 Joseph Holloway records a meeting with O'Casey in which O'Casey told him:

"Of the play with the title of The Plough Amongst the Stars (sic)

he had in his mind to write." (Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre p. 232)

But it is in a letter of October 1924 to Lady Gregory that O'Casey writes: I am anxious to start work on "The Plough & The Stars" which, dealing with Easter Week, will bring to our Remembrance "old unhappy, far off days, & battles long ago!" (Letters Vol I p. 119). In a letter dated 22 February 1925 O'Casey reports to Lady Gregory that he is: "again working slowly at "The Plough and the Stars" (Letters Vol I p.133). And, in a letter to her on 18 March 1925, he writes: "My own play (ie The Plough) is going forward slowly; about half way to its journey's end - or rather, to the day, when, through the enchanted gate of the Abbey, it may take its first step into the life of the world." (Letters Vol I p.133). By August 1925 the play had been completed and was already being considered for production at the Abbey, for Lady Gregory, in her journal entry for August 23rd 1925, writes of the play arriving at Coole for her opinion on the very day that O'Casey himself began a holiday there.

"Casey arrived yesterday. His play, The Plough and The Stars, had come in the morning with a letter from Lennox Robinson saying he and W.B. Yeats liked it ... He (O'Casey) had been working on it for thirteen months and is tired and glad of a rest, "... (Lady Gregory's Journals pp. 86-7).

The play was first performed at the Abbey Theatre on February 8th 1926.

In fact although the historical material of The Plough is not always reworked into an ostensibly "dramatic" incident or artistic setting within Drums Under the Windows, it is remarkable to what extent the images of the period 1915-16 as created in the play do seem to present themselves to the minds-eye of the author as he writes in the autobiography.

For example, Drums in giving, at the beginning of its "Bold Fenian Men" section, an account of such aspects of the Great War as touched upon the Irish consciousness in the years immediately before 1916, seems to conjure up an incident from the play. The autobiography describes how, despite the growth of Irish Nationalism and of anti-British feeling in the years immediately preceding the Rising, Irishmen were leaving Ireland in their thousands in order to fight for Britain in the Great War:

....all the time, the stoutest men from hill, valley, and town were pressing into the British Army, and long columns of armed Irishmen, singing Ireland's latest love song, It's a long way to Tipperary, went swinging by Liberty Hall down to the quays to the ships waiting to bring them to a poppy-mobbed grave in Flanders. The I.R.B. worked hard sticking up fly-by-night posters calling on Irishmen to keep out of the British Army, while the journals Sinn Fein and Irish Freedom warned them that the coming fight must be, not for Catholic Belgium, but for Catholic Ireland; but the swinging columns went on marching down to the quays to the ships that go down to the sea. (p.646)

And this passage is certainly related to, even clearly derived from, part of the intensely effective and moving scene which closes Act I of the play. The men of the house and Mrs. Gogan have gone to take part in, or to witness, the Nationalist meeting, and Nora and Mollser have apparently been left in the house alone. As they sit together gloomily Mollser remarks:

....Oh, this must be some more o' the Dublin Fusiliers flyin' off to the front. (Just before Mollser ceases to speak, there is heard in the distance the music of a brass band playing a regiment to the boat on the way to the front. The tune that is being played is "It's a long Way to Tipperary"; as the band comes to the chorus, the regiment is swinging into the street by Nora's house, and the voices of the soldiers can be heard lustily singing the chorus of the song.

It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go;
It's a long way to Tipperary, to th' sweetest girl I know!...

Nora and Mollser remain silently listening. As the chorus ends and the music is faint in the distance again, (Collected Plays Vol I p.191)

Even in Drums' apparently much more "personal" account of Sean's experiences as an active, although increasingly disillusioned, Nationalist, as a member of The Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Wolfe Tone Memorial Committee and, most importantly, as the Secretary of the Irish Citizen Army, there is much evidence to suggest that O'Casey is not drawing directly upon memories of personal experience, but upon artistically ordered and expressed images of that experience - images, created and presented in the play.

For example, when in the section entitled "Under the Plough and the Stars", the banner of the Plough and the Stars is first shown to the men of the Irish Citizen Army, the words which "Sean" imagines the flag itself to say to the men:

....Be worthy, men, of following such a banner, for this is your flag of the future. Whatever many happen to me; though I should mingle with the dust, or fall to ashes in a flame, the plough will always remain to furrow the earth, the stars will always be there to unveil the beauty of the night, (p.613)

seem to recall, both textually and with regard to the visual image which they conjure up, Brennan's description, in Act IV of the play, of the death of Clitheroe:

An' then I seen the Plough an' th' Stars
fallin' like a shot as th' roof crashed
in, an' where, I'd left poor Jack was
nothin' but a leppin' spout o' flame!"
(p.244)

There is, however, one striking difference in the ways in which the play and autobiography use the same visual image. In Drums there is the assertion that no matter what may happen physically to the flag, the spiritual ideals - "labour's near and higher ideals" - which it represents in its symbolic design (p.612) will live on. But in the context of the tragic atmosphere of the last act of the play, the news of the physical destruction of the flag seems to symbolise the destruction too of all the spiritual ideals which the flag represented.

The Plough's presentation of the events of the Easter Rising through civilian eyes - the third strand in the historical weave of the play - also makes its direct contribution to the autobiography, for it seems to lie very much behind Drums' depiction of the happenings, of Easter Week 1916.

Moreover, a particular passage from "The Bold Fenian Men" exemplifies the influence of the play upon this chapter not only in terms of actual material, but also in terms of "dramatic" spirit. Indeed the entire sustained "dramatic" episode which forms the autobiography's account of the events of the first day of the Rising (pp.651-5) seems to be based upon Act III of the play.

It is seemingly a manifestation of the dramatic spirit of The Plough and also of its unheroic "civilian" approach to the military events of Easter Week, that in Drums Under the Windows the Nationalists'

occupation of the General Post Office in O'Connell Street and Padraic Pearse's subsequent reading of the Declaration of an Irish Republic - perhaps inherently the most stirring and "heroic" events in modern Irish history - should be presented through the eyes and ears of a dramatic character - an irascible Old Man - who is totally unaware of the implications of the events, is, anyway, rather hard of hearing, and whose temper is not being improved by the persistent demands of another bystander that he should tell her what is going on:

.....down the centre of O'Connell Street, silent but for the tramp of their feet, came hundreds of armed Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army, led by Pearse, Connolly, and Tom Clarke, to halt, wheel, and face the General Post Office.

- There go the go-boys! muttered an old man, half to himself and half to an elderly, thin lady beside him who had stopped to help him stare at the Volunteers. Well, Mac Neill put a stop to their gallop! What th' hell are th' up to now? They seem to be bent on disturbin' th' whoremony of the sacred day. Goin' in, eh? Wha' for, I wondher? Can't be wantin' postage stamps. Can't be to get th' right time, for there's a clock in th' window. What'r they doin, ma'am? I dunno. Somethin' brewin'? Ma'am, there's always somethin' brewin'. I'm seventy, an' I've never known an hour that I didn't hear tell of somethin' brewin'. Be god, they're takin' th' clock outa th' window! That's odd, now. Looka, they're smashin' out th' windows with their rifles! There's a shower o'glass - right over th' passers-by! That's goin' beyond th' beyond. Tha's, tha's just hooliganism. We better be gettin' outa here - th' police'll be here any minute! Didn't I tell you before, ma'am, I dunno! They're shovin' out the Post Office workers; pointin' their guns at them. We better be gettin' outa here while we're safe. Houll' on a second - here's someone out to read a paper. What's he sayin'? I dunno. How th' hell can you expect a fella to hear from here? Oh! pushin' th' people off th' streets, now. Eh? G'on home, is it? An' who are you t'ordher me about? Takin' over th' city? D'ye tell me that? Well,

you're not goin' to take over me! I'm a peaceful man out on a peaceful sthroll on a peaceful day, an' I stand be me constitutional rights. Gunfire here soon? Arrah, from where? From where, ma'am? I dunno, I'm tellin' you! He says he's speakin' in th' name of th' Irish Republic, so now you're as wise as I am meself.

(pp. 651-2)

So close is the relationship between this passage and Act III of the play that it seems as if the Old Man in O'Connell Street must almost be rubbing shoulders in the crowd with the Covey and Peter, two characters from the play. Certainly they witness exactly the same sights as he does, for they run back to the tenements to tell their neighbours of the events in the city centre, and these include the Declaration of a Republic.

The Covey. An' then out comes General Pearse an' his staff, an', standin' in th' middle o' th' street, he reads th' Proclamation.

Mrs. Gogan. What proclamation?

Peter. Declarin' an Irish Republic

Mrs. Gogan. Go to God! (p.218)

Also The Covey and Peter have seen The Lancers attempting to dislodge the Republicans from the G.P.O.:

Peter. An' we seen th' Lancers -

The Covey. (interrupting). Throttin' along, heads in th' air; spurs an' sabres jinglin', an' lances quiverin', an' lookin' as if they were assin' themselves, "Where's these blighters, till we get a prod at them?" when there was a volley from th' Post Office that stretched half o' them, an' sent th' rest gallopin' away wondherin' how far they'd have to go before they'd feel safe.

Peter. (rubbing his hands). "Damn it," says I to meself, "this looks like business!" (pp 217-8)

While the Old Man of the autobiography sees exactly the same sight:

Don't be talkin', looka what's comin' up
 O'Connell Street! A company o' throttin'
 lancers - full regalia with carbines,
 lances, an' all! Comin' to clear th'
 Post Office. Don't be pushin' me ribs
 in, ma'am! Hear th' jingle of them!
 This looks like business. Here we see,
 ma'am, the Irish Republic endin' quicker'n
 it began. Jasus, Mary, an' Joseph! th'
 fools are firin' on them! Here, get outa
 th' way, ma'am, an' let a man move!
 Near knocked you down? Why th' hell are
 you clingin' on me tail for, then?
 Didn' I tell you hours ago that it was
 dangerous dawmlin' here? D'ye hear that
 volley! Looka th' police runnin' for
 their lives! (p.652)

And it even seems that the Old Man's expression of enjoyment: "This looks like business" is an actual echo of the text of the play and Peter's gleeful remark "Damn it," says I to myself, "this looks like business!"

When the accounts in play and autobiography of the early events of the Rising are compared, the effect is increasingly as if the autobiography's account is somehow proceeding in a definite parallel to Act III of the play. It is as if the action of Act III of the play, is now playing upon two stages at once. The setting for one stage is the street outside the Clitheroe's tenement as in the play itself; the setting for the other stage is the city centre as in the autobiography's account. And it really does seem that when various characters of the play leave the tenement setting of the stage in Act III of the Plough, they then mysteriously appear somewhere amongst the crowd which is peopling the "city-centre" setting provided by the autobiography.

When looting breaks out in the city-centre both the Old Man of the autobiography and Bessie of the play are somehow there to witness it. The Old Man exclaims, in the autobiography: "-Oh, looka them breakin' into the shops!" (p652) while Bessie "waits" until she has "returned" to the stage of the play before she cries out: "They're

breakin' into th' shops, they're breakin' into th' shops!" (p224)

But she does not "return" to the play until after witnessing another specific sight seen too by the Old Man of the autobiography. The

Old Man says:

...Looka these comin' with a piano, no less!
Didja hear that? Give them a shove! Cheek
wha'! (p.652)

while Bessie back home reports to her neighbour how she has just seen: "two men an' a lassie pushin' a piano down th' street, an' th' sweat rollin off them thryin' to get it up on th' pavement;..."(p224)

The Old Man remarks "Look, they're bringin' out handcarts an' prams", (p652) and so they are for Bessie and Mrs. Gogan have just "left" the play for the city centre and have taken a borrowed pram with them. Later they are to return home with the pram piled high with plunder.

The belief expressed by the Old Man that the looting is "provokin'",after all, th' boys are out for somethin' higher" (p.652) is akin to Mrs. Gogan's indignation that Bessie should "stretch out her arm in a sly-seekin' way to pinch anything dhriven astray in th' confusion of th' battle our boys is makin' for th' freedom of their counthry!" (p.228) But the ultimate intentions of The Old Man and Mrs. Gogan are also akin: Sean later sees the Old Man in the midst of the looters selecting shirts for himself from a box marked "De Luxe" and ordering a fellow looter to look "for a box marked pyjamas" since - like Seumas Shields of The Gunman - he "always had a notion of wantin' to feel how they felt on a fella" (p.654), and Mrs. Gogan returns home with Bessie in "the pride of a great joy" (p.230) over their own particular spoils.

The Old Man has heard a bullet "whizzin' by" (p.652) and Bessie

has seen the Volunteers firing on the crowd (p.224), but neither they nor the other looters seem unduly daunted.

As the monologue of the Old Man ceases and its speaker apparently goes off to do a little looting on his own behalf, Sean himself appears in the city centre to resume the narrative and provide his own description of, and comments upon, the looting. He himself does not participate, but as he watches the "wonderful activity" (p.654) of those who do he is cheered by the thought that "All who were underdressed before, were overdressed now" (p.653), and finds that it is not in his heart to "desecrate their disorder with dishonour". He decides that:

If the lilies of the field, that neither
toiled nor spun, could be lovely, how
much more that these whose lives were a
ceaseless labour should be lovely too?
(p.654)

And this is in accord with the belief expressed - nominally at least - by the Covey in the play that the spoils of looting are "th' things that God is givin' to His chosen people" (p.230)

Sean of the autobiography even seems to spot Fluther of the play amongst the looters. For he sees:

A solidly-built man...trotting along carrying
a large jar by the handle against his right
thigh, while from his left hung a pair of
vividly yellow boots. A sharp ping sounded,
and the jar separated into halves, letting
a golden stream of liquor honour the road.
The man stopped, and gazed at the jagged
neck of the jar left in his hand.

- Jasus! he said, not a dhrop of it left -
the wasteful bastards! (p.653)

The man is not named but he "must" be Fluther, who has after all just left the house with the intention of giving "a pub....a shake up" (p.225), and who will soon return with "an earthen half-gallon jar of

whisky" and the supplementary spoils of "a new tunic shirt" and "a woman's vivid blue hat with gold lacing" - the latter corresponding in its bizarre inappropriateness to the "vividly yellow boots" looted by the man in the autobiography. The man's loss of his whisky by means of a sniper's bullet and his sudden exclamation which follows the loss are seemingly related to the behaviour of Fluther, whose "frantic movements cause him to spill some of the whisky out of the jar", and who exclaims: "Blast you, Fluther, don't be spillin' th' precious liquor!" (p.237)

It is notable that while the poor will risk bullets to go out looting, yet the people of the upper and middle classes, having all their worldly needs already catered for, run in the opposite direction, to their homes. The autobiography comments briefly but specifically on this:

Lansdowne Road, Rathmines, and Rathgar
gathered up their fine clothes and
ran home; (p.655)

and this statement, short as it is, seems founded upon a scene, again in Act III of the play in which:

A fashionably dressed, middle-aged, stout
woman comes hurriedly in....almost
fainting with fear. (p.225)

and tries unsuccessfully to persuade first Fluther, and then Peter, to "show any safe way for me to get to Wrathmines?".

And as Sean himself arrives safely at his home, he looks back to the city-centre and sees "a great plume of flame rising high into the sky: the first passion-flower had blossomed" (p.655). And this detail recalls a precise stage-effect in the setting of Act IV of the play:

The dusk has well fallen, and the glare of
the burning buildings in the town can be
seen through the window, in the distant sky.
(p.239)

But if the autobiography does seem to draw very extensively upon the play for the substance of its historical narrative, the design of the autobiography itself does ultimately take precedence over that of the play when it comes to the question of how this material should be reworked. Again this feature of the relationship between the historical material of the play and the autobiography is best seen in connection with Drums' reworking of the play's presentation of the events of Easter Week, although it can be seen too at points within the volume's reworking of the other historical strands of the play (as, for example, in "Under The Plough and the Star's" pronouncement that the ideals which the flag of the Plough and the Stars symbolises are imperishable). "The Bold Fenian Men" draws heavily upon the material and effects of the play, but in drawing on these aspects of The Plough, it does eventually assert itself in a manner and spirit not only independent of the play, but totally alien to it.

For whereas the play ends on a note of total desolation with the city in ruins, the Republicans in defeat, civilian men in detention, innocent victims killed or bereft of their loved ones, and even the British Tommies tired and homesick, "The Bold Fenian Men" and, with it, the autobiographical volume as a whole, ends upon an heroic note which totally contradicts the conclusion of the play.

The closing pages of Drums Under The Window describes an Ireland where "The thyme had turned to rue" and where "For evermore,..... Easter lilies would have a crimson streak in them", (p.661) but it is essentially too an Ireland in which a new spirit of courage, patriotism and defiance has been born. An Ireland where, despite the seemingly total military defeat of Nationalism:

Cathleen ni Houlihan in her bare feet, is singing for her pride that had almost gone is come back again. (p. 661)

And in one passage in particular, O'Casey seems to be reviewing the moral of the play's tragedy - that it is always the innocent and the ordinary people who suffer in political struggles - and actually, in the autobiography, declares such suffering to be necessary and justified in the cause of Irish freedom.

A rare time for death in Ireland; and in the battle's prologue many a common man, woman, and child had said goodbye to work and love and play; and many more in an hour or so would receive a terse message that life no longer needed them. There they are, lying so quiet - a child surprised in the doorway; an old man stretched in the street; a young man near a lamp-post which he had clutched when the bullet struck him, and down which he had slid when he died, his curiously white face containing wide eyes staring upwards, as if asking the sky why this had happened, a stiff arm still half-encircling the lamp standard; a young lassie in holiday attire, lying on her face, maybe hurrying home when she heard the uproar, but going too slow, for on the brilliant white blouse a purple patch of death was spreading over the middle of the back; an old woman on the floor of her tenement room, alone, her blood seeping through the ceiling below: all of the goodly company of the dead who died for Ireland. Jesu, have pity! Quiet, comrades, quiet. It was necessary that you should die for Ireland too. You didn't want to die. I know, I know. You signed no proclamation; you invaded no building; you pulled no trigger; I know, I know. But Ireland needed you all the same. Many will die like that before Ireland can go free. They must put up with it. You will be unknown for ever; you died without a word of praise; you will be buried without even a shadowy ceremony; no bugle will call your name; no gunshot will let loose brave echoes over your grave; you will not be numbered among the accepted slain. But listen, comrades, listen: Whitman will be there to meet you; he will marshal you into the marchpast with the greater dead; on the cornet he will give you a shrill salute. Listen - there it goes! Forward! March! (pp.661-2)

It is utterly unthinkable that O'Casey would, in the context of the play, soothe Nora, almost insane with anxiety for her husband and her dead child, with such sentiments as he expresses here in the autobiography. Indeed in the play Captain Brennan's belief that "Mrs. Clitheroe's grief will be a joy when she realizes that she has had a hero for a husband" is quickly set aside as fatuous by Bessie's reply: "If only you'd seen her, you'd know to th' differ", and by the sudden appearance of Nora herself (Act IV p.244). And it is unthinkable that O'Casey would in the context of the play soothe Bessie - whose fate seems to have suggested the fate of the "old woman" in the passage of the autobiography, - the "old woman on the floor of her tenement room, alone, her blood seeping through the ceiling below" - with the words "It was necessary that you should die for Ireland too. You didn't want to die. I know, know... ..Many will die like that before Ireland can go free. They must put up with it..... "

It seems that, in this portion of the autobiography, the interest in the depiction of the personalities of individual characters, which enabled the author of The Plough to present the sorrows and fates of ordinary people as tragedies of the highest magnitude, has been overtaken by the doctrine, severely criticised in connection with the Republicans in the play, that the furtherance of a just and glorious cause requires and vindicates the death of the innocent. And indeed, by the time Drums was written, a preoccupation with the life and good of the mass, rather than with the personal if representative fates of individual characters, had already come into his work, most notably in The Star Turns Red (published in 1939). Also, it seems as if at the end of Drums O'Casey tends in his descriptions of the results of

Easter Week to be swept away by the potential splendour of his subject matter and seems unable to resist lavishing a certain amount of rhetoric upon it. The heroic spirit of the ending of the autobiographical volume, differing as it does from the spirit of the play and even, apparently, from the spirit of much of the final chapter's own narrative, does not, however, indicate a lapse of artistry upon the author's part, but that he is working to artistic and thematic designs independent of those in the play.

The Easter Rising of 1916 was both an exciting and an extremely important event in modern Irish history, and the historical scheme of the autobiographies demands that it be given prominence as such. Moreover, the depiction of the results of the Rising constitutes, in the artistic structure and scheme of the autobiographies, not only the conclusion of the individual volume, but also the culmination of the description of the growth of Irish nationalism, which has been a major concern of the first three volumes of autobiography. And so, from the point of view of artistic effect and impression, there is a demand for positive and even exalted epilogue about the Rising. And Drums does end on a sombre and inspiring note:

But Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan,
walks firm now, a flush on her haughty
cheek. She hears the murmur in the
people's hearts. Her lovers are
gathering around her, for things are
changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.
Poor, dear, dead men; poor W.B. Yeats.

But it must be noted that thrilling though the conclusion of Drums Under The Windows may be, the succeeding volume, Inishfallen, which traces Sean's disillusionment with post-1916 opens with an

immediate contradiction of the sentiments of Yeats' poem "Easter 1916" which close Drums (hence the reference to Yeats' name in the final line of the volume):

things had changed, but not utterly; and
no terrible beauty was to be born.
Short Mass was still the favourite service,
and Brian Boru's harp still bloomed on the
bottles of beer. (p.3)

And since no time elapsed between the completion of the writing of Drums and the commencement of the writing of Inishfallen⁴ the contradiction of the former by the latter must be attributed not to any radical change of opinion on the author's part, but to his conception of thematic and artistic design in the autobiographical sequence.

Although The Plough and the Stars is firmly set in a specific time and in a specific place, however, it does, like Juno, in the final analysis transcend its time and place, in that it deals with human issues emotions and relationships which are relevant to all human beings regardless of the time and country in which they live. As in their reworking of Juno the autobiographies treat this "universal" aspect of The Plough separately from the play's historical material, and "universal" themes of The Plough - such as that which conveys how the sanctity of human family relationships is violated by political causes and political struggles - are, in the first volume of the autobiography, reworked in connection with the portrayal of women characters indigenous to the autobiographies; rather as the "motherhood" theme of Juno is reworked throughout the six autobiographical volumes.

⁴In her book Sean Mrs. Eileen O'Casey writes:

Sean completing his third volume of autobiography, Drums Under the Windows, went straight into the next, Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well.

Eileen O'Casey: Sean, London, Macmillan, Gill and Macmillan 1971 p.200

But after the first volume, the reworking of the non-historical material and themes of The Plough becomes increasingly involved with the presentation of characters who are not indigenous to the narrative of the autobiography, but who are introduced there within their own dramatised incidents or scenes, and who seem to have originated in The Plough.

The reworking of individual character portrayals from The Plough is a definite, extensive, and perhaps the most important element in the autobiographies' treatment of The Plough. It is in evidence within each of the six volumes of autobiography and cuts across the "boundaries" of the autobiographies' reworkings of the other distinct elements (the play's three kinds of historical material and its wider themes). Moreover, the relationship between the autobiographies and the characters of The Plough is particularly interesting in that it seems, itself, to evolve through several different stages. And, gradually, as characters from the play are successively introduced, their origin in the play not only becomes clearer and clearer, but the author begins to rely upon that known literary origin for a calculated effect within the autobiographies.

All the major characters of the play, with the possible exception of Mrs. Gogan, and most of the minor characters reappear in one way or another in the autobiographies. It is the civilian characters, rather than the politically involved characters, of the play who generally contribute most to the six volumes of autobiography; for being uncommitted to the cause of 1916, and displaying in their foibles, predilections and qualities the essential traits of human nature throughout the ages, they and their portrayals can transcend

the 1915-16 setting of the play in a way that the portrayals of the Nationalists and British soldiers, which are totally bound up with the political events of a specific time and place, cannot. However, Clitheroe, Langon, Brennan, Corporal Stoddart and Sergeant Tinley do have their place within that portion of the narrative of Drums Under the Windows which depicts the same historical period as that presented in The Plough.

The characters of The Plough are introduced one by one, and almost systematically, into the autobiographies.

I Knock at the Door is the preserve of the women of the play. But in this volume the women of the play appear not as it were, in their own right, but as a definite influence upon or contributory factor to the presentation of women characters who are native to the autobiography. The Plough and the Stars is dedicated "To the Gay Laugh of My Mother At the Gate of the Grave" and it is not, therefore, surprising that, as with the portrayal of Juno, the portrayal of the finer qualities of the women of The Plough should be linked with O'Casey's admiration for his own mother and subsequently with his portrayal of her as Mrs. Casside in the autobiographies - and especially with his portrayal of her in I Knock at the Door, which is in many respects Mrs. Casside's book.

Although not possessed of the aggressive and less attractive aspects of Bessie Burgess's nature, Mrs. Casside is, like her, a staunch Protestant loyal to the English throne, and she shares Bessie's fundamental goodness of heart, as well as Bessie's courage in the face of poverty.

But the younger heroine of the play, Nora Clitheroe, also has a very great deal in common with Mrs. Casside, for both assert a theme which is fundamental to The Plough - the value and strength of human relationships as opposed to the deceptive glamour of political and military "glory" and comradeship. A "dramatic" "scene" in the section of I Knock at the Door entitled "R.I.P" vividly recalls Nora's understanding and rejection of the motives of vanity which drive her husband to the Nationalist cause, and also very clearly echoes her pleadings with him that she is his "dearest comrade", his "thrust comrade" (Act III p.234).

In "R.I.P" Mrs. Casside, grieving over the recent death of her beloved husband, finds herself surrounded by her sons, daughter and future son-in-law (a drummer in the British Army), who are all in a state of peculiar excitement.

Silent she sat, knitting, and thinking, maybe,
of a silent man lying in a quiet corner out
under the cold stars, and the last hopes
of her life but a few dying blooms on a
lonely grave; while Tom was singing, in
a harsh and staggering voice, a song of
bustling battle:

Side by side, in the crimson tide,
In the days not long ago,
On we dashed, and our bayonets flashed,
As we conquered every foe.
One by one, as the fight was won,
I saw my comrades fall,
An' I was the only one left to answer the last roll call!

With all the others joining in, and the voice
of the red-coated drummer loudest of all,
to sing the sad brave words a second time,
their hearts swelling with desire, to
fight, aye to fall under the Union Jack
for any cause that a single thought
could say was worth a fight;.....(p.58)

Gradually, as the dialogue of the scene unfolds, it becomes apparent that Mrs. Casside's sons, Tom and Mick, have enlisted in the British

Army. And the contrast of the reality of the love which binds Mrs. Casside to her dead husband and living sons, with the illusionary nature of the imaginary duty which those sons themselves vain-gloriously feel towards the "Union Jack", is essentially the same as the contrast in the play between the strength of Nora's bond of love for Jack, and the insubstantial nature of the personal vanity, which forms the basis of Jack's sense of "duty" to the Irish Citizen Army.

When Mrs. Casside hears her sons' toast to "the soldiers of the Queen", all she can think is:

they were leaving her, they were lost to
her, they had 'listed. The gay gaudy
uniforms dished out to her soldiers
by the Queen with the thinly blue
eyes, had taken two sons from their
mother. (p.59)

And Nora experiences exactly the same sense of loss when, in Act I, she realises that her husband is prepared to sacrifice her company and her feelings in order to take charge of a battalion of the I.C.A.

Is General Connolly an' th' Citizen Army
goin' to be your only care? Is your home
goin' to be only a place to rest in?
Am I goin' to be only somethin' to
provide merry-makin' at night for you?
Your vanity'll be th' ruin of you an'
me yet.....That's what's movin' you:
because they've made an officer of you,
you'll make a glorious cause of what
you're doin', while your little red-
lipp'd Nora can go on sittin' here,
makin' a companion of th' loneliness
of th' night! (p.189)

Nora's speech in Act III of the play in which she states that:

.....there's no woman gives a son or a
husband to be killed - if they say it,
they're lyin', lyin', against God,
Nature, an' against themselves! (p.220)

enshrines the very essence of the themes or meaning of The Plough, just as the "motherhood" speech of Mrs. Tancred and Juno - "Ah, what's the pains I suffered bringin' him into the world to carry him to his cradle, to the pains I'm sufferin' now, carryin' him out o' the world to bring him to his grave!...." - enshrines the very essence of the themes or meaning of Juno. And the sense of Nora's speech is reworked in the autobiographies in connection with the portrayal of Mrs. Casside, just as is the sense of the speech of Mrs. Tancred and Juno.

But the portrayal of Nora, again like the portrayal of Juno, being, on one level at least, representative of all women rather than simply of one personality, can and does influence the presentation of more than one female character in the autobiography. Ella, Mrs. Casside's daughter, although herself dazzled by the splendour of her prospective husband's army uniform, begins to realise, on her wedding morning, that each British soldier killed in Egypt "might well have been my own Nicholas" and that this "hardly bears thinkin' about" (I Knock at the Door p.66). And in these thoughts she seems to recall the words of Nora, who with much more immediate cause for alarm cries:

I can't help thinkin' every shot fired'll
be fired at Jack, an' every shot fired at
Jack'll be fired at me. What do I care
for th' others? I can think only of me
own self.... (Act III p.220)

But perhaps too Ella is related to Bessie Burgess. Both Ella and Bessie are staunch Protestants and loyal to the English throne, but, more significantly in terms of the relationship between them, both have near relations (Ella a future husband, and Bessie a son) serving in the British Army, and are, therefore, very much opposed to Irish

Nationalism. Ella objects to:

Fanny Parnell wavin' a newspaper over her head an' rushin' in to her mother to say with a cheer that....Arabi Pasha had beaten the British in Egypt, forgettin' that many of her own brave people were sheddin' their blood to keep up England's glory in spite of all the agents an' bailiffs an' landlords who were meetin' with a sharp an' sudden end in followin' their lawful rights an' duties. (p.66)

While Bessie in Act IV of the play vehemently tells Corporal Stoddart:

Bessie Burgess is no shinner, an' never had no thruck with anything spotted be th' fingers o' th' Fenians; but always made it her business to harness herself for Church whenever she knew that God Save the King was goin' to be sung at t' end of th' service; whose only son went to th' front, in th' first contingent of the Dublin Fusiliers, an' that's on his way home carryin' a shatthered arm that he got fightin' for his King an' counthry! (p.252)

The characterisation of Nora Clitheroe, however, seemingly makes a further contribution to I Knock at the Door in a very brief, but very vivid, presentation of an unnamed woman in a chapter entitled "The Red above the Green".

Johnny and his mother are taking a tram-ride to view the illuminations and decorations set up "in honour of something to do with the Majesty of Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India" (p.158) when a fight breaks out between loyalists and Nationalists in the street. Characteristically of the technique of this volume of the autobiography, and of the technique The Plough also, attention is focused upon a small detail of the scene, a detail which illustrates, as if symbolically, the disruptive, and even destructive, force of politics upon individual lives and families. As mounted police troops advance the crowd attempts to retreat:

.....Johnny saw a yelling woman savagely trying to fight her way back to the thick of the crowd, screaming out:

Me Tommie's lost; he was pushed out o' me hands;
let me back, God damn yous, till I find me Tommie!
Oh, please, please, make way for me!

But the crowd was helpless, and she was pushed back and back, till Johnny lost sight of her, still screaming to be let back to find her Tommie. (p.169)

Since the theme of this episode is so close to the central theme of the play, it is not strange that in its details the incident should recall so clearly Nora's description of her own search through the strife-torn streets of Dublin, for her husband:

All last night at th' barricades I sought you, Jack.
 ...I didn't think of th' danger - I could only think
 of you....I asked for you everywhere..... Some o'
 them laughed....I was pushed away, but I shoved back
Some o' them even sthruck me.an' I screamed an'
 screamed your name! (Act III p.234)

It is almost as if Nora of the play should suddenly be glimpsed in the autobiography, but now screaming out the name of a son rather than the name of a husband. And already it seems as if a change is taking place in the way in which characters from the play are being brought into the autobiographies. In earlier chapters of I Knock at the Door, Bessie and Nora from the play had contributed certain aspects of their personalities and portrayals to the presentation of characters who were absolutely native to the autobiography. But with the glimpse of "Nora" in "The Green above the Red" as once again a complete character (albeit in a slightly different guise), the way seems to be opened for the "personal" reappearance, incognito, in Pictures in the Hallway, of Bessie Burgess, and another female character from the play.

In the chapter "I Strike a Blow for You, Dear Land", Johnny and his Republican friend, the tram-conductor, are standing in a crowd outside the offices of the Irish Independent, where news of British victories and defeats in the Boer War is being flashed upon a screen. The crowd cheers the Boer victories as if they were victories for Ireland - but there is a dissenting voice, a female voice which by its pugnacity as much as by its pro-British fervour strongly suggests Bessie's voice as raised in political argument in Act II of The Plough. The woman of Pictures in the Hallway shouts:

Sayin' nothin' calculated to hurt a soul, I'll say you are
 a lot o' starin' fools, watchin' an' waitin' for somethin' yous'll
 never be spared to see. I wondher, she went on, raising her
 voice to a screaming pitch, I wondher what all of yous, what any
 of yous 'ud do, if England went undher! (p.363)

And she might so easily be Bessie who, in the play, taunts her adversaries with such remarks as:

I can't for th' life o' me undherstand how they can call themselves Catholics, when they won't lift a finger to help poor little Catholic Belgium.

.....You mind your own business, ma'am, an' stupify your foolishness be gettin' dhrunk..... There's a storm of anger tossin' in me heart, thinkin' of all th' poor Tommies, an' with them me own son, dhrenched in water an' soaked in blood, gropin' their way to a shattherin' death, in a shower o' shells! (Act II p.201)

The woman of the autobiography is described as "striding towards middle age" which corresponds to Bessie's age of "forty". (Act I p.178). But the depiction of the woman as ill-clothed and shabby would seem a little too slovenly for the meticulously respectable, albeit impoverished, Bessie. Perhaps the autobiography is making an additional and independent point, that, to judge from the woman's appearance, British Rule has done little enough for her to warrant the hearty approbation which she gives to it.

However something of the portrayal of Bessie in the play again asserts itself in the description of the woman as wearing "a large brown shawl flowing down to beyond her hips" (p.363). Bessie wears a shawl, and in the quarrel in the public house indicates her displeasure and eagerness for a fight "with a passionate swing of her shawl" (Act II p.203). In the autobiography the woman likewise uses her shawl to denote her preparedness for battle:

The protesting woman flapped her shawl like a bird flapping its wings, gave a clumsy little lep from the pathway into the air, flapping open her shawl again, and closing it tighter as she did a nervous defiant dance on the pathway. (p.363)

And perhaps more significantly still, the woman's gesture, before she launches into the fray, of tucking her shawl "more closely round her body, as if she were clothing herself in armour" (p.363) immediately recalls Bessie's action at the end of Act III when she is about to brave the danger of the streets in search of a doctor for Nora: "....She hesitates for a moment, then she

tightens her shawl round her, as if it were a shield,...." (p.238)

In the autobiography, however, the woman's chief adversary is not a figure based on Mrs. Gogan, who is Bessie's adversary in the play, but seemingly a Rosie Redmond figure, "a lissome young woman" (p.362) who has been attracting Johnny's attention by her good looks for some time before the argument begins. It later transpires that the girl's name is Daisy Battles; and Johnny's interest in her charms rather than in the political views which are expressed all around him, and, furthermore, his actinn of escorting her home after the crowd has been violently dispersed, seem derived from the Public House scene of the play, in which Fluther abandons all thoughts of politics and of the political meeting to go off "home" with Rosie.

In Drums Under the Windows it is the male characters of the play who begin to appear. And although they are not attributed with their names from the play, they are clearly identifiable.

While pausing in the street to listen to a speech given by James Connolly, Sean notices that:

A thin, haggard, lugubrious young fellow, wearing a red tie, moved aimlessly through the little crowd, droning out the titles of a bunch of colour-covered pamphlets that he carried in his hand, a drone that was half a whisper and half a threat, Socialism Made Easy, a penny a copy, only a penny the copy; tuppence each, Can a Catholic be a Socialist? only tuppence each; the truth for tuppence; Hubert Bland's great work, Can a Catholic be a Socialist? The gaunt young man, whose name was Tom Egan, was the most cheerless sight ever seen by Sean. Everything about him had a downward drag; his jaws sagged down to the edge of his chin; his long nose seemed to be bent on pulling itself out of his face; his eyes were mirrors of energetic despondency; his lips were twisted into lines of deeply-cut complaints; but in the midst of all this misery his red tie blazed in his shallow bosom." (pp.413-4)

The young man reveals in the ensuing dialogue that he can be extremely uncivil in conversation and that he regards himself to be in possession of an

intellect superior to that of his fellows: "...if you knew all you should know, you'd know without askin'.....Aw, God, th' ignorance here's devastatin'!....." (p.414) All in all, this "gaunt young man" although named in the autobiography as "Tom Egan" can only be another manifestation of the dramatic character, The Covey - The Covey who is described in the play as

...about twenty-five, tall, thin, with lines on his face that form a perpetual protest against life as he conceives it to be. Heavy seams fall from each side of nose, down around his lips, as if they were suspenders keeping his mouth from falling. He speaks in a slow, wailing drawl; more rapidly when he is excited. He is dressed in dungarees, and is wearing a vividly red tie.
(Act I p.169)

The Covey does not sell political pamphlets but he repeatedly advocates, and offers to lend to Rosie, "Jenersky's Thesis on the Origin, Development, an' Consolidation of the Evolutionary Idea of the Proletariat". He is consistently uncivil in conversation, and loses no opportunity of vaunting the superiority of his "big brain" over the "little brain" of his neighbours such as Fluther (p.171).

The Covey's arch-enemy, Peter Flynn, also makes an appearance in Drums Under the Windows. And although, in the autobiography, he remains unnamed, the gentleman in "Green Fire on the Hearth" who, at a fantasised gathering outside the Pro-Cathedral, protests so vociferously, and from such little knowledge, about the works of Shaw, can be none other than Peter:

-Aha, yelled a man, full-dressed in green coat, white breeches, polished top-boots, and plumed hat of the Irish National Foresters; aha, wiping the creamy froth of a newly-lowered pint from a flowing moustache, now maybe he knows what's in store for him before long if he doesn't mend his way o' thinkin'. If he wants to understand things above our poor fumin' minds, let him go an' ask poor Benjamin Binns about them. (p.564)

"Professor Mcgennis" who is supporting the main "speaker" at the meeting, the statue of St. Lawrence O'Toole which stands on the top of the Pro-Cathedral, has just quoted, as a warning to Shaw, a rhyme about "The ghost of John, James, Christopher, Benjamin Binns, who was cut down right in the midst of his sins", and the National Forester in the autobiography has been

quick to seize eagerly upon this promise of damnation for Shaw. This is typical of Peter of the play who derives great satisfaction from consigning his personal antagonists to the torments of hell. He commits The Covey, for example:

..to th' day when th' all-pitiful, all-merciful, all-lovin'
 God'll be handin' you to th' angels to be riev'in' an'
 roāstin'you, tearin' an' tormentin' you, burnin' an' blastin'
 you! (Act I p.174)

and advises Mrs. Gogan in her quarrel with Bessie Burgess to ignore Bessie's taunts since: "It's always better to leave these people to th' vengeance o' God!" (Act II p.203).

But, of course, it is the gorgeous uniform of the Irish National Foresters, a uniform splendidly incongruous with the nature of the man inside it, that really proclaims the man in the autobiography to be Peter. Peter spends most of Act I of the play adorning himself in his regalia for the meeting and eventually emerges

"in full dress of the Foresters: green coat, gold braided; white breeches, top boots, frilled shirt. He carries the slouch hat, with the white ostrich plume, and the sword in his hands." (Act I p.180).

This "little, thin bit of a man" in his magnificent uniform provides, throughout Acts I and II, a constant butt for the jibes of the other characters who describe him as "Lookin' like th' illegitimate son of an illegitimate child of a corporal in th' Mexican army!" (p.182) and as being "dhressed up" like a "green-accoutred figure gone asthray out of a toyshop" (p.202). In the play Peter's natural insignificance and his ostentatious uniform provide an extreme comment upon the pride taken by the Nationalists in their uniform and authority. In the autobiography, at the point at which the Peter figure appears, there is no question of such a parallel but there is still the same sense of, as Fluther says, "wondher" as to "whether th' man was makin' fun o' th' costume, or th' costume was makin' fun o' th' man!" (p.200). The man in the autobiography is referred to in terms of being "the plumed hat" and even "St. Laurence O'Toole" exhorts him to

"-Shut up, and go home,.....Go home, an' look in the glass to see if you're there at all; and if y'are, keep it a dead secret." (p.564)

In the context of the autobiography "the plumed hat" represents the popular voice of pious ignorance, but the fact that he is in the "literary" company of "a crowd of Barney Dorans, Matt Haffigans, Corny Doyles, and Patsy Farrells" (p.562) - all of whom are characters from Shaw's own play John Bull's Other Island - suggests that he too is to be recognised as a literary celebrity.

The ensuing description in the same chapter about Sean's visit to the "real" Garden of Eden, a description which seems to be given in response to the voice under the plumed hat's "statement of the opinion "that th' Garden of Eden was somewhere among the lakes and fells of Killarney" (p.564), is also related to The Plough. In Act I of the play The Covey and Fluther argue over the theory of evolution, with Fluther firmly on the side of "Adam an' Eve" and The Covey on the side of "mollycewels an' atoms " and "th' skeleton of th' man o' Java". (pp. 170-2)

It is within the "Prepare, Everyone with Weapons" chapter of the same volume that Clitheroe, Brennan and Langon reappear briefly, or at least, a scene which involved them in the play is re-enacted under different circumstances in the autobiography.

Sean hears that gun-running is taking place at Howth, and on his way to investigate he sees:

...two young men, haversack and belt showing they were volunteers, casually, as it were, supporting a third between them who, though walking wearily, was half reclining in their arms, his head resting sideways on his left shoulder, while the look on the faces of his comrades was that of ignoring all, but seeing everyone. (p.642)

This sight immediately recalls the incident in Act III of the play in which:

Captain Brennan comes in supporting Lieutenant Langan, whose arm is around Brennan's neck. Langan's face, which is ghastly white, is momentarily convulsed with spasms of agony. He is

in a state of collapse, and Brennan is almost carrying him. After a few moments Clitheroe, pale, and in a state of calm nervousness, follows, looking back in the direction from which he came, a rifle, held at the ready, in his hands.
(p.231)

The implications of the two scenes are, however, different. Set before the Rising proper, the scene in the autobiography illustrates the Republicans' almost naive vanity, foolish desire for attention and absolute ignorance of the real horrors and practicalities of warfare - for it is revealed in dialogue that the wounded man is not really very much hurt, and that they walking in this way as an "advertisement" for their cause. Sean believes that they are "thoroughly enjoying themselves" (p.643). In the play, however, by virtue of its setting during the Rising, the scene is designed to reveal the terrible reality which overtook precisely such romantic and heroic fantasies.

Langon is very seriously wounded indeed and the three men are far from "enjoying" their predicament. But the scenes in the autobiography and play are clearly related, and since Clitheroe, Langon and Brennan did, before the Rising, share the vanity and foolishness of the Nationalists in the autobiography, perhaps the author did have them in mind when he transposed their scene into the play.

Corporal Stoddart of the play seems to reappear in the autobiography in the guise of the British "Tommy" who escorts Sean home during his period of internment, and who, on finding that Sean and his mother have nothing to eat, insists that a local shop-keeper gives them something: "-E'll give it, 'e'll 'ave to; you come with me, said the Tommy; Gawd blimey, a man 'as to eat!" After the "royal meal" has been procured and prepared the soldier takes "a cup of scald" with Sean and Mrs. Casside (p.660). In Act IV of the play Corporal Stoddart behaves "impatiently, but kindly" (p.251), and shows concern for his prisoners welfare in advising them to take food with them to their place of internment:

If I was you I'd bring a little snack with me;
you might be glad of it before the mawning. (p.254)

And he drinks "a cup of scald" (p.260) as the play closes.

Stoddart's immediate superior, Sergeant Tinley, is perhaps just glimpsed at in the autobiography in the course of a strange fantasised dialogue in which Sean or the author, it is not clear which, laments the defeat of the Rising, and speaks of the kind of ideals which provoked it.

.....so that St. Furze might again become the patron saint of the fierce O'Flaherties, and the Feast of Brendan on May the tenth could be safely kept again in Galway by the ancient dwellers on the quay street; that the Dublin men might be free to again become members of the Corpus Christi Guild of Coventry, and make a new path round that fair city; and to be able to send clean white boards for the church of Salisbury, and oak and elm beams to England to be made into galleys and shapely vessels of a fine length.

-Whhoorish! shouted a sergeant; is it treadin' on th' tile of me coat yes want to be now? Oirish, an' prawd of it, wot?

-Ay, and so as to again excel in carving rich and diversified designs on all churches, within and without the walls;.....

-I wouldn't tike it too much to heart, daddy; no use of gettin' riled wif us - we didn't start the shindy.

-make no sport of me, soldier, for there's no Fergus of the kindly tongue now to cool a man's anger! To hell with yous, spawn of Cromwell! May none of your race survive; may God destroy yous all; each curse of the holy book of the psalms and the prophets upon yous fall! (pp.663-4)

The dialogue as a whole seems to be a greatly elaborated and fantasised version of the brief exchange in the play between Sergeant Tinley and Fluther, who shares Sean's and the author's pride in Dublin:

Sergeant Tinley (He catches Fluther by the shoulder)

Gow on, git aht!

Fluther. Eh, who are you chuckin', eh?

Sergeant Tinley (roughly). Gow on, git aht you blighter.

Fluther. Who are you callin' a blighter to, eh?

I'm a Dublin man, born an' bred in th' city, see?

Sergeant Tinley. I down't care if you were Broin Buroo; git aht, git aht.

Fluther (halting as he is going out). Jasus, you an' your guns! Leave them down, an' I'd beat th' two o' yous without sweatin'! (Act IV p.255)

Fluther is glimpsed in the account of Easter Week in Drums Under the Windows, for, though unnamed, the man who loots a jar of whisky during the Rising (p.653) must surely be the Fluther who returns home with a jar of whisky in Act III of the play.⁵ But Fluther is to make much more significantly "personal" appearances in the autobiographies, for in Inishfallen an important development takes place in the use of characters from The Plough, and that is in the actual reference by name to Fluther himself. In the volumes of autobiography from Inishfallen onwards, the author assumes that the reader will be previously acquainted with Fluther and with his attributes in The Plough. And building on this assumption O'Casey uses Fluther Good as a symbol of all that is honest, generous, lively and also delightfully eccentric in the working class man. It seems that O'Casey is so personally fond of Fluther that he allows him to take on a life outside the play, and in times of depression Sean calls upon Fluther as an ally.

When in Inishfallen, in the chapter itself entitled "Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well", Sean, as a comparative new-comer to Dublin's literary circle, feels alienated by the genteel and elite assembly gathered at Yeats' house in Merrion Square for a performance of At the Hawk's Well, he amuses and consoles himself by conjuring up Fluther to his aid.

....in this crowd, outside of Yeats, there was no friend for him. He (Sean) could foresee that much. Most of them had gathered here, not to see the play, but because Yeats was Yeats. As Sean stood, watching, trying to listen to what they said, he wondered how they would feel, what would happen, if Fluther, furiously drunk, came tumbling into the room, looking for someone to fight him.

- Any two o' yours, any three o' yours; your own selection; anywhere you like - here or in th' sthreet!

⁵see above in connection with the autobiography's reworking of the play's depiction of the early events of the Rising.

An ignorant, ignoble savage, shouting that he wouldn't let that poet fella make little of Fluther's religion; lost to, and separate from these elegant ones here in Yeat's drawing room. And yet, Fluther was of the same family; bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh; a Christian, too, never missing Mass on Sundays. What headlines his visit would make in the morrow's newspapers! Fluther runs wild in Yeats's drawing-room; Shocking scene; The poet tries to reason with him; A number of dress-suits ruined; Six constables remove Fluther Good! (p.234)

Sean, indeed, looks upon Fluther as an old friend, and seems to be thoroughly acquainted with him and his ways:

Fluther had his rights, and he had his qualities. Fluther, on Sundays, sober; his old suit brushed, a faded bowler hat set rakishly on his head, a newly-washed shirt showing over the top of his waistcoat, coming up the poor street, would be surrounded by children, some preceding, some following him, and all crying out, Sing us a song, Fluther; give us th' Weddin' O' Glenree! And, shy and self-conscious, Fluther would set his back to the wall of a house, remove his hat, and sing the song for them. When it was done, Fluther, to regain his confidence, would say, I've a wing (penny) left; come on all of yous. He would lead the way to a sweet-shop, buy the sweets, and share them equally. Once, Sean saw him go back to the shop, and say, I want to give the chiselurs three each, an' I'm three short; and, for peace sake, the shopman would hand them over. But the children would never pester him; never beseech him to sing a song, till they saw him wearing the clean shirt and the bowler hat, and saw that he was sober. (p.234)

The words "Once, Sean saw him....." might seem to indicate that the character of Fluther was based upon a person from real life. This may be so to some extent, but the Fluther of the play, no matter where the original inspiration for his creation came from, emerges as very much the larger-than-life product of O'Casey's creative genius. And it is this Fluther, O'Casey's Fluther, the "whole man" of the play⁶ rather than any individual from real-life who has a suggestion of Fluther about him, whom O'Casey calls upon in the thematic and literary context of Inishfallen in order to convey Sean's recognition of just how isolated

⁶In Act I of the play *Nora*, simply using a Dublin idiom, describes Fluther as "a whole man" when she thanks him for mending the lock on her door (p.177). But in the light of the portrayal of Fluther in the play it seems as if these words can be interpreted as a tribute to the completeness of his human qualities.

he is himself from the literary cliques of Dublin.

bar Yeats and a few others, Sean was as far away from these elegant people as the doughtly Fluther. Far farther, for he was nearer to Fluther than he was to them. (p.234)

And it is by way of tribute to Yeats and Lady Gregory that Sean credits them with some understanding of Fluther - that is, that he credits them with a respect for rather than with a contempt of, the behaviour and impulses of unaffected human nature:

there was something of the wildness of Fluther in Yeats himself; and Sean could clearly see Lady Gregory listening attentively to Fluther shyly singing his The Weddin' O' Glencree, if he happened to come to Coole; for this was Fluther's one shy way of giving a bow to the glory of literature and song. (pp.234-5)

Fluther appears twice in the next volume of autobiography, Rose and Crown, and on both occasions as a symbol of the vital, yet ordinary, man and as the antithesis of all that is, in the author's opinion, unspontaneous and pretentious. In one instance he is again mentioned in connection with an O'Caseyan tribute to Yeats. On the surface Fluther would seem to be a direct contradiction of Yeats' famed yearnings for the mystic, the aesthetic and the esoteric. But O'Casey claims to know Yeats better than this:

No; let Yeats try ever so hard, he could never have been an aristocrat. With his castle, his crested spoons, his sword of Sato, he was no more an ancestral aristocrat than James Joyce; or even than Fluther Good when Fluther was singing his song about The Wedding o' Glencree. (p.283)

And Fluther is once more conjured up in his role as an ally of Sean when Sean and his wife attempt unsuccessfully to enrol their young son as a pupil at a lower-middle-class convent school. Fully expecting, since he cannot pay the full amount of the school fees, that the boy will be rejected, Sean waits outside the Convent Grounds for his wife and child

to bring him the nuns' verdict. He contemplates the imposing gate of the Convent and decides that it is specially designed "to keep out the Fluther Goods". And then he pictures Fluther Good actually braving the genteel and exclusive atmosphere of the grounds and buildings, and assesses Fluther's common-sensical reaction to the situation before him:

Imagine Fluther Good, if he happened to be a father, going up this drive, his heavy hand holding the light one of his son; Fluther's shoulders squared, his walk a swagger, his lips forming the words of The Wedding O' Glencree; on his way to interview the reverend mother.

-How much, ma'am, for this little fella? How much? Jasus, ma'am, that's a lot to charge a chiselur for his first few lessons, an' makin' him into an ordinary, orderly Christian man. (p.369)

Fluther makes his final appearance in Sunset and Evening Star, somewhat disappointingly, not in an imaginary and "dramatised" scene as his most notable appearances in Inishfallen and Rose and Crown have been, but still as the autobiographies symbol of O'Casey's "ideal" of the ordinary working-class man. Writing disparagingly of G.K. Chesterton O'Casey denies him the comradeship of Fluther:

No, this was no man for a symbol on a workers' banner. One could ne'er imagine this man striding along between Feemy Evans and Fluther Good. He knew far less about the workers than did Yeats or Lady Gregory,.... (p.465)

The fact that Fluther is here in literary company - "Feemy Evans" being a character from Shaw's The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet - draws further attention to the fact that the author expects the reader to be acquainted with Fluther's origin as a character from a play.

In connection with the author's inclusion in the autobiography of characters derived from The Plough, the character of Mollser merits special attention, for after the play she reappears not only as the unnamed "Young Girl" in "The Clergy Take a Hand" section of Inishfallen,

but also, again named as "Mollser", as the subject of a short story entitled "A Fall in a Gentle Wind", which was published in Windfalls (1934) about 9 years after the writing of the play and 15 years before the publication of Inishfallen. And the nature of the relationship between the three presentations of Mollser epitomises the nature of the relationship between The Plough and the autobiographies as a whole. It is a markedly literary relationship - that is, in writing "A Fall in a Gentle Wind" the author was working from the dramatic presentation of Mollser in The Plough, and in writing of the "young girl" in Inishfallen he was drawing upon the two previous literary representations of the character. Also it is a markedly creative relationship - play, story and autobiography in no respect simply copy each other's presentation of Mollser, but each rework the various aspects of her story as part of their independent artistic and thematic design.

Basic to all three presentations of Mollser are the facts that she lives in considerable poverty in a tenement slum in Dublin, that she is young, and that she is on the point of dying through consumption which has been caused and expedited by poverty and the insanitary nature of her surroundings. And so in all three of the works in which she appears, Mollser and her story are used to illustrate the appalling poverty which exists in the slum-areas of Dublin, and to condemn the society which allows such poverty and such slums to exist. The fundamental themes of the Mollser's story wherever it appears are the same. But by changing the historical background against which it is set, and by making some adjustments in minor details, the story can be used for independent effect in play, story and autobiography.

The play with its stage time of November 1915 - Easter Week 1916 presents Mollser and her life and death as symbolic of the real Ireland, as opposed to the imaginary romantic Ireland for which the Republicans

such as Clitheroe are fighting. Also she and her story manifest the author's belief that the real enemy of Ireland in 1916 was the social evil of poverty, rather than the political evil of British Rule. Much of the tragedy in the play is bound up with the fact that the plight of Mollser, and of the many like her, is as little heeded by the Nationalists as it is by the British governors; and the implication of this is that poverty would thrive unchecked under an Irish Republican regime just as it has under British Imperialism.

There is thus a ironic contrast virtually throughout the play between social concerns, represented by Mollser, and political concerns, represented by the Nationalists and the events of Easter Week. In Act I Mollser's physical appearance is, in itself, disconcerting and a visual condemnation of society:

She is about fifteen, but looks to be only about ten, for the ravages of consumption have shrivelled her up. She is pitifully worn, walks feebly, and frequently coughs.. (p.190)

Yet in a real and symbolic sense her welfare has already been abandoned in favour of political matters, since her mother and most of the other inhabitants of the house have gone to a political meeting, leaving her alone and "terrible afraid (that) I'll die sometime when I'm be meself". In Act III her presence, as she sits weakly in a chair "beside the railings, at the left side of the steps" (p.215) comments silently but sadly upon the patriotic enthusiasm displayed by the Nationalists at the end of Act II, and upon the news brought back to the tenement of the events of the Rising. The Covey, Peter, and Fluther toss coins as if to indicate that life and death are indifferently in the balance for Mollser just as much as for the Republicans fighting in the town. Her sudden attack of faintness, a warning of her imminent death from a cause which she did nothing to bring upon herself, contrasts with the sufferings of Langan, whose wound in battle was brought about by his voluntary and active part

in the political struggle. By Act IV the political cause of the Republicans is lost, but by this time too Mollser is dead, and it is her coffin rather than her emaciated presence which broods over the scene. The Covey, Peter and Fluther are again gambling, this time with cards, by the light of Mollser's funeral candles, and The Covey remarks that Mollser's death was inevitable since her mother was out all day looking for work and Mollser "never got any care". It is mentioned that Mollser's father had also died of consumption. (p.241). A death such as Mollser's is far from uncommon and in the tenements and arouses no surprise. Corporal Stoddart shows a momentary interest in her fate, but it is an interest which soon subsides when he finds out that she has died of disease and not from a sniper's bullets: "Ow, is that all? Thought she might 'ave been plugged". The Covey's sharp retort:

Is that all? Isn't it enough? D'ye know, comrade, that more die o' consumption than are killed in th' wars? An' it's all because of th' system we're livin' undher?
(p.249)

makes a very significant point in the argument of the play, but as far as The Covey himself is concerned his interest in such as Mollser is purely as a useful statistic in his own political theories. Unlike Bessie and Fluther, The Covey is not seen even to speak to Mollser or to acknowledge her presence when she is alive.

The story "A Fall in a Gentle Wind" is given no specific setting with regard to time, but a passing reference in the story to an old woman who is complaining that her old age pension has been cut from ten shillings to nine shillings seems to place the story in the early days of the Irish Free State Government.⁷ Unlike the play, "A Fall in a Gentle Wind"

⁷"I'm goin' for me oul' age pension; nine shillin's now. Takin' a lousy shillin' off a poor oul' woman..A lousy shillin'.....A lousy oul' shillin'" (Sean O'Casey: Windfalls; Stories, poems, and plays, London, Macmillan 1934. p.124). In Nannie's Night Out, set in "The Present" time of 1924 (the year in which it was written and produced) Nannie makes the same complaint against the Free State Government: "she'll give them somethin' betther than cuttin' down th' oul' Age Pensions". (Feathers from the Green Crow p.314)

does not present any direct contrast between the sufferings and death of Mollser and the preoccupations of the Nationalists, and the story which centres entirely around Mollser, is concerned with social matters rather than with social and political matters. Nevertheless the existence of poverty such as Mollser's does condemn, by implication, not only the society in which it is found but the government which has established that society. And thus, by implication rather than directly, the story recalls the theme of the play that Nationalists are as heedless of poverty in Ireland as are the British, for Mollser of the story is, unlike Mollser of the play, enduring poverty and disease under an Irish and not a British government.

The setting of the opening of the short story seems to have been drawn from the setting of Act III of the play. In both Mollser is said to be sitting on a chair by the five steps leading to the front door of a tenement house, in both the time is spring and Mollser, wrapped in a shawl, is hoping to derive some benefit from the early sunshine.

Something of the narrative of the story is also derived from the play. As in Act III of the play, so in the story Mollser's mother appears and exhorts her daughter to keep warm, and the tossing of coins which goes on near Mollser in Act III of the play occurs again near Mollser in the story. The gambling episode which takes place near the dead Mollser's coffin in Act IV of The Plough also finds its way into Windfalls- as another snatch of dialogue from the "toss-school" which Mollser hears as she is in the ambulance on her way to the Hospice to die:

As if from an infinite distance, she heard the murmur of voices: "Harps a tanner"... "Heads a bob".... "For Christ's sake, keep back there, and give a fella a chance to toss th' coins." (Windfalls p.132)

And, as in the play, the gambling seems to be an ironic comment upon the precariousness of life in the tenements. Also Mollser's wistful

I often envy you, Mrs. Clitheroe, seein' th' health you have, an' th' lovely place you have here, an' wondherin' if I'll ever be sthrong enough to be keepin' a home together for a man. (p.190)

is echoed in the story as Mollser broods upon a romance that ill-health has seemingly banished from her life forever. She remembers that

her artificial crepe de chine blouse, with its saucy glad neck,long long ago had prompted Jimmy Byrne to dance and dance with her, (Windfalls pp.126-7)

but now Jimmy Byrne is courting Mary Timmins:

"....Curious, a sturdy fella like him to be gone on a bloodless one like Mary Timmins....." Mollser instinctively looked at her own hands, pallid with the mournful delicacy of disease....."The summer may work wonders," thought Mollser, "and then--" (Windfalls pp.123-4)

But "A Fall in a Gentle Wind" differs markedly from the play with regard to the point of view from which the story of Mollser is related. The play provides a dramatic and thus, to some extent, "objective" portrayal of Mollser in the company of many other characters, and the audience or readers must draw their own conclusions from her appearance, her actions, her words and the words spoken about her by the other characters. The story, however, is written specifically from Mollser's point of view, and her thoughts, rather more than her words or actions, or the words or actions of others, form the substance of the narrative. Moreover, the prose form of the story, as opposed to the dramatic form of the play, encourages this Mollser's introspection, and it also encourages the author to adopt a rather consciously "literary" or "poetic" prose style, a style which is alien to the play:

A rollicking twittering, having in it the lilt of joyous intoxication, roused up Mollser to raise her head,....she saw a pair of sparrows abandoning themselves to the joy of tumultuous motion in the bosom of one of the little trees that stood at regular distances apart, surrounded by crudely cut wooden palings, along the pathway's edge of the slum street. A vague sense of kinship moved her to sympathy as she looked at the frail, thin trunk, like her own shrinking body; the fragile

branches stretching towards the sky as if appealing for deliverance;.....

And Mollser shivered as she vaguely thought that life was more abundant in a common sparrow than it was in her: song and rhythm and motion, against weakness, disease, and death, a fragile feathered morsel of life, that even her little, wasted hand could clutch and banish from the universe, vibrant with the vigour that her body, passive because of tubercular weakness, would never know,..... (Windfalls pp.124-5)

The medium of such prose naturally allows the author a much more direct expression of his own savage indignation against poverty than did The Plough. As in O'Casey's previous Abbey plays his portrayal of poverty in The Plough relies heavily on the sets and upon the appearance and behaviour of the characters including Mollser. This is by no means ineffective since the stage directions indicate clearly the degree of poverty to be presented, and Bessie's room, for example, is described in great detail, as well as generally described as possessing "an unmistakable air of poverty bordering on destitution" (Act IV p.239) Nowhere in The Plough, apart from the social theorising of The Covey - which is entirely in character for him and is undercut to a large extent by his own indolence and lack of compassion - does any character complain of, or even speak of, poverty. Yet in "A Fall in a Gentle Wind" the author's commentary on the thoughts of Mollser takes on not just a somewhat self-conscious "literary" style, but also a fierce, but self-conscious, denunciatory tone, with regard to the subject of poverty. Hence passages such as the following in which "literariness" and indignation combine in the personification of the slum tenement-houses who tower over and threaten the bewildered girl:

A tremulous shiver passed through Mollser's couched body, as she mistily seemed to see a sinister vitality gleaming from the eye-like windows, leering down on the fibrous life that tottered into or plodded out of the various cave-like hallways. They seemed to glance in a sidelong, jeering manner at the horde of uncared-for youngsters playing feverishly in the street, as if conscious that each slum was a secondary parent to them, each child subdued by one faith and one baptism, having had to pass through the womb of the slum when they had been safely

delivered from the womb of the mother. Having been born first in the image of God, they were afterwards to be moulded in the image of the Devil.

Mollser shivered again, for the tenement opposite, a foul, wrinkled, dishevelled, palsied-looking building like a worn-out harlot, seemed to be muttering across to her.

"Well, Mollser, how are you to-day; going along well, ay? You're a credit to number fifteen.....All the little body's a mass of tubercular rot.....feeling as if you'd like to be laid out? Time enough, time enough, little one.....We'll give you a long spell on the broad of your back before we pack you away in the coffin..... You're the little masterpiece of number fifteen..... Each of us has its own..... ..Mine went a week ago,But I've years of fertility left in me still, and there's many more to come....My own little one above with spinal disease, in a few months, 'll be able to hold her own with the best of you....We've a rich and lush heritage for all our children, and it will go hard with us to disinherit any." (pp.121-3)

The sequence of events described in the story though initially moving in a parallel with the plot of Act III of the play, later diverges from The Plough in that Mollser of the story does not die suddenly, but, confined to her bed, is visited by the nuns who arrange a place for her in the Hospice for the Dying. And the story ends with Mollser, resisting the thought that she is about to die, being carried helplessly into the ambulance, bound for the Hospice.

For its basic narrative the episode concerning the "Young Girl" in The Clergy Take a Hand section of Inishfallen seems to draw upon this latter part of the story rather than upon the plot of the play. The young girl is dying, has been given a place in the "Hospice for the Dying", refuses to go, but is eventually carried protesting into the ambulance. Another smaller detail of the autobiography corresponds with the story, and that is in the reference to "the sycamore sapling" (Inishfallen p.101), which is outside the house in the autobiography; for this seems to recall the tree in which Mollser of the story saw the sparrows quarrelling.

But the autobiographical episode, while drawing upon the incidents of the short-story also makes something of a return to the themes of the play. For within its Civil War setting "The Clergy Take a Hand" can make use of the play's central contrast - which was missing from the story - between the deaths or woundings of young Republicans in the political struggle and the deaths and illnesses of young people as a result of poverty and disease. And in autobiography as well as play the point is made that the Republicans themselves care very little about remedying the social evil of poverty. The autobiography even echoes the dialogue of the Plough in order to help make this point, and the Republican "tram-conductor" in his lack of concern over the young girl's imminent death - "That's not much to get excited about. We have more stringent things to think of today than a case of simple consumption" (p.102) - echoes the words of Corporal Stoddart when he learns that Mollser of the play died not as a victim of the fighting but as a victim of consumption.

But that the autobiography is drawing upon the material of The Plough as part of a precise and independent artistic and thematic design can clearly be seen even here, in so far as the autobiography is deftly and purposefully combining elements of The Plough with elements of Juno. (It is from Juno that the Civil War setting and the story of Captain Wogan, whose death is contrasted with the imminent death of the young girl, is derived.⁸)

All in all, then, the account of the Young Girl in the autobiography is drawing upon material from at least three other works of O'Casey's - The Plough, Juno and The Paycock, and the story "A Fall in a Gentle Wind." And these fragments of material from the previous works are all dovetailed into the new context of the narrative of Inishfallen itself -

⁸ see above chapter on Juno and the Paycock.

concerned as it is with a specific period in Irish history, and with the course of Sean's life during that period. If the Mollser episode is incorporated into the historical scheme of the volume by virtue of its Civil War background (which it derived from Juno), it is incorporated into the truly autobiographical scheme of the volume by virtue of being presented from a new viewpoint: that of Sean himself.

In "The Clergy Take a Hand" the "Young Girl" and her situation described entirely through the eyes and mind of Sean:

The young girl below was coughing again. He could see in his mind's eye the bed in which she lay, a heap of clothing, confused with the restless tossing and turning of one in an advanced state of consumption. (p.98)

Moreover, Sean himself is described as playing a large part in her destiny, for he personally had "advised Peter, the sick girl's brother to get her into the Hospice for the Dying", and had himself

....gone down to try to persuade the sick girl; but she had turned her face to the wall, had cried the whole time, and screamed occasionally while he was there, so he had returned to his room without a word spoken. (p.99)

Eventually, he provides the "thirty pieces of silver" for the fee for the ambulance which is to take her to the Hospice (p.100)

In presenting the Mollser/Young Girl character through, as it were, the life and presentation of Sean the author employs a technique, and achieves an effect, in the autobiography which are quite as distinct from those of her portrayal in the story as they are from those of her portrayal in the play. Sean is at one and the same time both a dramatic figure and a figure representing the author, therefore, when Sean comments on the young girl and her situation (as, for example, when he describes her as "very young - just on the verge of womanhood; and, one time, she was handsome and gay" (p.102) the author is controlling

the sympathies of his "audience" much more directly than he does in the "objective" medium of the play, in which Mollser's words and appearance must speak for themselves; but he is also avoiding the rhetoric and literary self-consciousness of the authorial voice into which the narrative of the short-story tends to slip. The autobiography's "semi-dramatic" description, again through Sean, of poverty also marks a departure from the "objective" technique of the play, while in time and style it is considerably quieter and more factual than the declamations within the story. In describing, for example, the conditions in which the young girl lives, the episode in Inishfallen does not refer to "glowering houses" "sordid street" "eye-like windows" "cave-like hallways" of the story but tells of how the girl:

A basement dweller,..lived with an old mother, a brother who was a plumber, and a little girl, child of a sister, who, too, had lived with consumption for years before she had died. They lived in a basement set of two rooms, one a bedroom, the other a kitchen. Two days before, the young brother had shown Sean the floor of the bedroom that had rotted under the oilcloth till the boards were of the texture of rain-soaked wallpaper. Sean and the young man had pointed this terrible condition of the room out to the sanitary inspector, and the family were living together in the kitchen while the landlord took his time to put in a new floor. pp.98-9

Distinct from the play and the story in its technique and style, the portrayal of the Young Girl in Inishfallen also involves a theme which is quite independent of The Plough and "A Fall in a Gentle Wind" and independent too from Juno. "The Clergy Take a Hand", as its title suggests, is concerned with the attitudes of the clergy. Primarily this concern takes the form of a criticism of the clergy's intervention in the politics of the Civil War. But it is extended also to a criticism of their failure to show any anxiety over the social evil of poverty in general, and any regard for victims of poverty - such as the Young Girl - in particular.

Anyway, it surely was the priest's job to get the dying girl to dimly realise the inevitable end of this illness in a tenement. But the priests, as far as Sean could see, were chary of crossing the border into the hidden horridness of a slum - the hidden Ireland! Usually, they'd hurry in to fortify the dying with the last rites of the church, and then hurry out again. No priest, as far as Sean knew, had ever visited this dying lass to say even the Lord be with thee. There wasn't much to be got out of these places. (p.99)

And so it is that the episode in Inishfallen, while portraying again a character who had appeared in The Plough many years before, not only draws upon and assimilates influences details and developments of the intervening short-story which was itself based upon The Plough, and not only derives something of its substance from a second play, Juno and the Paycock, but utilises them within its own artistic and thematic design, and, moreover, asserts a theme and uses a viewpoint, and technique completely independent of both The Plough and "A Fall in a Gentle Wind".

The autobiographies' artistic and complex treatment of the portrayal of Mollser, including as it does an assimilation and adaptation of the details surrounding the portrayal of Mollser in two previous literary works epitomizes the precise, almost systematic, yet independent nature of the autobiographies' reworking of the portrayals of almost all the characters from The Plough. And in its turn the almost systematic introduction throughout the course of the six volumes of the autobiographies, of almost all the characters from The Plough - in their various new guises, and with attention being progressively drawn, for specific purposes, to their origins in the play - epitomizes the kind of relationship which exists between The Plough and The Stars and the autobiographies. It is an artistic and creative relationship which embraces all aspects of the play, but, as in the relationship between the autobiographies and Juno and the Paycock, within which the aspects of the play are reworked separately from each other, and the artistry and creativity are directed towards enriching the fabric and achievement of the autobiographies, rather than towards enriching the fabric or achievement of the play.

But apart from the actual reworking of The Plough and its material the autobiographies make claims, and again, artistic and creative claims, upon The Plough and The Stars in one further regard.

O'Casey was to write of The Plough and of its production at the Abbey in 1926:

It is strange how simple things and simple incidents weave a way into a life and often shape its ends; or is it Destiny that Shakespeare says 'shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will'? Well, I suppose that things and incidents are parts of that Destiny that raises us up or knocks us down.....

....Well, the play called The Plough and the Stars came into existence in an odd way; and the effects of its living presentation on the stage gave Destiny an opportunity to shunt me from the way I went on to another and stranger road altogether.⁹

And it is precisely as just such an important influence upon the course of Sean's life that The Plough and its production are described within the scheme of the autobiographies.

This treatment in the autobiographies of the influence of the actual plays and their production upon Sean's the author's life begins in earnest, although it does not end, in connection with The Plough.

It is strange, perhaps that O'Casey does not in the autobiographies dwell in any detail or at any great length upon how the Abbey's production of The Gunman - his first play to be professionally performed - provided a turning point in "Sean's" life. Instead he emphasises "Sean's" disappointment over the smallness of his financial reward from the production (Inishfallen p. 14³), and in his description of "Sean's" feelings on the occasion of the first presentation of the play, he seems deliberately to minimise any sense of personal excitement, gratification or pride. He writes that Sean "felt no great elation", and the more positive and promising statement that

⁹from 'Memories of a Farewell to Ireland' first published in The New York Times, Dec. 4, 1960 and reprinted as "The Plough and the Stars in Retrospect" in Blasts and Benedictions (quotation from p.95)

He felt, though, as he stood quiet in the vestibule (ie of the Abbey Theatre) that he had crossed the border of a little, but a great, new kingdom of life,

is quickly tempered by the succeeding comment, very much in a directly authorial voice:

and so another illusion was born in his poor susceptible soul. He didn't know then that it was no great thing to be an Abbey playwright; and, afterwards, when he knew a lot more, he was glad he had suffered himself to feel no jubilation to mar his future by thinking too much of a tiny success.....realising, though unaware of it at the time, that to be a great playwright was a very different thing from merely being one who had had one, two, or even three, plays produced at the Abbey Theatre.
(p.103)

It seems as if bitter disagreements with the Abbey - principally over the Abbey's rejection of The Silver Tassie - which were in the future when the early plays were presented, have coloured O'Casey's retrospective account of his early relationship with the Abbey, and have led him to imply that Sean's" career as a playwright owed very little to the Abbey Theatre. The intrusion of these retrospective prejudices not only mars the seeming spontaneity of the narrative at this point, but also spoils an important part the artistic design of the autobiographies. For a little earlier in Inishfallen the author had begun to make something of a definite theme of Sean's determination, in the face of the Theatre's rejections of several of his plays, to have a play produced at the Abbey:

He had made up his mind years ago that the Abbey Theatre curtain would go up on a play of his; and up it would go; sooner or later. First decide slowly and deeply whether it is in you to do a thing; if you decide that you can, then do it, even though it kept you busy till the very last hour of life. (p.98)

But more importantly, by pitching in such a minor key his descriptions of the real beginnings of Sean's career as a playwright, he is failing to provide a climax to, or even to advance, a much deeper theme in the context of the artistic and thematic design of the autobiographies as a whole -

the theme of Johnny/Sean's artistic vocation that is specifically asserted in the closing words of Pictures in the Hallway:

....He was staying too long in the Hallway looking at the pictures. All done by others. Very beautiful and strong, but all done by others. He'd have to start now doing things for himself. Create things out of his own life. He'd begin to make pictures himself; ay, pictures, too, that would be worth hanging in the Hallway for other people to see. (p.402)

Of his plays which followed The Gunman in production at the Abbey and which preceded The Plough, only one, Kathleen Listens In, is referred to in anything like detail, and then only because in production it gave "Sean" the distinction of being "the one and only playwright to have had a play received in silence by an Abbey audience....." (p.144)

But the account of the production and performance of The Plough, is much more extensive and gives much impetus to the central theme of Inishfallen itself - that of Sean's increasing disillusionment with post-1916 Ireland, a theme which reaches its climax at the end of the volume with Sean's departure for England.

Sean, desirous of a "place in which he would find fairer comfort, greater space, and a steady quietness" (p.146), is described as already thinking of a visit to London, where his play Juno is running in the West End, when The Plough is put into rehearsal at the Abbey. From this point onwards the narrative of the autobiography progressively reveals how the thought of a possible stay in England gradually, through the circumstances and consequences attendant upon the production of The Plough, becomes a firm decision to leave Ireland at all costs, and perhaps "forever".

The rehearsals of the play are described in connection with Sean's sense "that something was going wrong". Some of the actors seemed very unenthusiastic about their parts. An actress refused to play the role of Mrs. Gogan because "The part was not genteel", Lennox Robinson, the

producer of the play, was irritable with Sean, and rumours as to the nature of the play already seemed to be circulating in Dublin.

(p. 147).

Suffering severely from pain in his eyes, Sean attended the first performance of the play and "though some of the actors didn't seem to strive very earnestly to swing themselves into the drama, most things went well", and "when the end came, the audience clapped tumultuously, and shouted applause. They shouted for the author, and Sean went on to the stage, quietly glad that the play had succeeded." But on going to the Abbey for the performance on the next night¹⁰ he sauntered into a storm" (p.148)

Republicans in the audience were protesting vigorously, even violently at the supposedly anti-Irish sentiments of the play and the police had to be sent for, a measure to which Sean very reluctantly gave his consent. Unimpressed by the speech delivered by Yeats to the audience that this performance of The Plough constituted O'Casey's "apotheosis",¹¹ Sean's personal reaction to the vociferous and violent protests of the Republicans is to feel

For the first time in his life, ... a surge of hatred for Cathleen in Houlihan sweeping over him. He saw now that the one who had the walk of a queen could be a bitch at times. She galled the hearts of her children who dared to be above the ordinary, and she often slew her best ones. She had hounded Parnell to death; she had yelled and torn at Yeats, at Synge, and now she was doing the same to him. What an old snarly gob she could be at times; an ignorant one too. (p.150)

¹⁰In Inishfallen O'Casey describes The Plough not as taking place on the second night of the production, i.e. Tues, 9 February 1926, however, in Sean O'Casey the man and his Work, London MacGibbon & Kee, 1960, paperback edition 1967 p.39 David Krause writes that while "On Tuesday and Wednesday the play was repeatedly interrupted by shouting and jeering, -on Thursday night the real trouble broke loose".

¹¹The Irish Times and Irish Independent of 12th February 1926 reported Yeats' now famous speech to be as follows:
You have disgraced yourselves again. Is this to be an ever-recurring celebration of the arrival of Irish genius? Synge first and then O'Casey. The news of the happenings of the past few minutes will go from country to country. Dublin has once more rocked the cradle of genius. From such a scene in this theatre went forth the fame of Synge. Equally the fame of O'Casey is born here tonight. This is his apotheosis.

And as he left the theatre for home his crucial plans for the future were forming in his mind:

Did these bawling fools think that their shouting would make him docile? He would leave them to their green hills of holy Ireland. His play was doing well in London, and the producer, J.B. Fagan, had written several times to him, asking him to come over. Why didn't he go, and leave the lot of them? The land of Nelson and of Clive was beckoning to him more clearly than ever before; and he was near ready to leave the land of Patrick and of Tone: (p.151)

But The Plough is depicted as having yet a further part to play in sending Sean to England. For, having accepted an invitation to defend The Plough in public debate against Mrs. Sheehy - Sheffington - one of the foremost of the play's Republican critics - Sean, again suffering from pain in his eyes and also from the heat and oppressiveness of the crowded room, gives a far from satisfactory account of himself in the debate, and "in his heart he despised, more bitterly than ever, the ones who made it necessary for a writer to defend a work so many hated and so few admired". And on his return home that night, "weary and scornful at the end of it all", Sean, finding that J.B. Fagan - the manager of Juno in the West End - had telegraphed asking him to go over to London, finally makes his decision:

"-I'll go, he said.....and leave the wrack behind me" (p.153)

Before the volume closes additional reasons are given for Sean's departure from England; these include the hostility of Irish dramatic critics, the unfriendly attitude of certain members of the Abbey company, a sense of alienation from most of the literary personalities in Dublin, Sean's profound distrust and hatred of the power wielded by the Roman Catholic Church over all aspects of Irish life, and, of course, there runs throughout the entire volume, an increasing sense of his dislike of, and contempt for the Irish Free State society and modern Ireland.

Yet it is the circumstances of the production of The Plough which are treated within the artistic and thematic structure of Inishfallen, and of the autobiographies as a whole, as providing the real impetus behind Sean's decision to leave Ireland. And the autobiographies' use, as an essential part of their artistic and thematic design, of The Plough and the Stars and its production as an actual guiding force within Sean's/the author's life marks a new development in their overall relationship with the plays in general, and a development which will be pursued in their treatment of The Silver Tassie and Within the Gates in particular.

Chapter 6

The Silver Tassie

It is entirely characteristic of Inishfallen's artistic approach to the experience of the author, that the sweeping declaration of "Sweet Inishfallen, fare thee well! Forever!", to which, in the autobiography, the Abbey production of The Plough is made to seem so directly and inexorably to lead, was not, perhaps, in real life initially so sweeping or so final. Newspaper interviews given by O'Casey very shortly after his arrival in England early in March 1926 indicate that he did not at that time intend to stay in England. One such interview reports him as saying: "'I feel I'll never do as Barrie has done and come and live in England I don't fancy I'll like London.'"¹ And in a letter of April 1926 to Jim Kavanagh, an old friend and fellow resident at 422 North Circular Road, Dublin, O'Casey enclosed "One Pound for Rent (i.e. for his own room in 422 North Circular Road) which, I think, will bring payment up to the 8th of May".²

As early as March 27th 1926, however, he was writing to tell Gabriel Fallon that he liked London and "may stay here forever".³ And in a letter of June 17th 1926, again to Gabriel Fallon, he wrote that "I have decided to come to Dublin as soon as I can - to arrange to bring over my things for residence in London!"⁴ Over the years O'Casey's residence or "exile" in England did indeed reveal itself to be a permanent one. And when he himself, retrospectively and artistically tracing in the autobiographies the significance and pattern inherent in

¹ Daily Graphic (London), 6 March, 1926, p. 2 reprinted in The Sting and The Twinkle pp. 25 - 6, quotation from p. 26.

² Letters Vol I p. 188

³ Letters Vol I p. 185

⁴ ibid p. 199

in his actual experience, depicts "Sean's" leaving of Ireland as the most momentous single event in the course of "Sean's" life, then his judgement upon the matter must be regarded as absolute, for it springs from an insight into the author's life that only he is qualified to give.

It is tempting to assume that if O'Casey's departure from Ireland early in March 1926 actually, although he might have been unaware of it at the time, fixed a great gulf between his past and future life, then a great gulf was immediately fixed also between those plays he had written in Dublin and the first play - The Silver Tassie - which he was to write in England. The decision of the Abbey Theatre to reject The Tassie when it was submitted for production, and certain of the arguments put forward by two of the Abbey Directors - W. B. Yeats, and Dr. Walter Starkie - in defence of that decision, first began the contention that the O'Casey who lived and wrote in England was a playwright who had left both his material and inspiration far behind him in his native land. And from then on this was increasingly to be the cry of hostile Irish critics, as one by one the plays written by O'Casey in England appeared. Furthermore, in favourable as well as unfavourable criticism of the play, the Expressionism of The Tassie, and particularly of its now famous Second Act, might also be regarded as evidence that, for good or ill, The Silver Tassie begins a new era or chapter in O'Casey's work and career.

Certain modern criticisms of the play, however have tended to see it and its qualities as developing organically out of his Dublin plays, rather than being a new and radical departure from them. But whatever other arguments may be put forward for viewing The Tassie as fundamentally different from, or alternatively, as essentially similar to, the earlier plays, there is one context in which it can quite unequivocally be regarded as possessing an affinity with them, and as closing rather than opening a chapter in O'Casey's work. And that context is the consideration

of the existence and importance of the relationship and interaction between his plays and the autobiographies; for The Tassie was the last of O'Casey's plays to be written in its entirety before he began on the writing, in some shape or form, of what was to become in time the first volume of the autobiography.⁵

This fact may not seem, initially, to be especially significant. But it does mean that if the actual writing of the autobiographies was in any way to influence the course or nature of O'Casey's plays, then The Tassie, no matter what other new influences it might have been written under, is, like the previous plays and unlike the subsequent ones, certain to have been free of this particular influence.

Furthermore, since the relationship between a "pre-autobiography" play and the autobiographies seems to reflect the nature of the original play and the author's view of the play's achievement; the degree to which the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies is akin to the relationship between the plays written in Dublin and the autobiographies, and the degree to which it develops or radically diverges from them, will provide an indication as to how much The Tassie itself shares its predecessors' basic qualities and characteristics, and as to whether it developed out of the tradition evolved through the previous plays, or has largely come into being independently of them.

In two highly important respects the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies is essentially of the same nature as those between the autobiographical volumes and all the other "pre -

⁵ The Silver Tassie was written in October 1926 - February 1928. In a letter dated 1 October 1926 O'Casey wrote to Gabriel Fallon: "I've just commenced work on a new play. The ideas of each act have been arranged in my head, and I've found a good opening for the first Act, and the rest will, I hope, be filled in while the Earth is spinning once around the Sun." (Letters Vol I p 207). And in a letter dated 27 February 1928, again to Gabriel Fallon, he writes: "Just finishing off the last few corrections in the new play to send it to be properly typed for publication. I believe it to be the best play I've written. "The Silver Tassie". The seeds of what was to become the first volume of autobiography were not sown until 1929 - 30. See chapter below which includes a study of the writing of Within The Gates and I Knock at the Door."

autobiography" plays; for it is a creative relationship which seems to take into consideration all aspects of the play. (And in the tracing of the overall relationship between the plays and autobiographies of O'Casey, these do emerge as very much the distinctive group characteristics of individual relationships involving the plays which were completed before O'Casey began the autobiographies). In another highly important respect, the relationship between the autobiographies and The Silver Tassie is directly in the tradition of the relationship between the autobiographies and The Tassie's immediate predecessors, Juno and the Paycock and The Plough and the Stars; for in the treatment of The Tassie within the autobiographies, the various aspects of the play are reworked individually to make individual contributions to the substance, thematic scheme, structural design and artistic achievement of the autobiographies. And, again as with the reworking of Juno and of The Plough, important correspondences with The Tassie are to be found in every one of the six autobiographical volumes.

The implication that the kind of analytical treatment accorded to Juno, The Plough and The Tassie in the autobiographies indicates the author's conscious or subconscious satisfaction with these plays (as opposed to his conscious or subconscious dissatisfaction with The Gunman, Kathleen and Nannie, the plays which he tends to rework as composite wholes within the autobiographies), seems to be borne out particularly in connection with The Tassie. As soon as it was completed he was confident that it was "the best play I've written"⁶ and that "I have certainly put my best into it".⁷ And in the debate which ensued over

⁶ Letter from O'Casey to Gabriel Fallon, 27th February, 1928 (Letters Vol I, p. 229)

⁷ Letter from O'Casey to Lady Gregory, 28th February 1928 (Letters Vol I p. 230).

its rejection by the Abbey he was, therefore, scornful of "Mr. Yeats's suggestion that I should ask to withdraw the play, telling the Press that I am dissatisfied with it (I am proud of it), and that I want to revise, etc."⁹

The details of The Tassie's relationship with the autobiographies seems to reflect a play which is, by nature, very much akin to the natures of the earlier plays (as they too have been reflected in their own relationships with the autobiography), but which has developed from them in some respects.

As with the reworking of all the other "pre-autobiography" plays - with the exception of Kathleen Listens In - the bulk of that material of The Tassie which is treated in the autobiographies, is treated within the first four volumes of the autobiography which exclusively describe Sean's Irish, and mainly Dublin, experience. (And since that plot of Kathleen Listens In is not presented in naturalistic terms there are very special reasons why the important re-appearance of the heroine of the play, who herself represents Ireland, should occur not in the Irish context of the first four volumes, but in a fantastical English context in Sunset and Evening Star. And even so, the rest of the reworking of Kathleen Listens In is confined to the Irish settings of Drums and Inishfallen).

The fact that such a large proportion of the material of The Tassie can and does find its way into the "Irish" volumes of the autobiographies emphasises very strongly that O'Casey in writing the play was, just as he had done unavoidably in all his previous works, drawing very much upon experience gained and impressions formed during his life in Ireland. O'Casey himself, had, of course, long before the autobiographies were begun, most convincingly refuted W.B. Yeats' and Dr. Walter Starkie's

⁹ Letter from O'Casey to Lady Gregory, undated but sent by O'Casey on 9th June, 1928 for publication in The Irish Statesman (Letters Vol I, p. 270).

charges that The Silver Tassie revealed a playwright who was out of touch with his native Irish material and inspiration. In a letter to The Irish Times and to The Irish Independent dated 21 June 1928 he wrote of Yeats' criticism of The Tassie:

.... his cute contention that I was out of touch with my environment, and had lost my material, is ridiculous.

I am now two years in London; the new play was thought out and started more than eighteen months ago, and to toss away in six months the material of a life-time is more than even Mr. Yeats himself could do.¹⁰

And again, in a letter dated September 1928 from O'Casey to Nineteenth Century he replies to Dr. Starkie's argument that O'Casey had "left the scenes of his impressionable years and has ceased to see intensely" by writing that:

In the first place, it would be impossible to lose in two years the impressions of forty; in the second place, a good deal of those two years has been infused into the production of my old plays,⁽¹²⁾ and the rest of the time has been spent in the writing of The Silver Tassie, so that about a lunar month remains in which I must have lost the 'power to see intensely.' And if Starkie bets, and he is game, I will take a bet with him that he himself during his life has spent more of his time out of Ireland than I have. The fact is that Starkie's leit-motif of separation from Ireland is a veil over the conceited opinion that there must be a loss in the wider separation from that little Irish league of letters who have joined hands and dance continually around the totem pole of their own opinions.¹³

And the fact that the material of the play can, within the autobiography, be integrated so naturally into a Dublin setting seems to confirm the truth of O'Casey's arguments.

¹⁰ Letters of Sean O'Casey Vol I, p. 288

¹¹ See Walter Starkie, "The Plays of Sean O'Casey," Nineteenth Century, August 1928.

¹² Juno and The Paycock began its London production at the Royalty Theatre on 16 November 1925 and was transferred to the Fortune Theatre (very shortly after O'Casey's arrival in London) on 8 March 1926. Upon the withdrawal of Juno, The Plough and the Stars was put into production and opened at the Fortune Theatre on 12 May 1926.

¹³ Letters Vol I, pp. 308 - 9

The first aspect of the play and its material to be reworked in detail in the autobiographies, the aspect concerning the British Army and the service of Irish men in the British Army, indeed seems to have had its origins deep in O'Casey's life and experience, for it is presented in the early volumes, of the autobiographies. In I Knock at the Door, Pictures in the Hallway and Drums Under the Windows the Casside family are revealed to have a positive history of involvement in British military affairs. But as with the treatment of the historical material of The Plough within Drums Under the Windows, the relationship between The Tassie and the narrative of the autobiographies is a complex one in this connection. The autobiographies seem to be giving an account of actual experience of the author, experience which he had earlier used as material for his play. But so powerful is the artistry of the play, and so artistic and receptive the nature of the autobiographies, that in giving their account of the original experiences, they seem to draw upon the artistic images of those experiences as translated into the art of the play.

The dramatised "scene" in I Knock at the Door (pp. 58 - 61), in which Johnny's brothers celebrate their enlistment in the British Army provides a good instance of the workings of this kind of relationship. The "scene" has already been described in connection with the autobiographies reworking of The Plough's portrayal of Nora Clitheroe with the attendant theme of the attitude of women to war. But it is related to The Tassie also in that it illustrates the unthinking and emotional way in which men enter the forces. Harry Heegan in Act I of the play is described before returning to the trenches as

... a typical young worker, enthusiastic, very often boisterous, sensible by instinct rather than by reason. He has gone to the trenches as unthinkingly as he would go to the polling booth. He isn't naturally stupid; it is the stupidity of persons in high places that has stupefied him. He has given all to his masters, strong heart, sound lungs, healthy stomach, lusty limbs, and the little mind that education has permitted to develop sufficiently to make all the rest a little more useful. He is excited now with the sweet and

innocent insanity of a fine achievement, and the rapid lowering of a few drinks. (Collected Plays Vol. II
Act I, p. 25)

Harry's excitement and "sweet and innocent insanity", together with "the rapid lowering of a few drinks", are on account of his football victory, but his present state of mind, as well as the general circumstances of his life are surely akin to those of the "excited and glowing" Tom and Mick who, in the autobiography, have thrown aside their reasonably promising jobs (p. 59) and ignore their innate talents in order, amidst the singing of patriotic songs and drinking of porter, to embark upon a life in the British Army. True, they are not about to go to war, nor will they die in war, but if the opportunity had arisen they, with "their hearts swelling with desire to fight" (p. 58) would like Harry have gone "unthinkingly" "to the trenches".

And just as Harry sings the song "The Silver Tassie" which tells of a young soldier embarking for the war and leaving his sweetheart behind:

.....
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
Full loud the wind blows from the ferry;
The ship rides at the Berwick Law,
An' I must leave my bonnie Mary!
..... (Act I, p. 32).

so Tom Casside sings a song of similar sentiment, "his song of love and war" (p. 61).

On the banks of the Clyde stood a lad and his lassie
The lad's name was Georgie, the lassie's was Jane.
She flung her arms round him, and cried, Do not leave me,
For Georgie was going to fight for his Queen. (p. 60)

while all the men present, including the five or six year old Johnny, join in the chorus. Of course the song in the play, in its inspiration of the central "Silver Tassie" symbolism of the play, carries a weight of significance which is not attached to the song in the autobiography, but the inclusion within the autobiographical scene of a ballad so closely related in subject and kind to the song of "The Silver Tassie", seems quite clearly to denote a direct relationship with the play.

The Cassides' history of service in the British Army is pursued further in Pictures in the Hallway when the author, describing Johnny's feelings towards his uncle, writes:

Johnny was proud of his uncle because he had fought in the Crimean War where a sabre-cut had sliced an arm from the shoulder to the elbow, where often, after a night's sleep beside his horse, his uncle's hair had been frozen to the ground; and Nurse Nightingale had bandaged the wound up with her own hand in the hospital at Scutari. (p. 198).

It is during an outing with his uncle to Kilmainham Gaol that Johnny first encounters the paradox of Irish men being English soldiers:

-
- What English, Uncle? I've never seen any English knockin' about.
 - The soldiers, Johnny, the English Soldiers.
 - What, is it Tom or Mick, you mean?
 - No, no; not Tom or Mick; they'r not English - they're Irish.
 - But they're soldiers, aren't they?
 - Yes, yes; I know they're soldiers.
 - They're Irish soldiers, then, Uncle, that's what they are. Aren't they, Uncle? Same as you were when you fought in the Crimea.
 - No, no, no; not Irish soldiers.
 - Well, what sort of soldiers are they?
 - English, English soldiers, really.
- (p. 199)

That many Irish men have traditionally fought for England is to become a theme in the autobiographies and is also explored in Oak leaves and Lavender O'Casey's play about the Second World War. But it is important in connection with The Silver Tassie also, for although the Great War, which forms the historical background of the play, was an event dwarfing in its scope the Irish national issues and struggles which had formed the background to the previous major plays, yet The Silver Tassie, though depicting an international catastrophe did not necessarily thus forfeit the Irish nature of its material. Harry Heegan is an Irishman, as are Barney, and Teddy Foran, despite the fact that they serve in the British Army. And as in his previous plays the author is to some extent revealing the effect of war upon ordinary Irish people, even though the scale of this war is vaster and its location is not Ireland.

In the chapter "Cat'n Cage" there is yet more evidence of Johnny's early enthusiasm for and knowledge of the Anglo-Irish military life. He is portrayed as spending an evening in a public house with his soldier brothers Tom and Mick. Tom "had overstepped his leave by a day, and laughingly drew the picture of Captain Bacon's moustache bristling when he'd be brought on the mat before his officer for absence without leave" (p. 217). In this he is a fit companion for Harry of the play who would like to "like to hang the latch for another night" (Act I, p. 31) so that he could attend the party given in honour of the football club.

Also Pictures describes, in the "Death on the Doorstep" section, Johnny's visit to "Beggars Bush Barracks" to see his brother-in-law Bugler Benson (p. 321), and how, because of Benson's prowess as a shot, Johnny was able to handle "almost the first Lee-Metford rifle the English Army had" (p. 320). The latter incident is perhaps related to Susie's meticulous cleaning of Harry's Lee-Enfield rifle during Act I of the play (p. 6 - 8).

And when Johnny's brother Tom, who is now on "the Reserve" is called up to fight in the Boer War, the description of him and his comrades as they march through the city contains several parallels with Act I of the play. Tom

dressed in khaki, helmet and all; had marched, with a contingent of his regiment, the Dublin Fusiliers, through the city, Johnny by his side, carrying his rifle, and had gone long ago to the front, after promising Johnny he'd bring home a bunch of hair from Kruger's whiskers. (p. 362)

In the play Harry and his friends, are to march in khaki battledress to the boat, with Susie carrying Harry's rifle (p. 32), the service Johnny performs for Tom. Furthermore, Tom's bravado promise to Johnny to bring home some of Kruger's whiskers recalls from the play an apparent promise made by Harry to send Jessie a "German helmet". (p. 30).

Drums Under The Windows completes the account of the military career of Tom Casside when Sean remembers how his brother, now ill and dying, returned from the Boer War (pp. 422 - 3). And the same volume again asserts Sean's/the author's childhood interest in soldiering and the British Army, for when the Irish Republican Brotherhood try to impress the critical Sean by giving him "a British red-covered Manual of Military Drill," his reaction is to throw it back "saying that he'd gone through all this with a broom handle when he was ten, from an identical book given to him by his Dublin Fusilier brother". (p. 550).

Much later in the chronological scheme of the autobiographies, when O'Casey comes to describe the Abbey's rejection of The Silver Tassie in 1928, he quotes a specific passage from a letter written by Yeats to him at the time of the rejection:

You are not interested in the Great War; you never stood on its battlefields, never walked its hospitals, and so write out of your opinions. You illustrate those opinions by a series of almost unrelated scenes, as you might in a leading article.¹⁴

And in his angry response, within the autobiography, to Yeats' questioning of his personal knowledge of the Great War, he actually draws attention to the connections between his family and the army; connections previously described in the autobiographies.

Oh, God, here was a man who had never spoken to a Tommy in his life - bar Major Gregory; and to him only because he was an artist as well as a soldier - chattering about soldiers to one who had talked to them all; infantry, cavalry, and artillery; who knew most of the regimental marches; who, when a kid, had listened to them telling, in their halting way, stories about Canada, Hong Kong, India, Gibraltar, Malta, and the wilds of Shorncliffe Camp and Salisbury Plain. One who had known soldiers since he was a kid of six; whose uncle had been wounded on the field of Balaclava; whose brother had gone through the Boer War in the Dublin Fusiliers; whose elder brother had worn the khaki in the first World War; who had walked with the Tommies, had chatted with them, had sung songs with

14. From a letter of 20th April 1928, written by W. B. Yeats but later (9th June 1928) sent by O'Casey for publication in the Irish Statesman. See Letters Vol I, pp. 267-8.

them in the hospitals of St. Vincent and of Richmond; who had followed the Great War from its first declaration, through the Russian Revolution, to its final end by the Surrender of Germany. And now he was being told by one who wouldn't know a Life Guard red from a Horse Guard blue, that he wasn't interested, directly or indirectly, in the Great War! Not interested to one who had talked and walked and smoked and sung with the blue-suited, wounded men fresh from the front; to one who had been among the armless, the legless, the blind, the gassed, and the shell-shocked!

(Rose and Crown p. 275)

The second set of experiences, which the author presents here as part of his qualifications to write The Tassie about soldiers and the Great War, relates to the period of the Great War itself. And these happenings too, like those revealing Johnny's early knowledge of the army, are presented in the autobiographies in a way which suggests both that the material of the play was originally derived from the author's personal experience, and that when he came to give a new account of that experience in the autobiographies, he drew upon the play's previous artistic interpretation of the original events.

Sean's impressions of the Great War of 1914 - 18, and of its consequences as they were to be seen in Dublin, are described within Drums Under The Windows. And this reworking of a substantial portion of the material of The Tassie within the historical scheme of the autobiographies, and at a point in that scheme corresponding to the date of the period setting of the play, relates the autobiographical treatment of The Tassie to the reworkings of the three other major pre-autobiography plays, and again reveals that The Tassie itself is, at least in part, made up of essentially the same kind of material as went into The Gunman, Juno and The Plough.

Each of these three earlier Dublin plays had dealt with political conflicts of the recent past, and by the time The Plough was written the "historical" nature and view point of these plays (as opposed to the purely topical nature and viewpoint of Kathleen and Nannie, which the author seemed to find so unsatisfactory) was becoming more apparent,

for the gaps of time between the period in which the successive plays were set and the time at which the author actually wrote them became very noticeably wider in connection with The Plough, which, though written after The Gunman and Juno, dealt with an earlier period of Irish life than those which they had taken as their subject matter. When O'Casey in writing The Tassie in 1926 - 8 looked back to the years of the Great War of 1914 - 18 as the setting for his play, he was, therefore, continuing this trend of depicting an increasingly "historic" period. Furthermore he was also pursuing his already well established path of treating, in the successive plays, "historic" events of increasingly wider implication and significance. Of course the Great War of The Tassie differs from the Anglo-Irish War of Independence of The Gunman, the Civil War of Juno and the 1916 Easter Rising of The Plough in being of significance to the World and to World history, rather than primarily or solely to Ireland and to Irish history. But the earlier plays had each ultimately transcended the bounds of their Irish setting, in that they essentially portrayed the tragedies which ensue when politics and war encroach on the lives of ordinary people. While The Tassie itself, though concerned with a war of worldwide proportions, sets three of its four acts in a town which, though not specifically identified is, from the accents of the characters and the references in Act I to the "quays", certainly Dublin; and does, in at least three of the four acts, trace the effects of the War, international though it is, upon Irish lives. And so the discrepancy between The Tassie and its predecessors with regard to the kind of events or history which they describe, is not so great as it would first appear.

In fact, The Plough totally set in Ireland as it is, and dealing with the events of Irish history, has already touched upon the subject of The Great War and its relationship to the life of the Irish people if not to Irish politicians. In Act I of The Plough, Irishmen are heard to be marching past the Clitheroes' tenement on their way to

troop-ships which will carry them to the French battle-front, and Bessie Burgess, an Irish woman, whose son is fighting in the trenches, constantly reminds other characters of the events and issues of The Great War, and of the sacrifices that some of their fellow countrymen are making abroad in "th' dhread dimness o' danger" while the Irish Nationalists are "crawlin' about feedin' on th' fatness o' the land!" (Act I p.191). That the Great War was very much a part of Irish life for very many ordinary Irish people is suggested by a fact which Stephen Gwynn, in a history of Irish literature, records in connection with the work of another writer:

When rebellion broke out in Easter week, it was unpopular; at least twenty thousand wives or mothers in Dublin had men serving in France or in Gallipoli. 15

That The Tassie is, in one respect, actually developing an aspect of Irish life and history that had been more than touched upon in The Plough can be seen in the way in which "The Bold Fenian Men" chapter of Drums under the Windows, in depicting the embarkation of Irish men to fight in the Great War in Europe, draws upon scenes from both The Plough and The Tassie.

The autobiography's description of:

....long columns of armed Irishmen, singing Ireland's latest love-song, It's a long way to Tipperary, went swinging by Liberty Hall down to the quays to the ships waiting to bring them to a poppy-mobbed grave in Flanders..... (p.646)

16

seems based upon a specific incident almost at the end of Act I of The Plough, but it most certainly recalls also Act I of The Tassie for the Heegan home in which the Act is set, is near the quays and "A large window at back looks on to a quay, from which can be seen the centre mast of a steamer, at the top of which gleams a white light" (p.5) This steamer is Harry's troopship and at the end of the Act he, Barney and Teddy march with a procession of well-wishers, singing the song of The Silver Tassie, to the ship (p.33). Shortly afterwards

15 Stephen Gwynn: Irish Literature and Drama in the English Language: A Short History, London, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1936 p. 192

16 See chapter on The Plough and the Stars above

Perhaps too^{the} passage in the autobiography contains verbal echoes of Act I of The Tassie. The phraseology, as well as the sense, of the lines "...wentdown to the quays to the ships waiting to bring them to a poppy-mobbed grave in Flanders.....the swinging columns went on marching down to the quays to the ships that go down to the sea." (p. 646) seems to echo the chorus of voices which, in mysterious unison, urge Harry and his comrades to embark for war.

Voices outside:

Come on from your home to the boat;
Carry on from the boat to the camp
.....
From the camp up the line to the trenches (p.33)

The passage in the autobiography goes on to describe how "while the sky was green for some, for many more it turned to the solid and salutary buff colour of a ring-paper" (p.647) The first part of this comment about life in Ireland in 1914-16 refers to the growth in National consciousness and in the activities of the Nationalists themselves, and Irish Nationalism is not mentioned once in The Tassie, although it is one of the chief concerns of The Plough. Also the irony that while many Irish are preparing to fight for Ireland, many more are preparing to fight for England belongs to The Plough and not to The Tassie. But the reference to "the solid and salutary buff colour of a ring-paper" - that is, the document entitling the nearest relation of a serving soldier to a separation allowance paid by the British Government - recalls the materialistic interest¹⁷ which the women of The Tassie, but certainly not Bessie Burgess of The Plough, take in sending their men to the Great War. When it seems likely that Harry might overstay his leave Mrs. Heegan, his mother, complains that "no one (s) thinkin' of me an' the maintenance money" (Act I, p.18) and it becomes apparent that there are ill-feelings between Harry's mother and Jessie, Harry's sweetheart, since Mrs. Heegan "put her weddin' off with Harry till after the duration of the

17. For an examination of The Plough's and The Tassie's contradictory presentations of the attitude of women to war, see below in connection with characterisation in The Tassie.

It is Act III, not Act I, of The Tassie, however, which makes the largest contribution to the historical narrative of Drums in connection with The Great War, and the act as a whole seems to influence the "St. Vincent Provides a Bed" chapter of the autobiography. The chapter describes Sean's stay in a Dublin hospital - St. Vincent's - for a short period during the war, and his contact there with soldiers from the battle-front who have become fellow-patients. And in its presentation of a Dublin hospital ward as the setting for, and point of vision upon, the horror and aftermath of war in terms of the sufferings of individuals, the chapter is very much akin to Act III of the play.

"St. Vincent Provides a Bed" suggests in its parallels with, and reworking of, Act III again just how much O'Casey had, in writing the play, drawn upon his own Dublin experience. In real life O'Casey was a patient in St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin, from the 15th August to the 1st September 1915,¹⁷ and indeed, so very closely does Act III of The Tassie resemble Sean's hospital experience as described in the autobiography, that ^{it} becomes in some instances very difficult to determine to what extent the narrative of the chapter, in its correspondences with the play, ^{is} being influenced at all by The Tassie's creative rendering of experience, or is simply returning to, and following the outline of, the original experience upon which The Tassie was based. Such a difficulty does not present itself in such an extreme form in connection with the relationship between the autobiographies and any other of the pre-autobiography plays. Even in Drums' account of Sean's experiences in Easter Week, the artistic and dramatic influence of The Plough was strongly apparent.

One simple example of the difficulty and danger in relying too easily upon

17. See Letters Vol. I, p. 57, editorial note 1 upon a drawing sent by O'Casey to Leo Rush in October 1915.

the chapter as manifesting consistently and directly the artistic influence of The Tassie concerns an incident which, in the chapter of the autobiography, is described as taking place just before Sean gains admittance to St. Vincent's hospital. Applying for a bed at the Protestant Adelaide Hospital, Sean has his request refused by a house surgeon, but a senior surgeon intervenes and exclaims: "Oh, make out a bed for him, and give the poor devil a chance!" (p.627) It might initially seem that this exclamation is evidence of a direct textual and literary influence from the end of Act III of the play with Harry's cry, as he awaits his operation, of "God of the miracles, give a poor devil a chance, give a poor devil a chance!" (p.79) . However, in a letter to Horace Reynolds dated 6 February 1938, that is, several years before Drums Under the Windows was written and published O'Casey wrote of his own experience:

I got a note to the Adelaide Hospital, saw
the head surgeon who called the House Surgeon,
showed me to him & said "Let him in & give the
poor devil a chance." 18

And so it seems that both in the use of these words and in the description of the context in which they were used O'Casey is, in the autobiography, returning to the original experience rather than to the text of the play which had itself made such striking artistic use of that experience. (Dr. Robert Hogan though far from uncritical of the play as a whole, regards Harry's cry of "...give a poor devil a chance", when it is "tossed against the remote and passionless Latin"- i.e. of the Sisters' hymn at the end of Act III-as "certainly one of O'Casey's finest touches".¹⁹)

But, on the whole, it seems as if dramatic scenes and images from the play do find their way into the chapter, and colour the autobiographical account of the experience from which the play was originally derived. And even in such instances in the chapter as the exclamation of "Give a poor devil a chance", in

18 Letters Vol. I p. 698

19 Robert Hogan: The Experiments of Sean O'Casey, New York, St. Martins Press 1960, ch. 4

which the autobiography seems to revert back directly to experience rather than to the play, it may well be that the writing of the play, with its reference to the detail from experience, reinforced, even if it did not colour, the memory and significance of that original detail of experience in the author's mind. And so, perhaps, if the phrase had not been immortalised in the play, then, even though it was part of O'Casey's actual experience, it would never have found its way into the autobiography. Certainly "St. Vincent Provides a Bed" itself is far from devoid of artistry, although this artistry is, in general, in a lower key than that of the highly symbolic play. This lower key is necessary in connection with the part the chapter plays in the scheme of the autobiographies. One of the main functions of the chapter is simply to portray a certain episode in the life of "Sean"; and although Sean is still presented as a "dramatic" character he is, in this chapter, no longer the representative figure that Johnny Casside of the first two volumes had often been. Thus there is in the chapter no need for the kind of symbolism inherent in the play's treatment of the representative fate of Harry Heegan. Moreover, though the chapter is concerned also with portraying a certain period in Irish life, its hero, Sean, is a civilian figure, whose presence in hospital has nothing to do with war, and who is thus an observer of, rather than a victim of, the tragedy of the war; whereas the hero of the play is a soldier who has been maimed in battle. The viewpoints of the hospital scenes in autobiography and play are thus quite different, even though the unvarnished individual details of the substance of both are very much the same; ^{and} the dramatically more exciting viewpoint of the play lends itself to, and employs, much more specific symbolism than is usually required by the quieter, more reflective viewpoint of the play. And so if "St. Vincent Provides a Bed" seems to tone down some of the material and effect of the play it may well be that this is a result of the autobiography adapting the play to suit its own artistic design, rather than as a result of the autobiography returning directly to the experience from which the play was developed.

An example of how the artistry of the chapter is less striking than that of the play, but at the same time no less real, concerns the use of religious statues in the settings of both "St. Vincent's Provides a Bed" and Act III of The Tassie.

Since the wards in which O'Casey in real life, Harry Heegan in the play, and Sean in the autobiography found themselves were each part of a hospital administered by Roman Catholic Orders, it is on a naturalistic level, entirely unremarkable that all these wards should contain holy images. The artistry (and the differing degrees of artistry) within the play and the autobiography can, therefore, be assessed in connection with how they interpret and present this basically unremarkable detail.

The opening stage direction of Act III of the play describes:

The upper end of an hospital ward.....
In the corner between the glass door and
the fire, is a pedestal on which stands
a statue of the Blessed Virgin; under the
statue is written "Mater Misericordiae
ora pro nobis. (p.57)

In the context of the play this statue is, and is designed to be, immediately significant in ways which are quite distinct from the natural and inherent religious implications of the image - although of course the play does also utilise these religious implications. The very presence of the statue in the setting of Act III recalls the image of the Virgin "vividly apparent" in the stained-glass window of the ruined monastery in the war-zone setting of Act II (p.35), and the statue's inscription of "Mother of Mercy, pray for us" is a comment upon the tragedy and wretchedness of Harry and his like. In comparison with the play's explicit bestowal of an extra and dramatic significance upon the presence of the statue, the autobiography's description of the statue in the hospital ward may at first seem simply to be a reference, almost in passing, to the statue which simply happened to form part

of the furnishings of a real-life hospital ward which the author is describing. But upon closer examination this statue too is given a great deal of significance distinct from that which it would normally possess, for ^{the} descriptive prose of the autobiography endows it with senses and feeling, and suggests that the saint is deliberately isolating himself from the pain and misery in the ward around him.

.....St. Laurence's ward, the saint himself, frocked, cowled, and tonsured, at the entrance, standing deep in stony meditation, as if he had vaulted into upper thoughts so as to muffle his hearing from the half-repressed sighs of anxiety and fear that dignified the rough bosoms of those who lay stretched out on the beds within. (p.628)

Despite the lower key and different viewpoint of the chapter, however, a general, but direct, artistic and dramatic, contribution of the play to the autobiography seems to be in evidence in the way in which the "St. Laurence O'Toole ward" in the chapter is described almost as if it were a stage-set (pp. 627-8) (as indeed in the play (pp. 57-8) it was), and in the way in which the chapter makes several breaks into fairly sustained dialogue.

And within the framework of this general contribution of the play towards the presentation of the scene in the chapter, there are long passages in which it seems very clear that the author is drawing substance directly from the play. In these passages the dialogue is often too sustained for the author to have remembered it verbatim from experience, and its verbal correspondences with the play are too distinct to be coincidental. Also the artistic effects created in, and by, the autobiography's description of certain incidents seem to recall effects, aural and visual, from the stage presentation of Act III of the play.

The following passage from the chapter seems, for example, to recall many aspects of two "scenes" from Act III of The Tassie and to combine these scenes for its own effect.

Strange how placid it seemed to be in an hospital! Stones, bricks, and a few sheets of glass, helped by pain and suffering, hid the busy world away. All was dimmer and quieter now that the night had fallen, with but one nurse left in the ward to guard against the needs of the quieter hours. There she was, all but her head hidden in a deep armchair by a blazing fire, her head resting on its back, her hands folded over an abandoned book, her senses sinking into a vigilant sleep; while the fire made more vivid parts of the lamentable crucifix overhead, throwing other parts into an uneasy purple shadow.

Hail Mary, the Lord is with thee - there it goes, the night - mustering mutter of the rosary, the words, only half formed, falling rapidly from the mouths of those whose heads Sean could dimly see by the humble light given by two small, crimson-coloured bulbs, one at each end of the ward. Hail Mary th' Lord is with thee blessearthou art on woman, it circled the ward lazily, rose to the ceiling, and died away in the sad sleep of the patients;.....

-Jesus! came a sharp scream from a centre bed. I can stick it no longer, I'm tellin' you! And the scream from the man with cancer in the tongue went skirling about the ward, bringing to a keener wakefulness the drowsy murmur of Holmarmotherogo prayfrusmisrablesinnars nowana thourofhoudeath. The head of the night nurse left its haven, and stiffened to listen, and turned to where the cry came from; then turned back, and sank slow to rest again when the murmur of prayer and moaning of pain mingled amicably together.

Again the animal-like yelp of pain circled the ward, and again the head of the nurse left its soft nest, to turn quick, and face towards the stricken patient.

-You'll have to stick it, Eighteen, she said, sharply: you've had your morphia, and you'll get no more; so sink your head into the pillow, and don't keep the other patients awake! And Sean heard the yelping die down into a muffled moaning. Heavy breathing showed that the patients had woven their anxiety away into sleep; the nurse's head again lay on the back of her chair, and nothing was left with Sean's thoughts but the two soft red lights, and the dreary madrigal of moaning from the centre bed.

(pp. 631-2)

The central incident and dialogue of this passage is clearly derived from the following incident and portion of dialogue from the play:

Voice of Patient, out left (plaintively). Nurse!

Susie (turning her head in direction of the voice) Shush, you Twenty-three; go asleep, go asleep.

Voice of Patient, out left. Nurse!

Susie. Ditch, ditch. Go asleep, Twenty-three

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Voice, Out left. The stab in the head is worse than ever Nurse.

Susie. You've got your dose of morphia, and you'll get no more. You'll just have to stick it.

Susie (to Surgeon Maxwell) Twenty-three's at it again.

Surgeon Maxwell. Uh, hopeless case. Half his head in Flanders. May go on like that for another month.

Susie. He keeps the patients awake at night....
(Act III pp 65-6)

But the peaceful night-time setting of the incident in the autobiography, the strange "visual" and atmospheric effect evoked by the description of the scene as being illumined "by the humble light given by two small, crimson-coloured bulbs, one at each end of the ward", and the "aural" and atmospheric effect evoked by the juxtaposition of the sound of the rosary with a cry of pain, are all derived from the ending of Act III. At the end of this Act when the stage is lit by "a bracket light with a red shade" which "projects from the wall over the fireplace (p.57)"-Susie has just switched off "the two hanging lights, so that the red light over the fireplace alone remains" (p.76)- Harry's cry of spiritual and mental anguish is juxtaposed with the sound, coming from the Convent, of the nuns singing "the hymn of Salve Regina"

Sisters:

Salve Regina, mater misericordiae;
Vitae dulcedo et spes nostra, salve!
....

Harry God of the miracles, give a poor devil a chance,
give a poor devil a chance!

Sisters:

Nobis post hoc exsilium ostende,
O clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria!

(pp. 78 - 9)

A major difference between the autobiographical passage and the passages from the play, however, seems to be in that the patient who cries out in the autobiographical episode is not a victim of the War, whereas patient "Twenty-three" and Harry of the play are both suffering from injuries inflicted in battle.

And although "St. Vincent Provides a Bed" does make mention of the wounded soldiers who "were flowing into St. Vincent's as room could be made for them", and who were "sadly" colouring "the whole city now" with their blue uniforms (pp632-3)- military hospital uniforms such as Teddy and Barney wear in Act III of the play - yet the narrative of the autobiography, unlike the play, does not focus upon the plight of any individual victim of the War. But the autobiography's description of the civilian patient crying out in pain is nevertheless in a curious way related to the War and its victims, and this connection seems to be made by a process of thought-association between the autobiography and the play.

The setting for the incident in the autobiography is largely derived from the end of Act III of the play, but it also, for one detail, draws upon Act II: for the passage describes the brooding presence in the ward of "the lamentable crucifix overhead", some parts of the figure being "made more vivid" by the light of the fire, other parts being cast "into an uneasy purple shadow"; and this strongly "visual", almost spectacular description of the crucifix seems to recall and recreate something of the visual effect and impact of the "life-size crucifix" which towers over the stage-setting and events of Act II of the play. And it is as if the author, in recalling, at this point in the autobiography, this dominant image from Act II, begins to associate the pain and suffering in the civilian ward which he is describing, with the pain and suffering which he has depicted in the War-zone setting of Act II of The Tassie. The two scenes - one from the autobiography, one from the play - being thus associated in the author's mind he associates them in the mind of Sean, whose thoughts are led directly from the scene before him in the Dublin hospital ward into a contemplation of, even a vision of, the suffering of men at the battle-front:

...nothing was left with Sean's thoughts but the two soft red lights, and the dreary madrigal of moaning from the centre bed.

If only one knew, he thought, there's a helluva lot of moaning in the world today: and it would grow; grow till the common people came to themselves.

Humanity's music would be as sad as ever, but it wouldn't remain silent much longer. New thoughts were being born, not only in a cry, but in smoke, flame and cannon-fire. Half the Christian world had just discovered that the other half no longer deserved to live. The slime, the bloodied mud, the crater, and the shell-hole had become God's Kingdom here on earth. Deep trenches led to the delectable mountains; and a never-ending line of duck-boards led to where they could see Him even as they themselves were seen. Our Father which art in Heaven, thy kingdom of communism come! In every ravine, on every hill, through every golden cornfield tens of thousands of Irish wriggled and twisted to death, their dimming eyes dazzled by the flame from a scarlet poppy, their dulling ears shocked by the lilting notes from a rising lark. The ghosts of them who fell at Dettingen, Fontenoy and Waterloo were clasping their colder arms around the newer dead.

(p. 632)

The Communist gloss which is placed upon the tragedy of the War is, of course, the autobiographies' own and is totally alien to the profoundly Christian and apolitical faith of the soldiers in Act II of the play. But the impressionistic, distorted and nightmarish picture of the battle-front as conjured up in Sean's contemplations strongly recalls, indeed, recreates in prose, something of the overall visual effect of the stage-setting of the "war-zone" of Act II, with its "jagged and lacerated" ruins, its "heaps of rubbish" marking "where houses once stood" and from which "lean, dead hands are protruding"; a scene in which the earth is "dotted with rayed and shattered shell-holes"; in which "across the horizon in the red glare can be seen the criss-cross pattern of the barbed wire bordering the trenches"; in which "In the sky sometimes a green star, sometimes a white star, burns" and in which "Every feature of the scene seems a little distorted from its original appearance" (p.35). This setting seems indeed to have been the product of a vision or a dream, and is thus peculiarly appropriate for inclusion in the autobiography as a scene imagined by Sean.

Thus it is that even something of the Expressionist manner of the second Act, set "somewhere in France", is being reworked into the normally low-keyed prose of the autobiography and its account of Sean's Dublin experience.

But the relationship between the autobiography and the Expressionist second act of the play is also revealing as to the nature and substance of the original play, for the way in which this vision of the Great War is, in the autobiography, integrated into Sean's personal experience as he lies in a Dublin hospital bed perhaps gives an insight into how O'Casey himself, who had not visited France could, with the aid of what he had heard and read about the War, personally "experience" an aspect of the Great War while remaining in Ireland. Perhaps too, in real life, the fact that O'Casey would be at this time himself suffering from no inconsiderable pain and discomfort - he had been admitted to hospital for an operation to remove some tubercular glands from his neck - caused him to sympathise more deeply with, and, in a sense to share, the distress of the victims of the War both at home and abroad. And so, in a sense, the events and scenes of the Great War which he saw in his imagination would form an integral part of the personal Dublin experience of the author - the kind of experience from which he drew the substance of much of the rest of The Tassie and all the substance of the previous plays. The setting of the action of Act II of The Tassie in France does not, therefore, mark such a radical departure from the nature and material of the earlier plays as might ^{at} first be thought.

The large crucifix, which forms part of the setting of Act II and also part of the setting of the hospital ward in "St. Vincent Provides a Bed", is worthy of further attention; for it can give more insight into how experience gained by the author in Dublin at the time of the Great War can become, in his creative consciousness, and, thus, in Act II of the play, associated with the events of the War in France; and further insight also into how the artistic image of that experience, when once presented in the play, re-appears in Drums Under The Windows to colour the autobiographical narrative with its symbolism and heightened dramatic, even "Expressionist" qualities.

In Act II the crucifix, which is at all times and by its very nature a highly emotive symbol, is presented in such a way as to give its inherent

symbolism of a suffering Saviour a new and specific dimension in the context of the play:

...Further up from this window (i.e. of a ruined monastery) is a life-size crucifix. A shell has released an arm from the cross, which has caused the upper part of the figure to lean forward with the released arm outstretched towards the figure of the Virgin. Underneath the crucifix on a pedestal, in red letters, are the words: PRINCEPS PACIS. Almost opposite the crucifix is a gunwheel to which Barney is tied. (p.35)

The shell-damaged Figure on the Cross seems itself to be a victim of the War and to hold out His hand in supplication to the Virgin. The inscription "The Prince of Peace" is at once both ironic amongst the ruin of war, but also profoundly moving in its implications as to the nature of true religion. Furthermore, the obvious correspondence between the position of Christ on the Cross and the position of Barney tied to a gunwheel identifies the sufferings of Christ with the sufferings of the soldiers, and the sufferings of the soldiers with those of Christ - a theme which is made clear in the dialogue of the Act:

Christ, who bore the cross, still weary,
Now trails a rope tied to a field gun.
(p.53)

Initially it may seem that while the Crucifix in the play is an obviously dramatic symbol, with its significance deliberately heightened for a specific effect, the Crucifix which dominates the hospital ward described in the autobiography is such as might well be found quite naturally in such a hospital. And it seems as if the presence of such a Cross in the real-life ward of St. Vincents might have inspired O'Casey to include the dramatically heightened symbol which appeared in the play. But having once occurred in the play, the depiction of the Crucifix there is brought into the autobiography to enrich the artistic description of what was, perhaps, the Cross "originally" seen by O'Casey in the hospital ward. In order to remain true to the naturalistic setting of the ward, O'Casey cannot depict the Cross as broken or distorted as he did for thematic purposes in the play, but

he can and does, by employing the symbolism of the play in its use of the Crucifix, exploit for artistic effect the inherent symbolism of the traditional Cross.

Over the fireplace, filling the breast of the chimney with sorrowful significance, stretched a great black cross on which hung the yellowish-white figure of Him who is, and was, and is to come, silently manifesting forth the curious, majestic mystery of pain. (p.628)

By drawing attention to the Cross and describing it in such terms, O'Casey makes an almost "dramatic" symbol out of the Crucifix without seemingly doing so, or destroying the apparently naturalistic description of the hospital ward. In the chapter the Cross is not linked to the suffering of soldiers in the War as it is in the play, but rather with the suffering of the patients in the Ward. But again the direct and artistic relationship between the two symbols is seen in corresponding incidents which take place in connection with the respective Crosses in play and autobiography.

Although the Cross in ^{the} play towers over the setting of Act II and an audience would be very much aware of its disturbing presence, the soldiers on stage appear to take little heed of it - that is until a certain incident occurs. The visitor, a patronising, jingoistic, establishment-figure seriously offends the sincere religious faith of the soldiers when:

He takes a match from his pocket and is about to strike it carelessly on the arm of the crucifix, when the 1st soldier, with a rapid frightened movement, knocks it out of his hand.

1st Soldier (roughly) Blarst you, man, keep your peace-white paws from that!

2nd Soldier The image of the Son of God.

3rd Soldier Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

1st Soldier (reclining by the fire again) There's a Gawd knocking about somewhere

(Act II p. 46)

The incident, like the symbol of the Cross itself, is, in the play, designed to convey the companionship of the soldiers with Christ, and the soldiers' genuine religious faith; but in very many respects it is akin to the following passage which is set in the different context of the autobiography. Sean himself, seemingly troubled by the presence of the Crucifix in the ward,

glanced at it very often and wondered that the patients seemed in no way disturbed by it. Indeed, they seemed not to notice it, and when he had been a few days there himself, it ceased to trouble him with more than a casual thought. The patients passed by as indifferently as those who did the same on the day of the first crucifixion. The symbol was never mentioned - yes it was, once: when a bright young man, convalescent and about to leave, cast a longing eye on a pretty maid who was sweeping the floor, and murmured longing, lustful words about her fine and charming figure. One of some who were listening moved away, saying afterwards to Sean, Did you hear him? Right under our Lord on the cross, too! I was mortally ashamed. Yes, at times it came before them, and this genuine man was shocked again when Sean said, I'm afraid your Lord on the cross is getting used to far worse things than those hot words from the heart of a young man eager to endorse life in the arms of a maid.

(p. 628)

It seems as if in real life such an incident involving a Crucifix might well have been the raw material and inspiration for the incident in Act II of the play. But the account of the incident given in the autobiography has seemingly, for its own part, drawn upon the play; for its break into dialogue, although brief, reveals a dramatic influence, and the reference which Sean makes to God's witnessing of the events of the War links the incident in the autobiography with the War setting of Act II, in which the figure of Christ on the Cross looks directly upon the consequences of war. Also Sean's words in this connection re-express a theme from the Act:

God, unchanging, heart-sicken'd, shuddering,
Gathereth the darkness of the night sky
To mask His paling countenance from
The blood dance of His self-slaying children (p.53)

Dr. David Krause regards the manner and techniques of Act II of The Silver Tassie as deriving from the works of other dramatists rather than as evolving

...while the general theme of his new play was an extension of his past work, the dramatic form, particularly in the symbolic second act, was a bold experiment in the revolutionary techniques of Expressionism, the non-realistic and surrealistic movement in modern drama which had been developed by Strindberg and the German dramatists early in the twentieth century.

O'Casey was familiar with the Expressionistic plays of writers like Strindberg, Toller, and the Strindberg-influenced O'Neill, and in the symbolic stagecraft of these experimental dramatists he found a method of projecting the nightmare tragedy of the battle zone on the stage 20.

Yet whatever the origins of the overall manner and technique of Act II, the individual symbols and symbolic incidents which that manner and technique employ, and even the impression of "nightmare tragedy" which that manner and technique strive to create and convey, might well have been, as the relationship between The Silver Tassie and Drums Under the Windows suggests, part of O'Casey's own Dublin experience and, in this respect, very much at one with the material and inspiration for his previous plays.

A further indication within the relationship between the play and the autobiographies that most of the material of The Tassie derived from the author's life in Dublin, and especially from the period of his life up to and including the time of the Great War, is given in that after Drums, which gives an account of Sean's life up to 1916, no further incidents or symbols related to The Tassie appear in the autobiographical volumes. The fourth, fifth and sixth volumes treat instead the themes of the play, and this they do in a somewhat abstract fashion. That is: Inishfallen, Rose and Crown and Sunset make reference to, and rework themes related to, the play, but in these volumes the themes are divorced from the incidents or characters which conveyed the themes in the play.

For example, in the final pages of the final volume - a volume itself concerned with the period of The Second World War and with the threat of a third and nuclear war - O'Casey passionately asserts, in his own voice, the sanctity of the "ordinary" way of life of "ordinary" people, and declares that the military men must not be allowed to violate this sanctity with war ever again:

So we hang together as best we may, going through a life that has become a corridor of war memorials, built in honour of the young who gave their lives gallantly for his nib's sake; with obeliskan officers standing at every corner shouting: Prepare to fight; prepare to die; prepare to meet your enemy! Aw, go to hell, and leave our little world alone; our little lives rounded with a little sleep; our little streets, our little homes; we want them all, we love them all - we'll die in our beds, you tabb'd and uniformed sons of bitches!

(p.659)

Precisely such an assertion and declaration are at the heart of The Silver Tassie, but they are outwardly expressed through dramatic incidents and symbols and in terms of individual lives, as, for example in the scene almost at the end of the play, in which Harry Heegan, crippled in the War, and Teddy Foran, blinded in the War, withdraw with dignity from the joys of life which the Football Club dance begins more and more to symbolise.

Teddy: Come, Harry, home to where the air is soft. No longer can you stand upon a hill-top; these empty eyes of mine can never see from one. Our best is all behind us - what's in front of us we'll face like men, dear comrade of the blood-fight and the battle-front!

Harry: What's in front we'll face like men! (Harry goes out by the window, Sylvester pushing the chair, Teddy's hand on Harry's shoulder, Mrs. Heegan slowly following. Those left in the room watch them going out through the garden, turning to the right till they are all out of sight. As he goes out of window) The Lord hath given and man hath taken away!

Teddy: (heard from the garden) Blessed be the name of the Lord!

(The band in the hall begins to play again Those in hall begin to dance.)

Maxwell: Come on, all, we've wasted too much time already.

(Act IV p. 102)

In the "abstract" treatment of The Tassie's themes the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies is markedly moving away from the kind of treatment generally accorded in the autobiographies to the earlier pre-autobiography play and is prefiguring most strongly an important aspect of the autobiographies' relationship with future plays. And since the nature of a play's relationship with the autobiographies seems to reflect the nature of that play, perhaps this development in connection with the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographical volumes, marks a development away from the other pre-autobiography plays and a development towards subsequent plays.

Perhaps the autobiographies' "abstract" treatment of the themes of The Tassie is connected with another departure which the relationship between the autobiographies and The Tassie makes from the patterns established in the autobiographies' reworking of previous plays. For whereas the autobiographies creatively present again - albeit in different ways, and for different ends in connection with the different plays - characters from all the previous extant plays, (including the allegorical fantasy Kathleen Listens In), the characters of The Silver Tassie receive very scant attention in the autobiographies, and such attention as they do receive is artistically unproductive.

Such characters from the play as do find their way into the autobiographies appear within the "St. Vincent Provides a Bed" section of Drums Under The Windows. On hearing the rosary being muttered by patients in the hospital ward one night:

Sean recognised the voice of the leader as that of Dan Daffy, in for urethral stricture, due for an operation soon, and dreading it: a big, burly, bald-headed docker, own brother to Sylvester Daffy who had been tried for the alleged killing of a scab by cleaving his head open with a navvy's shovel, during the big lock-out; but he had been released without a stain on his character when it was discovered that the blood on his shirt came, not from a human body, but from the bodies of fleas, crushed when he found leisure to kill them; own brother, too, to Cock Daffy, one of the best football backs Dublin had ever known.

(pp. 631-2)

And it seems as if this "Daffy" family of the autobiography are generally related to Sylvester, Simon and Harry in the play. Den Daffy being "a big, burly, bald-headed docker," and "due for an operation soon, and dreading it" is, as far as the description goes, an exact counterpart for Sylvester Heegan who is:

a stockily built man of sixty-five: he has been a docker all his life since first the muscles of his arms could safely grip a truck, and even at sixty-five the steel in them is only beginning to stiffen (Act I p.5)

yet who, despite his physical strength, "goes pale" at the thought of his forthcoming "little operation" (p.75). The name "Sylvester", however, is given in the autobiography not to Sylvester Heegan's apparent counterpart but to that counterpart's brother. The mild-mannered Simon Norton of the play bears little resemblance to the formidable Sylvester Daffy of Drums beyond that of being related, although through friendship rather than brotherhood, with the Sylvester Heegan/Den Daffy figure. But Cock Daffy the famous football-player brother of Den Daffy seems to be, again as far as the description goes, a counterpart for Harry Heegan, the locally-famous football-player son of Sylvester Heegan in the play.

All in all the references to the Daffy family in the autobiography would seem to apply more to a real Dublin family, who were perhaps in some respects prototypes of the leading male characters in the play, as to Sylvester, Simon and Harry of The Tassie. And the autobiography's reference to Sylvester Daffy's part in the 1913 Dublin Lock Out Strike is completely independent of the play, as is the social comment implied by the reference to the killing of fleas.

It is strange, however, that this miniature history of the Daffy family should so suddenly be slipped into the narrative of the chapter, and its appearance there amid so much material which has been derived from the play suggests, in itself, that the Daffy family are associated with the play in one way or another, and that they owe their appearance in the autobiography to that association.

Certain aspects of the presentation of other characters of the play seem to be incorporated within the chapter also. The friction which Sean notices in the relationship between members of the nursing-staff in the hospital is reminiscent of the degree of ill-feeling which seems in the play to exist between Nurse Susie Monican and Sister Peter Alcantara. And though Sister Paul and Sister Gonzaga of the autobiography seem to have had their origins in real-life,²¹ the dialogue in the chapter which expresses the jealousy of the stern Sister Paul for the popular Sister Gonzaga seems to recall that portion of Act III in which Susie protests about the leniency of her colleague. In the chapter, the dialogue is set in the context of Sean falling foul of Sister Paul, while helping Sister Gonzaga to organise a concert in the hospital:

"Sean was busy helping and when Sister Gonzaga - who was the life and soul of the activity - said, Chairs, more chairs for our theatre, Sean rushed into his ward and began to whip up the chairs, one of which stood by the end of every bed. Going out, he ran into Sister Paul.

-Where are you going with those? she asked sharply.

-Sister Gonzaga asked for them, he said busily; she wants all she can get.

-Leave them back where you got them! Sister Paul said angrily; at once, please!

-But Sister Gonzaga wants them, said Sean, surprised, and sure that Sister Paul hadn't heard what he had said.

-Does she indeed? sarcastically. Sister Gonzaga has no authority here; and Sister Paul now tells you to leave them where you got them. And for the future, never touch a thing in this ward without my permission;....." (pp. 633-4)

It is not simply the tenor of the passage, but the repetition of the correspondingly unusual name of the offending Sister in question, which

21 In a letter to Horace Reynolds dated 6th February 1928 O'Casey wrote of his time in St. Vincent's Hospital: "First I was under a Sister called Sister Gonzaga, but, alas! was shifted to a ward under Sister Paul, who didn't like Jim Larkin....." (Letters Vol. I p. 698)

seems to recall the officious Susie's confrontation with Mrs. Heegan and Mrs. Foran over their visiting of Harry:

Susie (coming in, annoyed). Who let you up here at this hour? Twenty-eight's to have an operation tomorrow, and shouldn't be disturbed.

Mrs. Heegan. Sister Peter Alcantara said we might come up Nurse.

Mrs. Foran (loftily) Sister Peter Alcantara's authority ought to be good enough, I think.

Mrs. Heegan Sister Peter Alcantara said a visit might buck him up a bit.

Mrs. Foran Sister Peter Alcantara knows the responsibility she'd incur by keeping a wife from her husband and a mother from her son.

Susie Sister Peter Alcantara hasn't got to nurse him.

(Act III p.71)

The unnamed Sister of the Ward, who passes through the ward at the end of Act III of the play, and who exchanges well-meaning words with Harry and Barney, might possibly be Sister Peter Alcantara herself, and related in some way to Sister Gonzaga of the autobiography who was: "a delightful woman, most popular with the patients; never lax, always lenient; always cheerful, with a gay greeting for everyone" (p. 627) Certainly it is not co-incident^{that} her dress of

a cream habit with a white coif; a large set of Rosary beads hangs from her girdle. .. a brass Crucifix flashes on her bosom. (p.78)

is identical to the habit worn by the Sisters of St. Vincents in the autobiographical chapter. Sister Paul is described as wearing:

her cream-coloured working-habit, her cap, white as snow, almost hiding her passive face, a dark stream of heavy rosary beads hanging by her skirt, and a large brass crucifix agleam on her bosom (p.636)

This direct correspondence cannot in itself be construed as evidence of a direct literary influence of the play upon the chapter, however, for in a letter of 1935 in which he defended the play against the criticisms of a Dominican priest O'Casey wrote:

His protest against the "insult to the Canonical Habit of his Order" puzzles me. The garb worn by the Sister in the play is that worn by nursing Sisters of Charity when on duty, and has nothing to do with the Dominican Habit; if he would like to know, it was actually modelled on the nursing garb worn by the Sisters of St. Vincent's Hospital in Dublin.²²

And the chief aspect of the portrayal of Sister Paul, her dislike of Jim Larkin, the leader of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union who organised the 1915 Dublin strike, has nothing to do with the play and is apparently drawn from life.²³

Perhaps the portrayal in the play of Resident Surgeon Forby Maxwell has a more literary association with the autobiography, for although he does not appear as a character in the chapter, a reference to Sean's brief glimpse of a surgeon as Sean enters the hospital for the first time, seems to strike some chords of the way in which Maxwell is portrayed in the play:

He (Sean) passed by the gaudy image of St. Michael shoving a tough spear throughout the twisting body of a spitting dragon; perhaps a white - coated surgeon flitted by, giving importance to a quick walk or a decorous trot, on his way to, or coming from, doing damage to some poor body. (p.628)

The self-important air of such a doctor seems to recall the "careless, jaunty air" of Surgeon Maxwell (p.66) while the phrase, "doing damage to some poor body" certainly sums up Surgeon Maxwell's talent, at least as his patients see it. And the reference at this point in the narrative to the image of the statue of St. Michael "shoving a tough spear throughout the twisting body of a spitting dragon" perhaps was included by association with Maxwell in the play, whose skill and technique as a Surgeon is regarded by Sylvester and Simon as being . . . on the level of those of St. Michael

22 letter to the Irish Times of 11 September 1935. Letters Vol. I (p.586)
The Dominican Priest whom O'Casey refers to in the letter was Father M.H. Gaffney, O.P. whose letter protesting about the forthcoming Abbey production of the play was printed in the Irish Press on 14 August 1935.

23. See O'Casey's letter to Horace Reynolds, 6th February 1938, quoted in note 21 above

with a spear:

Sylvester We have our hands full, Simon, to keep alive. Think of sinkin' your body to the level of a hand that, ta-ra-ra-ra; would plunge a knife into your middle, haphazard, hurryin' up to run away after a thrill from a kiss in a corner.....

Simon Everybody say's he's a very clever fellow with the knife.

Sylvester He'd gouge out your eye, saw off your arm, lift a load of vitals out of your middle, rub his hands, keep down a terrible desire to cheer lookin's at the ruin, an' say, "Twenty-six, when you're a little better, you'll feel a new man!" (Act III pp 70-1)

All in all, however, the associations between the characters of the play and the characters in "St. Vincent Provides a Bed" are too few, too limited in nature, and too unclear in origin to constitute a real reworking or development of the characters of the play the text of the autobiographies.

And this general absence from the autobiographies of any very real impression that the characters of the The Tassie are appearing again, or are being presented afresh, is particularly marked since the autobiographical volumes had found places for virtually all the characters from The Tassie's predecessor, The Plough and the Stars.

Taking, in conjunction with each other, the two ways in which the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies differs most radically from the relationships between the previous plays and the autobiographical volumes - the reworking of the themes of the play without the simultaneous reworking of character portrayals and incidents from the play, and the very limited association between the play and the autobiographical volumes on the level of presentation of particular characters - the conclusion to be drawn would seem to be that The Tassie differs from its predecessors in that within this play theme is not so deeply rooted in characterisation, and less importance is attached to characterisation as a result of this.

the presentation of the personalities of the central characters such as Juno Boyle, Bessie Burgess and Fluther Good are absolutely fundamental to the action and themes of the plays, and though in many respects their qualities are ultimately representative rather than personal, these characters are manifestly individuals first and representative characters second, moreover, paradoxically, they achieve their representativeness through their personal qualities as individuals. Even Minnie Powell of The Gunman, who seems to be in some respects a less vividly drawn character than Juno or Bessie Burgess, and whose portrayal in the play has perhaps a more obviously apparent representative aspect, even she has a basic "personal" element in her portrayal. And even the latently symbolic character of Nannie in Nannie's Night Out, and perhaps too the overtly symbolic figure of Kathleen in Kathleen Listens In have very "personal" characteristics and qualities which contribute to, but are not entirely dictated by, the themes of the play.

In The Tassie, however, this general process of character portrayal in the earlier plays seems to be totally reversed, and the central characters of this play seem very much to be representative figures first, and personalities second. This is by no means a shortcoming or "failure" of the play, but simply a part of its method. Dr. David Krause has summed up the differences between Juno and The Tassie with regard to their approach to theme and character as follows:

While Juno is the universal mother and Harry is the universal soldier, she is above all a realistic character who finally becomes symbolic in the most general sense, he is above all a symbolic character who is at all times both realistic and representational. Juno speaks for all mothers in war-time, Harry speaks for all soldiers; but O'Casey felt he had to use different forms and techniques in telling their analogous yet different stories. O'Casey realised that the dramatist cannot limit himself to a single approach; he must suit the theme and character to the form, and the particular emphasis and technique depend upon the total intention. In Juno and the Paycock the character defines the theme; in The Silver Tassie the theme defines the character. The methods and forms are different, and the result is that in the one play he created a noble woman in the other a noble theme.²⁴

It is considerations of theme as opposed to considerations of characterisation that led O'Casey in The Tassie to present the women characters as totally

24 David Krause: Sean O'Casey, The Man and his Work p. 120

unsympathetic to the plight of men who go to War. This is in total contradiction to the presentation of the women characters in the previous major plays, who consistently assert the real values of love and life and who, in Juno and The Plough must assert those values in the face of the blind opposition of the men whom they are trying to protect. But in The Tassie the war does not take place in Dublin but away from the witnessing eyes of the women. And although many mothers and wives in Dublin must have been appalled by the horrors which their menfolk were facing in the trenches - indeed, Bessie Burgess in The Plough speaks of "All th' poor Tommies, an' with them me own son, dhrenched in water an' soaked in blood, gropin' their way to a shatterin' death in a shower o' shells" Young men with th' sunny lust o' life beamin' in them..." (Act II p.201) - yet in The Tassie the concern is all with the soldiers themselves, and with the horrors of war. And these horrors are so great that in the context of the play they can only be understood by those who actually experienced them. Thus the women at home can no longer be the "true" but rejected "comrades" of the men as Nora was of Jack, but must, in their lack of understanding and lack of experience of the war, only add to the hardships of the returning men, and must eventually be thrust completely aside, in order that the ultimate bond between victim-of-war and victim-of-war can be asserted: "Our best is all behind us - what's in front we'll face like men, dear comrade of the blood-fight and the battle-front" (Act IV p.102).

But the shift away from portrayal of character to portrayal of theme, although very marked in The Tassie, must not be over-exaggerated, for it is neither completely new in O'Casey's work, nor is it absolute. For although the previous major plays had presented vivid portraits of their central "civilian" characters, the portrayals of politically involved characters such as Maguire in The Gunman, Johnny in Juno, and Clitheroe, Langon and Brennan in The Plough have as little, or less, purely personal colour than do the presentations of Harry, Barney and Teddy in The Tassie. And with the obvious exceptions of those figures in Act II whose anonymity is specifically designed to suggest the depersonalising and dehumanising nature of war, the characters of The Tassie still possess rather

more personality than do characters from the plays of O'Casey which were to follow. The characters of Within the Gates embody themes, creeds, political beliefs and social types so precisely that the list of dramatis personae contains not one personal proper name, and the characters of The Star Turns Red, even the very few of them who are endowed with personal names, are too, with the possible exception of Red Jim, little more or less than representatives of political or religious doctrines or of certain elements of society. Even the characters of Purple Dust, though they do possess personal names, tend to be rather more overtly representative, even symbolic, than do those of The Tassie. Red Roses for Me makes something of a return to an intrinsically richer kind of character portrayal, but this is because of very special reasons, as the relationship between Red Roses and the autobiographies will reveal ²⁵. Furthermore, even though characters from The Tassie do not re-appear in the autobiographies in anything remotely approaching the scale upon which characters from The Plough and characters from the earlier plays did, yet the fact that some references to, or associations with, the characters of the Tassie do appear in the autobiographies at all is enough to distinguish the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies - and hence the nature of The Tassie itself - from the relationships between the autobiographies and many later plays, such as, for example, Within The Gates.

And in so far as it exists at all, the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies with regard to characters and characterisation does suggest that the characters of the play did have their origins, like most of the other elements of the play, in Dublin. And this Dublin origin of the characters must account for the fact that though the play was written in England, it can contain dialogue such as the lengthy discussion in Act III as to whether Sylvester is really doomed to having a bath,

Voice of Susie, left. Twenty-six!

Sylvester Yes, Nurse?

²⁵ See chapter below which includes a study of Red Roses for me in connection with Pictures in the Hallway

Voice of Susie Sister says you're to have a bawth at once:
and you, twenty-seven. see about getting it ready
for him

(A fairly long pause)

Sylvester (angrily) A bawth: well, be God, that's a good
one! I'm not in a fit condition for a bath.

(Another pause)

Sylvester (earnestly) to Simon You haven't had a dip now
for nearly a week, while I had one only the day
before yesterday in the late evening: it must
have been you she meant, Simon.

Simon Oh, there was no dubiety about her bellowing out
Twenty-six, Syl.

Sylvester (excitedly) How the hell d'ye know, man, she
didn't mix the numbers up?

Simon Mix the numbers up! How could the woman mix the numbers up?

Sylvester How could the woman mix the numbers up! What
could be easier than to say Twenty-six instead of
Twenty-seven? How could the woman mix the numbers
up! Of course the woman could mix the numbers up!

Simon What d'ye expect me to do - hurl myself into a bath
that was meant for you?

Sylvester I don't want you to hurl yourself into anything:
but you don't expect me to plunge into a bath that
maybe wasn't meant for me?

(pp. 61-2)

Sylvester and Simon may not, in "personal", or even "representative", terms be characters of the stature of Captain Boyle and Joxer of Juno and the Paycock, or Fluther and his companions of The Plough. but they can almost match them in comic verbal dexterity, and that is a gift which is not to be quite so much in evidence in certain later plays.

But if the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies is weak in terms of the reworking of character, it is strong in terms of the reworking of symbol. The reworking of symbols and symbolism of plays within the autobiographies is, however, certainly not unique to the autobiographical treatment of The Tassie amongst the pre-autobiography plays.

The autobiographies, for example, also render explicit and develop the

inherent symbolism of the references to the moon in The Shadow of a Gunman, they rework several obvious symbols (such as the house which represents Ireland) from the symbolic fantasy of Kathleen Listens In, and they positively fulfil the hitherto unfulfilled symbolic nature of Nannie's Night Out.

On the evidence of the relationships between the autobiographies and the "pre-autobiography" plays, The Silver Tassie is not the first of O'Casey's plays to contain symbols. And the kind of use which is made within Drums Under the Windows of, for example, the play's symbol of the Cross and of the religious statues, is little removed from the kind of use which the autobiographies make of, for example, the votive light of the set of Juno and the Paycock - the light which seems to reappear in connection with Inishfallen's depiction of Mrs. Moore. Such symbols seem to arise naturally out of the setting, presentation of character, and action of the plots of the plays, and, accordingly, if and when they appear in the autobiography, they do so as fully integrated parts of the narrative's portrayal of places, people and events.

But, equally, on the evidence of the relationships between the pre-autobiography plays and the autobiographies, The Tassie is shown to be the first of O'Casey's extant plays in which a certain kind of symbol appears - a symbol which dominates, even dictates, the action and themes of the play. A symbol which instead of evolving out of the play, actually inspires it. Such a symbol is "The Silver Tassie" itself, the cup which at first represents Harry's pride in his youth and strength, and then comes to represent the senseless destruction of those same qualities.

The earlier plays of O'Casey had apparently taken their inspiration from the idea of depicting specific periods in modern Irish history, and had then drawn their material from the author's experience of those periods. Describing how he set about the composition of The Plough and the Stars O'Casey once wrote:

Meanwhile, I remembered that I had written a play about the Black and Tan period; about the period of the Civil War; but no play yet around the period of the actual Easter Rising, which was the beginning of all that happened afterward. So I set about illumining and ravaging my mind for a new play about the Easter Rising, setting down scene and dialogue, taking notes on any piece of paper that was handy when an idea or word struck me.

I never make a senario, depending on the natural growth of a play rather than on any method of joinery. Things I saw, things I heard, flooded my mind, and the germ became the gist, with a title vaguely selected of The Easter Lily Aflame; but the Banner and its design came too often before my mind to be set aside, so the title eventually became The Plough and the Stars²⁶

But although The Silver Tassie depicts a particular period in Irish as well as world history, and takes almost all its substance from the Dublin experience of the author; yet the inspiration of the play was a symbol and, moreover, a symbol which was not originally connected either with this period, or with the personal experience which was later drawn upon as the material of the play. The association between the symbol and what were to be the concerns of the play was forged within the creative consciousness of the author, hence the inspiration of the play.

So remarkable was the inspiration of the play that the author gives a full account of it in the autobiographies. But so distinct was the play's inspiration from the experience which was to form ^{the play's} material that this account is to be found not in Drums Under the Windows, which reworks much of the material of the play, nor in any of the volumes set in Ireland, but in Rose and Crown which describes his life in England. It is strange that the only part of The Tassie which can be directly associated with, or ascribed to his controversial residence in England, should be its very inspiration and central symbol. But the nature of the inspiration was not essentially English, in fact, it could be said to be Scottish for it sprang from a Scottish song, sung by a Scottish businessman acquaintance of "Sean" when Sean visited him in his office

26 "The Plough and the Stars in Retrospect" Blasts and Benedictions p. 97

Idly, the strong, fat fingers tapped the desk-top, and the thick, fleshy lips moved moodily to the humming of an air. Then the hum changed to a whistle, then words began to trickle through it to an air. Sean had never heard before. He cocked an ear to listen; the words came huskily to his ear, uttered thoughtlessly, unemotionally by the moody crooner:

Gae fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' full it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink before I gae
A service tae my bonnie lassie

-Ay, Sean, me lad, it's a woefu' state o' things: th'floors o' th' forest are a' wede awa'. There isn't as much as a bean in th' locker, th' day.

But it's no' the roar of sea or shore
Wad mak' me langer wish tae tarry;
Nor shout o' war that's heard afar -
It's leavin' thee, my bonnie lossie.

Sean was startled. Aaron's rod had budded. A riotous and romantic song had drifted up from the solid rancour of the big, impassive desk, that was to hum in his mind for many months to come. He hummed it in his tiny flat in South Kensington; he hummed it in the dead of night, strolling down the Cromwell Road. He would give the title of the song to his next play. He would set down without malice or portly platitude the shattered enterprise of life to be endured by many of those who, not understanding the bloodied melody of war, went forth to fight, to die, or to return again with tarnished bodies and complaining minds...

(p. 270) 27

In Rose and Crown O'Casey goes on to describe how Sean is determined to write the new play in a "new way". The relationship between the autobiographies and the pre-autobiography plays reveals that this "newness" in The Tassie was to apply not to material, nor simply to the presence of symbols in the play, but to the position of symbolism in the scheme of the inspiration and writing of the play. For in the scheme of The Silver Tassie, unlike the schemes of its predecessors, not only are characters subordinate to themes, but themes are subordinate to the central symbol.

Moreover, evidence which the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies provide as to the real difference between The Tassie and its

27 The song of "The Silver Tassie" is composed of a traditional first verse, with additional verses by Robert Burns.

Although the incident which gave O'Casey the inspiration for the play is dramatised within the artistic context of the autobiography, that it did take place in real life can be seen from a letter written by O'Casey to Gabriel Fallon, 5th January 1927 (Letters Vol. I p. 211) Also Mrs. O'Casey gives an account of the incident in her book Sean pp. 68-9

predecessors - a difference not based upon The Great War subject of the play, or O'Casey's residence in England at the time the play was written, or simply in the apparent expressionism of Act II - closely confirms the conclusions reached by Dr. Katharine J. Worth from a study of The Tassie directly from the point of view of symbolism and technique.

O'Casey's dramatic work has often been seen by his critics as falling into two periods, the first, and generally most admired, realistic, the second symbolic. This is a misleading division. Symbolism was present in the earliest plays: in O'Casey's own words, 'the manner and method of two of the plays were as realistic as the scents stealing from a gaudy bunch of blossoms'.⁽²⁸⁾ Any play coming from an imagination at once poetic and dramatic inclines towards symbolism: the poetic imagination throws up images, the dramatic imagination draws them into the action.²⁹

And the chief difference between the early plays and a play such as The Silver Tassie is seen in so far as "There is, ... less surface symbolism in the early plays. The symbols work unobtrusively, from the heart of the action, ... This is symbolism of which the characters themselves are unaware"; whereas in The Silver Tassie there are "more conscious attitudes to the symbols". In illustration of this difference there is cited from Juno and the Paycock, as an example of symbolism in the early plays, the removal of the furniture from the stage^{in the final act,} an action which leaves "a dismantled stage which stands there as a physical symbol of a disintegrating family and a disintegrating country"; and in contrast, as an example of symbolism from The Silver Tassie, is quoted the explanation, by Harry himself, of 'the significance of the tassie in the last scene: "And now, before I go, I give you all the Cup, the Silver Tassie, to have and to hold for ever, ever more. Mangled and bruised as I am bruised and mangled.....")³⁰

(28) Quotation from Rose and Crown p. 271

29 Katharine Worth: "O'Casey's Dramatic Symbolism", Modern Drama, IV No. 3 (Kansas, 1961) reprinted in Modern Judgements pp 183-191 quotation from p. 183

30 Ibid pp. 183-4

The relationship between the contents of the play The Silver Tassie and autobiographies reveals, in the light of the autobiographical volumes' relationships with the earlier plays, that The Silver Tassie is a play which is essentially akin to its predecessors in the kind of material which it uses. With regard to the portrayal of character the relationship reveals that although The Tassie has moved away from the kind of presentation of character which is to be found in the earlier plays, yet even in this respect the link with them is not completely broken. And the relationship also reveals that as far as symbolism is concerned The Tassie differs from its predecessors in that it contains a new approach to symbolism rather than in the fact that it contains symbols.

And so although important developments do seem to be taking place within The Silver Tassie, it would seem, on balance, that The Tassie does spring out of the tradition of the earlier plays and that there is not a great and impassable gulf fixed between them. And the further dimension in the relationship between The Tassie and the autobiographies - the relationship concerning the writing and production of the play in so far as they affected or influenced the author's life - would also suggest that in many respects The Silver Tassie marked the end of an era or chapter in the author's life and work, rather than the beginning of a new one.

In the scheme of the autobiographies such importance is attached to The Silver Tassie as in itself constituting part of the author's experience, that it is the first of only two plays to give its name directly to a chapter of the autobiographies ³¹

31 The second, also significantly, is Within the Gates see below. I Knock at the Door (published 1939) includes a section entitled "The Hill of Healing" which is very closely related to the one-act play The Hall of Healing (published in 1951). However in this instance the autobiography provided the title for the play. Also a chapter of Drums is entitled "Under the Plough and the Stars" but this refers to the flag of the Irish Citizen Army - from which the play itself derives its name - rather than directly to the play.

Rose and Crown, the volume in which the account of the history of The Tassie appears does not possess the same clarity of structure and design as can be seen in the preceding volume, Inishfallen; but it does seem that as Inishfallen presented the circumstances surrounding the production of The Plough and the Stars as precipitating "Sean's" physical departure from Ireland, so Rose and Crown presents events surrounding the production^{of} The Tassie as precipitating "Sean's" final spiritual and artistic departure from Ireland.

It must be remembered however that these events occurred only after The Tassie was written and, therefore, could not possibly have influenced the nature of the play itself. In fact the autobiography, despite its perhaps misleading emphasis upon the "new way" of ^{The} Tassie suggests a very important respect in which the play was clearly related to the work which had gone before it. Since The Tassie was rejected when O'Casey first submitted it for production at the Abbey Theatre, it is never regarded as one of his "Abbey Plays". But the chapter "The Silver Tassie" emphasises that the play, like its predecessors, was written with a production at the Abbey Theatre in mind (p. 271). And since the Abbey had its own company of actors, its own style of acting, and a particularly small stage which presented its own problems to potential Abbey dramatists, this fact forms not an insignificant link between The Tassie and the plays that had gone before it.

O'Casey's residence in England while The Tassie was being written had not, apparently severed his relationship with the Abbey Theatre, but the rejection of the play by the Abbey did so.

In the autobiography the rejection is presented as a positive betrayal and appears doubly harsh because of the circumstances under which Sean receives the news - on the very morning that his first child, a son, is born:

On account of the child's size, the doctor in charge of Sean's wife decided, after consultation with a colleague, by an operation to make the birth immediate; so, to be out of the way, Sean was packed off to spend the night with a friend. The next morning, a telephone call told him a big boy had been born, and that Eileen was eager to show it to him. He hurried off, opened the door of the house in Woronzow Road, entered the hall, and saw a large envelope from the Abbey Theatre lying solus on a table; too big to hold an advisal of a coming production. He opened it, and read the letter from Lady Gregory and the letter of condemnation, peppered with pompous advice, from Yeats. Curse o' God on them! His anger grew at every line he read.

He went upstairs, saw his wife, congratulated her on the birth of her big boy, looked at the laddo, touched his cheek, and said nothing about the play's rejection. He would have to wait till she was safe; till she was up and about; and then he would send a salvo of words that would shake the doors of the Abbey and rattle the windows.

(p. 273)

And Sean's financial insecurity at this time, with a wife and now a child to support, is also emphasised:

He was fenced in with money anxieties; he had now a wife and a child to guard and keep, and a rented house which needed many things more before it could become a home....if The Silver Tassie didn't bring in enough for a further year's life, then the nights would be full of anxiety's light and the days would be gloomy and glum..... Yeat's rejection of the play was a blow on the heart. (p. 274)

It was very important to Sean, touching the security of his life, his wife's, and the kid's in the cradle in the room beyond him. They were all depending on what the play would bring in to allow them to live decently for one more year. The first honest home he had ever had, simple as it was, stood silent and shaking.... The play was very important to him.(p 278)

The rejection of the play by the Abbey is also presented as particularly damaging since respect for Yeats in the literary world was so strong that his condemnation of the play might have meant not only the loss of an Abbey production but the loss of any production at all.

But of course there is also an entirely different aspect to Sean's indignation over the rejection, and this was his anger that Yeats and the Abbey should presume to dictate to him the path that his talents and career should pursue. At the end of Inishfallen Sean attempts, by physically leaving Ireland, to escape from both the mob-censorship to which The Plough was subjected and the restricting influences of the literary cliques of Dublin:

Sean thought he could sense two systems of censorship sprouting out in Ireland. One was the group gathered here in Yeats's room, among the richly-heavy blue curtains, the seductive settee and cushions, the gleaming glass, and shiny silver; a censorship of brittle badinage and dainty disdain for anything written different from what they wanted, or were used to, because they had tried it themselves. The other was a prelatian-led crowd of ding-dong dederó devotees, roaring out opposition to everything outside of what Father Tom, Dick, or Harry thought proper to put in poem or book. Holy water would soon be raining down for forty days and forty nights, and the sooner Sean got into the ark of England the better, if he was to escape the deluge.

(Inishfallen p. 235)

But the Abbey's rejection of The Tassie is construed by "Sean" as an attempt on the Abbey's part to assert their artistic authority over his work, despite his residence in England. And typically of "Sean", and of the emerging pattern of his life in the autobiographies, he decides, whatever the odds, to fight for his own artistic integrity: "fight he should; and fight he would" "clenching his spirit into the fight against the Abbey Theatre's determination to stereotype a writer's manner and style, and through them, to fight the wider literary influence of those who believed that at the name of Yeats every knee should bow,"...(p.279)

Sean replies to Yeats' letters and arguments, and, much to the Abbey's discomfort publishes the whole correspondence over the play in the press. In his struggle he seems to have the support of Bernard Shaw (a letter of Shaw's is published in the text of the chapter), but soon senses that Mrs. Charlotte Shaw is influencing her husband towards seeking a reconciliation, rather than a further confrontation, between Sean and the Abbey. And Sean's reaction to the proposal that Shaw should first read and censor any letter that Sean wishes to send to the Abbey is to further assert his integrity and freedom, an assertion with which the chapter "The Silver Tassie" ends:

Well, so near, so bad. Sean couldn't welcome this kind of help. He had no wish to have his letters edited, even by such a man as Shaw. Yeats had hit as hard as he could, and Sean wasn't inclined to hold his punches. He had refused the counsel of Uncle Yeats, and he had no intention of taking the counsel of Auntie Shaw. He would fight alone, one alone and not a second. He would fence in his own sour way, thrust, parry, and cut with his own blade of argument, in his own way, not according to rules

perfumed with the stale musk of custom; but according to the measure of his own heart, the rhythm of his own mind, logical now, savage and sudden a moment after: in this fight, he would face any opponent, and thrust straight at the side where the heart lay. (p. 280)

The following chapter "The Friggin' Frogs" largely completes the history of the fortunes of The Silver Tassie. And it seems that just as the chapter "The Silver Tassie" dealt with Sean's determination to free himself once and for all from what he saw as the restrictive bond of association with Yeats and the Abbey, so "The Friggin Frogs" reasserts his determination to be independent of the mob-censorship of popular Irish piety.

After a reconciliation between Sean and Yeats, the Abbey produced The Tassie in 1935 and provoked from Catholic critics the kind of outburst that The Plough had earlier provoked from the Republicans. "All Eire's sacred frogs began to croak" and the play was denounced, in paragraphs of criticism which O'Casey quotes, as "a cup that possibly may have been filled from a sewer... a vigorous medley of lust and hatred and vulgarity..."(p.284) "a poisonous draught from a dirty cup" (p.286),.."Those who relish the rank sort of fare that Mr. O'Casey provides ought to be denied by law the opportunity of indulging their debased tastes" (p.287).

In the context of the artistic and thematic pattern of the autobiographies, this chapter again confirms that Sean was right to leave Ireland when he did. His reaction in "The Friggin Frogs" to the venom and vehemence of the Catholic criticism is to "murmur, as big Joe Brady, the Irish Invincible, murmured on his way to the scaffold, Poor oul' Ireland, poor oul' Ireland!" (p. 288). But, now resident in England, he could afford to "saunter" "away from the frogs, getting away from their croaking to busy himself with other work" (p.389).

And so, according to the account given of the history of The Tassie within the autobiographies' scheme of the pattern of "Sean's"/the author's experience,

it seems that O'Casey's final break with Ireland came not when he left the country shortly before he began work on The Tassie, but with the Abbey's rejection of The Tassie after it was completed, and with the growth of critical feeling against him in Ireland.

Despite the fact that it was written in England, the nature of The Silver Tassie is essentially akin to the plays which preceded it, and essentially different from the play which followed it, in that its material is still basically Irish and does not reveal that strong reaction against Ireland and all things Irish that the studiedly "English" nature of Within the Gates seems to embody.

In basic pattern the relationship between The Silver Tassie and the autobiographies follows in the tradition of the relationships between the autobiographies and the previous plays. This is a developing tradition, but a coherent one in which the autobiographies, for whatever result and by whatever means, rework or take account of, all elements of the original play.

With Within the Gates this kind of relationship between play and autobiography simply no longer exists, nor is it to exist in connection with any play in the future. If there was a definite break from the past at any one point in O'Casey's career, the overall pattern of relationship between the autobiographies and the plays most strongly suggests that it occurred not in the writing of The Silver Tassie, but in the writing of Within The Gates.

But if Within The Gates was a break with the past perhaps the play, in itself, was not quite as influential upon the nature of O'Casey's plays as was another new development which, perhaps, the writing and nature of Within The Gates helped to precipitate. This development in O'Casey's career was the beginning of the writing of the autobiographies.

PART TWO

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND THEIR "CONTEMPORARY" PLAYS.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Within the Gates - I Knock at the Door. Part One

Within the Gates was the first of O'Casey's plays to be written in part or whole during that long central period in his writing career in which he was contemplating and working upon his autobiographies. And it is, therefore, the first of his plays which might possibly reveal in its relationship with the autobiographies evidence of a reciprocal influence between itself and the autobiographical volumes, as opposed to the solely one-sided influence from play to autobiography which is unquestionably in operation between the earlier plays and the autobiographies.

In order to judge to what extent Within The Gates and the autobiographies were, in the process of being written, actually exposed to influence from each other it is necessary to establish as exactly as possible the respective times at which the play and the first volume of autobiography were conceived and written.

Certainly something of the play seems to have been taking shape in the author's mind for several years before the autobiography. As early as November 1925 O'Casey, still living in Dublin, and having then recently completed The Plough and the Stars, told a newspaper reporter that "My next play will be The Red Lily - about a prostitute"¹. The title The Red Lily itself was linked with the projected second play or "richer picture" which O'Casey had frequently declared he would create for Nannie of Nannie's Night Out, but it seems as if perhaps some idea for Within The Gates as to the portrayal of its heroine did emerge while he was thinking of a new play for Nannie²

1. Newspaper interview which appeared in The Observer (London) 22 November 1925, p.9. Reprinted in The Sting and The Twinkle pp. 21-23 Quotation from p.22
2. For an account of the possible connection between the portrayal of Nannie and that of Jannice, the heroine of Within The Gates, see chapter on Nannie's Night Out above.

On his arrival in London in March 1926 he was still referring to "The Red Lily about a fallen woman"³ as being one of the plays which he intended to write. But soon this idea seems to have been superseded by, or perhaps - in view of the eventual nature of Within the Gates - was to some extent absorbed within, a new idea of writing a play about London.

In a newspaper interview published in July 1926, O'Casey announced that he had taken a three years' lease on a London flat and was going

to write a play about London people...Human nature is just the same in a Chelsea environment as in Dublin,...I should not care to write a play about Ireland just now with a possible bitterness in my heart.⁴

In the event his next play, The Silver Tassie which was begun in October 1926 and finished in February 1928, if not exactly "about Ireland", drew very heavily, almost, it seems, totally, upon the author's Dublin experience, as the play's relationship with the autobiographies reveal, and owed very little to London experience or "London people" as such. Yet O'Casey had not abandoned the idea of a play about London life and in her book Sean Mrs. O'Casey recalls how:

Already, with the Tassie over, he was considering his next work. Since he reached London, Hyde Park, and Speaker's Corner especially, had stirred his imagination, and he intended to write a play of four seasons that would be set entirely in the Park.⁵

Referring to a time before the birth of their eldest son on the 30th April 1928, and, therefore, before O'Casey received news of the Abbey's rejection of The Tassie⁶, Mrs. O'Casey describes her husband as:

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3. From an interview published in The Daily Graphic (London), 6 March, 1926 p.2 Reprinted in The Sting and the Twinkle pp. 25-6 quotation from p.26
 4. From an interview published in The Daily Sketch, 7 July, 1926 p.2 reprinted in The Sting and the Twinkle. p.37
 5. Eileen O'Casey, Sean p.76
 6. By both O'Casey's own account (Rose and Crown p.273) and Mrs. O'Casey's (Sean p.82) he is said to have heard of the rejection of The Tassie on the day of his son's birth

Daily now,...concentrating more closely on the play, Within the Gates, which had been christened 'The Green Gates' in draft.

Mrs. O'Casey also writes that when the news of the Abbey's refusal to produce The Tassie did arrive, it did not in any way impede the progress of the new play.

The rejection of the Tassie, the ensuing arguments, and the effort to get the play into London production, had not distracted Sean from other work. He wrote on steadily at the final version of Within The Gates, his symbolic play about Hyde Park from the opening of the gates in the morning until their closing at night,....⁸

And describing a time before The Silver Tassie went into production in the West End, that is before October 11th 1929, she states that "Sean's main work continued to be Within the Gates"⁹

Within The Gates was not, it seems, finished until 1933, for in a letter of 30th May 1933 O'Casey himself wrote to George Jean Nathan: "I am working hard towards the completion of my new play, "Within the Gates"¹⁰, and in a letter of 27 July 1933, again to George Jean Nathan, he promises to "send... a copy of the play...as soon as I can", and implies that the only work remaining to be done on the play concerns the setting down of "the airs of the songs and choruses in the play...They are modifications, done by myself from Irish folk tunes".¹¹ Within The Gates was first published in December 1933¹², and was first produced at the Royalty Theatre, London on February 7th 1934.

So it is that Within The Gates was actually written during the period of early 1928-1933, although some of the seeds of its origin might have been in the author's mind as early as 1925.

7. Eileen O'Casey, Sean p.81

8. ibid. p. 89

9. ibid. p. 93

10 Letters Vol. 1 p. 457

11 ibid p. 459

12. Within The Gates A Play of Four Scenes in a London Park, London, Macmillan 1933. The play was very thoroughly revised as a result of the stage productions of the play in 1934-5, and it is this second or "stage version" of the play which appears in Collected Plays Vol II (first published in 1949). In assessing the relationship and interaction between the play and the autobiographies both versions of the play and the variations between them, have been taken into account.

It is hard to establish exactly when O'Casey began work on avowedly autobiographical writing, and at what point this autobiographical or semi-autobiographical writing began to take shape as the first volume of the Autobiographies proper, I Knock at the Door

In a newspaper interview given to George Walter Bishop and published on 6 October, 1929, shortly before The Silver Tassie opened in the West End, O'Casey himself is reported as saying "I have..written part of an autobiography, which will be finished and published some time"¹³. While Dr. Ronald Ayling in his article "A Note on Sean O'Casey's Manuscripts and His Working Methods", which is based on a study of O'Casey's extant note-books and papers, regards the origins of the autobiographies as dating from 1930:

One exercise book reveals that in October 1930 O'Casey planned a book of seventeen short stories, and the ideas for some if not all of them were clearly autobiographical. From 1930 onwards he was engaged in writing what he called "biographical sketches" or, in the words in which he described the first volume of memoirs, writing "stories" about "what I saw and heard and felt during the first eleven or twelve years of my life." ¹⁴

Mrs. O'Casey in her book does not describe O'Casey as engaged on any autobiographical writing until the brief period during which the O'Casey's lived at 2 Misbourne Cottages on the estate of Misbourne House, Chalfont St. Giles (September - October 1931). But she most clearly regards the autobiographical writing which O'Casey was engaged on at that time as being part of I Knock at the Door:

In the evenings I sat mostly in the room where we ate; Sean, at work on the earliest of his autobiographies, I Knock at the Door, describing his Dublin boyhood, once more became involved in writing and had to have the other small room for himself and his papers. ¹⁵

O'Casey detested the tiny and insanitary cottage and in October 1931 the O'Caseys

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13. The Observer (London), 6 October, 1929 p.13. reprinted The Sting and the Twinkle pp. 42-5 (quotation from p.44)
 14. Ronald Ayling: "A Note on Sean O'Casey's Manuscripts and His Working Methods" R361
 15. Eileen O'Casey, Sean p. 114

moved to a bungalow called "Hillcrest" in the village of Chalfont St. Giles. And it is in a letter from here to Mrs. Charlotte F. Shaw, and dated by Dr. Krause, the editor of O'Casey's letters, as being written at some time in November 1931, that O'Casey mentions that:

I began last week to get back to the play or film - or whatever it may turn out to be - & to the semi-biography to be called, A Child is Born . 16

In his notes on the letter Dr. Krause identifies "the play or film" in question as Within The Gates and comments upon the reference to "A Child is Born".

This was the earliest indication that he was writing his "Semi-biography" or impressionistic autobiography. "A Child is Born" became the first chapter of I Knock at the Door (1939) 17

And in an interview with the journalist and author J.L. Hodson which was first published on 21st December 1931, O'Casey again made mention of a play - obviously Within The Gates - and of a "biography" or autobiography which he was currently writing and between which he was, apparently, dividing his time:

He didn't want to talk about his work, but he owned he is writing a new play about London life; which part of London he wouldn't say. First, he said, he thought he would write it straight for the films, but again he changes his mind. He is half-way through a sort of biography too, and has done a number of sketches - 'weaving a pattern' he called it. 18

From the evidence available it seems fairly clear that Within The Gates was begun before O'Casey started work on any kind of avowedly autobiographical writing. The only account which might seem to contradict this is the interview reported by George Walter Bishop and published in The Observer of 6 October, 1929 in which O'Casey though mentioning that he had "written part of an autobiography", replies, when asked "if he had written any new plays" (since The Tassie), "I am incapable of starting a new play until the last one is

16. Letters Vol. I p. 441

17. ibid p. 441 notes 2 and 3

18. The Sting and the Twinkle p. 57. This book reprints, under the title "O'Casey in Buckinghamshire" the chapter entitled "Sean O'Casey" from J.L. Hodson's book No Phantoms Here (London, Faber, 1932). The chapter itself is an enlarged version of the interview "The Strange Mystery of Sean O'Casey" which was published in News Chronicle (London) 21 December 1931

produced. After The Tassie is staged I shall lose interest in it, ... I have two or three ideas," ¹⁹. Even so O'Casey's reply implies rather than states directly that he has not begun work on a new play, and his wife's seemingly assured knowledge that he was writing and making firm progress with Within The Gates from very soon after the completion of The Tassie quite early in 1928 must greatly outweigh the testimony of this interview which was, after all, given for publication and to a complete stranger.

Whether or not O'Casey did begin to write "biography" or autobiography in some shape or form in 1929 or 1930, and precisely how those writings were related to the "Autobiographies" in their final form, must be a matter of conjecture, but on the evidence of Mrs. O'Casey's account in Sean and of the letters of O'Casey himself it seems that it must be accepted that from September - October 1931 onwards he was, in effect, working directly upon what was to become I Knock at the Door, although probably the final format of the book, and certainly its eventual title and its status as the first of no fewer than six volumes of autobiography, were not known to him at that early stage.

Thus it is that Within The Gates can with a fair degree of certainty be regarded as the very first play of O'Casey's to be written even in part during a period in which he was also working upon the writing of a volume of the autobiographies. And the letter to Mrs. Shaw in which he writes of getting "back to the play...& to the semi-biography", and his words in the interview with J.L. Hodson that "he is writing a new play....He is half-way through a sort of biography too,..." imply, by mentioning the two kinds of work in such close proximity to each other, that O'Casey was in 1931 working upon the two concurrently.

It remains to be seen, however, just how much, or how little of I Knock at the Door was written during the period in which he was working upon Within The Gates. Certainly from O'Casey's letter to Mrs. Shaw it would

19. Interview reprinted in The Sting and The Twinkle pp. 42-5 quotation from p.44.

seem that the first chapter "A Child is Born" was written contemporaneously with Within The Gates. But it is rather more difficult to determine which other autobiographical chapters emerged while the play was being written. For apparently O'Casey at first wrote and regarded these chapters not as related parts of one volume but as individual "sketches", each with a certain independence from the others, and capable of being published separately;²⁰ and, accordingly, they were not necessarily written in the sequence in which they appeared when they were eventually collected together within I Knock at the Door and arranged with chapters specially written for the book, into a chronological account of the earliest years of Johnny's life.

Letters²¹ of O'Casey record the writing of various, named autobiographical sketches and (later) "chapters" (all of which were eventually included in I Knock at the Door) from about July 1934 (that is, after the completion and publication of Within The Gates) to September 1938 (when the manuscript of the first autobiographical volume, in its complete and final form, was sent to the publishers. On the evidence of the letters O'Casey did not think of collecting the "sketches" into a book until February 1938 - almost four years after the completion of Within The Gates. And by February 1938 only "9 or 10" out of the eventual twenty-three chapters had been written. Six of these "9 or 10" chapters can be associated with a date of 1934-7; and thus, by a process of elimination, it seems that the chapters written during 1931-3 when O'Casey was also working on Within The Gates were, almost certainly. "A Child is Born", probably "First the Green Blade", "Hill of Healing", and perhaps too "His Da, His Poor Da", chapters which, as it happens, do follow each other in the chronological sequence of the narrative of the published volume.

It seems then as if these four early chapters of I Knock at the Door, might well have been in a position to influence the nature and content of the play, just as it, in turn, might have exerted an influence upon them.

20. See evidence of the letters quoted below

21. See below

The material of the first chapter "A Child is Born" seems to contain no direct correspondence with Within The Gates, but the second chapter of the autobiography "First the Green Blade" does contain a very positive correspondence with the first version²² of the play, and this is perhaps the very first instance, in the tracing of the overall relationship between the plays of O'Casey and his autobiographical volumes, of the autobiographies having actually provided matter and words for a play.

In "First the Green Blade" the narrative tells of how five-year old Johnny Casside first suffers from the "hot and torturing pain" in his eyes that was to trouble him throughout his life (p.11) Having tried unsuccessfully to treat the pain herself with all the eye-remedies she and her neighbours can think of, Mrs. Casside takes Johnny on a visit to her sister to seek for further advice. The advice is:

You cart him off to St. Mark's Ophthalmic Hospital for Treatment of Diseases of the Eye and Ear,.....
Everyone who isn't a pauper pays sixpence for a ticket, lasting for a month, with attendances three days in each week.....(p.14)

As Johnny and his mother make their way home, the tram in which they are riding is halted in its progress by a large crowd gathering to watch the guests driving to "the Vice-Regal Ball" at Dublin Castle, the seat of British Government in Ireland at that time. Mingling with the crowd Johnny and Mrs. Casside meet Ella and Archie, Johnny's sister and brother, and the dialogue which ensues draws into sharp focus the contrast between the wealth of the privileged classes and Anglo-Irish aristocracy (who are represented by the gorgeously attired guests on their way to the ball), and the poverty of the ordinary people of

22 The first version of the play is particularly important in connection with the relationship between Within The Gates and I Knock at the Door, since this is the version of the play which was being prepared when the early chapters of the autobiography were being written.

Dublin (who are represented by Johnny, with his sore eyes, Mrs. Casside who can hardly spare sixpence for the fee to take him to the hospital, and the crowd in general who are content to gaze with wonder upon a way of life which exhibits a luxury almost beyond their comprehension).

-Come here, in front of me, said Ella, pulling Johnny beside her, and stay quiet and stand still and don't stir, till we see all the lovely lords and ladies tripping and trotting into the Castle.

-I'm bringing Johnny to a special hospital for the eyes and ears only, on Monday morning, said Johnny's mother to Archie.

-He ought to be brought somewhere, said Archie, for his crying by day and his crying by night is becoming more than most of us can stick.

-When I was on me way along, said Ella, the carriages stretched from the Castle Yard, down Dame Street, Westmoreland Street, through Sackville Street, and right into Cavendish Row. Oh, look at the oul' fogey in blazing blue, with a pile of gold braid on his chest, and a slip of a girl nearly on his knee, in that brougham just gone by us.

-Stuck fast in the arms of a pleasure he'll never feel, murmured Archie.

-I'll get Johnny up early on Monday, said the mother and bring him to the hospital, whatever happens.

-Th'oul' fogey, said Ella, had a jewelled star hanging be a blue ribbon in the middle of the pile of gold braid - Order of the Garter, I suppose.

-Not the Garter, said Archie, for only a few, outside of princes of the Royal Blood get the Garter. Mantles of purple velvet lined with silk the Knights wear. Musta been the Order of St. Patrick you seen, for it has a blue ribbon an' the motto, Quis Separabit; but if they'd only known the right way to do things here they'd have gone the whole hog an' made the ribbon green.

-I wish I had a known about this hospital before, said the mother, for Johnny might have been saved a lot of pain by gettin' attention in time.

-Looka' the kids over there, ejaculated Ella, all in their bare feet an' without a flitther on them. Shame for their mothers to let them look on at a sight like this.

-The whole thing gives a great amount of employment, said Archie encouragingly. Even the photographers benefit, for the whole crowd get their photos taken after the ball is over, after the break of morn, after the dancers leaving, after the stars are gone, to be able to look back at themselves in their old age in their gala get-up.

-Sixpence a month, with three visits a week, isn't a lot to charge, if they can do anything at all for Johnny, murmured the mother.

-Some of the dresses of the duchesses cost hundreds an' hundreds of pounds, said Ella.

-And sweet goodbye to the kingdom, the power, and the glory, if we get Home Rule, added Archie.

-Well, we'll see what they can do for Johnny on Monday, said his mother, putting her hand protectingly on his head (pp. 15-16)

And in a long passage of impressionistic "poetic" prose entitled "The Castle Ball" which follows all the material splendours of the ball are described.

Spendours which include the sight of :

fine far-seeing footmen/all padded in plush, yellow, red and plum-coloured,/satin coats of cerise and warm brown on their backs,/fatted calves swathed tight in the whitest of silks,/and their heads periwigged, merriwigged, and beribboned, (p.17)

and also included glimpses of the "blue, white and gold,...black, scarlet and gold...silks....satins....poplin all finely brocaded, ..rich lace from Valenciennes city,...flounces and fans," (pp.16-18) of the raiments of the guests as they led into the presence of the Vice-roy by:

the rod,/held high in the hand of the figure dress up/in the richly-made suit of the best of black velvet.....(p.18)

All this may seem a far cry from the park-world and the action of Within The Gates yet, nevertheless, the first version of the play does seem quite unmistakably to draw upon "First the Green Blades" description of "the Vice-Regal" ball. For in Scene II there occurs a dialogue in which the two Chair Attendants, who have just lost their jobs in the Depression of the 1930s, contrast their lot with that of a debutante giving her first ball:

OLDER ATTENDANT (as they come in) Too slow! Why there's years of 'opping abaht in us still. 'Ad 'is own fyvourites f'r the job, 'e 'ad, Godfrey. En' when I thinks of us, en' when I thinks of 'er!:-

YOUNGER ATTENDANT.= Forgit it, forgit it, Bysil.....

YOUNGER ATTENDANT (half asleep). Carn't git it aht of me brine. When I thinks of us, en' then when I thinks of 'er.

OLDER ATTENDANT (half asleep). Doesn't bear thinking of, I thinks.

YOUNGER ATTENDANT (with sleepy bitterness) Daughtaw of a lyebor leader. 'Er first dawnce in 'er fatheh's 'ouse. Two ushers in blue velvet coats en' yellow velvet britches, with white styeves to guide the visitors in.

OLDER ATTENDANT (sleepily). Forgit it, Godfrey; not good to dwell on it, en' us aht of a job.

YOUNGER ATTENDANT (with sleepy bitterness). In en emerald green gown, costing 'undreds, with glittering bands of jewel green en sapphire blue crossing over 'er byre back. Oh, when I thinks of us, en' then, when I thinks of 'er.

OLDER ATTENDANT (sinking to slumber) Forgit the blue en' yellow velvet, the jewel green, en' sapphire blue on the byre back, en' ransom 'unger with a little sleep.

(pp. 56-7)

The setting and occasion of the ball described and thus something of its implications have been changed to fit into the context of the play. The contrast of the splendours of the hierarchy of the British Empire in the Ireland of the 1880s with the pain and poverty of the Dublin poor becomes

the contrast of, ironically, the splendour of a labour leader's way of life compared to that of those English unemployed in the 1930s, whom, presumably, he is supposed to represent. But the essence of the contrast, that of excessive, almost fabulous, unashamed wealth with poverty bordering on destruction is precisely the same in autobiography and play. And details of the description of the ball in the play clearly correspond to the passage from "First the Green Blade". The "Two ushers in blue velvet coats 'en yellow velvet britches, with white styeves to guide the visitors in", seem quite clearly related to the autobiography's "fine far-seeing footmen all padded in plush, yellow, red, and plum-coloured, satin coats of cerise and warm brown", and the usher "dressed up in the richly-made suit of black velvet" who had a "rod held high" in his hand. While the play's description of the gorgeousness of the hostess's gown corresponds to the autobiography's description of the magnificent finery of the guests at "The Castle Ball". Moreover the passage of dialogue from the play contains a verbal correspondence with the passage of dialogue from the autobiography, for the Younger Attendants' comment that the girl wore a "gown, costing 'undreds" must surely be related to Ella's remark that "Some of the dresses of the duchesses cost hundreds an' hundreds of pounds".

That a direct relationship does exist between "First the Green Blade" and Within The Gates seems, then, quite definite. Rather less definite is the determination as to whether the influence was from the autobiography to the play or from the play to the autobiography.

All things considered, it seems much more likely that the "ball" dialogue with its descriptions of splendour, and its contrast of wealth and poverty, originated in the autobiography, for the episode and description of "The Castle Ball" form a much more integral and much more sustained part of the narrative and concerns of "First The Green Blade" and arise much more spontaneously out of its context than does the description of the dance ^{in the play} - and this in spite of the apparent "adaptations" made to fit the subject in the play of the dance into the context of the play.

The impression that the "ball" dialogue was not indigenous to the play seems confirmed by the fact that it was totally omitted from the later stage version of the play.

And so, it seems, the "First the Green Blade" chapter of I Knock at the Door provides in its relationship with Within The Gates the first instance in which the autobiographies provide material for the plays.

But if it seems that an integral part of the Dublin world of the autobiography has, in the form of the "Castle Ball" of "First the Green Blade" penetrated into the park-world of Within The Gates, then an integral part of the park-world of the play has, in its turn, penetrated into the Dublin setting of "The Hill of Healing" - another autobiographical sketch or chapter which was apparently being written at the same time as the play.

The first scene of the first version of the play is set Within The Park on a Spring morning (p1) and part of the stage-set consists of a "slope..... sprinkled with large, formalized figures of daffodils" (p 2). The seasonal setting of the scene is an absolutely organic part of the design and structure of the play and these two particular stage-directions remain unchanged in the revised version of Within The Gates; yet, almost uncannily, a breath of the spring air of the play and a glimpse of the play's park with its flowers find their way into the dismal waiting-room of Dublin's "St. Mark's Ophthalmic Hospital For Accidents and Diseases of The Eye and Ear". And Johnny, waiting there to receive treatment for his eyes, overhears the following snatch of conversation between two fellow-patients:

-The first real touch o' spring is comin' into the air at last, said a soft voice, a little lower down; in the people's park yesterday the main beds were a mass o' yellow daffodils. The whole time I was gettin' a mug o' tea an' a chunk o' bread down me, I was lookin' at them.

-Geraniums, red geraniums for me, said an answering voice, every time, every time.

-I don't know, I don't rightly know, answered the soft voice; to me, red geraniums or geraniums of any other colour seem to have a stand-offish look, always, while daffodils seem to welcome you to come in and walk about in the midst of them.

-There was a moment's silence, then Johnny heard the second voice saying, maybe you're right, but I still hold to the red geraniums (p 23)

The passage is, of course, despite its initially surprising subject matter thoroughly assimilated into the chapter for it is typical of the autobiography to bestow the gift of the vision of beauty upon very ordinary and apparently unlikely people, and typical of it also to introduce a note or sight of the truly beautiful amidst the dullest and drabbest of Dublin surroundings. Yet it seems that this particular, almost touching, glimpse of beauty does very genuinely owe its nature and origin directly to the seasonal park setting of Scene I of the play. In addition the passage from the autobiography might also verbally just suggest something of the dialogue of the play. The "soft voices" remark in "Hill of Healing" that "the first real touch o' spring is comin' into the air at last" perhaps contains some echo of the Bishop's words in the play: "Glorious nip of crispness in the air of a Spring morning, isn't there?" (First Version Sc.I p.15) And perhaps too the patients' discussion of the merits of daffodils owes something to a snatch of the play's dialogue which concerns daffodils:

BISHOP (breezily) - to the GARDENER) Beautiful flowers, Tom, beautiful flowers.

BISHOP'S SISTER. Their gold would do to gild the robes of Gabriel.

BISHOP (softly and reverently). They bring one nearer to the great Creator, Tom.

(First Version, Sc I p. 27)

The "His Da, His Poor Da" section of I Knock at the Door contains no correspondences with the play. And so it appears that those four chapters which were seemingly written during the same time as the play contain only two passages which seem in substance and wording to be related to the play. But those two passages and their contents are enough to suggest that, in connection with substance and wording, a genuine and direct relationship could exist between a play and the autobiographical work which was emerging and taking shape contemporaneously with it; but also, that this potential relationship between them could be based on an influence which would be equally capable of flowing from play to autobiography, or from autobiography to play.

After the first four chapters of I Knock at the Door, however, the correspondences between Within The Gates and the autobiographies can only be

based on a flow of material from the play to the autobiographies as in the relationships between the autobiographies and the "pre-autobiography" plays.

Some correspondences do exist between Within The Gates and the remainder of I Knock at the Door, but they are few and isolated.

"His Father's Funeral", the sixth chapter in the sequence of I Knock at the Door, and associated in the Letters of O'Casey with the date : February, 1937²³ contains an echo of the play in a speech mannerism of one of its characters. One of the cab-drivers at the funeral - "The man wearing the yellow muffler" - ends each of his conversational remarks with a hummed refrain - "didderey didderey didderum":

-I'll give them another quarter of an hour, said the third driver, who wore a yellow muffler round his throat, if some good Jesuit 'ud come along an' give me a jorum o' malt to lower down into me belly - didderay didderey didderum, he hummed.

.....

The man wearing the yellow muffler rubbed his hands together, and envy glistened in his eye.

-Not a bad sackful for a man to get down him in the latter end of a night, he murmured - didderay didderey didderum.

.....

-They ought to have the old man warmly folded up be this, said the man wearing the yellow muffler, didderay didderey didderum

.....

-I'd ha' done something, said the man with the yellow muffler, even if I hadda lie down to do it, didderay didderey didderum.

.....

The man wearing the yellow muffler rubbed his hands gleefully together.

-We ought to be soon bowling along merrily to the boneyard, now, he murmured expectantly, didderey didderay didderum.

(pp. 36-9)

While in Scene I of the first version of the play the Younger One of the two Chair Attendants, in an effort to respond to the joviality of the Bishop's greeting and the Bishop's remark "Glorious nip of crispness in the air of a Spring morning, isn't there?" (a remark which has already seemingly exerted an influence upon the "Hill of Healing" chapter of the autobiography), has interspersed his contributions to the dialogue with the same hummed refrain:

23. See evidence quoted in chapter on The Star Turns Red

.....
 YOUNGER ONE (encouragingly to the BISHOP) Never mind 'im sir
 -go on torking abaht the Spring; - Dideree, dideray, diderum; -
 and the birds!

.....
 YOUNGER ONE (enthusiastically) Reminds a man that Cord watches even over
 the fall of the sparrer! Dideray, dideree, diderum.

(pp. 15-16, 18)

The respective presentations of the characters of "the man wearing the yellow muffler" in the autobiography and the Younger Chair Attendant in the play are not connected in any way beyond this trick of speech, but it might be that the way in which the cab-driver in the autobiography is identified throughout the episode by virtue of his "wearing the yellow muffler", and is thus distinguished from "the driver wearing the bowler hat" and "the third driver", might owe something to the way in which various minor, and otherwise anonymous, characters in both versions of the play are referred to by various distinguishing features of their clothing or appearance: "The man in the Bowler Hat" (first version) or "A man wearing a Bowler Hat" (Stage Version), "The Man in the Trilby Hat", "The Man with the Stick" and so on.

Within the Gates is linked verbally to "The Street Sings" chapter of I Knock at the Door (a chapter which was written in 1938)²⁴ in so far as both make use of the same quotations from the "Song of Solomon":

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth (ch. 1 v 2)

and

He bought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over
 me was love. (ch. 2 v. 4)

In "The Street Sings", Johnny, playing in a ring game with "shy, green-eyed Jennie Clitheroe", seizes an opportunity to give her a swift and sly embrace:

So, in a cute and gentle way, this play and these songs touched
 the time when the girl would long to let him kiss her with the
 kisses of his mouth and his banner over her would be love. (p.80)

In Scene I of the first version of the play The Dreamer, on hearing the Gardener's plan to spend an evening with Jannice in her flat, comments: "He brought me home to his house of wine, and his banner over me was love" (p.27). And in Scene II he uses exactly the same words to Jannice herself when he attempts to persuade her to let him take her home. (p.79) In the stage

24. See evidence of letters quoted below in connection with the relationship between I Knock at the Door and The Star Turns Red

version of the play both these passages are omitted, but this version too possesses a relationship with the passage from I Knock at the Door, for in Scene II Jannice calls upon the Salvation Army Officer to "Come into the sun, and kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth! (p.173) and this speech is found only in this particular version.

Perhaps too "The Street Sings" subject and theme of the "Golden and joyous" days of Johnny's existence "when he was free from pain" and

could jump into the sunlight,
laugh, sing, shout, dance, and make merry in his heart, with
no eye to see what he was doing, save only the eye of God, far
away behind the blue sky in the daytime, and farther away still
behind the golden stars of the night-time. (p.74)

reveal the direct influence of Within The Gates' emphasis upon singing and dancing, and its theme that song and dance are ultimately the only true means of worshipping God and life. In both versions of the play The Dreamer redeems Jannice's soul by encouraging her to dance even in the face of death:

Offer not as incense to God the dust of your sighing,
but dance to His glory, and come before His presence
with a song! (first version), (stage version)
Sc IV p.164 Sc IV p.228

But the theme and depiction of singing and dancing as symbolising the joy of life is by no means confined to Within the Gates among the plays, or ^{to} I Knock at the Door among the autobiographies. It is present in the earlier plays Nannie's Night Out and The Silver Tassie,ⁱⁿ O'Casey's middle and later plays such as Red Roses for me, Cock-a-Doodle Dandy, The Drums of Father Ned and Figure in the Night, and is represented in each of the autobiographical volumes. Hence the theme itself might be regarded as a central or fundamental one in

O'Casey's work rather than peculiarly characteristic of Within The Gates²⁵. And hence the presence in "The Street Sings" of the same theme need not reveal a particular influence of Within The Gates upon I Knock at the Door, but a rather more general relationship, in that each might simply

25. For an examination of the role and significance of dancing in Nannie's Night Out, The Silver Tassie, Within The Gates, Red Roses for Me and Cock-a-Doodle Dandy see William A. Armstrong: "Sean O'Casey, W.B. Yeats and the Dance of Life" Modern Judgments pp. 131-142

be drawing upon a theme which was becoming increasingly prominent in O'Casey's work at the time that they were written.

The relationship between Within The Gates and the chapters of I Knock at the Door which were written after the play is fairly typical of its relationship with the later autobiographical volumes.

The written text of the play does possess a relationship with each of the volumes of autobiography, and a relationship in which, after the four early chapters of the first volume, the direction of the flow of material between play and autobiographies is exactly as it was in the relationship between the "pre-autobiography" plays and the autobiographical volumes. But in comparison with the kind of comprehensive reworkings which the autobiographies accorded to the "pre-autobiography" plays, the scattered thematic and verbal echoes which largely comprise the relationship between the written text of Gates and the autobiographies seem, on the whole, to be slight, haphazard and disappointing.

In general little by way of specific characterisation or incident from the play finds its way into the autobiographies. This may well be initially because the "London Life" aspect of the play renders much of its substance unsuitable for inclusion in the Dublin context of these volumes. It has been seen from the "First the Green Blade" and "Hill of Healing" sections of I Knock at the Door that the worlds of the play and the autobiography were capable of overlapping each other, but this seems possible only to a certain extent. And while, for example, a dialogue about daffodils may be readily introduced from a play set in a London park in the 1930's into an autobiographical scene set in the waiting room of a Dublin hospital in 1880s, it would be less easy to take such a character as Jannice from the play and put her into a historical Dublin setting without altering her portrayal so radically as to totally destroy her original identity. And it seems highly significant that those works of O'Casey which are, in the characters and incidents which they describe, most closely and richly related to Within The Gates are not the autobiographies at all - not even those chapters which were written at the same

time as the play - but two short stories from the volume Windfalls. These two stories, entitled "I Wanna Woman" and "The Job" were written shortly after O'Casey began work on the play ²⁶ and they share its time and setting of "contemporary " London.

The portrayal of the girl "Alice" in "I Wanna Woman" is obviously closely allied to the portrayal of Jannice in the play. Both share the same profession, although Alice is rather more hardened to her way of life than is Jannice and seemingly rather more prosperous, possessing as she does a flat in Maida Vala, and a fur coat. Apart from the fur coat her appearance is almost identical to that of Jannice. Alice is:

Pretty, dressed in a smartly-made tailored suit, covered by a fur coat that reached to the hem of the skirt, short enough to show the full knee when she took a step forward, a delicious helmet hat of modest red made a sweet frame for her face.

(Windfalls p. 71)

While in Scene I of the stage version of the play Jannice is described as:

very pretty,....dressed in a black tailored suit, topped by a scarlet hat (p.121)

and in Sc. II of the first version as:

very attractive-looking, sitting there in her tailor-made coat and skirt, and her bright helmet hat. Her slim legs, looking slimmer in their elegant silk stockings, are for all to see from the knees down (p.63)

The description of Alice as having, despite her charm, "something about her that

26. In the Preface of Windfalls, stories, poems, and plays; London, Macmillan, 1934, p. vii O'Casey describes how "The three short stories", that is, "I Wanna Woman", "The Star-Jazzer" and "The Job" were written as "an effort to get rid of some of the bitterness that swept into me when the Abbey Theatre rejected The Silver Tassie". This would place the date of writing the stories after the beginning of work on Gates, which according to Mrs. O'Casey began before the rejection of The Tassie. In fact the actual dates of the composition of two of the stories can be ascertained from letters written by O'Casey to Gabriel Fallon in 1928. In a letter of the 28th October of that year O'Casey wrote: "Just finished a short story - it isn't a story - The Star Dance - ..." (Letters Vol. I p. 316) and in a letter of 29 November he wrote:

I've been writing a good deal these few days - well into a short story to be call - I think - "The Flesh is Willing" (Letters Vol. I p.323). The stories actually appeared in Windfalls under the changed titles of "The Star Jazzer" and "I Wanna Woman", respectively. No reference is made in the letters to the writing of "The Job", but this presumably took place at about the same time.

suggested the possibility of hire" (Windfalls, p.71) seems very much akin to the influence upon Jannice's appearance of her "contact with the selfishness and meanness of the few clients that have patronised her" (1st version Sc I p.32) Like Jannice who "'as a mind, a swift intelligence of 'her own (First version p.10), Alice is intelligent.

But the quality of Alice's intellect is emphasised more strongly than is that of Jannice's, for whereas Jannice "has read a little, but not enough" (First version Sc. I p.32) (Stage Version Sc. I p. 121), Alice is "interested in books" (Windfalls p.81), and reads Hardy, France, Dostoievsky and Balzac.

The other chief character in the story, Jack Avreen, has perhaps most in common with the "Young Man in Plus Fours" in the first version of the play, who is "a symbol of those young and old men whose whole life is an interest in the surface of women"²⁷. The portrayal of Avreen is, however, much more humanly developed from the play's presentation of the "Young Man in Plus Fours" who simply appears on stage at intervals in order to follow "The Scarlet Woman" or to cast meaningful glances at Jannice, the "Young Whore".

The narrative of the story does not, in its incidents, so much follow the sequence of the plot of the play as illustrate certain of the plays themes and arguments; but the connection between the substance of the play and the substance of the story is nevertheless an obvious one. Alice is of high intelligence and is quite equal to a debate upon the literary merits of the authors whose work she admires, but Avreen makes it clear that he has not gone back to her flat for a literary discussion:

"Come over here", he said, "and sit beside me; I don't want to be bothered about Balzac just now". (Windfalls p.82)

This incident "proves" precisely the play's and Jannice's point that:

27. This is how O'Casey described "The Young Man in Plus Fours" in the article "From Within The Gates" which was published in the New York Times Oct. 21, 1934, as an introduction to the American production of the play in that year, and is reprinted in Blasts and Benedictions pp. 111 - 117 (quotation from p. 114)

Dance, sing, and strip, for the fun of the thing
-that's all they want from a woman. A sigh, a
sob of pain, a thought higher than their own from
a woman, and they're all hurrying home.

(First Version Sc III p. 98 & Stage Version Sc III p.187)

And Jack Avreen's sense of savage revulsion from Alice in the dawn is a perfect illustration of the words of the stage-direction of the play which describe the attitude of Jannice's clients towards her:

for these, though unable to resist the desire to have her, hate her subconsciously before they go with her, and consciously detest her, when their desires have been satisfied. (First Version Sc I p.32) (Stage Version Sc I p.121)

A minor but seemingly genuine, correspondence in incident and character between the story and the play concerns Avreen's encounter, in Piccadilly Circus, with an evangelist who carries a placard stating that

"The wages of sin is Death" (Windfalls p.69).

This recalls the presence and activities in the first version of the play of the "Two Placarded Evangelists" (In the Stage Version of the play the Evangelists are not described as carrying placards).

Character, incident and theme from the play are also closely bound up with the story "The Job". The central figure in the story, a young and pretty girl is virtually pushed towards a form of prostitution in order to get "The Job" as a singer and dancer in a chorus - a job which she desperately needs in order to earn her living. Her would-be employer - an "old gilded pig", who "couldn't really enjoy or understand the companionship of girls" (Windfalls p.111) appears to regard the taking of "supper" with him as obligatory for his girl employees in return for the favour of employment. Here the substance of the story and play come together for Jannice of Within The Gates leaves her job because:

the swine of a manager brings good-looking girls, one at a time, to a silent store-room to sort chemises, and then sends his slimy paw flickering around under their skirts. When he made a clutch at me, I came away.

(First Version Sc I p. 42)

And ^{she} tells the Bishop:

I wonder, if you were a girl, and good-looking, would you bray about the happiness of work? (Raising her voice a little) Do you know why I had to fly out of the last two jobs I was in, had to - d'ye hear - had to fly out of them?

.....
(vehemently) Because I wouldn't let the manager see how I looked with nothing on...There's many an old graven image has made a girl dance out of her job and chance the streets, sooner than strip herself for his benefit, with nine hours a day and three pounds a week added on to the pleasure.

(First Version Sc II p.67)

But the girl of the story, though realising that her employer

Wanted a lot for four pounds a week...Little enough for work that sweated her for hours every night without having to let herself be mauled about into the bargain.

(Windfalls p. 113)

needs the job too badly to display Jannice's independent spirit, and she must reluctantly agree to take supper with her prospective employer on "Wednesday".

Later she reproaches herself for her lack of aplomb in the transaction:

Somehow or other she couldn't make use of it as other girls did. No good at a business deal. (Windfalls p.114)

And in this lack of professional "business" sense her portrayal comes very close indeed to that of Jannice who "is too generous and sensitive to be a clever whore, and her heart is not in the business" (First Version Sc I p.32)

(Stage Version Sc I p.121)

Also the circumstances and events of the girls' lives coincide in so far as the girl in the story is looking forward to the consolation of an evening of dancing with "Jim" whom she loves, while Jannice in Scene I of the play looks forward to an evening of dancing with, and a proposal of marriage from, the Gardener. But both girls are doomed to disappointment. Jannice finds out that the Gardener has absolutely no intention of marrying her, and when the girl of the story goes home in order to get ready for the dance she receives a telegram to say that Jim will not be seeing her that night but on "Wednesday" -ironically the evening on which she has the engagement with her employer.

The closeness and richness of the relationship between the material of the play and that of "I Wanna Woman" and "The Job" is so strongly marked and so

sustained that the relationship between the written texts (that is substance and wording) of the play and the autobiographies seems in comparison to be weak and spasmodic indeed. As has been said, the general correspondence in character and incident between "I Wanna Woman", "The Job" and Within The Gates, when compared to the general absence of correspondence in character and incident between the first four volumes of autobiography and Within The Gates, may, initially, be due to the correspondence in the London setting of the stories and the play as opposed to the Dublin setting of these autobiographies.

The initial affinity between the play and the two stories in so far as they share a "modern" London setting, may account, to some extent, for the fact that the material of the play seems to have found its way much more readily into the stories than into the historical Dublin setting of I Knock at the Door, or of the first four autobiographical volumes as a whole.

But the question of setting cannot be the sole issue for other works within Windfalls which do not share Within The Gates' London setting, but which were written at a time when O'Casey was working on the play, also possess a most positive relationship with certain aspects of the play.

A further short story in the volume, a story entitled "The Star Jazzer" which was written in October 1928²⁸, is actually set in the autobiographies' world of Dublin and far away from the world and society in which Jannice and the girls of "I Wanna Woman" and "The Job" must earn their living. Yet it is thematically related to the play and the other two stories in that it portrays how a male-orientated society, be it in London or Dublin, places its impositions upon women. The central figure in "The Star Jazzer" is a still young woman of the tenements. Having given birth to seven children in ten years, she must now work all day and most of the night to look after her family. And she apparently receives little help or understanding from her husband.

Another aspect of the story, an aspect which involves considerations of incident and characterisation as well as of theme, is also extremely interesting

28. See letter from O'Casey to Gabriel Fallon, 28th October 1928 (Letters vol. I p.316) quoted above.

in connection with the play, and that is the "dance" element of the story.

The woman, already wearied by a day's washing, is induced by the sight of a certain star in the sky to shake her cares and troubles from her and perform a wild and abandoned dance in the tenement yard. Apart from its general link with the play in that it partakes of the same tradition of dance-symbolism in O'Casey's works, the actual incident of the dance in the story seems more particularly related to Jannice's dances in that it is performed in the determination to shake off sorrow, and it ends in exhaustion and collapse. Moreover the dances of the woman of the story and Jannice of the play might also share something of a common literary history, for both dances seem, in their motives and endings to be connected not only with each other, but connected too with the dance of Nannie in Nannie's Night Out. Furthermore, they seem to prefigure in some respects the defiant, but tragic dance of Mild Millie in Drums Under The Windows. And the "Mild Millie" episode, emerging as it did in the early 1940's, itself seems to have been very directly related to Nannie and her play.²⁹

And if three of the short stories of Windfalls which were written contemporaneously with Within The Gates are related to it in incident, character and theme certain poetical works of the same period, which are also included in Windfalls, seem too to be directly related to the play, particularly with regard to theme and phraseology.

The very title of the prose poem "Gold and Silver Will Not Do", which was written in 1929³⁰ corresponds exactly to lines which appear in the "London Bridge is falling down" sequence of Scene II in both versions of the play.³¹

29. See above chapter on the relationship between Nannie's Night Out and the autobiographies.

30. In her book Sean p.99 Mrs. O'Casey describes how this poem in its original form was given to her by her husband on the 14th July 1929. She writes that in this version her name appeared throughout the poem, "though for publication Sean decided to make the poem impersonal".

31. In the first version of Within The Gates the lines "Gold and Silver will not do"...are played by "The Gramophone" (Sc. III p.91) In the stage version they are sung by Jannice "with a distinct note of denial" (Sc III p. 182)

And the questions that the woman of the poem asks her would-be lover:

"what hast thou to give me....?"

What greater things than these hast thou to give...?

What givest thou unto me now, if I go,....?

(Windfalls pp 36-8) bring to mind Jannice's question to The Dreamer:

"Supposing I go and give, what do I get? (first version Sc II p.79, Stage version Sc II p.170). And the answers which the women receive - the lover in the poem replies: "I will give thee love;...I will give thee my love, and my need of thee,..." (Windfalls pp 37-8) while the Dreamer of the play promises: "I'll pay your merry kindness with a song." - are similar in so far as, in both poem and play, the lovers' gifts are offered in contrast to the worldly and material gain which the women initially expect. A further correspondence between the poem and the play lies in that in both poem and play the lover is not immediately successful in his suit. The woman in the poem at first inclines after the "richness and grace" (Windfalls p. 38) of material gifts given by other admirers, while Jannice scorns the song as "A puff of scented air!" and describes The Dreamer as "Out on the hunt for bargains" (First version Sc II p.79, Stage Version Sc II p. 170) But in both poem and play the suits of the lovers eventually prosper as both women are led to accept a new vision of life's spiritual, rather than material, values.

Also it cannot fail to be significant that just as the lover in the play is known as "The Dreamer", so in the poem the lover is addressed by the woman as:

"O dreamer" and is mocked by his fellow suitors with the words "he dreams".
(Windfalls p. 39)

The diction and imagery of the poem too in their combination of biblical-sounding phraseology and rather self-conscious sensuousness - which perhaps constitutes an attempt to evoke something of the tone and quality of "The Song of Solomon", which is actually quoted in the course of the play - bears a strong resemblance to the most deliberately "poetic" passages from the play. A resemblance which is illustrated by the following extracts from poem and play respectively:

I answered and said: I will give thee my love, and my need of
of thee, now; and in the days that shall follow they going, colours
many times more wonderful than these colours that shine in this
silken loveliness of yellow and green and crimson and blue; and I
will bring thee more marvellous things in bronze and in stone than
even these trinkets of silver and trinkets of gold

(Windfalls pp 38-9)

DREAMER...(Joyously down to the YOUNG WHORE) I have that will
give another month of gay and crowded life of wine and laughter;
joy in our going out and our coming in, and the dear pain from the
golden flame of love.... (First Version Sc III p.122)
(Stage Version Sc III pp. 200-1)

"The Dreamer" appears too in another poem in Windfalls which is entitled
"The Dreamer Dreams of God". As the title suggests "The Dreamer", exactly like
his counterpart in the play, is regarded in the poem as one who possesses a
vision of God and His true purpose, and who seeks to carry that purpose out.

"The Dreamer" believes, as the refrain of the poem states that God is "ours,
for he is our friend, and is one with the Dreamers for ever" (p.43 and passim)
The presence of "The Dreamer" in this poem and the similarity between the diction
and imagery of the poem and various passages and songs in the play are in them-
selves enough to proclaim its unmistakable kinship with the play, but the letters
of O'Casey actually supply a piece of evidence to suggest that this poem was, at
least in part, initially written for inclusion in Within The Gates itself (when
Within The Gates was still envisaged as a film). In a letter of 31st December,
1930 O'Casey wrote to Gabriel Fallon:

At the immediate present I am trying to fix a film scenario, &
have written as part of the talkie, an Artist-Atheist's hymn to God!

The Sun is but a wee brooch in his breast
The moon a fair stone in the ring he is wearing
The stars are the beads that gleam in his robe
When the evening is fallen etc. Amen 32

And the second stanza of the poem "The Dreamer Dreams of God", as it appears
in Windfalls, is essentially the same verse with but the merest of changes:

The sun is just a wee brooch in His breast;
The moon is a stone in the ring He is wearing;
The stars are the beads gleaming grand in
His robe, when the ev'ning has fallen.
(Windfalls p.43)

The third poem in Windfalls which is related to the play - and which together with "Gold and Silver Will Not Do" and "The Dreamer Dreams of God" makes up the section of the volume which is called "Second Fall" - is entitled "She Will Give Me Rest". Written at the same time as the play³³, "She Will Give Me Rest" is a love poem such as the Dreamer might sing to Jannice. The lover in the poem in Windfalls says:

My belov'd is sweet and fair and comely,
The poet's sadden'd gladness singing,
Like unto a rose's fragrance scenting
The bosom of the deep'ning dusk (Windfalls p. 47)

While The Dreamer sings to Jannice:

Her legs are as pliant and slim
As fresh golden branches of willow;
I see lustre of love on each limb,
Looking down from the heights of a pillow! (Sc II p.80)

And the contempt which the speaker in the poem in Windfalls expresses towards the

Men of the market, busy with decimals,

who

Smother with spittle the glorious fancies
That flow from the brooding mind of God (Windfalls p.47)

suggests something of the song "composed" by The Dreamer and sung at the beginning of Scene II of the play:

Ye who are haggard and giddy with care, busy
counting your profit and losses,
Showing the might of your name unto God in
the gay-coloured page of a cheque book;
Storing the best of your life in a drawer of your
desk at the office: ...
(p.48)

The richness and precision of the relationship between Within The Gates and three of the stories and three of the poems in Windfalls is unmistakable. It is a relationship which, taking the stories and poems together, embraces characterisation, incident, theme, symbolism, verbal correspondence and similarities in diction, and poetic idiom and style. In short it is the kind of comprehensive relationship which, on analogy with the relationships between

33. In the Preface to Windfalls p.vii, which bears the date of 1934, O'Casey writes that "The verses in the section called "Second Fall" were written in recent years,..."

the earlier plays and the autobiographies, might have been expected between Within The Gates and the autobiographical volumes.

If the extent to which, and the way in which, the autobiographical volumes rework or make use of the material and text of the earlier plays can suggest the nature of those plays themselves, then the extent to which the autobiographies fail to include the material of Within The Gates, perhaps can be equally revealing as to the fundamental nature of the play.

The fact that little material from Within The Gates finds its way into I Knock at the Door, even though the very earliest chapters of the volume were being written at the same time as the play and as Windfalls, might be accounted for by the fact that the author wished to keep the writing of the play and fresh venture of the writing^{of} the autobiography deliberately separate. But if this was the case he would not have allowed the material of the chapters to relate at all with the material of the play, whereas the early chapters of the autobiography contain two specific instances in which this happens. Moreover, the very first chapter of I Knock at the Door, "A Child is Born", though it does not contain correspondences with Within The Gates, seems to draw, in its presentation of Mrs. Casside, upon the themes of "motherhood", and the presentations of the "mothers", which are to be found in Juno and The Paycock. Also, even if he did try to keep the plays in general, as represented by Within The Gates, in a separate compartment from the early chapters of the first autobiographical volume, or even from the first volume as a whole, this barrier with regard to Within The Gates in particular must have surely broken down before the final page of the sixth volume was written, over twenty years later. Certainly, as the relationships between the autobiographies and the pre-autobiography plays show, if such a barrier ever existed it very quickly broke down in connection with the plays written before Within The Gates. Yet, if anything, correspondences between Within The Gates and subsequent volumes of autobiography are even more infrequent, and much less substantial, than the correspondences between it and I Knock at the Door.

Another basic factor which might account for the absence of much substance of the play from I Knock at the Door and, conversely, the presence of much of the play's substance within Windfalls, perhaps concerns considerations of settings in time and place. This factor might well be in operation to a great extent in the first volume, and even the four "Irish" volumes of the autobiography as a whole. But the fifth and sixth autobiographical volumes are each set in England, and Rose and Crown describes London life during the precise period in which the play is set. Yet little or no material of the play finds its way into Rose and Crown in this connection. Furthermore, the discrepancy in the settings of the play and the autobiography had not been totally exclusive of a relationship between Within The Gates and I Knock at the Door, and within Windfalls too, substance apparently related to ^{the} play had been placed in a Dublin context in the story "The Star Jazzer".

It might be thought that material from Within The Gates was not reworked within the autobiographies because it had already been reworked outside the play, in the stories and poems of Windfalls - which were written during the period when the author was working on the play, and at a time when the writing of the autobiographies was very, very much in its infancy. This too might be true to a certain extent. But in the story of Windfalls which is entitled "A Fall in a Gentle Wind" he had drawn very much upon the material of The Plough and its characterisation of Mollser, and this had not hindered him from drawing upon precisely the same material - plus the contributions which the story itself made to the presentation and interpretation of the play's material - in the fourth volume of the autobiography.³³ Yet nothing of the kind happens in connection with Within The Gates

It seems then that the apparent barrier which exists between Within The Gates and the autobiographical volumes is largely and simply one of incompatibility of material and, perhaps too, of manner. And herein must lie too the essential difference between Within The Gates and all the previous plays - including

33. See above chapter on the relationship between the autobiographies and The Plough and the Stars

Though set seemingly in a particular place at a particular time it does not, unlike the previous major plays, contain a core of historical material, or, as with even the previous minor plays, convey an impression of life in a given place at a given time. In a critical study of the plays of O'Casey which is designed "to provide an examination of the political and sociological material from which he shaped them, making it thus possible to read the plays in the light of events and conditions prevailing at the time they were written",³⁴ attention is drawn to the absence from this particular play

of any very definite references to specific time and place, so that while we are reminded of the period of the play by suggestions such as the procession of the Down-and-Out and by occasional topical references, such as that of the Attendants to the gold standard, the connection between the play and the times in which it is assumed to take place is far more general than in any previous work.³⁵

And the Stage Version of the play contains even fewer contemporary references than does the first version. It omits, for example, the first version's reference to a "lye-bor leader" (Sc. II p.57) and to Winston Churchill (Sc III p.11)

The absence of the play's material from the historical scheme of the autobiographies - and Rose and Crown does describe the Gold Crisis and Depression of the 1930s - emphasises, in contrast with the relationships between the autobiographies and the previous major plays, the author's comparative lack of interest in Within The Gates in historical, contemporary or local detail. This, in its turn, doubtless reflects the author's design in the play, that of creating an allegory of modern life in general. The Gunman, Juno and The Plough had each transcended the concerns of their particular period, and the description of time and place in The Silver Tassie had been, from the first, simply a means of conveying universal themes through the particular circumstances. But in the allegory of Within The Gates even the particular circumstances of the play's basic

34. Maureen Malone: The Plays of Sean O'Casey (Cross Currents/Modern Critiques series) Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, London and Amsterdam, Teffer & Simons, Inc. 1969 Introduction p ix

35. ibid p.55

material were to be "universalised" as four archetypal seasons in a park, within which, not individual characters, but representative of social types can meet. In its first version the play was subtitled as being set "In a London Park", but in its Stage Version it loses this subtitle, and with it the only explicit reference in the play to a definite town.

The most arbitrary nature of the artistic purpose and techniques embodied in Within The Gates are obvious enough in almost every line of the play, but Rose and Crown draws even more attention to them in its description of how the play was actually written:

Sean worked off and on at a new play, The Green Gates, a title he afterwards changed to Within the Gates. He had written a lot of dialogue and rough drafts of themes, and now he was trying to knit the wild themes and wandering dialogue into a design of Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night, blending these in with the seasons, changing the outlook of the scenes by changing the colour of flower and tree, blending these again with the moods of the scenes. The dominant colour of Morning and Spring was to be a light, sparkling green, that of Noon crimson and gold: Autumn's crimson was to tinge itself with violet, and Winter and Night were to be violet, turning to purple and black.

At this time, he had become a little interested in the film and had thought of this play as a film of Hyde Park. He thought the film world was dangerously indifferent to the life of England and her people. He thought of the film as geometrical and emotional, the emotion of the living characters to be shown against their own patterns and the patterns of the Park. It was to begin at dawn with the opening of the gates and end at midnight as they closed again to the twelve chimes of Big Ben striking softly in the distance.

(Rose and Crown pp 351-2)

O'Casey, an scholars have seen the rigid structure and techniques of Within The Gates as being manifestations of ^a process of systematic experimentation, on O'Casey's part, with Expressionist techniques, a process which began with Act II of The Tassie.³⁶ But it does not seem to be the manner of the

36. See, for example, David Krause, Sean O'Casey the man and his Work p.145:

In The Tassie he had experimented only partially with the symbolic methods of Expressionism, but now he constructed his whole play as a non-realistic configuration of the real world as he saw it in a transmuted vision...

and Robert Hogan, The Experiments of Sean O'Casey p. 72: Within The Gates has little in it that could be called realistic. It is O'Casey's first completely Expressionistic play and is written, unlike the Tassie, in the same manner throughout.....

play which alienates it, as it were, from the essential nature of the autobiographies and of the earlier plays. After all, Kathleen Listens In is just as uncompromising an allegory as is Within The Gates, and if the later play employed uncompromising Expressionist techniques, Kathleen was an outright "phantasy"; yet substantial parts of Kathleen were reworked in the autobiographies and it was seemingly an incompatibility of theme rather than of manner which hindered a complete reworking of Kathleen Listens In within the autobiographies. The autobiographies could even embrace symbols and an "Expressionist" passage from The Silver Tassie ³⁷. And if the distinguishing feature of Within The Gates, the entirely new development within it that marks off its nature from the nature of all previous plays, and from the nature of the autobiographies also, lies other than in its manner and form; the relationships between successive plays and the autobiographies ^{suggests that} this distinguishing feature very simply concerns the source and nature of the play's material .

The material of the play is equally as arbitrary, if not more arbitrary, than its form .

Not long after his arrival in London in 1926, O'Casey decided "...to write a play about London people, ...I should not care to write a play about Ireland just now with a possible bitterness in my heart." ³⁸ This decision bore fruit not in his next play, The Silver Tassie, but in Within The Gates. In defending both himself and The Silver Tassie against the charge that The Tassie manifested the fact that he had "left the scenes of his impressionable years and has ceased to see intensely" O'Casey had argued that the play was completed only two years after he had left Ireland and that "it would be impossible to lose in two years the impressions of forty" ³⁹. The criticism was unjust, and O'Casey's reply was more than valid. But, ironically, within the further month or two

37. See chapters above on Kathleen Listens In and The Silver Tassie

38. Interview published in Daily Sketch 7 July, 1926, p.2. reprinted in The Sting and The Twinkle p.37

39. See chapter above on The Silver Tassie

which elapsed between the completion of The Tassie and the commencement of work on Within The Gates he very deliberately chose to turn his back upon "the impressions of forty years" and to concentrate exclusively upon his experiences during the two years of his residence in England. It is not so much the "nationality" of the subject matter of the play which is at issue in connection with Within The Gates, but the fact that in excluding Irish material from the play O'Casey was also excluding from the play a very substantial part of his own experience. For as the author was later to have "Sean" observe as, at the end of Inishfallen, he leaves Ireland and begins his journey to England:

Oh, God Almighty, the life he was living now had almost all been spun from what he had felt, had seen, had touched in these few Dublin streets!

(pp. 246-7)

And although the author seems to imply in Rose and Crown that Sean on arrival in London, found it just as congenial to his spirit as was the city of Dublin itself:

Sean was astonished to see the moon shining just as bright over London now as he had so often seen her shining over Dublin. So clear, so elegantly, too, that he almost thought she must have left Dublin, and all Ireland was a dark night now. But the rain fell here, on the evil and the good; the sun shone out on the just and the unjust English; the same blue sky tented London as once had tented Dublin; and, now the same moon, so beloved of him in Ireland, shone silently and grand in the English night-sky. The English were known to God! (p. 310)

yet even in the midst of this seeming affirmation that life in London would suit him quite as well as life in Dublin he cannot refrain from expressing a certain nostalgia for Dublin. And, as the passage continues, the impression is most certainly given that London, because of its sheer size as well as its unfamiliarity to him, fails to inspire him so much, or touch him so deeply, as did his beloved, if irritating, Dublin:

...the same moon, so beloved of him in Ireland, shone silently and grand in the English night-sky...But she did not shine quite so lovingly. When the moon shone over Dublin, a reverie could easily conjure all the wider scenes and all the famous forms of old long since into the streets again.....

All the fame of Dublin City from the time the first worried Warriors crossed the river at the Ford of the Hurdles, to the recent days when desperate Irishmen from

corner, from pillar and post, sent shot after shot into the Black and Tans, can gather to pass by, or stop to talk in the corner of an Irishman's mind. But London was too barbarously outspread for the moon's magic to gather together in comfortable compass all the brave things done, and all the figures of fame that had given her high history and made the world wonder.

(pp. 310-1)

And yet it was the life of London, this city which could never move him as Dublin had done, that he set out to depict in Within The Gates. In these circumstances it is little wonder that his attempt to depict the life of London should develop into much more of an attempt to present a microcosm of modern Western society, for, it seems, he was not sufficiently at one with the life of London to depict that life in detail. O'Casey had once said:

A dramatist, I think, can make a single spot symbolic of the whole world. 39

This is what he had done in his major plays - both those written in Dublin and The Tassie - but he could not do it in a play based on London experience and material. In such a play he had to attempt to depict "the universal" virtually ^{initial} directly for he did not have enough understanding of "the particular" to make that the basis of the work .

It may well be that the form and manner of Within The Gates was part of an experiment with Expressionist techniques, but it seems doubtful that O'Casey would, or could, have written such a technically precise and rigidly structured play if that play had been in any way about Dublin, or was based on Dublin experiences. If the material of the play had been about Dublin, sooner or later it would have taken possession of him and would have broken out of the bounds of technique or structure imposed on it. This seems to have been the case even in connection with The Tassie which, though inspired and dominated by a central symbol, finds a place for the incorrigible Simon and Sylvester and their inconsequential chatter.

Within The Gates was seemingly inspired by O'Casey's delight in Hyde Park. There are several very extensive accounts of his enthusiasm for the park, and of

39. From an interview published in The Daily Graphic (London), 6 March, 1926, p.2, reprinted in the Sting and The Twinkle pp. 25-6, quotation from p.26

particular sights and characters which caught his attention there. In her book Sean Mrs. O'Casey writes that "Since he reached London, Hyde Park, and Speakers' Corner especially, had stirred his imagination,"⁴⁰ and describes how he befriended one of the Speakers "an atheist" who "Obviously...must have helped the play"⁴¹. Beverley Nichols in an interview with O'Casey shortly after he arrived in London records him as saying:

'Yesterday,...was the happiest day I've spent since I came to England. It was in Hyde Park that I spent it, and I stood there listening to the Speakers. I felt almost drunk at the end of it - the characters up there are so rich in comedy.

'What are your dramatists doing to neglect Hyde Park?'....42,

and as giving vivid character sketches of "'a woman...a fine woman, standing in the lamplight under the trees... All the time she spoke she was patting the crucifix by her side....."; "'a man there who made a speech about milk"; of "'a man with a bald head, and little glistening eyes, who spoke of Jesus"; of "'a thin man in a black coat, and long grey hair, who kept on taking oranges out of his pocket....."'⁴³. While in a letter to Lady Londonderry, O'Casey himself writes of 'Sauntering through Hyde Park, "taking upon me the mystery of things, & acting as if I were one o' God's spies."' and goes on to describe at length the activities in the park of

the little cock'ey'd sparrow...the red-coated, gorgeously braided Salvation Army officer...Secular Societies...Public morality Councils...circles of people tossing troubles away into the singing of "Danny Boy", or, "Oh God, our help in ages past," led by conductors tense as steel...The gaudy-coated household troopers gibbering with their lassies...And here and there a lonely, static-faced preacher appealing piteously for someone to come along & shake the hand of Jesus. Riders in the Row, walking their horses, trotting their horses or galloping their horses from end to end and back again....44

40. Eileen O'Casey, Sean p. 76

41. ibid p.93

42. "Sean O'Casey; or, A Rough Diamond" from Are They The Same at Home? Being a Series of Bouquets Differently Distributed (New York: George H. Doran 1927) reprinted in The Sting and the Twinkle pp 37-40 (quotation from p.38) O'Casey gives his own account of the interview in Rose and Crown pp.254-7 but makes no mention of what he said to Nichols about Hyde Park.

43. The Sting and The Twinkle pp.38-9

44. Letters Vol I. p. 413

Yet despite these accounts, the autobiographies themselves contain no suggestion of any incidents in life which might have given rise to any part of the play. Even though the early chapters of Rose and Crown do describe his life in London. And since the narrative of the autobiography is concerned with depicting the most significant events in Sean's, the author's life, this absence suggests that the experiences which inspired the play were not significant within the course and pattern of the author's life as a whole. Some prominence, however, is given in the autobiographical narrative to the writing and productions of the play, and this suggests that these aspects of the play constituted a fundamentally more important part of Sean's/ the author's life, than did the actual experiences on which the play was based.

The essential differences between the nature of the material of the play and the nature of the material of the autobiographies thus precludes any very sound relationship between Within The Gates and the autobiographies in terms of actual correspondences in text or substance.

But the kind of relationship which operated so strongly between each "pre-autobiography" play and the autobiographies is, perhaps, not the only kind of relationship which operates within the overall relationship between the plays and autobiographies of O'Casey.

Within The Gates - I Knock at the Door

Part Two

There seems to exist a kind of relationship between the plays and autobiographies of O'Casey which is not based upon or even directly connected with similarities in the content and wording of the written texts. This second kind of relationship is not to be seen in connection with the individual "pre-autobiography" plays, although collectively they do play a part within it. But with Within The Gates, this second kind of relationship between play and autobiography is certainly in the ascendant, and supersedes in importance the kind of relationship and influence between written texts which was so precise and significant between the individual pre-autobiography plays and the autobiographical volumes.

This second kind of relationship is, or arises from, the influence exerted by the actual writing of one kind of work - be it play or autobiography - upon the writing during the same period of the other kind of work. That is, the interaction of the dramatic and the autobiographical works of O'Casey, not in terms of exchange of specific material and phraseology, but in terms of the nature and course of development of one kind of work influencing, even directing to some degree, the nature and course of development of the other kind of work. This interaction between the plays and autobiographies is often much more difficult to detect and define than the relationship based on "tangible" correspondences in material and wording. The influence might pass from play to autobiography or from autobiography to play, and might equally well be a negative influence - with play and autobiography reacting away from each other along directly contrary paths - as be a positive one - which would result in play and autobiography taking the same course. And the negative or contrary aspect of the interaction, though even harder to detect than the positive aspect, may be no less decisive than it.

It seems as if the author's initial idea and desire to begin to write the works which were to emerge as the 'Autobiographies' might actually have arisen directly out of his writing of plays. In Sunset and Evening Star when the wheel of the autobiographies has turned its full circle and he records, within the autobiographical narrative, how he came to begin the autobiographies, he writes:

Here, now, in a house in Devon, he was looking over the page-proofs of his first biographical book; for, while writing plays and thinking about the theatre, his mind had become flushed with the idea of setting down some of the things that had happened to himself..... (p.514)

And this suggests that he had become aware of, and inspired by the thought of, just how much of the substance of his own life he had been using as the material for the plays up to and including The Silver Tassie

But although brought, by the plays set in Dublin, to this apparent awareness and appreciation of the richness of his experience, he had seemingly taken another decision - and this time, it seems, a decision far more arbitrary than inspired - "to write a play about London people, ...I should not care to write a play about Ireland just now with a possible bitterness in my heart".⁴⁵

It seems then, that just as O'Casey was becoming aware, through his earlier plays, of the richness of the artistic potential of his own life and experience, he was preparing, in the plan of, and writing of, Within The Gates, to turn his back upon most of that experience. And, furthermore, it seems as if once he began to write his London play, he might have found such little, conscious or subconscious, creative satisfaction with the limbo-like world of Within The Gates (or, as it was first called, The Green Gates) that this in itself might have caused him to react towards the writing of autobiography - for in autobiography, by its very definition, he would be able to draw, even much more extensively/^{than} in his previous plays, upon that wealth of personal Irish experience that was being deliberately excluded from Within The Gates.

45. Newspaper interview of 7 July, 1926, see above.

Certainly the writing and nature of Within The Gates seems to reflect by contraries the writing and nature of I Knock at the Door as if there is a definite relationship between them - but a relationship of opposites, contrasts, complements, even of compensations, rather than a relationship of correspondences.

In sharp contrast to the vaguely "London", vaguely "modern", setting of the play are the opening words of "A Child is Born" - the opening and, in date of composition, earliest chapter of the autobiographies:

In Dublin, sometime in the early "eighties, on the last day of the month of March, a mother in child-pain clenched her teeth,.....

(I Knock at the Door p. 3)

The words fix the narrative in terms of time and place almost as specifically as the opening stage directions of The Curman, Juno and The Plough. They also suggest, in the universality of the event of child-birth, precisely that kind of depiction of the universal through the particular which is to be found in the "pre-autobiography" plays. The nature of the autobiography and of its material are, from the outset, deriving from the tradition of the earlier plays, but are being, at the same time, confirmed, even to some degree, inspired by, the contrary nature of Within The Gates.

And this relationship of, in effect, sharply defined contrasts or complements involves not only the setting and substance of the play and of I Knock at the Door, but the techniques used in the expression of the differing kinds of material.

The structure and manner of Within The Gates was chosen as arbitrarily as was its subject matter.

And it seems that just as the limiting of the material of the play to non-Irish material gave rise to the desire, even need, of the author to write elsewhere of his life in Dublin; so the limiting of the process of the artistic creation and development of the play, by the imposition upon it of an inflexible, intellectual pattern, gave rise to the desire and need to create,

in compensation, a work with rather more vigour and spontaneity, in which the inherent richness of the material would evolve an artistic order from within itself. In such a work he would be free to pursue virtually any manner that the material suggested to him. In a sense it seems paradoxical that Within The Gates, which was for him so thoroughly experimental in substance and manner, should be so restrictive. It might be thought that he had in the four Expressionist scenes of Within The Gates broken "free" from the "restrictions" of "naturalism". But his earlier plays, perhaps with the exception of The Gurman, had never been totally naturalistic, there are elements of symbolism - inherent or explicit - in all of them and ^{they} achieve much of their thematic, as well as dramatic, effect by moving readily from one manner to another. They move out of naturalism as readily as Juno in repeating with new feeling the lament which, she, on a naturalistic level, "remembers" Mrs. Tancred to have uttered for a dead son, can step out of her 1922 Dublin-tenement setting and can speak for the mothers of the whole world. Even The Tassie, though that too was experimental in that one Act is apparently devoted almost entirely to Expressionism, really mingles whatever manners and techniques it, or the author, likes. And it can, in Act IV, as the storm of Harry's tragedy is just about to break with full force, ^{even higher} with a superb sense of timing, over a kind of music-hall sketch in which Sylvester, Simon and Mrs. Foran grapple with the intricacies of a telephone - "a delicate contrivance that needs a knack in handlin'" (Act IV p.87) And though the famous Second Act of The Tassie is regarded as a conscious experiment on O'Casey's part, yet there is evidence that it was very much an instinctive rather than an arbitrary experiment. That is, that although the "Silver Tassie" symbolism of the play dictated its themes and its approach to characterisation, yet the actual manner of Act II came to the author not in conscious thought but, as it were, from within the material of Act II itself, or, in the interaction between this material and his creative consciousness. For in a letter written while he was working on The Tassie he remarks:

I have been busy with my play (off & on) & I have just altered a good deal of the second act - an idea came to me after I had passed the middle of the act, & I liked it so well that I felt that the idea was meant to leaven the whole lump. I start the 3rd act tomorrow & afterwards the fourth act, & then revision, & then an exultant weariness. 46

The instinctive, exciting, if exhausting process of writing The Jassie is very different indeed from the mechanical way in which he approached the writing of Gates.
Within The | The matter-of-fact description in Rose and Crown of how Within The Gates was written suggests, although it is probably not meant to, a very wearisome and uninspiring process:

Sean worked off and on at a new play, ... He had written a lot of dialogue and rough drafts of themes, and now he was trying to knit the wild themes and wandering dialogue into a design of Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night, blending these in with the seasons, ...

(pp. 351-2)

It may be significant too that Within The Gates took much longer to complete, or, indeed, later than any of O'Casey's previous plays. O'Casey took over five years to write it, in comparison with, for example, The Silver Tassie's fourteen months. Of course O'Casey wrote Windfalls and began the autobiographies during the period that he was working on Within The Gates; but if one definite conclusion can be drawn from O'Casey's letters as to the nature of his working methods, it is that if he was really stimulated by and engrossed in a particular play, he would abandon all other work until the favoured play was completed. All in all, it seems that he might have found the writing of Windfalls a little tedious. In a letter of October 1932 he complains: "I am working on my new play; but the work is hard, and the going is damned slow." 47

and in May 1933 he wrote:

I am working hard towards the completion of my new play "Within The Gates". It is the hardest job that I have ever attempted, making me exclaim with Yeats, "my curse on plays that have to be set up in fifty ways!" (48) All the action takes place in a Park; it is in four scenes, Spring (morning), Summer (Noon), Autumn (evening), and Winter (night), so, to keep the action in the Park, and keep it going, is a job. 49

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46. Letter to Gabriel Fallon, 14th September 1927. Letters Vol. I p.218
 47. Letter to George Jean Nathan, 5th October 1932 Letters Vol. I p.450
 48. A quotation from Yeats' poem "The Fascination of What's Difficult"
 49. Letter to George Jean Nathan 30th May, 1933 Letters Vol. I p.457

In sharp contrast to his mechanical manipulation of theme, incident and action in Within The Gates, is the free flow of the style within even the first chapter of I Knock at the Door. Set naturalistically enough in Dublin in the "early eighties" the chapter almost immediately launches into a long "impressionist" or kaleidoscopic depiction of Dublin at that time. A Dublin:

where white horses and black horses and brown horses and white-and-black horses and brown-and-white horses trotted tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tappety-tap over cobble stones, conceitedly, in front of landau, brougham, or vis-à-vis; lumberingly in front of tramcar; pantingly and patiently in front of laden lorry, dray, or float; and gaily in front of the merry and irresponsible jaunting-car: (p.3)

this completed, and Johnny's birth having been described, the author presents, through a strange mixture of considered, conclusive statements and sharply focused tiny, almost inconsequential detail, the character of Johnny's mother:

Forty years of age the woman was when the boy was three, with hair still raven black, parted particularly down the middle of the head, gathered behind in a simple coil, and kept together by a couple of hairpins; a small nose spreading a little at the bottom; deeply set, softly gleaming brown eyes that sparkled when she laughed and hardened to a steady glow through any sorrow, deep and irremediable; eyes that, when steadily watched, seemed to hide in their deeps an intense glow of many dreams, veiled by the nearer vision of things that were husband and children and home. But it was the mouth that arrested attention most, for here was shown the chief characteristic of the woman: it quivered with fighting perseverance, firmness, human humour, and the gentle, lovable fullness of her nature. Small strong hands, hands that could slyly bathe a festered wound or scour a floor - wet cloth again and, finally, the dry cloth finishing the patch in back and forward strokes and twisting circles of rhythmic motions. (p.5)

And then the chapter launches into a vividly "dramatic" and profoundly emotional - but not sentimental - account of an incident which occurred before he was born - his mother's loss of a child.

The next chapter "First the Green Blade" contains not only some very pointedly dramatic dialogue, but a long passage of fantasy written first in an O'Caseyan poetic "form":

Sail or goo-goos in blue, white and gold
Soldier goo-goos in black, scarlet, and gold,
Top-heavy and stern in shakoo or busby,
in helmet or bearskin,
finished off with a huckle or ball, a spike or a plume (p.16)

and then in another O'Caseyan "form", this time of fantastical "prose":

...outside under the milky way and the Pleiades,
the landau, brougham, victoria, coupe, coach, and
cab drove through the Castle gates into the Yard
paved with good and bad intentions, like the road
to hell, defended with horse, foot and artillery,
courtyard of England's faithful garrison i neirinn
of the saints and scholars and scuts and the glorious
round towers and the dear little shamrock so green with
the wolf-dog lying down and the harp without the crown
and the sun - burst of Ireland between ourselves, be
Jasus, the counthry is in a nice way between the two
of them..... (p.20)

And the subsequent chapters are rich in dialogue and characterisation of the kind to be found in the earlier "Dublin" plays.

Clearly on the evidence of the very text of the volume itself O'Casey revelled in the writing of these chapters, all the more so after the rigid "experimental" constraints of Within The Gates, and all the more so since the prose form can perhaps, in the right hands, generally evoke a mood, or depict an event, present a large vista or give insight into a character, rather more readily and swiftly than can generally be done in the dramatic form. Also the prose form offers the scope of limitless changes of scene and mood - a scope which O'Casey seems to have begun to explore in the very first paragraph of the volume, with his 'kaleidoscopic presentation of Dublin.

But if "A Child is Born", and the volume which it introduces, generally resembles the "pre-autobiography" plays in its freedom of form, as opposed to the "experimental" constraints of Within The Gates, it resembles them much more specifically within its "dramatic" episode. Indeed it seems as if in I Knock at the Door O'Casey is picking up and perpetuating, in his prose, traditions of the "pre-autobiography" plays which, with Within The Gates, he actually abandoned in his plays.

The episode depicted dramatically in "A Child is Born" - Mrs. Casside's loss of a young son - occurred several years before Johnny of the autobiography, or the author in real life, was born, and so it is clearly a *creative* account, since the author could not possibly have witnessed the events which he describes.

Central to the episode is the figure of Mrs. Casside, a heroine whose portrayal seems to be inextricably linked with the significance and portrayals of the women heroines in the earlier plays.⁵⁰ In Sunset and Evening Star O'Casey has written that one of the prime functions of the autobiography was as a tribute to his mother:

First weave in a sable tapestry would be the colourful form of her whose name was Susan, ragged dame of dames, so quietly, so desperately courageous. Life couldn't get rid of her till she died.

Now he was handling I Knock at the Door, his first biographical book which would give her life for an hour again.

(p. 515)

Perhaps then, this personal need to pay tribute to his mother did, to some extent, motivate the author in the writing of the autobiography. And this need itself could have arisen as a result of the nature of Within The Gates, and, perhaps too, of The Tassie. For thematic reasons the central figures of The Tassie while Jannice of Within the Gates is a heroine of a new kind are not heroines, but heroes; and if O'Casey had been, consciously or instinctively, paying tribute to his mother in his portrayals of the heroines of the earlier plays, then this loss of ^{Dublin working-class} heroines to his plays might have led him to an awareness of a need to find a new medium in which he could find a new artistic expression of her and her qualities.

"A Child is Born" slips into the ^{manifestly} "dramatic" mode as Mrs. Casside, after the birth of Johnny, remembers how an earlier child, also named John, had died. Here, as throughout the autobiographies, Mrs. Casside is not only a strong and vividly portrayed personality in her own right, but she is also the embodiment of the most noble, compassionate and courageous qualities of motherhood:

50. See chapters on Junno and the Paycock and The Plough above.

...one evening on her way to his bedside she stopped, frightened by the sound of a hard choking cough. Prompted, at first, by fear to go away and refuse to hear, she went slowly through the room to the bed, and found him struggling from under the clothes, his arms moving wildly, his eyes staring, his face bluish, and his breath coming in short and clattering gulps. She remembered that, in a panic, she had slapped a bonnet on her head and a shawl round her shoulders, had gathered the little body into a blanket, rushed out of the house, down the street, climbed into a passing cab, calling on the driver for God's sake to drive fast, fast, fast to the Abercorn Hospital.

- He can do it, if He wants to, she murmured in the cab all the way to the hospital, He can save the child; the other died, but this won't, this won't, won't, won't die. With a thought, God can take this choking lump from the little child's throat, and give him back his healthy happy breathing

And the child got it harder and harder to get its breath, and the choking effort of the child to breathe whistled agony into her brain. She tore up the steps of the hospital, rang and rang and rang the bell, pushed past into the hall when the door was opened.

- Get the doctor, she said, pantingly, to the porter, get the doctor, get him quick to look at this child of mine quick, to treat this little child of mine, quick please, for he's dying, but can easily be cured if the doctor comes quick, bring me quick to the doctor or let him come quick to me here, there's no time to be lost, for it's the croup he has, and he's dying fast and will be dead if the doctor doesn't come quick, go and get him, go, go and get him quick.

And she had walked up and down, down and up the hall, waiting, waiting for the porter to bring the doctor. Afraid to look at the convulsed little face hidden under the shawl, and trying to hear less clearly the choking cadences of the shivering cough shaking the little figure sheltering in her arms.

.....

And again she had asked God to help and hurry the doctor so that her child wouldn't die in her arms.

Suddenly she held her breath as she heard a curious rasping sigh, and her bosom shuddered as she felt the little body in her arms give a mighty straining stretch; and she pressed to her breast a dear possession that had emptied itself of life. She had sat, stricken dumb, motionless for some moments, then she had laid the little form down on the bench, and looked at the rigid little face tinged with purple; she had closed the shades of the staring eyes, placed two pennies on the lids, and bound them there with her handkerchief. (pp. 6-7)

As the episode progresses it reveals a further important characteristic which both recalls the nature of "pre-autobiography" plays such as Juno and The Plough and contrasts with, or counterbalances, the nature of Within The Gates. This characteristic is the presentation of theme implicitly through the interplay of character and incident, and of character and character, rather than explicitly through bold and often generalised statements, in which the voice

of the author sounds clearly through the words of the character who is ostensibly speaking.

The theme of social injustice in "A Child is Born" is expressed in the specific terms of the Doctor's failure even to come to examine Mrs. Casside's baby before it died.

Some time after, the doctor, followed by the nurse, came up the corridor and she had called out to them, You came too slow, for God came quicker and took the child away. The doctor had come over to her, put his hand over the child's little heart, murmuring, Yes, he's gone; but no skill of ours could have saved him. And she had answered bitterly, None of you broke your heart trying.

She had taken up the dead form in her arms, and said to the nurse and to the doctor, Open the door, now, that, I may pass out, and leave you all in peace.

.....
 ...This would be another painful halting place in her own and her husband's life. All usual things would stand still till this was over. Had she come in a victoria, a brougham, or a landau, all the bells in the hospital would have been ringing attendance on her. (pp. 7 - 8)

In stark contrast to the Autobiography's "dramatic" presentation of the theme of social injustice is the comparative "undramatic" presentation of the same basic theme in Within The Gates. In the play, despite its dramatic form, the theme takes the form of a straightforward statement, albeit put in the mouth of Jannice and delivered to the Bishop:

When youth has gone; when night has fallen, and when the heart is lonely, I will stand and stare steady at a god who has filled the wealthy with good things, and has sent the poor empty away. (Sc. III p.111)

In presentation of theme, the prose of I Knock at the Door not only conveys a richer sense of "dramatic" spirit than the play, but also a correspondingly richer and warmer sense of human emotion.

A definite technique for the expression of theme through incident which O'Casey uses extensively in both the "pre-autobiography" plays and I Knock at the Door but not in Within The Gates, is the highly effective one of juxtaposition of incident with incident to comment implicitly upon each other. And in "A Child Is Born" the juxtaposition of Mrs. Casside's cab-journey home with her dead child, and of the triumphant progress through Dublin of Parnell

at that time Ireland's "Uncrowned King" and the embodiment of the hope for Irish Freedom, speaks volumes as to the social and political plight of Ireland under British rule, and of Ireland's need of Parnell. Also the juxtaposition in its jarring contrast of moods, the deep sorrow of the mother and the exaltation of the cheering crowds, who are stopping her progress through the streets, emphasises the bitterness of the mother's grief and the sense of her isolation in an unthinking and uncaring world.

In the agitated state of her mind she tried to think of a portion of the Bible that would soften a little the hardness of her trouble. She could think only of the widow, the widow's little son, and of Elijah. But there was no Elijah now to take this little son out of her arms, and stretch himself upon the boy, call three times upon the name of the Lord, and bring the living soul back again to the dead body - only a doctor who had delayed his coming, and a deadhouse.

.....

She heard, subconsciously, the playing of a band and the sound of many voices, and the steady regular sound of many marching feet. Then the cab stood still. The sound of the band got louder, and the sound of the voices and the marching feet came close. The driver got down from his seat, and stood beside the window of the cab.

- We'll have to go a roundabout way, he said, or wait here till God knows when, for a fly couldn't get through a crowd like this, much less an animal like a horse. They're bringing Charlie Stewart Parnell to the Rotunda with bands and banners, where he's to speak on the furtherance of Home Rule for Ireland. That band knows how to rattle out The Green Above the Red, I'm telling you. They've the best belly-drummer in the whole bloody country. My God Almighty, looka the way that fella's twirlin' the sticks! He's nothin' short of a genius at it.

Then she heard a rolling roar of cheers breaking out that held on for many minutes, the cab-driver waving his hat and yelling out a fierce and excited approbation.

- That's Parnell himself that's passed, he said, when the cheering had subsided, Ireland's greatest son. I'd sell me hat, I'd sell me horse an' cab, I'd sell meself for him, be Jasus, I'd nearly sell me soul, if he beckoned me to do it. He's the boyo'll make her ladyship, Victoria, sit up on her bloody throne, an' look round a little, an' wondher what's happenin'.

She shrank back into the shadow of the cab, and looked at her dead child lying stiff on the seat-cushions, stained with spots of tobacco and smeared with spilled beer. She waited dumbly for the crowds to pass, longing to get home so that she might bring her husband within the compass of her sorrow.

.....

- I happen to be a loyal woman, she had said, with all my hopes gathered round the person and the throne, though, she thought, it hasn't rendered me much, it hasn't rendered me much. God Almighty, heavenly Father, you might have spared this little son of mind.

.....

- Now, suddenly said the cab-driver, the procession's endin' an'

we can follow on, crawlin' cautiously at the tail-end of it.
(pp. 8-10)

In its contrast of the life of the individual with the political life of a nation this passage or episode from "A Child Is Born" is in the direct tradition of such episodes as that, for example, in Act II of Juno in which Johnny's ominous visit from "The Mobilizer" takes place as Robbie Tancred's funeral procession is heard passing with hymns and prayers outside the house; or as that in Act II of The Plough in which the squabble between Mrs. Gogan and Bessie, and the blossoming of the relationship between Fluther and Rosie Redmond take place as the Nationalist meeting proceeds outside the public house, and are punctuated by the stirring and patriotic words of a speaker at the rally.

But, political implications apart, in its contrast of Mrs. Casside's sorrow with the excitement of those around her the episode in "A Child is Born" has, perhaps, most in common with the scene in Act IV of The Tassie in which Harry's soft singing of the negro-spiritual, which seems to sum up his sense of isolation and the kind of desolate existence which he must now lead, takes place against the background of the dance proceeding in the hall beyond, and is punctuated by sounds and glimpses of the dance's gaiety.

Harry:

Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home.
I looked over Jordan, what did I see, comin' for to
carry me home?
A band of angels comin' after me - comin' for to carry
me home.

(A voice in the hall is heard shouting through a megaphone.)

Voice. Balloons will be given out now! Given out now - the
balloons!

Mrs. Foran (excitedly) They're goin' to send up the balloons!
They're going to let the balloons fly now!

Harry (singing):

Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home.

Mrs. Foran (as Harry is singing) Miss Monican wants us
all to see the flyin' balloons

(She catches Teddy's arm and runs with him into the hall)

Simon We must all see the flyin' balloons

Mrs. Heegan (running into the hall) Red balloons and black
balloons

Simon (following Mrs. Heegan) Green balloons and blue balloons

Sylvester (following Simon) Yellow balloons and puce balloons

(All troop into the hall, leaving the curtains apart, and Harry, alone with his ukelele through the entrance various coloured balloons that have been tossed into the air can be seen, mid sounds of merriment and excitement.)

Harry (softly and slowly) Comin' for to carry me home.

(Act IV pp. 96-7)

It might be more accurate to describe the technique used in passages such as this from the plays and in the passage from I Knock at the Door as the superimposition of one event upon another rather than the juxtaposition of two events, for in these episodes the author presents two incidents as occurring simultaneously with one, as it were, punctuating the other. It is, of course, a matter of extreme artistry to present the two incidents in such a manner that they interact in so meaningful, yet apparently so artless, a fashion.

Another respect in which I Knock at the Door follows in the tradition of the earlier plays and provides a contrast with the nature of Within The Gates, concerns its richness in vivid character - portrayal, apparently for its own sake. The unnamed cab-driver who possessed so much enthusiasm for Parnell in "A Child Is Born" is just one of the very many minor and often unnamed, yet clearly drawn, Dublin characters who appear in the volume.

And in its portrayal of incident in order to express human emotions I Knock at the Door again firmly follows in the footsteps of the "pre-autobiography" plays and emphasises, by contrast, the purely cerebral nature of Within The Gates.

The apparently simple description of Mrs. Casside's actions on reaching home with her dead child is permeated by the overwhelming impression both of her love of her child, and of the deep bond of sympathy and love between her and her husband:

She brought the body in, laid it down on the bed, then went out to her husband. He had looked at her and murmured, Oh, is he worse, then? They had gone into the room together; she had pulled off the handkerchief tied over the face of the little child, and the two of them had gazed at the rigid little face silently and long.

- He has stretched a lot, she said.
 - When did he go? he asked
 - In the hospital, lying in my arms, before one came to look at him, she answered.

She felt his arm round her, pressing her tenderly.

- Dear Sue, he said, my poor dear Sue.

(pp. 10-11)

In comparison with this "scene" and others in the same tradition from the earlier plays (such as that in Act III of The Plough in which Nora Clitheroe pleads with her husband to leave the Nationalist troops and to return home with her), the death of Jannice as presented in the play is seen, in terms of language as well as in terms of incident and emotion, to be highly and deliberately stylised indeed:

(The DREAMER and the YOUNG WHORE again dance to the music of a flute and other instruments. The tune is now slow and mournful, and the DREAMER is almost carrying the YOUNG WHORE in his arms. They dance in this way for a few moments, then the head of the YOUNG WHORE falls limp, and the DREAMER lifts her in his arms, carries her to the foot of the slope, and lays her gently on the ground.)

YOUNG WHORE (almost in a whisper) I die, Dreamer, I die, and my soul is heavy with a great fear.

DREAMER (standing over her, gently) Fear nothing; God will find room for one scarlet blossom among His thousand white lilies.

(The BISHOP rises from his knees and goes over to where she is lying. He kneels again, and takes one of her hands in his)

YOUNG WHORE (staring at the BISHOP). Guide the hand hold into making the sign of the cross, that I may whisper my trust in the golden mercy of God.

(The BISHOP guides her hand as she makes the sign of the cross. She lies still and silent.

The DOWN-AND-OUTS come down centre, chanting...

We challenge life no more, no more, with our dead faith, or our dead hope;.....

DREAMER:

Way for the strong and the swift and the fearless:
 Life that is stirr'd with the fear of its life, let it die;....

.....

DREAMER (looking towards the BISHOP and the figure of the YOUNG WHORE) Hail and farewell, sweetheart; forever and forever, hail and farewell!

BISHOP (in low and grief-stricken tones) She died making the sign of the cross, she died making the sign of the cross!

(The DREAMER gazes for a moment at the YOUNG WHORE, then turns and begins to go slowly out. The music, sounding slow and soft, of the song he sang to her is heard; in the middle of the melody the gates begin to close slowly, coming together on the last few notes of the tune.)

(Scene IV pp 166-9)

(First Version of play)

It is not that the death-scene in the play is dramatically ineffective, indeed in performance it could be extremely effective, but it relies for effect upon rhetoric, the conflict of intellectual points of view, upon music and dance, and upon symbolism - that is upon obviously artificial language, form and technique - to achieve that effect. The earlier plays and the autobiographies, on the other hand, rely for effect basically upon the inherent human and emotional richness of their material.

It seems that the flexible prose and powerful "dramatic" spirit and potential of the autobiography both amazed and delighted O'Casey. And in contrast to his clear-cut approach to Within The Gates (with its "design of Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night," and its "geometrical and emotional" patterns - "the emotion of the living characters to be shown against their own patterns and the patterns of the Park", Rose and Crown p. 352) and his "'curse"' in having to set it up "'in fifty ways"', are his references in letters of 1931-9 to his contentment to allow the autobiography to take its "own" form. Moreover, the autobiography apparently not only "chose" its own manner and shape but chose a manner and a shape that the author himself was at a loss to put a name to.

In November 1931 he described "A Child is Born" as a "semi-biography".⁵¹ In a letter of 15th February, 1937 he was to refer to "Dreamschool" and "His Father's Dublin Funeral" (later chapters of I Knock at the Door) as parts of his "peculiar biography"⁵², in March of the same year he writes of his

51. Letter to Mrs. Charlotte F. Shaw. Letters Vol. I p. 441

52. Letter to Horace Reynolds. Letters Vol. I p. 649

"curious autobiography" ⁵³ and in May 1937 he calls Dream School

"autobiographical & unconventional" and comments "My autobiography'll be a curious thing, if I can get to the end of it".⁵⁴

In a letter dated 5th May 1937 he wrote very significantly

Unfortunately, an unconventional (*sic*, obviously a slip for conventional) biography doesn't appeal to me. I have often been asked to write my "reminiscences", but, alas! this I don't seem able to do. I find that anything I want to say about myself must take a colour & a form which seems to hunt all editors away from me ⁵⁵.

In February 1938 he informs his publisher that he is working on "a few fantastic pages of biography" ⁵⁶. In letters written later in the same year he rejects the prospective subtitle of the book - "Studies' in Autobiography" - as having "too much of a scholastic touch about it for me" ⁵⁷, refers to the autobiographical chapters as "reveries", ⁵⁸ and describes I Knock at the Door as a whole as being "written, I think, in an unusual way" ⁵⁹.

Indeed, so far was he from imposing any external shape or structure upon the autobiography that it was only in February 1938, more than six years after the writing of "A Child is Born" that he even begins to speak of the autobiography in terms of a "book" or "volume" at all. ⁶⁰ Apparently by this time the individual "sketches" which he had written had formed "themselves" into a book. And even when I Knock at the Door emerged as a complete volume, O'Casey after no little debate with his publisher, refused to impose even the rules of conventional punctuation upon its prose. Arguing against employing inverted commas to indicate direct speech, he wrote:

...in certain sketches, or part of sketches I must allow the rhythm or lilt to flow free. Besides, I think the practice of handcuffing all dialogue between inverted commas an abominable one. ⁶¹

53. Letter to George Jean Nathan, 8 March 1937 Letters Vol. I p.655

54. Letter to George Jean Nathan 4 May 1937 Letters Vol. I p. 667

55. Letter to Horace Reynolds Letters Vol. I p.667

56. Letter to Harold Macmillan Letters Vol. I. p.696

57. Letter to Harold Macmillan 21st June 1938 Letters Vol. I p.727

58. Letter to Horace Reynolds 28th June 1938 Letters Vol. 1 p.728

59. Letter to Horace Reynolds 3rd October 1938 Letters Vol. I p.744

60. Letter to George Jean Nathan, 14th February, 1938 Letters Vol. I p.703

61. Letter to Harold Macmillan, 21st June, 1938 Letters Vol. I p.728

Of the freedom of the volume from arbitrary artistic considerations

O'Casey wrote:

...And of another thing,....I am as positive as a human being can be: there is no posing in the book from one end to the other - that is "art" posing 62

Yet he was far from unaware of its merit as art. He was so dissatisfied with Within The Gates that he completely revised it, but there can be no doubt of his enthusiasm for the achievement of the first volume of autobiography. For in a letter to Brooks Atkinson in 1939 he wrote;

Remember saying some time ago that I should write nothing but works of art?

Well, since then I've written a lot of stuff that had nothing to do with Art; but a new book by me (dealing with my life up to twelve years of age - one of three, I hope), called "I Knock at the Door", is coming out in March, & I think it has something in common with a work of art. But has it? How do I know? I don't know; I simply feel it has; but I may be a helluva long way out in my reckoning. I feel you'll like it (again I don't know), & will say, "O'Casey has done something at last!" 63

Also in contrast with or in compensation for the nature of the writing and history of Within The Gates and I Knock at the Door is O'Casey's apparent enjoyment of writing the autobiography. This is seen from the fact that almost as soon as the final manuscript of I Knock at the Door was completed he was planning two more autobiographical volumes. And Mrs. O'Casey in her book Sean comments upon how shortly after her husband had begun work on the autobiography:

Sean, his book possessing him, would recall a lot about his early life; he had an acute memory that would evoke a scene in detail while he talked and I listened. 64

Also about the chapter of I Knock at the Door entitled "The Protestant Kid Thinks of the Reformation" O'Casey was himself to comment "I loved writing it".65

62. Letter to Brooks Atkinson, April 1939 Letters Vol. I p. 793

63. Letter to Brooks Atkinson, 19th January 1939 Letters Vol. I p.771

64. Eileen O'Casey: Sean p. 115 italics mine.

65. Letter to Brooks Atkinson April 1939 Letters Vol. I p. 793

If O'Casey did in fact enjoy writing the autobiographical chapters so much it seems strange that in 1931-3 he did not abandon the play to concentrate on writing the autobiographies. The answer seems to be that he always primarily regarded himself as a dramatist, and the task of a dramatist is to write plays. But also, it seems, that by providing a medium for freer artistic expression, and for his store of Irish material, the early chapters of I Knock at the Door made their own "negative" contribution to the writing of Within The Gates. Perhaps if they had not been available as outlets for the expression of his more meaningful personal experience, and as a respite from the heavily-imposed conventions of the play he would have become even more frustrated with the nature and form of Within The Gates and would have abandoned it.

Of course, very little of I Knock at the Door was actually written while O'Casey was working on Within The Gates, but those four chapters which were written in contrast with, or in compensation for, the play, were enough to establish the path which the volume as a whole was to follow. And because of this Within The Gates seems to have influenced, in its contrary course and nature, the course and nature of the entire volume.

But there is another important respect in which Within The Gates seems to have interacted with the nature and writing of I Knock at the Door, even after the play itself was completed. Indeed, this particular kind of interaction only began between the play and the autobiography after the play was finished, for it concerns the play's fortunes in production.

Within The Gates had a singularly unfortunate history with regard to its production prospects and its productions themselves - a history singularly unfortunate enough to warrant considerable space in the narrative of the autobiographies.

The author's original conception of Within The Gates as being produced in film-form was doomed to come to absolutely nothing, for in Rose and Crown O'Casey describes how, after an apparently propitious initial discussion about the play

between himself and the film-producer Alfred Hitchcock, "Sean...never heard from Hitchcock again" (p.353)

Within The Gates was now to be a play dependent on the live theatre for production. But more specifically, it was to be dependent upon the live commercial theatre for production.

The rejection of The Tassie by the Abbey Theatre Directors had led to a quarrel which had completely sundered O'Casey's links with that theatre, moreover, the very scale, scope and nature of Within The Gates itself were quite beyond the means of the Abbey Theatre and the possibilities of the Abbey company and stage - as O'Casey himself pointed out to Yeats, when Yeats actually wanted to produce the play at the Abbey in 1935:

Sean learned then that Yeats wanted the Abbey to do Within The Gates. He objected. He wouldn't refuse, but set out the difficulties of production by the Abbey company, and showed the poet that the Abbey stage would never accommodate the play's action. He suggested The Silver Tassie, a play far easier to put on the Abbey stage. (p.282)

O'Casey had already experienced the difficulties inherent in the production of a play on a West End commercial stage, for although The Silver Tassie did achieve an artistically successful production at the Apollo Theatre in 1929, its run lasted only two months, for the play failed to be a financial success.⁶⁶

Even C.B. Cochran, who had produced The Tassie decided regretfully that he could not produce Within The Gates "without financial loss"⁶⁷. And in Rose and Crown O'Casey describes the dilemma that now faced "Sean" as a writer of experimental plays:

Sean knew that the more he tried to put into a play, the less chance he'd have of a production in England, so he had to decide whether he would model a play so as to squeeze it towards triviality, or persist in experimental imagination, and suffer for it. On the other hand, if he did get a production of an experimental play, he would be forced to submit to a rag-and-tag one, one that would be cheapened so much that half the life would be gutted out of it. The English critics, by and large, would measure the play by its furtive, underhand performance, so giving

66. See O'Casey's letter to Gabriel Fallon 3rd December 1929 Letters Vol.I p.384

67. See letter from C.B. Cochran to O'Casey, 1st August 1933. Letters Vol. I p.460

the play no chance of a better and deserving production in the future. Not only that, but a furtive and fidgeting production in London echoed loudly in New York, which wrapped the play in a web of failure, encouraging the American managers to falter in having anything to do with it; while the English critics, immersed up to their buttocks in love for the tawdry and trivial, are only too ready to give an imaginative play a kick down rather than a hand up. (p.359)

"Sean" and O'Casey however, were determined to retain their artistic integrity at all costs. But all the while Within The Gates, to use O'Casey's own words, "lay there, embalmed in the book" (Rose and Crown p.356) And it seems as if the bleak outlook with regard to the production prospects of not only Within The Gates, but of any other future play he might write, must surely have led him more and more to put greater effort into, and to channel more and more of his dramatic imagination into, the writing of I Knock at the Door. The autobiography having already been inspired and moulded by his dramatic work, did after all, have something of an innate dramatic nature, yet no matter how "dramatic" or "experimental" it became it would never be dependent upon the whims of the commercial stage to give it life. Unlike a play it could never be said to be "embalmed in the book" since it was designed to achieve its finest expression within the pages of a book. O'Casey has written that "A good acting play that is not also good enough to be enjoyed in the study is not worth a dying tinker's damn."⁶⁸ But the prospect of having all his future plays consigned to "the study" rather than to the stage must have inclined him, by way of compensation, to write works, namely the autobiographies, which could use "the study" as their largest and ultimate show place. Moreover, when, eventually; an English production of Within The Gates was arranged O'Casey's disappointments over that production were so very bitter as to constitute in all probability, another force inclining him to the writing of the autobiographical prose form - a form in which he himself as author was at least master of all aspects of the presentation of the work and could present it entirely as he himself had envisaged it. Of this production of the play, which opened at The Royalty Theatre, London on the 7th February, 1934, O'Casey was to write in

68. Sean O'Casey: The Flying Wasp (London, Macmillan, 1937) p.94

So Sean, grubbing the infinite for a few faint pounds, was forced to risk a paltry production which brought to light all the darkness his poor heart had feared. After a struggle with Herbert Hughes, who wanted to torture simple tunes with elaborate musical decorations, Sean handed over the mystery of his playwriting to Norman McDermott, who reduced whatever lustiness there was in the play to an agitated and timid tinkle. An ugly woman was shooting an arrow into the sky. On the very first night of the production, Sean saw in the theatre's foyer the bunch of crepe hanging there, telling him and all who came that the play was dead. (p.359) 69

The fortunes of Within The Gates, however, began to improve when George Jean Nathan, drama critic and friend of O'Casey, himself helped to secure a production of the play on Broadway, and O'Casey himself was invited to New York, with all expenses paid, to advise at the rehearsals. A letter to George Jean Nathan reveals O'Casey's joy at the news and, in contrast, his severe disappointment over the London production:

I am getting a bit excited about the American production of "Within the Gates". I thought I should never come to life again after the production given here; but I have heard so much of what is to be done in New York that I feel like one new-risen from the grave. 70

O'Casey duly went to America, and the play opened at the National Theatre New York on October 22nd 1934. The chapter of Rose and Crown entitled "Within The Gates" describes the fate of the play in America and it seems as if, artistically, he was fairly satisfied with the New York production

...at the dress rehearsal, it broke out into an unsteady but glowing cascade of speech, movement, colour, and song. Sean was glad; let it succeed, let it fail; at least the play would justify its full and defiant appearance.

(p.418)

It was a beautiful production in every way, and any fault shown on the stage was in the play itself.

(p.421)

But even the rehearsals of this production had brought great personal anxiety for him.

These times are very harassing to all, but most so to a dramatist whose conscience ranges a little outside of himself and his own interest. He has to think (though he tries not to) of the actors who work so hard for weeks, and yet may walk about idle again, after performing for a

69. For a further account of O'Casey's serious conflicts of opinion with Norman MacDermott, the producer of Within The Gates see O'Casey's letter to Norman MacDermott 28 January 1934 Letters Vol. I pp. 490-1

70. Letter dated 21st July 1934 Letters Vol. I p.515

few nights, even, maybe, for one night only; and of him who furnishes the money for the play's production, however wealthy the man may be; but especially if the producer be one who has just managed to scrape enough dollars together to lift the play to the stage. Grey hairs grow fast during the rehearsal of a play, brazen with imagination and experiment, on the commercial, or any other kind of stage. And the finer the production the greater the anxiety, for, in a bad production, the dramatist is almost assured from the start that the play will be a failure. (pp. 417-8)

And he had also found need to speak to an imperious designer as to the relative importance of play and design. The quarrel was over the bishop's crucifix which, as the stage directions of the play instruct, should hang on the bishop's chest:

The designer angrily said he had so designed the symbol to hang between the legs, and there it was to hang, or he'd have nothing more to do with the production. Sean said the symbol would hang in the place where the script had placed it, but he was told that the design was more important than the play; Sean, responding to the angry face glaring at him said, The play was the living body and soul and the clothes that covered them while the designing added coloured buttons, braid on the sleeves, and, maybe, epaulettes on the shoulders; but however important and lovely these things might be, and often were, without the play they couldn't be summoned even into existence. The script says the symbol is to hang on the Bishop's breast, and there it will lie till the play comes off; and, in a high rage, the designer ran from the theatre, and they saw him no more. (p.418)

The issue at stake was a comparatively small one in the context of the whole production, but it must have brought home to the author yet again the difficulties inherent in the dramatist's forced reliance upon the judgment and aid of others in matters of stage production. And although it is the vocation of a playwright to write plays and to see them performed, it must, nevertheless, have been something of a comfort to him, after his disillusionment with the live theatre, to create in the autobiographies scenes, characters and effects that needed no middle man to further interpret or misinterpret them, and that, once written remained unchanged and constant - unlike the ephemeral dramatic production.

But his final disappointment over Within The Gates was yet to come, and it was all the more bitter since the play had at last achieved a fitting

artistic production. After a run of 101 performances the play closed in New York but was to be taken on a tour of thirteen cities, beginning in Boston. O'Casey had already left for home as his wife was expecting their second child, and it was in London that he received the news that clerical opposition to the play had caused the production to be banned in Boston and that the tour was to be cancelled.

In Rose and Crown O'Casey quotes from, and heatedly replies to, this clerical criticism of the play. The tone and themes of the criticism are typified by these sentiments of the Rev. Terence Connelly, S.J.:

The whole play is drenched with sex. The love song in the play is but a lyric of lust and a symbol of death. O'Casey has written on immoral subjects frequently in the past, but in art, as in life, the end does not justify the means....
(quoted in Rose and Crown p. 422)

Even by turning his attention to the writing of autobiography O'Casey could not quite escape clerical censorship, for I Knock at the Door was itself banned in Ireland in May 1939, but all in all it is small wonder that after O'Casey's many harsh and bitter experiences concerning the productions of Within the Gates in 1934-5 the years immediately following should constitute something of a hiatus in his dramatic career as such, and should see him turning more and more towards the autobiographical prose form as an outlet for his dramatic and creative talents.

And so it seems that I Knock at the Door the first volume of O'Casey's autobiography was a work inspired in a dramatic context - the author's writing of and thoughts upon his earlier plays. It was brought into being in a dramatic context - to fill certain voids left in O'Casey's creative life because of new and arbitrary nature of Within The Gates. It had its character and form moulded in a dramatic context - by carrying on the traditions of the "pre-autobiography" plays and interacting with, and compensating for and the character and form of Within The Gates. And it was assured of its author's continued interest in its actual composition, because of his disillusionment over the fate of Within The Gates in production in the commercial theatre.

Chapter Eight

A Pound on Demand and The End of the Beginning

The connection between the writing and nature of the autobiography and the two one-act plays A Pound on Demand and The End of the Beginning - which were written in 1932¹, and thus during a period when O'Casey was engaged on writing both Within the Gates and I Knock at the Door - is slight and of little significance for its own sake. But it does, in the context of tracing the interaction between the autobiographies and the plays of O'Casey's middle period, seem to confirm certain conclusions which have been drawn as to the interaction by contraries between Within the Gates and I Knock at the Door. And it also throws into relief the development of a more positive kind of interaction between play and autobiography which seems to take place in connection with The Star Turns Red.

Both of the one-act plays are, though perhaps slight in artistic "status", nevertheless, richly comic and technically brilliant.

The "plot" of A Pound on Demand, revolves around the endeavours of two drunken Irishmen to complete a form for the

¹ In a letter of July 1932 (date supplied by Editor of Letters) to J.R. Storey, an Inspector of Taxes, O'Casey, enclosing £5 towards the debt of £236 which he owed in income tax, mentions that:

I have just finished a little one-act play, which I hope to see on the Halls; this may make things a little easier, and allow me to get down that £236 a little lower.

In an editorial note Dr. Krause identifies this "little one-act play" as A Pound on Demand (Letters Vol I p445).

The End of the Beginning was presumably written shortly afterwards, since Mrs. O'Casey referring in her book Sean to the writing of A Pound on Demand simply says:

"Sean also wrote The End of the Beginning", Sean (p 118). Both plays were written at the request of Arthur Sinclair (see below).

They were first published as "Falls in an Idle Wind" in Wind-falls (1934), and both later appeared in Vol II of the Collected Plays.

withdrawal of one pound from the Post Office Savings Bank:

JERRY Now you've only just to gather the pen into your mit 'n slap down the old name on to the form.

(JERRY spreads the form on the ledge, gets a quill pen and puts it into SAMMY's hand, who lets it fall to the floor.)

JERRY (with irritation, as he picks it up, and places it again in SAMMY's hand.) Try to keep a grip on it, man, 'n don't be spillin' it all over the place, (SAMMY grips it like a sword.) Aw, not that way. Don't go to the opposite extreme. (Arranging pen) Nice 'n lightly between the finger 'n thumb. That way, see? (Speaking over to the GIRL.) He's not used to this kind of thing, miss, but he'll be all right in a minute.

SAMMY (standing still and looking vacantly at the wall) Wanna pound on demand. (Windfalls ppl 63-4).

And the "plot" of The End of the Beginning presents the series of domestic calamities which ensues when Darry Berrill - "About fifty-five; stocky, obstinate, with a pretty big belly." - decides to show his wife Lizzie "how the work of a house is done" (Windfalls p 139). Darry is "helped" in his efforts by his "very nearsighted" friend Barry Derrill, and the climax of the "action" occurs when the men's ingenious plan for preventing the heifer from straying from the bank at the back of the house results in Darry and a armchair disappearing up the chimney, and then coming down with a bump. (Windfalls pp 170-1).

It would be highly tempting to assume that these two sketches, rich as they are in character, incident and humour, and possessing a strongly Irish quality - Jerry and Sammy speak in the Dublin idiom of O'Casey's early plays, and The End of the Beginning is clearly set in an Irish farmhouse - were written in reaction to the artistic austerity and English setting of Within the Gates, and were directly inspired too by the writing and nature of the autobiography, which itself contrasts with Within the Gates, and which possesses qualities similar to their own. But such an as-

assumption would, it seems, be a rash one, for the writing and nature of A Pound on Demand and The End of the Beginning were actually determined by a process even more arbitrary than the artistic decisions which governed the writing and nature of Within the Gates. In fact the sketches were virtually commissioned from O'Casey at a time when he desperately needed the money which they might bring in. Mrs. O'Casey recalls:

Our funds were low. Sean was beginning to be depressed;... Hope flickered momentarily when Arthur Sinclair, managing now for the Irish Players, arrived to ask Sean for a brief one-act play, with not more than four characters, that might be done on the music-halls; it was increasingly hard to get work for the full Irish company. Sean responded with A Pound on Demand,...²

And O'Casey himself described The End of the Beginning as being "written for Sinclair - who pestered me into doing it when he was out of work - and then didn't do anything with it".³

If the actual writing of the plays was done at the request of a friend rather than spontaneously from the author's own free choice, so too the nature of the sketches was fairly rigidly laid down by the nature of the request. Obviously plays suitable for performance by Irish actors in the music-hall would trade upon Irish comic characterisation, or even caricature, and upon farcical incident. Such plays would also, by necessity have to be short, and Sinclair added the additional stipulation that they contain "not more than four characters". Thus O'Casey was, in connection with the two sketches, given a ready-made dramatic blue-print which, without any exercise of artistic judgement on his part, was already as far away from the plan and nature of Within The Gates as it was possible to be.

² Sean, Eileen O'Casey, p117.

³ Letter to C.B. Cochran, 7 August 1933 Letters Vol I p462.

However, within the limits that it must be potentially comic and capable of being given an Irish flavour, O'Casey could have something of a free hand in choosing the actual material of the sketches. And it is his choice of material for A Pound on Demand and for The End of the Beginning which seems to confirm certain characteristics of the relationship and interaction between his plays and the autobiographies, which have been suggested in connection with Within the Gates and I Knock at the Door. The first of these characteristics concerns the paucity of the contribution which these plays made to the autobiographies.

The only contribution which the two sketches make in any way to the material of the volumes of autobiography which were written after them is a minor, although seemingly authentic, one. In The End of the Beginning Lizzie Berrill in objecting to the outrageous behaviour of Alice Lanigan, whom Darry Berrill admires, describes her as:

The Alice Lanigan that's on the margin of fifty, 'n assembles herself together as if she was a girl in her teens, jutting out her bust when she's coming in, 'n jutting out her behind when she's going out, like the Lady of Shalott, to catch the men ... (Windfalls p140)

And in Pictures in the Hallway, written several years later⁴, Johnny experiences a severe reprimand from his employer, not to mention a vicious response from the lady in question, when he refers to Bidy - "a big-bodied, big-headed, and big-footed woman who had a face like an Aunt Sally", and who came "with her donkey and cart to take away the damaged goods" from the firm of Hyndin and Leadem (p 260) - as "The Lady of Shalott". It seems that Bidy and Johnny's employer, Anthony Dovergull, have the same unfavourable opinion of that title as does Lizzie Berrill, but the relationship between the play and the autobiography is really only a matter of verbal repetition,

⁴ Pictures in the Hallway was written in 1939-41 for evidence of these dates see below.

for that incident in Pictures in the Hallway which centres on the phrase is very much more extensive than the incident in the play:

- Farewell, called out Johnny, waving his hand carelessly, as the donkey started, farewell sweet Lady o' Shalott!
- Jasus! She jerked her donkey to a sudden standstill, splashed back fiercely through the slimy - puddled lane to where Johnny was about to close the gate, made a slash at him with her stick, that, had it got home, would have broken an ear in two!
- Yeh, yeh gonteecl, gaunty gutthersnipe! she yelled, out of a hoarse scream, I'll flatten your grinny bake, an' knock th' plume out a yer impudence, if you dare again to murmur, let alone to shout afther a decent female th' name of some evil woman of th' long ago!.... Anthony turned his frosty eye to stare at Johnny; silently he stared at him for a full twenty seconds.
- What did you say to anger the woman? he asked. Come, come, what low-minded gibe did you fling at the woman? he added, as Johnny, holding down his head, hesitated.
- I only said something about the Lady of Shalott, said Johnny surlily.
- Well, we don't want any reference to ladies of this or that place here, he said. (Pictures in the Hallway pp 266-7).

The second characteristic shared by Within the Gates and the two one-act plays in their respective relationships with the autobiographies concerns a weakness in the interaction between the material of these plays and the part of I Knock at the Door which was being written simultaneously with them.

For if these plays do not contribute much to the material of the volumes of autobiography written subsequently to them, neither do they derive much material, or positive inspiration for material, from the autobiography which was being worked on at the same time as themselves.

Indeed the material of A Pound on Lemand and The End of the Beginning has less connection with the early chapters of I Knock at the Door than does Within the Gates, and this despite the fact that the two one-act plays, unlike Within the Gates, share the Irish setting of the autobiography. There does, at least, seem to be some exchange of material between

Within the Gates and the early chapters of I Knock at the Door, but A Pound on Demand and The End of the Beginning seem to derive nothing from the autobiography.

Apparently "A Pound on Demand" and a short story of the same title which O'Casey also wrote, were firmly based on a Dublin anecdote once told to him by Gabriel Fallon. A letter written to Gabriel Fallon by O'Casey makes the origins of the play and story clear.

'member the tale of the "Pound on Demand?"
 You told it to me four, five, six or seven golden years ago. Well I've written a short story to it, and will send it to a Magazine for consideration. You often told me to use it, and at last I've done so. Now the point is this:
 Would you be willing to take 10% on whatever I may get on the yarn?
 If so, write and say so.
 I have also written a one acter round it, and again ask you if you would take ten per cent of each fee received, should the thing ever be produced? ...⁵

And an article sent by O'Casey to the Irish Times, in reply to an unfavourable review of The End of the Beginning, makes equally explicit the origins of the material of that play too.

The "Shoddy material of the play" is derived from an old and honoured folk-tale. Long years ago I bought "News from Nowhere," by William Morris, the classic craftsman and poet, and there in the preface to this early edition was a reference to this honourable tale, man and cow at either end of the rope, and all. Some time after I bought a well-worn book of Norse folk tales in a second-hand bookshop kept by a Michael Hickey, of Bachelor's Walk, and there in the middle of it was the old story mentioned by William Morris - man and cow at either end of the rope, and all. Faber and Faber of London, publish the story under the name of "Gone is Gone" as a folk - tale from Bohemia. But strangest of all, the learned dramatic critic ...

⁵ Letter to Gabriel Fallon, 24 September 1933 Letters Vol I pp 464-5. See also Gabriel Fallon: Sean O'Casey The Man I Knew pp 45-6 for Fallon's account of how he told the original anecdote to O'Casey, and of how the anecdote formed the basis for A Pound on Demand.

will find the story written in Irish - and in fine and vigorous Irish, too, if I am any kind of a judge - in An Dailc Seo 'Goinne-ne, by "An Seosamh," cow and man at either end of the rope, and all! Each of the stories differs a little in details but the ~~clowning~~ broad and genuine, is all there, and the Irish story is blessed by no less than Seosamh Laoide, member of the Royal Irish Academy.⁶

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And Sunset and Evening Star too makes reference to The End of the Beginning being "almost all founded on a folk-tale well known over a great part of Europe" (p652).

The fact that in A Pound on Demand and The End of the Beginning O'Casey has chosen to use material which is not only unrelated in any way to I Knock at the Door, but is also totally outside O'Casey's personal significant experience as recorded in the autobiographies as a whole, suggests that in these two plays, as in the much more important play, Within the Gates, the author was concerned with form and technique rather than with content-albeit that the actual form and technique of the two music-hall farces differs so widely from those of the major play. Moreover, his use of material from "external" literary sources for A Pound on Demand and The End of the Beginning may even suggest that, to some extent, his stock of personal experience which could provide material suitable for plays was running low.

That stock seems to be gradually replenished however, when as the writing I Knock at the Door progresses, O'Casey remembers more and more of his past experiences of life in Ireland, and as, with the writing of The Star Turns Red, he begins to allow the actual material and inspiration of the autobiography to spill over a little more freely into the plays.

⁶ Letter to The Irish Times published 23rd Feb. 1937. Reprinted in Letters Vol I pp 651-2, quotation from p651. The initial review of the play, to which O'Casey's letter was a reply, was published in The Irish Times on the occasion of the Abbey's production of The End of the Beginning in February 1937.

I Knock at the Door - The Star Turns Red

The impetus given to the writing of autobiographical prose as a result of O'Casey's disillusionment with the productions of Within The Gates, and thus with the theatre as a whole, seems to have been quite substantial. His progress with the writing of the autobiography after the play's first production early in 1934 is well documented. And well documented too is his seeming lack of inclination, and certainly his failure, for several years after the completion and productions of Within The Gates to begin work on a new play. And certainly it must seem as if the enthusiasm for continuing with the autobiography and the lack of enthusiasm for commencing a new play go hand in hand.

Within The Gates was first produced, disastrously as O'Casey thought, in February 1934. By July 1934 he had certainly completed "A Protestant Kid Thinks of the Reformation" (later to form a chapter in I Knock at the Door) for it was published in the American Spectator for that month. On his return to England in December 1934, after helping with the production of the play in New York, he took up residence in 49, Overstrand Mansions, Battersea, which his wife had prepared as the new family home during his absence. The O'Casey's were to live there until September 1938, and of this period of 1935-38 Mrs. O'Casey was to write:

All said, life in Overstrand Mansions was easy. Sean made rapid progress with I Knock at the Door and talked to me frequently of his Dublin life, his mother and sister and his friends. 1

1 Eileen O'Casey, Sean p. 147

Mrs. O'Casey, in her book, also describes the family holiday spent in Penmaenmawr, North Wales in the summer of 1935 and, in connection with O'Casey's appreciation of the place and of the house in which they stayed, she writes:

Sean liked it so much that, though he had left his typewriter behind, he managed to make copious notes for the final part of I Knock at the Door. 2

This comment is extremely interesting since there is evidence from another source that at precisely this time he was not working upon a play and that, though aware that he ought to begin a new play soon, was possessed of little inspiration for the task. For in a letter which is headed by the address of his landlady in Penmaenmawr, North Wales, and which is supplied by the Editor of the letters with a date of September 1935, O'Casey himself wrote to George Jean Nathan:

I am, with wife and the two children, down in Wales wedged tightly in between sea and mountain and, God forgive me, terribly interested in the Welsh Language, first cousin to my own Irish. It's as much as I can do to keep myself from trying to learn it, but it behooves me as an honest man to put no further burdens on my back. Besides, I have a new play to write; but what it is to be about, God only knows! 3

It seems at this point in O'Casey's writing career the autobiography, while absorbing the dramatic talents and imagination of the author, had not yet begun to lead him back to the drama. It was not, as yet, suggesting itself to him as a source of inspiration for, or even as a source of material for, new plays.

Eight more months passed and he had still not begun a new play.

In May 1936 he wrote to George Jean Nathan:

I haven't yet started on a new play. I have felt tired for a long time, and no impulse came for a beginning; but I suppose, I shall set down a thought or an idea soon. The Theatre is worse

2. ibid p. 157

3. Letters Vol. I pp 580-1

But if the autobiography was continuing to profit from O'Casey's disillusionment with the theatre, in so far as the autobiographical chapters were giving expression to creative imagination and dramatic sense which might otherwise have gone into a play, O'Casey was finding in another branch of writing, more direct expression for his disgust with the contemporary commercially-orientated theatrical scene, and with its devotees and adherents. In the above letter to George Jean Nathan, O'Casey after stating that he is still not writing a play, and after giving his succinct view on the state of the English theatre, continues:

5

The Editor of an advanced paper came to see me and begged me to write a few articles on the Theatre. Reluctantly, I consented. I wrote gaily about an English National Theatre, and all applauded. Then came the first of a few articles called "Coward Codology" and bang! the shutters were put up at once!

But with or without encouragement from editors, O'Casey had continued to write his scathing articles on the contemporary theatrical scene and soon formed a plan to publish them in book-form. By the end of May 1936 he was again writing to George Jean Nathan to tell him:

I have opened out on critics here (at the request of "Time & Tide", who, I think are sorry now they asked me) and maybe they'll go into book form later on under the ensign of "The Flying Wasp" 6

And in March 1937 The Flying Wasp, a collection of essays and articles on the theatre, was published - despite some earlier misgivings on the part of Macmillans, the Publishers. Macmillans were apparently alarmed at the forthrightness, even aggressiveness of many of the

4 Letter of May 1936 (date supplied by Editor) Letters Vol. I pp 623-4
 5 Time and Tide
 6 Letter of May 30 1936 Letters Vol. I p 630

articles and at O'Casey's naming of, and specific attacks upon, theatrical arch-enemies of his, such as James Agate, the dramatic critic, and Noel Coward. 7

Meanwhile in December 1936, O'Casey, still with seemingly no inclination to start a new play, and very much aware of the passage of time, was writing to Gabriel Fallon:

My dear Gaby, when you say that the pen is a heavy thing to lift, who are you tellin'? Look at me: years and years ago since I wrote 'Within the Gates', and what have I done since? A few oul' scrawls of would-be criticism that aren't worth a tinker's damn. 8

But O'Casey had been at work on the autobiography also, and early in 1937 his letters make mention by name of several chapters which were subsequently to be included in I Knock at the Door. Presumably these chapters, now emerging in their final form, were the outcome of the "copious notes for the final part of I Knock at the Door" which Mrs. O'Casey described O'Casey as making in Wales in the summer of 1935. The chapters "Dreamschool" and "His Father's Dublin Funeral" (which were, respectively, to form the thirteenth and sixth chapters of the first autobiography, - the title of "His Father's Dublin Funeral" being amended slightly to "His Father's Funeral") had been completed by 15th February 1937 for O'Casey refers to them in a letter of that date to Horace Reynolds. Indeed his mode of referring to them implies that they had been written for some time before then:

I see by an American clipping that Lady Rhonda is in the USA trying to evoke interest in Time & Tide, so, perhaps, things are not too well with the paper. I may try them again with "Dreamschool", a part of my peculiar biography - "His Father's

7 See Eileen O'Casey, Sean p.153, and also O'Casey's letter to Harold Macmillan, 25th September 1936. Letters Vol I pp 637-8

8 Letters Vol. I p 644

Completed before O'Casey so much as mentions that he is contemplating the writing of a particular play, "His Father's Funeral" seems to be very much of a product of the dramatic talents of the author. And it seems to typify the parts of the autobiography which were written, as it were, in lieu of a play, at this point in his career.

"His Father's Funeral" consists of a series of sharply visualised contrasting "scenes", each using dialogue as a prime means of presentation of character, emotion, even humour; and as a means of providing insight into human reactions to death.

The chapter begins with a prose description setting the "scene" outside the house of the dead man as "Johnny watched the cabs coming into the street, eager to pick up those who were going to his father's funeral..." (p 35). There is a general air of expectancy, even of awed excitement, as the gaily-coloured cabs arrive and line up in the street, as friends and neighbours gather, and as the magnificently sombre hearse itself arrives and takes pride of place right outside the house.

...There was a low murmur as the hearse, like a huge, black, decorated gothic casket, drawn by four black horses, each with a black plume on its head, came slowly trotting up the street in state, and sidled with dignity into a space in front of the waiting cabs. The driver of the hearse and his assistant, wearing big, black, tall hats, and long, heavy, blue silver-buttoned coats, climbed quietly down from their high-up seats, and hovered about near the door, waiting for the call to come in and nail the coffin down. (pp 35-6)

The scene being set, as it were, by an opening stage direction, the action begins, and minor but richly-drawn characters in the drama take the stage. The opening dialogue is calculated at once to arouse interest by its irreverent contrast with the ostensible solemnity and

A cab suddenly swept round the corner, came at a rapid trot up to the street, pulled up in a line parallel with the hearse; and the driver, jumping down, joined two other drivers who stood smoking and leaning and talking together against the wall near the window of the house. The new comer took off a hard bowler hat and wiped his forehead.

- The belly-band broke on the way, he said, an' be the time I put a stitch of twine in it, I thought he'd be planted, an' all the prayers said.

One of the other two drivers took a pipe from his mouth, spat on the path in front of him, and answered, Plenty of time, Jim - he hasn't been screwed down yet. Curious how long people take to say goodbye to a dead man.

...
- Me an' Jack, said the driver who had come in a hurry, had a great night yesterday. After dockin' t' animals, we opened with a couple o' pints in Demsey's, then we had three more in the Bunch o' Grapes, slung another five into us in Hennessey's, an' ended with the last o'three more in The Royal Oak as the shutters were comin' down at the tick of eleven o'clock. (p 36)

The dialogue between the three cab-drivers is interrupted when Johnny, full of childish importance at being connected so closely with the funeral, is dared by Connor, a school-friend, to touch one of the horses standing in front of the hearse. He does so, making the horse kick violent and shake the hearse. One of the cab-drivers, having reprimanded the shame-faced Johnny in no uncertain terms, the dialogue proceeds as before with a vigour and a humorous, almost mock-heroic, quality, entirely characteristic of dialogue in the pre-autobiography plays:

- Fifteen pints between eight and eleven, said the driver wearing the bowler hat, I wouldn't ask anything better, even on the night of me first daughter's weddin'. We got home, he went on, we got home, but it took two hours to do it, where it should ha' taken only twenty minutes: two solid hours o'mighty sthrivin', but we done it in the end.

- They ought to have the old man warmly folded up be this, said the man wearing the yellow muffler, didderay didderree, didderum.

- The both of us were rotto, went on the driver wearing the bowler hat, the two of us strugglin' together, him helpin' me an' me helpin' him, whenever help was needed. We sung, The Heart Bowed Down all the way home, fall an' up again, fall an' up again; I'd call it a red-letter night, even after a day of thinkin'.

- Last week was a rotten one with me, said the third driver, a few roll-an'-tea-for-lunch laddies, who are always lookin' for the return of their fare in the change. (p 37)

The attention of the chapter again reverts to Johnny for an exchange of dialogue which is both richly "dramatic" and richly human, for it possess the quality of being able to rely almost solely upon the "spoken" words of dialogue to convey emotions such as Connor's childish jealousy, and Johnny's childish pride, and it conveys these feelings with an exactness and with a truth to human nature that is touching as well as humorous.

Johnny felt Connor beside him again, and whispering at him over his shoulder.

- Mother says, he whispered, that in a week or so you won't be so cocky.

- You're not comin', anyway, answered Johnny, for I heard me mother saying that she hoped the Connors wouldn't thry to shove their noses in at the funeral.

- Yah, sneered Connor, you're shapin'. Just because your father's dead you think you're big in your black suit, but me mother says it isn't new at all, but only dyed.

Johnny turned slantwise, looked at Connor in the eye, and murmured, If it wasn't for me father bein' dead, I'd go round the lane with you, an' break your snot. (p 37)

Another entirely human, if again, somewhat undignified, dialogue takes place as Johnny, screaming and struggling in protest, is hauled inside the house to kiss the body of his father, before the lid of the coffin is nailed down. But suddenly, as Johnny is taken to his mother, who is standing beside her husband's coffin, the mood and tone of the chapter changes. The ribaldry and irreverence of the cab-drivers' conversation, the comical and entirely natural childish pretensions and preoccupations of Johnny and Connor, and Johnny's natural, voluble horror at being asked to kiss a dead man, are thrown into sharp relief by, and have been but a preparation for, the expression of the intense

grief of Mrs. Casside, and the expression of her instinctive understanding of the feelings of her small son. And this small "scene" inside the house, a scene which forms the centre-piece of the chapter as a whole is again conveyed almost entirely in terms of dialogue. Johnny is being pulled into the house by the woman sent to bring him in:

- Let me go, let me go, screamed Johnny, kicking viciously at the woman's legs, as she dragged him towards the house. I won't go, I don't want to kiss him.
 - Your mother'll have a handful in you when you grow up, me boy, she said, as she gathered him forcibly into the house in her arms.
- She held him tightly in the midst of the crowd in the room waiting for the coffin to be screwed down. His mother turned round when he began to scream again, came over, and caught his hand in hers.
- Let him down, let him down, Mrs. Saunders, she said to the woman. Then she bent down over him, putting her arm round his trembling body and kissing and kissing him, she murmured, There, there, hush, nothing is going to happen to you. He circled her with his arms, pressed his face into her skirts, and she felt his fingers cleaving through her skirt to the flesh of her thighs.
 - I couldn't, I couldn't, he sobbed, Don't ask me, mother, don't ask me to kiss him, I'm frightened to kiss a dead man. He felt a gentle, sympathetic pressure of an arm around him, and softened his sobbing.
 - No one'll ask you to do it, she said, I'll kiss him goodbye for you myself. Just touch the side of the coffin with the tip of your finger.
- She gently drew out his arm, and he shuddered deeply when he felt the tip of his finger touching the shiny cold side of the coffin.
- That's the brave little son, she murmured; and now I'll give your father a last kiss from his little boy.
- She bent down and kissed the thing in the coffin, and he heard her say in a steady whisper, Goodbye my Michael, my love goes with you, down to the grave, and up with you to God. She stepped back, and he felt her body shaking. He looked up and saw her lips quivering in a curious way, as she said quietly to the waiting hearsemen, you may put the lid down on the top of him now. (pp 38-9)

The second part of the chapter, which describes the journey to the cemetery and the funeral service itself, has only one lengthy passage of dialogue - that which takes place between the Casside family inside the mourning coach and which illustrates, again almost solely by means

of the "spoken" word, the differences / the temperaments of the members of the family. This small exchange, for example, without any explicit comment by the author, is extremely revealing as to the contrast between Ella and her mother.

Johnny, hedged in between his sister and brothers, edged towards the window, but his sister pulled him back as he was trying to let the window down.

- Sit easy, can't you? she said, you can't go looking at things out of the window at your father's funeral! Keep quiet with those feet of yours, or you'll pull the dress off me.

- Let him come over here, said his mother, and he can keep quiet and look out of the window at the same time (p. 40)

The "scene" in the grave-yard itself has little dialogue other than the words of the actual funeral service, but it possesses, nevertheless, a "dramatic" quality in the power and clarity with which the scene is envisaged and presented. There is emphasis too upon the interplay of character, for the hypocrisy of the clergyman - who rapidly utters the conventional words of comfort, while thinking all the while of the tea and warm fire waiting for him at home - contrasts starkly with the genuine grief of the widow, as does also the apparent unconcern of Ella and Johnny's older brothers. These contrasts prepare for the tableau-like effect which closes and forms the climax of this "scene" and the chapter as a whole - the simple but profoundly moving visual image of a woman, silently and with the utmost care, arranging flowers on her husband's grave, while her small son stands by:

Heavily, for his feet felt puffed and softly numb with the damp that had oozed through the thin soles of his boots, stifly, because his joints had tightened with the cold, the clergyman picked his path through the graves, crossed the main avenue, and dived into the vestry. As his mother lingered by the grave arranging the flowers that had been hastily placed there, Johnny saw him come out of the vestry, swinging a little leather case in his right hand, and hurry away till the trees hid him from view.

Ella touched her mother's arm, and said, you just come along now, Ma, and try to keep your pecker up; but her mother

went on silently arranging the flowers on the grave, so Ella stole away to join her brothers strolling along slowly towards the main avenue.

For a long time Johnny waited and waited, till his mother turned away from the grave, and he saw that tears were streaming down her face. He crept up closer and closer to her as they slowly moved away, caught her hand in his and pressed and pressed and pressed it in a dead silence broken only by a pigeon's coo-coooo and the cold swish-swish of branches bending as a stronger breeze went sweeping by. . (p. 46)

Mrs. Casside's silence is now as eloquent as her previous few and simple, but tender and dignified, words over the coffin had been - and is seemingly just as natural. The dramatist in O'Casey knows precisely when and how to use words, or words and action, or action and silence to convey a precise dramatic effect. "His Father's Funeral" reaches its "dramatic" climax in an almost palpable silence broken only by mournful bird-song and the sound of the wind - a silence so "dramatic" that it can seemingly only be ended by the falling of a stage-curtain.

After "His Father's Funeral" and "Dreamschool", the next part of the autobiography to be written was, it seems, the chapter which was later to be called "A Child of God", and which was to form the fifteenth chapter of I Knock at the Door. In a letter of 19th February 1937 O'Casey, referring to this chapter, writes:

I am doing a little with my "Autobiography". Have just finished a chapter on "Sunday - School & Church", ending - not beginning - with the text, "and God said let there be light and there was light" 10

It is in a letter dated 8th March 1937 to George Jean Nathan - a letter in which he also describes himself as 'now and again, writing a "curious autobiography, "' - that O'Casey first makes mention of positive plans for a new play:

I haven't started a new play yet. I am a little tired of all the rows that my plays caused. I haven't written one yet that didn't create a blaze... and I really hate quarrelling although I like an argument as well as the next one. I am thinking about a play to be called "The Star Turns Red" - Star of Bethlehem, that is but amn't sure that I'll go on with it, for it would sure cause another bloody big row! 11

It seems significant that O'Casey was, on the evidence of this letter, working on chapters of the autobiography at the time when he began to think about The Star Turns Red, for it does suggest that something in the writing of the autobiography might have inspired him directly or indirectly, or might have contributed in some way, to the idea of, and writing of, this play.

The first reference to any actual work having been done on The Star occurs in a letter of 5 May 1937, in which O'Casey writes:

Madden (O'Casey's American Agent) was, I fear, a little premature about the play. I didn't think he'd hear about it. I started one to be called "The Star Turns Red" & have written a song for a "Leader" & his men, called "In the Morning Early" one verse going like this:

Leader: What shall we do with the Bishop prating,
 Bishop prating,
 Slyly stating
 God's love for the workers' patient waiting
 In the morning early?

The workers: Advance on him with the Red Flag o'er us
 Tearing down all the
 Things that tore us;
 We've a world to win on all before us
 In the morning early! & so on. 12

And in this letter too O'Casey refers to several chapters of his autobiography, and mentions that he currently is working upon one of them:

11 Letters Vol. I p 655

12 Letter to Horace Reynolds, Letters Vol. I p 668
 The song referred to in the letter is not in the final version of the play (Collected Plays Vol. II) although a song of sentiments generally similar to those expressed in the second verse is sung by the "Leader" and the "Rest" (of the workers) at the end of Act III (pp 326-8).

... I'm glad you like "Dreamschool", ... I have written quite a lot in this line about myself: Father's Wake; His Father's Dublin Funeral; Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven (i. e. A Child of God); Dream Review - a sketch of a military Review that used to be held in Dublin's Phoenix Park on the "24th May the Queens Birthday", at which I am still working. 13

But whatever, if any, inspiration O'Casey found in the autobiography for the writing of The Star Turns Red, the idea for the play could not have arisen totally out of the writing of the autobiography. Almost fifteen years earlier, in October 1922, at a time when he was working on The Shadow of a Gunman, O'Casey wrote a letter in which he described more than the germ of the idea of The Star Turns Red. Writing to Lennox Robinson of the Abbey Theatre, and expressing his disappointment that the Theatre has rejected his play The Crimson in the Tri-Colour (no longer extant) he refers to a specific point in the Abbey's criticism of the play:

The reader adversely criticises the fact that an action is performed for a man that never appears on stage. I am glad this is mentioned, for I was thinking of writing a play around Jim Larkin - The Red Star - in which he would never appear though responsible for all the action. 14

And though the projected play entitled The Red Star was not to materialise at that time, the idea of it remained in the author's mind for at least two years, for on the 1st November 1925 (not long after the completion of The Plough) he wrote to Lady Gregory:

I happened to mention to a German Labour comrade, whom I met in the Abbey, that I was thinking of writing in the future a Labour play to be called "The Red Star". Since then I have received appeals from Leningrad & Moscow to let them know when the play is to be commenced & when finished & to send on the work to them scene by scene & act by act so as to avoid all possible delay in production! Well, comrades

13 ibid pp 667-8

14 Letter dated 9th October 1922 Letters Vol. I p 105

and all as they are, they will have to wait till the proper time may come for the new birth. 15

In the mid-1930's after the writing and productions of Within The Gates several factors, still setting aside the influence of the writing of the autobiography, do seem to have arisen which individually, or more probably, conjointly, could have prepared the way for, and suggested that the time was ripe for, that long delayed "new birth" of "The Red Star".

In The New Statesman and Nation of 9th February 1935, O'Casey¹⁶ in an article entitled "The Thing That Counts" reviews Seven Plays a new edition of works by Ernst Toller. Commenting on the title of Toller's book he describes it as "a holy number, and in many ways a holy book" and goes on to give his opinion that :

Of the seven plays, Masses and Men and The Machine Wreckers are the best, I think, but each has something to say, and all have in them that fierce outcry against the world's woe that is the strongest and shrillest note in every song that Toller has to sing.

... Almost all the plays cry out against and cry in screams what Toller thinks to be an inadequate social system for the working-class, and who to-day cannot see the present system will allow few souls to go back clean to God. 17

The book Seven Plays was not, of course, O'Casey's first introduction to the work of Toller, and before he left Dublin he had seen Masses and Men presented at the Abbey Theatre by the Dublin Drama League. 18 But the re-reading of the Toller plays for the review in 1935 might possibly have reminded him of his earlier plans for his own "Labour Play". The influence of Masses and Men upon The Star must

15 Letters Vol. I, p. 155

16 The review is reprinted in Letters Vol. I pp 537-9 The first part of the article gives O'Casey's extremely unfavourable opinions on the play Love on the Dole by Ronald Gow and Walter Greenwood.

17 Ibid p. 539

18 See Gabriel Fallon, Sean O'Casey, The Man I Knew, pp.47-8

not, however, be exaggerated for it seems very far from being a thorough or consistent one with regard to basic technique. Indeed, the Star whatever its shortcomings, has far too many O'Caseyan characteristics and contains far too much O'Casey material to be regarded to any great extent as a product of the influence of Toller's play. And even those passages of obviously and heavily stylised dialogue which do suggest something of the manner of the dialogue in Masses and Men prove, upon examination, to occur much less frequently in the text of The Star than might upon initial perusal, be thought, and also to be rich in O'Casey's own imagery.

If Masses and Man, in particular, or Toller's work in general did really influence The Star it would seem to have done so not in dramatic technique or manner as such, but in its explicitness as a political play in theme and intent, and also in providing The Star with certain "proletarian" terms and concepts such as "The Cause". The ideal of "The Cause" is referred to several times in Masses and Man. In the "Third Picture" for example, the Nameless One (representing the masses) quells the objections of the Woman (who represents the freedom and good of every individual) to his plan for armed revolution by invoking the name of "The Cause".

Be silent, comrade
 For the Cause!
 The individual, his feelings and his conscience,
 What do they count?
 The Masses count!

....
 War is necessity for us
 Your words will split us -
 For the Cause
 Be silent 19

And in the "Fifth Picture", as actual war is being waged, The Nameless
 One reports the progress of the battle to the Woman saying:

We hold the post office
 And at this moment
 The wives are giving out
 News to all peoples of our deeds
 Done for the Cause

Woman: Our work, Our Cause!
 O holy words! 20

As if echoing Masses and Man, the song at the end of Act III
 of The Star contains the words "Our comrade's gone, but there's no
 weeping, The Cause he lov'd is in safe keeping. . . ." (Collected
 Plays Vol. II Act III, p 327), and in Act I Michael, asking Jack to
 take Julia to the political meeting that evening says: "Don't forget
 Julia, Jack. She's lonely since the mother was taken. She's all I
 have" only to meet with the implied rebuke in Jack's answer: "There's
 the Cause". (p 244)

The Star's exaltation of "The Cause" at the expense of personal
 affections and human relationships is one of the least attractive, and
 seemingly one of the least "O'Caseyan" aspects of the play - for plays
 such as The Gunman, Juno, The Plough and The Tassie had all deplored
 the disruptive influence of political violence upon the lives of ordinary
 people. If the veneration of "The Cause" does not seem to be O'Caseyan
 it might, therefore, be supposed to be evidence of a very strong thematic
 influence from Toller's play. But this cannot be so, for even if the
 concept and term of "The Cause" is borrowed from Toller's play, the
 author's attitudes to "The Cause" in Masses and Man and The Star are
 diametrically opposed. Toller's play reveals that the author, though

a bitter opponent of capitalism, is firmly on the side of "Man" rather than on the side of the "Masses" with their mindless thirst for vengeance. The final and "Seventh Picture" makes this clear as "The Nameless One" - still vaunting the good of "The Cause" of the masses and "The Woman" - who is now about to die for her vision of the sanctity of each individual life - hold their final debate:

THE NAMELESS. The masses count, not man.

THE WOMAN. No, you do not love people!

THE NAMELESS. Our Cause comes first,
I love the people that shall be,
I love the future

THE WOMAN. People come first.
You sacrifice to dogmas,
The people that are now.

THE NAMELESS. Our Cause demands their sacrifice
But you betray the Masses, you betray The Cause

....
THE WOMAN. If I took but one human life,
I should betray the Masses. 21

In complete thematic contrast is the closing of The Star in which Red Jim exhorts Julia, whose sweetheart Jack has just been killed in battle for "The Cause", to forget personal grief in the happiness of the victory of the masses:

(In the far distance great cheering is heard, mingling with the singing of "The Internationale".

Jim (to the silently crying Julia) He's not too far away to hear what's happening. You'll nurse, now, a far greater thing than a darling dead man. Up, young woman, and join in the glowing hour your lover died to fashion. He fought for life, for life is all; and death is nothing!

(Julia stands up with her right fist clenched. The playing and singing of "The Internationale" grow louder. Soldiers and sailors appear at the windows, and all join in the singing. The Red Star glows, and seems to grow bigger as the curtain falls. Kian alone - the one disconsolate figure in the crowd - stands, sad, gazing down on the stiff face of his dead brother. (pp 353-4)

It is ironic that by here denying Kian , killer of Julia's father and a very recent convert from fascism, the grace of whole-hearted allegiance to "The Cause", O'Casey has unintentionally created the impression that Kian is ultimately one of the most sympathetically human characters in the play. Not only is the philosophy of The Star much cruder than that of Masses and Man, but the presentation of that philosophy is even less subtle than the presentation of the philosophy in Toller's play.

But whatever the influence of the work of Toller upon the nature and writing of The Star, it was not the only influence. In 1936 The Spanish Civil War began and O'Casey's letters leave no doubt either as to the keen interest which he took in the Fascist-Communist struggle or as to the side which he was on. For example, in a letter dated 13th November 1936 he wrote to Harold Macmillan:

I am praying to God that the Spanish Communists may win
I wish I could be with them. However, if I haven't manned
a tank, or fired a rifle for the cause of Communism, I have,
at least, in my day, fired stones at the police. 22

The basic conflict of the Spanish Civil War - the direct military confrontation of the forces of Fascism with those of Communism - was to provide the basic conflict at the centre of The Star, perhaps supplementing O'Casey's original idea of a "Labour play" around the work of Jim Larkin and, presumably, the events of the 1913 Dublin Lock Out Strike. And from the letter's reference to firing "stones at the police", it can be seen that O'Casey was clearly identifying himself and his past activities in the Irish Labour and National movements with the struggle of the Communists in Spain.

In the spring of 1937, when he was "thinking" about The Star he received a visit from "Frank Ryan, who leads the Communist Irish in Spain."²³ And a letter written during the same period reveals him to be pondering upon "a row on in Parliament about a Communist Poster that has superimposed a hammer and a sickle on the Cross".²⁴ The symbol itself, and its implications as to the relationship which exists between Christ and Communism are essentially akin to the kind of symbolism and themes that were to form the backbone of the play. And the poster itself actually seems to appear in Act II of the play for the "room in the headquarters of the General Worker's Union" displays prominently on its wall

a black poster, having on it a white cross on which a red hammer and sickle are imposed. (p. 277)

Doubtless his personal ardency in his political beliefs, the acuteness of the conflict in Spain, and also the urgent and desperate threat to world peace by the rise of Fascism in Germany and Italy, all helped, perhaps, to provoke him, rather than to inspire him, to the writing of The Star in 1937.

-If such a number of possible powerful "external" sources of inspiration thus seemingly come together to exert their independent, but by no means incompatible, influences upon O'Casey's life and thought in 1937, then another factor, this time within O'Casey's own writing career, but still distinct from the writing of the autobiographies, might also have inclined him to begin a new play at this time.

23 From a letter to Horace Reynolds 19th March 1937, Letters Vol. I p 656. In connection with this visit see also: Eileen O'Casey, Sean, p. 156 and a letter to F.R. Higgins, 5th June 1939, Letters Vol. I pp 803 - 4

24 Letter to Gabriel Fallon, 5th March 1937, Letters Vol. I pp 652-3

The Flying Wasp was published in March 1937 and perhaps, somewhat paradoxically, the writing and publication of his most scathing and indignant views upon, or rather denunciations of, the London Theatre and its upholders, the critics, ²⁶ had helped, by relieving him of much of the personal bitterness which made him turn away from the theatre and the dramatic form, actually to lead him back towards the writing of a play or at least, had helped to lessen his disinclination to write plays.

So many possible inspirations and influences seem to exist in connection with the writing and nature of The Star that there may seem little room left to admit of a palpable influence from the writing of the autobiography - yet it seems that such an influence was also at work. And whereas the interaction between the writing and natures of Within the Gates and I Knock at the Door found expression largely in terms of contrary or compensatory factors in each of the two works, the relationship and interaction between I knock at the Door and The Star seems to have become slightly more obviously positive, in that there is now a marked tendency for the autobiography, in some connections, to influence the play into likeness with itself.

25 Sean O'Casey, The Flying Wasp, London, Macmillan, 1937

26 Denunciations such as the following, from an essay entitled "Critici Infallibilibombast", in which he refers to the English drama critics as

These gossellers of good taste who dread drama having the heart-beat of life in it and treat a play which has the sound of flutes as if it were a mendicant at a street corner begging a coin from cold pockets - who are always yelling or wistfully whispering for new things in the theatre, for God's sake, and when they get it, fail to try to understand and pine away for such masterpieces as Family Affairs or The Old Folks at Home. (The Flying Wasp p.169)

Perhaps the autobiography had an important part in determining that the play, like itself, and unlike Within The Gates, should be set in Dublin. The setting of The Star is not actually named as Dublin, but as in The Tassie, the identity of the city is recognisable from the accents of its characters.

And though most, perhaps all, of the characters in the play are simply representative figures and have little or no personality in their own right yet, just occasionally, certain of the minor characters assert their Dublin nature, and the play momentarily "lapses" back into the kind of dialogue and humour that were to be found in such abundance in the plays before Within The Gates, and which were presented in the chapters of I Knock at the Door. Of such "lapses" the dialogue between the Old Man and Joybell as they attempt, in Act IV, to hang Christmas decorations, provides the finest example:

Old Man: Slip up, Joybell, as a preliminary, and fix your end first.

Joybell: No; you slip up first and see how your end'll hang.

Old Man: How my end'll hang? Don't you know well enough how my end'll hang? My end'll hang just the same as your end'll hang!

Joybell: My eye is younger than yours, and I'll be able to see if your end is hanging at the right angle.

Old Man (viciously) Right angle! This is a matter of pluck and hammer and nails, and not a question of aljaybra! There 's only one angle to hang it - the right angle.

Joybell: That's just what I'm after saying.

Old Man: Just what are you just after saying?

Joybell: That if you hang it at all, you must hang it at a right angle.

Old Man (shouting) Good God, man, isn't that what I'm just after saying!... (in anguish) Oh, isn't an intelligent man nicely tested when he's fronted with a fool!

(Act IV pp.340-2)

Heegan of The Tassie in debate with Simon Norton, or even a dialogue between Fluther and Peter Flynn of The Plough. It could equally well be an altercation between two characters in a scene from I Knock at the Door, characters such as the cab-drivers in 'His Father's Funeral', for example.

Perhaps the writing of chapters of I Knock at the Door with their specific Dublin background, was, in its contrasts with the writing of the "English" play Within The Gates, already leading him to recognise a fact which he was to state many years later: "Like Joyce, it is
27 only through an Irish scene that my imagination can weave a way".

When he had announced his intention of writing a play about London, which was to materialise as Within The Gates, he had, after all, said
28 "Human nature is just the same in a Chelsea environment as in Dublin", but the comparative experiences of writing Within The Gates and the early chapters of autobiography might well have led him to see that, if "human nature" were basically "the same in a Chelsea environment as in Dublin", his personal insight into human nature, and his personal powers of expressing that insight, were inextricably bound up with Ireland.

Furthermore, if the autobiography seems to have led O'Casey in The Star - and indeed, in all his subsequent plays except one - back to providing an Irish setting/^{- real or implied -}for his plays, it seems in the case of The Star to have led him back also to the use, as in itself and

27 From an article entitled "Cockadoodle Doo" published in Blasts and Benedictions pp.142-5 (quotation from p.144). In a note on the article the Editor of the volume, Ronald Ayling, comments: "Part of this article was published in The New York Times on Nov. 9 1958, under the title 'O'Casey's Credo'; it was intended as an introduction to the first production of Cock-a-doodle Dandy in New York."

28 From an interview with O'Casey published in the Daily Sketch, 7th July 1926, p.2, reprinted in The Sting and the Twinkle, p.37.

as in the pre-autobiography plays , of a specific period of Irish history to provide much of the basic material for the play. Unlike the pre-autobiography plays, the actions of which are given definite historical dates, the action of The Star, of course, is meant to be futuristic. "Time - To-morrow , or the next day" (p.240), but the play is dedicated "To The Men And Women Who Fought Through The Great Dublin Lockout In Nineteen Hundred and Thirteen", and although, doubtless, events in Spain, and the tide of events in the world in the mid-late 1930's would naturally incline O'Casey towards endowing The Star with explicitly unlocalised and futuristic, even prophetic implications, basically the play itself is not so much O'Casey's prophetic vision of the future worldwide triumph of Communism over capitalism, as an idealised vision of the Dublin Lockout Strike in 1913.

Moreover, The Star's use of the 1913 strike as its background marks not only a return to the use of historical material, but to the use of significantly personal material also. Later autobiographies especially Drums Under the Windows were to reveal how much the labour struggle of 1913 meant, and continued to mean, to O'Casey personally, even though the events of the Nationalist struggle of 1916 were, in terms of Irish history greatly to overshadow the events of 1913.

I Knock at the Door does not of course include 1913 in its time - scheme but one of the effects upon O'Casey himself of the actual writing of the autobiography seems to have been that of making him not simply think about, but almost re-live, the past. Mrs. O'Casey has commented in her book Sean about how, the autobiography "possessing him" O'Casey "would recall a lot about his early life" 29 and "talked

frequently of his Dublin life, his mother and sister and his friends".

While he himself, in describing in Sunset and Evening Star how he came to write the autobiographies, refers to

"the savage grace of a day that is dead" and which "cannot come

back to him. Only in sleep might he dream it back; never again,

except in sleep" (p 515), and, he might have added, in the writing of the

autobiographies. He had certainly not, as Irish critics had claimed

and were repeatedly to claim, left behind his dramatic material and

the source of his dramatic inspiration in Ireland. His Irish experience

had formed, and was to form, some of the richest fabric and inspiration

But

for his art. / He had carried it away from Ireland with him, and although

in Within The Gates he chose to turn his back on it, yet very importantly,

the writing of the autobiographies, in causing him to re-live this

experience, opened it up to him once more as a rich field or store of

matter and inspiration for his dramatic works.

It might even be that the author's thoughts about the past, with regard to the writing of the autobiography, provided inspiration for

The Star in that it helped him to remember his old plans, when still

about

living in Dublin, to write a "Labour play" / Jim Larkin and entitled

The Red Star.

But the historical and personal nature of the material which

the writing of the autobiography turned up for use in the play slightly

throws off balance the rather rigid design of "Labour play". For it

seems that O'Casey cannot write such a premeditatedly uniformly

"mannered", and uniformly structured play as Within The Gates if he

writes about an Irish situation. Form and content conflict in The Star,

and this seems to be at the heart of the play's unsatisfactory nature - for the play is unsatisfactory whether judged in terms of being specifically a "Labour play"; or in terms of being a play by O'Casey and, therefore, a potential vehicle for his finest talents.

As a "Labour play" The Star ultimately fails because although it sets out to glorify "The Cause" at all costs, and to emphasise the common good at the expense of individual happiness and personality, yet the author's sympathy with and delight in individual human characters is not totally quelled - not even by depriving many of the characters of personal names. Certain "Dublin" characters seem to tempt him to allow them to say things which virtually invalidate, or at least point out the fundamental weaknesses in, the argument of the play as a whole.

The Old Woman has seemingly a genius for doing this. Perhaps the early Dublin plays with their noble heroines, and the autobiography with its portrayal and tribute to Mrs. Casside as a mother, are partly responsible for the fairly sympathetic presentation of the mother in the play; although, in the main, in so far as it possesses a hero or heroes (in Jack, and Red Jim), or alternatively a consortship of young hero and heroine (in Jack and Julia), The Star follows in the tradition of Within The Gates and reveals something of a further break from the heroines of O'Caseyan tradition in the earlier plays. Perhaps in this respect there is some compensatory interaction between The Star and I Knock at the Door, for, since the autobiography takes on the role of paying tribute to the memory of O'Casey's mother, the plays are left free to present central male characters who are possessed of an understanding of life.

The most pronounced examples of how the Old Woman of The Star undercuts the intended themes of the play are to be found in Act I.

In terms of the dogma of the "Labour play" aspect of The Star, the Old Woman's Communist son Jack is as unquestionably correct in his unswerving devotion to "The Cause", and in his contempt for those who do not follow it. Equally, in the context of the politics of the play her Fascist son Kian is unquestionably wrong in his own political allegiances and prejudices. But in human terms a note of doubt creeps in - voiced by the Old Woman who says to her husband:

What about our own two boys, always at each other's throats for the sake of a slogan? What with the saffron shirts prodding us on one side, and the Communists pouncing at us on the other, life's lost everything but its name.

(Act I p.248)

Her husband's immediate reply of:

Ask your Communist son, Jack, and he'll tell you that, to the workers, life is nothing but a name. (Act I. p.248)

is calculated to reassure those who would agree with the Old Woman's doubts, and to assert once more that the situation within the play is so extreme that brother must now be prepared to fight brother for "The Cause". But the Old Woman's voice of doubt was, in spite of the play's themes and the playwright's efforts to justify them, too much like the voice of reason also. And as the play proceeds, so the impression too persists that the struggle between the brothers, indeed the struggle between the entire forces of Fascism and Communism, which the play attempts to present in truly exalted terms as the ultimate battle before the Kingdom of Heaven is established on earth, is, in reality, nothing more than a tragic and sordid civil war "for the sake of a slogan": the

kind of war which O'Casey had set out to depict in a very different light in Juno and the Paycock. The mother's appeals for peace between her two sons are actually reminiscent of Mrs. Tancred's and Juno's appeal for the setting of personal affections and relationships before rash political hatreds and commitments, but in Juno the theme of the play is that these appeals should be heeded, whereas in The Star the theme of the play is that "'The Cause" is now supreme and that these appeals, even from a mother, should be set aside:

Jack comes back in a thoughtful mood, goes back to his place at the table, rearranges the music, and plays a few bars of "The Internationale" on the cornet.

...

Old Woman (nervously to Jack) I shouldn't go on playing that, Jack, till Kian goes out. Let him go off quiet to his Fascist meeting, and then you can blow to your heart's content.

...

Jack (doggedly) He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the workers say to the world.

Old Woman (going over and placing her hand persuasively on Jack's shoulder) For my sake, Jack, for your mother's sake, let us have a little peace.

Jack (gently removing her hand from his shoulder) Kian must learn to sing what we sing, for that will bring him life, or close his ears till the hour comes when the sound of the song will bring him face to face with death.

Old Woman Jack, Jack, he is your brother.

Jack I have brothers everywhere, Mother; but I have none in this house.

Old Woman He is my son, you are my son: therefore you are his brother.

Jack He is dead; I see him not, I hear him not, I touch him not - he is dead.

(Act I pp.248-9)

And at the end of the Act, when Michael, Julia's father, attacks the Leader of the Fascists and is shot down by Kian, the laments of the Old Woman of "my Kian, my poor Kian, my dear son Kian!" (p.275) seem meant, in the context of the themes of the play, to be an acknowledgement of Kian's political wrong-headedness even wickedness. But they seem involuntarily to touch upon a deeper and more human chord than this, they seem to echo Mrs. Tancred's and Juno's cries of "me son, me own son", to recall the remark made by Juno about Mrs. Tancred and Robbie Tancred: "God help his poor old creature of a mother, for no matter whose friend or enemy he was, he was her poor son" (Juno Act II p. 55), and to express something of the human tragedy involved when politics of any kind, and of any party, are allowed to impinge upon the lives of ordinary people.

If the doubts admitted by the characterisation of the Old Woman as to the good and moral rightness of sacrificing everything of individual human concern for "The Cause" are not suppressed sufficiently to allow The Star to succeed as a "Labour Play", they are more than sufficiently restricted by the arbitrary format of a "Labour Play" to prevent The Star from succeeding as an expression of sympathy and concern for the universal human condition.

O'Casey's personal genius for characterisation and presentation of the human condition cannot allow him to write a formal labour play, ironically the format and ideal of the kind of labour play at which he consciously aimed would not allow the full expression of his finest talents, and caused him in The Star to be content with the political sign of "The Clenched Fist" (Act I p. 276, Act IV p.353) as the ultimate comment upon, and expression of, personal and human emotion.

But, if The Star perhaps derives some of its softer more human moments from I Knock at the Door, some of the play's vehement, even violent opinions, and the vehement, even violent, way in which they are expressed, might also arise from something of an interaction between it and the autobiography. Naturally the vehemence of the play must, in some measure, reflect the extreme gravity of the world political situation in the late 1930s. But in connection with the nature of the play it seems far from coincidental that of those chapters of autobiography which were written after the completion of Within The Gates and before he began work on The Star - "The Protestant Kid Thinks of The Reformation", "Dreamschool", "His Father's Dublin Funeral", "A Child of God" and "His Father's Wake" - all except "His Father's Wake", which is a short chapter concerned solely with the subject of its title, explicitly portray Johnny's life as being lived in a world of poverty, pain, hardship and social injustice. Moreover, in these chapters, as in the play, such evils are attributed specifically to a conspiracy of Church and State.

Since the writing of the autobiography involved, for O'Casey, the reliving of past experience, perhaps the memories he drew upon in these chapters were strongly to influence the themes and tone of the play. That the writing of such chapters did make a deep impression upon the author can be seen from his own comment, in a letter, upon "A Child of God":

It brought me back to the days when life was largely pain & Church & Sunday School and a lot of laughter & some vision in dreams. 31

31 Letter to Horace Reynolds dated January 1938
Letters Vol. I p. 695

and the note of deep indignation which sounds throughout these chapters with regard to the life that Johnny is forced to live seems to find its way into, or rather to provide fuel for The Star's explicit and politically partisan attacks upon church, state and society - although the direct expression of political partisanship itself is very far from the nature of this first volume of autobiography.

"The Protestant Kid Thinks of The Reformation" introduces the character of the Reverend Mr. Hunter who is rapidly to become the chief "villain" in the book. So cold, so callous is the Reverend Hunter in his dealings with Johnny and Mrs. Casside, so absorbed in the exercising of his own authority, and moreover so hated is he by "Johnny" and the author, that he cannot but be related to the sadistic, feared and hated Purple Priest of the play - and this despite the difference in the churches which they represent.

From the moment Hunter appears on the scene of the autobiography he literally as well as metaphorically casts a shadow over Johnny's life. Johnny, unable to attend school because of his diseased eyes is playing marbles in the street, and is, thereby, both enjoying himself and after a fashion, educating himself, when:

Suddenly a shadow like the shadow of a monster crow fell on the space between him and the marbles in the ring, and Johnny knew that the Reverend Mr. Hunter was standing just beside him.

Johnny had checked himself from letting the marble in his hand fly at the three in the ring, and now stood, silent at the edge of the kerb, waiting to hear the voice and the word that was in the beginning; and the word that was with God; and the word was God.

(p. 81)

The "entrance" on to the scene of Hunter is almost that of a villain of melodrama, and in its impression of menace it matches too

the sudden first appearance of the Purple Priest in the play.

In the doorway - left open by Julia - the Purple Priest and the Brown Priest are seen on the threshold, the Brown Priest a little behind the other. The Purple Priest is clad in a violet cassock, girdled with a black cord. A caul hides all but the front of his face, which is pale, fixed like a mast in lines of cold severity. . . . There are a few moments of tense silence, broken by the drum-beats of the marching saffron shirts, while those in the room stare at the two priests. They come a little way into the room, and the Brown Priest gently closes the door.

(Act I pp 270-1)

Hunter, on entering the Casside's home, imperiously and "peevishly" insists that Johnny be taken to school immediately, and in his apparent delight in condemning and spoiling the little joy and pleasure Johnny derives from life - as in the game of marbles - Hunter is again akin to the Purple Priest who, seeing Julia dressed in her costume for the fancy-dress ball; says:

I see before me a poor daughter of Eve dressed for a folly that will fondle sin with a busy finger;. . .

and orders her to "strip off the dress of folly and put on a garment meet for penance and prayer" (Act I p.271).

As Hunter leads the way to the school Johnny broods upon "The Protestant Reformation" which he, regards as the source of his present predicament, and concludes that:

A wave or two of the truth as it was in Luther splashed over Ireland, and so in process of time, The Reverend Hunter was born in protestant circumstances that made him a sky-pilot, and Johnny was born a protestant in circumstances that placed him in the position of being lugged along at the backside of this soft-hatted, stiff-collared egg-headed oul' henchman of heaven, to be added to his swarm of urchins cowering and groping about in the rag-and-bone education provided by the church and state for the children of those who hadn't the wherewithal to do anything better.

(p. 87)

Although the presentation of the character of Hunter in the autobiography is not obviously stylised ^{like the} portrayal of The Purple Priest in the play, it becomes increasingly clear that, just as much as the Purple Priest, Hunter represents all the forces of church, state and society which are in alliance to protect their own interests and suppress the people.

With regard to the obviously stylised presentation of The Purple Priest it is, however, possible that this too had some seed of origin in the autobiography, since Johnny, pursuing his meditations on "The Protestant Reformation", as he is dragged along behind Hunter, thinks of: "Black friars, white friars, purple-hooded monks, brown-caped priests, crimson-cassocked cardinals", (p. 83) and this does suggest the names as well as the appearances of The Purple Priest and Brown Priest in The Star.

In "A Child of God" Hunter's apparent determination to break the spirit of Johnny is renewed. He forces Johnny to attend Sunday school and church, as well as day-school, and the author's depiction of, and implied judgements upon, Hunter become more and more severe and more and more indignant. Hunter has no sympathy with suffering amongst the poor, choosing to regard it as God's will. In forcing Johnny to attend Church and Sunday school he tells him:

- You must do what God wants you to do, John... if you wish God to cure your sore eyes, or help you to bear the pain that He sends upon us all at times. Remember the little gold crown, John, that God is keeping safe for little boys who bear pain patiently, and readily do His will.
(p.99)

In such sentiments Hunter is at one with the Purple Priest who has told his parishioners ' "In God's sight... the poor and

A prayer spoken by Hunter, supposedly for Johnny and Mrs. Casside's spiritual well-being, is again typical of both Hunter's and The Purple Priest's exploitation of the concept of a stern God, in order to support the authoritarian state and unjust society, within which they personally hold authority:

. The woman knelt down, leaning her elbows on the seat of a chair; the boy knelt down beside her; and the minister kneeling down too, faced the opposite way, and said in a cold and common manner: Oh God, our heavenly Father, giver of all good things, give Thy blessings unto this woman and unto this boy, that she may bring him up in the knowledge and fear of the Lord; that he, in full fear of Thee, may learn in all humility to submit himself in lowly reverence to all his betters, governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters, and so grow more worthy to call upon Thee for blessing and mercy. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
(p. 100)

The Purple Priest's support of and vested interest in the state and society is stated even more directly in the play. He is actually given the title of the "Purple Priest of the Politicians", and he condemns Red Jim for attempting to make the people:

To the Church, to the State foes, or to property sacred,
Handed down through the ages from father to son,
So one with the Church, with the State, and with Owners,
We mark Red Jim down as a wolf to be worried,
Wounded and worried away from the care of the flock...
(Act II pp 279-80)

The author's resentment against Hunter is vented more and more in authorial or semi-authorial comments which go so far as to disturb the usually "dramatic" and implicit presentation of judgments in the first volume of autobiography. Hunter's hand is twice described as "pudgy" (p. 99) , he is described as having a "cold common face" (p. 100) and as speaking, or rather, praying, in "a cold and common

manner" (p.100). But the expression^s of O'Casey's feelings against the minister reach an apparent climax when the author, rather than Johnny, describes Hunter's leaving of the house, after once more blighting Johnny's existence, in the following terms:

And off toddled this black-whiskered, snug-souled gollywog gospel-cook who brightened up the will of God with his own.
(p.100)

In the ensuing account, in the same chapter, of Johnny's experiences on the next Sunday morning, as ailing in health and poorly clad, he sets out in heavy rain, for what to him, in his condition, was plainly the ordeal of Sunday school and church, the author's indignation is barely contained within the dramatic framework of characterisation and incident. He describes Johnny as walking "in the drizzling rain down Dorsèt Street, full of a feeling he didn't know was rage" (p. 101). And when in Sunday school Johnny's teacher tells him to repeat the words "...as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, yet possessing all things", the author gives her^{this} comment to make on Johnny's performance:

"when you're speaking, Casside, don't keep your teeth so close together" (p.105)

Indeed the rage of the author, now, however, firmly channelled into character and incident, propels the chapter along, as Johnny in his way to church, endures yet another soaking with rain, and, once inside the church, endures another long spell of sitting in wet clothes as he listens to prayers and to Hunter's sermon. Finally, Johnny, after praying piteously that the rain might stop, is forced to run "flushed and faint and frightened" home through the rain once more. And Mrs. Casside's comment, as her son eventually arrives home, is not simply a heartfelt one on her own account, but expresses too

- A nice state for you to be in after bein' gathered into the arms o' God, she said, as she dried his dreeing hair. A church that 'ud send a delicate half-starved child home to his mother in your state is round a corner'n well outa the sight o' God; (pp 110-111)

The author allows himself one final semi-direct comment upon the hypocrisy of the so-called Christians, and it is with this comment that he closes the chapter. Miss Valentine, the Sunday School teacher, visits Johnny "some weeks later " when he was feeling "better", to express the hope that he will soon be back at Sunday school, and to give him "a lovely scripture picture-card that was given to those who attended, and and and and she hoped it would bring Johnny's thoughts nearer to God" (p. 112). As Mrs. Casside shows Miss Valentine out there is a sad scene as the half-blind Johnny is left to try and decipher the words of the biblical text on the card - words and an ironic implication which are too much for the weak eyesight and limited understanding of the child, Johnny, but which the author helps to point out to the reader:

When Johnny was alone, he moved the bandage higher up on his head, put the Scripture picture-card against his good eye, peered a long time at it, and saw a big bunch of daffodils and a verse from the Bible. Spelling the words out slowly, he could not make them out, but they were these:
And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (p. 112)

Of course, the fact that the author breaks something of the ostensible dramatic "objectivity" of the chapter in this way is by no means to the artistic detriment of the chapter - on the contrary it increases the irony in the chapter and lends it an extremely powerful emotional quality in which the reader as well as the author can share.

felt by the author in these chapters are always kept under some measure of restraint - they have, as it were, their power and effectiveness not only preserved but increased by, on the whole, being harnessed to some form of controlled artistic expression, even if this expression is in the voice of the author.

In The Star, however, it is as if the emotion and indignation aroused in the author by the writing of, and memories recalled by, chapters such as "The Protestant Kid Thinks of The Reformation" and "A Child of God" will no longer be forced or channelled into character and incident or even into ironic authorial statement. Instead they seem to release themselves in the presentation of the stark, sadistic "figure", rather than the "character", of the "Purple Priest", and in long and loud denunciations of the hypocrisy of so-called Christians.

Julia, at her father's funeral, vows to the corpse that:

... the priests that sanctioned your shooting shall fall and shall be dust and shall be priests no longer! (She glances at the crucifix). Against you, dear one, we have no grudge; but those of your ministers who sit like gobbling cormorants in the market-place shall fall and shall be dust and shall be priests no longer. (Act III p. 315)

And Red Jim in a confrontation with both the Purple Priest and The Brown Priest declares "passionately":

If the heritage of heaven be the heritage here of shame and rags and the dead puzzle of poverty, then we turn our backs on it! If your God stands for one child to be born in a hovel and another in a palace, then we declare against him. If your God declares that one child shall be clad in silks and another in sores, then we declare against him. If your God declares that it takes a sack of sovereigns to keep one child and a handful of pence to keep another, then we declare against him. If your God declares that one child shall dwell in the glory of knowledge and another shall die in the poverty of ignorance, then we declare against him: once and for all and for ever we declare against your God, who filled the

wealthy with good things and hath sent the poor empty away!
 (Act III, pp 324-5)

These are passages of powerful rhetoric but the fuel of emotion and experience upon which they draw, and which they burn up in words, comes not from within the play itself but from the autobiographical chapters written just previously. Ironically, in its directness of verbal expression, and in its lack of substance in human character and incident to give real support or conviction to its words, the play, despite its dramatic form is less dramatic than the chapters of autobiography. And the austerity, vehemence and violence of the play - its bold clear-cut themes, the uncompromising moral black-and-whiteness of the political struggle it depicts, its stylised characters, the savagery of its villains, the harshness of its verbal invective as each political party slanders the other - while reflecting, probably, O'Casey's concept of "The Labour Play" and the urgency and extremity of the contemporary political situation, seem also to be something of a release, or perhaps of a dissipation, of emotion aroused by, and expressed powerfully, but with remarkable artistic restraint within, I Knock at the Door.

In this respect the writing and nature of the autobiography has influenced the play to be like the autobiography in spirit, but unlike it, or complementary to it, in artistic expression - perhaps, in the last instance, to the detriment of the play.

Other chapters of I Knock at the Door in which the Reverend Hunter appears - "Pain Parades Again" and "The Lord Loveth Judgment" and the chapter "Crime and Punishment", in which the other arch-villain of the book and Hunter's ally, Slogan, the sadistic school-master takes

a leading part, are not mentioned by name in O'Casey's letters and so their date of composition cannot be firmly established. But in a letter written on the 14th February 1938, almost one year after he began to think about The Star, O'Casey refers to having written "nine or ten" "biographical sketches to make a book", and from what is known or can be conjectured about the dates of composition of other chapters it is extremely unlikely that "Pain Parades Again", "The Lord Loveth Judgment" or "Crime and Punishment" were included in these "nine or ten". And since the whole of I Knock at the Door was completed before The Star itself was finished then it seems safe to assume that these three particular chapters were written at a time when O'Casey was working on the play.

This being so it is possible to interpret certain elements in these chapters as being the results of some degree of interaction with the play, even of influence from the play, although, in the main, the autobiographical chapters proceed in their own tradition of placing much more emphasis on ^{of} character and incident as the conveyers of theme, rather than utilising the stark techniques of the play.

It seems as if Johnny's tirade, in "Pain Parades Again", against Hunter and Slogan, with their glib theorising upon the spiritual value of other people's sufferings, might be related to the play's presentation of The Purple Priest's complacency over the suffering of others. The force of Johnny's expression of his own indignation might suggest something of a little of the directness of the expression of opinion in the play, although not enough to out-balance the autobiography's

The curse o'God on every school that was ever built and every teacher that was ever born! The way they maddened him, the way they talked about it. Hoity-toity haughty holy holy Hunter, with his God, is behind all pain, and He will help every brave and patient little one to bear it: and sly an' sleeky Slogan chimin' in after holy Hunter with his, It would be a very bad thing for children if they could go through their young years entirely free from pain; that if they could, there'd be no standin' them, and that, although they didn't quite know what it was, there was a purpose of some kind or another behind everything that anybody suffered; and oul' haughty hoity-toity holy Hunter goin' one better be sayin' that God sent sufferin's to try us and that if we bore them as we should bear them, uncomplainin', we'd come out of them like refined gold that had stood the test of fire, and would surely shine in the sight of all the angels of heaven, who wouldn't know how to feel pain even if they tried, and who'd have a fine laugh if they could only get a chance of seein' haughty hoity toity holy Hunter and sly and sleeky Slogan squirmin' about on their bellies with the pain that's shootin' through me eyeballs now!

(p.93)

The Purple Priest in the play is reported as telling the "Hunch-back" : "You're all the more beautiful in the sight of God because of the hump on your back" (Act III p. 314) and he approves of the infliction of bodily pain as, supposedly, a means of saving the soul. When Julia is to be whipped he remarks:

It is good that the little immodest wretch should have the lash laid on her back, lest worse befall her. (Act I p.273)

and later pronounces that:

If the foolish young hearken not to the voice of the Church warning against the pleasure of a sinful love, then the lash should be laid on their backs to turn them away from the lust of the flesh. (Act III) p 319)

The chapter "Crime and Punishment" might also be related to the play; as Julia, under the auspices of the Purple Priest, is whipped in the play, so Johnny is severely caned by Slogan. And Slogan's elaborate reasoning that the caning of Johnny - who had been

forced by older and bigger boys to keep watch for them while they
played cards in the school-yard - was for his ultimate well-being,
echoes the kind of sentiments expressed by the Purple Priest. 398

That little boy's mother is a widow, so he has no father to take care of him- and it is meet, right, and my bounden duty to do everything possible to make sure that no bad tendencies are allowed to creep into the nature of the widow's little son. And when I have reddened his backside with this cane, I'm sure he'll be a better and more careful little boy for a long time to come, and run a mile away from a card whenever he sees one. He swished the cane through the air, and grinningly asked the school, who was he who said, spare the rod and spoil the child, boys?

....
- All Holy Scripture is inspired of God, said Slogan, and the Book of Proverbs is part of Holy Scripture, and chapter thirteen and verse twenty-four is part of the Book of Proverbs; ergo, the counsel in the verse, he that spareth his rod hateth his son, is holy and inspired of God without a possible doubt. So boys, wouldn't it be very sinful of me to neglect or despise the teaching inspired of God, seeing that I stand in loco parentis to you all, and particularly to the widow's little son, brave little Johnny Casside?

..... Now all we want are two strong and willing boys to come up here and stand ready to hold you down, if you squirm too much, so that you can get the full benefit of a kindly, if stern, Christian castigation. (pp 130-2)

And Johnny's "flood of mighty rage" against the master, which prompts him, after his caning to revenge himself "with all the hate in all his heart, in all his mind, in all his soul, and in all his strength", by bringing "the ebony ruler down on the pink, baldy, hoary oul' head of hoary oul' Slogan," (p.136) ^{seems} to share something of the extreme violence of emotion and action of the play.

And if the portrait of "The radiant, iron-bowelled, ratty-hearted master" (p.134) in "Crime and Punishment" seems touched by something of the vindictiveness and sadism of the Purple Priest, so the portrait of Hunter in "The Lord Loveth Judgment" - Hunter being the character whose appearance and portrayal in earlier chapters perhaps influenced

the presentation of the Priest in the play - seems perhaps in its turn, to be rendered even more harsh, if possible, by the influence of the extreme authoritarianism of the Purple Priest of the Politicians.

For now Hunter is an even more sinister and political figure than he was before, and tells Mrs. Casside openly that:

... we don't want your little boy to grow up to be a criminal; but if he is to grow up to be readily able to do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him, these dangerous inclinations must be checked, and checked, if necessary, with a very rough hand....

- If your boy won't willingly do it, then he must be made, must be made, Mrs. Casside, to order himself lowly and reverently to all his betters, went on the smooth, soft, cold voice.

... when he has been suitably punished, he will go down on his knees, and beg his master's pardon for his blaguardly conduct; so that, in future, he will never dare to raise a hand against anyone whom God has set in authority over him.

... what you have to remember at the moment Mrs. Casside, is that God is angry, very angry, with your boy. If he isn't punished one way, he'll be punished in another, and, very possibly, in a more severe way.

... I will be there to take charge of the boy, and I can assure you that the punishment will be given under my own personal supervision.... (pp 139-41)

All in all the writing of I Knock at the Door with its depiction and implicit condemnation of poverty and its author's re-experience of "the savage grace of a day that is dead" must have provided something of a sympathetic background to the writing of The Star and perhaps vice versa.

Once The Star was begun, the writing of the autobiography and the writing of the play progressed side by side for a time, and both works were eventually completed within a few months of each other.

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34

Letters of September 1937 and January 1938 indicate that

33 Letter to George Jean Nathan 16th September 1937. Letters Vol. I p 679. O'Casey had been on holiday in Wales once more in August-September 1937 and writes "Now I'll try to take up my next play again from where I left off, before I went to Wales.."

34 Letter to Horace Reynolds 1 January 1938 Letters Vol. I p 694

O'Casey had continued with the writing of the play after his initial work on it in May 1937, and in the second of these letters he remarks of the play : "I think it is doing well". In February 1938 he wrote to his publisher:

I have a few things in hand (doing something with a play, and a few fantastic pages of biography), but they haven't reached the stage yet that would interest a publisher. 35

In the same month in a letter to George Jean Nathan he wrote:

I'm still doing a little to the new play. And also carrying on biographical sketches to make a book... I've done nine or ten of them, & if I can get the play & this volume done by the end of the year, I'll expect George Jean (if they be well done) to say bravo! 36

This letter is of some significance since this is the first reference in the letters by O'Casey to his intention of assembling the individually written autobiographical "sketches" or "chapters" into a "book" or "volume". And so it seems that I Knock at the Door was really assuming its final shape and form as The Star was being written.

According to further evidence from the letters in April 1938
37
he was "hard at work" on the autobiography and by 23rd May 1938 he had written '17 sketches on the same lines" as "A Child of God" and

....will be bringing them to Macmillans this week to see if they (or some more) will make a book to be called, "First The Green Blade" 38.....now I'll be busier writing more of them; & the play - my God! 39

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- 35 Letter to Harold Macmillan, date of February 1938 supplied by Editor Letters Vol. I p. 696
- 36 Letter dated 14th February 1938, Letters Vol. I p. 703
- 37 Letter to Harold Macmillan (28 April 1938) Letters Vol. I p 713
- 38 The title "First the Green Blade" which is here used to refer to the entire volume was later used simply as the title of the second chapter of I Knock at The Door.
- 39 Letter to Horace Reynolds Letters Vol. I p 721

By June 21st 1938, having been apparently informed by his publisher **401**

that another 15,000 words would be needed if the sketches were to form a book, he had already done two sketches - "The Tired Cow" and "The Street Sings", with another - "Vandhering Vindy Vendhor" - well on the way, and was trying to think of a new title for the whole book, "Father of the Man", or "Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven" - too long?⁴⁰

A letter of a week later to George Jean Nathan indicates that O'Casey has temporarily suspended work on the play in order to finish the autobiographical volume:

The play is as it was when I last wrote to you. At present I'm writing four more chapters to make a volume to be published by Macmillans - they're waiting for it, and when this is done, then, with the help o'God - the play. 41

The "four more chapters" he was then working on must have included "Vandhering Vindy Vendhor" since there are 23 chapters in the book as a whole and, excluding "Vandhering Vindy Vendhor", 19 of these had already been written. By the 23rd July 1938 he had seemingly almost completed twenty one chapters and was estimating that "Two more should do it."⁴²

And in September 1938 he was able to write to George Jean Nathan:

I've just sent the MS of my life - in the form of chapter stories - up to twelve, under the name of "I Knock at the Door" to Macmillan & expect to be working at the proofs in a week or so... I think, on the whole, the work is good. 43

that

It appears from the same letter/as soon as the volume was finished and, incidentally, its title finally decided, O'Casey was eager to return to work on The Star:

40 Letter to Harold Macmillan, ibid p 727

41 Letter dated 28 June 1938, ibid p 728

42 Letter to Harold Macmillan ibid p 730

43 Letter dated September 1933 ibid p 737

I've been reading some of the dialogue already written for my new play, "The Star Turns Red"; I haven't looked at it for the last two months or more; & so may possibly be more critical, than if I had written it yesterday. Well, the most of it to me, sounds good, which has pleased me a little. I begin to think of it again today & hope to make progress tomorrow....44

Also at the time when I Knock at the Door was completed, O'Casey had formed the plan of writing two more volumes of autobiography to be entitled "Come On In" and "The Lighted Room" 45. Of these "Come On In" was "to consist of what happened till I joined the Irish Movement, & the last to deal with all or most of what happened afterwards" 46. Thus the autobiography which had begun as a series of "sketches", and had only recently taken shape as a "volume", was now looked upon as forming the first volume in a series of three. O'Casey's plans for the autobiographies were expanding very rapidly.

But he did not turn his attention to the writing of the second autobiographical volume immediately. Instead he seems to have devoted his attention to The Star, and by the 9th December 1938 he was able to write to George Jean Nathan that:

I am in the middle - more than the middle - of the new play: First Act & Second done; 3rd Act nearly so, & 4th partly. Out of a huge mountain of chaos, order is, I think, beginning to appear. 47

And on the 13th January 1939 he was writing again to Nathan:

I have just finished "The Star Turns Red" & have to add a line or two, & go through it once more to see & feel (or try to, rather) how it moves. 48

44 Letter dated September 1938, ibid p 738
 45 See letter to Horace Reynolds, 3 October 1938, ibid. p 744 and letter to Harold Macmillan 7 October 1938, ibid p 746
 46 Letter to Harold Macmillan 7 October 1938, ibid p 746
 47 ibid p 761
 48 Ibid p 770

In February he sent copies of the play to Nathan and to his
 49
 own American agent Richard Madden and in March he was working
 upon some alterations to it - "trying to make the difference between
 the B (rown) Priest & the R (ed) Priest (i. e. later "the Purple Priest")
 50
 clearer; to make the girl more consistent; & to do something about Kian".

Even so it seems that The Star was to all intents and purposes
 finished before O'Casey began work on the next volume of autobiography
 in June 1939.

Any relationship between The Star and the volumes of autobiography
 from Pictures in the Hallway onwards thus concerns simply the play's
 contribution to and influence upon the autobiographies.

Unlike the "pre-autobiography" plays, The Star is certainly not
 given an exhaustive reworking within the autobiographical volumes,
 but it does contribute rather more to the nature and substance of the
 autobiographies which followed it than did Within The Gates and its
 material. Its most marked contributions to the autobiographies from
Pictures in the Hallway onwards are its stock portrait (in Sheasker, a
 51
 corrupt union official) of a capitalist complete with gold watch-chain,
 52
 its symbolism of a church spire to represent the authority of the Church,
 53
 and its diction and imagery. Perhaps too, its portrait of "Red Jim"
 and presentation, albeit idealised, of events concerning the Irish Labour
 movement and the 1913 lock-out strike made some contribution to the
 54
 portrait of Jim Larkin in Drums Under the Windows, and to the depiction
 55
 of events within the historical scheme of the same volume .

49 See Letter to Nathan, 8 February 1939, Letters Vol. I p 775
 50 Letter to Nathan 14 March 1939 ibid p 786
 51 See for example, Pictures in the Hallway in connection with the
 characterisation of Anthony Dovergull, p 262
 52 See Pictures in the Hallway pp 349-50
 53 See, for eg. the invocation to the "Red Star" Inishfallen p 139
 54 See Drums Under the Windows pp 572-4
 55 See Drums Under the Windows pp 575-589

This legacy of the play to the subsequent autobiographies denotes a much greater compatibility in material between The Star and the autobiographies than exists between Within The Gates and the autobiographical volumes. And this may indicate how The Star does, perhaps directly as a result of the writing of I Knock at the Door, mark a return in the plays to the kind of material and setting that O'Casey had used in plays before Within The Gates, and had begun to utilise again in the first volume of autobiography.

CHAPTER TEN

Pictures in The Hallway - Purple Dust - Red Roses for Me -

Drums under the Windows

A second volume of autobiography which was to be called "Come On In" and was "to consist of what happened till I joined the Irish Movement", was planned virtually as soon as O'Casey completed I Knock at the Door.¹ The writing of this second volume, however, did not begin until after the completion of The Star Turns Red, and seems to have been further delayed by a prosecution over an allegedly broken lease at 49 Overstrand Mansions, Battersea.² In a letter dated 4th April 1939, O'Casey wrote to George Jean Nathan:

I am busy with this law case; getting ready a dossier of cross-examination, etc. I tried to do some more of the biography; but had to give it a miss till this damned thing is over.³

But by June 1939 he had commenced the autobiographical volume, which was eventually to be entitled Pictures in the Hallway, for in that month he wrote, again to George Jean Nathan:

I am, with an odd article or two, writing a little of the second part of "I Knock at the Door", & am trying to think of a theme for a new play.⁴

The reference to thoughts about "a new play" at the same time as the actual writing of the autobiography seems significant. Pictures in the Hallway was from the outset to be bound up with the writing of plays. And the relationship and interaction between this volume and the plays which were written most directly under its influence was in general to move

¹ See letter to Harold Macmillan dated 7th October 1938 Letters Vol I p.746.

² For an account of the case of the broken lease see Eileen O'Casey: Sean p. 160 and pp. 164-166.

³ Letters Vol. I pp. 791-2.

⁴ Letter with date of June 1939 supplied by Editor Letters Vol. I p.803.

further away from the kind of "compensatory" or complementary relationship and interaction which is to be found between I Knock at the Door and Within The Gates, and to proceed further in the direction taken by the relationship between I Knock at the Door and The Star Turns Red, with the autobiography making very clear and direct contributions to the plays, and with like in the autobiography inspiring like - rather than compensation or complement - in the play.

By the 25th August 1939 he had written four more autobiographical chapters⁵, three of which, "Royal Residence", "Dung-dodgers over the Border"⁶ and "Cat 'n Cage", were to become the third, fourth and fifth chapters of Pictures in the Hallway respectively. The remaining chapter of the four, which was "about a dog's drowning", and is later referred to in the letters as having the title "Thy Servant a Dog", was with reluctance on O'Casey's part, omitted from the published version of the volume only when Pictures in the Hallway proved, in manuscript, rather too long to be commercially viable.⁷

All four of these chapters written for Pictures in the Hallway reveal very strongly marked "dramatic" features such as those in the "dramatic" episodes of I Knock at the Door. "Royal Residence" and "Cat 'n Cage" are particularly and powerfully dramatic and are triumphs in the presentation of political and universal theme through character, dialogue and incident - exactly as in The Plough and Juno. And Pictures in the Hallway as a whole is strongly "dramatic" in quality, as was I Knock at the

⁵ See O'Casey's letter to Gabriel Fallon, 25th August 1939 Letters Vol. I p.812.

⁶ The chapter "Dung-dodgers over the Border" appears in Pictures in the Hallway under the title of "The Hawthorn Tree".

⁷ See letter from O'Casey to Daniel Macmillan, 1 July 1941 Letters Vol. I p. 888, letter from O'Casey to Peter Newmark, 9 July 1941 ibid p. 891. Letter from O'Casey to Daniel Macmillan, 10 July 1941 ibid p. 892 and Letter from O'Casey to Daniel Macmillan, 17 July 1941 ibid p. 897. It would seem that this chapter "Thy Servant a Dog" was eventually published under the title "The Dog" in Million: New Left Writing, (No. 1), William MacLellan, Glasgow, 1943. It is reprinted in Blasts and Benedictions, pp. 302-308 in which the Editor describes it as a "Chapter of Autobiography".

Door. However the disinclination to write plays, which O'Casey seemingly felt as a result of the difficulties in the productions of Within The Gates, and which might have led him initially to channel so much of his dramatic talents into I Knock at the Door instead of into a new play, seems by the time of the writing of Pictures in the Hallway to be passing away.

Paradoxically, in writing the first volume of autobiography as, perhaps, something of an alternative to a play, O'Casey seems to have been led back to the dramatic form; for the autobiography had, as it were, been keeping his dramatic talents and imagination alive, and had probably also begun to suggest to him material and ideas for plays. He was still disenchanted with the commercial theatre, but he seems to have reached an understanding, perhaps with the aid of the enormously "dramatic" autobiography, that his vocation was that of a dramatist and that he must, therefore, continue to write plays.

While working on The Star in June 1938 he had written to George Jean Nathan:

... things are so curious in the Theatre, I'm not over anxious to come into contact with it again. I dread the dumb look of reproach in so many eyes when a play's a financial failure; and I don't expect any play of mine to be a financial success. However, the new play, success or no, has got to be written; & maybe, more when that's done.⁸

But although he was, perhaps, with the aid of the autobiographies, soon to be well within the stream of the prolific middle period of his career as a playwright, the production prospects of his plays were, for a time, to be worse than they had been for Within the Gates. The Star did achieve an artistically satisfactory production in March 1940, at the Unity Theatre, a left-wing theatre in King's Cross.⁹ But because of its political nature

⁸ Letter dated 28 June 1938 Letters Vol. I p. 728

⁹ For an approving account of the production see Eileen O'Casey, Sean pp. 175-177.

there was to be no question of a production of the play in the commercial theatre - particularly after public opinion in Britain and America turned so bitterly against Russia after her signing of the non-aggression treaty with Germany in 1939.¹⁰ Furthermore, although The Star was published by Macmillan in Britain in February 1940, the Macmillan Company in New York actually decided against publishing the play because it would be politically unpopular with the American public.¹¹

And as far as commercial production in England for any future play - political or non-political - was concerned the prospect was bleak indeed for with the outbreak of war in September 1939 all commercial theatres had closed. O'Casey himself wrote to Nathan in that month.

All theatres and cinemas are closed, so fare you well for awhile. Concerning the theatre, O'Casey's occupation's gone. I'll have to try to look around for some other things to write about to keep the kettle on the hob.¹²

Doubtless this closure of the theatres must have to some extent focused his attention upon continuing with the autobiography and, for financial reasons, he was interested in having "some of the sketches of the 2nd vol taken by some magazine or other".¹³ But in October 1939 he was working only 'spasmodically at the 2nd vol of "I Knock at the Door"', envisaging it as only being finished after "a year and a lot of days", and was trying to think of "something" other than the autobiography "to keep the pot boiling for the next few months".¹⁴ Pictures in the Hallway, then, was not a pot-boiler as such, and O'Casey seemed to be thinking more in terms of the writing of articles "to keep the kettle on the hob".

¹⁰ See O'Casey's Letter of 19th October 1939 to Richard J. Madden Letters Vol I p. 817.

¹¹ See Letter dated 16th February 1940 to O'Casey from George P. Brett Letters Vol I pp. 844-5.

¹² Letter dated September 1939 Letters Vol I p. 815.

¹³ See Letter to Richard J. Madden, 19 October 1939 ibid., p. 818.

¹⁴ Letter as above ibid., p. 818.

Initially conditions in the London theatre during war-time did make some mark on O'Casey's plans for a new play. The "play" which he was contemplating at the same time as he was beginning the volume of autobiography in June 1939 was abandoned and Purple Dust was begun in November 1939. Seemingly Purple Dust, as it was originally conceived, did not, presumably because of the slightness of its subject, qualify for the title of "play". In a letter of 28th November 1939 he wrote:

I have had to pass off, for the time being, my vague scheme for a new play. The times are too bad. But I am attempting a sort of a comedy to be called -, I think "Purple Dust", and which I hope may be done, or nearly done, early on in the new year. As well, I do an odd chapter of 2 vol. of "I Knock at the Door"; to be called, I think, "Rough House".¹⁵

The idea for the "new play" that was abandoned at this time might just possibly have prefigured the play Red Roses for Me which was not actually begun until after both Purple Dust and Pictures in the Hallway were completed. O'Casey's letters give no clue as to the nature of the projected and then abandoned play, but his wife in her book Sean does make an otherwise puzzling reference to O'Casey, having "practically ended The Star Turns Red", "Next, . . . contemplating a play entitled Red Roses for Me, in which one of the Dublin characters was partly based on a figure familiar to us in Totnes. . . . but as yet Red Roses was only just forming in Sean's mind; he continued to put the last touches to The Star Turns Red."¹⁶

Once Purple Dust was begun in November 1939, O'Casey made very rapid progress with the writing of it. On 13th January 1940 he was hard at work on 'Purple Dust', a joke in three acts'¹⁷ and by the 18th of that month he had '2/3rds of a new play done; and the last of it roughly written -

¹⁵ Letter to George Jean Nathan, Letters, Vol I p. 823.

¹⁶ Sean, pp. 166-7.

¹⁷ Letter to Peter Newmark, 13th January 1940 Letters Vol. I p. 835

a comedy to be called "Purple Dust".¹⁸ By the 24th January he had 'just ended, roughly, the last act of "Purple Dust", but was "writing an alternative end; then I'll think for a while; and so eventually choose which will be the better one."¹⁹ By early February the play was finished, for in a letter of that time he described himself as having been 'very busy; . . . finishing the play. "Purple Dust".' and refers to having a "fair copy" of the play typed to send to his American agent.²⁰ The whole play had, then, been written in about three months. And while the first reference to the writing of Purple Dust (in the letter of 28th November, 1939 to Nathan) is coupled with a reference to O'Casey's writing 'as well .. an odd chapter of 2 vol. of "I Knock at the Door"', no further reference is made in the letters to any more work being done on the autobiography during the time that the play was being written. This apparent concentration upon the play might be one reason for the swiftness of its composition. The next reference in the letters to the writing of the autobiography occurs in a letter dated 30th March 1940 (that is, about two months after the completion of the play) in which O'Casey writes: "I am busy on my autobiography, . . . & hope to have most of another volume done by the end of the year".²¹ And in a letter of a day later he writes: "I am still working on the second book of my life. I have ten chapters done; & I think some of them are very good."²² It would appear, then, that with the completion of Purple Dust O'Casey turned his energies once again into the writing of the book which was to become Pictures in the Hallway.

¹⁸ Letter to Gabriel Fallon, 18th January 1940 Letters Vol. I p. 837.

¹⁹ Letter to Peter Newmark, 24th January 1940 Letters Vol. I. p. 838.

²⁰ Letter to George Jean Nathan, 4th February 1940 ibid p. 841.

²¹ Letter to Peter Newmark ibid p. 853.

²² Letter to George Jean Nathan, 31st March 1940 p. 855.

The parts of the autobiographies which were written before the play, and which could, therefore, potentially have influenced the writing and nature of Purple Dust are, then, the whole of the first volume and four chapters written for the second - "Royal Residence", "Dung-dodgers over the Border" (i.e. "The Hawthorn Tree"), "Cat 'n Cage" and the chapter "about a dog's drowning".

A general but important influence of the writing of autobiography upon the nature of the play Purple Dust is the specific setting of the play in Ireland, although, as later volumes of the autobiography - particularly Rose and Crown - were to reveal, the play derives much of its material and certain of its themes from O'Casey's experiences in England in the years prior to those in which it was written. But Purple Dust's setting of the Irish countryside as opposed to the Dublin of the early plays and of the early autobiographies is perhaps something of a significant independent development also.

Despite this general influence from the writing of the autobiography upon the nature of Purple Dust, there is very little evidence indeed of an actual textual influence from I Knock at the Door upon Purple Dust.

The only apparently probable link between the texts of the two works concerns "The Tired Cow" chapter of the autobiography. In this strangely poignant chapter Johnny is asked, by a drover, to stand guard in the rain over a cow, which has collapsed from exhaustion while being driven with her herd, through the Dublin streets to the quay and the cattle boats. After a long vigil, with no sign of the drover's reappearance, Johnny creeps away home, leaving the animal lying indifferently in the rain and the cold. So poignant is this episode that the cow almost seems to become a symbol of resigned and patient suffering - perhaps the resigned and patient sufferings of the poor.

Johnny stood in the deep of a doorway, cautiously keeping his eye on the cow. Beyond an occasional twitch of her tail, she gave no sign of life. Every beast in the forest is God's, he thought, an' the cattle upon a thousand hills. But a sthray cow lying' on a

rain-wet street is not enough to make God bother his head to give a thought about it. ...

... At the end of the road he looked back, and, in the purple of the twilight, he saw the dark mass of the cow, still lying' on the path where everybody walked, starin' straight in front of her as if she saw nothin ', while the rain still kept fallin' on her softly; but the sun had stopped her shinin', and the rain was no longer golden. (pp. 73-4)

Purple Dust seems possibly related to this "Tired Cow" episode in two respects. One is the appearance in Act II of "bull's" head - in reality "Jest a harmless innocent cow" (p. 58)²³ - through the hall doorway of Stoke and Poges' mansion, much to the terror of the occupants of the house. After the play was completed and published O'Casey, commenting on the play's inherent, but originally unintentional symbolism, wrote:

As a matter of fact, the play was begun, and well on its way without a thought of symbolism, being named simply, a "Stay in the Country". I, being tired of controversy about my plays, determined to write at least one that wouldn't cause any comment (adverse), and that would go on, and be seen through bursts of laughter; and, incidentally, bring me in a few quid badly needed. Even the poor cow - that troubled T.C.D.M.⁽²⁴⁾ so much - was a perfectly innocent animal. The play simply grew out of what I first thought, and, only when it was finished in its rough form (which means three quarters done), did I see its implications. I'm afraid, I've builded better than I knew.²⁵

Earlier in a reply to "T.C.D.M.'s" review of the play O'Casey gave

²³ Unless otherwise stated page references to the text of Purple Dust are to Collected Plays Vol. III which contains a slightly revised version of the play. But in the study of the play in conjunction with the autobiographies the first version of Purple Dust (Sean O'Casey: Purple Dust, A Wayward Comedy in Three Acts, London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1940) has also been considered.

²⁴ T.C. Murray, Irish playwright and critic. "T.C.D.M." being a quibble upon Murray's initials and those of Trinity College, Dublin. Murray had reviewed Purple Dust in Irish Press, 20 December 1940.

²⁵ Letter to Gabriel Fallon, 29 March 1941 Letters Vol. I p. 882.

a hint as to the significance that the "perfectly innocent animal" might have taken upon itself:

I would remind the critic that the cow has a sacred signification in some countries; and that even in Erinn it was a symbol of grand things, which the critic would have known, had he ever sung Drimin Donn Dilis.²⁶

"Drimin Don Dilis" ("Sweet Brown Cow") appears in patriotic poetry as a symbol of Ireland. And the cow in the play - which strikes terror into the hearts of Englishmen Stoke and Poges, who have set out to patronise and, in a sense, exploit Ireland and the Irish for their own pleasure and convenience - might well be interpreted as representing something of the "real" Ireland which the cowardly and comfort-loving Stoke Poges will find, to their cost, to be infinitely less congenial to them, and infinitely more awesome and worthy of respect, than they first supposed. In retrospect, in the light of this interpretation of the appearance of "the cow" in the play, the episode of "the tired cow" in the autobiography might be seen to have had a possible nationalist significance, with Ireland as the tired and hopeless animal oppressed and exhausted by English rule.

"The Tired Cow" chapter and the play are further related in so far as the entire autobiographical episode takes place in the rain - in rain that makes Johnny think of the Biblical account of Noah and the Flood - while the play ends in a deluge reminiscent of the cataclysm in the Bible. In the autobiography Johnny wonders:

How 'ud it be, if God opened the windows
of heaven, an' let it rain, rain like hell, for
forty days an' forty nights, like it did when

²⁶ From a letter to Irish Press dated 12th January 1941 which was published in part on 17th January 1941. The passage quoted above was not published at that time but is to be found in the full version of the letter as it appears in Letters Vol. I. p.876.

the earth was filled with violence, an' it repented the Lord that He hath made man, causin' a flood till the waters covered the houses an' the highest tops of the highest mountains in the land? There'd be a quare scatterin' an' headlong rushin' about to get a perch on the highest places, to sit watchin' the water risin' an' risin' till it lapped your legs, and there was nothin' left to do but to close your eyes, say a hot prayer, slide in with a gentle slash splash, an' go to God; ... But that could never happen now, for God had promised Noah, a just man and perfect in his generation, there'd never be anything like a flood any more; and as proof positive, set His bow in the cloud as a token of a covenant between Him and the earth, ...

There was the very rainbow, now, sparklin' fine, one end restin' on the roof of Mrs. Mullally's house, and the other end leanin' on the top of one of the Dublin Mountains, with the centre touchin' the edge of the firmament; ... (p. 70).

It might well be that the background of rain in the "Tired Cow" episode and, more specifically, Johnny's vision of the Flood in a modern Irish setting, directly or indirectly provided inspiration for the final act and ending of the play. The whole of Act III is punctuated by "the sounds of falling rain and swishing winds" (p. 83). And the climax of the act and of the play is reached "when the river rises".

Then O'Dempsey and Souhaun, and O'Killigain and Avril leave the house and its other inhabitants to the fate described by "The Figure" who represents "the spirit of the turbulent waters of the rising river": (p. 115)

The river has broken her banks and is rising high; high enough to come tumbling in on top of you. Cattle, sheep, and swine are moaning in the whirling flood. Trees of an ancient heritage, that looked down on all below them, are torn from the power of the place they were born in, and are tossing about in the foaming energy of the waters. Those who have lifted their eyes unto the hills are firm of foot, for in the hills is safety; but a trembling perch in the highest place on the highest house shall be the portion of those who dwell in the valleys below! (p. 115)

And the curtain falls on the play as "green waters tumble" into the house (p. 119).

The ending of the play, written when O'Casey was aware of the play's potential for symbolism, and chosen by him from two possible conclusions

to the play²⁸ does seem, however, to have origins not only in the Biblical story of the Flood and, perhaps, in that story as it was utilised in I Knock at the Door, but also seems to derive inspiration from Blake's image of "the waters of materialism" and seems to present the fulfilment of Keegan's prophecy, towards the end of Shaw's John Bull's Other Island, that: "the day may come when these islands shall live by the quality of their men rather than by the abundance of their minerals; and then we shall see".²⁹

Of the four chapters which were written for the second autobiographical volume before O'Casey began work on Purple Dust, two of the three chapters which were eventually published in Pictures in the Hallway possess some affinity with the play.

The relationship between "Royal Residence" and the play consists of a simple correspondence between minor incidents. In the autobiography Uncle Tom, taking Johnny on an outing to Kilmainham Gaol, warns him:

... look here, Johnny, while we're in the jail, say nothin' about Parnell, nor anything you think your poor Da used to say either. (p. 201).

And this kind of warning against unintentionally revealing political opinions in a hostile environment occurs again in the play, although in Purple Dust the potentially dangerous sentiments represent a point of view diametrically opposed to that expressed through Johnny's artless remarks about Parnell:

Poges (wildly). Our pride shall be their pride, our elegance their elegance, and the banner of the Ormonds shall fly from the battlements again! The King, the King, God bless him!

1st Workman (warningly). I wouldn't say too much about the King, sir; we're a little touchy about kings down here in Clune na Geera. (Act II p. 64).

²⁸ See letter to Peter Newmark, 24 January 1940 quoted above.

²⁹

Bernard Shaw: John Bull's Other Island with How He Lied to Her Husband and Major Barbara, London, Constable and Company Ltd, revised and reprinted Standard Edition 1931 pp. 172-3.

The chapter "The Hawthorn Tree" bears several more points of resemblance with the play. The first of these concerns the hawthorn tree itself:

Johnny stood in the old waste field at the head of the street, looking at the hawthorn tree. It was a big tree, and its broad branches of rich white bloom were bending down so low that, if he sprang up into the air, he could easily catch one .. Her scented message of summer's arrival came pouring out of her blossoms, and went streaming down the little narrow street. A spicy smell, thought Johnny, like all the spicy breezes that blow from Ceylon's isle, ...

... The spice of Ireland, Ireland's hawthorn tree. And this grand tree was theirs. Right at the top of the little street it stood for everyone in the street to see it. The people of the street were always watching it, except in winter when it was bare and bony, cold and crooked. But the minute it budded, they took their eyes to it, and called it lovely ...

And the first flower would send them into the centre of a new hope, for the praties were dug, the frost was all over, and the summer was comin' at last. And no cloud of foreboding came till autumn's dusky hand hung scarlet berries on the drowsy tree, and all the people, with their voices mingling, murmured, the long dreary nights, the reckless rain, the chilly sleet, the cold winds, an' all the hathred in winther is comin' again.

...

If he wanted, now, he could easily climb up and break off a branch to bring the scent of the hawthorn tree right into his own home. But all the people round said it was unlucky to bring hawthorn into a house, ... Sacred to the good people, Kelly said; but he was only up a few years from the bog. They, the fairies, danced round it at night, he said, gay an' old an' careless, they danced round it the livelong night, and no matter how far away they were, they heard it moan whenever a branch was broken. (pp. 210-212).

In the autobiography the beauty and mysterious magical associations of the thorn tree are set against the squalid aspects of the way of life in Johnny's street. Particularly, in this chapter, the qualities of the tree are contrasted with the activities of the "dung-dodgers", whose job it is "to empty out the petties and ashpits in the backyards of the people, filling the whole place with a stench that didn't disappear for a week". (p . 212). The hawthorn tree in the autobiography

is also associated with love:

Johnny turned his thoughts away from the thought of winter, and gazed again at the pearly-blossomed hawthorn tree. Here, some day, in the quietness of a summer evening, in a circle of peace, it would be good to sit here with curly-headed Jennie Clitheroe, nothing between them save the sweet scent from the blossoms above. It would be good, good, better, best, positive, comparative, superlative, an' God would see that it was good, and would no longer repent that He had made man in His own image. (p. 212)

The play seems to reveal a direct influence from the chapter in Act I's reference to "The blasted thorn tree" with its associations of magic and its connections, hitherto unfortunate, with love and lovers.

O'Killigain arranges to meet Avril:

Tonight, or tomorrow night, then, beside the blasted thorn tree.

Avril (with fright in her voice). The blasted thorn tree! Oh, not there, not there - for evil things sit high, sit low in its twisty branches; and lovers, long ago, who leaned against it lost their love or died. No, no, not there: a saint himself would shudder if he had to pass it on a dusty night, with only a sly chit of a moon in the sky to show the way.

O'Killigain. Oh, foolish girl, there never can be evil things where love is living. Between the evil things an' us we'll make the sign of the rosy cross, an' it's blossomin' again the dead an' dry thing will be, an' a fruit will follow. (p. 16).

The play's reference to the tree's flowering again also seems to recall the description in the autobiography of how the hawthorn tree comes to life in spring and summer to give the people "new hope".

A Biblical reference, used ironically in "The Hawthorn Tree", finds its way into Purple Dust, and this too might be evidence of an influence from the autobiography to the play. Johnny, from his vantage point under the hawthorn, sees "what looked like little hills, one after the other", along the street in which he lived. With regard to these "hills", which are really piles of filth removed from the ashpits by the dung-dodgers, the comment is made: "I lift up mine eyes until the hills". (p. 212).³⁰

³⁰ "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (Psalm 121).

In the play, the same line of the psalm is quoted but without irony:

those who are to be saved from the waters at the end of the play are "Those who have lifted their eyes unto the hills" (Act III p. 115).

But a rather more important, if less easily defined, correspondence between the language of the chapter and that of the play is contained within a passage from the autobiography in which Mrs. Middleton, a neighbour of Mrs. Casside, and Mrs. Casside herself forestall Johnny's attempt to take a spray of hawthorn into the house:

Don't let him bring it into the house, she said seriously, bending her head close to Mrs. Casside, for it's the same may bring with it the very things we thry to keep at a distance.

-An what does it bring into the house with it? asked Johnny.

- Things that toss in a golden glory to a distant eye, said his mother, and, at the touch of a human hand, turn to withering leaves whirling about in a turbulént wind.

-And, said Mrs Middleton, things that swing in a merry dance to a silver song that changes, quick as thought, to a dolorous sigh and a thing stretched out in a white-wide sheet in the midst of a keen an' the yellow flame from a single candle. So leave your little twig o'hawthorn on the window-sill, outside, alanna.

-Ay, Johnny, said his mother, leave it there, for though it is only roman catholics who cherish such foolish fables, it's always safer to be on your guard. (p. 215)

It is the poetical quality of this passage and the mysterious, magical quality and atmosphere which that poetical quality conveys that seem to find their way directly into the play, very particularly into certain speeches of Philib O'Dempsey, the "2nd Workman", in Act II. Described by O'Killigain as "a wandherin' king holdin' th'ages be th'hand" (Act I p. 18), and describing himself as having his "share o' wondhers, new an' old" (Act II, p. 68), the "2nd Workman" overawes the materialistic and unimaginative Poges, in a dialogue in which he tells Poges of some of the visions which he sees. The following speeches are a part of that dialogue.

I hear sthrange things be day, an' see
sthrange things be night when I'm touched
be the feel of the touch of the long-handed
Lugh. When the Dagda makes a gong o' the

moon, an' the Sword o' Light shows the way
to all who see it.

.....

Then every rib o' grass grows into a
burnished fighter that throws a spear, or waves
a sword, an' flings a shield before him. Then
Ireland crinkles into a camp, an' Kings an' sages,
queens an' heroes, saints an' harpers stare me in
the face, an' bow, an' pass, an' cry out blessing
an' vict'ry too, for Heber's children, with
the branch of greatness waving in their hands! (Act II p. 69).

If "The Hawthorn Tree" and Purple Dust are related in such poetic evocations of mystery and magic, they are also related in that both place the poetry in the mouths of working class people. And, since the poetic manner of speaking manifests the poetic vision of the speakers, both autobiography and play thereby attribute the greatest gift in life, a true understanding of the wonder of life, to the "ordinary" people. The chapter "The Hawthorn Tree", as a whole, reveals how Johnny and his neighbours, despite the poverty of their surroundings and despite the squalour and filth (as represented by the activities of the dung-dodgers) with which they are forced to contend as part of their daily lives, are far from blind to beauty - as symbolised by the hawthorn tree in which all the inhabitants of the street take great pride. The play itself goes one step further in explicitly stating that only the working classes and the poor can possess such vision. After O'Killigain has referred to the "2nd Workman"^{as} "a wandherin' king" Souhaun asks "How could a common worker be a king, O'Killigain?", and is given the reply:

Easier than for a king to be a common worker.
Th' king o' a world that doesn't exist was a
carpenter. (Act I p. 18).

While the "2nd Workman" himself tells Poges that visions of Ireland's heroic greatness cannot be seen "with an eye that can see no further than the well-fashioned edge of a golden coin" (Act II p. 69).

This may mark something of a return to the themes of the "pre-autobiography" plays in which the "ordinary" people were those who were innately capable of seeing the true values and realities of life. In

Within The Gates this quality of vision was bestowed almost solely upon the artist, who then attempted to communicate the vision to others. In The Star "vision" was the prerogative of the leaders and adherents of the political party favoured by the author; although, perhaps because of the influence of the autobiography which kept the qualities and traditions of the earlier plays alive, the expression of the "Old Woman's" human values cast doubts as to the validity of a vision of life which is so bound up in political dogma. In Purple Dust, however, the influence of the autobiography in its endowment of the "ordinary" people with all the qualities of life, is now completely triumphant, and, in this respect, leads the play back to the traditions of the early plays.

However, in another respect the play and the autobiographies are still complementing, rather than corresponding with, each other; for whereas the plays before The Tassie and the first volume of the autobiography tend to depict women as most strongly possessing the gift of vision, Purple Dust follows The Tassie and Within The Gates in primarily bestowing the "true" vision of life upon men. But as the autobiographies progress, and particularly as Pictures in the Hallway is being written, a male figure possessed of poetic insight, the growing and increasingly aware, Johnny himself, emerges side by side with, and then gradually overshadows the heroine, Mrs. Casside. And Johnny's views upon "the hawthorn tree" are similar to those of O'Killigain's. And so even in respect of their initially contrasting or complementary presentations of female/male vision and values, it seems that with the writing of Pictures in the Hallway and Purple Dust the autobiographies and the plays are coming closer together.

But actual words in the autobiographical passage concerning the magic connections of the hawthorn have perhaps made a further contribution to the play - a highly important, even fundamental, contribution - in so far as certain of the words spoken by Mrs. Casside might have suggested a central image, and the title of, the play. For she speaks of:

Things that toss in a golden glory to a distant eye, ... and, at the touch of a human hand, turn to withering leaves whirling about in a turbulent wind. (pp. 214-15),

and this speech strongly suggests the imagery which the 2nd Workman uses to describe Ireland's heroic past as it appears to the dull of perception:

they see these things only as a little cloud
o' purple dust blown before the wind. (Act II p. 106)

And so, although comparatively little of Pictures in The Hallway was written before O'Casey began work on Purple Dust the chapter "The Hawthorn Tree" at least seems to have exerted some distinct influence upon, and to have made a few distinct, even fundamental, contributions to the nature and text of the play. Since it appears that the author suspended work on the autobiography while he rapidly wrote the play it cannot be said that the play and the autobiography interacted simultaneously with each other. But since once the play was completed the author returned to the writing of the autobiography there was opportunity for the play, in its turn, to exert influence upon and make contributions to Pictures in the Hallway. And to some extent it does contribute to the remainder of the autobiographical volume.

The play's image of "purple dust blown before the wind", for example, which was perhaps originally inspired by words in "The Hawthorn Tree" chapter of the autobiography, now seems to find its way out of the play and back again into the autobiography. But it loses, in the process, the poetic, mythological and historic significances with which the play endowed it, and now it is Bidy, the dealer in Hyndim and Leadem's rejected and broken goods and crockery, who uses the phrase. Complaining about the quality of the wares she has bought off Dovergull, ^{she} grumbles:

God keep the air still, for, if a breeze blows,
it's fallin' in coloured dust they'll be, ... (p. 264).

Also, one of the play's aspects or qualities which was partially derived from Pictures in the Hallway was, apparently to find its way, as it were, in toto into the autobiography. For if it was from the auto-

biography that the play derived its presentation of ordinary people as possessing the vision of the wonders of life, it was the play itself which made the explicit contrast between the innate vision of the workmen, O'Killigain and O'Dempsey, and the "blindness" of the business-men Stoke and Poges. And it is this explicit contrast which finds its way, complete, from the play to the autobiography. And just as in Purple Dust "the well-fashioned edge of a golden coin" renders Poges blind to those splendours of Ireland's heroic heritage which the 2nd Workman sees so clearly, so in those chapters of Pictures in the Hallway written after the play, time and time again the rich and materialistic Dovergull is revealed to be totally ignorant of the kind of beauty which the impoverished yet imaginative Johnny can see in the world. And while, for example, in the chapter "To Him That Hath Shall Be Given", the complacent Dovergull's "timepiece" is the solid yet ostentatiously, even vulgarly, ornate "clock of black marble, speckled with grey, shaped like a temple, . . ." (p. 284) which his employees give him as a wedding-present, the penniless Johnny has the power to appreciate, and thus to possess as his own, "the star-crowded sky, the majestic timepiece of the universe" (p. 287).

After its interaction with the writing of Pictures in the Hallway, Purple Dust was to make several distinct contributions to the subsequent volumes of autobiography. Notable amongst these contributions is the imagery of dust, and of dust blown in the wind. Although this imagery might have originated in Pictures in the Hallway and was re-introduced there again after the play was written, the images concerning dust which appear in Inishfallen, Rose and Crown and Sunset and Evening Star are all concerned with death and the passing of time, even of the passing of splendour, and in this they proclaim their kinship with the

play rather than with Pictures in the Hallway.³¹ The play also seems to contribute very markedly to an extensive passage of "dramatic" dialogue in the title-chapter of Rose and Crown. This dialogue, which concerns Ireland and the Irish,^{is} ostensibly between Stanley Baldwin and Sean.

But the way in which the mischievous, yet proud and clever, Irishman runs verbal rings around the cunning, yet dull and unimaginative, Englishman, surely recalls quite directly, and amalgamates, two sequences of dialogue in the play. In the first of these sequences the "1st Workman" skilfully yet outrageously flatters the ruthless but gullible Poges, and in the second, the "2nd Workman" proudly and disdainfully tells the bewildered Poges of Ireland's heroic heritage.³² Rose and Crown's descriptions of "Big Houses" in both England and Ireland and of the end of the era of the "Big House" and all that it symbolises,³³ seem to be related to the symbolism and themes of the play, which is set in an Elizabethan mansion about to be swept away by the waters of time. And Rose and Crown depictions of Sean's acquaintanceship with some of these houses after he achieved fame as a writer, seem to suggest that his real-life experience of "Big Houses" might initially have helped to inspire the play.³⁴ Similarly his tirades against country-life in Rose and Crown

³¹ See Inishfallen pp. 236-7, in which images of "mothering dust" and "dust, blowing about, restless, no-one knew whither or where" are used in describing how the splendour and might associated with the British Empire had passed from Dublin. Also Rose and Crown (p. 300) which, describing children playing in a graveyard, contrasts "the living dust ... vivid, asparkle, bounding about" with "the dead dust (which) had ceased to shine, even in the memory of man". In the same volume (p. 365) the author refers to religious belief in such things as possession by demons as "dusty fables, blown about by a sour wind from the middle ages", which "rise like dust and blur the eyes of some ...". And Sunset and Evening Star (p. 600), describing a once-aristocratic area of London, refers to the "Dust of time" and "the scintillating dust of England".

³² See Rose and Crown pp. 313-321 and compare, for example, Purple Dust Act II pp. 61-4, (dialogue between Poges and "1st Workman" and Act II, pp. 67-72 (dialogue between Poges and "2nd Workman").

³³ See, for example, Rose and Crown pp. 258, 283, 385-6, p. 389-90.

³⁴ Rose and Crown p. 257: "The plays proved to be a passport for Sean into the big, big houses". In her book, Mrs O'Casey identifies the house, which, in the autobiography, her husband symbolically describes as "a great conservative mansion, Richer England's tapestried tavern of the Rose and Crown" (p. 312) as Londonderry House, London home of Lord and Lady Londonderry (Sean, p. 73), and she describes the O'Casey's friendship with Lady Londonderry.

and Sunset and Evening Star again seem to suggest both the influence of the play in the literary expression of this theme, and, on another level, the kind of experience which, in real-life, helped to inspire, or provide material for, the original play.³⁵ O'Casey was living in the country at the time the play was written). Drums Under the Windows in its account of how the development of Sean's thought was influenced by a discovery and reading of Shaw's John Bull's Other Island might suggest a literary influence on the nature of the original play.³⁶

And so if there is strong evidence of some interaction between the writing and nature of Pictures in the Hallway and Purple Dust and that, all in all, the relationship between them is moving away from one of contraries or complements to one of correspondence, yet it seems too that with Purple Dust O'Casey was still largely looking outside his autobiographies for inspiration and material for his plays. And, if the origins of much of the initial substance of the play did not lie in those parts of the autobiography which preceded it, Drums Under the Windows and Rose and Crown provide strong evidence as to where the roots of Purple Dust do lie.

³⁵ See, for example, the chapter of Rose and Crown which is entitled "A Gate Clangs Shut" which describes how "Sean and Eileen and their boy fled from London, ... fled from the frying-pan of city poverty to the furnace of poverty in the glad green country" (p. 361) and describes too the "western worsten way of life" (p. 363) that awaited them there, and compare with the play, in its depiction of Stoke's and Poge's theoretical love of, and, in practical terms, extreme discomfort in, the countryside.

See also Rose and Crown, pp. 419 in which O'Casey, as a city-man born and bred maintains that New York seems to him quieter than the Devon countryside, and compare with this passage the opening stage direction and opening dialogue of Act II of the play (pp. 47-9).

³⁶ See chapter of Drums Under the Windows entitled "Green Fire on the Hearth", and particularly, what amounts to O'Casey's analysis of John Bull's Other Island itself (pp. 559-61).

But if the act of writing and the actual text of Pictures in the Hallway itself provided little initial inspiration or substance for Purple Dust it certainly provided inspiration, substance, and even actual text, in abundance for Purple Dust's successor Red Roses for Me. And of all O'Casey's plays Red Roses for Me is perhaps the one which owes the clearest and most direct debt to an autobiography.

With the completion of Purple Dust in February 1940 O'Casey once again turned his attention to Pictures in the Hallway. In March 1940, according to the letters, he was "busy on my autobiography, . . . & hope to have most of another volume done by the end of the year"³⁷ and had "ten chapters done; and I think some of them are very good".³⁸ In May 1940 he was 'trying to keep going at the "Biography"; but with a nation in arms around one, it's slow going.'³⁹

A letter of 29th October 1940, however, might well be highly significant not simply because it refers to his progress in the autobiography, but because it reveals also that he is thinking about a new play:

... I am working at "The Biography", & in a chapter just written, I've included a song, that I like, called "She Carries a Rich Bunch of Red Roses for Me". I have a few thoughts swimming around in my head for another play, too;⁴⁰ & hope things will let them grow into a decision.

The chapter of Pictures which ends with the song "She Carries a Rich Bunch of Red Roses for Me" is "Touched By The Theatre" which was to form the thirteenth chapter in the volume. Since the song itself was not only

³⁷ Letter to Peter Newmark, 30 March, 1940 Letters Vol I p. 853.

³⁸ Letter to George Jean Nathan, 31 March 1940 ibid, p. 855.

³⁹ Letter to George Jean Nathan, 26 May 1940 ibid, pp. 863-4.

⁴⁰ Letter to George Jean Nathan, ibid, p. 870.

to be included as a song in O'Casey's next play, but was to provide its central vein of imagery, and even its title, it is almost irresistible to conjecture that the "play" he was thinking about when he had "just written" "Touched by the Theatre" was an early concept of Red Roses for Me, and that the writing of the autobiographical chapter thus directly provided much of the inspiration and imagery for the play.

But the new play was not seemingly begun until well after Pictures as a whole was completed. By 1st July 1941 he had sent the manuscript of the volume to the publishers and it had been found to be too long. Since the chapters "one by one, follow the years" he found it "undesirable to evict any of them from their holding",⁴¹ but eventually the chapter about "The Dog" and "He Paints His First Picture" - which originally formed the last chapter of the book - were omitted.⁴² As soon as Pictures was completed O'Casey was making references to the future volumes of autobiography. On the completion of I Knock at the Door he had envisaged the autobiographies as consisting of three volumes in all, now he was thinking in terms of four volumes:

I had thought of four altogether, with the last one to be called, "The Clock Strikes Twelve". What the intervening one may be called, God only knows; if indeed any other thing can be written. If there be, it will be per ardua ad astra with a vengeance.⁴³

Despite his reference to "per ardua ad astra" he must obviously have been enjoying the writing of autobiography, or he would not have been so eager to allow the scheme of the autobiographical volumes to increase so much in scope.

⁴¹ See letter to Daniel Macmillan, 1st July, 1941, Letters, Vol I p. 888.

⁴² See letter to Daniel Macmillan, 17th July, 1941 Letters Vol I p. 897.

⁴³ Letter to Daniel Macmillan 1st July, 1941 ibid, p. 888.

It is possible that at some time between July-September 1941 (that is, while he was preparing Pictures in the Hallway for publication) he was contemplating ideas, not for the play which was to be Red Roses for Me, but for its successor Oak Leaves and Lavender. Mrs O'Casey makes a reference to him being "in the middle of his work, editing the second volume of his autobiography, Pictures in the Hallway, and the play, Oak Leaves and Lavender".⁴⁴ Also, the Battle of Britain which provided the background for, and seems to have inspired much of the action of, Oak Leaves had taken place during August 1940 - May 1941, and this too might indicate a date of about 1941 for O'Casey's first thoughts upon, and even initial work on, the play itself.

In a letter of 22nd September 1941, he mentions that he has "just finished the galley-proofs of the biographical second volume" and that "At the moment, I am trying to think out another play."⁴⁵ There is no indication as to whether this "play" and the thoughts around it were the beginnings of Red Roses for Me or of Oak Leaves and Lavender. But when about three months later a play began to be actually written, as opposed to being contemplated, that play was Red Roses in an embryonic form. In a letter of 20th December 1941 he wrote: "I am trying to write another play to be called, I think, Asea in a Gold Canoe".⁴⁶ This early title is enough to determine the identity of the play involved, for the phrase is not entirely lost to the published version of Red Roses for Me. In Act I of Red Roses the play's hero Ayamonn, referring to his attempts to

⁴⁴Eileen O'Casey: Sean, p. 184.

⁴⁵Letter to George Jean Nathan, Letters Vol. I p. 905.

⁴⁶Letter to Lovat Dickson, Letters, Vol. I. p. 918.

enrich his life with knowledge, philosophy and art, tells his mother,

Mrs Breydon:

... I am drifting away from you, Mother, a dim shape now, in a gold canoe, dipping over a far horizon. (p.135)⁴⁷

and in Act II he tells his timorous sweetheart, Sheila:

.. we've gone a long way in a gold canoe over many waters, bright and surly, sometimes sending bitter spray asplash on our faces. But you were ever listening to the beat from the wings of the angel of fear. So you got out to walk safe on a crowded road. (p. 170).

Whether or not inspiration for the play did come as the author wrote the chapter of Pictures in the Hallway entitled "Touched by the Theatre", and whether or not the idea for a "play", which O'Casey had earlier abandoned in order to write Purple Dust was related to Red Roses,⁴⁸ the actual writing of Red Roses for Me, began well after Pictures in the Hallway was completed in manuscript, and indeed, well after the autobiographical volume had actually been prepared for publication and its galley-proofs had been printed and corrected. Correspondences between the texts of the works must then reveal the influence of the autobiography upon the play.

But Red Roses for Me derives inspiration not just directly from Pictures in the Hallway but from O'Casey's very action of writing autobiography, or

⁴⁷Page references to the text of the play are to Sean O'Casey: Collected Plays Vol. III London, Macmillan, 1951. By virtue of its place in the Collected Plays, this text is the standard version of the play but it is neither the first nor the last published version. The first version was published as Red Roses for Me; London, Macmillan, 1942, and the final version appears in Three More Plays by Sean O'Casey The Silver Tassie, Purple Dust, Red Roses for Me with an introduction by J.C. Trewin, London, Macmillan St. Martin's Press, 1965. In the examination of the relationship between the autobiographies and Red Roses for Me all three versions of the text of the play have been consulted, but such discrepancies as exist between the different versions are of no significance in this connection.

⁴⁸See above.

rather from the train of thought that that action stimulated. Mrs. O'Casey describes Red Roses for Me as being "lyrical and very personal",⁴⁹ while commentators on the play have referred to it as "that searchingly autobiographical play",⁵⁰ "his most autobiographical play",⁵² "the most autobiographical of O'Casey's plays"⁵³, "Red Roses for Me - Me is apt, for these are recognizably O'Casey's roses",⁵⁴ "The play contains more autobiographical matter than any of the others and is also, perhaps consequently, among his best."⁵⁵

The question as to what the critics consider as being "autobiographical", or as constituting "autobiographical matter", in the play is an interesting one, since, after all, in one sense, absolutely all of the contents of all of the plays must be drawn from O'Casey's own experience of life. But what is really meant by the term "autobiographical matter" is that experience of the author which was also included in his autobiographies and thus was, apparently, endorsed by him, as having its roots directly in his life. And this is a very important distinction. Whether Red Roses for Me is any more "autobiographical" (in the sense of being related to the author's experience) than any other play is debatable, but certainly it is much more obviously and undisguisedly related to the Autobiographies than any other play; and that O'Casey made no attempt to disguise this obvious relationship is extremely significant in the course of the overall relationship between the autobiographies and the plays, and in the interaction of the writing of the autobiographies and the plays of O'Casey's middle period.

⁴⁹ Eileen O'Casey Sean, p.193.

⁵⁰ John O'Riordan in the introduction to The Sting and The Twinkle, p.7.

⁵¹ J.C. Trewin in the introduction to Three More Plays by Sean O'Casey, p.xv.

⁵² David Krause Sean O'Casey The Man and his Work, p. 164.

⁵³ William A. Armstrong Sean O'Casey (Writers and their Work series, No. 198). London, published for The British Council by Longman Group Ltd), 1967, reprinted 1971, p. 22.

⁵⁴ Robert Hogan: The Experiments of Sean O'Casey, p.87.

⁵⁵ Maureen Malone: The Plays of Sean O'Casey, p. 102.

Red Roses for Me, despite its prophetic note, was written in a retrospective frame of mind, a frame of mind doubtless created and fostered by the writing of I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway. Words on the title pages of I Knock at the Door (first edition)⁵⁵, of Pictures in the Hallway, and of the first edition of Red Roses for Me (1942) emphasise the essential similarity in the moods that engendered and pervade them all. I Knock at the Door is subtitled "Swift glances back at things that made me", the title page of Pictures carries the words: Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind, while words quoted by O'Casey from Tom Moore's ballad "Farewell! But whenever you welcome the hour" proclaim the same kind of sentiments beneath the title of Red Roses for Me:

"You may break, you may shatter the vase,
if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

And so it seems that in general terms the writing of autobiography as such influenced the nature of Red Roses for Me, indeed, perhaps even caused it to be written. And if a prototype of Red Roses for Me was the "play" which O'Casey contemplated and abandoned before and in favour of the "comedy" Purple Dust, then it was most certainly the general influence of the writing of autobiography, rather than very specific chapters in Pictures in the Hallway, which first inspired the play, for those specific chapters in Pictures were not written until after Purple Dust.

It was probably too the writing of autobiography in general, rather than the writing of Pictures in the Hallway in particular, that led O'Casey to make the central character of Red Roses a figure representative of himself, exactly as is Johnny (and later Sean) in the autobiographies. This does

⁵⁵ I Knock at the Door, London, Macmillan, 1939.

not mean that Ayamonn is not a "dramatic" figure or that he is not, at times, viewed critically in the play. Johnny/Sean^{and} of the autobiographies are, in the control of the autobiographical narrative, three dimensional "dramatic" characters quite distinct from the author, even though they possess a special relationship with him. And so it is with the portrayal of Ayamonn in the play.

For specific details of Ayamonn's temperament, enthusiasms, activities and experience O'Casey does indeed seem to have drawn directly and extensively upon the portrayal of Johnny in Pictures in the Hallway, but in age, "twenty-two or so" (Act I p. 128), Ayamonn is probably a little closer to Sean of the first chapters of Drums Under the Windows than to Johnny of the closing chapters of Pictures in the Hallway. What is important, however, in connection with the general influence of the writing of autobiography upon the writing of the play is that Ayamonn, like Johnny and like Sean of the early chapters of Drums, is essentially a young O'Casey figure, whereas the author himself, at the time when he began to write the autobiography, was already in middle age, and, at the time when he began to write Red Roses, was entering his sixties. In writing and thinking about the autobiographies and in his "dramatically" objective presentation of Johnny/Sean, O'Casey must have become very much aware not only of those characteristics of himself and of his thought which linked him to his young self, the young hero of the auto-biography, but also of certain changes in himself that the years had brought about. And it is very tempting to believe that in such a frame of mind, O'Casey was led to include within Red Roses something too of an older representative of himself - in the figure of Brennan o' th'Moor. Of course, unlike

⁵⁶ O'Casey was born on 30th March 1880. See David Krause, Sean O'Casey The Man and his Work, p. 1.

Ayamonn, Brennan cannot be regarded as representing O'Casey in the small details and circumstances of his life, activities and personality. And Mrs. O'Casey in her book Sean gives a specific pedigree for Brennan which involves two people from real life. One of these was

A figure familiar to us in Totnes. On Fridays we looked forward to the big market in the town square; ... Regularly, on these Fridays, we saw at the market an old man who was there not to buy, simply to walk round and chat; he buttonholed Sean, pouring out his troubles. His constant worry was his money in the bank. Was the bank to be trusted? I observed that all the time the old man was speaking to me Sean was taking notes. 'I am putting him in my play, Eileen,' he said. 'That's a wonderful character' ...

She adds that:

The rest of Brennan belongs to an old man who played the fiddle in Dublin streets.⁵⁷

But there is, nevertheless, something in Brennan which seems essentially to represent the author's viewpoint upon life. Brennan's "eyes are bright and peering" (Act I p. 144) and this suggests O'Casey's own keen and searching interest in life. Like Ayamonn and the author, he loves song. He has composed the tune to fit Ayamonn's words for the song of "Red roses for Me", and he plays it to the assembled company in Act I. In Act III his singing of a risqué Dublin ballad wins Ayamonn's approval as "a merry song" sung "well" (p. 195), even though the rest of his audience are shocked at its sentiments and far from complimentary to the singer. And, at the end of the play Brennan plays and sings a verse of the "Red Roses for Me" song outside the church in which Ayamonn's body is lying (p. 228). It seems then, that Brennan is the character in the play who most fully shares Ayamonn's vision of life, but in Brennan the youthful impetuosity of Ayamonn has been tempered by the wisdom of age and experience. If Ayamonn and Brennan together do in any

⁵⁷ Eileen O'Casey, Sean, pp. 166-7.

sense constitute something of a dual portrait of the artist young and old, they seem to set something of a precedent. Drishogue and Feelim of Oak Leaves, though like Brennan, they do not share the circumstances of the author's life, certainly share and express his views, Drishogue expressing them from a young view-point,

Feelim from an older one. And in The Bishop's Bonfire Manus and the Codger are, despite the enormous difference in their ages, possessed of the same vision of how life should be, and it is a vision which, fundamentally, they share with the author.

The characterisation of Mrs. Breydon, Ayamonn's mother, in Red Roses for Me also seems to owe its nature to the writing of autobiography, for in the author's avowed purpose of using the autobiography to pay tribute to his mother, he began, in I Knock at the Door to portray her in her own right, instead of presenting her qualities within the presentation of heroines such as Juno and Bessie. But Mrs. Casside is still very much a literary or "dramatic" portrait of O'Casey's mother, and it is a portrait which draws for substance on the portrayal of the heroines of the earlier plays.⁵⁸ The presentation of Mrs. Breydon as a dramatic character but as a figure directly representative of the author's mother, is developed directly out of the presentation of Mrs. Casside in the autobiography.

But if the presence of, and mode of presentation of Ayamonn and Mrs. Casside, and perhaps too of Brennan, in the play depended upon, or arose out of the author's thoughts about, and the writing of, his autobiography in general, very many specific details of the portrayal of Ayamonn and Mrs. Casside are drawn directly from the written texts of the

⁵⁸ See chapter on Juno and the Paycock and The Plough and the Stars above.

first two autobiographical volumes.

For example, I Knock at the Door makes several references to Mrs. Casside growing very special flowers in the window of her home very first of these references is simply to "a geranium growing in a pot near the window" (p.98) but by the next reference Mrs. Casside's flowers are rapidly assuming that significance which made them a recurring symbol, both throughout the autobiographies and in Red Roses for Me, of Mrs Casside's/ Breydon's intuitive love of beauty and thus of her spiritual values and vision. I Knock at the Door's reference to

... the two geraniums, one white, the other red,
and the purple cloaked fuchsia blossoming blithely
amid the wrack of common things around them.

(p. 138)

gives rise to such passages as the following in Pictures in the Hallway in which Mrs. Casside's delight in her flowers are seen as her equivalent to Johnny's delight in art:

.... beauty of colour and form above and beside him came closer; came to his hand; and he began to build a house of vision with them, a house not made with hands, eternal in his imagination, ... Even when the rooms were bare of fire and scant of food, he sang and wondered that life had so much to give; and he tried to share all these sights with his mother; but he saw they had but a timid and feebly-whispered message for her, sending her more eagerly back to the motherly care of her crimson geranium, her golden musk, and her fuchsia, with its purple bells and white waxy sepals drooping royally over the sadness of the cracked and withering window. (p. 388-9)

From Pictures in the Hallway the flowers find their way (in a stylised form) into Acts I and II of Red Roses for Me as a symbolic part of the stage-setting:

Under this window, on a roughly made bench, stand three biscuit tins. In the first grows a geranium, in the second, musk, and in the third, a fuchsia. The disks of the geranium are extremely large and glowing; the tubular blooms of the golden musk, broad, gay, and rich; and the purple bells of the fuchsia, surrounded by their long white waxy sepals, seem to be as big as arum lilies. These crimson, gold, and purple flowers give a regal tint to the poor room. (PP. 127-8)

And the passage from Pictures in the Hallway quoted above seems to have given rise directly to the following passage and incident from the play, in which Ayamonn's insatiable thirst for beauty in knowledge and art is set against Mrs. Breydon's quiet appreciation of beauty in the form of her flowers:

Mrs. Breydon. I'd thry to rest a little, Ayamonn, before you go to work. You're overdoing it. Less than two hours' sleep today, and a long nights work before you. Sketchin', readin', makin' songs, an' learnin' Shakespeare: if you had a piano, you'd be thryin' to learn music. Why don't you stick at one thing, an' leave the others alone?

Ayamonn. They are all lovely, and my life needs them all.

Mrs. Breydon. I managed to get on well enough without them. (A pause. She goes over to the window and tenderly touches the fuchsia. (Act I p. 132)

Of the myriad individual details of Pictures in the Hallway which are woven into the portrayal of Ayamonn in the play, among the most prominent are Johnny's enthusiasm for acting, and for Shakespeare and his rehearsal of the "prison scene" of Shakespeare's King Henry the Sixth (Pictures, pp. 191-3, Red Roses Act I pp. 128-9); the stealing of a book (Johnny steals a volume of Milton's poetry, Pictures pp. 293-4, Ayamonn has stolen a volume of Shakespeare's plays, Red Roses Act II p. 161); Johnny's love of art, particularly the paintings of Constable and Fra Angelico (Pictures pp. 387-388, Red Roses Act I p. 157, Act II, pp. 161), and his own yearning to be a painter (Pictures, p. 387, Red Roses, p. 157); his enthusiasm for the Nationalist cause (Pictures p. 355, Red Roses, Act I p. 159); his feverish attempts to educate himself by reading, and his study, in particular, of Ruskin's Crown of Wild Olive (Pictures pp. 348-9, p. 355-7, Red Roses Act I pp. 157-8); and his friendship with the Protestant Rector of the Parish, (Pictures p. 389, pp. 401-2, Red Roses Act I pp. 180-184, Act IV, throughout).

That the play did derive its material directly from the text of the autobiographies, most particularly from Pictures in the Hallway, rather than

from the author's memories of the past. (be those memories independent of the autobiographies or provoked by them) is very obvious. A complete dialogue, such as that in the "Sword of Light" chapter of Pictures in the Hallway in which Johnny discusses Ruskin's A Crown of Wild Olive with a Republican friend, (pp. 355-7) can be incorporated into the play (Act I pp. 157-9).

... What are you readin' now? he (the tram-conductor) asked, ...

-Crown o' Wild Olives, said Johnny, by John Ruskin.

- Ruskin? Curious name. Irish was he?

- A Scotsman who wrote splendidly.....

Listen to this spoken before a gathering of Business men who were about to build an Exchange in the Yorkshire town of Bradford.

- Aw, Sean, Exchange! interrupted the conductor. What have we got to do with an Exchange?

- Listen, listen for a second, man!
Here's a word or two of what he said:
Your ideal of life is a pleasant and undulating world, with iron and coal everywhere beneath it. On each pleasant bank of this world is to be a beautiful mansion; stable and coach-houses; a park and hothouses; carriage drives and shrubberies; and here are to live the votaries of the Goddess of Getting - on - the English gentleman with his gracious wife and lovely family -

-There, you see, Sean - the English gentleman!

-Wait a second: Irish or Englishman - a gentleman's all the same.

-It isn't, I'm tellin' you; it's different.

(Pictures, pp. 355-6)

Roory ... What oul' book are you readin' now?

Ayamonn ... Oh, that's Ruskin's Crown of Wild Olive - a grand book - I'll lend it to you.

Roory What for? What would I be doin' with it? I've no time to waste on books. Ruskin. Curious name; not Irish, is it?

Ayamonn. No, a Scotsman who wrote splendidly about a lot of things. Listen to this, spoken before a gathering of business men about to build an Exchange in their town.

Roory. Aw, Ayamonn- an Exchange! What have we got to do with an Exchange?

Ayamonn (impatiently) Listen a second, man!

Ruskin speakin' to the business men, says:

"Your ideal of life is a pleasant and undulating world, with iron and coal everywhere beneath it. On each pleasant bank of this world is to be a beautiful mansion; stables, and coach-houses; a park and hot-houses; carriage-drives and shrubberies; and here are to live the votaries of the Goddess of Getting - on - the English gentleman - "

Rocry (interrupting) There you are, you see, Ayamonn - th' English gentleman!

Ayamonn. Wait a second - Irish or English - a gentleman's th' same.

Rocry. 'Tisn't. I'm tellin' you it's different.

(Act I pp. 157-8)

The fact that the exact sentiments of the autobiography's Republican "tram-conductor" can be placed in the mouth of Rocry of the play reveals to what extent some of the minor characters in the play are, like the major characters, based on characters portrayed in the autobiography.

And the specific contributions of the autobiography to the play extend beyond characterisation, dialogue, action, imagery ("from the "Red Rose" song of "Touched by the Theatre") to setting also. Not only is the play, like the early autobiographies, specifically set in Dublin - the first play to be so set since The Plough and the Stars - but it takes its stage-settings for each of its four acts directly from the settings of scenes described in Pictures in the Hallway. The room which provides the setting of Acts I and II of the play (stage-direction pp. 127-8), corresponds in very many details to the main room of the Casside's two room home as described in the chapter "The Sword of Light" (p. 348-50) - for example, both overlook the railway, and signals are visible from the window, and both contain an "ebony" coloured table, books and an oil lamp. Elsewhere in Pictures in the Hallway, other details of the scene are suggested, the "bright fire" (p. 180), the "horsehair sofa" (p. 348) and the "geranium" "musk" and "fuchsia" by the window. Act III of the play takes its quay setting from the scene of an episode described in the "All Heaven and Harmsworth too" chapter of the autobiography; and the "St.

Burnupus" church-yard setting of Act IV is related to the final chapter of the autobiographical volume, the title-chapter "Picture in the Hallway", for that too is set in the grounds of "St. Burnupus" Parish Church (p. 400).

Very, very many correspondences between Pictures in the Hallway and Red Roses for Me are obvious and obviously direct. But one particular correspondence, concerning symbolism, between the play and the first two volumes of autobiography, though it seems no less authentic than the other correspondencies, is much more subtle. And it begins to provide some insight into the precise care and great imagination and creativity with which the author reworked the material of the autobiographies into Red Roses for me - an insight not immediately provided by the initially more obvious correspondences.

In the closing pages of I Knock at the Door Johnny is puzzled as to why the river Tolka which "was only the size of a brook" should be called a "river":

Of course he remembered the time it flooded the rotting little white-washed cottages on its bank, and swept away swift the statue of the Blessed Virgin standing in the muddy space beside the river. The statue had floated back again against the flow, like bread cast upon the waters, returning after many days, and stayed floating beside the houses, till it was taken up, cleaned, painted blue and white, and put back on its pedestal again. Yes, when it was in flood, the Tolka was a river; but every other time, it was only a brook (p. 174).

From I Knock at the Door the reference to the statue by the Tolka finds its way into "Cat 'n Cage" one of the first chapters of Pictures in the Hallway to be written. In this chapter Johnny, furiously driving back to Dublin a horse-drawn car, which his brothers and the hurlers have stolen from outside the "Cat 'n Cage" public house, is described as racing:

on over the bridge crossing the Tolka, giving
a fleeting glimpse of the white-mantled Blessed
Virgin standing alone among a clump of rain
and river-soaked cottages, .. (p. 232)

This passage recalls the story of the statue as given in the previous volume, and it must surely be from these two references, the latter enforcing the

former, that the author derived inspiration for the presence, in the play, of the statue of "Our Blessed Lady of Eblana's Poor", and for the incident of its "strange" disappearance and then "miraculous" return. But the author draws the statue and the incidents surrounding it to the very heart of the play by endowing them with new and very special significances.

He gives the statue in the play the title of "Our Blessed Lady of Eblana's poor" and this clearly identifies her with the people about whom the play and the author are concerned. Also the appearance of the statue is calculated to suggest a connection with Dublin, and to suggest that the city's former glories have now declined and faded into grime and poverty:

Dympna is carrying a statue of the Blessed Virgin, more than two feet high, in her arms. The figure was once a glory of purest white, sparkling blue, and luscious gilding; but the colours have faded, the gilt is gone, save for a spot or two of dull gold still lingering on the crown. She is wearing a crown that, instead of being domed, is castellated like a city's tower, resembling those of Dublin; and the pale face of the Virgin is sadly soiled by the grime of the house. (Act I p. 137)

Moreover, whereas the miraculous return of the statue as described in I Knock at the Door was supernatural - the statue "floated back again against the flow" of the river and "stayed floating" in one spot until it was taken out of the water - in the play the miracle of the statue's return, and, indeed, its initial disappearance, are due to man's intervention. But the "miracle" of the play is no less a miracle because it was carried out by the cunning and kindness of Brennan O' the Moor. Indeed the precise point of the play's adaptation of the story from the autobiography is that human beings can, and must, work their own miracles, and that man's salvation rests ultimately with man. Yet another dimension is added to the incident of the return of the statue in the play in Brennan O' the Moor's secret action of the re-painting the statue before he returns it. In the autobiography no mystery attaches to the re-painting of the statue since it is painted by the cottage-dwellers themselves after it

has returned. But in the play the restoration of the statue to its former splendour is a chief part of the "miracle":

He removes the paper and shows the lost image transfigured into a figure looking as if it had come straight from the shop: the white dress is spotless, the blue robe radiant, and the gold along its border and on the crown is gleaming. (Act II p. 162)

And this transfiguration prefigures and parallels the "transfiguration" scene in Act III in which familiar drab and impoverished Dublin is transfigured into "a city nearly smothered be stars" (Act III, p. 203), and the poor of Dublin seen as descendants of the heroes of the past. And just as the miracle of the transformation of the statue was carried out by a man, so the transformation of the city and its people too is carried out by a man - through Ayamonn and his visions of beauty and of an ideal society.

O'Casey's development of the autobiographies' simple, if mysterious, story concerning the statue into a symbol at the very heart of the themes, as well as at the heart of the action, of the play suggests the consummate artistry with which O'Casey is actually, in Red Roses for Me, developing the material of the autobiographies. It is a degree of artistry comparable to that which he was to use in reworking The Shadow of a Gunman within Inishfallen. But whereas in the reworking of The Gunman material was to pass from play to autobiography, in the relationship between Pictures in the Hallway and Red Roses for Me material is passing from autobiography to play. And whereas there must be some doubt as to the degree to which O'Casey was consciously reworking aspects of The Gunman into Inishfallen, there can be no doubt as to the deliberateness of his use in Red Roses of material directly from Pictures in the Hallway.

The pinnacle of the relationship between Red Roses for Me and Pictures in the Hallway - indeed the pinnacle of the relationship between Red Roses for Me and the autobiographies as a whole, and even one of the highest pinnacles of the overall relationship between the plays and autobiographies of O'Casey - is the play's treatment of the "transformation" scene of the

"All Heaven and Harmsworth too" chapter of Pictures in the Hallway.

Here the relationship between the autobiography and the play is at once at both its most direct and its most creative; as O'Casey takes what is, in many respects, the climactic scene of Pictures in the Hallway and creates it afresh as, in many respects, the climactic scene of Red Roses for Me.

The settings of the scenes in autobiography and play are basically the same: the Dublin quays by a bridge crossing the River Liffey. The building of the Four Courts is referred to in both works as being close by the scene of the action.

In the autobiography the atmosphere and beauty of the scene which strikes Johnny as, wheeling a rickety hand-cart after a day's work for a newspaper agency, he turns on to the Dublin quays at twilight, are conveyed in a long passage of descriptive prose of outstanding beauty, colour, and vividness.

Obviously Red Roses for Me can, in performance, rely heavily upon stage-lighting and stage-effects - "stage-magic" as the critic Dr. Robert Hogan rather slightly calls them⁵⁹ - for its visual presentation of scene. But O'Casey seems to have been so loath to lose the autobiography's verbal evocation of scene and atmosphere that he very carefully assimilates, and thus preserves, much of the autobiography's description into the text of the play. Some of the description is incorporated into the act's stage-directions, which means that the original imagery of the prose can be enjoyed only by a reader of the play, and will be required to be translated into visual terms in performance. But much of the description too is dove-tailed into the dialogue of the act, and so its original words

⁵⁹ Robert Hogan: The Experiments of Sean O'Casey, p.64

and images will not be lost in performance.

The dove-tailing of the text of the autobiography into the text and context of the play is very skilful indeed.

(In the following extract from "All Heaven and Harmsworth too" are indicated those parts of the description which O'Casey was to use in the transformation scene of the play. Unbroken lines beneath words, phrases, or sentences of the passage denote that the play was to make use of these actual words. A broken line beneath a part of the passage denotes that the play was to draw upon the effect created by these words, but not upon the actual words themselves. The capital letters which designate different parts of the description, correspond with letters used in the subsequent quotation of the parallel passage from the play, and indicate the individual relationships between the details of the autobiography's description and the details of the text of the play).

The twilight was getting close to the skirts of day when Johnny swung his chariot on to the quays confining the river like a pair of lusty arms round a pretty lass. Over to the sou'-west the sky was a vivid green mantle, bordered with gold, a crimson gold that flowered grandly against the green, darkening into a gentle magenta higher up and farther away in the sky;^A and farther away still, the faint glimmer of the first stars was peeping out from a purple glow of purple gloom. Numerous empty lorries, floats, vans, and drays were flowing quickly past him, each of them, under the magic sky, looking like flaming chariots making for a battle front.^B He saw golden arrows of the sun shooting up side streets, leading from the quay to God knows where. Here the hard, set, and leering faces of roughs leaning against a corner had changed into sturdy faces of bronze where the sun's shadow lingered, and became darkly golden where the sun's departing beams strayed towards them.^C The bridges looked like golden pathways, growing grey dauntlessly, turning from pride to get gentleness and peace. He left the crippled handcart by the side of the street, and went over to lean upon the river wall to gaze at Dublin in the grip of God.^D The old tattered warehouses and shops, bespangled with the dirt of ages, had turned to glory.^E Children, born into a maze of dirt, their vagrant garments clinging wildly to their spattered bodies, put on new raiment, satinised with the princely rays of the sun, as if she had winced at their ugliness and had thrown her own fair mantle over them all.^F The great dome of the Four Courts shone like a golden rose in a great bronze cup.^G The river flowing below was now a purple flood, marbled with gold and crimson ripples.

Seagulls flew upward, or went gliding swooning down through thin amber air: white gems palpitating on the river's purple bosom.^H And far away in the deep blue the stars grew braver, and sat with dignity in their high places, bowing the sun away out of the silken heavens. Johnny bowed his head and closed his eyes, for it was very beautiful, and he felt that his city could catch an hour of loveliness and hold it tightly to her panting breast.^I

He sang softly and fervently, watching the mauve and golden buildings,^J the crimsoned waters of the river beneath him, the sky like a mantle streaming from the shoulders of God, the Father.^K

(Pictures in the Hallway, pp. 379-80)

This passage is assimilated into the transformation scene of the play, as follows:

Ayamonn. ... (He .. gazes meditatively down the river). Take heart of grade from your city's hidden splendour. (He points with an outstretched hand). Oh, look! Look there! Th'sky has thrown a gleaming green mantle over her bare shoulders,^(K) bordered with crimson, an' with a hood of gentle magenta over her handsome head - look!

(The scene has brightened, and bright and lovely colours are being brought to them by the caress of the setting sun. The houses on the far side of the river now bow to the visible world,^B decked in mauve and burnished bronze,^J and the men that have been lounging against them now stand stalwart, looking like fine bronze statues, slashed with scarlet.^C

Ayamonn. Look! Th'vans an' lorries rattling down th' quays, turned to bronze an' purple by th' sun, look like chariots forging forward to th' battle-front.^B

(Eeada, rising now into the light, now shows a fresh and virile face, and she is garbed in a dark-green robe, with a silvery mantle over her shoulders.^F

.....

(. . . The men have slid from the parapets of the bridge, turning, too, to look where Ayamonn is pointing. Their faces are aglow, like the women's, and they look like bronze statues, slashed with a vivid green.^C . .

.....

2nd man. Looka the loungers opposite have changed to sturdy men of bronze,^C and th' houses themselves are gay in purple an' silver!^{EJ}

Ayamonn. There's th' great dome o' th' Four Courts lookin' like a golden rose in a great bronze bowl!^G An' th' river flowin' below it, a purple flood, marbled with ripples o' scarlet; watch th' seagulls glidin' over it - like restless white pearls astir on a royal breast.^H Our city's in th' grip o' God!^D

Ayamonn (lifting his right hand high). Home of th' Ostmen, of the' Norman, an' th' Gael, we greet you! Greet you as you catch a passing hour of loveliness, an' hold it tightly to your panting breast.¹

(Act III, pp. 198-200)

Nor are the very close correspondences between the third act of the play and the autobiographical chapter confined to the actual descriptions of Dublin's transformation. Act III in its inclusion of a song and of a dance is directly following the pattern of the "scene" in the autobiography. And part of the autobiography's description of the dance together with dialogue attendant upon the dance itself have also been transposed, often almost verbatim, into the context of the play.⁶⁰

But these obvious correspondences in text and incident between the transformation scenes in autobiography and play do not mean that the author simply borrowed the scene en masse from the autobiography for use in the play. The author has employed great skill and great sensitivity in adapting even recreating the details of the scene in the autobiography, in order to give it new implications when included in the thematic scheme of the play. And the points of divergence between the two scenes are ultimately of greater interest than are the points of correspondence between them.

⁶⁰ See Pictures in the Hallway pp. 381-2 "A young woman, dressed in a dark-red bodice and a black-and-white striped skirt, tapped her feet in the same violet pool .. The young woman caught Johnny's hand in her own, praising God for His brightness and the will towards joy in the breasts of men, the swiftness of leg and foot in the heart of a dance, for the gift of song and laughter, for the sense of victory, and the dream that God's right hand held firm." And compare Red Roses for Me Act III pp. 201-2.

"(Finoola has been swaying her body to the rhythm of the song, and now, .. she swings out on to the centre of the bridge in a dance Ayamonn dances out to meet her

... May you marry well, an' rear up children fair as Emer was, an' fine as Oscar's son; an' may they be young when Spanish ale foams high on every hand, an' wine from th' royal Pope's a common dhrink! Goodbye.
(He kisses her, ..).

A fundamental difference between the transformation scene in the autobiography and that in Act III of the play is that Johnny is simply an onlooker upon the sight of Dublin transformed by sunset, whereas in the play the transformation seems to be brought about by Ayamonn himself. This is an extremely important distinction, and it reveals the different functions and implications of the two scenes within their respective works.

Pictures in the Hallway as a whole describes Johnny's adolescence and youth (from the age of about twelve years to twenty years) and devotes much attention to the growth of his artistic vision and sensitivity. This volume, more than any other, proclaims itself to be the autobiography of an artist, and in this respect it is closer to Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man than are O'Casey's other autobiographical volumes. The chapter "All Heaven and Harmsworth Too" provides the climax of the autobiography's depiction of the development of Johnny's artistic vision, and seems to be a complete revelation and confirmation of this personal vision.

The Ayamonn of Red Roses, however, is just a little older than Johnny of Pictures - a stage-direction describes Ayamonn as being "twenty-two or so" - and although he is continuing to educate himself by exactly the same means as did Johnny in Pictures he clearly has had in his possession for some time that fully developed vision which Johnny in "All Heaven and Harmsworth Too" is only just beginning ^{to} fully recognise. Johnny and is coming into the knowledge of his own gifts/of the vision with which to transform his own life: Ayamonn has advanced one stage further and is prepared, and able, to transmit his vision to others, in order to transform their lives also. Johnny's is essentially a personal vision and revelation whereas Ayamonn's personal vision is extended and passed on to the community with which he comes into contact.

This essential difference can be illustrated in many ways in comparing the parallel scenes in autobiography and play. In the autobiography it is Johnny who, before the transformation scene, is disgusted by and weary of,

life in Dublin, whereas in the play, such a despairing attitude is assigned not to Ayamonn, but to the poor of Dublin to whom Ayamonn seeks to bring his vision. Johnny working as a van-boy for 'The Harmsworth Irish Agency' - a newspaper agency publishing popular magazines - meditates upon how those magazines, which he despises, both reflect and pander to the Dublin mentality and way of life:

Cursing and sweating, he pushed the haggard car along, on a lovely evening in the late spring. Packed high it was with the latest number of the Harmsworth Magazine. Rotten Dublin; lousy Dublin, what had it for anyone? What had it for him? Poverty and pain and penance. They were its three castles. The gates of Dublin: poverty, pain, and penance. And the Harmsworth Magazine, giving, with the aid of its kind, to Dublin the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. Now he was a barrennut. Thank God, the Gaelic League was doing all it could to turn the Irish people from a descent into a vulgar and idiotic Tophet; but, so far, with little success. The Orange cover of Answers covered the whole country. The priest had it in the inner pocket of his soutane; the teacher had it on his desk; the student had it under his arm; the labourer had it round his lunch; the soldier had it in his sentry-box; the postman in his bag; and the policeman had it on his beat; for Answers stooped to conquer. Tomorrow would be the day for that joy journal; and he'd be carrying a heavy cargo again, for there was a new competition on, offering as first prize a thousand pounds down, or two pounds a week for life. An' everybody would be stretching out a hand for it. Lousy, rotten, tiring Dublin, an ignorant perjury of life.
(p. 378).

Such despair with life in Dublin is precisely what Ayamonn has to contend with in Act III of the play, and some of the sentiments, and even some of the actual words, used in connection with Johnny's thoughts in the autobiographical passage are, in the play, placed in the mouths of the men and women in the street, to whom Ayamonn attempts to communicate his vision:

Ayamonn. Rouse yourselves; we hold a city in our hands!
Eeada (in a very low, but bitter voice). It's a bitther city.
Dympna (murmuring the same way). It's a black an bitther city.
Finoola (speaking the same way). It's a bleak, black, an' bitther city.
1st Man. Like a batthered, tatthered whore, bullied by too long a life.

2nd Man. An' her three gates are castles of poverty,
penance, an' pain.

There is no mystery in the way that Johnny comes upon the sight of the Dublin quays transformed by the sunset:

He pushed on through Parliament Street, up Cork Hill, through Lord Edward Street, into Cornmarket, delivering here, delivering there, till he reached James Street where he emptied the ould handcart of its last parcel. Then he sailed down Watling Street to go homewards by the quays, for he loved to see the river Liffey when the sun was setting, passing by many shops and houses looking like poor bewildered whores bullied with too long a life.

....

The twilight was getting close to the skirts of day when Johnny swung his chariot on to the quays confining the river like a pair of arms round a pretty lass. Over to the sou'-west the sky was a vivid green mantle ...

(pp. 378-9)

But Ayamonn in a mysterious way seems to bring about the transformation of Dublin, and, in doing so, he becomes associated with the heroes of Irish mythology:

(The scene has now become so dark that things are but dimly seen, save the silver spire and the crimson pillar in the distance; and Ayamonn's head set in a streak of sunlight, looking like the severed head of Dunn-Bo speaking out of the darkness.)

Finnoola. Songs of Osheen and Sword of Oscar could do nothing to tire this city of its shame.

Ayamonn. Friend, we would that you should live a greater life; we will that all of us shall live a greater life. Our strike is yours. A step ahead for us today; another one for you tomorrow. We who have known, and know, the emptiness of life shall know its fullness. All men and women quick with life are fain to venture forward.

(To Eeada) The apple grows for you to eat.

(To Dympna) The violet grows for you to wear.

(To Finnoola) Young maiden, another world is in your womb.

.....

Ayamonn. Don't flinch in th' first flare of a fight.

(He looks away from them and gazes meditatively down the river). Take heart of grace from your city's hidden splendour. (He points with an outstretched hand). Oh, look! Look there! Th'sky has thrown a gleaming green mantle over her bare shoulders,

(p. 198)

A mysterious note is again introduced into the play in connection with the dance. Johnny's dance is performed to the accompaniment of a hurdy-gurdy, (p. 381) and there is no strangeness or mystery attached to the presence of a hurdy-gurdy, a hurdy-gurdy player and a young woman dancer on a Dublin street corner. But in the play Ayamonn's and Finnoola's dance is accompanied by music of a rather more magical origin - music "played on a flute by someone, somewhere" (p. 201).

The "magic" of the scene in the play however, despite its mystery, is "magic" created by the human vision of Ayamonn. It is a man-made miracle, just as was the transformation and return of the statue in Act II. But it is no less a miracle for being human rather than directly divine in origin. As O'Casey was to write in Rose and Crown:

"Man must be his own saviour; man must be his
own god". (Rose and Crown, p. 623).

In the autobiography, in contrast, Johnny attributes the transformation of Dublin directly to God, and his response is to sing a hymn in God's praise:

A rippling thrill of emotional ecstasy
crept through him, looking at the sky above
and at the river beneath; all this beauty
and much more, everlasting, to be his and all men's
through the life, passion, and death of the
wonderful Jesus, when the glare of this poor
life slowly darkened into death.
..... softly and fervently he sang, sang
softly to himself and the loveliness around him:

When our brisk hands build strong where work is done,
Where steel is forg'd, or gentle silk is spun,
All work well finish'd with work that's well begun,
Let it praise Thee, let it praise Thee!
(p. 380)

Since Johnny does not himself bring about the transformation of the city it is he who is most amazed at, and most profoundly moved by, the change. But in the play, since Ayamonn is responsible for the transformation, it is not he but the men and women in the street who react with amazement to the changed scene:

Finnoola. She's glowin' like a song sung be
Osheen himself, with th' golden melody
of his own harp helpin'!

1st Man (puzzled). Something funny musta happened,
for, 'clare to God, I never noticed hershinin'
that way before.

...

3rd man. Our tired heads have always haunted far
too low a level.

....

1st man (emotionally). Oh, hell, it's grand!

Eeada. Blessed be our city for ever an' ever.

(pp. 199-200).

And whereas the vows made by Johnny in response to the experience are purely personal in that they are related solely to his own life, the people in the play, encouraged and led by Ayamonn, make collective vows with regard to life in the city as a whole.

The vows which Johnny makes form the peak of a scene which, in itself, forms a climax in the autobiographical volume. The entire book has depicted how Johnny has been gradually growing into manhood, and now he is moved to declare his manhood, to state his integrity, and to affirm his vision of the true values of life:

He resolved to be strong; to stand out among many; to quit himself like a man; he wouldn't give even a backward look at the withering things that lived by currying favour with stronger things; no busy moving hand to the hat for him. He would enlarge on a spare life, never pausing to pick up a prize that perished as soon as the hand grasped it. (p. 381)

In the play the vows of Ayamonn and the people take the form of a song:

Ayamonn: Fair City, I tell thee our souls shall not slumber
Within the warm beds of ambition or gain;
Our hands shall stretch out to th' fullness of labour,
Till wondher an' beauty within thee shall reign.

The Rest (singing together)

We vow to release thee from anger an' envy,
To dhrive th' fierce wolf an' sly fox from thy gate,
Till wise men an' matrons an' virgins shall murmur.
O city of splendour, right fair is thy fate!

(p. 200)

At the end of Act III after Ayamonn has left to attend the meeting about a strike, which he has helped to organise, and after the scene has

darkened, and the sound is heard of soldiers marching to prevent the meeting, the final verse of the song is resolutely sung again, this time by mysterious voices:

"voices that may be of those on and around the bridge, or of those singing some little distance away.

....

We swear to release thee from hunger and hardship,
From things that are ugly and common and mean;
Thy people together shall build a great city,
The finest and fairest that ever was seen.

(p. 204)

Earlier in the scene Ayamonn has offered the strike to the people as being the practical and precise means to that new life which they are just glimpsing in the momentary transformation of the city:

Ayamonn. Friend, we would that you should
live a greater life; we will that all of us shall
live a greater life. Our strike is yours. A
step ahead for us today; another one for you
tomorrow. We who have known, and know, the
emptiness of life shall know its fullness. All
men and women quick with life are fain to venture
forward. (To Eeada). The apple grows for you to
wear. (To Dympna) The violet grows for you to
wear. (To Finnoola) Young maiden another world is in
your womb. (p. 198).

The issue of the strike runs throughout the play, and in Act IV it is reported that Ayamonn has been shot and killed by soldiers in a clash during the strike itself. The transformation scene of Act III of the play is central to the theme of Ayamonn's martyrdom for the people, for it reveals the vision and beliefs for which he died. And though Ayamonn himself is dead, his vision and beliefs have not died with him, for he has communicated them to his followers. And Finnoola reports that he died in the belief that "this day's but a day's work done, an' it'll be begun again tommorrow" (Act IV, p. 221).

Of course, in his martyrdom for the people - something of a religious martyrdom for the time is Easter and before he dies he does, significantly, make a cross of daffodils for the Communion Table of the church (Act IV p. 208) - Ayamonn far outgrows in stature any sense that he a figure

directly representative of the author. Even Johnny of the autobiography has a "universal" element in his portrayal which recalls how in "pre-autobiography" plays such as Juno and The Plough the author conveyed universally human emotions and experiences through the personalities of particular characters. But as a leader of men and, perhaps, the herald of a new age, Ayamonn of Act III of the play assumes a symbolic role which goes far beyond any representative aspect of the autobiography's portrayal of Johnny's growth into manhood and into his awareness of his vocation as an artist. However, that the portrayal of Ayamonn, even though it is ultimately symbolic, should be so thoroughly based on precise "personal" circumstances and on a personality - the circumstances and the personality of the author in his youth - perhaps reveals the influence of the autobiographies which kept alive the earlier plays' traditions of character portrayal.

In the transformation scene of Act III of the play O'Casey has, then, very skilfully reworked and developed material from the "All Heaven and Harmsworth Too" chapter of the autobiography, in order to affirm the vocation and the powers of a character, who is rapidly transcending in importance the autobiographical interest that the rest of his relationship with Johnny and with Pictures in the Hallway has bestowed upon him.

But certain of those elements of the play and of Ayamonn's portrayal that seem to have originated outside, or to transcend, the bounds of Pictures in the Hallway, do still belong to the autobiographies, and may have found their way into Red Roses for Me through the interaction between the narrative of the play and the author's thoughts about, or even the partial writing of, a new autobiographical volume.

The play's emphasis upon the strike as the means whereby permanently to transform life in the city is a highly significant departure of the play from Pictures in the Hallway, but the 1913 Dublin Lock Out Strike in which O'Casey took part and which, in an idealised form, seems to have been the inspiration for the "strike" in the play, is described within the narrative

of Drums Under the Windows. Consequently the "strike" element of the play links Red Roses with Drums under the Windows rather than with Pictures. And in various basic aspects of his portrayal, aspects such as his age, the fact that he works on the railway, is a socialist as well as a nationalist, and is interested in the theory of evolution, Ayamonn is related to Sean of Drums Under the Windows rather than to Johnny of the autobiography.

Although the writing of Red Roses for Me began in late 1941 and apparently before O'Casey began actual work on Drums Under the Windows, yet the decision to write a third autobiographical volume had been made in 1938 upon the completion of I Knock at the Door. And in 1938 it was decided too that this projected third volume would take as its subject matter "all or most of what happened" after he "joined the Irish Movement".⁶¹ Also there is evidence that he was contemplating the literary contents of the third volume in more specific detail even before Pictures in the Hallway was published (and thus before Red Roses was begun). In a letter of 17th July 1941, to his publishers, he mentions that he "can start the next vol" (i.e. Drums) with one of the two chapters eliminated from Pictures in the Hallway and, perhaps, "by a change" can also include, in the new volume, the other chapter which had been omitted from Pictures in the Hallway. And in the same letter he suggests "(planning ahead, isn't it?)" that a photograph of The Reverend E.M. Griffin, (who appears under his own name in Pictures in the Hallway and Drums Under the Windows, and who was the model for "Rev. E. Clinton" in Red Roses) be the frontispiece of the next volume. Clearly if O'Casey was contemplating Drums Under The Windows before he began work on Red Roses then his thoughts about the period which Drums was to describe might very well have influenced or inspired certain

⁶¹ Letter to Harold Macmillan 7 October 1938 Letters Vol I p. 746.

⁶² Letter to Daniel Macmillan 17th July 1941 ibid, p. 897.

parts of the contents of the play. Moreover, although Red Roses was begun to be written before Drums, yet at some point the writing of the play and of this autobiography did overlap, for in Sunset and Evening Star the author writes of one particular night during the Second World War when "Sean working away at the biographical^{book} Drums Under the Windows and the play, Red Roses for Me, the siren sounded". (p. 585). Since Red Roses was only begun in late December 1941 and was published in November 1942, Drums Under the Windows must, therefore, have been begun in early or mid 1942.

In the absence of definite evidence it is hard to assess how much of Drums was written in 1942 when O'Casey was still working on the play, and thus how much the actual writing of Drums could have influenced the play. It can, however, perhaps be conjectured that only a very few chapters of the autobiographical volume were written during that period, and that these chapters were the earliest ones in the volume. These conjectures are based on certain known facts. Red Roses for Me was written in a comparatively short time - it was only begun in December 1941, but by November 1942 it had not only been completed in manuscript, but had been prepared for publication, for it was, indeed, published in that month.

For such a major play to be written in such a short time would require a great deal of concentrated effort, hence there would be less time to spare for the writing of the autobiography. And the letters of O'Casey have suggested with regard to previous works (I Knock at the Door, The Star Turns Red, Purple Dust, and Pictures in the Hallway) that when engrossed upon, or determined to finish, one work he tended to leave other works largely, although not always totally, in abeyance until he had completed that previous work, be it play or autobiography. And so again the implication is that little of Drums could have been actually written in 1942.

Furthermore, Drums itself was not completed until about September

1944⁶³ and so he worked on the volume for almost two years after Red Roses was not only completed but published.

The supposition that the parts of Drums which were written in 1942 were the earliest chapters of the book is based upon the knowledge of the author's development of an apparently more systematic "chronological" approach to the writing of autobiography. The chapters, or "sketches", of I Knock at the Door were initially written in an order which does not seem to take into account the chronology within Johnny's life of the events and experiences which they individually depict. They were not written initially as part of a continuous narrative, and when he later conceived the idea of bringing together the sketches as a "volume", he re-ordered them and perhaps too wrote additional chapters to fill in gaps left in the time scheme. For example, it is known from his letters that the chapter "The Protestant Kid Thinks of the Reformation" was written by July 1934, yet in the published volume this chapter, describing as it does the time when Johnny was forced to begin attending school, is necessarily placed after chapters such as "His Fathers Wake", "His Father's Funeral", "The Tired Cow" and "The Street Sings". Each of these four chapters depicts events in Johnny's life before he began to attend school, yet each of these four chapters was written after "The Protestant Kid Thinks of the Reformation". While working on Pictures in the Hallway, however, and with the prospect of another autobiographical volume to follow it, the author seems to have developed a much more systematic approach to the writing of the chapters and to the time-scheme of the autobiographies as a whole. And when the length of Pictures in the Hallway led the publishers to ask him to omit some chapters from it, he pointed out to his publisher the

⁶³ For evidence of this date see below in connection with the writing of Oak Leaves and Lavender and of Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well.

difficulties of this since

They, one by one, follow the years, and any of them would be out of place in any succeeding volume.⁶⁴

Even his tentative plan to begin the third volume with the unpublished final chapter of Pictures in the Hallway was not, it seems, carried out, for the contents of "At the Sign of the Pick and Shovel", the first chapter in the published version of Drums Under the Windows, seem to have very little in common with the title "He Paints His First Picture". And Drums Under the Windows likewise failed to include "Thy Servant a Dog", the other chapter which was omitted from Pictures in publication.⁶⁵

His new awareness of, and attention to, the chronology of the chapters and volumes might well, then, lead him to write the chapters of Drums in chronological order, especially since this volume provides an historical account of the growth of Irish nationalism and concludes with a description of the 1916 Rising, a climax of historical and national importance, rather than with a climax of a stage of "personal" development such as those with which the two previous autobiographical volumes ended.

Thus, in the light of knowledge with regard to O'Casey's working methods as developed when writing previous plays and volumes of autobiography, it seems reasonable to assume that although he, by his own testimony, did begin the writing of Drums while he was still working on Red Roses, yet comparatively little of Drums would have been written during this period, and such chapters as were written would tend very much to be

⁶⁴Letter to Daniel Macmillan dated 1 July 1941 Letters Vol I p. 888.

⁶⁵This chapter was published outside the autobiographies see above.

the early chapters of the book.

And so it seems, with regard to the interaction between Red Roses for Me and Drums Under the Windows that while the author's thoughts about Drums and the period of his life which it was to cover might well have influenced the nature and contents of Red Roses for Me, any influence of the actual writing and text of Drums upon the play might be presumed to be exercised only by the early chapters of the volume, while the writing and text of Red Roses might potentially have influenced all of Drums.

The contemplation of the period of his life that the projected third autobiographical volume was to cover seems to have been the chief source of the relationship between Drums and the play, and if it led the author to introduce something of the 1913 strike into the play, it also seems to have contributed to the characterisation of Ayamonn. One of the several important respects in which Ayamonn has more in common with "Sean" of Drums than with Johnny of Pictures, concerns the kind of relationship which exists between Ayamonn and his mother.

Ayamonn, while loving his mother and profoundly respecting her for the courage and resignation with which she has endured a life of poverty has come to the realisation that her way of life is not for him and that there is now a large part of his life and thought which she cannot share. And this realisation must necessarily affect their relationship:

Mrs. Breydon. Go on readin', an' don't bother to listen to your mother.

Ayamonn (going over and gently putting his hands on her shoulders). I do listen, but I am drifting away from you, Mother, a dim shape now, in a gold canoe, dipping over a far horizon. (Act I p. 235)

Johnny of Pictures has not reached this stage in his intellectual and emotional development, but Sean of Drums has:

Ah, t'hell with it! he thought, he wouldn't stay here to dry up and die! She'd have to stick it, but he wouldn't. Her life was nearly over. She belonged to a different world, the world of submission, patience, resignation; he to that of discontent, resentment, resistance. Whenever she

had been ill, he had done for her all he could - cooking, making tea and toast for her, and arrowroot when the funds allowed, lighting the fire, and washing out the damned floor when the end of the week came. But his life was away from her, and he'd have to leave her wandering in her little Garden of Eden among the musk, the fuchsia, and the crimson geranium. (p. 593-4)

But if Drums, like Pictures in the Hallway, seems to testify that Ayamonn is in many respects something of a self-portrait of O'Casey, it must be noted that certain characteristics of Ayamonn are at odds with the presentation of Sean of Drums just as they are with that of Johnny of Pictures in the Hallway. And thus the relationship between Red Roses and the third autobiographical volume suggests, as does, ultimately, the relationship between the play and Pictures, that Ayamonn is a rather more objectively "dramatic", as opposed to strictly "autobiographical", character than has sometimes been allowed. Ayamonn is, for example, a man of great physical courage who has no qualms at all in leading the workers at a mass meeting which has been banned by the authorities. At the meeting he is shot by a soldier and thus gives his life for his cause.

It might be thought that if Ayamonn is a portrait of the author O'Casey is here indulging in some self-aggrandisement, a charge which, indeed, hostile Irish critics have levelled at the autobiographies. But in the presentation of Sean in Drums, a character who most specifically represents the author, O'Casey emphasises several times Sean's reluctance to be a martyr to any cause. And although before his illness Sean is described as being of immense physical strength, his physical courage is not quite so great, and he is particularly wary of police batons at political meetings, including those of 1913:

Sean was no warrior. A harper, maybe, playing others into battle; but no warrior himself, (Drums, p. 441)

The dust and savage creak of this bloody scuffle had no benison of feeling for Sean, so he turned away to go from the place as quick as he dared to move; for, if he met a police patrol, speed would tell them he had been doing something, and a baton might crunch in his skull. (Drums, p. 580)

The mighty baton! Each one an Erin's rod - able
 at the will of the owner to bud into a purple
 bloom of death. A warning to Sean. Keep well away
 from them. That he'd do, for he wanted to live,
 feeling an urge of some hidden thing in him waiting
 its chance for an epiphany of creation. (Drums, p. 605)

Even at a proscribed meeting during the 1913 strike - perhaps the
 meeting which in real life gave the inspiration for the proscribed meeting
 which Ayamonn is to attend in the play - Sean is described in very
 unheroic terms:

Sean shivered, for he was not a hero, and he
 felt it was unwise to have come here. (p. 582)

And on the evidence of Drums, Ayamonn's heroism in leading the meeting,
 and, indeed, his specific action in burning the document which proscribed
 it,⁶⁶ relates him not to Sean at all but to Jim Larkin, "Prometheus
 Hibernica". Larkin even possesses, like Ayamonn in Act III the apparent
 power to transform the world around him. As Larkin speaks to his supporters:

darkness was falling, a dim quietness was
 spreading over the troubled city. Even the
 gulls muted their complaining cries; and the
 great throng was silent; silent, listening to
 the dark voice speaking from the window. To
 Sean, the long arm seemed to move about in the sky,
 directing the courses of the stars over Dublin;
 (p. 581).

Some correspondences between Ayamonn of the play and the autobiography's
 portrayal of Sean and Larkin may seem to be so close as to suggest that
 in addition to the influence of the contemplation of Drums upon the play
 there has been an actual literary influence in operation between the two works,
 with the literary presentation of Ayamonn either influencing or being
 influenced by the literary presentations of Sean and Larkin. This is
 possible, but although a considerable number of detailed correspondences
 with regard to characterisation and incident exist between Red Roses and

⁶⁶ Compare the action of Ayamonn Red Roses Act I p. 182 and that of
 Larkin Drums, p. 580.

Drums there is little or no verbal correspondence: however slight, and there is certainly no transposition of any particular scene or long passage of text from out of one work into the other. This lack of verbal correspondence is in sharp contrast to the relationship between Red Roses and Pictures in the Hallway, and would suggest a rather more general relationship between the play and Drums, a relationship such as would be formed if the contemplation of the planned contents, rather than the text, of Drums were to have influenced the contents of the play. Also it must be remembered that the portrayal of Larkin in Drums seems to be related also to the presentation of Red Jim in The Star Turns Red.

Of Red Roses for Me's other links with Drums one of the most notable seems to concern the portrayal of the Rev. E.M. Griffin Sean's friend, who appears in Red Roses as the Rev. Clinton.⁶⁷ Perhaps too the play's confirmation of the use of Mrs Casside's geranium, fuchsia and musk plants as symbols of a spiritual vision of beauty (symbolism which grew gradually within I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway before it was included in the play) perpetuated them in the author's mind, and led to their reappearance at frequent intervals not only in the text of Drums, but beyond into Inishfallen and even into Rose and Crown and Sunset.⁶⁸ Apart from confirming and perpetuating the symbolism of Mrs. Casside's flowers, Red Roses for Me's major contribution to the volumes of autobiography which followed Drums Under the Windows is in connection with "The Girl He Left Behind Him" chapter of Inishfallen, a chapter which describes a relationship

⁶⁷ Compare for example, the play's depiction of the Rev. Clinton's fear of contemplating poverty and the lives of the poor (Act III, p.191), with Drums' reference to this same characteristic in the Rev. Griffin, (p. 489).

⁶⁸ See, for example, Drums, pp. 475, 483, 484, 592, 593, 600, Inishfallen, p. 25, Sunset and Evening Star, p. 516.

between Sean and "Nora Creena", a timorous Catholic girl, which is very similar to that between Ayamonn and Sheila Moorneen in the play.

In this chapter too the "Red Rose" imagery of the play reasserts itself.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ See, for example, Inishfallen, p. 191 "Then she became a red, red rose ... " and p. 198 "Not the red rose, ... for her swan-white breast".

CHAPTEF. ELEVEN

Drums under the Windows - Oak Leaves and Lavender - Inishfallen,
Fare Thee Well

If the reworking within Red Roses for Me of a vast amount of material from Pictures in the Hallway, and of material that was, as it were, earmarked for inclusion in Drums under the Windows, suggests that O'Casey was, at this point in his career, regarding the autobiographies as a possible prime source of inspiration and material for his plays; the relationship between Drums under the Windows and the previously written plays, including Red Roses, suggests that he was now regarding the plays as a possible prime source of inspiration and material for his autobiographies.

In presenting one of its own heroes, the Irish labour leader, Jim Larkin, Drums seems to draw upon both The Star's and Red Roses for Me's modes of presentation of their heroes. In Drums the biblical phraseology, particularly ^{the} words of Christ, with which he and his actions are associated, seem to be related to the portrayal of Red Jim of The Star:

And many were afraid, and hid themselves in corners.
Some ventured as far as the drear and dusky doorway
to peer out, and to say, Mr. Larkin, please excuse us,
for we have many things to do and to suffer; we must care
for cancerous and tubercular sick, and we must stay
to bury our dead. But he caught them by the sleeve,
by the coat collar, and shouted, come forth, and fight
with the son of Amos who has come to walk among the men
and women of Ireland. Let the sick look after the sick,
and let the dead bury the dead. Come ye out to fight
those who maketh the ephah small and the shekel great;
come out that we may smite the writer house with the summer
house; till the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great
houses shall have an end.

(Drums p. 572)

Red Jim (gripping Brannigan's hand). My comrade was
dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found!
.... Bring forth his side-arms and put them on him.

(The Star Act II p. 304)

(And, to the priests,)

Red Jim ... once and for all and for ever we declare
against your God, who hath filled the wealthy with
good things and hath sent the poor empty away!

(The Star Act III p. 325)

Indeed, Larkin of Drums like Red Jim of the play is seen as a
messenger of God Himself:

God ... grew sorry for the work-worn people, and
sent another man into their midst whose name
was Larkin

(Drums, p. 572)

In presenting, in Drums, Larkin's poetic vision of a new life, and his
communication of that vision to others, the author, however, seems to
draw rather upon the portrayal of Ayamonn in Act III of Red Roses:

The voice of mingled gold and bronze went on picturing
the men to themselves - as they were, as they ought to
be; showing them that they hadn't been denied the gift
of a holy fire from God; this man in the drab garments
of a drink-sodden nature; that man whose key of Heaven was a racing
record; yonder fellow fearing to be above a black leg,
refusing to join his comrades out on strike; and, worst of
all, the unsightly scab taking the job of a comrade
out in a fight for better conditions for all.

.....

- Gifts of the Almighty, went on the voice, labour - a
gift, not a curse -, poetry, dancing, and principles;
and Sean, could see that here was a man who would put a
flower in a vase on a table as well as a loaf on a plate.

(Drums, p. 574).

(Conversely, in drawing in Drums upon the dramatic portrayals of
Red Jim and Ayamonn in order to depict Jim Larkin, the author is revealing
how Red Jim and Ayamonn themselves, albeit in differing degrees,
both took some of their being from the Jim Larkin of real-life whom O'Casey
profoundly admired).

But, for its material, Drums draws not only upon those plays which
were written alongside autobiographies in the years immediately preceding
its own composition, but draws very markedly¹⁰⁰ upon the 'pre-autobiography'
plays, much more markedly than the previous two volumes of autobiography
have done.

Amongst the early chapters of Drums is "Behold, my Family is Poor"
in which is reworked and "fulfilled" Nannie's Night Out. Echoes and

images from Kathleen Listens In find their way into this volume, And the historical material of both The Plough and the Stars and The Silver Tassie are very prominent indeed in the historical narrative of the volume. Characters too from Juno and The Plough appear in Drums. But, without exception, the material from the plays is handled with the utmost creativity within the autobiographical volume.¹ And though Drums, in comparison with I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway seems by its very nature to be peculiarly receptive towards material from the "pre-autobiography" plays, and, in comparison with the final volumes of the autobiography, seems by its very nature to be very creative in its use of that material; yet the precise way in which a play and its substance are treated in Drums seems to depend upon, and to reflect, not the nature of this autobiographical volume,^{but} the nature of the individual play. This can be seen in that Drums, within its pages, includes a full and consummate re-expression of Nannie's Night Out, a few scattered fragments of various elements from Kathleen Listens In, and portions of the thorough, yet analytical, reworkings of Juno, The Plough and The Tassie - reworkings which extend over all six of the autobiographical volumes.

I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway do, of course, make use of material from the plays and have a large part in the reworking of "pre-autobiography" plays, in the manner which the natures of those plays dictate; but it is the quantity of the material which Drums reworks which is a prime distinguishing features of this volume's relationship with the plays. The strong emphasis within Drums Under the Windows upon the events of Irish history in the years 1900-1916 renders this volume, perhaps, particularly susceptible to the inclusion of large masses of material from plays such as The Plough and The Tassie, which are set in a specific historical periods coinciding with points in the narrative of

¹ See chapters on the relationships between the individual pre-autobiography plays and the autobiographies.

Drums. Yet it does seem too that, just as in the writing of Red Roses O'Casey allowed material from the autobiographies to flood into the plays, so in the writing of Drums he is allowing material from the plays to flood into the autobiographies.

However, it is paradoxical that though it contains rather more 'dramatic' material directly from the plays than do the preceding autobiographical volumes, Drums itself seems, on the whole, to have less inherent dramatic spirit than do I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway. That is, although in the reworking of material from a play Drums can present superbly dramatically-realised episodes and scenes (as in the Mild Millie episode of "Behold, My Family is Poor"), yet when it is, as it were, working its "own" material, it occasionally seems to lack the dramatic impetus which was so obvious throughout I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway.

Perhaps, to some extent, this seeming decline in the autobiographies' dramatic spirit, which seems to begin to take place in Drums, can be attributed to the stage which has now been reached in the narrative depicting Johnny/Sean's life. Unlike Johnny of the previous volumes, Sean of Drums Under the Windows is of an age and understanding fully to comprehend the events which are happening around him, and to perceive for himself the ironies and injustices inherent in those events. And so, whereas in the previous volumes it was left to the author to dramatise situations involving Johnny in order to bring out social, political and human themes, now Sean can see the implications and ironies of events for himself and can express them in his own voice. For example, in the "First The Green Blade" chapter of I Knock at the Door it is the author who, by unobtrusively drawing attention, within the dialogue, to the children in rags who are watching the splendid vice-regal procession, points to the ironies and injustices in the situation. The reader comprehends the ironies and injustices but the characters of the autobiography seem totally oblivious of them:

- Looka' the kids over there, ejaculated Ella, all in their bare feet an' without a flitther on them. Shame for their mothers to let them look on at a sight like this. (p. 16).

In Drums, however, since Sean himself has weighed up the kind of society in which he lives, so he himself can express and comment upon those kinds of ironies and injustices. And when, for instance, Ella and her children move into the damp and dilapidated room that Sean is helping them to rent, it is Sean himself who sees the gulf of irony between familiar words from a Gospel text and Ella's plight:

Ella said no word when she came to the room, but just went on, with glazed eyes and thoughtless face, making up the old bed on its rickety iron frame, and the other bed on the floor. Sean advised her to make that one, too, on the frame for the time being, for it would be less dangerous than the damp floor, even though they would all be a little crowded. She agreed by putting all the clothes on the iron bed without a word, and so she slept at the head, with the two girls and Shawn, the youngest, while the two older boys slept at the foot - six in all in the one room, and six in the same bed. Are ye not more precious than very many sparrows? About the same value, my Lord, about the same. It was a bitter sight for Sean when he saw them tucked up for the night, but he could do no more (p. 479).

Sean as an adult figure representing the author does, of course, share the author's opinions quite "legitimately" as part of his characterisation, and within Drums such opinions are consistently expressed in Sean's thoughts or voice rather than in the author's. In this important respect, then, the volume continues to be "dramatic" in conception. But still the fact that Sean albeit in his own voice can now comment explicitly upon events, and bring out the themes of the autobiography for the reader, means that the techniques of juxtaposition of character and character, or character and incident, which O'Casey had perfected as the vehicles for the implicit conveying of theme in The Gunman, Juno and The Plough, and which he used with renewed vigour in I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway, are now in Drums just beginning a fall into abeyance within the autobiographies. Perhaps this decline in the use of these techniques in the autobiographies parallels a similar process which

took place in the plays themselves when O'Casey began to introduce highly articulate, even dogmatic, hero-figures into two plays - articulate heroes such as, perhaps, Harry Heegan of Act IV of The Silver Tassie, but more obviously, "The Dreamer" of Within The Gates, Jack and Red Jim of The Star, O'Killigain and O'Dempsey of Purple Dust, and Ayamonn of Red Roses for Me.

A change in dramatic technique, however, does not necessarily mean that the resulting play or autobiography is less "dramatic" in spirit, yet Drums under the Windows does seem to contain less dialogue than did its predecessors, and when "dramatic" episodes do occur in the narrative they tend, unless they are related to, or under the influence of, a particular play, to be less sustained than were the "dramatic" episodes in the earlier volumes. Perhaps O'Casey was at this point in the writing of the autobiographies, no longer writing the chapters as individual autobiographical sketches. Although this mode of writing sketches had begun in connection with I Knock at the Door, before O'Casey seems to have thought in terms of a "volume" of autobiography as such, yet it did continue in connection with the writing of Pictures in the Hallway, apparently because the author, in financial straits, was aware that individual sketches might be able to find a market in magazines and periodicals.² The practice of writing in self-contained sketches seems to have ceased in connection with the writing of Drums for, apart from "Behold, My Family is Poor",

² See letter to Gabriel Fallon 25th August 1939, (Letters Vol I p. 812) in which O'Casey writes of sending "Royal Residence" to the Virginia Quarterly Review "for \$5.00 a page". And in a letter of 19th October 1939 to his American agent Richard J. Madden (ibid p. 818) he asks Madden's advice on getting "some of the sketches of the 2nd vol. taken by some magazine or other". Certain chapters or "sketches" which later went into I Knock at the Door had also been first published in magazines, see letter to George Jean Nathan 8th March 1937 (ibid, pp. 654-5), and letter to Horace Reynolds, 19th July 1937, ibid, pp. 677.

which is under the influence of the play-form of Nannie's Night Out, it does not seem that any chapter of Drums could really stand on its own as a complete "sketch" or short-story.

But there seems to be another possible explanation for the lessening of the "dramatic" atmosphere and tension of the autobiographies within Drums. And the mode in which SEan is presented, and the method of the author's approach to the writing of the volume, might, to some extent, be manifestations of this other factor. The author, in the writing of much of I Knock at the Door, had seemingly channelled his dramatic imagination and talents into the autobiography, in lieu of a play. And with the writing of Drums it could be that O'Casey, having quite obviously - and perhaps through the inspiration and "dramatic" offices of the first and second autobiographies - embarked upon a second, highly-productive phase in his career as a playwright, his dramatic talents no longer needed to find expression outside the play form and accordingly, they began to fade from the autobiographies.

But the "dramatic" spirit was never completely to disappear from the autobiographies, and certainly in Drums the process of its gradual diminution is only just begun. And the third autobiography can still contain, on its own account, passages such as this in which the conflict, prior to the 1916 Easter Rising, between the Ireland of the poets and scholars and the Ireland of the people, is dramatised in a confrontation, at a Nationalist pageant, between a "Gael" and the proprietress of a "roundabout organ":

it was funny to see the agony on the faces of the Gaels when the roundabout organ blared out loud, grinding out Tara-ra-boom-de-ay with brazen impudence, aided by the mechanical roll from a grim drum, forcing those in the pageant to raise their voices, and those of the audience, nearer the Fair, to cup their hands to their ears to catch the sound of what was said. Pearse, dreamy and colourful in his pageant raiment, with a comrade Gael strode to the booth where the proprietor of the Fair sat, watching wares and workers; and the Gael requested, rather pompously, that the steam-organ should be silenced while the pageant ran its course.

- 'Deed an' I won't, she said indignantly, and it's cool customers yez are t'ask it! Th' music gives a thrill to th' gallop of th' horses, an' it's part o' what th' people pay for. I paid a good rent to get in here, an' it'll take more encouragement than I'm gettin' to see me safe outa th' hasty bargain. Stop your own show, an' let th' poor people, lettin' on they like it, come here to join in a heartier amusement. Yez can go back, gentlemen, for me organ's not goin to be lullabyed be any other opposite money-making manoeuvre. (pp. 620-1).

As the dialogue continues, the woman is completely unimpressed by appeals in the name of Cuchullain - "Was he one o' th' boys who stood be th' great O'Connell for Emancipation?" the "scene" And she concludes with her advice to the Gaels to forget about "the doin's of them who haunted Ireland before th'time o'blessed St. Patrick", (p. 621), and with the Gael sadly muttering "Poor old Ireland!" "as he and Pearse returned to do the best they could through the boisterous blare of the steam-organ" (p. 622).

But Drums Under the Windows makes its own contribution to the development of the autobiographies in that it is a volume peculiarly rich in "fantasy". Passages of fantasy and of impressionistic writing had, of course, been present in the autobiographies from the first chapter of I Knock at the Door onwards. But in the first two volumes of autobiography, fantastical prose and descriptions had been, as it were, introduced as distinct units within the autobiographical prose - such a unit being the "poem" about the vice-regal ball in "First The Green Blade". Very long passages of fantasy within a chapter were, indeed, prefaced with their own subtitle, such as "The Protestant Reformation" within the "The Protestant Kid Thinks of the Reformation" section of I Knock at the Door, and "The Buttle of the Boyne" within the title-chapter of Pictures in the Hallway.

Two of the chief fantasy sequences of I Knock at the Door are included in the autobiography's narratives as "dreams" and they give the title to the chapters which contain them "The Dream School" and "The Dream Review". Drums under the Window, however, draws no demarcation line between naturalistic prose and fantastical prose, naturalistic experience or fantastical

experience, nor does it attempt to explain the presence of a passage of fantasy in terms of being a "dream". At any moment the narrative of the volume is likely to plunge into fantasy which is offered simply as part of Sean's experience. For example, Sean can simply be walking down the street when he comes upon a group of literary characters being addressed by a statue:

One day, having honoured, in Bodinstown, the memory of Wolfe Tone, as he was coming home on a lovely late summer evening through misery-crowded Marlborough Street, he saw a crowd of Barney Dorans, Matt Haffigans, Córny Doyles, and Patsy Farrells gathered round the Church of the Immaculate Conception, known to all Dubliners as the Pro-Cathedral, staring up at the figure of St. Laurence O'Toole gesticulating with his crozier, standing tiptoe like a ballet dancer on his pedestal, and sometimes leaning down towards the street so that you were in fear he'd come tumbling down any minute. Shouting away the saint was, to the crowd below, and Sean, when he had pushed his way forward, found it was a Tirade against Shaw, while Professor Mcgennis in his academical gown held on to the saint's skirt to keep him from falling. (p. 562).

Such passages serve, in the context of Drums, to denote the ideas current in Ireland, and the development of Sean's own thought. In this passage the subject is the attack upon the works of Shaw by the Church and the Nationalists, and Sean's own reading and admiration of Shaw's works, and particularly of John Bull's Other Island. The fantastical passages can be extremely satirical. One of the bitterest attacks in Drums - an assault upon the "Keltic Twilight" school of Irish painting and poetry in general, and A.E. (George Russell) in particular, is presented in terms of a visit by Sean to a lunatic asylum, where he is taken for a conducted tour of the delusions and obsessions of the inmates (pp. 451-9).

If Drums is losing something of the "dramatic" spirit and techniques of the pre-autobiography plays and the earlier autobiographies, it is, perhaps, compensating for this loss in its emphasis upon, and abundant use of, fantasy. And although O'Casey argued that "fantasy" was an inherent part of his style as a writer, and outright allegorical fantasy can be traced back in his work as far as Kathleen Listens In, and even beyond

to a play The Robe of Rosheen which is now lost,³ perhaps Drums Under the Windows, in its almost indiscriminate mingling of naturalism and fantasy, prefigures developments in the dramatic nature of future plays.

It is possible that O'Casey began work on the play Oak Leaves and Lavender at some time in mid-1941 when he was preparing Pictures in the Hallway for publication. The evidence for this is a reference in Mrs O'Casey's book Sean to a time when he was "in the middle of his work, editing the second volume of his autobiography, Pictures in the Hallway, and the play, Oak Leaves and Lavender."⁴ With regard to the period of the background of the play this date for the writing of Oak Leaves is entirely possible, for the Battle of Britain during which the play is set took place during the period from August 1940 to May 1941. Otherwise the reference is somewhat puzzling. The letters of O'Casey in 1941 make no mention of any plans to write a play about the Second World War, and although in a letter of 22nd September 1941 he wrote that he was "trying to think out another play", that new play was more likely to have been Red Roses for Me, which he actually began to write in December 1941, rather than Oak Leaves.

But even if Oak Leaves was contemplated or even begun before the writing of Red Roses and of Drums Under the Windows, it seems as if Oak Leaves was soon to be kept in abeyance while the author wrote Red Roses (December 1941 - 1942). And Drums Under the Windows too was completed before, although probably not long before, it:

³ In a letter to Brooks Atkinson, April 1939, Letters p. 792 O'Casey traces the use of fantasy in his writing back to his very earliest work including, "a fantasy called "The Seamless Robe of Roisin" - Roisin is Ireland -; &, I think, it tried, through ridicule to halt the Civil War".

⁴ Eileen O'Casey: Sean, p. 184.

The evidence for the comparative dates of completion of Drums under the Windows and Oak Leaves is complex, and centres around a reference to the battle of Arnhem made in the first chapter of the fourth volume of autobiography Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well. In this chapter the author is describing, within the chronological framework of the volume, the fate of Thomas Ashe, an Irish Republican who died on hunger strike in 1917.. But the narrative concerning Ashe is suddenly led forward very many years to an event of World War Two:

And here, now, was another sad moment, the tale of the death of another young man for another cause, though both fought and died for freedom. The young man who died holding a Rhine bridge at Arnhem has been awarded the Victoria Cross. Defending a bridge and a blazing house for three days, he fell at last and went away for ever. Sean tried to picture this young man, Lieutenant John Grayburn, wounded twice, leading his little group of gallant paratroops to safety before he died,

(Inishfallen, p.10)

The unexpectedness of this break in the time-scheme of the narrative of Inishfallen and the use of the word "now" - "And here, now, was another sad moment" - suggest that the author had received news of Grayburn's death at the battle of Arnhem just as the first chapter of Inishfallen was being written. The battle of Arnhem took place in September 1944, and so it seems that the first chapter of Inishfallen was probably written towards the end of 1944. And since it seems that the chapters of the autobiographies were now being written in an order corresponding to the overall chronology of the narrative,⁵ and since the opening words of this first chapter pick up the closing words of the preceding volume, it seems safe to assume that when O'Casey began work on this chapter he was beginning work upon

⁵ See above in connection with the writing of Drums Under the Windows

Inishfallen as a whole.

Having established that the writing of Inishfallen began in late 1944, then the date of the completion of Drums is also roughly late 1944, for Mrs. O'Casey writes that:

Sean, completing his third volume of autobiography, Drums under the Windows, went straight into the next, Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well.⁶

Oak Leaves and Lavender although it might have been nearing completion at this time could not have been totally finished, for Mrs. O'Casey in her book Sean writes that:

"... when we read that the same boy (Johnny Grayburn) had been killed in the war, Sean dedicated the play of Oak Leaves and Lavender to 'Little Johnny Grayburn who, in his sailor suit, played football with me on a Chalfont lawn and afterwards gallantly fell in the battle of Arnhem.'"⁷

And so it would seem that Oak Leaves was written in 1942-45, largely after the writing of Red Roses for Me, and largely during the writing of Drums Under the Windows, but continuing also into the period during which the early part of Inishfallen was written. Oak Leaves was published in May 1946.

Oak Leaves is the first play of O'Casey's since Within the Gates to be set in England, and indeed is the only other full-length play of O'Casey's to have an English, as opposed to an Irish, background. Perhaps O'Casey's reversion to writing about contemporary events which took place in England in itself suggests something of a lapse in the influence of the autobiographies over his plays, and this seems to be borne out by the absence of any definite textual links between this play and the early autobiographical volumes which were written well before the play.

Oak Leaves draws hardly any substance at all from I Knock at the Door

⁶Eileen O'Casey; Sean, p. 200.

⁷Eileen O'Casey; Sean, p. 117.

and Pictures in the Hallway. The only possible textual relationships between the play and these two volumes concerns two images, one in each of the two volumes, which might have formed the germ of inspiration for the minuet danced by ghostly eighteenth century figures in the Prelude and at the ending of the play.

Part of the elaborate opening stage-direction for the Prelude describes the dance as follows:

.... the light ... seems to come from the ghosts of many candles. Three couples, dressed mistily in the garb of the eighteenth century, come in dancing, forming a triangle of figures; they dance to a minuet, the notes played on a piano, a little slowly, and perhaps a little stiffly. The dancers move slowly and stiffly with the melody; indeed, they dance as if they found it hard to move, and did so as if in a dream; or as if their thoughts were on things almost forgotten, rather than on the dance.

(Collected Plays Vol. IV p.6)

In I Knock at the Door, the graveyard in which Johnny's father was buried is described as containing:

" ... fan-branched yews, looking like shy, saintly,
Georgian ladies dancing a quiet, secret minuet
to themselves, ..." (p. 42).

And not only the image itself, but also the overtones of death and ghostliness provided by its grave-yard context, are in keeping with the Prelude and closing of the play.

The related image in Pictures in the Hallway also occurs in a grim context.. Johnny on a visit with his uncle to Kilmainham Jail refers to Kilmainham itself (which contains eighteenth century buildings such as the famous Swift's Hospital) as looking "as if it were doing a ragged and middle-aged minuet" (p. 202), and "the sombreness and grimness creep into the image as Kilmainham Jail - itself a building of the eighteenth century - is glimpsed:

There it was. A great, sombre, silent stone building, sitting like a toad watching the place doing its ragged middle-aged minuet. (p. 202).

Although much of the play was apparently written while the author was also working upon Drums Under the Windows, the amount of interaction

between the two works was, from the evidence of the texts of the two works, seemingly not great. One obvious reason for this lack of interaction is that Drums and Oak Leaves are each closely concerned with, and thus largely draw their substance from, their own specific, and different, time and place. And the material of Oak Leaves, when it came to be included within the autobiographies, was chiefly reworked into Rose and Crown and Sunset and Evening Star, both of which share the play's English background, and one of which, Sunset, depicts the same period of time as it does.

There might possibly be some kind of historical parallel, although not, of course, correspondence, between Drums and Oak Leaves in that the autobiography describes something of the First World War while the play depicts something of the Second; although, on the whole, Drums draws upon The Plough and The Silver Tassie for the substance of its narrative about the Great War.

In one particular passage in the "St. Vincent Provides a Bed" chapter, however, Drums seems to combine something of The Tassie and Oak Leaves.

In a passage of impressionistic description, which recalls the vision of the war-zone depicted in the set of Act II of The Tassie - "The slime, the bloodied mud, the crater, ..." (Drums, p. 632) - occurs the sentence:

The ghosts of them who fell at Dettingen,
Fontenoy, and Waterloo were clasping their
colder arms around the newer dead. (p. 632)

And this seems to link the passage to the Prelude and ending of Oak Leaves with their ghostly figures of men who had laid down their lives for England in battles of the past. In Act I Monica tells the story of Sir Nigel:

..... who kissed his bride, and spurred away to
fall on the field of Blenheim. Less'n a year after,
they saw her rise to dance with a young gallant
in grey, swooning when the grey shadow faded out of
her arms, to die an hour after, murmuring that eternity

would open and end for her dancing in the arms
of Nigel; in this room; in this very room.

(p.22).

And in The Prelude the Dancers, on learning that England is at war,
demand their swords and ask:

Where is Marlborough and where is Clive?
Where is Wolfe and where is Wellesley? (p. 10).

At the end of the play, after the death of Drishogue and Edgar in battle,
the dancers sense that some "new souls" are joining them and "seeking
out companionship from shadows" (Act III p. 109).

Another sentence in the same impressionistic passage from Drums:

In every ravine, on every hill, through
every golden cornfield tens of thousands
of Irish wriggled and twisted to death ...

points to a common theme of The Tassie and Oak Leaves, and of The Plough
and the autobiographies also - that is, the fact that so many Irishmen
have fought on England's behalf in her many wars.

The hero of Oak Leaves, Drishogue, though an Irishman, has come to
England to join the British air-force, and it is he who exhorts his English
friend, Edgar Hatherleigh, to "Go forth to fight, perchance to die, for
the great human soul of England" (Act I p. 29). And Drishogue's father,
Feelim, describes, to an English conscientious objector, the glories
of an England that is worth fighting for (Act III pp. 94-5). But it is
when other English characters of the play become involved in the dialogue
between Feelim and the conscientious objector, Pobjoy, that the theme
of Irishmen dying for England is given its most obvious expression:

.....

Joy. U's gettin' tired of th' yarn about th' Irish
as a fightin' race - if they are, where are
they in this war - tell me that?

Feelim (afire with racial pride). Where are they, is
it? If you were only near enough to th' centre of
the flame an' th' fighting, you'd know where they were!
Thousands of us left our bones to bleach in th' Vale
of Tamar, th' time Harold tried to prevent th' Norman
pennon from becomin' England's banner. Th' leopards
on your banner would have jumped from th' flag had not

the Irish held firm on the flank of the King's army at Crécy. Ay, an' when your gay an' godly King Harry th' Fifth got ringed round with horsemen an' spears at Agincourt, an' surrendered himself into God's care, he didn't forget to put th' Irish in th' front of the field.

Old Woman (mocking). Oh! that time's too far off to be brought in front of us now.

Feelim . . . (To the crowd) We'll bring things a bit nearer. We were at Waterloo; we were frozen to th' ground in th' bastions of Sebastopol; we were fightin' for yous in Egypt, while our mothers an' fathers were gettin' evicted outa their poor hovels be th' landlords, ...

....

.. An' not only yous, but others revelled in our courage an' skill. Did any of you ever hear of the Pennsylvanian Line? Well, they were th's best regiments in Washington's Army, an' almost all of them were Irish!

.....

.. An' we climbed th' heights of Gettysburg, with sprigs of green in our caps: an' thousands of us terraced the slopes with our bodies that lie there quiet to this very day.

....

(leaping to his feet again in a final outburst). An' we're here still, pierced be every bullet, scorched be every bomb, shook be every shell; an' here I am with death as close as life to me, an' a son waitin' to gamble his life in the skies for England's sake! (Act III pp. 97-102).

Like Drums, Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well shares at least a portion of its period of composition with Oak Leaves, and thus it is possible that the writing of Inishfallen and the writing of Oak Leaves interacted with each other.

One minor but unmistakable instance of an influence from the play upon Inishfallen yet again involves "The Prelude" of Oak Leaves and Lavender, and, again, another play is ^{also} involved.

The chapter "The Raid", which reworks, in effect, virtually the whole of The Shadow of A Gunman, contains passages which seem to be related to Oak Leaves. Sean, meditating upon the tenement area of Dublin in which

he lives, thinks:

The streets were long haggard corridors of rottenness and ruin. What wonderful mind of memory could link the shrinking wretchedness with the flaunting gorgeousness of silk and satin; with bloom of rose and scent of lavender? A thousand years must have passed since the last lavender lady was carried out feet first from the last surviving one of them. (p. 38).

The reference to the scent of lavender recalls the play with its

Old wife's tale that whenever death is near
the scent of lavender spreads over the house, ...
(Act I p. 19).

The autobiography's mentioning of a "lavender lady" brings to mind the ghostly "Lavender Seller" who, in the Prelude and at the very end of the play, is heard "chanting her wares" (Prelude p. 8, Act III p. 111). apparently outside the window of the house. And the passage in "The Raid" in which Sean thinks of how, in the 1913 Lock Out Strike and in the struggle against England, "The spirit beneath the coat brocaded, with slender sword quivering, had come into being again, not in brocade, but in rags" (p. 39) recalls not only the costume and significance of the ghostly dancers of Oak Leaves,⁸ but also one of the play's central themes - that power is passing from the aristocracy into the hands of the people. And at the end of the play, (when the "Manorial House of the Long Ago", in which the play is set, has already been turned into a factory) the aristocratic Dancers concede that their day is over, and that the people can now fight for themselves:

2nd Lady Dancer See St. Paul's standing sturdy out
against the sky; and see, the people's heads are
holding high, and swing is in their carriage.
(The sound of marching feet is heard: not of a
squad of Home Guards, but of a mighty host.)

2nd Gentleman Dancer (sadly) The people need our
swords no longer.

⁸ See chapter above on The Shadow of a Gunman.

1st and 3rd Gentlemen Dancers (sadly - echoing him).

The people need our swords no longer.

Lady Dancers (together). Well-a-day! that ye had no
swords to offer! (Act III p. 110).

But the chief interest in the relationship and interaction between Oak Leaves and Inishfallen centres around the characterisation of Drishogue and Dame Hatherleigh in the play.

Drishogue, as a promising young man who dies in battle in the Second World War, has thus much in common with Lieutenant John Grayburn whom the author knew in real life. And O'Casey pays direct tribute to John Grayburn in both the opening chapter of Inishfallen, and in the dedication of Oak Leaves. Part of the tribute paid to Grayburn in Inishfallen seems to echo words spoken by Feelim in the play, as he laments the death of his son Drishogue. In the autobiography Sean/the author "asks" of the dead Grayburn:

And what have you left of yourself behind for coming life to see, to honour, and admire? A blink o'scarlet ribbon holding up a copper cross, with a golden centre.⁹ Not enough, not enough, Johnny Grayburn; not enough to pay for your sturdy body, your handsome face, the promise of the future man. I was very fond of you, Johnny Grayburn, for you were all that every youngster ought to be; the makings of a fine, intelligent, colourful human being ... (p. 10).

while Feelim in the play says, of Drishogue's badly burned body: "A cap-badge an' a few buttons are all that's left of my boy!" (Act III p. 107).

But if in the autobiography O'Casey does write of Grayburn in the terms in which Feelim of the play speaks of his son, it seems very unlikely that Grayburn himself was to any real extent a model for the characterisation of Drishogue. The play itself must have been nearing completion when O'Casey had news of Grayburn's death, and the characterisation

⁹ Lieutenant Grayburn was awarded the Victoria Cross, see Inishfallen, p. 10.

of Drishogue must - since he is the central figure in the play - have been firmly established before then.

Moreover, Inishfallen itself holds some very real clues as to who a chief model for the character of Drishogue might have been. For the chapter of Inishfallen which is entitled "Where Wild Swans Nest" contains an account of Sean's visit to Lady Gregory at Coole Park, and during this visit he sees a picture of Major Robert Gregory, and is told, by Lady Gregory herself, how her son died in the Great War:

Sean paused in front of a young, broad-shouldered man with an open and courageous face.
- My dear son, she murmured softly, my dear, dear son, lost leading his air-squadron over de Italian battlefield. For months and months I had dreaded it, for I knew de German planes were well ahead of ours in design and swiftness. (p. 117)

Like Drishogue of the play, but unlike Johnny Grayburn, Robert Gregory was an airman, and, very importantly, like Drishogue and unlike Johnny Grayburn, he was Irish and, therefore, under no compulsion to fight for Britain.

The description, in Inishfallen, of Lady Gregory and her sorrow seems to be directly in the thematic tradition of the mother mourning her son that began in Juno and continued throughout the autobiographical volumes.¹⁰ But the portrayal of Lady Gregory at this point in the autobiographical narrative also seems to be very closely related to the characterisation of Dame Hatherleigh in Oak Leaves.

Both Lady Gregory and Dame Hatherleigh are women of rank living in large ancestral houses, both are widows, (Dame Hatherleigh hears of the death of her husband during the course of the play), and both have a son, an only child, who joins the airforce and is killed in action. There are discrepancies between the two "characters", but for whereas Lady Gregory

¹⁰ See chapter on Juno and the Paycock above.

in the autobiography is the mother of a Drishogue-type figure, Dame Hatherleigh of the play is the mother not of Drishogue, but of his friend Edgar. Also, for the sake of dramatic intensity, Dame Hatherleigh is depicted as losing a husband as well as a son in the war. However, Lady Gregory and Dame Hatherleigh are absolutely alike in expressing the same premonitions and fears as to the safety of their sons. Lady Gregory tells Sean:

For months and months I had dreaded it, for
I knew de German planes were well ahead of ours
in design and swiftness. (p. 117).

While Dame Hatherleigh confides in Feelim:

.... (With a long and sad sigh) It's a bad thing,
Feelim, for one's love and hopes to be depending
on one child only. (Her body grows tense, and her
face becomes drawn with anxiety and fear, while
her eyes stare out in front of her). I sometimes
dread the things I seem to see and hear, threatening
woe to husband and son. When there is silence
in my mind, I see and hear them.
(In a sharper tone) I see and hear them now: -
the cold clang of a horde of tramping jackboots,
bound with steel; the sharp windy scream of a
thousand German warplanes, with a pillar of
fire moving before them, shaving itself in the
shape of a whirling swastika! In the centre
of the red fire my son is a perishing white
flame; and the steel-shod jackboots pound down
heavy on my husbands body! (Act I p. 36).

Yet despite their own personal grief both women share too an indomitable and courageous vision of the real and continuing values of life. And they share too a respect for the joys of others. Lady Gregory tells Sean:

-We must be brave, we must fence our sorrow
away so that no shadow falls on those left singing
and dancing around us. Come, let us doh for a
walk in de woods. (p. 118).

While Dame Hatherleigh, almost at the end of the play, asks:

Is the crimson cherry brown? The apple-blossom
black? The sky for ever grey? No, no! The
cherry is as red as ever; the apple-blossom rosy;
and the sky is often blue; sweet lavender rears
tops of gentle purple; many a sturdy oak shall
strut from a dying acorn; and a maiden's lips still
quiver for a kiss. (Act III p. 110-11).

For the sake of dramatic effect, however, Dame Hatherleigh's feelings are, of course, expressed in a much more verbally elaborate and sensational way than are Lady Gregory's feelings in Inishfallen. This raises the question as to exactly what kind of relationship exists between Oak Leaves and the autobiography's account of Sean's visit to Coole Park.

Even though the autobiographies are literary and imaginative works, and even though the author has used a great deal of literary skill and artistic licence in their composition, it seems very unlikely that in Inishfallen O'Casey fabricated the incident concerning Major Gregory's photograph. Although Lady Gregory had died before the autobiographies were written,¹¹ she had been a very close and deeply revered friend of O'Casey, and it seems highly improbable that he would write and publish an account of an incident concerning her if that incident had not actually occurred - particularly an incident of such deeply personal and tragic implications on her part. It seems safe to assume, therefore, that the episode recounted in Inishfallen did happen in real life.

In real life O'Casey visited Lady Gregory at Coole Park in June 1924 and in August - September 1925.¹² The autobiography depicts apparently only the first of these visits, but perhaps the details of both are telescoped into one account. But no matter whether the incident concerning the photograph took place during the first or second visit, it would still have occurred many years before O'Casey wrote Oak Leaves, and also many years before he wrote Inishfallen. Assuming, then,

¹¹ Lady Gregory died in May 1932.

¹² See Letters Vol. I pp. 109-10 Letter from O'Casey to Lady Gregory 2nd June 1924 and Editors note (2), and p. 141 Letter from O'Casey to Lady Gregory, 19th August 1925 and Editor's note (1).

that the incident did take place in real life, then the play and the autobiography could have drawn individually upon that actual experience, and may be related only in so far as each does draw upon the same original experience. However, since Oak Leaves and Inishfallen were, in date of composition, so very close to each other and, in part, even contemporary with each other; and since the autobiography, even when dealing with 'fact' remains a work of literature in the way in which it presents that fact; it is possible that a literary influence could also have existed between the two works in their depictions of Dame Hatherleigh and Lady Gregory. And since the play was nearing completion when Inishfallen was just begun, it seems that any literary influence in this context would have been exerted by the play upon the autobiography. It is virtually impossible to assess just how much the characterisation of Dame Hatherleigh, which seems itself to have been partly based on the real personality of Lady Gregory, influenced the literary presentation of Lady Gregory in Inishfallen. But there are certain points of evidence in "Where Wild Swans Nest" to suggest that the play as a whole did have some measure of literary influence upon this chapter of Inishfallen.

Firstly, the autobiography's narrative breaks into dialogue to express the incident over the photograph, and, since Inishfallen is considerably less 'dramatic' in its essence than were its predecessors, this break into direct speech suggests the direct influence of a play. Perhaps this influence stems from the earlier play, Juno which is linked to this part of Inishfallen by virtue of its theme of motherhood, or perhaps it stems from Oak Leaves, or is, indeed, an amalgam of the dramatic influence of both plays.

Secondly, another reference to Lady Gregory in the autobiographical chapter seems very definitely to recall the Prelude of the play. For during his visit to Coole Sean discovers a neglected meadow full of bright blue butterflies and he thinks to himself:

How delightful the sturdy black figure of her ladyship would look doing a slow, graceful, if a little stiff, minuet among the brilliant-blue fluttering things (p. 122).

And this is surely yet another instance of the autobiography conjuring up the figures of the Prelude who "dance to a minuet, . . . slowly and stiffly with the melody" (Prelude p. 6).

The descriptions of Coole House in "Where Wild Swans Nest" suggests both a factual and literary relationship between the play and the autobiographical chapter. In life Lady Gregory was "Mistress of a grand house" (p. 114), just as Dame Hatherleigh in the play is mistress of "a Manorial House of the Long Ago" (p. 5) and in this respect it might have been the real Coole House which formed the original inspiration for the setting of the entire play of Oak Leaves. And Inishfallen reveals^a further link between the real Coole and the Manor House of the play, in that both houses suffered unexpected fates. O'Casey departs from the time-scheme of the narrative about his visit to Coole to comment bitterly upon what happened to the house after Lady Gregory's death:

All the rooms and passages are gone, and saplings
root among the broken stone, for an elevated Irish
Government has broken down the House and levelled it
smooth for nettles to grow upon a shapeless mound. Oh!
a scurvy act for an Irish Government to do on the memory
of one who was greater than the whole bunch of them
put together and tied with string. The god-damned
Philistines! (pp. 124-5).

In the play the house suffers a rather more positive and unlamented fate - a fate which symbolises the change in the social order.

Foreman (briskly). Now, ladies and gentlemen, murmur
your last farewell, and take your last look at the house
of your fathers; for in a few minutes' time we link this with
the other factory turning out tanks for the Red Army,
and tanks for our own. (Act III p. 105).

Stage-directions at the beginning of the play and of each successive act have indicated the gradual change of the architecture and decorative features of the house into the cogs and wheels of industry, and by the beginning of Act III:

The scene is the same, but the aspect of the big room has changed with the changing world outside it. Its broad and pleasing panelling has become like the ties, the belts, and bars connecting various parts of machinery together, and making of them an active, unified whole. The capacious fireplace, resembling it before, has now assumed the almost similar - though something stylised - shape of a great drop-hammer. The columns flanking the doorway have become machinery shafts. The bureau has become a lathe, though still preserving the vague outlines of what it once was. The two lesser windows have turned into wheels carrying belts to the chandeliers, now turned up on their sides, and ready to revolve, too, in unison with the rest of the machinery. (Act III p. 85).

The change is completed just as Dame Hatherleigh, who knows her home is lost to her, is approaching death and waiting to join the ghostly dancers.

If Inishfallen and the play are related in so far as the autobiography's descriptions of Coole Park help to throw light upon the real-life origins of the house setting of the play, yet the symbolically elaborated significance and presentation of the house-setting of Oak Leaves seems in turn to have exerted a literary influence upon the retrospectively-written descriptions of Coole in Inishfallen.

And the description of Coole as

a grand house, dying reluctantly, filled a little too full with things brought from all quarters of the known world; some of them bringing into his fancy the ghosts of a Victorian age, .. (p. 114).

seems related to Dame Hatherleigh's words that "The house must change; but it must not die" (Act III p. 103), while the reference to "ghosts" of a bygone age seems yet again to recall the ghostly dancers of the play. (Indeed, on the evidence of the relationship between the play and the autobiographies, the Prelude and ending of the play with their ghostly dancers must surely be the most distinctive and influential features of Oak Leaves).

Oak Leaves and Lavender's relationship with the volumes of autobiography written after it tends, on the whole, to indicate how much of the material of the play was drawn from O'Casey's own experience in wartime England, or, more specifically, in the West Country which provides the setting of the play. And although Oak Leaves has something in common with

Within the Gates in that both have an English setting, and draw, for their material, very substantially upon the experiences of the author in England; in connection with Oak Leaves that English experience was personally significant enough to the author to be included in the narrative of the autobiographical volumes. This was not the case in connection with Within of The Gates. And the implication/this may be that although Oak Leaves did not derive very much of its actual material directly from the text of the autobiographies, the writing of the autobiographies at least influenced the author to choose, for the play, material which was very much a part of his own significant experience.

Sean's/O'Casey's experiences in the doomed "Big Houses" of Rose and Crown might be related to the symbolism of Purple Dust. And the description in Sunset of the rigours of life in wartime Devon - for example, the putting up of the blackout, the over-officiousness of special constables, and, much more seriously, the terrors of an air-raid, and the bombing of Plymouth - seems to consist of exactly the same material as does the play.¹³

Rose and Crown and Sunset having moved quite markedly away from the consistently dramatic presentation of Johnny/Sean in the earlier volumes, contain long passages of opinion expressed in the author's own voice. And the relationship between Oak Leaves and these passages indicates that

¹³ Compare the autobiography's account of the inconveniences, and casualties of the blackout (p. 563), with the dramatic presentation of the same inconveniences and enumeration of the same kind of casualties in the play (Act I, pp. 12-13, 24, Act II p. 67-70); the autobiography's expression of irritation with special constables (p. 563), with Feelim's views on the same subject (Act I p. 20, pp. 67-70); Sunset's description of an air-raid (pp. 585-7) with the depiction of air-raids in the play (Act I p. 54 Act III pp. 83-4), and Sunset's references to the bombing of Plymouth (pp. 587-9), with the remark made in the play that "Duxton got it hot" (Act II, p. 55)

the views of Drishogue and the serious views of his father Feelim, as expressed in the play, are precisely those of their author, and this in turn, indicates that no matter how much Drishogue might, in the circumstances of his death, resemble Major Robert Gregory, and no matter how much he might be an independent dramatic character in the circumstances of his life, he is essentially too, a representative of the author. And the presentation in Oak Leaves of a young and an older character, both of whom express, quite directly, O'Caseyan ideals, perhaps, like Red Roses in its presentation of Ayamonn and Brennan o'the Moor, reflects the influence of the writing of the early volumes of autobiography in which the author - as a middle-aged/old man - recalled his own youth,^{and} thus became conscious of two images of himself.

Subjects upon which Drishogue and the author hold exactly the same opinions are, for example, the glorious literary, artistic and historical heritage of England,¹⁴ and the Celtic associations and nature of much of England.¹⁵ Also, like O'Casey, Drishogue is a convinced Communist.

Among the views which Feelim and O'Casey hold in common are, again, an appreciation of the finer points of England's history and culture,¹⁶ an enormous pride in the military prowess and achievements of the Irish - particularly in connection with their service of the English.¹⁷ - and a dislike of the Irish leader, De Valera.¹⁸

And it seems too as if Sean/O'Casey might, on the evidence of the final volumes, be related to Feelim and Drishogue not only with regard to opinion

¹⁴ See play Act I p. 29 , and Rose and Crown, p. 256, p. 268.

¹⁵ See play Act II p. 62, and Rose and Crown, pp. 518-21.

¹⁶ Play, Act III p. 94-6, Sunset, p. 545.

¹⁷ Play, Act III pp. 97-9, Rose and Crown, p. 319, Sunset, (pp. 560, 574, 637-8).

¹⁸ Play Act III p. 91, O'Casey's/Sean's dislike of De Valera is most clearly expressed in Inishfallen, pp. 134-6.

Both Feelim of the play and Sean/O'Casey of the autobiography are subjected to the charge that they are parasites upon England and the English people.¹⁹ And both Feelim and O'Casey answer those attacks.²⁰ Also Drishogue and Sean share the distinction of being the target of an importunate visitor who is determined to tell them the "truth" about the Soviet Union.²¹

Much of the relationship between Oak Leaves and Lavender and the final volume of autobiography may simply be based on the use of the same original experiences as their subject matter. But at least the episodes concerning this visitor, who is named "Deeda Tutting" in the play and "Creda Stern" in Sunset, must reveal something of a literary link between the two works. O'Casey might, in real life, have experienced such a visit. But the normally 'undramatic' Sunset's break into "dramatic" dialogue in order to present the episode, and its unmistakable echoes of the text of the play - not only in general meaning but at times too in its precise choice of words - would seem to suggest that, whatever the origin of the Creda/Deeda incident, O'Casey, in Sunset, is writing of the incident largely as it was artistically presented within the play.

¹⁹ Play Act III, p. 96-7, Sunset, p. 544.

²⁰ Play Act III, p. 96-99, Sunset, p. 545.

²¹ Play, Act I, pp. 46-54, Sunset, pp. 534-8.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well - Cock-a-doodle Dandy

Begun, it seems, in late 1944 on the completion of Drums under the Window¹, and when O'Casey was still working on Oak Leaves and Lavender, the writing of Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well was not itself directly prompted by anything in the writing or nature of Oak Leaves, but, as the fourth volume of the autobiographies, was planned as soon as the second volume, Pictures in the Hallway, was finished in manuscript. In a letter of the 1st July 1941 to his publishers, O'Casey mentioned his extended plans for the autobiographical volumes:

I had thought of four altogether, with the last one to be called, "The Clock Strikes Twelve".²

In the event, Inishfallen, which was published in January, 1949, was not to be the final autobiography, although for a time, even as it was it was intended to be the concluding volume of the autobiographies, being written, as a letter of November 1926 from O'Casey to an Old Dublin friend reveals:

I am working at the "last" volume of biography. It ends at the time when I leave Ireland for England, "The Last Glimpses of Eirean".³

However the inverted commas around the word "last" suggest, even here, an element of doubt as to whether the fourth volume was to be the final autobiography after all.

If the writing of Inishfallen was not in itself directly inspired

¹ See preceding chapter on Drums Under the Windows, Oak Leaves, Inishfallen.

² Letter to Daniel Macmillan Letters Vol I, p.888.

³ Letter to Mr. Jack Daly, 26th November 1946, quoted by Saros Cowasjee in Sean O'Casey, The Man Behind the Plays, paperback edition (revised), London, Oliver and Boyd Paperbacks, 1965.

or brought about by the writing of a particular play, it seems too that the overall nature of Inishfallen initially owes little to any previous play. For it seems as if its nature and structure were primarily influenced, even determined, by its position in the sequence of the autobiographies, whether as the final, or simply the fourth, volume. And, very interestingly, it was strongly influenced also by the nature of its predecessor Drums Under the Windows.

Inishfallen is based upon a strong artistic and thematic structure in that it is designed to culminate in Sean's leaving of Ireland, and thus it traces his progressive disillusionment with life in that country. It is very much an artistic design since, as his letters reveal,⁴ O'Casey's leaving of Ireland was not in real life originally intended to be so permanent as the autobiographical account maintains.

Inishfallen is unlike Drums, but similar to the earliest volumes, in that its climax concerns an event of personal rather than of national significance. But Inishfallen, like Drums, still contains much Irish political material. This is because the 1916-1926 period which it depicts was an eventful, as well as tragic, time in Irish history, and had repercussions upon the lives of individuals such as Sean. Indeed, disgust with the politics and national life of this period are presented in Inishfallen as a prime reason for Sean's increasing alienation from, and disillusionment with, Ireland. And if the volume ends on a purely personal note it is the first volume to begin with national rather than personal concerns:

Things had changed, but not utterly; and no terrible beauty was to be born. Short Mass was still the favourite service, and Brian Boru's harp still bloomed on the bottles of beer. But the boys were home again from prison camp and prison cell ...
(p.3)

⁴ See chapter on The Silver Tassie above.

These opening words are in flat contradiction to the stirring conclusion of Drums Under the Windows which quotes Yeats' words "A terrible beauty is born". And in many respects Inishfallen, which, according to Mrs O'Casey, the author began as soon as he had finished Drums, is a complementary piece, or a counterbalance, to the third volume. For whereas Drums depicts Sean's move away from a personal artistic vocation, to which he seemed to dedicate himself at the end of Pictures in the Hallway, towards active and almost total involvement in nationalism and politics, Inishfallen reverses the process and depicts his move away from active commitment to Irish politics and back to personal literary ambitions. And eventually Sean of Inishfallen reaches a point of personal isolation, or rather independence, at which he totally rejects the literary as well as the political world of Ireland, and leaves for England in order to pursue his own artistic vocation. The "All Heaven and Harmsworth Too" chapter and the concluding sentences of Pictures in the Hallway seem to suggest that Johnny possesses the sense of an artistic vocation such as that felt by Joyce's Stephen Daedalus:

He (Johnny) shook himself. He was staying too long in the Hallway looking at the pictures. All done by others. Very beautiful and strong, but all done by others. He'd have to start now doing things for himself. Create things out of his own life. He'd begin to make pictures himself; ay, pictures, too, that would be worth hanging in the Hallway for other people to see. (Pictures p.402)

But it is Inishfallen's conclusion of "Sweet Inishfallen, fare thee well! Forever!" (p.247), with Sean leaving Ireland to follow his vocation and fortunes elsewhere, which would seem to be the better parallel with the actual ending of A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man, in which Stephen too leaves Ireland in disgust:

Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order. She prays now, she says, that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Amen. So be it. Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth

time the reality of experience and to forge in the Smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.⁵

In a sense it is as if Drums has formed a hiatus in the account of Sean's artistic vision and vocation, and Inishfallen is designed to lead Sean, the author and the reader back to the point at which that theme, which had been established so movingly in I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway, might be taken up again. The failure, on the whole, of the fifth and sixth volumes to fulfil the potential artistic and thematic structure created for them by the general design and conclusion of Inishfallen is entirely another matter, and does not relate to the writing or nature of Inishfallen itself.

If Inishfallen was not, at the outset, inspired or influenced by any particular play, O'Casey's career as a playwright may yet have exerted a general influence on the nature of this autobiography. For he seems at this point in his career to have been most definitely in the midst of an extremely productive period with regard to the writing of his plays, and certainly no longer needed to use the autobiographical form as an outlet for his dramatic talents. Perhaps in consequence Inishfallen is, as a whole, less "dramatic" in its presentation of events and characters than is Drums, and Drums for its part had been noticeably less "dramatic" than I Knock at the Door or Pictures in the Hallway. Basically Inishfallen tends to be less "dramatic" than its predecessors in that it contains less dialogue than they do. The opening chapter of Inishfallen, actually contains no dialogue at all and is only the second chapter within the autobiographies to be devoid of direct speech. The first such chapter is "Work Made Manifest", a chapter of Pictures in the Hallway: a chapter which is only half the

⁵ James Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (London, Jonathan Cape, 1924), London, Penguin Books, 1960, reprinted 1969, p.253.

length of "High Road and Low Road" and which does not share the distinction of being the opening chapter of a volume. The final chapters of Inishfallen - "The Girl He Left Behind Him", "Silence" and "Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well" - too are noticeably poor in dialogue. "The Girl He Left Behind Him" contains no direct speech at all, "Silence", a very long chapter indeed, contains only a very, very brief passage of dialogue (p.225), and "Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well" contains no direct speech beyond two short and unconnected statements (pp.233, 234).

Further manifestations of Inishfallen's general tendency to be less dramatic than previous autobiographies are the frequency and the ease with which the chronology of the volume is broken and "anachronisms" slip in to the narrative. For example, in the very first chapter the author mingles an account of the death of Thomas Ashe in 1917 with a contemporary (in terms of the writing of the autobiography) account of the death of John Grayburn in the battle of Arnhem in 1944. And in the succeeding chapters he destroys the spontaneity of his narrative several times by introducing an anachronistic and therefore jarring note. A prime instance of this concerns Sean's early experiences as a playwright under the auspices of the Abbey Theatre. In describing the early days of Sean's relationship with the Abbey, O'Casey allows later bitterness with that theatre to cloud his account and to give it very much a retrospective quality, rather than that sense of the spontaneous recreation, or reliving, of experience which was to be found in the early volumes:

.... He felt .. as he stood quiet in the vestibule, that he had crossed the border of a little, but a great, new kingdom of life, and so another illusion was born in his poor susceptible soul. He didn't know enough then that it was no great thing to be an Abbey playwright; and, afterwards, when he knew a lot more, he was glad he had suffered himself to feel no jubilation to mar his future by thinking too much of a tiny success:....
(p.103)

Such a heavy and obvious sense of the author's "fore-knowledge"

of what was to happen to Sean certainly seems to identify "Sean" of the past with the author of the present time in which the book was written, and thus damages the dramatic objectivity of the characterisation and portrayal of Sean. And on another occasion when the authorial voice spoils the sense of the spontaneity of the narrative by breaking into it with an anachronistic comment, O'Casey actually writes of "Sean then" and "Sean now", thus plainly suggesting, despite the retention of the "third person" in his descriptions of the hero of the autobiography, that Sean and the author are the same person:

.... Once only did he burst out into protesting: when she (Lady Gregory), full of enthusiasm, and certain of pleasing him, read a Labour play called Singing Jail Birds; to Sean then, to Sean now, the worst play ever written signifying its sympathy with the workers. (p.115)

If the easy lapses in chronology tend to identify the figure of Sean directly with the personality of the author, and thus diminish the dramatic quality of Sean's characterisation, and, thereby, of his experiences also; another manifestation or symptom of Inishfallen's diminished dramatic quality is the ease with which its narrative slips into passages of directly expressed opinion, in which the distinction between the voice of the "dramatic" character of Sean and the voice of the author often becomes blurred, and quite often disappears altogether. For example, a passage on the folly, and often hypocrisy, of those who advocate that man should forsake the modern world and "Go back to nature" is initially placed in the "dramatic" context of Sean's thought, as he and his friends, on the way home from a literary evening, discuss the work and opinions of A.E. But the author obviously, and not unnaturally, shares Sean's opinions, and soon the authorial voice - complete with its rhetoric - is to become apparent:

Go back to nature! The yellow-bordered black shawl, the attractive face, pale as a new-born lily, with the luminous eyes, the big, red, defiant mouth, ascetic nose, crowned by the bunched clusters of curling hair, the white bosom, pushing forward to be fondled, that had been flickering about on the screen of Sean's mind all through the talking, Sean had earlier

been admiring a woman whom he saw in the snug of a public house⁷ faded away now, for he was angry. It made him angry to think of these people murmuring from a chair, or shouting from a pulpit, Go Back to God; Go Back to Nature! Go back to nature. We had never left her. Go back to God, go back to nature, without telling us how to do it. This is not the cry of the shepherd, but that of an hireling, afraid to face what God has brought to pass in the changes of a changing world. These people know, or ought to know, that the things done now, however mighty they be, will soon be lesser things behind the greater ones still to come. But they are afraid, they shiver before every forward step taken by man, and try to frighten him, too, with their meandering, delusive cries of back to God and back to nature. These were they who wanted life to die with a whimper, and were embattled, in Press, pulpit, and poem, against those who were determined, if life should die at all, that life should die with a cheer. It was utterly useless, and a little dangerous, to go about singing the song of Go back, go back to nature and go back to God, for it could never be done in the way they wanted it. The ways behind man were closed; the way before him was open, and forward he must go. If a God existed, then man was going to meet Him; he was not going to go back from Him, or slide away into a corner out of His sight. If God there be, He is with the aeroplane five miles high in the sky, sailing over the North Pole, as He was with the first ploughman who fixed a steel edge to his wooden plough. If God there be, He is with the minds planning the bridge over the Severn as He was with the mind that flung a grass rope over a river to make a safer way to cross it; He is with the man of the combine-harvester sweeping over the prairie of waving, golden corn, gathering it and threshing it in big bundles, as He was with the lonelier one, heavily cutting his few stalks of grain with a sickle-curving flint-stone; He is with the scientist controlling or releasing the energy of the atom as He is with the anxious young mother kissing her baby to sleep. A wayward mother may bring misery and danger to her child, and wayward minds may bring misery and danger from the power of the atom; but, by and large, the mother will always be loving and true to her child, and the energy in the atom will be for man's redemption in the end.

- We leave you here, said Edwin Grey to Sean, when the three of them had halted on Binn's Bridge covering the canal, (pp.183-4).

The mingling in the passage of the past tenses of reported speech, or thought, with the present and future tenses of direct statement is one indication that, despite the nominally dramatic context, the author is not only reporting Sean's thought but is, too, inclining towards speaking directly on his own account. And midway in the passage the past tenses yield completely to main verbs in the present and future tenses, as if the direct authorial voice and direct authorial opinion has completely taken over:

.... If a God existed, then man was going to meet Him; he was not going to go back from Him, or slide away into a corner out of His

sight. / If God there be, then He is with the aeroplane five miles high in the sky, He is He is He is may bring may bring will always be will be

And further pointers to this passage as being much more the product of the author's thought in the mid-1940's than the product of "Sean's" thoughts in the mid-1920's are the references to nuclear power, and apparently, to the atomic bomb. For although Ernest Rutherford discovered the atomic nucleus in 1919, and thus opened the way for the development of nuclear power for both peaceful and destructive purposes, it seems much more likely that, in this passage in the autobiography, O'Casey is thinking of the atomic bombs dropped by America upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, rather than thinking back to any early discussions in the 1920's about the possible potential of atomic energy.

Similarly concepts of aeroplanes "five miles high in the sky, sailing over the North Pole" or "the bridge over the Severn", and even of the "combine-harvester", belong to the world of the mid - late 1940's rather than to the early - mid 1920's.

The confusion between the character of Sean and the author himself, and a tendency, as a result, towards the direct expression of opinion, develop very rapidly in Inishfallen. In a way such developments are, perhaps, quite natural, even inevitable, since as "Sean", the hero of the autobiography, approached closer and closer to the author in terms of age, experience, thought and general development of character, it must have been increasingly difficult for O'Casey to keep "Sean" in a dramatic perspective. But it seems too as if, with the virtually continuous writing of plays during this middle period of his career, the dramatic impetus was now quite rapidly leaving his autobiographies, and with the final chapters of Inishfallen the autobiographies really begin to become something of a repository for directly expressed opinion and debate. And chapters such as, in part, "The Girl He Left Behind Him"

and, especially, "Silence" are much more akin to essays than to the "autobiographical sketches" which constituted the early volumes of autobiography.

In fact these two chapters introduce a new and, from the point of view of the artistic worth of the autobiographies, unfortunate element into the autobiographical volumes. This new element is the actual and extensive quotation of the works of other writers. "The Girl He Left Behind Him" - a chapter which ostensibly, and in part movingly and successfully, sets out to describe the ill-fated relationship of Sean and his first love "Nora Creena" - slips with amazing ease into an examination by Sean / the author of the actual text of a work by the theologian F.J. Sheed.

But it wasn't so easy for him, Sean thought, as he slouched homewards along the hedge-lined roads from Santry, Nora's kisses still happy and warm on his lips. He could not understand the stops, the vantages, the lowest, or the highest, compass in the melodious and malicious organ-tune of man's existence. What is man, O Lord, that Thou are mindful of him?.... A very superior being, thinks F.J. Sheed; for Man is aware of his power to produce effects which have nothing whatsoever in common with matter. What, nothing at all? But man being matter, and the effects coming from man, how can it be said that these effects can have nothing in common with matter? Because, says Sheed, Man can think - thought is not reducible to anything that we can feel justified in calling material. It doesn't occupy space, it has neither shape, nor size, nor weight, and it is not perceptible to any of our senses; it cannot be made into something else.

That's a queer saying, surely. May not a thought take the shape of a poem, a painting, a building? It may even turn itself into a war, national or civil. And hasn't catholic thought filled the sky with angels? How do we know that thought doesn't occupy space? How are thoughts sometimes carried over space from one mind to another? (p.191)

Of course, the references from the work of F.J. Sheed and the ensuing debate, are nominally placed in the autobiographical framework of a depiction of the development of Sean's thought. But the direct quotations from the work spoil any sense that the author is writing of spontaneous experience (surely O'Casey must have referred again to the theological work in question when he was writing this chapter), and the author's voice is entirely indistinguishable from that of Sean. The extent to which the author has chosen explicitly

to identify himself with Sean in this debate is emphasised by a strange break in the chronology of the chapter. In part of the debate as to whether animals share Man's power of thought, a story is recounted about a dog owned by Sean's brother. And describing how this dog resolutely left his home to try his fortunes elsewhere O'Casey writes: "To this day, the picture glows sadly before Sean's eyes" (p.194). The author and Sean are thus clearly being written of as one and the same person.

It even seems as if, now that O'Casey's dramatic talents and imagination are finding, apparently, such rewarding expression within the plays, that not only are Inishfallen and its successors Rose and Crown and Sunset, simply losing dramatic qualities, which are being channelled into the plays, but also that the author is actually and increasingly using these volumes to express, at greater length, the ideas and themes behind his plays. In a sense, with Inishfallen there is the beginning of a return to that kind of interaction between plays and autobiographies which can be seen through contraries or complements rather than through correspondences. And although they are much more than simply a background to the plays written contemporaneously with them, and can inspire the themes of plays as well as simply amplifying upon them, yet these autobiographical volumes do seem to provide a medium through which O'Casey can explore and debate issues and themes at greater length, and in greater, even documented, detail, than can be done within the dramatic form of the plays.

But, this tendency of the later autobiographies to become essay-like and non-dramatic in form, as a definite counterbalance to the dramatic form of the plays, seems to be only just beginning in Inishfallen, and only becomes marked in the final chapters. And if in its nature, Inishfallen is generally less "dramatic" than the previous volumes it does, nevertheless, contain some strongly dramatic episodes, most of which, significantly enough, seem to have been written under the direct

dramatic influence of a pre-autobiography play. The historical background of Inishfallen is such that in this volume the author can utilise the material of certain of his previous plays which were set in Dublin in the 1920's, and this he does with no little creativity. Inishfallen contains the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" chapters, both of which seem firmly rooted in The Shadow of a Gunman,⁶ and "The Raid" comprises perhaps one of the most powerfully and dramatically envisaged sequences in the autobiographies as a whole. The chapters "Into Civil War" and "Comrades" also contain some strikingly dramatic episodes which clearly derive inspiration and material and dramatic impulse from Juno and the Paycock;⁷ while the chapter "The Clergy Take a Hand" contains a dramatic sequence which is compounded from the material and influence of Juno, The Plough and the short-story "A Fall in a Gentle Wind" which appeared in Windfalls.⁸

An example of a strikingly dramatic episode in Inishfallen which is not related in any particular play is the depiction of, and dialogue between, "Julia" and her companion in the chapter "Dublin's Glittering Guy" (pp. 172-4). These characters, who "Sean" later describes as "Gods of the earth, earthy, but none the worse for that", are worthy of I Knock at the Door or Pictures in the Hallway; in the vividness of their personalities, the vigour of their speech, and the way in which, despite their inherent significance - the author is contrasting their spontaneity with the manners and affectations of Dublin's literary set - they seem to be allowed to speak for themselves, with the author joining Sean and the reader as a listener and spectator. But this passage, though brilliant, is brief, whereas, in an earlier volume it might have extended into a whole chapter. And it appears

6 See chapter above on The Gunman.

7 See chapter above on Juno

8 See chapters above on Juno and The Plough.

all the more striking within the context of Inishfallen because such qualities as it possesses are comparatively rare in this volume.

But if influenced directly by pre-autobiography plays, Inishfallen was itself to be profoundly influential upon virtually all of the plays which were begun by O'Casey after he started work on Inishfallen. Of the nine such plays, beginning with Cock-a-doodle Dandy only one - The Hall of Healing which bears a precise relationship to another volume of the autobiography - fails to make use of the vision of life in "modern" Ireland (that is, Ireland of the Free State and after) which Inishfallen presents in such detail. In terms of theme, symbolism and outlook, perhaps no one volume of the autobiographies contributed more to the plays than did Inishfallen.

Two passages from Inishfallen seem to have been particularly powerful in determining the themes, symbolism, and general characteristics of the subsequent plays.

The first of these passages is contained within the chapter entitled "A Terrible Beauty ^{is Borneo}". The passage is a long one. It begins with an account of how, with the establishment of the Free State, the politicians and the new Irish middle class, who were coming into prominence and power with the Free State, were betraying Irish ideals and customs by clamouring after the trappings of English gentility and social status:

Then, while a host of Irish harps were sounding Let Erin Remember the Days of Old at a mass meeting, the new politicians and people decided that they must become genteel, with really nice manners, to show how fit for self-government they were. So all who could, and many who couldn't, spare the money, got themselves fitted adequately for the short black jacket and the black tie, and the tailed coat with the white tie for more formal functions. The cruiskeen lawn was rejected for the cocktail glass, and long, anxious questions of precedence troubled many simple souls (pp. 128-9)

The passage continues with a bitterly humorous description of the new middle class's unease within the station of society to which they aspire:

But these good people weren't certain of themselves. They couldn't learn everything in a hurry. These things took time (p.129)

And it is in this connection that "Morning-dress" and the top hat - representing all the betrayals, pretensions and materialism that O'Casey associates with the Free State and the post-Free State Irish society - are to be central symbols not only in Inishfallen, but in all the major plays from Cock-a-doodle Dandy onwards:

.... One had to be suitably dressed to pay one's respects to the Governor-General. But how? Morning-dress? There was no way out of it. But that would cost money; and, besides, one would have to get suitable head-gear to go with it. You couldn't go wearing a cap over it, for instance. Good God, no! That would be a revolting thing to do. Well, what then? A taller! That'll cost money, too. Especially with such a demand for them. Black, I suppose? One could hardly go in a green, white, and gold topper. Why not? Why not? Ah, for God's sake, man! It's not right to make a laugh of a serious occasion. Well, a white one then? No; for, as far as I know, them sort is worn only at a race meeting or cricket matches. It's a worrying problem. Why not go in me nightshirt? Aw, try to be serious, for once. (p.129)

A dialogue ensues in which a friend confides his chief problem to Sean:

.... what to do at the beginning and the end of a Levee. I've got the tall-hat all right; but where do you put it, and what do you do with it when you get there? (p.130)

But Sean is far from sympathetic:

- Why not ask some of the seventy-seven dead men?
- The seventy-seven - what dead men?
- The men executed by your Free State Government.
- Oh, them! I had nothing to do with their executions, anyhow. The dead are dead, and are neither here nor there now.
- They are certainly not here, said Sean with some bitterness. But it seems to me that these men were put to death to afford you the privilege of donning a tall-hat. It won't be long till the gold harp's taken out of the green flag, and a bright black tall-hat put in its place. The terrible beauty of a tall-hat is born to Ireland. (p.130)

Bitter humour ensues with further descriptions of the new middle-class's ineptitude at the social graces (pp. 131-2). And then follows a highly satirical account of how the Republican party, which had originally refused to take the Oath of Allegiance to the British Throne, and had thus been debarred from taking their seats in the Dail, or

Irish Assembly, managed, with great sophistry, both to satisfy the British demand that the oath be taken, and their own consciences.

(pp. 132-3).

O'Casey clearly regards the taking of the oath by the Republicans as the final betrayal of the men and ideals of 1916. And he expresses this betrayal within a fantasy sequence in which Pearse's declaration of the Irish Republic is, as it were, adapted for the Free State. This declaration is, in the context of the relationship and interaction between the autobiographies and the plays, particularly important, for it sets out the basic premises of precisely the kind of Ireland and of Irish society, with which all the later plays, except the Hall of Healing, are concerned:

In fancy again Sean recalled the vision of Pearse coming from the General Post Office into the now silent street, and standing in the midst of the fair sunshine to read to a few distant listeners, one here, two there, and three away yonder, the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, while a tiny tricolour fluttered high away over his head; but the building had changed, and seemed now to be half a bank and half a church, and the words read were different:

Irishmen and Irishwomen, in the name of God, and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her people to her flag, and strikes for freedom. She strikes in the full confidence of victory for -

The white tie and the tailed coat.

The right to wear a top-hat, grey or black, according to circumstances or taste, when the occasion demands it.

The banning of all books mentioning the word Love, except when the word is used in a purely, highly spiritually, insignificant way.

The banning of any mention whatsoever of the name of James Joyce.

The right to examine and to settle eternally the question of procedure as to whether Paddy or Mick, Julia or Bridget, shall be the first to shake hands with, or bow to, Tim Healy or Sean T. O'Kelly; first to ceremonially enter a room, or first to sit down to a table.

The right to excommunicate a catholic student who enters Trinity College.

The right to make it known that western rivers are swift and deep to any person, called a communist, who may be thinking of spending a holiday in Connemara.

The right of the wrong to banish even a whisper of the name of Dr. Walter McDonald, D.D., Maynooth's Professor of Theology for forty years in the wilderness.

The right to give the catholic clergy the first word, the last word, and all the words in between, whatsoever they

may be, on any and every question, whatsoever, without any reservation whatsoever either.

The right to consider such men (once referred to as Irishmen) as Tone, Emmet, Mitchel, Parnell, Synge, Yeats, and Joyce; and all such women (once referred to as Irish-women) as Betsy Gray, Sarah Curran, Fanny Parnell, Lady Gregory, Eva of the Nation, and Speranza as non-gaels, non-Irish, and so non est perpetua. (pp. 133-4)

The other episode in Inishfallen which exerts an enormous influence upon the plays which were to follow occurs in "Dublin's Gods and Half-Gods" chapter. Set in the context of Sean's return from Coole Park to Dublin, and of a necessary wait at Athenry for a train to Dublin, this episode epitomises not the political or even social structure of the Free State, but the climate or atmosphere which these create, and in which young people must live. The terrible sense of desolation, both of the Irish countryside and of the lives that are lived within it, the terrible sense of the decay of life, and of the desperate longing for life on the part of the young, form the essence of this episode. And after this episode they become the essence of later plays:

Athenry - Ford of the King. No king here now. Ne'er a sign of one even - bar the king of loneliness. Sean passed under a famous archway of which it was said that whomsoever it fell on, and buried beneath its ruins, would become the saviour of Ireland. Loneliness the king, and the wind his attendant. It blew cold and sharp through every narrow street. Like a scythe eager to cut down any sign of life that came to tease the loneliness around; or to disturb the town's drowsy restfulness. It came sweeping in from the levels of Clare-Galway bog and plain. The houses stood still, careless of stare, of pity, or of scorn. They looked old, oh, so old. And they looked neither sad nor sorry about it; they simply seemed set to wait for the end to come. They were lost in quietness. He heard a bell toll in the distance. The wind lessened it into the ghost of a chime. Somewhere in the town, maybe, someone had passed into a better quietness. The bell tolled, but the town did not stir. No sign of life anywhere, as if the bell tolled for the dead town. Resignation showed a passive power everywhere. It even looked as if eternity was dying down here.

Away over the bridge, above, the seepy silence seemed startled by a passing train; passing by swiftly, as if possessed by fear; passing by noisily, as if to give itself courage; straining to get away, as if in fear of being caught in the fearsome plight of life here, standing still to watch its own decay, and to wait for its own departure.

Sean heard a sound like a leaf's rustling. He turned, and

saw a young girl coming out of the doorway of a sunken house. She had to mount four or five steps to bring herself to the level of the side-walk. Sean stood perfectly still to look at her. She was a winsome lass. A mass of brown hair gave a golden hue to a pale and trimly-chiselled face, with delicate ears, a straight and slender nose, dignifying a saucy-looking red mouth; while a pair of blue, softly luminous eyes met Sean's admiring stare. She was dressed in a brown coat, open, showing a thin white blouse against which her young breasts pushed, forming a pattern that told Sean they were finely turned and tempting. When she came to the top step, Sean saw that her legs flowed finely into the delightful curving of her body. They had a charm that would entice a dead-tired man to take a long journey after them in the hope that a favouring wind would lift skirt and petticoat higher, showing the legs off, and signalling Here is beauty. Her hand shot up to her head to recapture a lock of hair the wind had suddenly played with, and Sean saw that the hand was well made, though the skin looked rough, telling him that hard work was part of the girl's portion.

There the lass stood on the side-walk, facing him, framed in the muddy-yellow decay of the house behind her, like a lone cherry blossom thrusting itself shyly and impertinently forward through the ragged, withering foliage of an ageing tree. She was hesitating, maybe wishing him to speak, but he could say nothing. His mind had been too full of the loneliness and the ruin to be so suddenly called upon to reflect with words the wonder in his mind. He could say nothing. There she lingered, but his silence lasted too long. She lowered her eyes from his, turned, and went down the street, and disappeared round an alley-way a little lower down.

.....
Whenever his mind wandered again to the lonely wretchedness of Athenry, he would see this lovely figure, this bud of womanhood, longing for life, standing, alone and radiant, in the midst of the houses, quietly resolute in sinking to their own decay.
(pp.164-5)

Taking as its heroines three such "bud(s) of womanhood, longing for life", Loreleen, Lorna and Marion; set in desolate Irish countryside ("Stretching away in the distance, beyond the wall, is a bog of a rich purple colour, dabbed here and there with black patches"); and reflecting, in the preoccupations, and alliance, of business-man Michael Marthraun and Father Domineer, the Irish political and social structure as laid out in "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo"; the play Cock-a-doodle Dandy seems not simply to have been begun while the author was working on Inishfallen, but to have been positively inspired by it.

Outside the evidence of the texts of the play and of the autobiography themselves, it seems that O'Casey did experience a definite insp-

iration for the play, for Mrs. O'Casey, describing the period during which he was writing the fourth autobiographical volume, comments:

Besides his other work, (i.e., Inishfallen) Sean was excited about the creation of a new play, Cock-a-doodle Dandy - as excited as when he had got the idea for The Silver Tassie. Once more, as so often when beginning a play, he sang a good deal....

Since Oak Leaves and Lavender was probably not completed until 1944-5, and since it does not seem to have been in accordance with O'Casey's working methods to have two major plays on hand at the same time (although, interestingly, he often worked on autobiographies and major plays together) it may be conjectured that Cock-a-doodle-Dandy was begun in 1945-6. That is, after the completion, or even after the publication (in 1946), of Oak Leaves, and at a time when he must have been well into the narrative of Inishfallen.

The writing of Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy must have progressed side by side for a time, with Inishfallen being completed first but apparently not very long before Cock-a-doodle Dandy was itself finished. Both must have been written by 1948, for Inishfallen was actually published in January 1949 and a list of O'Casey's other works which appears on an end paper of that first edition¹⁰ refers to the play Cock-a-doodle Dandy as being "In the Press". And shortly afterwards, in May, 1949, the play itself was published.

The writing of Inishfallen seems to have been enormously influential upon the nature and content of the play, and seems to have directly inspired or provoked the writing of the play, but Cock-a-doodle Dandy does have some roots which stretch back well beyond this fourth autobiographical volume.

When he first arrived in London in 1926, before the writing of The Silver Tassie, he remarked in a newspaper interview:

⁹ Eileen O'Casey. Sean, p.200

¹⁰ Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well, London, Macmillan, 1949.

'Oh, yes, I have lots of ideas for new plays. I want to write one called The Signal, about the railway; one called The Red Lily about a fallen woman; another on a Catholic's religious doubts. I want it to be called The Cock Crows.¹¹

And in several letters of 1928, in which he refers to the quarrel over the Abbey's rejection of The Silver Tassie, he quotes from lines about the "Red Cock" which appear in W.B. Yeats' play The Dreaming of the Bones (written in 1919 and published in 1921). In one of these letters he writes ironically of Lady Gregory's sorrow at the rejection of The Silver Tassie, and he points out that the Abbey should rejoice in its refusal to produce the "bad play":

That is nothing to be sad about, but calls for merry-making in the heart, because of the spiritual exhilaration of casting out the things that would defile the soul of Drama -

"Up with the neck and clap the wing,
Red cock, and crow!"¹²

In another letter he urges George Russell, editor of the Irish Statesman, to publish the correspondence about The Tassie which was exchanged between O'Casey and the Abbey Directors:

So on you go and print them in the Irish Statesman as soon as you like. Up with the neck and clap the wing, red cock, and crow.¹³

And in a third letter, referring to the actual publication of this correspondence over The Tassie, he writes:

Red Cock has crowed at last (a fine title for a play -
The Red Cock)¹⁴

Thus, it seems, a germ of the idea of the play - mainly, an idea concerned with the play's central symbol of The Cock - who

11 Interview published in the Daily Graphic (London), 6th March, 1926, p.2., reprinted The Sting and the Twinkle, p.26.

12 Letter to Gabriel Fallon, 23rd May, 1928, Letters, Vol I, p.252.

13 Letter to George Russell, 2nd June, 1928, Letters, Vol I, p.257.

14 Letter to Gabriel Fallon (13? June, 1928) (date supplied by Editor) Letters, Vol I, p.278.

gives sudden and triumphant expression to Truth, and who, in the context of the play represents the life-force - was in the author's mind for many years before either Inishfallen or Cock-a-doodle-Dandy itself came to be written. And Scene I of the play contains a speech only barely adapted from the words of Yeats:

Messenger /To the Cock/ Go on, comrade, lift up th'head
an' clap th'wings, black cock an' crow!

(Collected Plays, Vol. IV p.144)

But if O'Casey derived inspiration for the central symbol of the Cock from Yeats' play, the symbolic setting of Cock-a-doodle Dandy - the house and garden of Marthram which represents Ireland - seems to have come from O'Casey's own earlier play Kathleen Listens In,¹⁵ and perhaps too an element of the fantasy of Kathleen, and, or, the fantasy of Drums Under the Windows has influenced the mode of fantasy in the play. Perhaps in connection with the influence of Kathleen upon Cock-a-doodle Dandy, the autobiographies have played something of the role of an intermediary, in that, through their imperfect attempts to re-express and rework the play, they perpetuated it and its symbolism in the author's creative consciousness, and thus led him to enshrine something of them in Cock-a-doodle Dandy.

With regard to the material of Cock-a-doodle Dandy O'Casey was later to claim that:

In spite of the fanciful nature of the play, almost all the incidents are factual - the priest that struck the blow, the rough fellows man-handling the young, gay girl, the bitter opposition to any sign of the strangeways of a man with a maid, the old, menacing fool, full of false piety, going round inflicting fear of evil things on all who listen to him; and, above all, through the piety, through the fear, the never-ending quest for money.¹⁶

¹⁵ See above, chapter on Kathleen Listens In.

¹⁶ Blasts and Benedictions, "Cock-a-doodle Doo" (1958) p.145. "Cock-a-doodle Doo" appeared in part as "O'Casey's Credo" in The New York Times Nov. 9th, 1958. It was written on the occasion of the first New York production of the play.

But although the incidents O'Casey describes might well have more than a grain of factuality within them, and he was an avid reader of Irish newspapers,¹⁷ the play did not apparently derive much material or inspiration from "fact" but largely from his own autobiographies, chiefly Inishfallen, which had already given an artistic treatment to that fact - sources which were as literary as Yeats' The Dreaming of the Bones from which he had initially derived Cock-a-doodle-Dandy's central symbol. For example, Domineer's killing of a man in Scene II of the play, may be nominally related to a fact that an Irish priest did once kill a man,¹⁸ but it seems also, in the intensity and violence of Domineer's authoritarianism, and, furthermore, in the intensity and violence with which O'Casey, as the playwright, depicts this incident, to recall most strongly the characterisation and presentation of the much hated "holy Hunter" In I Knock at the Door. I Knock at the Door's depiction of the self-opinionated and callous, even sadistic arch-enemy of Johnny, has already, in the course of O'Casey's work, interacted with The Star's presentation "The Purple Priest", and in prefiguring Father Domineer of Cock-a-doodle Dandy it seems to prefigure also the unsympathetic priests who succeed Domineer in later plays - The Very Rev. Canon Burren of The Bishop's Bonfire and the Rev. Fillifogue of The Drums of Father Ned.

Direct, detailed, and precise correspondences between Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy are legion. Since it is not known, however, just how much of Inishfallen was already written when its author began work on the play, it is hard to estimate exactly to what extent these correspondences are purely the result of the influence of the autobiographical volume upon Cock-a-doodle Dandy, and to what extent

¹⁷ See, for example, Eileen O'Casey: Sean, p.271: "Every day he received the Dublin newspapers and followed everything that went on".

¹⁸ Vivian Mercier writes in Commonwealth LXIV 13th July, 1956: "Such an incident did occur in Ireland some years ago - like a true Irish Protestant, I have the clipping filed away"

they derive from a reciprocal influence and interaction between the writing of the two works. But it seems safe to assume that the general flow of influence and inspiration was from Inishfallen to the play. For not only was Inishfallen begun, and, therefore, its nature established, well before O'Casey began work on the play; but also the kind of material, the themes, and even the structure of Inishfallen were to a large extent predetermined by its position in the sequence of the autobiographical volumes. In contrast, in contemplating and writing of Cock-a-doodle Dandy the author was not obliged to make the play a sequel to any previous work, nor was he bound to set it in a specific period, or indeed in any specific place.

Indeed, given the predetermined literary obligations of the nature of Inishfallen and the contrasting freedom with which O'Casey could choose the nature and matter of Cock-a-doodle Dandy it is remarkable that the material and themes of the play should in so very many ways resemble the material and themes of the autobiographical volume. And it can hardly be coincidence that a play which was written in the late 1940's, and which was apparently set in the "present time" of its time of composition, should depict so accurately the kind of society and the kind of attitudes of mind which Inishfallen sets forth as the hallmarks of Free State Ireland in the early 1920's.

The characters and action of Cock-a-doodle Dandy illustrate most prominently and most precisely (almost point by point) many of these characteristics of Free State Ireland which were listed in Inishfallen.

For example:

"The right to wear a top-hat, grey or black, according to circumstance or taste, when the occasion demands it"

is made much of in the play. The Cock, like Sean and O'Casey in the autobiography, seems to take a very grave exception to this symbol of the new Irish middle-class and of the ills of "modern" Ireland as a whole. And the amount of dialogue and the number of strange events which are woven around the subject of Mahan's top-hat in the play fully bear out O'Casey's contention in Inishfallen that, with the Free State, "the terrible beauty of a tall-hat is born to Ireland". (p.130). In Scene I Mahan, haggling with Michael Marthraun over money and business matters, makes the following reply to Michael's plea of poverty:

Mahan [viciously]. You'd rather throw th' money after a tall-hat so that you could controvert yourself into a dapper disturbance th' time the president comes to view th' workin' of th' turf. Talk about Loreleen castin' a spell! Th' whole disthric't'll be paralysed in a spell when your top-hat comes out to meet the president's top-hat, th' two poor things tryin' to keep people from noticin' what's undher them!"

(Scene I, p.134)

And from then onwards in the play the "Tall-hat" is treated as an object of ridicule, and is an easy target for the machinations of the Cock. Soon Marion is rushing out of the house to tell the men about the strange bird which is "flyin' about the' house, an' behavin' outrageous": "It's sent th' althar light flyin'; it's clawed the holy pictures; an now it's peckin' at th' tall hat!" (Scene I, p.139). And in the same scene more emphasis is placed on the symbolism of the top-hat when Lorna, Michael's wife, describes how she has seen the Cock

.... peckin' to pieces th' brand new tall-hat that Mr. Marthraun bought to wear, goin' with the Mayor to greet His Brightness, th' President of Eire, comin' to inaugerate th' new canteen for th' turf workers.

Michael [enraged]. Is it me new hat he's desthroyed?

Shanaar [pulling Michael's arm in warning]. Damn it, man, take no notice!

Michael [turning indignantly on Shanaar]. How'd you like your sumptuous, silken hat to be mangled into a monstrosity.
(Scene I p. 144)

A new tall hat is ordered in replacement of the old, but when it is delivered in Scene II it appears to have been bewitched. The

porter who brings the hat is at first disinclined to believe that Marthraun is the "Councillor" and "Jay Pee" for whom the hat is designated, and this detail is interesting since Inishfallen describes how, with the Free State, the Irish middle-class scrambled for the minor privileges and offices established by, and now vacated by, the English. But once he is convinced that Michael is the rightful owner of the hat, he describes how it was damaged when "someone shot a bullet through it, east be west" (Scene II, p.167). And even as he is speaking another shot is fired at the hat (p.168). Neither Michael nor The Porter will touch the hat, and soon a sergeant of the Civil Guards arrives on the scene to tell of how the Cock is at large, and is taunting his pursuers by "changin' himself into a silken glossified tall hat!" (p.171). Marthraun's tall hat, which is lying abandoned in the garden, now takes on even more sinister implications as far as the assembled company are concerned.

Mahan [going away as far as he can from the tall-hat lying in the garden] Steer clear of it; get as far away from it as we can! Keep well abaft of it!

Sergeant [puzzled]. Keep clear from what?

Mahan [pointing to the hat]. Th' hat, man, th' hat!

Sergeant [seeing the hat beside him, and jumping away from it]. I was near touchin' th' brim of it! Jasus! yous should have warned me!

Michael [close to the Sergeant - in a whisper]. Does it look anything like th' thing you shot.

Sergeant [laying a shaking hand on Michael's arm]. It's th' dead spit of what I seen him changin' into durin' the flash of lightning! I just riz th' gun to me shouldher - like this [he raises the gun to his shoulder] to let bang.

[The garden is suddenly enveloped in darkness for a few moments. A fierce flash of lightning shoots through the darkness; the hat has disappeared, and where it stood now stands the Cock. While the lightning flashes, the Cock crows lustily. The the light as suddenly comes back to the garden, and shows that the Cock and the hat have gone. Michael and Mahan are seen to be lying on the ground, and the Sergeant is on his knees, as if in prayer.]

(Scene II, pp.171-2)

The tall-hat, however, is to figure in just one more incident in the play, for a little later in the same scene it is revealed, by Lorna, Marthraun's wife, that the real replacement for the original

tall-hat has actually been delivered safely some time before, and is now safe and sound inside the house. And Michael's initial, extravagantly expressed disbelief turns to abject terror when the hat itself is brought before him:

.... Michael /loudly/. Who are you jade, to set yourself up against th' inner sight an outer sight of genuine Christian men? /He shouts/ We seen this thing, I tell you! Through our bulgin' eyes, didn't we see th' horrification of me tall-hat turnin' into th' demonised cock? Me tall-hat, you bitch, me own tall-hat is roamin' round th' counthry, temptin' souls to destroy themselves with dancin an' desultory pleasures!

/Marion comes from the house, carrying a fresh, dignified tall-hat, noble in its silken glossiness. She offers it to Michael who jumps away from it./

No, no, take it away; don't let it touch me.

/Marion puts the hat on the table, and the three men stare at it, as if expecting something to happen/.

(Scene II, pp.180-1)

This is how O'Casey and The Cock cured Michael Marthraun of his craving for the tall-hat. And it seems as if all this richly comic farce, and, of course, all the serious implications which lie behind the humour, sprang directly from Inishfallen with its creation of, and emphasis upon, the tall-hat as the symbol of all that is wrong with the "modern", or, in the autobiography, Free State Irish political and social structure.

The episodes involving the tall-hat exemplify the direct and precise contributions which seem to have been made to the play by, in particular, one of the chief seminal passages of Inishfallen - the passage describing the Free State in "A Terrible Beauty in Borneo". But the other seminal passage of Inishfallen - the Athenry episode - also makes its direct and precise contributions to the play, and these can be exemplified by certain details in the presentation of the heroines of the play.

In the autobiography, the beautiful young girl of the Athenry episode appears before Sean suddenly, in the doorway of a house, and her appearance is in complete contrast with the desolate scene upon which he has been brooding. Similarly Loreleen and Marion, both beautiful young girls, each make their first appearance suddenly, and at the door of the house. And their youth and beauty contrast with the

"rough and uncared-for" garden of Marthraun which has been scorched by the heat of the sun that is blazing down upon it (Scene 1, p.121):

/A cock suddenly crows lustily as Loreleen appears in the doorway of the porch. She is a very attractive young woman with an air of her own. A jaunty air it is, indicating that it is the sign of a handsome, gay, and intelligent woman. She is dressed in a darkish green dress, with dark-red flashes on bodice and side of skirt. A saucy hat of a brighter green than the dress sports a scarlet ornament, its shape suggestive of a cock's crimson crest. Her legs - very charming ones - are clad in brown silk stockings: brown that flashes a golden sheen./

(Scene I, p.127)

/Marion rushes to the door of the porch, frightened and alarmed. She is a young girl of twenty or so, and very good-looking. Her skirts come just to her knees, for they are nice legs, and she likes to show them - and why shouldn't she? And when she does so, she can add the spice of a saucy look to her bright blue eyes..../

(Scene I, p.138)

Lorna, Marthraun's young and pretty wife, is the third of the heroines of the play, she too makes a sudden entrance upon the scene, but appears at a window of the house rather than in the doorway.

Lorna's head appears at the window above the porch and it is at once evident that she is much younger than her husband, very good-looking still, but the bright and graceful contours of her face are somewhat troubled by a vague aspect of worry and inward timidity./

(Scene II, p.143)

Moreover incidents and a passage of dialogue which occur as Loreleen, having left the house, stands in the garden suggest just how strong the influence of the Athenry passage is in the depiction of the heroines of the play.

"A young, rough-looking Fellow, well-set and strong", a disgruntled employee of Mahan, runs into the garden and pushes Loreleen aside:

"1st Rough Fellow /pushing Loreleen out of his way/. Outa me way, woman! /He sees how charming she is and as he swings her aside/. Be God, but you're the 'good-lookin' lass! What are you doin' in this hole?

Loreleen. Seeking happiness, an' failing to find it.

1st Rough Fellow. It isn't here you should be lost among th' rough stones, th' twisty grass, an' th' moody misery of th' brown bog; but it's lyin' laughin' you should be where th' palms are tall, an' wherever a foot is planted, a scarlet flower is chrushed; where there's levity living its life, an' not loneliness dyin' as it is here.

Loreleen /dropping him a deep curtsey/. Thank you, sir knight, for th' silken compliments to your handmaiden.

(Scene I, p.129)

The contrast, made by the "1st Rough Fellow", between the loneliness of Loreleen and the barrenness of her surroundings is precisely that made by Sean in connection with the young girl of Athenry:

Whenever his mind wandered again to the lonely wretchedness of Athenry, he would see this lovely figure, this bud of womanhood, longing for life, standing, alone and radiant, in the midst of the houses, quietly resolute in sinking to their own decay.

(Inishfallen, p.165)

Loreleen's words that she is "seeking happiness, an' failing to find it" relate her further to the girl in the autobiography who is longing for life". And the 'Rough Fellows' description of Nyadnanave (the "setting" of the play) as a place where "loneliness (is) dyin'" seems to echo something of Inishfallen's descriptions of Athenry:

Loneliness the king, and the wind his attendant. It blew cold and sharp through every narrow street. Like a scythe eager to cut down any sign of life that came to tease the loneliness around It even looked as if eternity was dying down here the fearsome plight of life here, standing still to watch its own decay, and to wait for its own departure. (p.164)

The incident in the play continues as the "1st Rough Fellow" says to Loreleen:

If you wait till I'm done with these fellas he indicates Michael and Mahan I could go to th' bend o' th' road with you, for it's meself would surrendher a long spell of heaven's ease to go a long day's journey with a lass like you! (pp.129-30)

And this speech seems to recall a description of the young girl in the autobiography:

Sean saw that her legs flowed finely into the delightful curving of her body. They had a charm that would entice a dead-tired man to take a long journey after them in the hope that a favouring wind would lift skirt and petticoat higher, showing the legs off, and signalling Here is beauty.... (pp.164-5).

A second "Rough Fellow" hurries on to the scene of the play:

pulling Loreleen out of his way. Eh, there, woman - outa me way! He sees, as she swings around, how charming she is Arra, what winsome wind blew such a flower into this dread, dhried-up desert? Deirdre come to life again, not to sorrow, but to dance! If Eve was as you are, no wondher Adam fell, for a lass like you could shutther th' world away with a kiss! He goes through the gate, and down to the other men, pausing to look up at Loreleen again.

2nd Rough Fellow. To Loreleen. Wait, lass, till I'm done with these fellas, an' I'll go with you till youth's a shadow a long way left behind! (p.130)

His comparison of Loreleen to a flower in a desert perhaps recalls the comparison of the girl in the autobiography to

a lone cherry blossom thrusting itself shyly and impertinently forward through the ragged, withering foliage of an ageing tree. (p.165)

And all in all, the young men's expression of compliments to Loreleen, and her apparent happiness to receive them, seems to be something of a fulfilment of the episode in the autobiography in which the girl seems to wish Sean to speak to her, and in which he fails to do so:

She was hesitating, maybe wishing him to speak, but he could say nothing. His mind had been too full of the loneliness and the ruin to be so suddenly called upon to reflect with words the wonder in his mind. He could say nothing. There she lingered, but his silence lasted too long. She lowered her eyes from his, turned, and went down the street, and disappeared round an alley-way a little lower down.

He looked at his watch: it was time to go back to Lady Gregory, back towards Dublin. He went slowly back to the grimy station, imagining what he would have said to the lass while she walked by his side, or stood where she had been to listen (p.165)

But apart from such specific contributions from Inishfallen to the play, there are also much wider influences from the autobiography to the play. An example of such an influence concerns Inishfallen's central theme, and, indeed overall structure. For it can hardly be coincidence that the play, which depicts how young and lively people are forced to emigrate from Ireland because of the repressive and oppressive nature of life there, was begun while the author was writing the volume of autobiography which takes as its central theme Sean's progressive disillusionment with Irish life, and which directs its narrative towards, and culminates in, Sean's departure into exile.

But Cock-a-doodle Dandy, though apparently so much influenced by, and indebted to Inishfallen, might, in its turn, have had some influence upon, or might have made some contribution to, this autobiographical volume.

And although generally it seems as if Inishfallen's predetermined theme and pattern of progressive disillusionment leading to exile,

inspired and influenced the central theme and pattern of the play; yet it seems that, in the closing chapters of Inishfallen, Cock-a-doodle Dandy itself exerts an influence upon the way in which, and the material with which, Inishfallen fills in the outlines of its own predetermined artistic plan.

Cock-a-doodle Dandy was begun after Inishfallen and was, therefore, apparently able to make much use of the established and integral background and material of Inishfallen as well as of its projected plan and structure. But Cock-a-doodle Dandy was already "In The Press" when Inishfallen was published and must, therefore, have been nearing completion at the same time as the autobiographical volume. This being the case, the further the writing of Inishfallen progressed the more open it would be to influence from the play - the play which, though quite largely based on the material themes and structure of Inishfallen, creatively found its own way of presenting that material and those themes, and of fulfilling that structure.

Working purely from the published texts, the sole criterion for judging whether material which appears in both the play and the later part of Inishfallen has originated in the play (as opposed to in the autobiography) must be its wide distribution and central importance within the play, in comparison with a late and restricted occurrence within the autobiography.

For example, Cock-a-doodle Dandy having adopted Inishfallen's broad theme of the spiritual desolation of post 1916 Ireland, illustrates an aspect of this theme with its own story of Julia's hopeful departure to, and hopeless return from, Lourdes. Julia's story is woven very deep into the fabric of the play.

Scene I is scarcely advanced before Michael, recounting to Mahan the terms of his own marriage to Lorna, remarks: "An' didn't I give her oul' fella fifty solid pounds so that her ailin' sither could travel

to Lourdes to get under the ' aegis of the Blessed Virgin?" (p.126). And this scene, the "Morning" scene of the play, ends solemnly but movingly with Julia's departure. Julia's wan and wasted presence on stage is as visually disconcerting, and is as sadly eloquent about life in Ireland, as is the appearance of the consumptive Mollser which broods over Acts I and III of The Plough and the Stars:

Along the path, on a stretcher, carried by the two Rough Fellows, comes Julia, followed by her father. Her face is a sad, yellowish mask, pierced by wide eyes, surrounded by dark circles. (p.153).

A civic procession is accompanying Julia to the train and there is irony in the appearance of the Mayor and the Mace-bearer whose "rough clothing" contrasts with the splendid regalia of their office (p.153) (O'Casey is again illustrating Inishfallen's theme of the eagerness of the Irish to seize upon the trappings of authority left behind by the English). But the dialogue between Julia and her well-wishers is truly moving:

Lorna (/affectingly). My sister, my little Julia, oh, how sorry I am that you have to go on this long, sad journey!

Julia (her voice is low, but there is a hectic note of hope in it). A long journey, Lorna darlin', but not a sad one; oh, no, not a sad one. Hope, Lorna, will have me be the hand all the long way. I go to kneel at the feet of the ever Blessed Virgin.

Lorna. Oh, she will comfort you, me darlin'.

Julia. Yes, she will comfort me, Lorna (after a pause); an' cure me too. Lorna, say she will cure me too.

Lorna (/stifling a sob). An cure you, too. (p.154)

Julia's pilgrimage is being stage-managed by Father Domineer who now arrives with "a breezy manner ..., heading the forlorn hope".

As Julia's procession moves off to the train, the strains of the hymn "Star of the Sea" are heard:

Mother of Christ, Star of the Sea,
Pray for the wanderer, pray for me.

And the scene closes with the "enthusiastic" assertion of the Priest that: "Julia will bring us back a miracle, a glorious miracle! To Lourdes!" (p.155).

When Scene II opens the hymn can still be heard faintly "in the distance", but the "sunshine" of the setting of Scene I has faded slightly and "isn't quite so bright and determined" (p.156). Julia has begun her "long, long journey", but despite the "edifyin' spectacle" of her "grand send-off" there is more than a little scepticism about the outcome of her pilgrimage. Lorna, returning with Marion from the ceremony, believes that the changes of Julia's recovery are slender "but we won't talk about it" (p.156). And Michael's assertion that "Julia's asked for a sign, ... an', believe me, she'll get it. She'll get what she's afther - a complete cure" are balanced by Mahan's doubtful remark: "She will, she will, though I wouldn't like to bet on it". (pp.156-7).

Scene III is set "towards dusk" and all vestiges of life, hope and happiness are fast ebbing away from Nyadnanave. As the play nears its conclusion the young, pretty and lively Loreleen is ordered out of the town by Father Domineer, and she is quickly followed by Lorna and Marion, who freely leave a place where "a whisper of love ... bites away some of th' soul". (p.219). Nyadnanave is being thoroughly abandoned to its desolate and hopeless fate. And the engulfing desolation and hopelessness are now emphasised, even symbolised, by the return of Julia, uncured, from Lourdes:

Shanaar ... What's this I see comin'? If it isn't Julia, back from Lourdes, an' she on her stretcher still! I'd best be off, for I've no inclination to thry a chatter with a one who's come back as bad as she was when she went.

After a pause, Julia comes in on her stretcher, carried by the two Rough Fellows as before, her father, silent and stony-faced, walking beside her. The stretcher is laid down in the garden just inside the gate. Julia is covered with a rug, black as a winter's sky, and its sombre hue is enlivened only by the chalk-white face of the dying girl....

Julia [in a toneless voice - to no-one in particular]. Lorna, I want Lorna.

Messenger [gently]. She's gone, Julia.

Julia. Gone? Gone..where?

Messenger. To a place where life resembles life more than it does here.

Julia. She's a long way to go, then. It's th' same everywhere. In Lourdes as here, with all its crowds an' all its candles. I want Loreleen.

Messenger. She's gone with Lorna, an' Marion's followed them both.

Julia. Then there's no voice left to offer even th' taunting comfort of asking if I feel better.

Messenger. There's Michael Marthraun there.

Julia [after a long look at Michael]. He poor man, is dyin' too. No-one left, an' th' stir there was when I was goin' ... because they all thought I would bring a miracle back. [She pauses]. There was no miracle, Robin, she didn't cure me, she didn't cure me, Robin. I've come back without even a gloamin' thought of hope. [She pauses again; with a wan smile]. I can see your whole soul wishin' you could cure me. Touch me with your question-able blessin' before I go.

Messenger [very softly]. Be brave.

Julia. Nothin' else, Robin Adair?

Messenger. Evermore be brave.

(pp.219-21)

This highly emotional and intensely moving episode, perhaps, the most moving episode in Cock-a-doodle Dandy, truly sets the seal on the ending of the play. Seconds after Julia has left to face her slow and inevitable death the Messenger prepares to follow Marion "To a place where life resembles life more than it does here" (p.221). And the play closes with almost a tableau of Michael, his head buried in his hands, sitting alone on the darkened stage, which represents a darkened country.

The story of Julia thus forms a highly important sub-plot in the play. It is woven into every scene and is used very clearly to illustrate, even to symbolise the doom of Nyadnanave, and, thus, by implication, the doom of Irish society. So integral to the action and themes of the play is the story of Julia's pilgrimage to Lourdes, that it seems to have been one of the author's earliest ideas in the planning of the play. In contrast, it is only as Inishfallen nears its end that it begins to make sudden and repeated references to Lourdes. And while the contexts in which these references are made are not incompatible with the subject of Lourdes, neither, it would seem, would they be, in

themselves, particularly suggestive of it. In other words, it seems that as O'Casey was writing the late portion of Inishfallen, there was in existence outside the autobiography, a stimulus which had set him thinking about Lourdes, its history and its customs, and which thus led him to include references to places of pilgrimage, and to Lourdes in particular, in marginally relevant places in the autobiography. It seems highly likely that Cock-a-doodle Dandy was approaching completion as the later chapters of Inishfallen were being written, and it seems, therefore, logical to assume that the play was responsible for introducing the Lourdes theme into Inishfallen.

The references to Lourdes in Inishfallen, being once introduced become progressively more expansive and progressively betray, or so it seems, their origins in the play.

The first reference, in the "Dublin's Glittering Guy" section of the autobiography is linked to the play simply by the subject of Lourdes itself and by the author's scepticism of the claims of such places of pilgrimage. In discussing with friends A.E.'s art and poetry Sean says:

These visions of flame-feathered and plumed masters, of blazing stars, of inimitable light, are as full of tawdry, childish decorations as those seen by French kids at Lourdes, Portugese kids in Fatima, Irish kids at Knock, and Latvian kids at Kirkhala. And as superstitious, too; worse, even, for A.E.'s a grown man who ought to know better. (p.168)

The second more revealing reference occurs in "Silence" the penultimate chapter of the volume. In the context of an attack upon the kind of Roman Catholicism which has no place for Dr Walter MacDonald, O'Casey criticises clerics who are "of little wit and lesser knowledge" but whose authority

sanctifies the orderly, money-making orgy of Lourdes, strange tinselled waste, and woeful issue of a sick child's slick dream; tipping rose-leaves out on running sores and eating cancers; setting its comic, codified cure by dipping the sick into a well, thick with the scum of a thousand tumours, against the calmly measured scientific healing of millions, without the singing of a single psalm. God's gift of penicillin is worth ten thousand Lourdes. (p.205).

The themes that scientific research is of infinitely more value to man than is a superstitious belief in miracles, and that God Himself works through the actions and efforts of men, are to be found frequently in the autobiographical volumes, and can be regarded as native to them. But the mentioning of the support and countenance which priests "of little wit and lesser knowledge" give to "the orderly, money-making orgy of Lourdes" recalls Cock-a-doodle Dandy, in which Father Domineer has apparently arranged Julia's pilgrimage, and in which he seems chiefly responsible for fostering false hopes as to the outcome of the journey.

Father Domineer [enthusiastically]. Julia will bring us back a miracle, a glorious miracle! To Lourdes! (p.155).

And the savageness of the author's description of Lourdes does seem to suggest that he has the story of Julia in his mind as he writes, or, if not the story of Julia herself, certainly such a one as her's - a story in which the sick person's hopes and desires are cruelly and tragically manipulated by those who falsely promise a miraculous cure.

The third reference to Lourdes in Inishfallen contains, however, rather more specific evidence that the author was writing under the influence of Cock-a-doodle Dandy. The final chapter of the volume is itself entitled "Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well" and it presents something of a survey of those aspects of Irish life and thought that most repel Sean, and that have finally determined him that "It was time ... to go" (p.231 and passion). In this survey the author includes a very long passage on the subject of pilgrimages to Lourdes. In his opinion, the Irish Catholic Church's preoccupation with the French Lourdes is a betrayal of the ancient Christian heritage of Ireland itself, and is symptomatic of the Irish hyper-superstitious and hyper-sentimental attitude to religion, an attitude which can be readily exploited by others for financial gain. He depicts Lourdes as a cruel confidence-trick played upon those who are psychologically least able to sustain

the inevitable disappointment.

All the Irish significance had gone to the grave with the older saints, and Bridget, now, couldn't hold a candle to Bernadette; though there was something silly, sensational, and tawdry in Bernadette; while about the name of Bridget clung the essence of charm, of poetry, and a realistic love of life. But now Kildare's holy shrine was dark and empty, while Lourdes was a blaze of candles carried by crowds. Oh, the trains, the yellow, the blue, the white, the brown, that race, *tirra lirra*, along to Lourdes! Racing along, carrying their rotting crops of humanity, to where a hymn and a prayer are to prosper them back to health. The woe and the waste of it all! Lourdes, where hope is swallowed down by misery to be vomited up again, more miserable and lost. Where Lazarus is offered a crumb, but can never crawl near enough to get it. Where miserere jingles little bells of expectation, and never hears them sounding. Where belief plays her last joke on the dying. The church's great sweep of misery and woe. You may be the lucky one. Take your chance and keep the bells a-tolling. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Keep smiling - someone has got to be cured. The Coney Island of misery, agony, and woe. And when the festivity of death ends, and all gather to go home, wending slow through voluptuous chants of Ave Maria, the untouched ear can hear the sickly growl, *sombre* and low, with a hiss in it of She never cured me, She didn't cure me.

When all the lights from a hundred altars had been darkened; when the priests had divested themselves of their sacerdotal grandeur; when the swelling hearts of the ailing had been emptied of desire from very weariness; and the treasures given for the Virgin's glory were being counted; go the sad souls back to the vigil of the lonely couch, the biting sigh, the broken prayers, born of the broken hope of going forth broken and coming back whole

There they go - the red trains and the brown trains, *tcheh-tcheh -tcheh -tcheh -tcheh -tcheh*, straight down through France, passing through fair valleys, by fruitful vineyards, going quick, but not quick enough, *tcheh-tcheh -tcheh -tcheh*, diving under tunnels, rushing through town and village, straight on to Lourdes, white train and yellow train, their carriages carrying the incurables, Muldoon the Solid Man's son and Mick McGilligan's daughter among them, on to the Maid of the Grotto, *tcheh-tcheh-tcheh-tcheh*,

O Maid of the Grotto, heal us,
From thee all skill and science flow, all pity,
care and love;
All calm and courage, faith and hope - oh, pour
them from above;
Tcheh-tcheh to Lourdes, to Lourdes, to Lourdes.
(pp.238-9, 41)

As well as the general correspondence in subject matter between this passage and Julia's story, there are several points of detailed correspondence with action and text of the play. And this further suggests the authenticity of the passage's origin in the play.

Inishfallen's lament, in connection with the subject of Lourdes, that Irish Catholicism has abandoned its own national characteristics and consciousness and has consequently neglected its own holy shrines and religious art takes up a theme expressed by the Messenger in Scene II of the play:

Michael ... /To Mahan/. It's a blessin' that so many lively-livin' oul' holy spots are still in th' land to help us an' keep us wary.

Messenger /scornfully/. An' where are th' lively holy spots still to be found? Sure man, they're all gone west long ago, an' the whole face o' th' land is pock-marked with their ruins! (p.60)

The autobiography's description of Lourdes as "a blaze of candles carried by crowds" seems textually to echo Julia's phrase of "Lourdes ..., with all its crowds an' all its candles" (Scene III, p.220). And Julia's bitter disappointment with Lourdes, which, despite "all its crowds an' all its candles", turns out to be as spiritually uninspiring and as lifeless as Nyadnanave, is very much akin to the general impression of the place given in Inishfallen. The comment in the passage that "wending slow through voluptuous chants of Ave Maria, the untouched ear can hear the sickly growl, sombre and low, with a hiss in it of 'She never cured me, She didn't cure me'" certainly echoes Julia's words to the Messenger after her return:

There was no miracle, Robin; she didn't cure me, she didn't cure me, Robin. (p.220)

And the passage's description of the return from Lourdes of the disappointed

sad souls back to the vigil of the lonely couch, the biting sigh, the broken prayers, born of the broken hope of going forth broken and coming back whole

would seem perhaps, for anyone who knows the play, to conjure up again the visual dramatic presentation of the dying Julia's return. While in sense and words this particular part of the passage from the autobiography seems to recall verbal references to Julia's plight in the play. For Julia describes herself as returning "without even a gloamin' thought of hope" (p.220) and Shanaar refers to her as "a one who's come back as bad as she was when she went" (p.219).

Lastly, the concluding paragraph of "Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well's" lengthy passage on Lourdes bears certain resemblances to the closing of Scene I of the play with its presentation of the departure of Julia on her pilgrimage. The reference to the "trains" which take "the incurables, Muldoon the Solid Man's son and Mick McGilligan's daughter, on to the Maid of the Grotto", recalls the fact that in the play Julia, an Irish peasant-farmer's daughter, is travelling to Lourdes by train. And the passage's inclusion of a short hymn - "O Maid of the Grotto, heal us" - which concludes with the words "Tcheh-tcheh to Lourdes, to Lourdes, to Lourdes." seems to recall the ending of Scene II with the singing of a hymn - "Hail Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star" and Father Domineer's exclamation, which closes the scene, of "To Lourdes!" (p.155).

If the final chapter of Inishfallen, which constitutes a survey of the Ireland, which Sean is leaving thankfully behind him, seems to amplify upon the Lourdes theme of the play, it seems also to draw upon other concerns of Cock-a-doodle Dandy. The autobiography's account of an actual incident in which the "handsome young wife" of a farmer was believed to be "possessed of a witch", was subjected to exorcism by a priest, and was later tortured and burnt alive (pp.245-6), perhaps refers to some of the "facts" upon which O'Casey claimed the play was based, although the elements of the factual story are rearranged in the play, and it is the farmer's (Marthraun's) daughter, Loreleen, rather than his "handsome young wife", Lorna, who is thought to be "a possessed person" (Scene I pp.123-4,132). And Loreleen is not actually killed, although she is attacked (Scene III, p.212-3) and Father Domineer threatens that, if she does not leave the village immediately, she will soon be in her coffin (p.216). The exorcism element in the account which the autobiography gives is used in the play not in connection with Loreleen, but in connection with the Cock (Scene III, pp.192-9).

The theme of the exile must have been an integral part of Inishfallen before Cock-a-Boddy Dandy was begun, and certainly long before the third scene of the play depicted the young people as leaving Ireland. But since the autobiography and the play must have been nearing completion at about the same time it is possible that the play, particularly its final scene might have influenced the final chapter of Inishfallen in the way in which Sean's leaving of Ireland is described. Certainly the imagery of the autobiography in this connection is related to the symbolism and the stage effects of the play.

Summing up life in Ireland and looking forward to his future life in England, Sean thinks: "It was getting very dark in Ireland, so his flight to London would be a leap in the light" (p.24), and darkness is used with an identical significance in the setting of Scene III of the play:

It is towards dusk in the garden now. The sun in setting, and the sky shows it.... The big sunflowers against the wall have turned into a solemn black, too; the house has a dark look, save where a falling shaft from the sun turns the window above the porch into a golden eye of light....

Lorna and Marion are leaving against the wall, away from the gateway, and near the house. Their gay garments are covered with dark hooded cloaks to temper the coolness of the evening air.
(p.190)

The verse of the poem, which is quoted as Sean stands on the deck of the mail-boat which is to take him to England, states that the ship

... cannot lead to scenes more dark,
more sad, than those we leave behind.
(p.247)

And certainly the play ends with a "dark", "sad", "scene" of Irish life, as Marthra sits alone in the gathering gloom and mourns the loss of Lorna, and waits to die. (p.221-2). Again, Sean reviewing his past life and contemplating his future life thinks: "His day in Ireland had been a long one, but the long day was over at last; a long day over; long day over; over at last" (p.245), while the play has actually presented its events in the terms of a figurative day of "Morning (Scene I) "Midday" (Scene II) and "dusk" (Scene III), and by the end of Scene

III the "day" of Ireland is certainly almost over.

Perhaps too, it is just possible that when Sean now embarked on the ship and already watching the coastline of Ireland recede from him - interprets the "keen wind ... sending sharp sleety hail and salty spray into his face, stinging it deeply", as "Ireland, spitting a last, venomous, contemptuous farewell to him" (p.247) there is some connection with, perhaps some echo of, Father Domineer's venomous and contemptuous dismissal of Loreleen from Nyadnanave:

[He hisses the words out] Stipendium peccati mors est! Get away from here quicker than you came, or it's in your coffin you'll be - in your coffin, your coffin!
.....

[Putting his face closer to hers]. Thrudge it; thrudge on your two feet; an' when these burn an' blister, go on your knees, an' when your knees are broken an' bruised, go on your belly; crawl in th' dust, as did th' snake in th' Garden of Eden, for dust is th' right cushion for th' like of you! [He raises himself erect, and commands in a loud voice]. Go now!

(Scene III, pp.215-17)

Inishfallen's and Cock-a-doodle Dandy's interrelated endings depicting the leaving of Ireland are to have considerable influence upon the endings of certain later plays.

The relationship between Cock-a-doodle Dandy and the two remaining autobiographical volumes, which were written entirely after its completion, is, as prefigured in Inishfallen's treatment of the Lourdes episode of the play, bound up with an examination of, and amplification upon, the themes which the play expresses. However, since many of these themes are not, within O'Casey's plays, by any means exclusive to Cock-a-doodle Dandy, and are to be found too in the previous autobiographies, the influence of Cock-a-doodle-Dandy upon Rose and Crown and Sunset and Evening Star, might simply be part of a more general relationship between the plays and the late autobiographies, but textual echoes of the play do seem to emerge within the prose of the two last autobiographical volumes and they indicate the play's contribution to the autobiographies is a genuine one. Amongst the many themes which the play shares with Rose and Crown and

Sunset are its strong anti-clericalism,¹⁹ its deprecation of life-destroying Irish piety,²⁰ its references to the popular, commercialised and sentimentalised aspect of Irish religious life,²¹ and its presentation of the Irish mistrust of women,²² and of books.²³

The degree of interaction between the writing and nature of the autobiographies and the writing and nature of Cock-a-doodle-Dandy does, then, seem to be such that the play, having seemingly taken much of its material from the autobiographies, and being particularly inspired by the substance and themes of Inishfallen, begins, with the closing chapters of that volume, to make its own contributions in theme and imagery, back to the autobiographies. And some of these contributions having passed into, or mingled with, the prose of the later autobiographies will seemingly exert, from there, an influence on the writing and nature

19 Compare the kind of portrayal accorded to Domineer within the play with O'Casey's view of the priesthood as expressed in, for example, Rose and Crown p.381.

20 Compare the play's presentation of this aspect of Irish life with, for example, the views expressed in Sunset p.560.

21 See Marthraun's and Mahan's discussion of "Bing Bang Crosby's" spiritual attributes (Scene II, pp.157-9), and for the author's own views on the same topic, Rose and Crown, p.375.

22 Compare Marthraun's, Shanaar's and Domineer's distorted view of the women characters throughout the play with Rose and Crown pp. 412-13 and Sunset p.647. the reference in Sunset to "lightning", "thunder" and a strange "voice" being attendant upon "Woman", seem particularly to recall the strange and evil powers which the men of the play attribute to Loreleen, and which are expressed, through their eyes in thunder, lightning, and cockcrow, for example, Scene I, pp. 131-2.

23 Compare, for example, Father Domineer's suspicion of Loreleen's copy of Ulysses and a "banned" book about Voltaire (Scene III, pp. 200-1) with O'Casey's fantasy account in Sunset pp. 627-8, of the Irish attitude to his own works. The parallel between the play and the autobiography is particularly close at this point since Domineer believes the presence of books might warrant another exorcism of Marthraun's house, and O'Casey writes, in Sunset, in terms of his book, Drums Under the Windows, provoking an exorcism ceremony.

of certain plays which are to follow. And since Cock-a-doodle Dandy had perhaps itself drawn something of its inspiration symbolism and material from interactions between previous plays and autobiographical volumes written before Inishfallen, then it does seem that the relationship and interaction between Cock-a-doodle Dandy and the autobiographies as a whole reveals that, by the point in O'Casey's writing career at which Cock-a-doodle-Dandy came into being, a whole series of chain reactions between his autobiographies and plays had been set up, and that these chain reactions could play an enormously important part in directing the course and nature of his work.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Rose and Crown

Hall of Healing - Time to Go - Bedtime Story

In her book, Sean, Mrs. O'Casey writes that

At the end of the nineteen forties, and early in the nineteen fifties, Sean had been engaged upon Rose and Crown,....

Also in his head at this time, the autobiography apart, were three short plays, Hall of Healing, Bedtime Story, and Time to Go.¹

Rose and Crown, the fifth volume of autobiography was begun presumably after the completion of Inishfallen in 1948, and in all probability after the completion too of Cock-a-Doodle Dandy in the same year. It must, itself, have been nearing completion by March, 1951, for in a letter which bears the date of the 7th of that month O'Casey describes the book to Daniel Macmillan, one of his publishers, in terms and tenses which suggest that it is virtually finished, and ready to be considered for publication:

Thank you very much for your letter dated the 6th March and for your kind interest in the present work.

I don't think there is anything libellous in it. I certainly had no feeling of writing anything so derogatory while I was working at it. If I be inclined to libel anyone, I am inclined to libel myself. But, as you wisely say, it is better to make as sure as assurance can be by getting a lawyer to look over it.

I am sure that no one can write anything worth a damn without annoying someone: Joyce did; Yeats did; Hardy did; and so did Tennyson. And Jesus annoyed a crowd of people. However, I haven't written anything just to annoy, but simply wrote down what I felt I must write down. And that was done, not to annoy any person, but to free myself from annoying God. Of course, some of my conceptions may be wrong - nay, all of them may be so - but they are all honest, though that isn't saying that they are true or proper. Let a man examine himself, says St. Paul, and I have done this often, and must often when I am writing, so as to try

to prevent anything malicious creeping into what I am setting down.²

However, additions must have been made to the work later than March 1951, for in its third chapter, entitled "The Friggin Frogs", O'Casey in tracing critical objections to The Silver Tassie through the years included, perhaps well after the rest of the chapter was written, the seemingly very latest attack on the play, and he dates this attack:

.....

Perhaps this was the last stroke of the bell tolling for the demise of the play? But no: The Silver Tassie is dead, but the damned thing won't lie down. This very month of October, nineteen hundred and fifty-one, a revival of the play in the Queen's Theatre by the Abbey brought on more thunderclaps of resentment
(p.290)

Rose and Crown was published in July, 1952; its three contemporaries, the one-act plays, were published before it in 1951, when "Hall of Healing" appeared in the third volume of the Collected Plays and Time to Go and Bedtime Story appeared in the fourth.

Of all the six autobiographical volumes Rose and Crown is, perhaps, the most disappointing with regard to literary and imaginative qualities. It is also strangely disappointing in the kind of approach which it adopts towards the portrayal of the author's life.

The essential change in the nature of the autobiographies which takes place between Inishfallen and Rose and Crown is much more pronounced than the change which divided the first two autobiographical volumes from Drums Under the Windows. It can be attributed to several causes, most of which spring directly from the changed nature of the author's life in the period which Rose and Crown describes; but others of which are, perhaps, related to the developments in O'Casey's work as a dramatist.

2

Letter quoted in Sean, p.211.

The most obvious, and perhaps most fundamental difference between the fifth volume and those which precede it is that it is set in England. This is, of course, inevitable, the author having absolutely no artistic choice in the matter, O'Casey left Ireland for England in 1926 and even the most creative and imaginative autobiography would be obliged to follow the precise course of the author's life in this most radical of respects. But much of which is, artistically, disappointing in the book stems from the failure of Rose and Crown to make much of its new setting and of the new phase in its author's life. Inishfallen had in its later chapters progressively built up a picture of England as the specific place to which Sean must escape in order to leave behind the disillusionments and restrictions of Irish life, which had long beset him, and to find freedom to fulfil himself and his vocations:

He wanted to move somewhere else to a place in which he would find fairer comfort, greater space, and a steady quietness. He could do all this in England, but the expense would be great, and he hesitated...

(Inishfallen, p.146)

... The land of Nelson and of Clive was beckoning to him more clearly than ever before; and he was near ready to leave the land of Patrick and of Tone. (p.151)

He'd hoist his sail and go to England,

Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in
With rocks unscalable and roaring waters.
(p.157)

Holy water would soon be raining down for forty days and forty nights, and the sooner Sean got into the ark of England the better, if he was to escape the deluge. (p.235)

There was nothing to keep him here: He would soon be crossing the border of his own life. To London! To art galleries and picture shows. He would learn a lot more about painting. He would see something of what Van Gogh, Cezanne, Renoir, and Manet had done, for as yet, they were but glittering names to him. London! (p.244)

Yes, London would mould him into a more fully-developed mind and man. ... It was getting very dark in Ireland, so his flight to London would be a leap in the light. (p.244)

Whatever were O'Casey's actual feelings on arrival in London - and letters written very shortly after his arrival to Gabriel Fallon

suggest that he was well pleased with London life³ - it is almost inevitable in a literary context that the sequel to Inishfallen would have difficulty in presenting a picture of London vivid enough to fulfil the expectations progressively roused as part of the artistic pattern of Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well. And despite its opening assurance that:

Here he was now, planting a foot for the first time on the pavement of London: planting it firmly, with a confident air and a fluttering heart

A London apprentice now (p.251)

Rose and Crown's descriptions of Sean's early experiences in England - such as his arrival at a dismal Euston station (pp. 251-2), and his first very hasty and hazy encounters with the London theatrical world (pp.252-3)-are something of an anti-climax after the splendid flourish of the close of Inishfallen.

It could possibly be, of course, the author wishes these opening events of Rose and Crown to form, in the artistic scheme of the autobiographies as a whole, a decrescendo to counter-balance the crescendo of Inishfallen. But there is no real evidence of this, for apart from the expression of Sean's surprise that "the magnificent, wealthy city of London, with her gilded Mayor and red-robed Alderman, was entered through long kennels of struggling poverty and disordered want". (p.251), there is no evidence that Sean was disillusioned with or displeased by the place to which he had come; nor is there any reference in the entire volume to any desire on Sean's part to return to Ireland. On the other hand the lack of artistic emphasis at the beginning of the volume when compared with the conclusion of Inishfallen could suggest that

³ For example in a letter of 27th March, 1926, about 3 weeks after his arrival in London, O'Casey was writing: "What with taxis (or should it be taxii) Buses (or Busi) Tubes, and trains, the life of London seems to be "a getting in and a getting out". However, I like it well, and may stay here forever. (Letters Vol I p.185). And in a letter of 26 April 1926 he wrote: "Here I am just flitted from Bloomsbury to Chelsea and thinking of stopping in London till God calls me away", (ibid. p.191)

in Rose and Crown O'Casey was dispensing with an artistic plan within the autobiographies, and was simply recording events as they occurred and placing no particular interpretation or pattern upon them. But this theory too can be discounted, for some considerations of artistic pattern^{and} effect do operate in the narrative of Rose and Crown. For example, in Rose and Crown the author avoids contradiction of Inishfallen's closing impression that when Sean left Ireland in March 1926 it was with the fixed idea of never making his home there again, whereas, in real life, his decision to remain indefinitely in England was a little less sudden - according to the evidence of his letters and was taken while he was living in London.⁴ Also in keeping with a pattern established within the scheme of the autobiographies as a whole is Rose and Crown's treatment - within its chapters entitled "The Silver Tassie" and "The Friggin Frogs" - of the controversy over The Silver Tassie in terms of being the final breaking of a bond between Sean and the literary life of Ireland, and a complete assertion of that artistic independence which Sean, at the end of Inishfallen, has left Ireland in order to pursue.⁵

However, if Rose and Crown does reveal evidence of some artistic considerations in the presentation of the facts of Sean's life in England, characteristically, it also contains passages in which the author abandons - or rather seems quite simply to forget - the pattern to which he is working. For example, although Rose and Crown fully sustains Inishfallen's impression that Sean went to London with the full determination of making England his permanent home, it ultimately fails to support Inishfallen's dramatic, climactic statement that Sean was on his first departure from Ireland, absolutely literally leaving "sweet Inishfallen" behind "forever".

4 See chapter on The Silver Tassie.

5 See chapter on The Silver Tassie.

For Rose and Crown does, in its third chapter entitled "The Friggin Frogs", refer to an occasion on which Sean re-visits Ireland:

Coming to Ireland for a brief visit on money gained out of New York's production of Within the Gates, Sean had got a kindly letter asking him to come to lunch and spend afternoon and evening with Yeats in Riversdale.... (p.281)⁶

And the chapter "Star of the County Down" describes a visit to Mount Stewart, the Ulster home of Lord and Lady Londonderry, before he embarked for New York in 1934. That references to these visits to Ireland is within Rose and Crown, evidence of a breaking down, or neglect, of an existing artistic structure rather than evidence of the total absence of an artistic structure, is revealed by the fact that O'Casey has otherwise apparently deliberately avoided making references in Rose and Crown to return visits which he made to Ireland, and even to Dublin, after the departure which was presented as so momentously final in Inishfallen. In actuality O'Casey also revisited Ireland on two other occasions, which are not mentioned in the autobiography: once very briefly in 1926 in order to collect some belongings from his Dublin lodgings;⁷ and again, this time for a period of six weeks, in 1927 while on honeymoon.⁸

The way in which O'Casey first breaks the artistic impression or illusion that Sean literally never returned to Ireland is in itself intriguing, and entirely characteristic of Rose and Crown. For the description of Sean's meeting with Yeats in "The Friggin Frogs" is entirely outside the chronological sequence of the narrative, and, indeed, even outside the chronological scope of the entire book. The first

⁶ In real life this reconciliatory meeting with Yeats took place in September, 1935

⁷ See letters of 17th June and 13th July 1926, to Gabriel Fallon Letters Vol I pp. 199, 202.

⁸ See Eileen O'Casey Sean p.61-9

chapter, "London Apprentice", describes Sean's early experiences in London in 1926, and the second chapter centres around the writing of The Silver Tassie, and its rejection by the Abbey Theatre in 1928. In the third chapter "The Friggin Frogs", however, a leap forward is made to an event which happened in 1935. The author himself indicates that the meeting with Yeats took place after "New York's production of Within the Gates", but the main narrative of Rose and Crown actually ends with Sean on board an ocean-liner leaving New York after he had helped to establish the American production of Within the Gates on Broadway. In real life O'Casey left New York on December, 12th, 1934.

It is ironic that the incident in Rose and Crown which mars so early the aesthetically satisfactory impression that Sean never returned to Ireland, should belong to a period in O'Casey's life which is not Rose and Crown's province, while ^{the autobiographical volume} avoids mention of two visits which would have fallen within its time-scheme, and while its successor, Sunset and Evening Star makes no reference to this very visit of 1935 which comes within the final volume's own particular chronological scope.

Such vagaries in chronology are very far from uncommon in Rose and Crown as a whole. The opening chapters of the volume contain several more very outstanding anachronisms. For example, in the second chapter, "The Silver Tassie", O'Casey describes how news of the Abbey's rejection of The Silver Tassie in 1928 arrives on the very day that Sean's wife gives birth to their first child (p.273), yet it is only in the fourth chapter, "Feathering his Nest" that he describes Sean's first meeting, in 1926, with the girl who was to become his wife (pp.291-2). "The Friggin Frogs" begins with the subject of the meeting with Yeats in 1935, and moves on to that of the Abbey production of The Silver Tassie in 1935 "seven (sic) years after it had seen the lights of London" (p.284) but the narrative of the previous chapter ["]The Silver Tassie has ended in March 1928 - this date is given in the text in ["]connection with a meeting with George Bernard Shaw (p.279) - one and a

half years before the London production in October, 1929. And the London production itself is not to be described until "Black Oxen Passing By" the third chapter after "The Friggin' Frogs". Furthermore, after its description of the circumstances surrounding the Abbey production of The Tassie in 1935, the narrative of "The Friggin' Frogs" moves forward to "Twelve years later" when "The Silver Tassie was performed for two crowded weeks in the Gaiety Theatre " (p.289), and thence to "Nearly two years later " (p.289) and an incident which took place concerning the play during a lecture by Lennox Robinson at Yale University, and from then to "This very month of October, nineteen hundred and fifty-one" and "a revival of the play in the Queen's Theatre by the Abbey", (p.290). The opening of the subsequent chapter "Feathering His Nest", however, reverts right back to "The General Strike in 1926" and Sean's first meeting with the woman whom he was to marry.

Although the total disregard in "The Friggin Frogs" for the time-scheme of the narrative, and for the chronological scope of the volume, completely destroys any sense of spontaneity or drama in this part of the book, it is easy to see why the chapter came to be written in this way. Having embarked in the chapter, "The Silver Tassie", at the "Correct" chronological point in the scheme of the volume, upon a description of how the play of that title came to be written, the author goes on to pursue, single-mindedly, an account of the trials and tribulations which beset it. He thus moves on directly to describe the rejection of the play by the Abbey, and fails to mention that he met and married his wife in the meantime. And in "The Friggin Frogs" he continues his account of the almost invariably troubled history of the play in production and carried his narrative way beyond the time-scheme of Rose and Crown and right up to "This very month of October, nineteen hundred and fifty-one" (p.290), that is, the "present time " during which the volume was being written.

Q: Casey is then, in "The Silver Tassie" and "The Friggin Frogs"

pursuing one specific issue to its conclusion, regardless of an artistic pattern in the narrative of the book as a whole. He is, as it were, picking out ^a complete strand in his life and choosing to present that strand in isolation, rather than reweaving it throughout the book into an artistic pattern with the many other threads of his experience.

That the author can so easily introduce an anachronistic and documentary chapter such as "The Friggin Frogs" into Rose and Crown, illustrates some essential differences between this volume and its predecessors. Firstly, the narrative of Rose and Crown, despite its firm point of commencement with Sean just about to start a new life in London lacks any very momentous point at which it can conclude, and towards which it can direct itself. I Knock at the Door ended with Johnny's realisation that he was beginning to educate himself to face the challenge of life; Pictures in the Hallway conclude with his realisation that he was approaching manhood and must now prepare to make his mark on the world; Drums Under the Windows reached a political, rather than a personal, climax with the 1916 Easter Rising, and Inisfallen ended with Sean's leaving of Ireland. Rose and Crown's conclusion of Sean bidding farewell to America, after his stay there to advise on the production of Within The Gates, is hardly of the significance or of the literary stature of the previous conclusions:

The buildings now were but faint silhouettes, fading into the lights of multitudinous windows: soon all these, too, would go, and there would be nothing but a sullen sky above and a grey and choppy sea below to keep him gloomy company.

Hail and farewell, America! It was unlikely he would ever walk the streets of her cities again; so an Irish blessing and an Irish good-bye to America's people who shall never have an ending, never have an ending, never have an ending. (pp.454-5)

Indeed Rose and Crown is the only autobiography to possess such a weak and indeterminate conclusion, for the final volume, Sunset and Evening Star must, inevitably, work towards a precise and powerful conclusion concerning the author's thoughts as he waits for death and looks back on his life. But if Rose and Crown has a weak ending, Sunset has a

weak beginning. And it almost seems as if O'Casey, in planning the fifth and sixth volumes of autobiography which describe his life in England, and had no very particular event or development in mind at which to make the division between the two books, but simply ended Rose and Crown after enough had been written to constitute one volume. And in some respects the voyage from America formed a convenient, if not very significant, point for division of the volumes; for, in so far as it is the leaving of a country, it does, albeit only at its face value, parallel the departure from Ireland at the end of volume four, and since Sean was to return from America to a new home - a flat in Battersea to which his family had moved while he was away - this could provide at least something of a fresh start for the final volume.

It could be that O'Casey intends Rose and Crown to be the autobiography of an experimental dramatist, striving to write his plays in a "new way", suffering poverty rather than pandering to the trivial tastes of the commercial London Theatre, and struggling to find suitable productions for his play. Certainly two chapters of Rose and Crown "The Silver Tassie" and "Within the Gates" derive their names directly from his plays and are the only two chapters in the autobiography to do so. Also, the eventual achievement of a worthy production of Within The Gates in New York, might add a note of significance and triumph to Sean's return from America at the end of the play. But although this strand, within Rose and Crown, of Sean's development as an experimental dramatist, seems strong in theory, and ^{when} separate parts of it are picked out from different points in the autobiography, yet within the text and context of Rose and Crown this particular thread is as broken and as tangled as the chronology of the volume itself. Moreover, the inclusion of something of the history of the writing and productions of The Silver Tassie and of Within The Gates reflects the nature of the plays themselves as much, perhaps more than, any sense

of artistic design in Rose and Crown.⁹ And any significant overtones which the ending of Rose and Crown might have, as depicting the experimental dramatist returning home triumphant, are almost completely undercut by the fact that O'Casey has previously broken the chronology of the volume, and even exceeded the allotted time-span of the book, to describe how Within the Gates' planned tour of American cities was called off due to clerical objections to the play (pp. 421-6). O'Casey's trials and tribulations as an experimental dramatist might then, form an element, even a strand in Rose and Crown. But they do not constitute its structure, or even impose an order upon the narrative.

Between, then, the fixed starting point of the narrative of the Rose and Crown and the fixed goal of the narrative of Sunset the sense of any structure in the works - even of chronological structure - becomes lax; although the predetermined nature of the conclusion of Sunset does manage to exercise just enough demand upon the narrative of its own volume to rescue Sunset from the degree of shapelessness manifested in Rose and Crown.

If Rose and Crown lacks structure and artistic shape it also largely lacks dramatic impetus. Passages of sustained dialogue, "dramatic" episodes and characterisation are rare, whereas long passages of argument and opinion, complete with quotations from letters, books and newspapers, abound. A typical passage of authorial opinion from Rose and Crown - and typical in theme as well as style - is the following which expresses O'Casey's views on the medieval Church:

It is odd - mostly entertained by roman catholic apologists for their own reasons - how many prate of the days when the Church ruled the roost, as if then all was jollity, sweetness, and effulgent light; whereas, in fact, those days were riddled and ruined with venomous puritanism; hatred of dancing, of music, of painting, of sculpture (except the sculpture of saintly figures and the sculpture of the tomb), and of any natural beauty in woman. Hilaire Belloc in his Europe and the Faith, says:

9

See chapters above on The Silver Tassie and Within the Gates.

'Two notes mark the thirteenth century for anyone who is acquainted with its bulding, its letters, and its wars: a note of youth and a note of content.' Again, dealing with the effects of the three hundred years following the Reformation, he says: 'With all these, of course, we have had a universal mark - the progressive extension of despair.' Even the English Church Times said a few years ago: 'Mediieval spring, summer, and autumn had many delights when the church's holidays were holidays; when the prople not only worked hard, but prayed hard, and played hard.' There were, then, says G.G. Coulson, a hundred holydays in the year; on these the people could do no servile work; the landlords, brd and abbot, refused to divide, and so the holydays were dark indeed to the workers. As for 'playing', almost all of it was done under a shower of denunciations from the clerics. St. Jerome, with his lion, an authority quoted throughout those times, bawled out against all the frolics and joys that flesh is heir to; and St. John of the Cross warned us that 'the spiritual Christian ought to suppress all joy in created things, because it is offensive in the sight of God'. The sea, the rock, tree, fern, and flower, offensive in the sight of God! Oh, lord! But there's worse than these; oh, ay. The whole period's frantic with the abuse of woman, who, to the clerics, was far more dangerous than the American blue-tailed fly. Odo of Cluny, a big-shot Benedictine in those days, says: 'Looka, boys, though girls have no power to add to their looks, they powder and puff and dye their faces, or fiddle their hair into fanciness, give the glad eye, and vary their dress by divers other far-fetched methods; how much better it would be, all this while, if they were intent upon the upkeep of their souls!

Ha, ha, ladies of Vogue, who go contrary, and how does your garden grow? (pp. 411-2)

Perhaps in its changes from the previous volumes, the nature of Rose and Crown reflects changes in the author's life and way of life during the period which the narrative of Rose and Crown describes. The most obvious change at that time was his residence in England. And it is possible that in writing an autobiographical volume which must be set in England as opposed to in Ireland, the author writes in it of a country which he did not understand as fully as he understood Ireland, and which did not inspire him so greatly as Ireland did. It is in Rose and Crown itself that the author has Sean recognise that though "the moon (was) shining just as bright over London now as he had so often seen her shining over Dublin" yet "she did not shine quite so lovingly; when the moon shone over Dublin, a reverie could easily conjure all the wider scenes and all the famous forms of old long since into the streets again". Whereas, London is "A city set too wide apart to

assemble them from one reverie in a single mind," (p.311). And it could be that, in some respects, the change in the nature of the autobiographies between Inishfallen and Rose and Crown parallels the change between The Silver Tassie and Within the Gates in that the author, albeit for different reasons in the two cases, deliberately turns aside from Irish material and experience - the experiences which, as the concluding sequence of Inishfallen acknowledges, "had almost all been spun from what he had felt, had seen, had touched in these few Dublin streets!" (pp.246-7) The autobiographies which, in their Irish setting and as a medium in which the author might write about Ireland and relive Irish experience, had, perhaps, been brought into being to compensate for the lack of Irish material in Within the Gates, and, perhaps, too, in a way, to "compensate" the author, in his residence in England, for the aspects of Irish life that he missed most. Moreover, once the autobiographies had been begun, they had, through their texts, or through the author's thoughts, associated with them increasingly provided material and inspiration for his plays - material and inspiration that, apparently, England could not, on the whole, provide. Even Oak Leaves and Lavender, which is set in wartime England, has two Irish heroes who voice, to some extent, Irish concerns. But with Rose and Crown, the autobiographies, if they were in any way to follow the merest outline of the events of the author's life, had to be set in England.

Perhaps then the lack of structure in the narrative of Rose and Crown can be attributed to the fact that in this "English" volume of autobiography the author is no longer tracing, as a major concern in the book, the emergence of Ireland as a nation, and is no longer linking the portrayal of Sean with an account of the successive events of Irish history. Perhaps the lack of dramatic impetus in the volume as a whole is a result of the fact that few opportunities are presented in Rose and Crown for the depiction of Irish characters and events.

And, indeed, when such opportunities are presented the author does seize upon them with much of the "dramatic" vigour with which he wrote in previous volumes. A prime instance of Irish characters apparently lifting the narrative of the play into "dramatic" dialogue, concerns the incident which takes place as Sean sails for Ireland, on his way to visit the Ulster home of Lord and Lady Londonderry:

So off he set from Heysham, straight for Belfast, from there in a boat dipping and rising a lot in a three-quarter gale, with two women in the next cabin far gone in seasickness, their wails and their abuse of each other preventing him from sinking into a satisfying sleep.

- Jasus, Annie, said a wailing voice, I'm in a bad way. I know it; I'm in a bad way, wally - are you listenin'?

- Oh, shut your big mouth! came back an answer in a buder voice, an' let me concentrate on me own disthress. You would insist on comin' to Belfast to slip down to Dublin to see Mr. De Valera. You made your voice a buzz in me ear of sayin' I must see De Valera before I die so often that I was thricked into bein' spell-bound. Who the hell's De Valera that anyone would want to see him!

.....

(p.383)

Another occasion when "Irish" characters seem to inject the narrative with a dramatic impetus occurs in the "Wild Life in New Amsterdam" chapter in which three Irish-Americans, fellow guests of Sean at a dinner-party, indulge in a heated and lengthy argument as to the merits and demerits of the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions:

..... Sean was startled by hearing the Ulsterman say slowly and sharply: 'The Irish wud be a grund people but for the inseedious releegion of the romun catholic church ruining thum!

Sean saw an uneasy look flash over the lean, almost ascetic face of McCartan,

- That's a matter of diversified opinion, came from Judge Lynch, in a conciliatory murmur; as a matter of fact, the catholic faith has never put any obstacle in the way of an Irishman's advancement.

- I'm tulling you different, said the voice from Ulster; it brings puverty and eegnorance everywhure it fastens on the minds of people. Thure's one thing stuppung the Irish, one thing only: the clinging of thum tae what hus no wurrunt from the mind of man, or the ravelations of holy scrptures.

-That's a debatable question, came in a sharper murmur from the judge.
-It's no' a debatable question, I'm tulling ye! It's the prime an' pure truth!

- Oh, God, thought Sean, Connemara's Croagh Pathrick and Belfast's Cave Hill are at it again, and, of all places, in New Amsterdam. (pp. 434-5)

Another respect in which Sean's/the author's life differs in Rose and Crown from his life as described in the preceding volumes, and which, therefore, might account for something of the change in the autobiographies is the fact that he is now a professional playwright, and, though undesirous of social prestige and far from wealthy himself, he is moving within exalted circles both within the Theatre and within the society of the day. Although apparently delighting in the title "The slum dramatist", (pp.252, 253) he is, on his arrival in England, made "an honorary member" of the Garrick Club", and in the Garrick club he meets "a playwright and a play-critic - Arthur Pinero and James Agate" (p.264). And he soon begins, on his own account, an enduring friendship with George Bernard Shaw. Also, "the plays proved to be a passport for Sean into the big, big houses" where, chiefly through the hospitality of Lord and Lady Londonderry, he met such celebrities as Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald. Although Sean/O'Casey was later to move out of fashionable areas of London to live, with some degree of poverty, in Chalfont St. Giles, he was never again no matter where his heart lay, actually to be the member of the working class, in a working class environment, that he had been in Dublin.

It is not that Sean's/O'Casey's talents, or ideas, or ideals, or loyalties changed with this new way of life but that, this new way of life does not seem, in itself, to have provided much dramatic or creative inspiration for the autobiography which records it. In this connection, it seems as if the fame of those personalities with whom the author/Sean came into contact, somewhat hindered the development of literary characters within the book. For it is one thing to elaborate upon, and create a dialogue for, an anonymous man or woman in a Dublin bar or street, but it is quite another to create a character sketch, dramatic incident, and dramatic dialogue around, well known figures in English politics, society or the English Theatre. O'Casey's publishers were, apparently, well

aware of such difficulties - but from a legal rather than a literary point of view, hence O'Casey's letter of the 7th March, 1951, assuring his publishers that there was, in his opinion, nothing "libellous" in Rose and Crown, but that it might be wise to get "a lawyer to look over it".¹⁰ O'Casey had, of course, in Inishfallen included Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats as figures in his narrative, and Drums Under the Windows included portraits of such personalities from real life as Jim Larkin, James Connolly, Maude Gonne, and Madame Marcevicz (who is presented in a by-no-means flattering light), but these were not the figures that give the books their dramatic colour or embody its dramatic spirit. And a chief difference between characterisation in these volumes and in Rose and Crown seems to be that while Drums and Inishfallen could describe well-known personalities side by side with an abundance of O'Caseyan Dublin characters - such as the "Old Man" of the sequence in Drums describing the declaration of an Irish Republic, or such as Julia and her companion in the public house in the "Dublin's Glittering Guy" section of Inishfallen, the world of Sean's experience in Rose and Crown cannot supply him with sufficient "anonymous" or "unknown" characters to balance his necessarily restricted portrayals of celebrities. Perhaps the nearest O'Casey approaches, in Rose and Crown, to creating a literary character out of a well-known personality, is his depiction of Stanley Baldwin, leader of the Conservative party, as an archetypal, shrewd, but bluff and bewildered, Englishman in conversation with the clever and fanciful Gael, Sean. But this rare "dramatic" episode, which takes place in the chapter Rose and Crown reveals in its nature, as well as in its themes and character portrayal, the influence of specific passages of dialogue from the play Purple Dust,¹¹ and so is not necessarily typical of Rose and Crown itself. It is significant,

¹⁰ Letter quoted above.

¹¹ See chapter above on Purple Dust.

although not surprising, that on the main occasions in which the narrative of Rose and Crown itself, without the influence of a play, blossoms into characterisation and dramatic dialogue-the dialogue between the women in the mail-boat, and the argument at the American dinner party - the characters involved are not only Irish, but are sufficiently unknown to the public to allow a great deal of O'Caseyan creativity to go into their presentations in the autobiography.

A third major change in Sean's/the author's life during the period which Rose and Crown depicts ^{was that} he met and married his wife and together they established a home and began to bring up^a family. O'Casey does, and not infrequently, mention his wife and his oldest son in Rose and Crown, but his family life does not really seem, in its own right, to form an element in the book. Usually details of his family's life and circumstances are brought into the autobiography in connection with other concerns. For example, in the chapter "The Silver Tassie" the birth of Sean's son seems to be mentioned since it emphasises how bitterly Sean/O'Casey felt the blow over the Abbey's rejection of The Silver Tassie. Again, Mrs. O'Casey's failure to have their young son enrolled at a private convent school in the chapter "A Gate Clangs Shut" seems primarily brought into the autobiography as an opportunity to attack the Catholic attitude to education and to the bringing up of children. It is left to Mrs. O'Casey in her book Sean to supply the really tender, intimate and detailed account of O'Casey's marriage, and of his family life. It seems as if during the period which Rose and Crown and Sunset (and Sean) depict, his life was roughly divided into two areas: one area concerned his profoundly loving family, the other ^{with} his work.

Mrs. O'Casey writes that:

His home and his children were his world, his room, his books and his work aside.¹²

It seems, however, as if in the writing of Rose and Crown and Sunset too he preferred to set "his home and his children" aside from the main concerns of the book, probably as something far too precious and, curiously, for an autobiography, too personal to write about.

Instead he depicts his personal life as being largely a matter of his efforts and progress in pursuing a career as an independent and experimental dramatist experiencing poverty, and much criticism, in following his chosen path. He also chooses to write of issues involving all mankind, the human family, rather than simply his own family. Such concerns in Rose and Crown may be very interesting. And they do incidentally throw much light upon O'Casey's personality, for his hold upon and expression of opinions are so strong that they constitute a part of his personality. But what is missing from Rose and Crown, and from Sunset too, is the portrayal and warmth of human relationships - qualities which were found in the previous volumes depiction of the relationship between Sean and Mrs. Casside.

One particular role which the autobiographies begin to assume within Rose and Crown is directly connected with Sean's or rather, by this point in the narrative, O'Casey's work as a playwright, for the author begins to use the autobiographical prose as a medium through which to reply to his critics. He seems to find the autobiography especially useful if his previous replies to specific critical attacks have been refused publication. He breaks the chronology, and exceeds the time-scheme of Rose and Crown in order to reply, at great length, to the clerical critics who caused his play Within the Gates to be banned in Boston. And any semblance that has hitherto remained in Rose and Crown of "Sean" being a dramatic character, distinct from the author, is shattered by passages such as this:

Stand up there, now, Terence Connelly, stole and all on, if you want to wear it, till O'Casey has a word with you; a

word he wanted to say when the row was on, but couldn't, because influences were used to prevent its printing.... (p.423)

Passages such as this indicate that if the life O'Casey is portraying in Rose and Crown has changed from that portrayal in the previous volumes, then essentially too in Rose and Crown his own attitude to the autobiographical medium which portrays that life has changed. And it may be that behind many of the changes which take place in the autobiographies within Rose and Crown is the ever-changing role of the autobiographies in their relationship and interaction with the major part of O'Casey's work - the plays.

After all, changes in the qualities of the autobiographies, and radical changes at that, occurred in both Drums Under the Windows and Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well, yet these plays were set in Ireland, and portrayed a working-class hero. There is, in the autobiographies, from Drums onwards, a steady decline in the dramatic element, and an increasing tendency towards directly expressed opinion. And it is in the final three chapters of Inishfallen, not in Rose and Crown, that the essay-like qualities of the final volumes first begin to emerge.

Inishfallen seems, in its relationship and interaction with the plays, to begin to lead the autobiographies away from being artistic and creative works in their own right, towards being supplements to the plays - perhaps, in a way, rather like Shaw's prefaces to his plays, although, of course, not nominally linked to any specific plays. At least Rose and Crown and Sunset provide something of a survey of, and expansion upon the themes of the plays and the authors personal beliefs which went into the writing of those plays. His dramatic imagination and most of his artistry are being expressed within the dramatic form of the plays which, through the wealth of inspiration and material supplied by previous autobiographical volumes, he is now regularly writing, and he now feels the need to expand in

prose the ideas of the play, to argue over them in a degree of detail and at a length which would be unacceptable in the dramatic form. This need appears to be a genuine and positive one. After all, O'Casey once planned to end the autobiographies with his leaving of Ireland in Inishfallen, and there was no compulsion for him to write Rose and Crown or Sunset if he did not so wish, and if he had not felt that he needed a medium for expression outside his plays.

In its closing sequence Inishfallen had sufficiently recovered from its "lapse" into preoccupation with theme in order to present Sean as a "dramatic" character "dramatically" renouncing his native land "forever", but with Rose and Crown the return is made to abstract issues and concerns rather than ^{primarily} to the "dramatic" depiction of experience, people and events. Hence the artistic structure of the previous autobiographies falters in Rose and Crown, perhaps not so much because O'Casey is incapable of sustaining it, but because the purpose of the new volume no longer really requires it. Hence too the "dramatic" spirit of the previous volumes is largely absent from Rose and Crown not because O'Casey has lost his creativity - such "dramatic" episodes as do appear within Rose and Crown discount this possibility - but because he no longer requires a ^{thoroughly} "dramatic" autobiography. The change in the nature of Rose and Crown can, therefore, be viewed too as a positive, if somewhat disappointing, literary development, rather than as a literary "lapse".

And so it seems that although the nature of Sean's/O'Casey's life in England, as opposed to the nature of his life in Ireland, must inevitably be reflected in some change in the nature of the autobiographies, perhaps the radical change which is made manifest in Rose and Crown derives not a little from the author's changed attitude to the autobiographies. And perhaps this change in attitude was brought about, by the relationship and interaction between the writing of his autobiographies and the writing of his plays.

Whether it was chiefly because of Rose and Crown's preoccupation with Sean's/O'Casey's "new" life in England, or whether it be chiefly because Rose and Crown is fulfilling a new supplementary role to the plays, certainly those plays written while O'Casey was working on Rose and Crown take no inspiration or material directly from it.

If the fifth autobiographical volume did inspire or influence the writing, ^{or} nature of the three one act plays Hall of Healing, Time to Go, and Bedtime Story, then it did so through contraries rather than through likenesses, and rather as the fixed nature of Within The Gates might have inspired and influenced the writing and nature of the contrasting and complementary I Knock at the Door.

Hall of Healing reveals a very striking reaction away ^{from} Rose and Crown in that for its inspiration and substance it reverts back to a much earlier period of the author's life and to an earlier period of his writing.

The play is set in "The waiting-room of the Dublin Parish Dispensary for the Poor" on a "winters day" (Collected Plays ^{Vol. III} p. 234). The year is unspecified, but the kind of society suggested in the play is that the "preautobiography" plays and that of Johnny's childhood and youth in I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway. O'Casey was himself to confirm that the play was based on a "fifty-year-old ¹¹ memory". But, on the whole it seems that if memories were involved in the writing of Hall of Healing, most of them had been filtered through the artistic medium of the autobiographies before they found their way into the play.

There is an obvious similarity between the title of the play and the title of "The Hill of Healing" chapter of I Knock at the Door. There are also very marked correspondences between the contents of the play and of chapter. "The Hill of Healing", which gives an account of Johnny's first visit to "St. Mark's Ophthalmic Hospital for Diseases

of the Eye and Ear", describes a hospital waiting room which greatly resembles the basic setting of the play. In the autobiography Johnny and his mother are said to enter:

a long narrow hall, divided in two by a barrier of polished pine. At the upper end were two doors, one to let the patients in to the doctors, and the other to let them out when the doctors had finished with them for the time being. The hall was furnished with long, highly polished, golden coloured pitch pine benches on which a number of men, women, and children were sitting, slowly moving up to the door leading to the room where the doctors were.
.....

Johnny's mother gave the details asked for the sixpence was handed over, and they were given a ticket of admission which would also be used by the doctor to write down the prescribed remedies to be applied to the diseased eyes. These were made up and handed out to the patients at the dispensary, a little closed-in booth-like space with a sliding panel, stuck in a corner of the hall.

(I Knock at the Door) pp.21-2)

While the play is set in:

The waiting-room of the Parish Dispensary in Dublin Running along the back wall is a bench on which the patients sit while waiting to go in to the Doctor. A shorter bench runs along the wall to the left.... a wooden partition comes down, somewhat diagonally, through nearly two-thirds of the room, and then turns to the right, till it is joined to the side wall on the right. A door in this partition wall, up towards the back, admits one to the Surgery. Another door in that part of the partition which has turned to the right, near the right side wall, gives entry to the Dispensary. To the left of this door is a small window (shuttered for the moment), with a narrow ledge in front of it, through which the remedies are handed out to the patients ...

(Hall of Healing, Collected Plays, Vol IV,
p.235)

Another feature of "The Hill of Healing's" hospital also seems to have found its way into the setting of the play. On moving into the doctor's room, Johnny sees that "All round the wall terrible pictures of diseases of the eye and ear were hanging" (p.24), while the stage-direction of the play refers to "the posters warning of disease" as "the few bright spots" in the room:

On the back wall, to the left of the window, is a poster on which are the words in black print, DIPHTHERIA: BEWARE! Above the Dispensary Window is another one on which are the words in red, TUBERCULOSIS: BEWARE! The Caretaker, Aloysius, nick-named Alleluia, is fixing a third one, to the right of the window at back, on which are the words in green, CANCER: BEWARE!
(p.235)

Also the waiting rooms of both chapter and play are presided over by characters of singular appearance: "Francis" in the case of the autobiography (p.22) and Aloysius, nick-named Alleluia, in the play (p.236). And episodes in the autobiography and the play both contain passages of dialogue in which the waiting patients discuss their various ailments:

Johnny heard the people round him talking of their complaints, their pain, and their hopes of improvement.

- I have to go months yet, he heard a voice say, before there'll be any improvement. Steel chips in a foundry flew into me eye, an' they had to get them out with a magnet. They made me jump when they were doin' it, I can tell you

(I Knock at the Door, pp.22-3)

Jentree [giving a sudden jerk in his seat]. You know, if I don't get some specific attention soon an' sudden, something terrible's bound to happen. I'll fall, paralysed, from me neck down!

(Hall of Healing, p.257)

There are correspondences between Hall of Healing and other sections of I Knock at the Door also. For example, in the very first chapter of the autobiography, the chapter entitled "A Child is Born", Mrs. Casside, like "Red Muffler" in the play, pleads for a doctor to see her dying child. And, again, as with Red Muffler, her requests are ignored until it is too late.

The existence of a literary relationship between "A Child is Born" and the play is indicated at several points in the texts. There is an insistence, in both autobiography and play upon the belief that God can and will spare the "choking" child.

- He can do it, if He wants to, she murmured in the cab all the way to the hospital, He can save the child; the other died, but this won't, this won't, won't, won't die. With a thought, God can take this choking lump from the little child's throat, and give him back his healthy happy breathing.

(I Knock at the Door, p.6)

In the play Mrs. Casside's religious faith is expressed by the sympathetic "Old Woman's" rather than by "Red Muffler"; the not altogether admirable parent of the child:

Red Muffler ... [Tensely] The child is bad; th' child is worse; th' child is chokin'. [Agonisingly] Jesus Christ, ha' mercy.

Old Woman [soothingly]. I wouldn't be fancyin' death for your little one, son. She'll be all right. God is good. They tell us that God's thought is roomy with anxiety for the very young. (p.242)

In both autobiography and play the parent finds his or her grief all the bitterer for the fact that the doctor made no effort even to see the child:

Some time after, the doctor, followed by the nurse, came up the corridor, and she had called out to them, You came too slow, for God came quicker and took the child away. The doctor had come over to her, put his hand over the child's little heart, murmuring, Yes, he's gone; but no skill of ours could have saved him. And she had answered bitterly, None of you broke your heart trying.

.....

In the agitated state of her mind she tried to think of a portion of the Bible that would soften a little the hardness of her trouble. She could think only of the widow, the widow's little son, and of Elijah. But there was no Elijah now to take this little son out of her arms, and stretch himself upon the boy, call three times upon the name of the Lord, and bring the living soul back again to the dead body - only a doctor who had delayed his coming, and a deadhouse.

(I Knock at the Door, pp.7-8)

Red Muffler [quietly]. Well, we've got all we could get here, so we'd better go. [To the Doctor] You might have safely said you'd come, an' kept hope danglin' still in front of us that healin' still was here, an' common goodness. Our little one has had th' charity to save you from a cold an' tirin' journey in th' mornin'. [Fiercely] Oh, you blasted fomenter of medicine, you might have listened to what I thried to say!

(Hall of Healing, p.271)

On her way home in the cab with her dead child, Mrs. Casside thinks of the sorrowful time ahead until she and her husband feel "that their little boy's soul was getting accustomed to God" (p.8). Perhaps something of this feeling is recalled in the play when "Grey Shawl" the child's mother says of the dead little girl: "I'm frightened she's feelin' lonely wherever she may be now" (p.271), "Oh, me little one'll be runnin' round frightened, lookin' for her mammy, among the spirits of the best!" (p.272). And, in the play, the "Old Woman's" remark that "God Almighty does odd things at times" (p.272) - a remark which in no way detracts from her absolute belief

in the goodness of God - perhaps recalls Mrs. Casside's devout questioning of the will of God: "After all, He might have let this occasion of the chastening of those whom he loveth slide aside from the smiting of her harmless innocent baby." (p.10).

Pictures in the Hallway and Drums Under the Windows seem also to contribute material directly to the play.

Pictures in the Hallway, in a chapter entitled "Death on the Doorstep" prefigures not only the play's "red-ticket" episode, but also its portrayal of the Dispensary Doctor. When his older brother Tom was dangerously ill:

Mrs. Casside sent Johnny off to get a red poor-law ticket, and to deliver it at once to the Dispensary for the attendance of a doctor. The next morning at midday the doctor, Shonelly, came,

(p.312, italics mine)

In the play "A lad of fifteen years of age" - about the age of Johnny in the corresponding episode in the autobiography - brings "a red ticket" and tells Alleluia:

Me mother says, sir, she's very sick an' can't stir in th' bed, an' would th' docthor please hurry to her?

(p.266)

At the end of the play when Alleluia mentions the ticket to the Doctor, it has as much immediate effect as the Ticket handed in by Johnny of the autobiography did:

Alleluia [holding out the ticket]. Another visitin' ticket, sir. Doctor [Impatiently]. Put it on my desk, put it on my desk, man! Alleluia glides off swiftly, with hand extended holding the red ticket; dives into the surgery; comes out again, and watches the Doctor go. (pp. 272-3)

And the doctor in "Death on the Doorstep", when he does arrive, greatly resembles the Doctor of the play, not only in his neglect of his patients, but also in his physical appearance and in his appalling manners

... the doctor, Shonelly, came, flat-footed, hard-headed, his cheeks a glossy red, ripening into purple on the tips of his cheek-bones. He had a shining bald head, like a huge island surrounded by a narrow fringy sea of wiry hair; and the backs of his hands were covered with dirty yellowish hairs as if furry

gloves were beign born to them. He had a thick collar round a bulging neck, so tight that he was hard set to bend his head. In he came, coughing up a lump of phlegm fiercely and spitting it into the fireplace.

- Where is he? He asked impatiently. In here? - Oh, I see - what's the matter with him? How long's he been like this? Get outa the way, for God's sake, woman, and let me see him

- I'm anxious about him, murmured Mrs. Casside timidly, and I'd be glad if you could come tomorrow.

- Ay, and so would many another too, me fine woman, he said sarcastically; but I've more to do than to stand guard on your door-step, ma'am. And off he hurried, telling his coachman to drive to the next patient, and breaking wind shockingly as he climbed into his oul' drab brougham.

(Pictures, pp. 312-3)

In Hall of Healing

The Doctor is of middle height, rather plump, and widening perceptibly around the belly. His face - half concealed now by a thick white wool muffler - is turning to a purlish tinge by hard drinking. His eyes are small and hard, his eyebrows thick and shaggy. Had he his black bowler hat off, it could be seen that he is bald, save for a few reddish-grey hairs brushed over the crown, in an effort, maybe, to hide a big expanse of polished skull As he enters, he gives a sudden belch, and he ejaculates as if to himself, but quite audibly: "Jasus!"

(p.245)

Remarks characteristic of him are:

I told you not to come for a month. I gave you enough bromide mixture for a month. You're not going to die. Be off home.

(p.263)

I know, I know; everyone wants the doctor to come at once. I'll come sometime tomorrow.

(p.269)

And he leaves the scene in the same unappealing way as does Shonelly in the autobiography:

[... The Doctor pulls the white muffler closer around his neck, settles his hat more firmly on his head, giving a few thick coughs as he does so, and goes out of the waiting-room. Giving a richer belch as he goes out by the door]. Jasus, I'm in a terrible state! (p.273)

Drums Under the Window's chief contribution to the play seems to be in connection with a "Dr. Woods", a kind, sympathetic doctor who is himself dying. In the autobiography it is described how:

Visiting his mother once, Dr. Wood had paused to look at, and handle, Sean's books, had smiled graciously, and had shaken Sean's hand when he was leaving; so he was a friend, and, as well, was loved by the poor, though the poor man's own state of health forced him to nearly live on drugs. (p.448)

And, on another occasion, seriously ill and having received little or no help from the rough and unsympathetic "poor-law doctor", Dr Donnelly (perhaps "Shonelly" of Pictures in the Hallway) , Sean himself calls in Dr. Woods:

Dr. Woods of Gardiner Street came to see him. He was a five-shilling first-visit doctor, half a crown afterwards. He was loved by the poor, so gentle, painstaking; he was a wrath-like figure, said to have but a short time to live, keeping himself going with drugs

Hanging his coat up on a nail in the door, after a swift glance round the room, sighing languidly, the doctor sat down beside Sean, fingering him with quiet, sympathetic hands, sighing, sighing as he did so.

He sees the world in his own condition, and sighs for it, thought Mrs. Casside. (p. 591)

The descriptions of Dr. Woods exactly fit the man whom is referred to as "the last doctor" throughout the play, and whose consideration for the comfort of his patients is constantly being contrasted with the behaviour of the present doctor. This "last doctor" had been seriously ill and had eventually died.

... he went into his grave. Cancer, I'm told. With th' aid o' dhruugs, he kept himself goin' for a year an' a day; then, he was silently seen no more. (p.242)

He was loved by, and is now missed by, his patients: "Since the last doctor's death th' last light left us has gone out". And Mrs. Casside's thought that Dr. Woods "sees the world in his own condition, and sighs for it", finds a special echo in the dialogue of the play:

Old Woman [meditatively] Th' last one (doctor) always had a winsome word for th' sick an' dyin' so he had.

Alleluia. Because he was sick an' dyin' himself - that's why. (p.244)

If ,in the apparent absence from Rose and Crown of any direct inspiration and potential material for a play, Hall of Healing goes back to the earlier volumes of the autobiography for its origins and substance, Time To Go and Bedtime Story also seem to look to previously written works from which to derive their being. Unlike Hall of Healing, however, they do not look back very far.

O'Casey claimed that Time to Go was "founded on ... (an) Irish folk-tale",¹³ but whatever it owes to that unspecified Irish story it owes a very great deal to Inishfallen, and to Cock-a-doodle Dandy, and perhaps, particularly to the final chapter of Inishfallen, in which Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy seem to have reacted with each other.

Time To Go takes its very title from within the last chapter of Inishfallen. In the context of the play the title is explained when Kelly and Widda Machree, two fantastical characters who share O'Casey's vision of life, are arrested on a charge of breaches of the peace and insanity:

Sergeant [laying a hand on Kelly's shoulder]. Come on, me man, to where you'll be cured into seein' things as we all see them.
2nd Civic Guard [laying a hand on Widda Machree's shoulder]. An' you, me woman, come along to where your poor mind'll be mended.
Kelly [to Widda Machree]. It is time to go, sither.
Widda Machree [to Kelly]. It is time to go, brother.
Kelly [embracing and kissing her]. Goodbye, fair sweetheart.
Widda Machree [kissing him]. Goodbye, my love.

[The Sergeant, followed by the 1st Civic Guard, leads out Kelly by way of the Stores; the 2nd Civic Guard leads out Widda Machree by way of the Tavern.]

(Collected Plays, Vol IV p.289)

But the dull inhabitants of the country town cannot so easily repress the visionaries, for only a few moments later news is brought of their miraculous escape.

In the final chapter of Inishfallen, the phrase "time to go" had already been used no less than three times to express Sean's realization that he could bear life in Ireland no longer and that he must escape. The chapter actually begins with the words:

It was time for Sean to go. He had had enough of it. He would be no more of an exile in another land than he was in his own (p.231)

After enumerating some of the developments in Irish life which are driving Sean away, the chapter states:

Holy water would soon be raining down for forty days and forty nights, and the sooner Sean got into the ark of England the better, if he was to escape the deluge. It was time to go. (p.235)

And after describing yet more uncongenial developments in Irish life, the phrase appears again. This time ^{it} constitutes an entire paragraph in the typographical lay-out of the book, and this emphasises the absolute finality of Sean's decision to leave:

..... like the cleric in Sierra's Two Shepherds, the priests will drag the people of Ireland into heaven by the scruff of their necks.

It was time for Sean to go.
(p.236)

The setting of the play is "the butt-end of an Irish town, small and untidy". And beyond the town "Tavern" and the "General Stores" can be seen.

a scrubby field with a vista of a few cottages, thatched, in the distance. On the edge of the field, close to the edge of the road, are the remains of two trees, one near the Tavern and the other near the General Stores. Their branches look as if they had been blasted by lightning. (p.261)

This apparently lifeless Irish country scene is akin to the Nyadnanave of Cock-a-doodle Dandy and strongly reminiscent of the description of Athénry in Inishfallen (to which Cock-a-doodle Dandy is, in its turn, related). Like Athénry ^{it} is a place where life is "standing still to watch its own decay, and to wait for its own departure", and like Nyadnanave, it is a place which is rapidly losing its young people. Early in the play, Bull Farrell (of the General Stores) and Flagonson (of the Tavern) comment upon this phenomenon of emigration from the Irish countryside:

Flagonson Though me own takin's timidly topped last year's, I'd say I never seen a quieter fair:

Bull. An' why was that? Because the young æe goin' who aren't already gone. Because there's ne'er a one, lad or lass, in th' disthrikt between seventeen an' thirty. An' why are they gone?

Flagonson. To better themselves, God help them! Even me own Judy an' Jack, up in Dublin, want me to settle them in London,

where ther's a betther openin', they say, God help them. Ay, an openin' into th' world that shuts them out from God. (pp.264-5)

In Inishfallen, especially in the chapter "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo", O'Casey depicts the greed for material gain, which is rife amongst the middle classes of Irish Free State society, as being a total betrayal of Ireland's history and traditions in general, and, in particular of the ideals of the patriots who died for Irish freedom. And in Time to Go precisely the same moral is drawn. After Flagonson's wife has charged a Young Man and a Young Woman: "Five shillin's each for a crumb of bread, a cup of tea, and an egg wouldn't sit tight in a thimble", the young couple emerge indignantly from the tavern and exclaim against modern Irish attitudes:

Young Man ... A nest of daylight robbers!

... Daylight robbery!

Young Man [sadly]. Times have changed! When Brian Boru reigned, jewels an' costly garments could be left on the hedges without a sould thinkin' of touchin' them. But now!

Young Woman. I wondher what would Brian Boru think of it if he was alive today!

Young Man [passionately]. Or the Fenians before (sic) him, who set honour an' thruth before comfort or safety. High hangin' to ye on a windy night, yeh bunch of incandescent thieves. (pp. 271-2).

And like Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy, Time to Go makes it clear that Irish life is now dominated by the priests. Even Bull Farrell who makes a pretence of opposing the influence of the clergy, and who describes Ireland as "Priest-puffin island" (p.265) has secretly given "Canon Whizzer" twenty pounds (p.274). And Widda Machree says that Farrell and Flagonson, who in the shrewdness of their business dealings are akin to Mathan Marthran of Cock-a-doodle Dandy, have the reputation of being: "th' two most meritorious rogues in th' disthict, an' ... Canon Bullero commends all yous do because of the whack he gets out of it" (p.270). Also, the superstitious piety of the two men and the other inhabitants of the town is such that, after the transformation of the trees, they are willing to revere Widda Machree and Kelly as saints.

Time to Go, in common with Cock-a-doodle Dandy and the last chapter of Inishfallen,¹⁴ also draws attention to Ireland's neglect of its historic and holy buildings, and, by implication of its history and heritage.

Two cyclists, a Young Man and a Young Woman, have come in from around the Tavern, ...]

Young Man [in quick excitement]. How far from here, sir, is the remains of the Abbey of Ballyrellig?

Bull. Th' oul' graveyard with th' ruins it it is it you mean?

Young Man. It must be: th' one with the chapel of Saint Kurrakawn in it.

Young Woman [rapidly]. A lovely crypt with groined arches, supported by lovely semi-columns, decorated with lovely foliage an' faces.

Bull. D'ye tell me that, now? Well, if what it is is what yous want, it's more'n fifteen miles farther on. But th' whde thing's lost, man, in thickets, brambles, an' briars.

(p.267)

If Rose and Crown contributes virtually nothing directly to Time to Go, the play, which was written during the time that the author was working on the autobiographical volume, might possibly have made a contribution to the autobiography in connection with this subject. For in a very long passage of authorial opinion, which is set in the account of Sean's visit to Mount Stewart in Ulster, Rose and Crown enlarges upon the theme which is conveyed so deftly in the brief incident in the play.

Down to the south lies the spot where St. Patrick is said to lie buried, and, a little to the north, is Saul, where, it is said, he said his first official Mass in Ireland - two sacred places that no-one cares a damn about, though one might think that many a miracle would be hopping round here quietly. France's Bernadette and Italy's Anthony are honoured more by the Irish than their own St. Patrick. His grave is said to be covered with bramble and briar by any occasional traveller accidentally coming to it; and hardly a hand in Ulster, or in any of the other three beautifields of Ireland, has ever planted as much as a primrose on the spot where Patrick's buried. No-one goes near it, though thousands parade to the grave of Wolfe Tone; and Downpatrick is better known as the place that saw the hanging of The Man from God Knows Where, rather than the burial-place of the land's apostle. The whole country reeks of ecclesiological memories that have been long forgotten (p.387-8)

¹⁴ See chapter on Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy above.

Bedtime Story, like Time to Go, chiefly reverts back to Inishfallen for its picture of life in Ireland. The play revolves around the dilemma of John Jo Mulligan who has brought Angela Nightingale to his room. Now, at "three or four

of a cold, sleety January morning", all his terrified and prayerful

concern is to get her unnoticed out of the house. For, as he explains:

You see, Angela, the head of my department's a grand knight of Columbus, an uncompromising Catholic, strict in his thought of life, and if he heard of anything like this, I'd - I'd be out in the bleaker air, quick; the little gilt I have on me life would be gone; I'd run to ruin! God help me!

Angela [prompting him]. And then there's Father Demsey?

Mulligan. Then there's Father Demsey whose right-hand man I am in the confraternity and at all Saint Vincent de Paul meetings, with his "We can safely leave that matter with Mr. Mulligan", or "John Jo will do this for us". You see, it's a matter of importance to more than me. So, come on - we better get off at once. (p.234)

But Angela is a girl of spirit, a true O'Caseyan heroine, and, as the author himself describes her: "Far and away too good a companion of an hour, a year, or a life, for a fellow like Mulligan" (p.230).

And she artfully foils all John Jo's ludicrously frantic attempts to, as she sarcastically puts it, "banish ... poor Eve from her Mulligan paradise" (p.231), until she has virtually robbed him of a garnet ring, his wallet containing eighteen pounds, a cheque for ten pounds, a new overcoat and his best umbrella.

John Jo's hasty pursuit of Angela, once he realises that he has been tricked, occasions Miss Mossie, the landlady, and Halibut, his friend, to believe that he is insane. And when John Jo returns there is a farcical scene between him and Halibut in which each believes the other to be a dangerous lunatic and acts accordingly. The play ends when Miss Mossie brings "a few kind friends" - a policeman, a doctor and a nurse - to help pacify the bewildered John Jo. (pp.256-7).

But through the farce the morals of the play shine clear. To O'Casey John Jo's Irish piety, ostensible chastity and sense of sin are nothing more than selfish hypocritical guises to hide his fear of life and living. Angela herself points this out:

Sometime or other, we have to face out of all we get into: face out of getting into bed with a woman no less than face out into silence from the glamour of prayer; face out of life into death! (p.235)

Failure to respond to the challenge of living and particularly the impulses of sex will lead John Jo, and others like him, to an awful fate such as that of Miss Mossie; the "very respectable lodging-house keeper" (p.226) who used to walk in her sleep (often visiting John Jo's room at these times, "with a loving look on her face" p.252), and who dreads "the habit coming back to me, for then you never know whether you're always asleep and never awake, or always awake and never asleep." (p.251).

But if, then, the basic themes of the play are rooted in the previously written Inishfallen, certain specific correspondences can be found between Bedtime Story and Rose and Crown to denote that some interaction in smaller detail did take place between the two works.

A small but interesting and apparently authentic, piece of interaction between the play and the contemporarily written autobiography, concerns the detail, in the play's setting, of

a picture of a whitewashed cottage, well thatched with straw, a brown pathway before the door, with purple heather growing in tufts on its edges, and, in the distance, the dark-blue peaks of hills, all surmounted by a bright blue sky. (p.227).

Initially it seems very odd that the author should pay so much attention to describing the details of the picture. After all, in a stage-production the picture itself, let alone its details, will be hardly noticeable. But the significance of the picture and its details and, it seems, the picture's very presence in the play, are accounted for by the first chapter of Rose and Crown. For in "London Apprentice" the author describes how Sean's discovery, while in Dublin, of works by "Gorgione, Constable, and Goya" had told him:

to look away from Irish eyes of painting, smiling into miserable vistas of yellow-roofed, white-walled cottages, with their brown piles of turf beside them, bunches of gorse by the wayside, and the skies full of Yeats' purple glow; all of one piece, one manner, one misery, destitute of colour and line and form. (pp.259-60)

The pious and "very respectably" cosy Ireland of the John Jo Mulligan's and Miss Mossie's is, then, hardly productive of great art, or of the

finer things in life.

If an early chapter of Rose and Crown exerted an influence upon the stage-set of Bedtime Story, perhaps the play in its turn is reflected in a late chapter of the autobiography which was presumably written after the play was completed. Writing in the chapter "Within the Gates" of the objections of American clerics to his play of that title, O'Casey comments upon the priests' assumption of authority over all aspects of their fellow human beings' lives:

.... even to the time and the manner in which and by which any man or woman whatsoever shall proceed in slow motion to the hymeneal bed, or, in perversity, shall, on the other hand, fling themselves, as it were suddenly, with ravening speed, on to a couch without prim and purposeful preparation for the roister-doistering deed of love. It's funny, when one thinks of it, that a permissive chit from a cleric makes all the difference in the world, presenting those who get it with what Bernard Shaw said was "the maximum amount of temptation with the maximum amount of opportunity". (p.423).

Although this passage is connected within Rose and Crown to the play Within the Gates, it could also provide a comment upon John Jo Mulligan's convictions that the Church should control the natural impulses of life.

Angela /mockingly/. And isn't it a sweet thing for a girl's voice to be heard in a man's room at this time o' the night or morning?

Mulligan /almost fearfully/. You know its not; not as we're situated. You know you did wrong to practise on a body who didn't know enough. Situated as we are, without divine warrant, it's not proper. We're in the midst of a violent sin, and you should be ashamed and sorry, instead of feeling sinfully gay about it. It's necessary to feel sorry for a sin of this kind. (p.231)

Collectively, then, as well as individually, the three plays written while O'Casey was working on Rose and Crown reveal a reaction away from the English setting and experience of Rose and Crown, and take their settings from previous autobiographies. And they also seem to "compensate" for the decline in artistry and dramatic spirit within Rose and Crown, for, in stark contrast to the fairly uniform "undramatic" style of much of the prose of the autobiographical volume, they, collectively,

explore three widely different, yet each extremely theatrical, styles. The Hall of Healing, subtitled "A Sincere Farce in One Scene" combines something of the setting and concerns of the pre-autobiography plays and early autobiographies with elements of farcical humour, in the antics of Alleluia, and ^{with} explicit social comment, such as is found in the later plays, from "Red Muffler". Time to Go, subtitled "A Morality Comedy in One Act", follows the fantasy manner of Cock-a-doodle Dandy, but with even more elaborate stage effects (the barren trees which burst into "blossom, foliage, and illuminated fruit" and then fade away again, pp. 291-2), and with central characters rather more fanciful than those of Cock-a-doodle Dandy, and perhaps rather more like the figures from popular songs and literature who parade in Drums Under The Windows. Bedtime Story, subtitled "An Anatole Burlesque in One Act" (i.e., Anatole France) is a situation comedy which, as it progresses almost partakes of something of the farcical nature of The End of the Beginning and A Pound on Demand. That each of these three one-act plays should be given a subtitle pointing, as it were, to their manner, seems to suggest that O'Casey was deliberately exploring, even playing with, manner and forms in these three plays.

Despite their differing forms, however, and their different origins within the autobiographies, all three of these plays illustrate an intriguing aspect of the autobiographies' relationship with the plays. For it seems that in the autobiographies O'Casey created for himself, and perpetuated, his own image or images of Ireland, and that these personal and literary images of Ireland - rather than the Ireland of the newspapers which he read, or even, perhaps, the absolutely real modern Ireland - essentially ^{formed} the Ireland which he portrayed in his plays. Although the play itself was written in about 1950, in Hall of Healing O'Casey is bringing to life the Ireland which he depicted in I Knock at the Door, that is, the Ireland of the 1880's. And in Time to Go and Bedtime Story, as well as in Cock-a-doodle Dandy,

he is using Inishfallen's image of the Free State in the early-mid 1920's as the basis for, and as most of the substance of, his portrayal of the "present-day" Ireland of about ^{a quarter of a} century later.

It seems that for many years during his residence in England, the autobiographies were the means whereby he kept in touch with the Ireland that he used to know. And so closely was the Ireland of his successive plays bound up with the images of Ireland that he created and perpetuated in the autobiographies, that when the time came for the autobiographies, with the writing of Rose and Crown, to take an English setting, then the images of Ireland presented in the contemporarily written plays - Hall of Healing, Bedtime Story and Time to Go - did not progress, but either remained static as essentially that image which had been presented in Inishfallen, or else, in the case of Hall of Healing, was a reversion to an image of Ireland presented in the early autobiographies. It is only after the writing of The Bishop's Bonfire, the next play, when the final volume of autobiography, Sunset and Evening Star, in its penultimate chapter, adds a new dimension to Inishfallen's image of Ireland, that the portrayal of Ireland in the plays can progress.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Bishop's Bonfire - Sunset and Evening Star

After the completion of the manuscript of Rose and Crown in late 1951, perhaps in early 1952, O'Casey could have lost little time in continuing the autobiographical narrative with the writing of Sunset and Evening Star, and in beginning to a new play, The Bishop's Bonfire, for Sunset was published in the autumn of 1954 and The Bishop's Bonfire in the summer of 1955.

It seems likely that O'Casey commenced work on Sunset before he began the play, for the low-keyed opening chapter of the final autobiographical volume picks up very easily and simply the narrative of Rose and Crown, as if "A Drive of Snobs" were simply a subsequent section in Rose and Crown rather than the beginning of a new volume:

Back to London, New York lingering beside
him still (Oh, linger longer, do), his hand
still touching Rockefeller Center, his eyes
still luminous with the myriad windows lighting
up New York's night; here he was driving back
with his boy, Breon, and their maid, Marion,
back to their new home, a flat in Battersea; ... (p. 459)

But although The Bishop's Bonfire was probably begun after Sunset and was certainly published almost one year after the final autobiographical volume, it seems actually to have been completed just before the autobiography. This is suggested by certain aspects of the relationship which seems to exist between the two works, but it is confirmed by Mrs. O'Casey, who refers in her book to^a time when

He had completed a play called The Bishop's Bonfire and was ending the sixth and last volume of his autobiography, Sunset and Evening Star¹

¹Sean, p. 234.

Written, then, while O'Casey was at work too on the bulk of Sunset and Evening Star, The Bishop's Bonfire was the last play of O'Casey's to be exposed to the influence of a contemporaneously written autobiography, and the last, too, to be in a position to exert, in its turn, its own influence upon an autobiographical volume.

But if the writing and nature of Sunset did initially provoke or influence the writing and nature of The Bishop's Bonfire, it seems largely to have done so by negative means, that is by itself leaving a void in the author's creative life that the play would be written to, and obliged to, fill.

Like Rose and Crown before it, Sunset and Evening Star is set in England; and The Bishop's Bonfire, like Hall of Healing, Time to Go and Bedtime Story, reverts back to the 'Irish' volumes of autobiography to find the image of Ireland which is to provide its setting, and also its material and themes. That the play is very much concerned with an image of Ireland can be seen from an article of O'Casey's which introduces the play to Russian readers:

The Bishop's Bonfire itself is an effort in the form of drama to picture Ireland's present condition, social, economic, and political. To weave in and out, mingling together, the many and bitter complexities of Irish life and thought; her religion which is formal, bent on power over everything the people say on a platform, in novel, poem, or play.²

But no matter how much O'Casey believed the Ireland of the play to be Ireland in its "present condition", and no matter to what extent the Ireland of the play did correspond with contemporary Ireland, The Bishop's Bonfire seemingly did not draw its image of Ireland from contemporary or

²"O'Casey's Drama-Bonfire", an article published in Zvezda (Organ of the Union of Soviet Writers), Leningrad, in the first issue for 1958. Reprinted in Blasts and Benedictions pp. 138-141, (quotation from p. 140).

factual accounts of the country, so much as from, like Time to Go and Bedtime Story, the image of Free State Ireland of the 1920s as presented in Inishfallen.

Like Cock-a-doodle Dandy - the play which seemingly sprang directly out of the writing, material and concerns of Inishfallen, and was for sometime written alongside this volume of the autobiography - The Bishop's Bonfire can be used to illustrate point by point almost all the clauses of Inishfallen's mock-declaration of the characteristics of the Irish Free State, and also derives something of its setting and of its basic "atmosphere". concerning the quality of the lives that its characters live, from the Athenry episode of the same volume. The Bishop's Bonfire seems to draw too upon the closing chapter of Inishfallen to which Cock-a-doodle Dandy, through its stage-presentation of the autobiography's theme of exile, had contributed certain images and expressions.

That The Bishop's Bonfire is very much basing itself upon the "literary" portrayal and image of Ireland which is created within Inishfallen, rather than upon an image of Ireland obtained directly from memory, directly from the newspapers or directly from any other source, such as correspondence with friends, can be seen from the closeness of the correspondences between the play and the autobiography, as if the actual text of the autobiography were forming almost a blue-print for the play.

In Inishfallen the ultimate effect of the politics and social attitudes of the Free State upon the quality of life in Ireland seems to be conveyed not in any polemical passage but in the episode set in the apparent desolation of the country town of Athenry (Inishfallen, pp. 164-5).³

³For a study of, and very extensive quotation from, the Athenry episode itself see chapter above on Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy.

Accordingly, The Bishop's Bonfire is set in an Irish country district which seems, as does Athenry in Inishfallen, to represent the whole of Ireland. The symbolic house and garden setting of Act I of the play would seem directly to recall the setting of Cock-a-doodle Dandy, but the vista of "fields and meadows" (p. 1)⁴ which is seen beyond the garden, seems, perhaps, in its flat monotony to recall the "levels of the Clare-Galway bog and plain" which forms the backdrop to Athenry as described in Inishfallen. But more importantly, within the dialogue of the play, Father Boheroe, the curate, and Codger Sleehaun, the odd-job man - both of whom, in their way, share O'Casey's view and vision of life - paint verbal pictures of the countryside around Ballyoonagh. And their pictures of the desolate nature of the countryside, and of the desolate lives of the people who live in it, evoke exactly the same atmosphere of hopelessness and despair as do the descriptions of the decay of Athenry in Inishfallen:

Father Boheroe. The work; ah yes, the work.
 Never-ending work, yet few fruits come from it.
 (Musing) Just a little life. No colour, no
 thought; lean cattle, thin milk; worn-out
 meadows giving dusty hay; not a single building
 calling a halt for a look at it; not even the
 tawdry church. (Act I p. 24)

Codger . . . No heart in the soil, no heart in the
 grass that taps it. Hay from grass that never had
 a life . . . (Act I p. 27)

Hay? Dust that the weary cattle can't chew. There
 isn't a sign in any meadow even of clover or of
 vetch. Meadows that haven't felt the rousin'
 rift of a plough for fifty years. (Act I pp. 36-7)

And there is a terrible irony in Reiligan's words when, ostensibly speaking of a carpet ruined by a burst bag of cement, he replies to his daughter's question of "What's goin' on here? What's happened?", with the words:

⁴Page references to the text of The Bishop's Bonfire are to Sean O'Casey: The Bishop's Bonfire, A Sad Play within the Tune of a Polka, London, Macmillan, 1955.

It's desolation's goin' on here, that's what;
 so go on, you, for your prayers are no use here
 now. (p. 35).

If the spirit of desolation which besets the people and the countryside in The Bishop's Bonfire is that evoked in the Athenry incident, so too the play follows the autobiography in suddenly presenting a beautiful young girl whose appearance contrasts with the desolation around her:

(Daniel comes back, goes over the bricks, and is about to collect them for the masons, when Keelin appears at the window, and beckons him. Keelin is a handsome lass of twenty-five. Her hair is a ripe auburn, more red than brown, and it surrounds her head in great fuzzy clusters, standing out from it so that it looks like a burning bush. Her figure is slim, though her breasts be buxom. She is dressed in a dark-green skirt, reaching just to her knees, a white blouse, amber nylon stockings, black shoes, and a lighter green apron, trimmed with dark red, protects her skirt and the front of her blouse from damage during housework.

(Act. I p. 12)

It is interesting that the description of Keelin's appearance includes a detail denoting that, despite her beauty, she must work, for in the parallel description of the girl in Athenry, the author has drawn attention to the roughness of her hands which revealed "that hard work was part of the girl's portion". Throughout the play, in fact, Keelin is treated as a slave by her father, Reiligan. And part of the tragedy of Keelin, and also of the girl in Irishfallen, is expressed by Father Boheroe, when he says:

Work, too, is holy, but only when it's
 reasonable. Work, Rankin, can bless,
 but it can blast too, as it is blasting
 little Keelin, who should be living with
 a gay young lad in a house of her own.

(Act I p. 25)

Like the girl of Athenry, Keelin could be described as a "bud of womanhood, longing for life", but although she is in love with the workman Daniel, and is personally brave enough to assert that love in opposition to most of her father, she, as Councillor Reiligan's daughter, must, like the other young people in the play, eventually succumb as a victim to the rigid social and political order of life in Ballyoonagh. And that social and

political order is precisely the one which Inishfallen presents as being set up with the Free State.

In Inishfallen's fantastical account of the reading of a revised version of Pearse's declaration of a Republic (pp. 133-4),⁵ Sean envisages the document as being read outside a building that is "half a bank and half a church". This signifies that an alliance between business and the Catholic church is now dominating the country, and the play contains some important reflections both of the symbol itself, and of the idea which it enshrines. Father Boheroe, in encouraging Daniel and Keelin to resist social and clerical opposition to their marriage, says:

You've escaped from the dominion of the
big house with the lion and unicorn on its front;
don't let yourselves sink beneath the meaner
dominion of the big shop with the cross and
shamrock on its gable. (Act II p. 77)

The dependence of the state upon an alliance of business and politics is made abundantly clear in the play in the presentation of Councillor Reiligan, and of Canon Burren, and of the friendship between them. A stage direction describes Reiligan as

... the biggest money-man in the district,
a loyal pillar of the clergy, and has a
great power and influence in the affairs
of the state - the local member of the Dail
could never climb into a seat without the
backing of Councillor Reiligan. (Act I p. 4)

And if Reiligan supports the clergy's authority, the clergy support his, for Canon Burren tells one of Reiligan's workmen:

When you are working for the Councillor, . .
however menial the job may be, you are serving
God. (Act I p. 5)

And the national implications of Councillor Reiligan's partnership with Canon Burren are eventually spelt out by Codger, when the Canon

⁵ For an examination of, and full quotation of this passage from Inishfallen see chapter above on Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy.

intervenes on the Councillor's behalf in an argument between Codger and Reiligan:

Codger: You own the land, own the tavern, own the shirt factory, own the dance hall, own the store, an' God help us, you own the people too. You're a menace to the world, Reiligan.

(The Canon has come over from the gate, and now stands looking down on the shut-eyed Codger.)

Canon (prodding Codger in the ribs with umbrella). What's that I hear your sayin', Codger Sleehawn, what's this I hear you sayin'? Why aren't you attendin' to the hay? To your master's hay?

Codger (with mock reverence). Oh! the Canon's voice. The Church an' State's gettin' together.

(Act I p. 37)

And in terms of the play the bond between Church, business and state is further cemented in that

His holiness has honoured us all by making the Councillor a Count of the Papal Court.

(Act I p. 38)

The first and second clauses of the Proclamation in the autobiography refer to Ireland as striking

in the full confidence of victory for -

The white tie and the tailed coat.
The right to wear a top-hat,

grey or black, according to circumstance or taste, when the occasion demands it.

And when Reiligan first appears in the play he is decked out in this uniform of the rising middle class:

He is dressed in morning clothes, frock coat, striped trousers, all a little too baggy for him, except that part of his clothing enclosing his waist ... He carries in his hand a silk tall-hat which he puts on when he enters the garden.

(Act I p. 4)

The next articles of the Declaration refer to:

The banning of all books mentioning the word Love, except when the word is used in a purely, highly spiritually, insignificant way.

The banning of any mention whatsoever of the name of James Joyce

(Inishfallen, p.133)

with such pronouncements
 In keeping with "The Bishop's Bonfire" of the play's title refers, on a literal level, to "a great bonfire" which will "light a welcome to the comin' Bishop" and which will have "piles of bad books an' evil pictures on top of it" (Act I p. 29).

The obsession with social privilege and etiquette that the rise of the Free-State middle-class has brought in its wake is expressed in Inishfallen's Proclamation in terms of

The right to examine and to settle eternally the question of procedure as to whether Paddy or Mick, Julia or Bridget, shall be the first to ceremonially enter a room, or first to sit down to a table.

In the play it takes the much more obviously serious form of setting apparently insurmountable barriers between inhabitants of the same small country-town - even between a young man and young woman who are in love, as are Danny Clooncoohy and Keelin Reiligan:

Keelin ... Don't forget, Daniel, I'm a lady, that me Da's a Count, an' gave me a high convent education, an' that we live in a grand house, while the Clooncoohys sheltered under a slate roof for the first time, me Da says, when Rural Authorities built them a council house outa the ratepayers' money.

(Act II p. 71)

The distrust of Communism which the Declaration expresses is shown in a humorous light in a dialogue in Act II of the play in which Reiligan's son, a Lieutenant in the Army, discusses with his father's workmen:

How best are we goin' to act if tens of thousands of Russian paratroopers came droppin' down from the Irish skies on to Tara's Hill or the Mountains of Mourne. (p. 54)

The clause, in Inishfallen's charter, of

The right of wrong to banish even a whisper of the name of Dr. Walter McDonald, D.D., ...

is not specifically taken up in the play, but The Bishop's Bonfire reveals little respect for bishops - and in Inishfallen as a whole "The bishops" are regarded as Dr. McDonald's chief enemies, Of Bishop Mullarkey, who is about to visit his home town, Father Boheroe says:

God help us! You've only to read his

pastorals to see that Bill Mullarkey with a
 bishop's robe on his back, a bishop's ring
 on his finger, and a bishop's mitre on his head,
 is Bill Mullarkey still. (Act III p. 112)

And the declaration's assertion that the clergy should have sole
 jurisdiction over all aspects of Irish life, is amply borne out in the
 play in Canon Burren's power to pronounce upon matters as diverse as
 whether or not Reiligan should grow roses against his garden wall, and as to
 whom Keelin should marry.

Also the Free State's supposed pronouncement that famous Irish
 patriots and writers are now to be regarded as "non-gaels" and "non-
 Irish" seems, in its suggestion that the new Ireland is a betrayal of the
 old, to find certain parallels in the play. For in the midst of the new
 Ireland, as represented by Reiligan's household and its concerns, Manus
 and the Codger, admiring the ash tree in the garden, reflect upon the
 fact that:

The ash ... gave the wood for the shafts
 for the spears of the ancient Greeks, and
 for the pikes we used ourselves to free
 Ireland through the sad year of Ninety-eight.
 (Act I p. 17)

And towards the end of the play, when Keelin tells Codger that Danny
 has not got the courage to defy her father and marry her, Codger replies

(viciously). An' they tell me there's a statue
 of Ireland's hero, Cuchullain, somewhere up in
 Dublin. (Pathetically) Oh, Keelin, Keelin
 me darling, I'm Irish an' ashamed of it. (Act III p. 85)

The statue to which he is referring is in the G.P.O. Dublin, headquarters
 of the rebel army during the Rising of Easter 1916 - the building outside
 which the real Declaration of an Irish Republic was read.

If The Bishop's Bonfire seems to be indebted to Inishfallen for the
 image of Ireland which it portrays, it is indebted to some extent also to
Inishfallen for something of its structure and symbolism. In the final
 chapter of Inishfallen, as Sean is preparing to leave for England, it is
 said that "It was getting very dark in Ireland" (p. 244), and that Sean's
 "day in Ireland had been a long one, but the long day was over at last; a

long day over; long day over; over at last". (p. 245). These images - derived as they possibly are from the symbolic "day" of the time-scheme of Cock-a-doodle Dandy, and the symbolic dusk which is descending on the Ireland of Cock-a-doodle Dandy, as the young people leave - seem to help inspire the setting of three acts of The Bishop's Bonfire at progressively later times on the same evening. The play begins in sunlight, and ends in physical, as well as symbolic, darkness, with one of its heroines dead, one of its heroes about to flee as her murderer, and Keelin and Daniel doomed never to marry, but to spend their lives according to the dictates of Ballyoonagh's code of values and conduct.

The symbolic darkness represents too, of course, not just the blighting of individual lives and of personal hopes and desires, but the spiritual death of a country. To reinforce, as it were, this symbolism of increasingly imminent death in the play, O'Casey sets the play not only in the evening of the same day, with darkness approaching, but on an autumn evening with winter fast approaching:

It is a warm, sunny day in the beginning
of autumn, when nature gives a last rally
and sings a song of colour before winter
brings death to flower and field. (Act I p. 2)

The leaves of the ash tree are already begining to fall (p. 17)

And this autumnal sense in the play, as well as, to some extent, the theme of the approach of death seem to be related to Sunset and Evening Star, the narrative of which inevitably moves towards the author's death, and which, as it nears its conclusion, describes the imminence of death in terms of the appearance of, first the sunset, and then the evening star, and in terms, too, of autumn.

He was writing now in the Fall of the Year;
while the leaves of the trees were taking a
last flutter through the air, whispering
a goodbye to life as they fell, sere and
yellow, they were useless now to the tree;
they had done their work, and the newer buds
beneath were busy pushing them off; pushing
them away from life, never to return again.
Sere and yellow leaf, fall fluttering, and

fade from all you knew, carrying to
 earth with you some tender fragment of
 the summer's dream. So are many now, so was
 he - waiting for that gentle but insistent
 push that would detach his clinging desire,
 and send him, like the tumbling autumn leaf,
 sinking from life's busy tree to the dull
 flavour of death in the kingly dust where
 all men mingle in a sleep unending. (p. 664)

Of course, the autumn and darkness envisaged at the end of the autobiography are encroaching upon a life that has been lived long and to the full, in contrast to the brief and frustrated lives of the young people in the play. It is physical death, not spiritual death which is engulfing Sean. But it does seem as if the pattern of the play parallels the pattern of the closing of the autobiography. And all in all it seems that once having planted its roots firmly in Inishfallen, and in the Ireland of Inishfallen, the play does begin to incline towards Sunset and Evening Star, the autobiographical volume which was being written alongside it.

In Sunset and Evening Star Sean's attitude to his approaching old age and to life is very much akin to that of Codger Sleenhaun, so much akin that it raises the question as to whether the Codger of the play has an element of an authorial self-portrait within him.

This element of self-portrait must not be exaggerated unduly for it is possible that the Codger had other origins also, for Mrs O'Casey writes of "Harry" a gardener and odd-job man whom the O'Casey's employed when they lived in Totnes; and says:

Sean had so warm an affection for him that I wondered frequently why Harry never figured in any of the plays. Maybe there is a trace of him in the old man, Codger Sleenhaun, of The Bishop's Bonfire, who has a curious philosophy and strange way of talking that Harry could well have suggested.⁶

⁶ Sean pp. 222-3.

Yet there are many similarities between Codger and the personality of Sean as it emerges from Sunset and Evening Star. Both, despite their age, are in total sympathy with the beauty of nature, with life, and with the young, and both are totally unimpressed by the wealth and authority of church or state, and both express the same attitudes to "modern" Ireland. The heartbroken Keelin pays Codger the compliment of wishing that he was her father (Act III p. 113), and Sean's respect for youth and for the young can be seen in the following passage from Sunset - a passage in which O'Casey actually refers to himself as "the old codger".

Well, the clack of his loom had always gone with the louder clack of life. The loom worked slower now, but there was no rust on it. It was a little tired, a little worn, for it had never rested, and never would. The young are knocking at the door. The old must decrease, the young increase. He hoped his children would throw a wider chest than his own. Down below, the elder lad hammered a frame together for a picture he was painting, the younger lad, laying aside biology for a spell, was blasting out music from a fine second-hand trombone, the young girl was merrily tapping out a Mozartian minuet from the piano - all indifferent - all careless of the tumult of mind afflicting the old codger up above, labouring over finding words for his wonderful work. Heartless youth; didn't give a damn how they distracted him. Thinking of themselves only. And who else should they be thinking of, in God's name?

When the rain raineth and the goose winketh,
Little wots the gosling what the goose thinketh.

And why the hell should it? It is only the
young who possess the world. (pp. 661-2).

By referring to himself/Sean as "the old codger" the author is not, of course, specifically identifying himself with Codger of the play, but he is presenting a picture of himself/Sean as an old and slightly eccentric, even semi-comic figure - the kind of figure to which the name of Codger is given in the play.

That the Codger is to some extent an O'Caseyan figure in the play might well be, as perhaps is the presence of O'Caseyan figures in previous plays, a result of the interaction of the writing of the autobiographies with the writing of The Bishop's Bonfire. The author has, in the autobiographies,

gradually grown used to writing of himself as a "dramatic" character, Sean, and perhaps automatically now includes something of such a character in the plays also, although such characters in the plays do possess an element of their "own" independent personality also.

But if Codger embodies something of Sean of Sunset, and, by implication, therefore, something of O'Casey himself, Manus, too, is something of an O'Caseyan figure in that basically he shares, albeit in a sour and angry way, Sean's/O'Casey's/The Codger's set of values, and their outlook upon life. And as a highly intelligent workman, his apparent love of the history of his country (as seen in his remarks about the ash tree), and even in something of his anger and bitterness, he perhaps resembles no-one so much as Sean of Drums Under the Windows. And it seems as if with Manus and Codger in this play, as with Ayamonn and Brennan in Red Roses for Me, and Drishogue and Feelim in Oak Leaves and Lavender, O'Casey is consciously or quite unconsciously, presenting two portraits of aspects of himself, a portrait of a young man and of an old man. Whether the inclusion of two such portraits in the play is conscious or unconscious, it seems as if it might have arisen directly as a result of the writing of the autobiographies. For the autobiographies too enshrine something of a double portrait of O'Casey. The early volumes of the autobiographies brought to life, and perpetuated in the author's imagination, a youthful O'Casey figure, while the author himself who actually wrote the volumes, and whose view of life is the guiding force within them, was well past his youth.

Of course in the plays, a character's concurrence with the opinions of the author does not simply mean that that character is in any sense a portrait of the author. Father Boheroe, for example, is another chief exponent of O'Casey's views within The Bishop's Bonfire, as is the Dandy Messenger in Cock-a-Doodle, yet beyond these views neither seem essentially to present or reflect anything of the actual personality of the author. Yet Manus and the Codger and their predecessors in previous plays do seem to

have an extra-dimension about their portrayal which relates them more substantially to Sean and to the author of the autobiographies.

In its inclination towards Sunset, The Bishop's Bonfire seems, as it were, to contribute themes for discussion to the autobiography. For example, two incidents in the play in which Reiligan, and, by implication, society, draw a distinction between those who work and those who pray, seem to have given rise to almost a dissertation on the subject in Sunset. Wearing by preparations for the Bishop's visit, Keelin of the play asks her father to make her sister Foorawn, who has taken a holy vow of chastity, to do some of the work:

Keelin (as Foorawn goes towards the gate,
..... Why doesn't your old threadbare mouth
order her to help a little about the house?

Reiligan (angrily) You know why. She belongs
to God, an' is separated from menial work - her
for prayer an' you for work. (more angrily) Go
in, I tell you, an' finish the carpet, an' then
get on with the pluckin' of the ducks!
(He pushes her in). (Act I p. 36)

And later Foorawn tells her father of Codger's reaction to Reiligan's order that he should help in the kitchen to prepare the bishop's dinner:

Foorawn. He said that if the holy Monsigneur plucked
the plover, he'd peel the spuds.

Reiligan. An' had me own daughter, devoted to
perpetual chastity, nothin' to say to the
oul' blasphemers?

Foorawn. Of course she had: she told him no
one would think of expecting holy hands that held
holy things should be set to pluck a plover
He said, Father, that since the holy hands of
Christ washed the feet of His Disciples, the half-holy
hands of the Canon shouldn't be afraid to peel a spud.

Canon (firmly). You hear, Count?

Reiligan. Terrible that such a one should be let go
on fermentin' mockin' thoughts of sacred things
in the holy quietness of Ballyoonagh! (Act III p. 100)

As if in direct comment upon these distinctions between those who work and those who pray, especially those who pray in comfort, O'Casey writes in

Sunset:

Food, clothing, shelter, the trinity of need worshipped by all life; in the secular seminary, in the ecclesiastical seminary as well as in the mind of the atheist and in all the homes of the working-class. What on earth do the saints think of all this? But these same souls, ripe for glory, have been nourished on bread and cheese and meat, washed down, probably with a lot of wine. Oh, no, no! Oh, yes, yes, yes! The Confessions of St. Augustine, the Meditations of St. Alphonso de'Liguori, the poems of St. John o'the Cross, all had their roots in bread and meat and cheese. Who provided for these chaps? Did they do for themselves? Did they buy their food, carry it home, cook it, before they golloped it down? Did they wash up the dirty dishes, carry the coal from cellar to fireplace, and kindle the fire that warmed them? Of a winter's morning, with their fingers nipped with frost, did they empty the ashes before they set a fire to make their coffee, toast their bread, to strengthen^{them} for another day's worship? Were all these things, and more, done for them so that they might have a good time in writing a poem, inditing a confession, making a meditation? It is said that it takes ten men to keep one soldier in the field; how many, more or less, does it take to keep a saint on his knees? If they didn't do any of these things, having things done for them, then what the hell did they know about life? Leave it all to the drudge, the lay brother!

(p. 570-1).

This passage reveals Sunset in its role of commentary upon the themes of the plays, a role which it inherited from Rose and Crown. Other characteristics which Sunset inherits from Rose and Crown concern its general lack of spontaneity. That is, its arguments and opinions are often well-documented, books are quoted, letters are included, and named critics of O'Casey's work are attacked (for example, Orwell in the "Rebel Orwell" section of the volume). Also specific passages of criticism of O'Casey's work are answered at length (for example, Denis Johnston's article "Joxer in Totnes" finds an answer in the chapter "Deep in Devon", and Patrick Galvin's criticisms of Hall of Healing are dealt with in the very closing chapter of the volume). The studied, rather than spontaneous, essay-like qualities of much of the book can be seen in the fact O'Casey actually reworked at least one previously written essay into the book - a description of Totnes which appears in the "Deep in Devon" chapter (pp. 523-6), but which had been written originally for the West Country Magazine.⁷

⁷ See Eileen O'Casey, Sean, p. 168.

The fact that the nature of the conclusion of Sunset is predetermined - for, as the final volume of a complete autobiography of a life it must end when the past time of the narrative meets the present time of the time of writing, and end, too, with Sean/the author awaiting death - does, however, impose a firmer structure upon the volume than was to be found in Rose and Crown. The chronology of Sunset is sounder than that of its predecessor, and as the volume moves towards its conclusion there is a conscious, and highly successful, attempt at an artistic structure as successive images of the progress in the sky of the Sunset and of the evening star occur.

In the chapter which is itself entitled "Sunset" occurs the passage:

The sun is half-way under the horizon's rim, a sad decline when it symbolises the lost loveliness of life's full day. Pale gold and paler green but thinly garland the sober livery of the evening's end. The day is dying drowsily in a lovely bed. The night is near. Swift to it's close ebbs out life's little day: it is big with grandeur and may be bright with glory. Oh, twilight, stay with us another hour and keep the last and loving light of day from fading! (p. 627).

And the chapter ends with a slightly adapted repetition of the image.

The sun is more than half-way beneath the horizon's rim, and its pale gold and pale green garlands are paler now, paler and turning grey. The day is dying, dying drowsily in a lovely bed. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lambent day. Oh, twilight, stay with us another hour and keep the last and loving light of day from fading! (p. 637).

The final chapter, entitled "And Evening Star", begins with the description:

The sun has gone, dragging her gold and green garlands down, too; gone from the sky, leaving him to live in the glimmer of midnight, to share the last few moments of life with the tender loneliness of the evening star. Soon it will be time to kiss the world goodbye. (p. 648)

And it ends:

Even here, even now, when the sun had set and the evening star was chastely touching the bosom of the night, there were things to say, things to do. A drink first! What would he drink to - the past, the present, the future? To all of them! Here, with whitened hair, desires failing, strength ebbing out of him, with the sun gone down, and with only the serenity and the calm warning of the evening star

left to him, he drank to Life, to all it
had been, to what it was, to what it would be.
Hurrah! (p. 665).

These successive images of the passing of time are almost like the stage directions opening the successive acts of Cock-a-doodle Dandy:

"It is a brilliantly fine day in summer .. "; " .. the sunshine isn't quite so determined . . ", "It is towards dusk in the garden now . . ", or of The Bishop's Bonfire: "It is a warm, sunny day in the beginning of autumn"; "... the evening is fine and balmy though the autumn is wending a way to its ending"; "It is night-time" . . . (p. 82). Moreover, this strain of symbolism of the "sunset" and the "evening star" seems to have begun in O'Casey's work in the final scene of Cock-a-doodle Dandy.

In the opening stage direction of this scene is written:

It is towards dusk in the garden now. The sun is setting, and the sky shows it. The rich blue of the sky has given place to a rich yellow, slashed with green and purple. Far away, in the depths of the sky, the evening star can be faintly seen.

(Collected Plays, Vol. IV, p. 190)

And the final chapter of Sunset includes too that autumn imagery which seems to be related to the autumnal setting of The Bishop's Bonfire.

If Sunset in its symbolism and structure reveals, particularly at its close, a greater kinship with the plays than did Rose and Crown, it does seem too to possess just a little more of the dramatic spirit in the portrayal of character and incident than did its predecessor. Certainly it does not seem to provide on its "own" initiative ^{such} / outstandingly "dramatic" episodes as that of the return of Cathleen in Houlihan in its "Rebel Orwell" chapter - an episode seemingly very much inspired by the "phantasy" and heroine of the play Kathleen Listens In - but it does ^{on its own account} provide some extended character sketches, such as that of the Old Man in Battersea Park (pp. 467-70) who represents the vanishing concept of a respectful and submissive working class, and such as that of the ack-ack gunner whose depiction reveals the effects of warfare upon the individual life:

A friend of Sean's, an ack-ack gunner, home for a few days' rest and a few nights' sleep, half staggered to a chair, on a visit for tea to empty himself of the thoughts he had had while helping to hit a bomber darting through the clouds, and snatch him down to death; his eyes red with staring into flame, so worn out that his crimson-topped forage-cap remained on his head throughout his visit.

- Looks like Plymouth's gone, he said, looks like they 'as done it to she. Yes, Sean, mister, looks like she's gone. He seemed to be sinking into deeper exhaustion through rest in the deep chair. Yes mister Sean, he went on, now too tired to try to open the slitted eyes, Plymouth's woeful place; don't 'ee never go near she again, for 'tis death's front parlour now. Day after day, week after week, us was at guns afirin' up, afirin' up, afirin' up, till all us wanted from Nazis was chance of a little sleep, sleep. The few guns us 'ad was tired, too, afirin' up an' up. No rest for guns, no rest for 'em afirin' of 'em up. No mister; keep on your toes, an' keep afirin' up was hourly order. Seen whole skyline agoin' down; houses, docks, churches, chapels, shops, just athrowin' theyselves down flat on knees, on faces, alyin' flat in flame, with us afirn' up, afirin' up, afirin' up! Ten blows for me, us'll give the bastards yet; ten blows for one!

.....

(p. 590)

That these "ordinary" yet representative characters are "dramatically" realised through dialogue and dramatised incident does suggest that, for all its overall lack of spontaneity and its deliberate essay-like qualities, Sunset can, at times, move close to the spirit of the drama.

And in the interaction between The Bishop's Bonfire and Sunset it is hard to estimate what extent the play is contributing to the autobiography, or to what extent the autobiography is drawing upon the play.

But certainly the play and the autobiography did interact, and the most significant product of this interaction seems to be the penultimate chapter of Sunset and of the autobiographies as a whole - a chapter entitled "Outside an Irish Window".

In terms of the autobiographies "Outside an Irish Window" constitutes the author's final word upon Ireland. It describes life in Ireland over a period corresponding to that of Sunset's description of life in England, and to some extent, perhaps, it parallels the survey of Irish life given in the last chapter of Inishfallen before Sean left Ireland. But if

"Outside an Irish Window" owes its place and function in Sunset to the artistic and thematic scheme of the autobiographies, it seems, with regard to its substance, to owe a direct debt to The Bishop's Bonfire.

Written probably after the completion of The Bishop's Bonfire (for Mrs O'Casey has written that Sunset as a whole was finished after the play) "Outside an Irish Window" in the main depicts an Ireland which is precisely that of the play, an Ireland which

had her own problems, her own life to live,
her own death to die. Busy saving her soul.
She was growing holier day by day, according
to statistics, 50 per cent this year above the
norm; not good enough, but encouraging. (p. 638)

It is
/a land under the patronage of saints such as "St. Clotherius, ... saints
Bricin and Cementino, ... St. Scinful, ... St. Spudadoremus ... St. Ironiconius,
... St. Teepotolo, ... St. Codoleus, ... St. Banaway, ... St. Preservius
(p. 638) who are perhaps of the same company of O'Caseyan saints as
St. Tremolo the "boyo" with the "buckineeno" who, though only a "holla"
statue, makes his presence felt in Act II of the play.

The chapter presents Ireland as a land of "Echoes",

Mostly wailing echoes after the emigrants.
Won't you come home, won't you come home?
Come back again; come back some time.
The heart cry of the Gael! Heard so
often that the very echoes of the land
have learned them. (p. 641)

For as Codger in the play has remarked:

Fly away, Peter, fly away, Paul; fly
away; Susan, fly away all - a fly-away
country, this of ours, ... this country
of ours. (Act I p. 27)

Like Ballyoonagh of the play, which spares no expense in preparing for Bishop Mullarkey's return to his native town, the Ireland of the chapter is a place in which "proper reverence to our bishops and our nuncio" is of paramount importance (p. 643). And, again like the Ireland of the play, it is a place where "morning clothes and toppers" are much in evidence (p.643).

The Ireland of the chapter is, too, a place of clerical censorship of books, a place in which one might see a "blaze in the distance ... the

blaze of burning books," "kindled by "The Bishop's book-keeper" (p. 643), the kind of blaze which provides the only light at the end of the play - " . . . The Bishop's Bonfire flames higher and more brightly, and the cheers are heard a little more clearly". (Act III p. 121).

If the reference to "The bishop's book-keeper", however, seems to be a reference to the title of the play, this correspondence is as nothing in comparison with that which the next passage in the autobiographical chapter possesses with the play, for the autobiography (pp. 643-7) incorporates, with only a minimum of adaptation, and, that largely mechanical, to suit a different number of speakers, an entire passage of dialogue from Act II of the play - the Jeep dialogue (pp. 54-6).

"Outside an Irish Window" does too include accounts of incidents which the author has apparently read of in the newspapers or heard of through friends. The "bishop's book-keeper" incident, despite its reference to the title and "blaze" of the play seems to recount on an incident from life, as does the following episode, which was later to find its way into the play Behind the Green Curtains:

Catholic energy and art painted a picture of real life, when a girl went to work for an unmarried farmer, aged fifty-six, with the blessing of her parents, but against the will of the clerics and their henchmen; an occasion of sin - the priest objects; so, one morning early, when the hoar frost was out, the first postman of the morning found the girl in her shift chained and padlocked to a telegraph pole, too frozen to moan, or give signal of life; while the farmer stretched himself out in his kitchen, bruised and bloodied as red as the fuchsia's ear-rings, from a beating given in the cause of honour and virtue, though no untowardness had passed between him and the girl; but the danger had been there, so the clerics stayed dumb, and the police folded their arms till the district became calm, ... (pp. 647-8)

But that the chief provider of the material for the chapter is a play can be seen from the fact that the chapter as a whole is presented in the somewhat dramatic terms of a dialogue between fantasy characters, and the direct correspondences between the chapter and The Bishop's Bonfire

identify this play in particular as the chief source of "Outside an Irish Window's" substance.

The play then is providing Sunset with a literary and complete image of Ireland. Various aspects of this image can be illustrated by contemporary news-stories, but the concept of Ireland which is presented in the chapter is essentially an artistic one and a personal one: it can be illustrated by selective references to contemporary events, but it is not, itself, subject to influence from them. It can only be changed within a literary context and through the creative imagination of the author.

(This does not necessarily mean, however, that, as Irish critics of O'Casey's later plays argued, his portrayals of Ireland in the plays written in England were not "true" ones, for perhaps deeper truths can be arrived at through personal vision, art and imagination than can be arrived at through so-called facts).

The image of Ireland which is to be found within The Bishop's Bonfire is essentially that of Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well and of the interaction between Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy in the final chapter of the fourth volume.

The final volume of autobiography is, therefore, through its interaction with The Bishop's Bonfire perpetuating the image of a Free State Ireland which is supposed to relate historically to the Ireland of the 1920s - some thirty years before the time with which the narrative of Sunset is concerned . Rose and Crown and the earlier chapters of Sunset had, because of their English settings, failed to evolve a new literary image of Ireland for use in the author's plays, and so the plays Time to Go, Bedtime Story and The Bishop's Bonfire perpetuated the image most recently evolved - that of Inishfallen. ^{And} Hall of Healing even returned to a earlier image of Ireland presented in I Knock at the Door, Pictures in the Hallway and Drums under the Windows.

But Sunset, though it bases its survey of Irish life upon a well established image or convention is, as an autobiography - and it seems

as if this power is largely restricted to the autobiographies - capable of evolving that image or convention further. And this "Outside an Irish Window" does.

And the literary and artistic and personal nature of O'Casey's concept of Ireland is truly to be seen when, at the very end of this penultimate chapter not only of Sunset, but of the autobiographies as a whole, O'Casey adds the final touch to the evolution of what amounts to his artistic vision of Ireland and Irish life. The development which takes place in the image is not accounted for by any evidence of specific events - such as that which O'Casey was to use earlier in the chapter to support the image as it had been handed on from The Bishop's Bonfire. The only reasons for the very surprising development of the image at this point seem to be the artistic dictates of the autobiography (which appear to require that the final survey of Ireland within the autobiographies should end on a strong and positive note), and the author's profound and personal love for, and, in spite of all, deep loyalty to, his native land. The autobiographies have previously provided good examples of the author's train of thought or argument being suddenly swept away, or even reversed, by considerations of what would be artistically most effective, or by overriding personal loyalties. At the end of Drums Under the Windows, for example, the Rising of 1916 seems to provide such a naturally tremendous climax to the volume itself, and to the historical/political narrative of the first three volumes as a whole, that O'Casey seems to indulge in a tide of powerful rhetoric. And this rhetoric sweeps away his previous less heroic arguments - in Drums itself as well as in The Plough and The Stars - that ^{the} Nationalists of 1916 were completely out of touch with the lives of the people, and, in the Rising itself, brought more harm to them than good. An example of the author's loyalties overcoming his apparent reasoning or the apparent themes of his works occurs in Sunset itself, in which Sean/the author, seemingly regarding the criticism of, and even, at times, contempt for, his native land as his sole

prerogative , is bitterly offended when an outsider such as Orwell launches what he construes as an attack on this Irish nationality. His response to Orwell's attack is to proclaim with heart and "voice" that:

So all round me hat, I wear a band of green ribbon O,
Zone of our faults, our fights, our love an' laughter gay;
All that Eire is or was is woven in that ribbon O,
An' there it stops till life is dead an' time has ebb'd away.
(p. 552)

The actual development which is made in O'Casey's vision of Ireland at the end of "Outside an Irish Window", is sudden, and is not elaborated. But it is revolutionary. It is, however, only reached through a depiction of Ireland as gloomy as the scene at the end of Inishfallen, at the end of Cock-a-doodle Dandy, and at the end of The Bishop's Bonfire:

Barrum, barrum, barrum; Yeats's drum
tapping as in his play, The Resurrection. A
rattle in the wood where a Titan strode. Barrum,
barrum, barrum.

The herald's cry, the soldier's tread,
Exhaust his glory and his might:
Whatever flames upon the night
Man's own resinous heart has fed.

Is there a heart among us now with enough resin in
it to provoke a flame that would roast a spud?
Tiny holy candles flickering around Ireland,
fainting wills-o'-the-wisp; woeful; but ne'er
a torch; ne'er a one blazing anywhere.

Heads bent, we go; go stumbling on
Where others ran:
A pray'r for me, a pray'r for you,
And pray'rs for Jack the journeyman.
(p. 648)

But just as Sunset's depiction of Ireland seems about to be enveloped in the darkness of the plays which are related to it, a complete reversal takes place, and very suddenly the author seems almost inspired to say:

What's that? An eagle's whistle! And another,
a number of them! Jasus, there are eagles
flying among the grey tits and the flat snipe!
Brennan's still on the moor. There are brave
men and women in Ireland still; and will be,
will be, always, for ever.
(p. 648)

And brief as it is, this statement, this final touch in the evolving image of Ireland within the autobiographies, was enough, seemingly, to provide the guiding spirit^{of}, and concept of Ireland for, the plays which were, after the completion of the autobiographies, to form the new, but, as it transpired, the final phase in his work as a playwright.

And perhaps it is that one of the most fundamental contributions which the writing of the autobiographies made to the plays, and one of the most abiding influences of the autobiographies in general upon the plays in general, was that for well over twenty years the autobiography provided O'Casey with visions of the country that he had left behind him - visions which were not only creative and artistic in their own right but which could inspire the writing of plays. This source of Irish inspiration during his "exile" was absolutely essential to O'Casey's career as a dramatist, for as he himself acknowledged:

like Joyce, it is only through an Irish scene that my imagination can weave a way, within the Irish shadows or out in the Irish sunshine, if it is to have a full or, at least a fair, chance to play.⁸

In the face of hostile Irish criticism O'Casey himself always maintained that the Ireland of his plays was contemporary Ireland, and could cite numerous examples of recent events in Ireland which could argue his case. This he did in defence of The Bishop's Bonfire in an essay entitled "Bonfire Under a Black Sun", which was published in The Green Crow. But even so^{his} final assertion of the validity of his view of Ireland has nothing to do with newspaper cuttings or news brought by friends, but is, really, a spiritual, almost a mystical one:

I know the red wind that comes from the east,
the brown wind that comes from the west, the
white wind that comes from the south, and

⁸ The New York Times (international edition) 10th November 1958.
Reprinted under the title "Cockadoodle Doo" in Blasts and Benedictions
p. 144 .

the black wind that comes from the north;
 I know the mind of Ireland because I am
 within it; I know the heart of Ireland
 because I am one of its corners; I know the
 five senses of Ireland because I am within them
 and they are within me; they bid me look, and
 when I look, I see; they bid me listen, and
 when I listen, I hear. Tell us what you see,
 says Ireland, and tell us what you hear; you
 speak out, son, and break the silence; for so
 many of the others are so afraid of their damned
 souls that they can but mutter prayers no
 good to God.⁹

Perhaps his intuitive, almost mystical insight into Ireland
 actually stemmed, at least to some extent, from his creation and
 perpetuation of pictures of her within the autobiographies.

These autobiographies too provided him with visions of his own life
 and experience - again visions which were not only creative and artistic
 in themselves but could provide inspiration for plays.

And it is fitting that in the final volume of autobiography O'Casey
 should chronicle, as itself part of the autobiographical narrative, his
 writing of the first autobiographical volume. For the actual writing
 of the autobiographies was, it seems, as much an integral part of the
 author's life as the experiences which they themselves portray:

Here, now, in a house in Devon, he was looking
 over the page-proofs of his first biographical
 book; for, while writing plays and thinking about
 the theatre, his mind had become flushed with
 the idea of setting down some of the things that
 had happened to himself; the thoughts that had
 darkened or lightened the roads along which he had
 travelled; the things that had woven his life into
 strange patterns; with the words of a song weaving
 a way through a ragged coat, or a shroud, maybe,
 that had missed him and covered another. His own
 beginning would be the first word, ... (p. 515)

Thinking about his early life he comments:

Here he was, deep in Devon, surrounded by his
 wife and two children (soon to be three), and

⁹ Sean O'Casey, The Green Crow, London, W.H. Allen, 1957, p. 123.

the savage grace of a day that is dead cannot
 come back to him. Only in sleep might he
 dream it back; never again, except in sleep.

But it seems that he "dreamt back" that "savage grace" within the autobiographies also.

Certainly the autobiographies seem to have been at the heart of O'Casey's creative life and consciousness. For, initially inspired by the writing of his plays, they in their turn seem not only to have inspired plays, but also to have provided a medium in which O'Casey could find creative fulfilment for unsatisfactory earlier plays, and seek compensation for the limited nature of ^{contemporary} ones. Furthermore, they provided a medium through which inspiration could be passed from one play to another. Within the artistic medium of the autobiography, experience which had already been translated into art within a previous play, could be recreated in new artistic terms and then transmitted into a contemporary or future play, where it would ^{again} be created anew. The autobiographies seem to have given O'Casey the opportunity of creating art out of art, of refining upon artistic images until a complete convention of O'Caseyan symbols emerged.

It is this convention, which only fully comes into being with the close of the final volume of autobiography, which goes forward - together with the autobiographies' final optimistic picture of Ireland and Irish life - as a chief inspiration for the final phase of O'Casey's work as a playwright.

PART THREE

THE "POST-AUTOBIOGRAPHY" PLAYS.

Chapter Fifteen

The Drums of Father Ned

The first play of O'Casey's to be written after the completion of the autobiographies, and, therefore, the first play with the potential to draw for substance or inspiration upon the autobiographies as a whole, was The Drums of Father Ned, which was itself finished in September 1957¹ and published in 1960.

Subtitled "A Mickrocosm of Ireland", the play is, in scheme and purpose, in

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1. In a letter of July 19th 1957 (published in A Paler Shade of Green, edited by Des Hickey and Gus Smith, London, Leslie Frewin 1972 pp.139 - 40), in reply to enquiries about his new play from Brendan Smith, the Director of the Theatre Festival which was to be part of the Irish Tostal for 1958, O'Casey wrote that he was then "on the fourth draft of the play". In a letter dated 9th September 1957 (*ibid* pp. 140-2) he informed Mr. Smith that he had "completed it to my entire dissatisfaction" and was sending the manuscript off for consideration by the Festival Committee. He also mentioned that the original title of the play - The Night Is Whispering - had been changed to The Drums of Father Ned.

It was agreed in October 1957 that the play would receive its world premiere at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin as part of the 1958 Theatre Festival, but in the event, neither this production, nor indeed the Festival itself, took place. For accounts of the history of the ill-fated Festival, of O'Casey's withdrawal of The Drums of Father Ned (after the objections of Archbishop McQuaid), and of O'Casey's subsequent ban upon the production of his plays in Ireland, see Eileen O'Casey: Sean pp. 261-4, David Krause: Sean O'Casey The Man and his Work (pp. 212-221) and A Paler Shade of Green, ch. 12 "The Drums of Father Ned: O'Casey and the Archbishop" by Brendan Smith.

the direct tradition of the surveys of Ireland and Irish life which constitute the "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo" chapter and the closing chapter, "Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well" of Inishfallen, the plays Cock-a-doodle Dandy, Time to Go, The Bishop's Bonfire, and the "Outside an Irish Window" chapter of Sunset and Evening Star. It draws, too, much material from these previous surveys, most particularly from "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo". But the spirit of The Drums of Father Ned is essentially optimistic, for it follows in the wake of Sunset's declaration that:

There are brave men and women in Ireland still; and will be, will be, always, for ever. (p. 648)

And such elements of Inishfallen's and its successor's gloomy vision of Ireland which are used within the play, are used to portray specifically the old order of Irish society which is in the process of being overthrown by the new. For the portrayal of Ireland's new order and new life, the author draws upon those parts of all six autobiographical volumes in which Johnny/Sean the author have expressed the desire for the fullness of life, and have asserted the joys and values of human existence.

The opening sequence of events in Act I of the play illustrates how very precisely The Drums of Father Ned recalls the autobiographies, and their attendant plays', old established image of Free State Ireland in order to present its portrait of the old established social order in the microcosmic town of Doona vale.

Act I is set in the Binnington household, Bernadette, the maid, is attempting to play a tune on the piano when Binnington and his wife enter. Binnington is immediately cast by the stage-direction into the middle-class businessman mould of which so much is made in Inishfallen and the plays which followed directly in its tradition: "Business-man, patriot, and pietist, he loves himself more than anything else living or dead," but, since Father Ned is an optimistic and happy play, the author adds "though he isn't really a

bad chap". (p.15)² The fact that Binnington is depicted as the Mayor of Doonavale and is actually wearing his "red Mayoral robe, ornamented at cuff and collar with rich green velvet" and his "Mayoral Chain" again recalls most directly the criticisms of the Irish Free State Society in Inishfallen. In "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo" the author complains bitterly of the scramble amongst the middle class in Free State Ireland to assume the offices of authority, and the petty trappings of those offices, which the English had established in Ireland:

The cause of the Easter Rising had been betrayed by the commonplace bourgeois class, who laid low the concept of the common good and the common task, and were now decorating themselves with the privileges and powers dropped in their flight by those defeated by the dear, dead men. And scarlet cassock and purple cassock were blessing them and their gew-gaws-the-low-cut-ball-dress, the top-hat, the tailed coat and the white tie, the foolish wig and gown, and all the tarnished decorations of a dead state. (p. 138)

In Act I of the play the love of the Irish middle class for the "gew-gaws" of authority and their thirst for social position is later made explicit when the Deputy Mayor, Councillor McGilligan arrives to discuss business with Binnington. An arch-enemy of Binnington, and another stock O'Caseyan Irish middle-class businessman, McGilligan

too, is wearing his municipal robe, red like Binnington's but with a deeper cape and cuffs of green, bordered with gold braid; a richer and more pompous robe than the Mayor's. (p.24)

Binnington is outraged, and maintains "that it is a dereliction of good taste for a Deputy Mayor to wear a more gorgeous gown than the Mayor". (p.25) A little earlier in the Act attention has been drawn to alien origins of such regalia when Mrs. Binnington, in reply to her husband's vaunts of patriotism, replies: "That robe an' cocked hat of yours weren't fostered from any concept creepin' outa Tara Hill" (p.20)

As part of his insignia of office Binnington is also wearing "his Mayoral

2. Page references in connection with the text of The Drums of Father Ned are to Sean O'Casey: The Drums of Father Ned, London, Macmillan, 1960

Chain, at the end of which hang a cross and harp, cross in gold, harp in silver". (p.15) the combination of the cross and harp symbolises the partnership of Church and State, and the amalgamation of piety and patriotism upon which, in O'Casey's view, as expressed in previous works, Ireland has depended since the Free State. The combination of "cross and harp" with its implications has too something of an ancestry in O'Casey's previous work for a "cross and shamrock" image with the same significance is mentioned in The Bishop's Bonfire (Act II p.77).

As the action of Act I gets underway Binnington occupies himself with some business papers, while Mrs. Binnington remonstrates with Bernadette over her playing of the piano. The ensuing dialogue, chiefly between Mrs. Binnington and Bernadette, seems to follow very closely the developments in a lengthy sequence (pp. 129-131) from the "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo" section of Inishfallen

The sequence in Irishfallen begins with a description of the Free State middle class's aspirations to gentility. The author expresses his contempt for such concerns by exploiting for comic effect, or rather, by rendering ridiculous the rising class's unease in the social circles into which they have pushed themselves:

But these good people weren't certain of themselves. They couldn't learn everything in a hurry. These things took time. There was an air of uneasiness on most of them at every public or private gathering. They hadn't yet taken root. So a gilt-edged invitation from His Excellency Timothy Healy, Governor-General, to a Levee, caused a flutter of ecstasy, mingling with dismay, to many who graciously got them. What were they to do? How were they to go? They would be facing the unknowable. They were tormented with the thought of what they would be expected to say, and the wherewithal with which to clothe themselves..... (p.129)

And O'Casey depicts this "air of unease" in exactly the same circumstances and for the same ludicrous and comic effect in the play. In the course of Mrs. Binnington's dialogue with Bernadette, it soon becomes apparent that

Mrs. Binnington has received the coveted invitation to a reception given by the President of the Republic, the modern counterpart of the Governor-General of the Free State. It becomes rapidly apparent also that she is attempting to acquire some social graces for the occasion, and is not progressing very well:

Mrs. Binnington (running over to piano, pulling Bernadette away, and bringing the lid down) What're you doin'? That piano was bought for good money, an' not bought her for you to go tantalisin' it with your fingerin' ding, ding, ding ding!

(Mrs. Binnington's practising deportment and balance of body, so she circles herself on one foot as Bernadette speaks, facing her when the circling movement is completed, which she does very awkwardly

Bernadette: It was 'Adeste Fideles' I was playin', an' there's no ding-ding-dingin' about that hymn!

Mrs. Binnington Don't argue. Knowin' I have to got out to practice deportment an' dancin' for the Reception our Presiden't givin' for important persons in Dublin Castle, you take advantage, when me back's turned, an' go ding-ding-dingin' on our new piano. (Mrs. Binnington does a half-wheel, half-toe pirouette, arms extended from her sides, asunder, suddenly dropping with a flop to the floor) God damn it! (to Bernadette) Do go on with th' cleaning of th' window, and stop gapin'! (pp. 15-16)

The next portion of the play's dialogue forms one of the most serious passages of the play. For a few moments the generally light and happy mood of The Drums of Father Ned takes on the more bitter tone of Inishfallen, and accuses modern Ireland of the betrayal of Irish ideals and Irish heroes. The passage in the play parallels the next development in the sequence from "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo". In both play and autobiography O'Casey uses the same artistic methods to convey the same authorial message. He takes, in a dramatic incident, an exponent of would-be gentility, whose attention is focused upon objects and concerns symbolising that gentility. And then he confronts him or her with a reminder of Ireland's dead heroes, who gave their lives for that Irish freedom which the middle-class are betraying by their enslavement to English customs and to personal ambition:

In the autobiography the incident is built around the questions of one of Sean's friends who is asking Sean's advice on certain correct procedures at a "Levee":

- Looka, Sean, he said, I've got an invitation to the Levee, and I dunno what to do. You're a friend of Lady Gregory's, and should know what a man is to do to comport himself proper.
- A man who owns a doctorate in a University should always know what to do, said Sean. But what's the gigantic problem?
- Why, what to do at the beginning and the end of a Levee. I've got the tall-hat all right; but where do you put it, and what do you do with it when you get there?
- Well, doctor, if you're any kind of a juggler, you can entertain the guests when you get there. (pp. 129-30)

The friend continues to worry about the management of his top hat until eventually Sean (and O'Casey) makes his contempt for top hats, and for all that they represent, abundantly clear. The friend is still reasoning:

-And then you can't suddenly slap on a tall-hat the way you would a soft one. So what's a fellow to do?
- Why not ask some of the seventy-seven dead men?
 - The seventy-seven - what dead men?
 - The men executed by your Free State Government.
 - Oh, them! I had nothing to do with their executions, anyhow. The dead are dead, and are neither here nor there now.
 - They are certainly not here, said Sean with some bitterness. But it seems to me that these men were put to death to afford you the privilege of donning a tall-hat. It won't be long till the gold harp's taken out of the green flag, and a bright, black tall-hat put in its place. The terrible beauty of a tall-hat is born to Ireland. (p.130)

The continuing argument about the piano in the play does not repeat the actual words of this passage, and it finds its own symbol of middle-class pretension and ambition - a piano which has been bought for the sake of its appearance - to replace that of the "tall-hat" of Inishfallen. But the dialogue of the play does follow precisely the thematic pattern of that in the autobiography.

Mrs. Binnington..... I'm goin' now, an' don't disturb the Mayor; an' don't you lay a finger on that piano again.

Bernadette (sullenly) Someone, sometime or other, will have to give it a rattle.

Mrs. Binnington (suddenly stopping awkwardly in a pirouette - indignantly) A rattle! No somebody or other's goin' to give that piano a rattle! A piano isn't made for a rattle! A rattle indeed! Whoever sits before that piano'll give it something more genteel than a rattle!

Binnington A piano's a dignified instrument, me girl, an' you can't put its music into any conformity of a rattle.

Bernadette (angrily and sullenly) Youse wouldn't have a piano if it wasn't for the dead who died for Ireland!

Mrs. Binnington (quietly but positively) Maybe not. But all that's well over now (murmuring to herself) Before sittin' down, do a graceful wheel on th' left toe, swingin' right leg round, with th' body lax, then sink into th' chair, he said. (Wheeling round, she doesn't do it right, misses the chair, and slidders to the floor) Oh, God damn it! (Recovering her breath - to Bernadette - while still sitting on the floor) All over now. We've done our best for our glorious dead with murmurin' of thousands of Rosaries, hundhreds of volleys fired over where they lie, an' th' soundin' of hundhreds more of Last Posts. All that can be done for a dead hero is to put a head-stone over his grave, an' leave him there.

Echo An' leave him there

Bernadette (bitterly) An forget all he said an' all he ever done

Echo All he ever done

Mrs. Binnington God's will

(She gets up stiffly) (pp.16-17)

(The magical echo of Doonavale is to be heard at intervals throughout the play, and is used by the author to emphasise ironies in the words of his characters, or to draw attention, as here, to the unacceptable maxims by which the old order of society lives. The device allows the author an extra dimension for the expression of opinion in the play, and perhaps is something of a dramatic substitute for, or counterpart of, the autobiography's capacity for slipping into the voice of the author in order to stress certain points, or make implications clear.)

An additional real, if minor, point of correspondence between the portrayal of Mrs. Binnington in the play, and that of Sean's friend in the autobiography is that both reveal in their mode of speech that their life and upbringing has not fitted them for the genteel world to which they now aspire. Mrs. Binnington exclaims "God damn it" when her efforts at ladylike deportment fail, and Sean's friend confuses adverbs with adjectives and asks Sean:

"What a man is to do to compart himself proper".

Mrs. Binnington's disastrous attempts at graceful deportment during the course of the dialogue about the piano further emphasise, according to O'Casey's tenets, the extent to which Irish ideals have been betrayed. And

perhaps it is a little more than coincidence that, as the narrative of Inishfallen continues, the "doctor" tells Sean of the antics which various people are up to in order not to disgrace themselves in the presence of the Governor, and while enumerating these he says:

Listen, an' you'll laugh.
Paddy Miskell's missus's sprained her ankle
doing curtseys at home (p.131)

He goes on to say that Rathmines (a middle-class suburb of Dublin) "is like a fairyland with the number of candles lighted to St. Anthony asking his help in the emergency". And bearing in mind the general correspondence between this part of the autobiography and the opening of Act I of the play, again it may be just more than coincidence that the Binnington's drawing room contains "a picture of St. Anthony of Padua" (p.13).

After the encounter between Sean and the "doctor" Inishfallen proceeds with another survey of the scramble for culture and prestige.

Every maunder of finer things who had his name in a bank ledger, or hoped to have it there soon, now that Cathleen ni Houlihan had won back three out of her four beautiful green fields, was busy in a quiet, curtained room, the blinds well down, discussing and practising the arts of refinement when making contacts with eminent people, more eminent people, and most eminent people; of walking with genteel steps, of bowing with dignity and caution, of curtseying with confidence, and of addressing the great with decorum and respect; just a few happy sentences to please His Excellency's ear; They were active fitting on trouser and skirt; morning-coat and evening-jacket;... (p.131)

By coincidence or otherwise the Binningtons are in a richly "curtained room" - the "window is ornamented by thick curtains of green plush" - ^{and} Mrs. Binnington is "practising the arts of refinement" and "of curtseying with confidence". And the social ambition and rivalry implied by the words "making contacts with eminent people, more eminent people and most eminent people" find expression in the continuing dialogue of the play, as Binnington tries to stop the argument between Bernadette and his wife:

Binnington (with irritation) That's enough of arguin'. Our work now is to sort ourselves out into our proper an' propounded places.

Bernadette (maliciously) Th' McGilligan's'll best youse at it. Theirs is a bigger piano than yours....." (p.17)

The autobiography proceeds with another dramatised incident in which a husband and wife are practising for presentation to the Governor-General:

-You go too quick, Jack, you're runnin' like a news-boy. Go back, an' come in again. Walk something like the way a judg'd do it, in his robes.

-These blasted boots are cuttin' th' feet o'me!

-You'll have to put up with them. Now thry again, an' thry to take that hump off your shoulders, an' that look of heart-sthrain off your face. I'll count the steps slow-one, two, three; go on-say something.....

-Don't stick your mug so close to mine, Jack, when you're speakin'. Keep back a little, man.....

(p.132)

Act I of the play does not follow Irishfallen into a similar incident but diverges into its own concerns about the Tostal and Father Ned's plans.

However, it is interesting that the closing sequence of Act II seems very much akin to the episode.

Bernadette. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayocress.

(The Binningtons come in, both in evening dress - he in tails. When they have stepped into the room, McGilligan and Mrs. McGilligan advance towards them - she smiling, he with a set and somewhat tortured-looking-face. They come so close that when Mrs. McGilligan makes her curtsy, she can but bend her knees awkwardly, and Binnington is prevented from making a proper bow; while Mrs. Binnington, trying to make her curtsy, loses her balance, and clutches the legs of McGilligan)

Binnington (impatiently) Youse came too damn close!

McGilligan (with irritation - to Binnington) Youse stood there with your kissers set, never givin' us a beck to halt....(p.75)

The evening dress and the tailed-coats, so slightly referred to in Irishfallen are also much in evidence in this act of the play.

After the dialogue concerning the "proper an' propounded" social order, Act I has diverged from the direct concerns of the prose of "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo" in order to introduce the subject of the Tostal, a festival of the Arts, which the curate of the Parish, Father Ned, is organising and which, in the terms of the play, is to bring about the new order of life in Doonavale. Classical music is to form a treasured part of this festival, and Binnington launches "frenziedly" into an attack upon "Ireland's newest passion to take

cognisance of the cultures of th' world" (p.19) He does not object to cultural activities as such, but cannot endure the fact that such activities might lead to him, and his fellow businessmen "with a stake, in the townland", "Losin' money instead of makin' it" (p.18) Faced with this awful prospect he is driven to pretend a pride in Ireland's own heritage of culture and civilisation, but (and here the play is returning once more to the precise concerns of "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo") Mrs. Binnington soon deflates this show of love for Irish traditions.

Binnington (frenziedly) We've our own culture, woman! We've our own dances, our own music, our own games, our own language, an' our own way of propoundin' out a preparation for the life to come. We want nothin'; an' we're all proud of what we have.

Mrs. Binnington I'm sure you are, though I never knew you to play any Irish game; I never seen you in an Irish dance; an' all you know of Irish is a greetin', an' even when you use one, you've to hurry in its sayin' for fear you'd lose it. That robe an' cocked hat of yours weren't fostered from any concept creepin' outa Tara Hill. (pp.19-20)

The author who, unlike Binnington, possessed a deep and abiding love of Irish culture and customs, has, in Inishfallen, similarly deplored the middle-class neglect of the Irish heritage:

The cruiskeen lawn was rejected for the cocktail glass... The teachers of up-to-date and old-world dancing were working night and day educating the vulgar hilarity from the joints of the adventists to the new Irish aristocracy, so that grace and a sweet easiness might take their place. Now it became a question of dignity and poise rather than one of enjoyment bred out of gaelic prancing in the dances of the wilder Irish. (pp. 128-9)

The dialogue of the play again diverges from "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo" in order to depict Binnington's precise business concerns and to enlarge upon his business partnership with McGilligan, but it returns once more to the absolutely precise concerns of the autobiographical chapter when McGilligan, the deputy Mayor, enters and, surprisingly, a discussion relating to the Free State settlement and the first Free State Dial ensues.

Binnington..... it is a dereliction of good taste for a Deputy Mayor to wear a more gorgeous gown than the Mayor.

McGilligan I am a McGilligan as well as a Deputy Mayor.

Binnington. A Gael who betrayed the dead when he took th' threaty, gave away Ulster, an' took an oath of allegiance to an English King.

McGilligan. Ah' when you and your gang found youse would lose th' pay if yous didn't enther th' Dail, yous ran to th' registherin' Officer, an' all Ireland heard your mouth smackin' th' Testament takin' th' oath!

Binnington (raging). We took no oath, yeh red-robed renager! I took no oath, I'm tellin' you, no, nor wouldn't with th' Ulsther Rifles proddin' me at one side, an' th' Iniskillen Fusiliers proddin' me on th' other!

McGilligan. Faithful to th' English King an' his successors forever; ay, forever, be God!

Binnington. A mottled lie! I'll take no oath, says I to th' officer attendin'; no oath, sorra one, says I, or any words that might fashion a similarity to any oath either, says I. You can take it or leave it, says he, for all I care, says he; right, says I, so sign here, says he, an' fit yourself to take your seat.

McGilligan. Deny as you like, all Ireland heard the thunderclaps of your kisses hoppin' off the holy Testament.

"A Terrible Beauty in Borneo" has, within the historical scheme of Inishfallen, described the Republican Party's discreditable political manoeuvring over the issue of the Oath in the early days of the Free State:

The search for beauty had begun. In the midst of the flurry and fury over the proper alignment of clothes, over the tormenting effort to rise sublime in manner and deportment, De Valera, pinched and worn and threadbare, studied the question of the Oath. He seemed to turn the spiritual side of the question into a mathematical one. His Party determined, after tremendous argument, that the taking of the Oath could be done without taking the Oath, provided they made it plain they didn't recognise the Oath when they were taking the Oath; that an Oath taken under duress wasn't really an Oath at all, but just the appearance of one; a deceptive thing, an illusion, a shadow, a ghost-oath. If you believed it was there, it would be there; if you didn't believe it was there, it couldn't be there; Just shut your eyes, close your ears, dispel your thoughts, and speak away, and the thing was done, yet not done. (p.132)

This passage describes the theory behind Binnington's vehement argument that he did not take the oath, and the next paragraph from the autobiography suggests Binnington's sophistical description of how the manner in which the oath was administered to him rendered it invalid as an oath:

So after it was all over, The Republicans said they had heard nothing; no-one had said a word to them indicating that they had been taking an oath; they hadn't seen such a thing in writing or in print; the officials who were present never explained a thing to them; they stayed dumb. The Republicans saw a booklet on a bench that might have been or might not have been, a testament. No-one said it was one. So there was no reason for them to assume that it must have been one. It was there; lying alone; but no-one picked it up, or said, Gents, this here is a testament; gents, I warn you, this is a testament - anything spoken beside this book or in the vicinity of this book, must be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. In fact, the silence was really oppressive. So though it was recorded that an oath had been taken, no Republican of De Valera's party could honestly swear to the taking of any oath whatsoever. (pp. 132-3)

But ^{the author in} Inishfallen, as does Binnington in the play, indicates that for all their self-righteousness, the Republicans had very definite motives in their chicanery, and that these motives were financial ones:

They entered the Dail, upright men, their consciences clear, their hearts aglow, for they could now take their salaries without pain of spirit, and they could fight more effectively for the dollars, left over from the American Victory loan, which the Free State Party was impudently claiming for its own. (p.133)

The sudden, and not particularly well explained, introduction of an explicit discussion of Free State history into Act I of the play, which is set in "The Present", seems truly to indicate not only how exact, but also how complete, is the play's reworking of Inishfallen's seminal image of Ireland and Irish life. For even those previous plays which had seemingly sprung directly out of the portrayal of Ireland in Inishfallen or had been directly ^{based} upon it, make no reference to the historical, Free State associations of the original portrayal within the historical scheme of the autobiographical volume.

In fact, O'Casey's concern in The Drums of Father Ned with the end of an era in Irish life seems to lead him to incorporate not simply one of the autobiographies' precise and preformed literary images of Ireland into his play, but two, with perhaps, even the vestige of a third.

The play possesses a prelude or "Prerumble" which goes back in time in order to present the origins of the old order that is itself to be superseded in the course of the main part of the play. This "prerumble" is set "thirty-four years or so

ago" (p.viii) from "the present day" of the writing of the play (actually it is set during the guerrilla-warfare period of "the Troubles", or Anglo-Irish War, of about 1919 - mid 1921). And the play differs from the autobiographies in ascribing the very beginnings of unsatisfactory "modern" Irish society to this period of Irish history rather than directly to the establishment of a Free State which took place a little later. But there can be little doubt that for much of its actual depiction of the 1919-21 period of "The Prerumple" the play is drawing most precisely upon the autobiographies' literary image of Ireland during the same period of its history - the image of Ireland presented, in fact, in the "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" chapters of Inishfallen. And such is the inter-relationship between O'Casey's plays and autobiographies that these two chapters themselves had apparently derived much of their image of the times from the play of many years before, The Shadow of a Gunman³. But "The Prerumple" seems to follow the image as it is developed in the autobiography and does not seem to penetrate through it back into the play.

That the image of "The Troubles" in "The Prerumple" is firmly based upon the artistic accounts of "Hail and Farewell" and "The Raid" can be seen in the use that "The Prerumple" makes not simply of the factual element in the autobiographical narrative - such as, the fact that the English Black and Tans tortured those Irishmen who fell foul of them - but the use it makes of the artistic elements and effects of the chapter. The prime example of this concerns the manner in which the whole "Prerumple" is to be presented. A stage direction notes:

(The scene looks like a sudden vision of an experience long past conjured up within the mind of one who had gone through it)(p.8)

And this distorted, psychological quality in the scene recalls the fevered and nightmarish imaginings of Sean during the early and "silent" part of the raid in Inishfallen⁴. "The Prerumple" makes use too of another notable artistic

3. See Chapter One

4. See Inishfallen pp. 41-2. For a quotation of these passages and a discussion as to how they constitute one of "The Raids" most noteworthy developments beyond The Shadow of a Gunman see Chapter One.

feature of "The Raid" - The chapter's depiction of "frost" as a strange, almost supernatural, background to the events which it describes.

In the evocative prose of "The Raid" the frost is described in a series of images which provide not only a visual, but also an emotional and thematic, background to the events of the chapter⁵. The "Prerumble" makes no attempt to rival the autobiography in the subtlety of the verbal use of the imagery of the frost, but its translation, within its setting, of the presence of the frost into purely visual terms would be striking in performance, and would perhaps greatly enhance the scenes' strangely unreal quality:

Sometime after midnight, we see a street in an Irish country town,....It is winter, snow has fallen, which has hardened from the touch of frost, and the street-way sparkles. Three Black and Tans, one an Officer, are standing like statues in the street. One is holding a hand-torch, and where the light falls from it, the frost sparkles more gaily. (p.1)

The imagery of the frost in "The Raid" and the visual presentation of frost in "The Prerumble" are perhaps related further in that both the autobiography and play seem to depict the frost as adding to the hardships of the Tan's victims. In "The Raid" the inhabitants of the tenement must wait outside in the cold of the frosty street while the raid proceeds (p.49) and in "The Prerumble" Binnington and McGilligan, when they are forced out on to the street by a tan "are dressed in shirt and trousers only, and are in their bare feet"(p.3).

"The Prerumble's" literary relationship with "Hail and Farewell" seems to centre around an ambush which both play and autobiography describe. That the play is again drawing quite specifically upon the autobiography in this connection can be seen in that the sense, and often the words too, of the dialogue and stage-directions of the play echo the text of the chapter at this point. For example, a brief passage from the autobiography's account of Sean's

5. For the quotation and examination of the frost imagery of "The Raid" and of its development from the inherent moon symbolism of The Gunman see Chapter One

reactions as he hears the ambush taking place, is, in the play, broken up into three parts with each part being reworked into a separate speech.

Sean imagines the ambushers:

...firing steadily at the head, the chest, or the belly of a Tan; and may God make their eyes keen and their hands steady! added Sean piously (Inishfallen p.34)

While the verbal reactions of the characters in the play to the ambush are:

Officer.....I'll court martial any man who hits arm or leg of these Sinn Fein murderers. Hit head, hit belly, and hit heart!

.....
Binnington....Aha, our boys are givin' it to them! God direct their aim!

McGilligan...Is there anything worse than a pious prayer from an impious party red with th' rust of roguery? (pp. 11-12)

A further example of apparently direct textual correspondence between "Hail and Farewell" and "The Prerumbe" concerns Sean's thought in the autobiography that, if the fighting with the English troops continued:

most of the cosy Irish homes would become but handfuls of ashes to be poured reverently into jars, and put safely away on a shelf for sweet remembrance.

(Inishfallen p.34)

"The Prerumbe" picks up this image of ashes, and The Officer exclaims, again in response to the ambush:

By God, we'll make Irish towns pay in huge heaps of ashes for th' loss of our comrades! (p.11)

The image also appears in the "chant of the people" that begins and closes the play:

The Black and Tans are blasting now
Ireland's living into the dead;
Her homes and shops in flames fall down
In red ashes on her bonny head. (pp. 2, 12)

If "The Prerumbe" seems basically to draw inspiration and substance from the autobiographies' depiction of Ireland during the troubles, it seems also to rework something of another of their historical images of Ireland, that of Ireland during the Civil War.

On one level "The Prerumbe's" portrayal of how much Binnington and McGilligan hate each other - though they were "born in the same year, in the

same town, in the same street on opposite sides of the road...are courtin' sisters", attended the same school, and worship at the same Roman Catholic Church (p.5) - gives a history of that animosity between the two men which appears in the main part of the play, and in doing so emphasises how long-standing are the hatreds and resentments that Father Ned's revolution are to sweep away.

But, viewed on the level of being something of an historical survey of the development of Irish society, the bitter enmity between two Irishmen who, it would seem, have every cause to be the best of friends, epitomises O'Casey's view of the Ireland of the Civil War, as presented in the Civil War chapters of Inishfallen. Again, "The Prerumble" seems to be directly recalling a literary image of Irish history, for the Tans, who make clear the national, political and social implications of the two Irishmen's hatred for each other, seem to reflect, in their comments, passages of authors' and Sean's comments on the Civil War which appear in the chapter of Inishfallen entitled "Into Civil War".⁶

Within the dialogue of the play it is established that not only are the two Irishmen Christians, but they are also both Catholic and actually worship at the same Church. The Officer comments "Mass in the morning and murder at night" (p.5) And this remark recalls Inishfallen's statement that

Here were those, now on the threshold of battle, who had not forgotten God; who went to Mass as regular as clockwork; who had deep-cut circles in the flesh of their fingers with the never-ending twisting of rosary beads (p.72)

"The Pre-rumble", within its dialogue also makes the point that both Binnington and McGilligan believe themselves to be patriots, although each would deny it of the other:

Binnington. I'm no informer, but a true-born Irishman
McGilligan (with a wail of contempt) A true-born Irishman!
D'ye hear that? (he hangs his head as if in shame -
pathetically) Poor Paudrig Pearse!

6. For a more extensive quotation of certain of these passages and an assessment of its relationship to the play Juno and the Paycock, see Chapter Four

Binnington (bitterly) Oh, may th' man who uses th' holy names of our dear dead heroes for his own purposes be hemmed in be a clusther of his children's head-stones!

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Officer (amused) You certainly have an astonishing respect for each other. (pp. 4 - 5)

And the point made here is that of "Into Civil War", that the two sides in the conflict each believed themselves to be "To God and Ireland true" (p.74)

The Tan's in the play are both intrigued and puzzled by the attitude of the two Irishmen towards each other. The 3rd Tan comments "Never seen such coves..... Hat_in' each other more'n they hate us" (p.3), and in a stage direction the Tan Officer is said to be "mystified at this example of inveterate hatred (p.9). In order to put this hatred to the test the Tans threaten to blow up the round tower (symbolic of Ireland's cultured past, and of her cultural heritage) if Binnington and McGilligan do not shake hands, they also threaten to kill the men themselves if they do not become friends - but all to no avail, even though the Tans amuse themselves by firing bullets all around them. The Officer comments "Perfect hate casts out fear". And the concept of Irish men hating each other more than they hate the English Tans, and to a degree that even the Tans, savage as they are, cannot understand, is to be found in "Sean's" thoughts in the autobiography, as he watches the withdrawal of English troops at the end of the Anglo-Irish War, and on the eve of the Civil War.

Well, thought Sean, as he watched them pass, at least, the Irish now will have the expansive liberty of biting each other without let or hindrance from low law of Dublin Castle or high law of heaven (p.74)

The Tan Officer in "The Prerumbe" realises the damage that such hate between fellow-countrymen can do to a nation. And when the 2nd Tan wants to kill McGilligan and Binnington in reprisal for the Sinn Fein ambush, he stops him with the words:

No, you fool! Can't you see that these two rats will do more harm to Ireland living than they'll ever do to Ireland dead? (p.10)

Although in the terms of the play as a whole these words prophesy not so much the Civil War as such, but rather the era following the Civil War - the era in

which Binnington and McGilligan and fellow middle-class business men will rise to power and help determine the nature of Irish life. However the basic idea in the Tan's speech - that of Irishmen destroying their country far more effectively than an external enemy could do is expressed very forcibly in Inishfallen albeit in sole connection with the Civil War:

Kelt was killing Kelt as expertly and as often as he could;
catholic Kelts too. Not a freethinker among them. As
diligent as the Black and Tans themselves. And just as
clever. (p.79)

And an ironic reference is also made to

Righteous catholic Irishmen....about to get busy making
their land a nation once again (p.74)

But if the play's depiction of images of Ireland's past and of its "present" and doomed social order are but new renderings of old and complete images from the autobiographies, it does have the opportunity to create its own image of Ireland's future. And the real manifestation of the quality of creativity in The Drums of Father Ned seems to lie not so much in the dramatisation, or even development, of the autobiographies' images of the past, but in the portrayal of the overcoming of the old order by the new.

In its creative portrayal of the new order and its victories, however, the play is just as indebted to the autobiographies as it was in the portrayal of the old society. For although The Drums of Father Ned does not lift the new image of Ireland wholesale, as it were, out of the autobiographies, the new Ireland of the play is very much a synthesis of the autobiographies' Johnny's/Sean's/the author's thoughts, actions and words as to the fullness and inherent joy of life. Furthermore this synthesis is made, it seems, through the inspiration of Sunset's optimistic prophecy of the future of Ireland.

One of the play's very first references to the actual practical means whereby Father Ned is to bring new life, and a new way of life, to Doonavale, concerns classical music. The subject is introduced early in Act I, right in the midst of the play's assimilation of Inishfallen's Free State image

of Ireland⁷, and so, even as the play is giving a basic depiction of the old order, it is juxtaposing it with a hint of the new. Binnington himself first raises the issue of classical music, and his violent opposition, for whatever motives, to Father Ned's musical projects at once points out their central importance in the scheme of Father Ned's revolution as a whole:

I'll not have it, Tosthal or no Tosthal!
 A waste of sacred time!.....music...
 that no one can get undher or over; when
 the minute a tune starts it stops, an'
 is off into a thousand tootles no mind
 can folly, makin' a body want to run out
 into a summer breeze or a wintry wind for
 a chance of survival.

.....

.....Losin' money instead of makin' it - With
 their Shumman an' Shubbert, an' that other fella,
 what's his name - makin' us wondher where we are.
 An, that wild fool, Father Ned! - shoutin' that he
 wouldn't be satisfied till the people of Doonavale
 would sit enthanced listenin' to music from -
 what's his name? - what's this it is? - Back, yis,
 Back, mind you, whoever he is. Shumman, Shubbert,
 an' now Back - what names!.....

Bernadette Father Ned says that through music, good
 books, an' good pictures, we may get to know
 more about th' mystery of life.

(pp. 18-19)

Johnny of Pictures had learnt of "th' mysthery of life" through "good books an' good pictures" but it was apparently only in old age, and then largely through the interest of his children, that "Sean"/O'Casey came to an appreciation of classical music - although he had always loved "Song" as every volume of the autobiography and virtually every play reveal. The final volume of the autobiography, written only a little while before the play, which records this discovery of the richness of classical music .

In Sunset he refers to Shaw's great knowledge of music and regrets that ^{"Sean"} himself has such little technical understanding of the subject:

.....Shaw had deeply what Sean lacked altogether. Not altogether, maybe, for he could, at least, love the melodic bars in opera, oratorio, and symphony. But Shaw had the knowledge of music in brilliant abundance, and this, maybe, gave him his serenity, as it, maybe, did to Joyce too...

7. See above

Music helped to keep Shaw calm, and made a fine dramatist of him, for music sings in most of his plays. Oh, lackaday, that Sean had so little of its solace! One had to be a constant practiser, or a constant listener, to know or feel anything right about the form and style of beautiful sounds which we call music. (pp. 608-9)

Sean's/O'Casey's attitude towards classical music is thus one of both joy and sorrow: joy that at least he has been introduced to music, but sorrow that that introduction has come too late in life to be pursued further:

How is the ordinary man to enter into an intelligently emotional enjoyment of music? Sean could think of but one way: listening. Listen to the band, for that was what an assembly of eminent musicians really was, though given the lordly, and deserved, name of an orchestra. Now that their three children were constant listeners to Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, and the rest, flowing from the wireless, the gramophone, and, more simply, from the stately piano they had in their best room, he was often sprayed with beautiful sounds. But it was a lovely baptism. Too late, now; too late. He would never be able to go further than the porch of the temple; never see the lights gleaming on the altar; never hear the full hymn sung (p.609)

O'Casey's belief, as revealed in Sunset, that music can lead the way to a new life must surely have inspired him in the play to put the fostering of a love of music at the heart of Father Ned's crusade to bring new life to Doonavale. Father Ned's (and O'Casey's) eagerness to bring the young people of the town into contact with the best in music does, indeed, seem to be in proportion to O'Casey's own keen regret that, as an old man, his own newly acquired thirst for music and musical knowledge will now never reach anything approaching satisfaction. And an interesting side-light on his personal musical tastes and listening is provided in the text, and in the performance, of the play in that he has selected the pieces of music which will accompany or help to depict Father Ned's progress. Even "The Drums of Father Ned" themselves are accorded a precise musical annotation:

The Drum Roll heard in the play at stated times should be of the kind used by Haydn in the Symphony No. 103, (Salaman No. 8) in E Flat Major, as given in Decca Record LX 3018 (p.IX)

Both Sunset and The Drums of Father Ned then, proclaim the author's discovery of, ^{and} attitudes towards, music, but that the relationship between the autobiography and the play in this respect arises not simply from the sharing

of a theme, but from the drawing of literary substance from the autobiography into the play, is suggested by the text of certain passages in the play.

Towards the end of Act I Mr. Murray, who, as a musician, is Father Ned's chief spokesman on the subject of music, maintains to an extremely unsympathetic Father Fillifogue that:

When we worship Mozart, we worship God; yes, God, ...
Mozart's moosic can be as dee murmur of a river's first
flow among dee forget-me-nots an' dee meadow sweet;
as indignant as tunder from any Hill of Horeb;
.....dee most of it would fit wid grandeur many songsdat
Dod Himself might like to sing! (pp. 42-4)

The description of Mozart's music in terms of a "river's flow" and as "thunder", and the association of music with praise of God, seem to recall a particular passage in Sunset in which the author writes of Shaw:

He was blessed with a deep love for, and a deep understanding of, the melody, intricate, rippling and majestic, that flowed from, and thundered out of, the magic weaving of sounds by Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, and Mozart. These were his God be praised. (p.608)

But it is a portion of dialogue early in Act II of the play which really manifests a most definite and direct literary relationship between Sunset and the play on the subject of music:

Tom. Things here have aged too long for us to try to make them young again

Bernadette Old fields can still bring forth new corn,
says Father Ned, my Tom; an' wintry minds give place
to thinking born of spring. Doonavale'll know, says
he something about the liveliness of colour; an'
Doonavale'll hear music - great music, a little, good
music, a lot, says he; an' near the end the setting
sun, with music at the close, says he, that sometimes
fills the heart with the burden of beauty.
(pp. 48-9)

This linking of the subject of old age with the subject of the discovery of the beauty of music seems exactly to recall the themes and narrative of Sunset. Also the initially strange fact that this young couple should speak at all of the rewards of old age seems to be explained by the influence of Sunset with its natural preoccupations with Sean's old age. And, almost as if to confirm the directness of the relationship between play and autobiography, the autobiography's image of "the setting sun" is introduced. Indeed, Bernadette's speech as a

whole would seem to perpetuate, not only in theme but also in its imagery of winter and spring, and in its very spirit, the impressions of life set out in the concluding paragraphs of Sunset and Evening Star:

.....Dead the blossoms, half-dead the bees, and the leaves all round fluttering down. A beautiful sadness everywhere. But in a few days the crimson disk will be there again, the purple-spreading dahlia will flaunt its pomp in the world's face, and the bees will buzz and hum and buzz again, as if the sun shone always and the frost was all over for ever. Even the winter has her many beauties, even for the old who shiver; the crisper air; the cold mists of morning, the fretted framework of the trees against the sky, the dismantling frost biting a harsh beauty into the earth's soft bosom; the stillness of the earth herself under it all, waiting for the Spring. Ah, yes; to the old, spring and its budding bring a welcome as well as to the young. Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses.

Even here, even now, when the sun had set and the evening star was chastely touching the bosom of the night, there were things to say, things to do. (pp. 664-5)

While Bernadette's phrase "the burden of beauty" seems to echo an assertion made only a little earlier in Sunset that

It is the many beauties of the earth that make life hard to bear, knowing that life must end, and all the beauties of the world say farewell to us. (p.651)

The relationship between Sunset and the play on the topic of music is, both in thematic and literary terms, a quite straightforward one, and as such is typical of many links with the autobiographies which help to make up the theory and the substance of, the play's vision of a new Ireland.

But the image of a new Ireland as it emerges in the play, enshrines too some much more complex, and much more subtly creative, individual strands of relationship between the autobiographies and the play. One of these concerns the "star" imagery and symbolism in the play.

In the autobiographies the stars are presented as a manifestation of the wonders of nature and of the works of God. The stars, are, of course, there for all men to see; but only a man of spiritual insight, imagination and "vision" will actually perceive them or their significance. Not only do they declare the magnificance of God's creation, which is a gift to all men, but, by virtue of their splendour and remoteness, they become a symbol of man's ideals and

aspirations. They are high above the world, and are thus totally unsullied by man's concerns . And so it is that in Pictures in the Hallway the stars become the antithesis of the mean, sordid, soul-destroying materialism which O'Casey vehemently denounces. And they come to represent true wealth - spiritual wealth - which even the very poorest of the poor, can possess.

In this autobiography the young Johnny Casside looks at the stars, which, significantly enough, are clearly visible even above the squalor and poverty of Dublin. For a man to look at the stars, and better still, to be familiar enough with them to call them by their names is, in O'Casey's work, a mark of that man's spiritual vision - almost a Blakean vision - the enemy of which is earth - bound materialism. And so Johnny, poor, and even suffering from defective physical eye-sight as a result of that poverty, nevertheless, sees the stars, when rich men do not.

In Pictures in the Hallway, at the beginning of a passage in which Johnny's ambition and attempts to educate himself are described, occur the words :

Johnny glanced up at a sickle moon hanging in the sky among a throng of stars. What was it and what were they? He had looked in the pages of Ball's Story of the Heavens and at the pictures, but it was all too hard for him yet. But he would learn, he would learn (p.256)

It is significant that Johnny not only sees and looks at the stars, thus revealing his spiritual vision and aspirations, but he also desires, as it were, to make the stars his own, by acquiring knowledge as to their true nature.

Johnny's question about the moon and stars has several echoes in The Drums of Father Ned. Nora, one of the young people in the play who sees, and is trying to assert, the joy and real value of life, looks at the stars, and seeks to identify them:

The sky of Doonavale is a casket of stars. Look Michael,
that glittering glow there to the west - is it the west?
I wonder what stars stay there? (Act III p. 82)

She receives a rather unsatisfactory answer from Michael, denoting how mankind ignores God's wonders which are all around:

I don't know. Maybe the Pleiades (musingly) What's this
I read about them once? - Many a night, I saw the Pleiades - Oh,
I've forgotten the poem, and the poet too.

Nora then comes to his aid to help along his partial knowledge:

"Tennyson, I think, dear:
 Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid."

Michael, in his turn, expresses O'Casey's sense of the wonder of the world, and follows this with a regret that man ignores and knows so little of the true meaning and beauty of life. The true meaning and beauty of life are here represented by the stars and poetry, which become linked together in Michael's train of thought. Michael associates the stars with poetry, just as Johnny of the autobiography, associates them with knowledge - Michael exclaims:

My God, an' we're tangled, too, in life's great glittering
 braid! To know the stars only through the song of a poet;
 then to forget the poet and the song he sang! (p.82-3)

Then comes an affirmation of life, joy and youth, as Michael suddenly embraces Nora and cries:

All the stars of heaven are close to me when you are near. (p.83)

Thus the stars, in the context of the play, also become associated with youth, human joy, and love.

Another series of references to the stars in Pictures in the Hallway involves a more complicated and detailed train of thought, which is clearly traceable and exactly paralleled in The Drums of Father Ned

In the section of the autobiography which is entitled "To him that hath shall be given", O'Casey describes how Johnny, as an employee of "Hyndim, Leadem and Co.", goes, in the company of three more senior and considerably more sycophantic employees, to the house of Anthony Dovernull - one of the owners of the firm.

"Mr. Anthony" the smug, stern, hypocritically pious capitalist and materialist, with his "bent back; the shrivelled head, the dangling watch chain; the frosty eyes" (p.262) is one of the earliest of the long line of materialists and capitalists who appear in O'Casey's plays and autobiographies from The Star Turns Red onwards.

Included in this long line, and almost at the end of it, are Binnington and McGilligan, the arch-materialists and capitalists of The Drums of Father Ned,

who in their cheerless physical appearances and with their obligatory gold watch-chains conform very clearly to the stock pattern.

In the stage direction on his first appearance Binnington is described as being:

...tall, thin and wiry.....his hair, moustache and close-cropped beard are greying...A thick gold watch-chain stretches across his belly from one waistcoat pocket to the other.....(Act I. p15)

McGilligan is described on his first appearance as:-

...a stoutish man, half bald, with tightly-clipped grayish-black hair from the skull's centre to the neck's nape... Across his belly, too, stretches a gold watch-chain from one waistcoat pocket to another. (Act I p.25)

In The Drums of Father Ned O'Casey depicts the overthrow of the Binningtons and McGilligans (and Dovergulls) of the world, by the forces of youth, joy and life. In the autobiography Pictures in the Hallway Dovergull cannot be overthrown in actual worldly terms. But O'Casey expresses "Johnny's hatred of Dovergull, and shows how Johnny can seek consolation from the true values of life to which Dovergull is utterly blind.

In the section of the autobiography entitled "To Him That Hath Shall Be Given" Mr. Anthony has just been married, and the object of the visit to his house is to present him with a clock bought by his employees.

Johnny himself has had more than one serious skirmish with the vicious, parsimonious Mr. Anthony. Surrounded by all the ugly and pretentious furnishings of their huge house, Mr. and Mrs. Dovergull are obviously in their element and Johnny is obviously out of his. Johnny's three fellow-employees, however, being only too eager to abase themselves at their master's feet, fit quite well into the scheme of things, and seek to emulate their employer in the snubbing of Johnny.

Eventually the four employees emerge from the house, the door of which:

soon closed upon all the glory left behind as they passed out into the silent night, under the star-crowded sky, the majestic timepiece of the universe (p.287)

The implied contrast between the ironically titled "glory" of the middle class 'Victoriana of the Dovergull's house and the real splendour of "the silent night, under the star-crowded sky" suggests the contrast of Dovergull's false materialistic values and false gods with Johnny's true spiritual vision and sense of a universal design. There is another implied contrast of false, material values with true, spiritual ones when the author describes "the star-crowded sky" as "the majestic timepiece of the universe" - for Dovergull's employees have just presented him with a timepiece - a particularly and vulgarly ornate clock (p.284-5).

Johnny, due to his attempts at self-education, can now name the stars, and can, therefore, assume a respectful acquaintance with the powers and beauties of the universe. Having emerged from the paltry splendour of the materialist's home, he muses on the glory of the stars, and by a process of association of ideas - via related quotations from Shakespeare, another aspect of his self-education - he reaches a comparison of the sheer insignificance of the pompous Dovergull in connection with the true majesty of the stars:

That was the Plough there, towards the north, and to the east, he thought, the Gemini, Castor and Pollux, children of Leda, the mother of Helen, who was the cause of all the uproar in Troy; and there was the Polar Star, the fixed star, the star that shone for Caesar, for he was constant as the Northern Star: poor Caesar, dead and turned to clay, stopping a hole to keep the wind away. Well, it'll be a small hole Anthony'll stop. A little Caesar faintly present when he stands beneath a star (p.287)

In Act III of The Drums of Father Ned, which is set in the Binnington's drawing-room - surroundings very reminiscent of Dovergull's "house" of materialistic "glory"⁸, this passage provides the basic pattern of thought in Michael's declaration, to the materialistic business man, of a guiding principle of Father Ned's revolution. And a visual, as well as thematic, contrast between material wealth and spiritual wealth, as represented by the stars, provides the climax of Michael's arguments.

In the autobiography Johnny could only privately and mentally compare Dovergull's and man's importance to that of the stars. In the play O'Casey gives Michael the opportunity to show to the materialists themselves the vast gulf

8. See below

separating man's achievement and God's achievement.

During the course of an argument about religion Binnington says to Michael:

I'll not have such a thing said....undher my roof, sir; not undher my roof! (p.91)

the dialogue then proceeds:

Michael (quietly) Your roof, Da? What is it but a few wisps of straw, a few clods of clay, mixed together to keep th' rain out an' keep th' wind away. Put out th' lights and hide th' roof of man, and let us look at God's.

Echo Look at God's.

(Michael pulls the curtains aside, as the scene gets dark, and reveals a sky filled with vast stars, one red, one green, one golden, with smaller stars between them, all aglow with gentle but amazing animation in a purple sky.

Michael Our real roof, ladies and gentlemen, th' royal roof over Doonavale, over th' world - the stars. God's great nightcap. There they are - half th' host of them. And ne'er a man, save Father Ned, can pick them out by the names man has given them. (p.91)

Taking full advantage of the dramatic form's visual dimension, in performance, O'Casey has largely translated the autobiography's symbolic description of the magnificence of the "star-crowded sky" into visual, as opposed to verbal, terms. In fact, he has gone further than this for the play's depiction of stars of startling colours and of exaggerated size constitutes not just a visual image, but a veritable theatrical spectacle. However the verbal link with the autobiography does remain.

Not only does the above passage from the play strongly echo the sentiments of the corresponding passage quoted from the autobiography, but the phraseology of part of the passage from the play seems to echo that of the text of the autobiography.

At the heart of the logic of Johnny's thoughts in the autobiographical passage are certain related Shakespearean allusions.

In the autobiography, Johnny looks up at the sky and sees the Pole star. This reminds him of Julius Caesar who in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar says:

But I am as constant as the northern star,
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament (Julius Caesar Act III Sc.I)

Accordingly Johnny says of the star, deriving his phraseology and vocabulary from Shakespeare:

there was the Polar star, the fixed star, the star
that shone for Caesar, for he was as constant as the
Northern Star. (Pictures p. 287)

With his mind on Caesar - and on Shakespeare's Caesar in particular - Johnny's thoughts turn to Hamlet's words on Caesar. Musing, in the graveyard, upon the transience of man's greatness and the decay attendant upon mortality, Hamlet says:

Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O! that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw. (Hamlet Act V Sc i)

Johnny correspondingly thinks:

"poor Caesar, dead and turned to clay, stopping a hole to keep the wind away."

And then relating his philosophy to Dovernull, the closest approximation to Caesar within Johnny's immediate sphere, Johnny thinks:

Well, it'll be a small hole Anthony'll stop. A little Caesar,
faintly present when he stands beneath a star (Pictures p.287)

It is noteworthy that in the passage from the play neither Shakespeare nor Caesar is alluded to. But in Michael's words to his father there is surely an echo of Caesar "dead and turned to clay, stopping a hole to keep the wind away". For Michael says:

Your roof, Da? What is it but a few wisps of straw,
a few clods of clay, mixed together to keep th' rain out
an' keep th' wind away. (Father Ned p. 91)

Michael is pointing out to the little "Caesars" of Ireland's business world that they and all their achievements are as nothing in comparison with that real splendour and achievement ^{which} belongs to the creator of the universe, who has built the roof of stars.

It is not only the employer classes, however, that are guilty of materialism. In the autobiography Johnny's three older fellow-workers, in their

submission to Dovergull, and what he stands for, are also materialists who worship the same false values as he does. They are totally devoid of kindness or pity, and after leaving Dovergull's house they ignore Johnny when he asks for a loan of tuppence for the tram-fare home. So Johnny is left....standing, alone, beneath the stars" (p.288) Such spiritual vision as Johnny possesses is ^a quality which sets him apart from others, and Michael's statement in the play that "ne'er a man, save Father Ned" can identify the stars by name not only recalls Johnny's ability in this connection, but recalls too Johnny's isolation. But Johnny cannot be truly alone when he is "beneath the stars", for he has his vision of them to support him, and Father Ned of the play is far from an isolated figure for he is rapidly communicating his personal vision of the stars to his youthful followers in Doonavale - Michael among them.

Indeed, precisely this kind of transmission of a visionary's personal insight into life, in order to bring about a transformation in society, is described in Drums under the Windows. And there it is again described in connection with the stars. But in this instance the visionary who shares Father Ned's qualities is not Johnny, but Jim Larkin.

The reference to the stars occurs in the section of Drums which is entitled "Prometheus Hibernica". A meeting of workers is being addressed by Larkin when police begin a charge upon the assembled crowd and a battle breaks out. One of the "witnesses" of the scene is the statue of St. Patrick on top of the Pro-Cathedral. In a fantasy-sequence O'Casey describes "St. Patrick's" attitude to the event. The saint summons "Bishop Eblanamus" to him, and asks what it is that Larkin is demanding on behalf of the workers. The Bishop replies that in addition to an improvement in living conditions Larkin wants the workers to have:

an education that'll allow them, if they so will, to dip in Plato, feel the swing of the Pleiades, to climb the long reaches to the peak of song, to wonder at the rift of the dawn, and to hail with silent happiness the reddening of the rose. (p. 587, italics mine)

In the depiction, then, of both the old and the new orders in Ireland in the play O'Casey is drawing very directly upon many specific parts and passages of the autobiographies. But this selection of old national images, and of

material for a new national image, from the autobiographies, is, it seems simply a well-defined and well-ordered part of a very much wider artistic process which is taking place in the play.

As a result of their individual relationships and interaction with successive plays, and their passing on of influences from play to play, the autobiographies helped to build up a large stock, or convention of O'Caseyan images and traditions which, wherever they might then appear in O'Casey's work, automatically carried with them, without the need of further elaboration, all the implications which had been attached to them previously. The result is a kind of symbolic shorthand. For example, the very mention of the fact that Binnington and McGilligan wear gold watch-chains speaks whole volumes as to their personalities, politics and beliefs, and as to the role which they will be given in the play itself.

Since the autobiographies are the chief means by which this convention is fostered, the convention itself grows at the same pace as the writing of the autobiographies. And as a richer convention evolves the successive plays tend to make greater use of it. Most of those plays which were written contemporarily with the autobiographies drew upon, and, in turn, made contributions to the symbolic tradition, but *The Drums of Father Ned* is, as the first play to be written after the completion of the autobiographies, in the position of being the first play to draw upon the full accumulation of the tradition. And this it generally does with such vigour and thoroughness - almost, indeed, as it were ransacking the previous works for any scraps of symbolism or significance that it might weave into itself - that the play which is designed as "A Mickrocosm of Ireland" emerges as nothing so much as a "Mickrocosm" or, perhaps, kaleidoscope, of O'Casey's previous work. The number of individual details in the play which each have a separate history traceable back through O'Casey's previous work are legion. But the setting of Act I of the play, as described in the opening stage direction of the Act for translation into visual terms in performance, provides a good example not only of the play's taking of individual symbols from the literary convention, but of its weaving of these

individual symbols into new patterns.

The scene of Act One is

The drawing-room and parlour of Alderman Binnington, Mayor of the town of Doonavale. It is a large, long room, furnished with an attempt at Irish middle-class pomp and circumstance. Everything in the room is new and polished, to be displayed rather than used. A large round mahogany table stands in the centre of the room, with large stiff armchairs at either end, both upholstered in emerald green. On the table, right in its centre, is a tall gilded vase, ornamented with embossed, highly-coloured flower-patterns. At one end is an album, at the other a photo of the Alderman in a wide and brightly gilded frame..... At the back is a large oblong window looking out over the front lawn, beyond which are a few trees, and beyond these the tops of the town's houses, and the spire of the town's church. This window is ornamented by thick curtains of green plush, tied back by heavy gold cords with gold and silver tassels. To the right of the window is a picture of Michael Collins; on the opposite side, a picture of St. Anthony of Padua. A pompous mahogany side-board stands to the right of the window; on it are wine-glasses, a decanter, a bottle of whisky, and some heavy silver-ware, a coffee-pot, silver cups and saucers, silver tray and a silver salver - all for show. At the back of the side-board, to its centre, stands another gaudily-gilt vase. In front of the window are a number of small chairs, green upholstered, so stiff that they look as if they dared anyone to stir them. The fireplace - aglow with heavy brass fender and fire-irons - is to the left, and a sofa stretches itself out diagonally, the head nearer the fire, the foot towards the window. On the mantles shelf are bronze-figures a man in eighteenth-century costume at one end, a lady at the other; and beside these figures, at either end, stand vases thick with colour and with gilt; while in the mantel-shelf's centre is a big golden clock decorated with gilt leaves and blossoms. To the left of the brown door is an upright piano, agleam, with a silver candlestick at either end with more vases standing between them! In the right corner of the back wall stands a big pink delft flower-pot containing a palm about six feet high, with long, lance-like vivid blue leaves and vivid yellow trunk. The floor is covered with a beige carpet covered with a gay flower pattern.

(pp. 13-14)

As a room which embodies a love of all things material, and a total disregard of the finer things of the spirit, this setting is generally reminiscent of the description of the house of Johnny's employer, Anthony Dovergull, which occurs in Pictures in the Hallway.

In Pictures in the Hallway Johnny, as part of a deputation which is to present Dovergull with a wedding present, finds himself

in a big, big room that he thought was the parlour, had not Dyke whispered that it was called the drawing room. For

the first time in his life, Johnny found his feet resting uneasily on a carpet. Real Persian, whispered Dyke. For the first time, Johnny found himself lost in a thicket of wonderful things, a huge glistening mahogany thing of doors and drawers, with plates and pitchers of gleaming glass on the top of it. A mighty mahogany sofa here, and stout mahogany chairs there and everywhere. In the centre, oh, a great mahogany table, with a top on it glossy enough for an angel to have a decko at himself and trim his wings by the gleaming of it; a narrow strip of white silk edged with lace, and embroidered with flowers, ran down it from one end to the other; and in the centre of this, a great epergne of many branches, coloured a light green outside, and a deep pink within, stood, as proud as any seven-branched candlestick on the altar of the Church at Thyatira. Whatnots, sparkling with vases and silver-framed photos, were in every corner. Lovely wallpaper, splashed with deep yellow roses, showed off many pictures on the walls, while a shining piano leaned away by itself in a corner, with the name of Cramer on it in big gold lettering. There was a big fireplace, fenced by a big brass fender, full of big brass weapons, as heavy as those in the hand of Goliath. There were heavy blue curtains on the windows, with lacy ones nearer the glass, foaming with heavy tassels and fringe. A golden chiffonier with many brackets, having on them knick-knacks of all shapes and sizes, hung over the mantle-piece, and on each side of it were lovely coloured photographs of the married couple, Anthony, to the right, pensive, leaning on a fluted pillar, with a book in his hand; and his missus sitting in a curved stone seat on a terrace, with a big harp beside her.

-A house of glory, thought Johnny, full of good things, lovely to look on and very fair to handle. No books about, thank God, for were they here, the desire to have them would make the envy in me bitter to bear.

(pp. 285-6)

Binnington's home is, exactly like Dovergull's, designed to be a "house of glory" - that is a house of purely material splendour and values, and as such, in Act III - although by then, its appearance is somewhat changed on account of the activities of the Tostal - the room is to subjected to the same comparison with the real glory of the stars as is Dovergull's room in Pictures in the Hallway⁹.

and

That O'Casey, in envisaging describing the setting of the play, was clearly thinking back to Dovergull's house as described in Pictures in the Hallway is suggested too by the opening words of the stage-direction:

← { "The drawing-room and parlour of Alderman Binnington....",
for the autobiography's passage of description begins
with Johnny being informed by Dyke that the room is
"called the drawing-room" and not the "parlour" as Johnny
had designated it.

9 See above

Also, apart from the strong similarity in the overall impression and significance of the two rooms, many of their individual details of furnishing corresponds - a thick carpet, mahogany side-board, sturdy chairs, sofa, brass fire-irons, heavy curtains adorned with tassles, a multitude of vases, ornaments and bric à brac, a piano and a photograph of the owner.

The Binningtons' ornate clock:

in the mantleshelf's centre is a big golden clock decorated with gilt leaves and blossoms,

might even be something of a reference back to the ostentatiously ornate clock which Johnny and his fellows presented to Dovergull in the autobiography, and which, in itself seemed to epitomise material values, vulgarity of taste, and a businesslike attitude to time.

It was a clock of black marble, speckled with grey, shaped like a temple, with two slender columns, one of each side. Over the top were gilt rays, spreading out, like the rays of the sun, and out of these rays sprang the delicate form of an angel, who was pointing to the face of the clock with one hand and up to the sky with the other. Around the upper semicircle of the dial were the holy words, Tempus Fugit. (pp.284-5)

But if the setting of the play basically resembles the room of Dovergull, it draws very much more widely upon O'Casey's previous work than simply upon one passage in one autobiographical volume. For Dovergull's "house of glory" is itself part of a tradition within the autobiographies and plays. Moreover, it does not even begin this tradition, for it seems that the "Lounge room in the residence of the Lord Mayor" which provides the setting of Act IV of The Star Turns Red might have been the first of the rooms redolent of capitalism to be depicted in the autobiographies and plays. The furnishing of the room in The Star are not described in much detail:

the walls here are pompous with purple and gold...Easy-chairs, a settee, all covered with brown material edged with purple, a small desk carrying a telephone, make up the furniture of the room.....

(Collected Plays Vol. II p. 329)

But the description does seem sufficient to have begun the tradition. Moreover the fact that this room is part of the "Mayor's" "residence" constitutes, perhaps, a direct link between it and the "drawing-room" of Alderman Binnington, Mayor of the town of Doonavale"

After Dovergull's house in Pictures a further ^{almost} explicitly symbolic "house of glory" ^{is described} in the "Wild Life in New Amsterdam" chapter of Rose and Crown, in which Sean ^{funds himself} is a guest of an American business man and his wife:

...then to dinner in a big room, resplendent with a wild display of walnut and mahogany reflecting the gleam of glass and the glitter of silver; thick carpets embedded boots at every step; candles lighted the outspread magnificence of the table, flanked with flowers, and spired with many slender, tapering bottles of differing wines. A rich house-hold, redolent of plenty, developing into a warehouse of rich and selected goods. A residence fit for Arnold Bennett rather than a home for Walt Whitman. Courtesy here, touched with a taint of vulgar grandeur. (pp. 431-2)

It seems as if the setting of the Drums of Father Ned partakes of the opulent atmosphere created by this description as well as that created by the Dovergull passage, and perhaps, in terms of more specific details the Binnington's room derived its "wine-glasses, a decanter, a bottle of whiskey,...heavy silver-ware a coffee-pot, silver cups and saucers, silver tray and a silver salver" from "the gleam of glass and the glitter of silver" about the American room. And if, in Act III, the Binnington's room is contrasted with the stars as is Dovergull's, just before the contrast is made, the author reworks into the dialogue between Binnington's dinner guests in the play (pp. 87-91) the conversation, or rather religious argument, which takes place between the dinner guests in "Wild Life in New Amsterdam" (pp. 434-7). And so Rose and Crown as well as Pictures was in the author's mind in connection with the setting of the play.

But there is something of a supplement to the "house of glory" tradition within the autobiographies, for in Sunset O'Casey, in describing the honest comfort of and points of real beauty and of art amidst what are, perhaps, the generally well-worn and shabby furnishings of the somewhat impoverished O'Caseyan household, seems to be implicitly describing this room in contrast to the showy but graceless magnificence of the American dining room in Rose and Crown and, perhaps too, the drawing room of Dovergull. Clearly the description of the room in Sunset is intended to provide insight into the values of its owners - and they are very different values from those of Dovergull and the American host:

It was a glorious afternoon of a day tinting a dying June with joy. He sat alone in what was called the sitting-room.....He sat sideways, one eye turned towards the garden, the other taking in the rest of the room containing, as Eileen so often said, all the family's respectable pieces, all hers; pieces she had brought from her flat to the new home they had sorted out after their marriage. Not much in it, indeed, but her hand and eye had made it graceful and pleasant to sit in. A deep, bright-brown carpet warmed the floor, stretching itself out with a strain, but failing to come within two feet of the surrounding walls. They hadn't had enough money to allow a carpet to touch the walls, but Eileen had herself darkened the intervening space with a rich walnut stain, and its dark, defiant glistening made the carpet feel richer than it was. A square-backed, square-sided couch and armchair, clad in deep-brown velvet corduroy, faced the hearth, which was brightened by a pale brown rug, ornamented with geometrical patterns in darker brown, white, and black; all wearing the honest badge of age and use. Oh a round table, the top of one piece silken surfaced and rimmed with walnut, supported by diagonal panels filled with books, lay a wide, shallow bowl of deep yellow, gaily rimmed with coloured patterns resembling the spiral ornamentation of the older Kelts, a wedding-present from Doctor Cummins to Eileen; and on a rose-wood china-cabinet stood the head and shoulders of a young and slender woman, deep in meditation, or breathless with adoration, done in grey-blue porcelain;....a graceful piece of work so serene, so wrapped in thought that catholic visitors always took the figure to be a symbol of the Blessed Virgin.....

.....On a higher level, flanking the quiet comeliness of the blue-grey figure, its porcelain shining like watered silk subdued by time, stood a deep-green glass vase filled with the gay loveliness of Cornish anemones. Facing the bow-window stood a Bechstein piano, Eileen's pet property, for touching things musical, Sean hadn't brought into the home so much as a mouth-organ: all Eileen's, for even the table at which he worked had been Eileen's before they were married. On the walls were a Segonzac print, a tiny figure of a man walking along a path through an avenue of towering trees, Van Gogh's 'White Roses' over the fireplace; a lovely water-colour of blue hydrangeas by a young Welsh artist; a tenderly beautiful picture of a Gitana by John; the same artist's portrait of Sean,

.....A kingly present from a kingly man.

So here Sean was sitting in the midst of good things, of grace and quiet charm brought to him by the imagination and sensible selection of his wife; here he sat in close touch with art, literature, and music encased in simple serenity of colour line and form - as every human being ought to be in hours of

leisure; for the young beginning life; for the old ending it. (pp. 526-8)

This is manifestly O'Casey's ideal of a room, and if its comfort, books, fresh-flowers and paintings contrast markedly with the vulgar, artificial and artistically worthless clutter of possessions in the previously described households, they are to contrast also with the setting of the play. Indeed a particular phrase in the description of the Binnington room "all for show" seems almost a deliberate contradiction of a phrase used in connection with the furnishings of the O'Casey's room - "all wearing the honest badge of age and use".

But the set of the play partakes also of another branch of the autobiographies' and plays' convention of room-settings.

In the chapter of Inishfallen which is entitled "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo" the author writes of the feverish Free State attempts at gentility which are going on in "Every house with curtains on the windows and an old clock on the stairs" (p.129) And this suggestion that the rising Irish middle-class can be identified by contents of their houses is greatly expanded upon in Acts II and III of The Bishop's Bonfire.

The drawing-room of Councillor Reiligan's house is a large one, and everything in it is new, except the things that are newer, and the newest that are now being added to adorn the Bishop's stay. At the back is the big bow-window, black plushy curtains at either side, with a white palmet over them, looking out to the garden....

To the right of the window is an upright piano, covered with an old sheet, and another sheet covers a big sideboard to the left of the window. On a ledge, or bracket, beside the piano, is a telephone. A table to seat six or seven stands somewhat to the middle of the room; it is a mahogany one, and has been polished so that the surface shines like a brightened mirror. There are six or so chairs set round the room, their seats cushioned with dark-green cloth, mahogany-backed and mahogany-legged.

The fireplace, a large and wide one, is to the right, and is curbed by a shining brass fender with heavy, brightened brass poker, tongs and coal-shovel. There are paper and sticks and coal set there so that a great blazing fire may be kindled any minute in the grate to warm up a room that is used only to receive important visitors. The mantelpiece has a two-set piece of prancing bronze horses, one at either end, and in the centre a gilded clock that does go. Over them, on the wall, is a big picture of a Pope which Reiligan says is a striking likeness of Pio Nino. Between the piano and the window is a narrow bureau, also of mahogany, with narrow drawers, and a desk-like top.

.....

Over the floor is a thick beige carpet..... (Act II pp. 46-7)

Certainly there is a very direct connection between the significance of

Reiligan's drawing room and the "Irish middle-class pomp and circumstance" of the Binnington's household. And, in smaller details the patriotic touch of the green colour of the Binnington's upholstery is probably derived from The Bishop's Bonfire. Also the Binningtons' ornate clock might be as much the "Irish middle class clock" of Inishfallen and The Bishop's Bonfire as it is the clock of Dovergull. The mahogany, thick curtains, bric-à-brac and piano are also as much in evidence in the home of Reiligan as they were in that of Dovergull and as they are to be in the drawing room of Binnington.

But apart from the setting of the play's relationship to these many rooms, themselves interrelated, in autobiography and play, it incorporates other distinct conventions of symbolism also. The "photo in a wide and brightly gilded frame" which appears in the stage-setting is a symbolic detail used in several plays of O'Casey's, and in the autobiography too, to indicate particular capitalists' love of themselves. The symbol begins in Act II of The Star Turns Red with the "picture of a man (that of Sheaker) in a grand gilt frame" (Collected Plays Vol.II p. 277) The Act contains much discussion of the picture, of which Sheaker the corrupt union official is exceedingly proud. It transpires that it was presented to him by businessmen in part payment for the betrayal of the members of the union.

From The Star the symbolism seems to find its way into Purple Dust for in Act I of that play a stage direction states;

Cyril Foges is carrying a large coloured picture of himself in a gold frame; and Basil Stoke too is bearing a picture of himself in a silver frame; he has a hammer sticking out of his side pocket.

(Collected Plays Vol.III p.17)

And from there it moves into Dovergull's house in Pictures in the Hallway, for the drawing-room of Johnny's employer boasts "lovely coloured photographs" of Dovergull and his wife.

The setting of The Drums of Father Ned draws too upon another extremely important strain of symbolism which began in The Star and was passed on through the autobiography into several plays.

"The spire of the town's church" which dominates the skyline seen through the window of the Binningtons' parlour was, as a symbol of the domination of the Church over the lives of the people, first seen in The Star Turns Red. Throughout The Star "The silhouette of a towering church spire" (Collected Plays Vol II p.241) can be seen from the right hand window of the setting, but as the successive Acts ensue this symbol gradually recedes and the view of "factory chimneys", symbolic of the power of the workers, as seen through the left hand window, gradually comes nearer.

From The Star the image of the church spire, and of a counter balancing symbol of labour, pass into Pictures in the Hallway and Johnny pausing in his studies, contemplates this view from his window:

Over beyond the canal towered the ugly bloated spire of the catholic church, a tapering finger on a fat hand beckoning to the ships that came sailing into the Bay of Dublin.....

Nearer than the thick-bellied steeple gleamed the rosy red lights of the railway signals, looking like fiery red buttons on the dark-blue coat of our lady of the night, with the sickle moon a dull gold curb in her night-blown hair.
(pp. 349-50)

From Pictures in the Hallway ^{the} dual symbolism passes into Red Roses for Me, where the two separate symbols are divided up. The symbol of work goes into the setting of the Breydons' home in Acts I and II.

In the same wall, towards the back, is a large, tall, window, nearly reaching the ceiling, and, when one is in front of it the top of a railway signal, with transverse arms, showing green and red lights, can be seen.

(Collected Plays Vol. III p.127)

The symbol of the spire goes into Act III in which "the tapering silver spire of a church" (representing ecclesiastical authority and the church's condonation of the status quo), and "Nelson's Pillar" (representing the authority of the state) watch complacently over the mean streets of Dublin and the mean lives of its inhabitants, and are particularly emphasised at the darkest point in the scene, just before Ayamonn communicates his transforming vision to his fellow-Dubliners:

(The scene has now become so dark that things are but dimly seen, save the silver spire and the crimson pillar in the distance; and Ayamonn's head set in a streak of sunlight, looking like the severed head of Dunn-Bo speaking out of the darkness.

(Collected Plays Vol III p.198)

And The Bishop's Bonfire too makes use of the symbol of a "church spire" the "highest" "of the town's buildings" which "thrusts itself up, looking like a stony stork rising from a fleecy nest of cloud" (The Bishop's Bonfire pp 1-2)

The use, in the setting of The Drums of Father Ned, of pictures on the walls to denote the religious and/or political beliefs of the owners of the room can be traced back right through the autobiographies to the Casside home in I Knock at the Door which boasts the treasured possession of "a picture of Queen Victoria in her coronation robes" (p.29) Such a device is used dramatically in The Star Turns Red with its contrasting sketches of a "bishop's mitred head" and of "Lenin" (Collected Plays Vol. II p. 241), and occurs again in Acts II and III of The Bishop's Bonfire with the "big picture of a Pope which Reiligan says is a striking likeness of Pio Nino" (The Bishop's Bonfire p.47) The presence in the Binningtons' parlour of a portrait of Michael Collins - a negociator for Irish Home Rule and later a leader of the Irish Free State who was tragically killed during the Irish Civil War - links the setting of Father Ned with the historical Free State background and concerns of Inishfallen, which contains a tribute to Collins (pp. 79-80) who "wasn't a great man, but..was the makings of one" (p.79) While the picture of St. Anthony of Padua might be a reflection of the comment in Inishfallen that would-be exponents of Free State gentility were praying to St. Anthony for aid (p.131)

But the placing together of the pictures of Michael Collins and of St. Anthony, and the resulting symbolism of the alliance of the stage and religion in modern Ireland is The Drums of Father Ned's own. And, despite its very heavy reliance on previously established conventions the play does display creativity in its amalgamation of the various symbols, and in singling out certain symbols - notably the piano - for a degree of attention which they have not hitherto been accorded in their previous appearances in the autobiographies

and plays. Indeed the piano, which had simply been just one detail among many in the general setting of Dovernull's room and Reiligan's house, becomes in the opening sequence of Act I, a focal point of attention almost comparable in significance to the "top hat" of Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy.

But on the whole the ^{symbolism of the} setting of the play relies upon the accumulation of minutiae rather than upon the exploration of individual distinct images. And on the whole this is true of all aspects of the play, for even the historical images of Ireland which the play takes, as it were, as wholes or as complete concepts, from the autobiographies, are, in one sense, only groupings of ^{myriad} interrelated "literary" details.

And the play does not confine its attention to one image of Ireland or even entirely to one historical image of the country.

And so it seems that in his "Microcosm of Ireland" O'Casey is giving a "Microcosm" of his work - or rather, of the autobiographies, and of the conventions in his work to which the manifold relationships and interactions between the autobiographies and the play have given rise.

It is particularly fitting that such a microcosmic or kaleidoscopic survey of the autobiographies, and of the autobiographies in relation to the plays, should take place within the first play to be written after the completion of the autobiographies. And something of the eclectic zeal of The Drums of Father Ned does seem to be accounted for by its position within the order in which O'Casey's plays and autobiographies were written.

Certainly, although O'Casey's three last plays continue to draw upon the autobiographies, the autobiographies' images of Ireland and the conventions which they inspired or perpetuated, they do not contain that overwhelming and luxurious cumulation and creative synthesis of details from the previous works which in effect, in itself, virtually constitutes The Drums of Father Ned.

Chapter Sixteen

Behind The Green Curtains -- Figuro in the Night

Written in 1958-1959¹ and published together in 1961² Behind The Green Curtains, Figuro in the Night and The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe were, as it transpired, to be O'Casey's final plays. Like the three one-act plays -- Hall of Healing, Time To Go and Bedtime Story -- which were written together when he was working on the fifth autobiographical volume, they are each quite different in nature, and yet each are, in their different ways, very much products of one specific point in the author's integrated career as playwright and autobiographer. There is even, perhaps, some analogy between the two points in the scheme of his writing career at which these two groups of plays were written. The dramatically uninspiring nature of Rose and Crown, which was being written contemporarily with the three one-act plays, caused the author to revert back to previously written autobiographies for inspiration and material for them. And the prior completion of the autobiographies as a whole and, with it, it seems, the complete drying up of a contemporarily flowing source of potentially inspirational material for the plays, had, likewise, forced the author back to previously written autobiographical volumes in order to find origins and substance for his three last plays.

But, in that they are able to draw upon the complete sequence of the

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1. In her book Sean p.271 Mrs. O'Casey writes that while she had been in New York (to see an off-Broadway production of Cock-a-Doodle Dandy and a Broadway production of The Shadow of a Gunman) O'Casey "had been working at home on his play about Irish religious bigotry, Behind The Green Curtains." Cock-a-Doodle Dandy was produced in New York in November 1958. Later Mrs. O'Casey refers to a visit to London in 1959 in which O'Casey met Peter Hall and "talked of the plays he was finishing, those in Behind The Green Curtains." (p. 274)
 2. Behind The Green Curtains, Figuro in the Night, The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe, London, Macmillan 1961. (to which refer all page references given in this chapter in connection with the texts of the three plays).

autobiographies, and at times do so, the last plays are both individually and collectively much more fundamentally akin to Father Ned than to Hall of Healing, Time To Go and Bedtime Story. But whereas in Father Ned there is almost a sense of a spontaneous and feverish celebration of the richness and variety of the symbols and themes which were embodied in the autobiographies that the author had just completed; in connection with the last plays -- written 1-2 years after the completion of Father Ned, and 3-4 years after the publication of the autobiographies -- there can be seen a much more studied, much more austere, even, perhaps, more disciplined, approach to the selection of suitable dramatic substance from the autobiographies.

Behind The Green Curtains completely turns away from the vision of a happy future for Ireland as suggested towards the end of Sunset and Evening Star and as depicted in The Drums of Father Ned. And it reverts to the pessimistic view of Ireland, as given in Inishfallen, Rose and Crown and most of Sunset. Perhaps this reversion is hardly surprising since The Drums of Father Ned, an optimistic play which depicted an Ireland free from clerical control, was, ironically, the cause of clerical opposition to the Dublin Theatre Festival, of which it was to form a part. However, Behind The Green Curtains, unlike the previous plays which presented a gloomy view of Ireland, focuses very particular attention upon the literary and artistic circles of Ireland.

Although this subject had never yet been touched upon in a play of O'Casey's, the autobiographies from Inishfallen onwards contain a series of passages (some of them whole chapters, others of them lengthy, or not so lengthy, episodes or comments) concerning various aspects of this subject. What the play does, it seems, is to draw the material and arguments of these passages together and to consolidate them within the play form.

The autobiographies' examination of the Irish literary world begins in Inishfallen and is presented through Sean's eyes. As now the author of plays performed at The Abbey, Sean is qualified to be introduced into the literary and artistic life of Dublin. But though initially prepared to revere the members of that supposedly exalted part of Irish society, he is increasingly disillusioned by and alienated from them. And an escape from Dublin's literary cliques is one of his prime motives in leaving Ireland. Perhaps it is no coincidence that in the play one of the characters who comments most directly upon the literary world in Ireland is a new comer to that world, who is first prepared to be very deferential to it, but is soon disgusted by it, and eventually leaves for England. The shared pattern of Inishfallen and the play in this respect is, ^{however,} not an autobiographical one concerning the events of Sean's experience and his personality, but simply a thematic one.

Reena Kitterman of the play, who is a nurse and a part time free-lance writer, distinguished herself in Scene I of the play by being the only one of a group of Catholic supposed intellectuals to have the courage to attend the Protestant funeral of a celebrated figure in the literary world. Means, however, are found of persuading her that she was wrong to do so and when she appears amongst the writers in Scene II it is as a representative from the Legion of Mary, helping to organise a protest march against Communism. At first she is obviously overwhelmed at finding herself in Chatastray's sitting-room and amongst such, as she thinks, distinguished intellectual company.

Reena. Good evenin', gentlemen. [she glances at the green curtains.]
How nice th' curtains are! What great thought and high ideas go floatin' round here behind these lovely green curtains!

. . . .

[shyly]. I'm a nurse, but I've tried my hand at writing a short story or two, but I got only a few accepted. [Resignedly] Never mind! It's lovely to come here, an' meet th' leaders of Ireland's thought.

Beoman. [sardonically]. You've come to th' wrong place, lady. Leaders of thought are elsewhere an' far away.

Reena [somewhat puzzled]. Eh? This is a proper place, sir, where th' writers come together; always brave, but will be braver from the grace given through the sacred Demonstration; braver than ever leading us all into th', into th', th' --

Beoman [ejaculatory]. Desert!

Reena. Pasture, sir, of wholesome, pure, and decent thought in poem, novel, an' play.

(pp. 44-5)

Although it is very unlikely that he should ever have held such idealised, and rather sentimentalised, views of Irish writers, Sean making his debut in Dublin's artistic social circle is a very shy and self-effacing figure. In the chapter "Blessed Bridget O'Coole", he, as the author of Juno and the Paycock, is invited to his first literary dinner -- a "ritual . . . held in a well-known Dublin restaurant bearing a sturdy poetical name". Sean accepts this invitation "To mingle with the elect people of Ireland in a ceremonial meal". But although he ^{is} "gently led" by Lennox Robinson and Arthur Shields "to a table for three, hedged safely in a corner of the room" he is still very much ill at ease, especially since, above the hum of conversation in the room, can be heard the "lordly lilt" of Yeats' voice holding forth on such topics as "Utumara, Brahmin Mohuri, birds born out of the fire, the two inflows to man's nature. . ."

(pp. 104-5).

It was all very mysterious to Sean, and he realised that he had not yet entered within the veil of the temple, and still was allowed to but stand reverent on the doorstep. So he did what he could to ingratiate himself with his hosts, eating what he thought was a badly-cooked meal as delightfully as he could; answering the questions put to him as wisely as possible; but discovering that he knew nothing about writers that were common names in the mouths of those who sat beside him. No, he had never seen or read The Life of Man, by Andreiev, or Falling Leaves, by Giacosa, or Monna Vanna and Joyzelle, by Maeterlinck; no, nor Benavente's Passion Flower, or Pirandello's Right You Are (If You Think So); while Sean whispered the names of Shaw and Strindberg, which they didn't seem to catch, though he instinctively kept firm silence about Dion Boucicault whose works he knew as well as Shakespeare's; afterwards provoking an agonised My Gawd! from Mr. Robinson, when he

stammered the names of Webster, Ford, and Massinger. So Sean hunched his shoulders, and sat silent, while the other two went in and came out with arguments about them and about the works of playwrights whose names Sean had never heard of, much less read.

(pp. 104-5)

Oddly enough, it is the poor quality of the meal itself which leads Sean to his first suspicions that all is not as it seems to be in the intellectual circles of Dublin:

Sean was awakened . . . by the voice of Mr. Robinson asking him if he had enjoyed the dinner, Sean dazedly and innocently replying with *The Rhubarb and Custard were Fine*, thanks, but the rest of the tings were badly cooked; to be startled by Mr. Robinson ejaculating *What a Terrible man you are to bring to Dinner!* Another shock for Sean, and he felt his face go red. What was there terrible in saying food was badly cooked? He based his remark on his mother's skill. . . . To this day, he remembers the soiled, sloppy look of the greens and the tattered, dry look of the meat served in the poetically-named restaurant. A ceremonial meal to Megarithma, or any other deity, wasn't going to make him say what he felt to be badly-cooked food was good and appetising. There was make-believe there, he thought, in spite of the solid aura of Keltic twilight that envelops the group.

(p. 106)

Once begun, the progress of his disillusionment is rapid and is fostered by his knowledge of the machinations of other writers to discredit Yeats, by ill-feeling against himself and his work amongst the actors and staff in the Abbey Theatre (pp. 146-7) (p. 156-7), by the ill-nature of critics and "intellectuals" who condemned *The Plough and the Stars* (p. 153-5), and, generally, by closer acquaintance with "Dublin's Gods and Half-Gods":

Sean was now walking tiptoe among the gods, but he had begun to doubt the divinity of most of them.

(p. 157)

Although he retained a life-long respect for Lady Gregory and Yeats, and a deep fondness for James Stephens (to whom *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy* is dedicated) he found on acquaintance that even the most eminent figures in

Irish literature "hadn't fully embedded themselves in the Nirvana of literature and art" (p. 163). It shocks Sean's idealistic artistic sensibilities to find that the major figures in the Irish literary world have a pronounced inclination to the reading of popular fiction in moments of relaxation: James Stephens and George Russell read Blood and Thunder novels, Lady Gregory reads love stories, Oliver St. John Gogarty reads the works of Edgar Wallace and Yeats likes "Wild Western Tales and Detective Stories" (pp. 163-6). And he finds that the minor figures are simply preening themselves amongst "the pitiable welter of small achievement" (p. 157). His increasing knowledge of the Dublin literary set only increases Sean's sense of isolation from it. In the chapter "Dublin's Glittering Guy" in which Sean attacks George Russell's reputation as poet and artist, and pronounces him to be "the fairest and brightest humbug Ireland has" (p. 167), Sean is much happier observing the fellow customers in the snug of The Blue Lion than at the literary soiree in James Stephens' flat:

He longed to say where he was, watching common life unfolding on the bench opposite; smoky life, catching the breath with a cough at times, but lit with the red flare of reckless vigour. It was the last time he would go to these gatherings. He liked James Stephens, loved him, really, and many fine people assembled there; but they were never themselves; they were ever on their guard; cautious and prepared, posing even, for there were few things in Dublin more conventional than the boastful, free-and-easy manners of its bohemianism. (p. 175)

And when attending a presentation, in Yeats' drawing room, of At The Hawk's Well, a play which O'Casey likens to an "artificial" flower (p. 233), Sean realises that the assembled artists and writers have failed in their duty to give leadership and to bring enlightenment to the nation's life and thought. And he prophesies that they will fail Ireland too in the future years which will be so crucial in her development as a nation:

No, this trifling group of the drawing-room would never deliver Ireland from what was coming -- they thought of themselves too much.

P. 235)

In the play Reena's disillusionment with Ireland's intellectuals is much more rapid in its progress, and much less complex, than is Sean's in Inishfallen. It is occasioned simply by her witnessing the inability of the writers to answer the attacks and jeers of the Communist Beoman, and of their cowardice in the face of the "pious" thugs, who break into Chatastray's house at the end of Scene II and who carry off Chatstray and his maid Noreen, who are to be punished for alleged immorality. But, about thirty-five years on from the situation in the literary world as described at the end of Inishfallen, her disillusionment brings her to realise that, as Sean prophesied, Ireland's writers and intellectuals have had neither the ability nor the courage to lead Ireland in her emergence as a nation. And in failing in such a duty they have betrayed the country and the people. This betrayal is expressed in no uncertain terms in Scene III when she tells a bruised and disconsolate Chatastray, who has not yet recovered from the beating he received at the hands of the thugs:

You got what you got through th' cowardice of your friends and your own . . . over th' years! I've looked back, an' now I remember things done which shouldn't ha' been done, but you nor your friends ever done a thing, ever said a word against them! No wondher Martin Beoman laughed when I said I had come to the leaders of Ireland's thought! Big fellas behind th' green curtains, but in the open a flock of scurvy sheep! Scant of wool an' scabby!

.

Chatastray. Please remember that it is you in th' form of a crowd that forces us to be what we were, what we are now.

Reena. You never tried to tell us how to think, what to do, where to go. Even th' louder murmurs of Beoman frightened youse all, as, indeed, I heard meself. Youse yourselves helped to form th' crowd that cry out against youse.

(pp. 60-1)

In Inishfallen Sean's knowledge of the intellectuals brings him not only an increasing sense of alienation, but also an increasing desire for exile and escape. When Irish critics maliciously attack his play The Plough, he is already thinking:

He would have to go a long way from the cliques of Dublin. But how could he escape? By living in the country or by crossing over to England. . . .

(p. 155)

While in conversation with A.E. at a literary gathering he

listened and ached and murmured in his heart, this man is not for me; none of these here are for me; you must go, Sean, go from them, for their people are not your people, neither is their god your god.

(p. 177)

And when he finally reaches his decision to leave for England he makes it clear that his physical exile will simply be a logical extension of his spiritual and intellectual alienation from, among other things, the literary life of Dublin:

It was time for Sean to go. He had had enough of it. He would be no more of an exile in another land than he was in his own. He was a voluntary and settled exile from every creed, from every party, and from every literary clique, fanning themselves into silence with unmitigated praise of each other in the most select corners of the city's highways and bye-byways.

(p. 231)

And as he sets out for England he thinks of how he is leaving behind him

the lesser writers . . . conceiving little things of verse chipped from the touch of little things timidly seen and carefully handled;

(p. 245)

In the play disillusionment with the intellectual life and standards of Ireland likewise lead Reena to thoughts of independence and spiritual exile -- not initially for herself, however, but for Chatastray, a Senator and patron of the arts, for whom she has developed an affection. She attempts to persuade him to free himself from the influence of the

church and of his fellow intellectuals, and to manifest this freedom by refusing to wear the sackcloth jacket of "Th' Third Ordher of th' Brothers Repentant" and by refusing to march in the protest march organised by the Church. The prospect of independence is, however, less attractive to the timid Chatastray than it is to Reena or was to Sean, and he argues:

. . . .If I refused, I'd be an exile from everything.

(p. 67)

In the event Chatastray, having seemingly agreed to live a new and independent life with Reena, quietly dons his sackcloth coat and sneaks away to join his colleagues in the march. Reena had previously mentioned to him the possibility of his moving to "th' North or England" if he found himself unable to face the consequences of non-conformity in Eire, but now, in the face of Chatastray's desertion, she is forced to think of exile, physical exile, for herself. Beoman, who has previously told Chatastray and Reena that he and Noreen, Chatastray's ex-maid, are leaving for England, now reappears, announces that he loves Reena, and wants her to go with him to England. Reena responds with amazing celerity and together they go "from this dead place". (p. 84).

If Inishfallen provides the play with a thematic pattern of progressive disillusionment with the literary world, a disillusionment which ends in exile, it does not, in itself provide the play with^a ready made and complete image of that world. It is within the play itself that O'Casey's comprehensive and definitive image of Irish literary life is created, or consolidated, and Inishfallen, Rose and Crown and Sunset each provide their own particular aspects to that image. And if The Drums of Father Ned created out of the autobiographies a microcosm of Irish life as a whole, Behind the Green Curtains is creating out of the autobiographies a microcosm of Irish literary life in particular.

Inishfallen for its part seems to make a contribution to the play's depiction of Ireland's second-rate artists. Although Sean moves amongst reputedly the highest circles of Dublin's artistic life, the "lesser gods" of Irish writing are often very much in evidence at the literary gatherings, and Sean seems to make something of a study of them:

As he listened to the crowd of the lesser gods, listened long, he began to see that their sneering, lofty conception of what they called culture, their mightly semblance of self-assurance in the most of them was but a vain conceit in themselves which they used for their own encouragement in the pitiable welter of a small achievement. Some of these were imitators of whom Yeats said, when he was asked to praise them, But was there ever dog who praised his fleas? He was learning by experience.

(p. 157).

It is precisely this sense of "the lesser gods'" vain conceit in themselves which they used for their own encouragement in the pitiable welter of a small achievement" that is conveyed in Scene II of the play as the second-rate, even third-rate, artists, pass the time by squabbling, and exalting their own image of themselves by denigrating the image of their fellows and of their patron, Chatastray. The author manipulates the dialogue of the play in order that each character might expose the hypocrisy and pretense of the others while preserving his own self-esteem:

McGeelish Glancing at books over the mantleshelf. All in Irish. He takes one down. Clean as a new pin. Never read a damned one o' them, I'll bet. Doesn't know more'n couple o' words.

Horawn. Do you?

McGeelish. No, but I don't go bellowing about that it must come back.

McGeera. Of course not. You bellow about higher things in your gabby-scabby gossip columns.

McGeelish. More interesting than Ó Horawn's pansy poems or your blank plays.

.....

Horawn. An' McGeelish thinks his gossip-column a more

exalted thing than my poems or your plays, McGeera!
It is, if a dusty clod of dung-soil'd grass be more
exalted than a ferny wood where violets are; or th'
crimson-berried wake robin; or th' sex symbol growing
beside th' Unicorn chained to th' Pomegranate tree on
th' tapestry hanging in th' Cloisters of New York.

McGeelish. Ah, for God's sake, O Hórawn, don't be ever-
lastin' bangling your poetic brows with home-made
bay leaves!

Bunny. Looka, I didn't come here to listen to yous
spittin' scorn over each other. I'm thryin' to
get into th' part of Barney Ó Hay I am to play
in next Abbey production, an' tho' I can't add to
me reputation, I have to keep it up.

McGeera. Jasus! What reputation?

Bunny. As a great Abbey actor. Oney last week, in
th' Dublin Presto Linal Sarrosel said I was th'
greatest actor in his livin' memory, an artist of
a wide fame.

McGeelish. A world-wide one from Abbey Theatre to Mooney's
pub!

Horawn. All actors of th' Abbey Theatre are famous or great
or world-known, or highly distinguished, known th'
world over.

(pp. 27-8)

The suggestion that Abbey actors have an inflated sense of their
own importance is reminiscent of Sean's squabbles with the Abbey company
over The Plough. And as is indicated in Inishfallen the pretensions of
such people to a love of and knowledge of the arts -- "their sneering
lofty conception of what they called culture" is founded in ignorance;
for on finding Renan's book Life of Jesus amongst Chatastray's possessions,
they know it only as a banned book which might "scorch your fingers"
(p. 29), and a photograph which, it later transpires, is of Goya's
painting The Maja, is excitedly hailed by them as a pornographic picture
of "Some English whore or other". (p. 29).

In Inishfallen too begins the depiction of several other aspects of

the Irish literary scene, although these aspects are to be elaborated upon in the later volumes of the autobiographies before finding their way into Behind The Green Curtains.

In Scene I of the play the "intellectuals", faced with the dilemma of whether or not they should attend a Protestant funeral, quarrel over the kind of leadership that Yeats would have given in such a situation:

Bunny [with a sigh]. If only we had Yeats with us now!

.

Horawn [impatiently]. Oh, Yeats again! We have to live an' fight without him.

.

Bunny. Ireland misses him sadly.

McGeera [angrily]. Misses him! How in th' name of God? Makes me mad to see people fancyin' thundher an' lightning in Ireland's sky when th' name of Yeats is mentioned.

McGeelish. He was always a swell. Never had a hard time like us. Half th' world bendin' th' knee to him. Yeats lived behind velvet curtains.

(pp. 18-19)

In the autobiographies O'Casey describes several conspiracies against Yeats, and makes it clear that antagonism towards the poet was founded purely upon jealousy. He makes it equally clear that "Sean", despite personal disagreements with Yeats, would have no part in the movements and manoeuvres to discredit him. He becomes aware of the hostility towards Yeats as soon as, in Inishfallen, he is admitted into literary circles:

Well, he'd take things easy; but he wouldn't be let take things easy. Some in Dublin hated Yeats, official Catholics feared him, and a group of younger writers disliked his booming opinions on literature and insubstantial things without any local habitation or name. A number of these last, headed by F.R. Higgins, the poet, Liam O'Flaherty and Brinsley Macnamara, the novelists, and Cecil Salkeld, the young painter, had started a Radical Club to nourish the thoughts and ambitions of the young writers, in

opposition to the elderly and wild speculation of Yeats and the adulatory group that trailed longingly after him. Some of these wanted to hook in Sean so that his newer influence might be useful in putting Yeats in his improper place.

(p. 106)

When approached by O'Flaherty, Sean refuses to join the campaign against Yeats, only to find later, when his play The Plough and the Stars is produced that Yeats' detractors have become his own detractors also:

Sean saw another side of Ireland's enterprising malice and envy. He was learning more in a few weeks than he had learned in a lifetime. The intellectuals began to send letters to the Press, and to A.E.'s journal, The Irish Statesman, condemning and upbraiding the plays . . .

(p. 153)

In Rose and Crown Sean is depicted as fighting his own battle with Yeats over the rejection of The Silver Tassie,³ but though O'Casey may resent and oppose Yeats' attempts to impose artistic judgements and theories upon him, he is careful not to denigrate the quality of Yeats' own writing. And he goes on, in a chapter entitled "The Friggin Frogs", to pay great personal tribute to Yeats and to pour scorn upon the mass of Irish Catholic critics and Catholic mediocre writers -- "The Friggin Frogs" of the title -- who had for long attempted, unsuccessfully, to discredit the poet; and who were now trying to heap ignominy on The Silver Tassie during its production at the Abbey Theatre in 1935.

In the course of the chapter quotations are made from several Irish reviews of The Tassie, and amongst these is one from The Standard which suggests:

. . . This play gives us a golden opportunity of improving our stage, and of reconsidering the value of our literary heroes who have been set up for our admiration. Mr. W.B. Yeats is no literary leader for a Catholic country. . . . No matter to what poetic heights he may soar, he will never lift us to the heights to which we aspire.

(p. 287)

3. See chapter above on The Silver Tassie.

And in its conclusion the chapter does actually move forward in time to depict an Ireland without the literary leadership of Yeats, for it describes how, on the death of this true champion of Irish literature, the minor writers and critics are left triumphant on the field:

But Yeats was stretched out, alone and motionless,
in a grave, thrust away in a farther corner of France.
The battler was gone from the field. His bow was
broken, and the scattered arrows lay where they had
fallen;

And, now, his young shield-bearer, F.R. Higgins,
has followed him: the riverside is lonely, and the
street where the Abbey is; the plains of Meath and
the fields of Connacht lack a lover.

.

The frogs were happier now; louder: Brékek
kékkek kékkek kékkek kóax kóax kóax.

(p. 291)

In that Behind The Green Curtains depicts the era of the "pious" and second rate Irish critics and writers, the era of "The Friggin Frogs" which only comes into its own on the death of Yeats, the Irish literary world of the play is essentially that of Rose and Crown rather than that of Inishfallen. But even after Yeats' death it seems that, as in the play, the old antagonisms against him lingered on, and in Sunset and the Evening Star an article written about "Sean" by a fellow Irish playwright, Denis Johnston, revives memories of ill-feeling between Dublin literary factions. The article,⁴ written after Johnston had visited Sean in Devon, stated that "O'Casey has a profound and deeply-rooted resentment for Yeats, in spite of the poet's efforts to help him". (^{Sunset} p. 521)

O'Casey's lengthy reply in the autobiography to this statement implies that Johnston himself had been involved in more than one organised campaign against Yeats -- campaigns which O'Casey had been invited to join, but which he would take no part in (pp. 521-2).

4. "Joxer in Totnes. A study in Sean O'Casey", Irish Writing, no. 13 (Cork, 1950).

Another unattractive aspect of the Irish literary scene, which forms part of the synthesis of the world of the play but which is treated as an individual subject within the autobiographies, is the power, as well as the poor literary quality, of ^{the} Irish popular Catholic Press. O'Casey believes the Catholic Press to wield its power with considerable malice, particularly in literary affairs. Journalists and clerics writing for the popular Catholic Press were prominent among "The Friggin Frogs" who harrassed Yeats and were also to become the sworn enemies of O'Casey, and throughout the play O'Casey depicts Chatastray and the writers living in mortal terror lest they should do or write anything to offend the sensibilities of Kornavaun, a reporter for the Catholic Buzzer.

Horawn comments on Kornavaun's power

Everything a man, anyway prominent, says if he dares to have a thought of his own, is given a slant by this Catholic Buzzer to make it appear to be sympathetic to th' Reds or giving hope and courage to anti-clerical feeling.

(Sc. II, p. 36)

While later Kornavaun boasts:

That's what we do to any atheist or Communist. We get them, don't we boys? We run them in!

(Sc. III, p. 75)

But, unfortunately for Chatastray and his friends, Kornavaun seems to have supernatural ability to sense when and where anything which might, according to his lights, be possibly interpreted as improper is taking place. It is the arrival of Kornavaun which, in Scene I, finally puts an end to any question of Chatastray and his companions attending a Protestant funeral. It is Kornavaun who creates trouble at Chatastray's factory over the issue of a Protestant employee marrying a Catholic girl, it is Kornavaun who is behind the abduction and punishment of Chatastray and Noreen for alledged immorality, and it is Kornavaun who, in Scene III,

slanders Beoman, the Communist engineer at Chatastray's factory, maligns Reena, and threatens Chatastray with financial ruin if he does not attend the Protest March.

The autobiographies' related discussion of the Irish Popular Press begins in Inishfallen, in the chapter "Silence" in which O'Casey describes and comments upon Dr. Walter McDonald's conflict with the Establishment in the Irish Roman Catholic Church:

Well, what of the catholic journalist? Is there anything so timid, so commonplace, so ready to say anything calculated to bring a pat on the back from a monsignor, so ready to dodge away from fact or from truth, as the roman catholic journalism of the roman catholic popular Press? . . .

(p. 218)

This would seem generally to sum up the journalism of Kornavaun, although if Kornavaun and his writing is "timid" in the acceptance of new thought, they are very far from timid in the denunciation of thought which they do not agree with.

But although the subject of the popular Catholic Press is broached in Inishfallen, it is left, it seems, again to Rose and Crown to elaborate upon it. And in, for example, a passage from the chapter "A Gate Clangs Shut" -- a passage typical of the thought and pre-occupations of this volume -- the author views the nature of the Catholic popular Press as symptomatic of the Catholic Church's general restriction, even suppression, of thought and of literature:

The catholic way? Is there a widening way to wider thought there; is there the fearless peering into life; is there the Roving immeasurable sweep of the imagination in art, science, and literature in the catholic way? The catholic popular Press is so shamelessly pietistic that no youngster honoured with a little intelligence would be caught

dead reading it. In one of their journals there is a weekly sprig of verse so dismally silly, so sentimental, so amazingly kiddish, that even Casabianca would look superb beside it. (p. 369)

And Sean of Rose and Crown learns to his cost both of the malice and of the power of Catholic journalism. For the Irish Catholic press subject him and his play The Silver Tassie to such vehement insults as: "Those who relish the rank sort of fare that Mr. O'Casey provides ought to be denied by law the opportunity of indulging their debased tastes"(p. 287). And clerical attacks upon Within The Gates, which were published in the newspapers, helped to lead to the banning of the play in Boston, and the subsequent cancellation of the play's projected tour of American cities (pp. 421-4).

But in the play and the autobiographies the author clearly regards Catholic journals and journalists as being the instruments of the power of the Church, or more precisely, of the power of the Bishops, rather than powerful in their own right. And another manifestation of the Bishops' assertion of authority over literature and the literary world in Ireland is censorship.

In Inishfallen he writes:

. . . backed by the bishops, the Censors in Ireland ban every book that has within it a single thought that might question the power their own invented tradition has given them; any idea that might bring discomfort into their own easy-going thoughts; anything that 'might be injurious'. Might be, not would be. Anything that they think shows the slightest sign of an arresting thought, and under it goes, banned for good. For fear souls might be lost, they say; but some have a hearty opinion that this fear is bred out of the fear of losing the monarchical power a bishop holds over his see. No wonder part of the catholic Press, in reply to an inquiry, said that it was part of Canon Law that anyone molesting a bishop was automatically excommunicated. (p. 217)

And in Sunset he describes the banning of several of his own books in Ireland, "exiles" from Ireland just as he was:

Bang! went the door against Purple Dust, . . .
 against The Star Turns Red; sent to go as exiles,
 along with the outcast Within the Gates, The Silver Tassie, and I Knock at the Door.

(pp. 559-60)

The play too touches upon the issue of the banning of books, for Kornavaun is reported to be questioning "why Mr. Chatastray kept friendly with them as had been condemned by The Buzzer, afther havin' their books banned." (Sc. II, p. 36).

The domination of Irish writing by the Catholic Church is not, however, without irony, an irony which is pointed out in both the autobiographies and the play. In Inishfallen O'Casey points out that

these bishops are the boyos who are continually roaring out for the preservation of 'the sacred rights and freedom of thought of the individual'.

(p. 221)

And this fact is turned to bitterly humorous account in the play when it is revealed that the hapless writers, who have been more or less blackmailed into taking part in an anti-Communist demonstration, are told that they are to march under the banner of "Free Thought in a Free World" (p. 46).

If all the autobiographies from Inishfallen onwards describe the ways in which the Church and the Bishops assert their power over Irish writers, it is, among them, the particular province of Sunset and Evening Star to attack the Irish writers themselves for meekly submitting to clerical authority. The cowardice of Irish writers in the face of religious pressures is one of the central themes of Behind The Green Curtains, and the play's presentation of the theme seems, itself, to owe something to Sunset.

In the "Rebel Orwell" section of Sunset and Evening Star,

"Cathleen ni Houlihan" brings most particular news of the literary scene in Ireland:

All our poets, dramatists, an' storytellers, are lyin' day an' night, flat on their bellies, just because a leadin' poet, Patrick Kavanagh, has declared that if only the poets an' writers fling themselves prostrate before God, an' admit their dire distress, they may be admitted into a new dispensensation; for, said he, all the great poets, says he, were, an' are, those who lie prostrate before God. Before God, it's terrible over there, over there, I'm tellin' yous, gentlemen.

-- Still, I think you should have stayed at home to keep the old flag flying, said Donal.

-- Oh, you do? Well, I don't. You go over, an' keep the old flag flyin', if you're that eager. You go over an' care for the poets lyin' prostrate. An' are they comfortable? They are not! It's just that they daren't get up. The nation's watchin' them from window and door. Bendin' over one of them, with a sweet Tipperary lass be my side, before I left to come here, I heard him mutter that the longer he lay the worse he got; an' when I poked him in the back with me snow-white wand, symbol of purity, tellin' him to get up, an' talk to the pretty lass beside me, an' be a man; he only dug himself deeper, moanin', oh, if it wasn't for the wife an' kids!

(p. 550)

Sunset's concept of "poets, dramatists, an' storytellers . . . lyin' day an' night, flat on their bellies", in a literal interpretation of Patrick Kavanagh's belief that "poets an' writers" should "fling themselves prostrate before God", is to reappear in the text of the play when, in Scene III, after an interview with the Bishop, Bunny, the actor, tells his literary friends:

Th' Bishop's wise words were better 'n any knock from a stick. Especially to you writers when he said that no writer can become great unless he always does it prostrate on his belly before God.

(p. 71)

And perhaps too Sunset's visual image of submissive Irish writers has inspired something of Scene I of the play. In this scene the antics of Lizzie and Angela, two middle-aged women with "the appearance of one-time

hawkers" (p. 3) seem to be juxtaposed with the antics of the intellectuals who are "jittering" at the gate of the Protestant Church. An analogy seems to be drawn between the comic irresolution of the women, who are definitely "lapsin'" in their

vow before th' figure of Saint Sinfoilio, that no liquor ud trickle over our lips till such time as the meetin' an' demonsthration for Cardinal Minteyzenty was over an' done with.

(p. 8)

and the comically presented irresolution of the intellectuals -- who are literally "swaying" "inwards . . . outwards again, . . . in, and . . . out again" (p. 24) in the gateway of the church -- in their decision to attend the funeral of Robartes.

Neither the vow of the women, now the decision of the artists holds firm, however. Angela and Lizzie go off for a drink and Kornavaun arrives to give Chatastray and his companions the pronouncement of the Archbishop upon the situation. As the scene ends it is the drunken women who are literally "lyin' . . . flat on their bellies", but there can be little doubt that their physical posture is meant as a comment upon the mental and spiritual "posture" of the so-called intellectuals, and that an association of ideas is linking the ending of this scene with Cathleen ni Houlihan's description of Irish writers in Sunset:

.
Kornavaun. Pull yourselves together! Get away from that gate, and forget it, boys. We've got to get ready for the Protest March.

∕A mutter of women's voices is heard outside, then Angela and Lizzie come staggering in, hardly able to keep their feet; they are arm in arm, supporting each other∕

Lizzie. Take a holt o' yoursel, willya! Don't go noseyin' here an' noseyin' there.

∕As they come in front of the group watching them, they collapse and fall, stretching out side by side on the ground. Lizzie makes one or two feeble efforts to rise, gives it up, and lies prone. A pause.

Lizzie ∕beseechingly∕. For Jasus' sake, Angela, thry to pull yourself together.

(pp. 24-5)

Certainly too, as "Cathleen ni Houlihan" suggests in Sunset, Irish writers, as depicted in the play, are far from comfortable in their submission to the Church. And they frequently plan to rebel. But all talks of revolt are strictly confined to the privacy of Chatastray's drawing-room -- preferably with the curtains drawn -- and are abandoned at the slightest hint of opposition. And opposition is never far away for, as Cathleen says, "The nation's watchin' them from window an' door", hence the necessity for "the Green Curtains". And so the artists of the play submit to the "fireside chat" with the Bishop, who "very softly and good-humouredly showed us the error of writing as we did" (p. 68) as they submit also to the "sackcloth jacket" of "Th' Third Order of th' Brothers Repentant" (p. 67), the garb in which they are to appear in the procession.

Another of Sunset's special contributions to the Irish literary scene as depicted in the play concerns the Irish Academy of Letters. Sunset gives the history of this institution and makes the author's opinion of it abundantly clear:

Yeats got a large medal from a Swedish artist, and was so dazzled with the design that he decided to form an Irish Academy of Letters. A circular, signed by some prominent Irish writers, was sent out, appealing to others to become founder Academicians or associate members. The circular came to Sean signed personally by Bernard Shaw. Shaw was asking a favour from Sean; the first favour ever asked, and Sean saw himself threatened with the hardest refusal he had ever had to face. Shaw had fought by his side in the Abbey Theatre controversy over The Silver Tassie, and now Sean had to refuse the one favour the great man asked of him. He didn't know what to say, though he knew what he would do -- refuse to join. Indeed, he had sent a laughing, critical article about the scheme to The American Spectator and its editor, George Jean Nathan, had replied, saying it would appear in the next number. Sean didn't like institutions powered to decide what was good literature and what was not good: they had

made too many mistakes before. They were inclined to look kindly on those who flattered their own work. He spent a long, long time thinking out a loving letter in whose core was a firm and final refusal.

(p. 614)

The play's dialogue reiterates and illustrates Sunset's argument that the Academy will be a snobbish, self-perpetuating and self-congratulatory institution. Also the fact that such writers as Horawn belong to it and such writers as McGeera secretly aspire to it, indicate that membership is by no means an honour confined to those whose work has achieved a standard of excellence; and more than justifies Sean's complete refusal to have anything to do with it.

Horawn. No rabblement for us -- sacred or profane.
We're above them, some of us even members of th'
Irish Academy of Letters.

McGeera [impatiently]. Aw, come off it, Horawn, balloonin' your little distinction of bein' an Academician of Irish Letthers!

Horawn [annoyed -- coldly]. It must be more'n a little distinction, or you wouldn't be damagin' people's ears with your cries for help to be elected.

.

McGeelish [mockingly]. Th' laurelled heads of your Academy are each laurelled be all the others!

Horawn. When th' two of youse reach th' level of quality required, youse'll be elected: at present, thank God, we've no place for scribblers.

McGeelish. Remember what the critic, Jim Gasper, said of your work, Horawn? That your poethry never felt th' earth; it dangled over it, slid down towards th' ground, glided up from it; never goin' far up, never touchin' down.

McGeera. Thank God, I'm not an Academician!

Horawn. How fortunate, for you were almost made one at our last meetin'.

McGeera [staggered]. Who -- me?

Horawn. Ay, you: you were beaten but by one vote.

McGeera [mollified and flattered]. Well, that was damned decent of the Academicians.

Horawn. Now that I know your feelings about it, I'll make sure your name doesn't come before us again.

McGeera [fluttered and anxious]. Oh, don't let a few hot an' hasty words put you out. After all, an Academy founded by Yeats carries an honour to its members. I can honestly say I deserve a place there.

.

(pp. 42-3)

And the precise status of the Academy, and of writers in general, in Irish society is amply illustrated by the position which is awarded to them in the protest march:

Youse, th' writers, headed by th' Irish Academy o' Letters, will folley th' Legion of Mary, with th' Band of the Catholic Boys' Brigade between youse.

(p. 37)

The lack of respect accorded to writers in Ireland was also expressed in Sunset before being expressed in the play. And in the "Outside an Irish Window" chapter of the autobiography the imaginary characters Mick and Dan, after bewailing the state of Irish writing begin to question: "What do we want writers for anyhow? They only create confusion." (p. 640).

Then follows a passage in the author's voice which can only be interpreted as his assertion of his artistic integrity in leaving the Dublin literary world. In terms of the scheme of the autobiographies it is a confirmation of Sean's decision, in Inishfallen to go into "exile":

Oh, St. Anthony Guide, St. Anthony Guide, is O'Casey to go back to this? To become, maybe, a Member of the Acodemy of Blethers. A high extinction. A good death, Bona Mors. Dignified defunctorum. Immortelles all. No flowers by request. Lay them to rest where the shamrock's growing. Little field of renembrance. Each little tablet over each little head. And you'll remember me. We will try; till we go our-

selves. Looka that one writing in the corner, stranger; from here you can see what is being written. 'Stay where you are, O'Casey, in England, where, if there isn't wisdom, there is sense, and some decency of manners.' And the other writing in the far corner -- read: 'All the new plays would have been better had they remained senseless on the typed-out paper. Dublin has changed so much! Pseudo-intellectuals, social climbers, racketeering politicians and businessmen, all squabbling and scrambling for power and position.'

(pp. 640-1)

This argument from Sunset that the state of the Irish literary scene confirms the wisdom of Sean^s/O'Casey's decision to leave Ireland is also picked up in the play, for Reena speaking, as she often does, directly in the author's voice, says to Chatastray, who is worried by the prospect of "exile":

As long as you have life, you can be exiled from nothing;

and tells him that the price of simply going along with his Irish colleagues will be a very heavy one in terms of freedom:

You'll be forever watched, for they'll never trust you. You'll never be able to take a step other than one in chime with theirs; never be able to venture a thought other than one looking lovely written on a three-leaved shamrock.

(Sc. III, p. 67)

Perhaps in some ways, the play, by drawing together the autobiographies' various and scattered references to different aspects of the Irish literary scene, is to some extent "fulfilling" the statement of these themes from the autobiography. But certainly it seems that in one respect the writing of Behind The Green Curtains was compensating the author for the "loss" to him of the autobiographical prose form after the writing of Sunset. For it seems that from Inishfallen onwards O'Casey had developed the habit of using the autobiographies as a medium through which to attack the Irish literary world and to assert, in the face of his personal critics, his thankfulness at being well out

of Dublin literary circles. With the completion of the autobiographies, however, one of the main channels of expression for these attacks on his enemies was closed to him, and perhaps he felt the need to express this particular vein of his resentment elsewhere. Hence, perhaps the derivation of the inspiration and substance of the play from the autobiographies, and hence, perhaps more certainly, the polemical tone of most of the dialogue of the play, and its complete subordination, to the dictates of theme, of anything which remotely resembles the portrayal of character.

The chief part of the legacy which the writing of the autobiographies and the autobiographies have handed on to this play is then, largely one of specific authorial opinions, and a manner of expressing these opinions in an argumentative and virtually direct fashion. And it may be significant that the funniest and seemingly most spontaneous and freshest part of the play is the Angela and Lizzie episode in Scene I, which, apart from the implications brought out at the ending of the scene, has in itself no intrinsic relationship with the autobiographies.

Not that the autobiographies do not inspire the play to some touches of artistry. In fact apart from the play's own "synthesis" of the various aspects of the autobiographies' Irish literary themes, the autobiographies, and the literary conventions which they helped to establish, seem to have inspired most of the artistry which the play possesses.

The climax of the play as Reena and Beeman depart for England, and leave a record of Tom Moore's ballad "I saw from the beach" playing in the darkness in the room "behind the green curtains", is one of the most dramatically effective scenes in the play, and it seems to derive inspiration from the closing sequence of Inishfallen in which Sean,

about to leave Ireland is reminded of sad verses from Irish ballads and songs (p. 245, 247). (The title and final words of the volume - "Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well! Forever!"-are themselves from a ballad by Tom Moore.) Reena's and Martin's ceremonial closing of the green curtains "We'll close th' world out together" (p. 84) denoting the shutting off of light and life from Ireland perhaps, in itself, recalls not only the convention of darkness closing in upon Ireland -- as seen at the end of Inishfallen, Cock-a-doodle Dandy and The Bishop's Bonfire, but also perhaps, a more specific image -- that of a curtain -- used in Inishfallen concerning Sean's "exile".

The Easter Rising had pulled down a dark curtain of eternal separation between him and his best friends; and the few that had remained alive and delightful, now lay deep, with their convivial virtues, under the smoking rubblement of the Civil War. It was getting very dark in Ireland, so his flight to London would be a leap in the light.

(p. 244)

The curtain symbolism of the play has, however, its own history in the autobiographies, and is, by the time it appears in Behind The Green Curtains a literary convention in its own right.

The idea of hiding behind curtains to escape from the world, as Chatastray and his friends do, occurs in the autobiographies as early as the "The Protestant Kid Thinks of the Reformation" chapter of I Knock at the Door in which cardinals, afraid of the tide of Protestant feeling during the time of the Reformation are said to have "hastened to hide behind the curtains" (p. 86).

In Pictures in the Hallway curtains, and the cloth they are made from, indicate social rank. In the opening passage of the volume, which describes rain falling over the whole of Dublin, the author describes how:

Behind heavy silken curtains, in happy looking beds,
slept the nicely night-gowned; behind tattered and
tumbled curtains, on muddled mattresses, gowned in
paltry calico or faded flannelette, slept the sisters
and brothers of the nicely night-gowned.

(p. 179)

And in the house of Dovergull, the presence of

heavy blue curtains on the windows, with lacy ones
nearer the glass, foaming with heavy tassels and
fringe,

(p. 285)

combines with the other details of the room to form an impression of
wealth and social privilege.)

Drums Under the Windows, however, when it picks up the imagery
of "curtains", uses it, as it was used in I Knock at the Door, to express
fear and a reluctance to become involved. It also now seems to suggest
a certain degree of furtiveness. Sean has tried to rally support for
Dr. O'Hickey, who is championing the teaching of Irish in the new Catholic
University, but professed Republicans refuse to join in the campaign,
lest they offend the Bishops. Sean comments bitterly to a "Sinn Fein
Republican":

go behind the curtain to work hard for your nation of
bishops and bobbies!

(p. 525)

The image is here associating fear and escapism with avowed nationalists
or patriots, and this association will be made again in the play. But
when the image of "curtains" appears next in Drums Under the Windows it
reverts to Picture's idea of curtains indicating wealth and privilege.
Watching the funeral of a worker beaten to death by the police during
the early days of the Irish Labour movement, Sean thinks:

Ay, you, . . . dotting the upper rich-curtained
windows with firmly brushed heads, who have lived far
from the life lived by the dead man, or from his own
life too. Light-years away from both. Eh, you, up

there, lean out a little more, and look a little closer. He can't hurt you now, and his body is quite clean.

. . . . Look over, look closer, ladies and gentlemen.

(pp. 606-7)

Social implications are again brought out in the image when it next occurs in Inishfallen. Describing the preoccupations of the rising Free-State middle class O'Casey writes

Every maunder of finer things who had his name in a bank-ledger, or hoped to have it there soon, now that Cathleen ni Houlihan had won back three out of her four beautiful green fields, was busy in a quiet, curtained room, the blinds well down, discussing and practising the arts of refinement when making contacts with eminent people, more eminent people, and most eminent people.

(p. 131)

But a little later in the same volume the nationalist associations of the image are revived, while earlier connotations of fear and escape become a sense of idealism which ignores the realities of life.

Criticising Madame Maude Gonne-McBride, the ardent nationalist, for knowing nothing of the real lives of the Irish people and for understanding little of poetry or of her ex-admirer Yeats, Sean thinks of her:

She forever sat within the folds of, or stood talking before, a velvet green curtain, and never thought to take a peep behind.

(p. 152)

The green colour of the "curtain" denotes nationalism or patriotism, and is a new development in the image, and one which is taken up in Behind The Green Curtains.

Meanwhile in Inishfallen the image occurs once more with its former implications of social prestige. On his way to Yeats' house in Dublin's exclusive Merrian Square Sean observes:

How stately the houses looked with their gleaming windows, the brightness of them muffled in the brief modesty of costly curtains, concealing secrets of private life from the eyes and ears of the street outside. . .

(p. 160)

The idea of the curtains hiding the concerns of the inhabitants of the houses from the world outside is a further important development in the image, and one of which the play will make use.

The next instances of the use of the image in the autobiographies, however, continue to link the image with the name of Yeats. In the closing chapter of Inishfallen the literary world of Dublin is presented in terms of

the group gathered here in Yeats's room, among
the richly-heavy blue curtains, the seductive settee
and cushions, the gleaming glass, and shiny silver; . . .

(p. 235)

Again the image suggests opulence and social prestige and exclusiveness, but its linking of these specifically with the literary world is yet another highly significant stage in the evolution of the image.

Rose and Crown continues the literary associations by connecting the image with Yeats and his mode of life and thought, while it also returns to the images former implications of isolation verging on escapism:

Did Yeats ever chronicle himself as sitting and
sounding out thoughts in a churchyard? Sean failed
to think of any reference to such a crowded isolation.
Death would have been too like death to him in a
graveyard. And yet the explanation of it was here and
it is that there is none; except that one who has died
ends his importance, while this one newly born begins it.
. . . Not among the dead, but among the living, Yeats
sought an answer to the riddle of death. Old mortality
had no interest for the poet; he sought out the newer
mortality within a room, having heavy curtains on the
windows, making himself a part of a circle of clasped
hands; the lights extinguished, the hymn sung, and a
diamond-tipped pencil scratching out words upon a
window-pane.

(p. 307)

And when a related image next occurs, it is the associations of escapism, even fear, which again come to the fore; for Yeats having abandoned the debate with Sean over The Silver Tassie, O'Casey comments:

. . . the poet decided to stay in his room with the
blinds down.

(p. 334)

In its last appearance in the autobiographies the image drops its literary connections and is used to denote unsuccessful, even futile, attempts at privacy. In Sunset and Evening Star a "stranger" being shown around post-war Dublin is told:

This is Sackville Street, sir, and that's Mr. Costello speaking outside of the Bank of Ireland, and he telling the world that Ireland's greatest need today is dollars -- can you see clear, stranger? And hear clear, too? Right: the curtains are drawn, but they're thin, and the window's wide.

(p. 638)

Before the ending of Sunset, heavy curtains, to denote Irish middle class opulence, had become part of the symbolic setting of The Bishop's Bonfire and of The Drums of Father Ned. And in Acts I and II of Father Ned the curtains were coloured green to denote patriotism. But the idea of hiding behind curtains, and the association of curtains with the literary world came to Behind The Green Curtains directly from the autobiographies. And it seems as if the play fulfils the vein of "curtain imagery" in the autobiographies, not only in that it focuses much attention upon it, but also in that it includes, and thus consolidates within one work, all the aspects of the imagery which had been explored individually, or in different combinations, at intervals throughout the six autobiographical volumes.

In Scene I of the play, the writers envious of Yeats attempt to disparage his reputation as a leader of thought by saying "Yeats lived behind velvet curtains" (p. 19). Although this has been said by Sean/O'Casey in the autobiographies, the irony of this remark by these writers becomes readily apparent in Scenes II and III when they themselves shelter behind the "Green Curtains" of Senator Chatastray's room.

The opening stage direction of Scene II describes these curtains: "The drapes, now pulled back, of the windows are of vivid green" (p. 26).

Initially the curtains, the colour denoting ostensible Irish patriotism, combine with the many other details of the room (such as "comfortable armchairs and settee", "a mahogany table", and "a photograph of Chatastray himself") to give an impression of Irish middle-class comfort, social prestige and materialism, such as was built up in the setting of Act I of The Drums of Father Ned.

When the text of the play begins to draw attention to the symbolism of the curtains, the first implication is that made in Inishfallen in connection with the houses in Merrion Square -- that of the curtains concealing the secret doings of those who live within. In the play Kornavaun insinuates that Chatastray and Noreen are having a love affair:

All correct an' cautiously coy while th' daylight's
here to see things; but when darkness hides things,
an' th' flimsy frills of night are worn, behind
green curtains th' handling sport begins.

(Sc. II, p. 33)

Only a little later the curtains are used to symbolise not only a desire for privacy but also, as originally used in the autobiographies, to denote a fear of the world. And the drawing of the curtains is developed into a ritual for Chatastray and his friends:

Chatastray. . . . Let's draw th' green curtains, an'
blind some of th' squinting eyes.

He slowly draws the curtains, almost keeping
time to the remarks made about them.

McGeera. Draw th' green curtains.

McGeelish. Fitly an' firmly, draw th' green curtains.

Bunny. To blunder th' eyes --

Horawn. Looking in at th' windows.

(Sc. II, p. 35)

A little later still the curtains are referred to in such a way as to suggest the exclusiveness of Ireland's intellectual and literary set -- just as in Inishfallen Yeats and his circle are depicted as ensconced amid the comfort and security of their "richly-heavy blue curtains":

Reena Kilternan enters the room.

Reena. Good evenin', gentlemen. She glances at the green curtains. How nice th' curtains are! What great thought and high ideas go floatin' round here behind these lovely green curtains!

(Sc. II, p. 44)

As Scene III begins the curtains are used once more to depict a fear of life and a desire to hide from it. Chatastray is cowering in his room after the beating given to him by the thugs, and

Although it is early daytime, the Green Curtains are still drawn, and now and again muffled sounds of life outside go across the room.

(Sc. III, p. 55)

Reena arrives and her new-found knowledge of the cowardice of Chatastray, and of his fellow intellectuals leads her to say:

No wondher Martin Beoman laughed when I said I had come to the leaders of Ireland's thought! Big fellas behind th' green curtains, but in the open a flock of scurvy sheep! Scant of wool an' scabby!

(p. 60)

In an attempt to compel Chatastray to face the world and his responsibility towards it she ceremoniously opens the curtains, just as he and his friends had ceremoniously drawn them:

Chatastray. We're not afraid to have our independent thoughts. Many a time, straight things have been said in this very room.

Reena. I'm sure o' that: well hidden behind th' green curtains! Th' windas shut behind th' curtains. None of th' brave thoughts, though, were let escape out into th' cool air of life. Well, let's pull th' green curtains back now, an' open th' windas.

She goes to the windows, and seizes one of the drapes to pull it back.

Chatastray hastily. Don't pull th' curtains back! Leave them as they are! Damn it, woman, don't be so fond of meddling!

Reena hesitating for a moment. It is day, Dennis, and each day brings a challenge. It isn't good to live an' move be candle-light when th' sun is out.

She sweeps one side of the curtain back.

Chatastray. No, don't Reena. Miss Kilterman,
don't

Reena /ready to pull back the second side/.
Face th' light of day! /She sweeps the second
part of the curtain back./ Now we can breathe
more easily, think more freely, for th' green
curtains are folded away. Now we'll open th'
window.

.

(pp. 62-3)

Chatastray begs Reena to close the curtains again, but she challenges him to perform that "ceremonial" himself (p. 64). For a little while he seems to respond to her appeal that he have courage, but soon he slips off to join his colleagues in the Protest March and Reena realising that there is no longer any place for her behind the "green curtains", decides to go to England with Beoman. But before they depart they decide "to leave the room as he'd (Chatastray) like to find it when he returns to the safety behind th' green curtains" (p. 84). The ritual in which they put out the light, draw the curtains, and "close th' world out" provides the culmination of the symbolism in the play and seemingly too provides the fulfilment of a vein of imagery in the autobiographies, in that it develops that imagery to its ultimate conclusion. For as the curtains finally shut out life and light from the room, and as Reena and Beoman leave for England, it becomes clear that the implications of fear of life and thought apply not simply to intellectual cliques or to individuals but to Ireland itself. Chatastray's room comes to represent the whole of the country, which is, in O'Casey's opinion, sheltering itself from the challenge and realities of the world by timidly hiding "behind the green curtains" of a comfortable patriotism and an unquestioning piety. And the result of this desire for isolation and escape is Ireland's decline into "this dead place" (p. 84) from which the young people flee.

And so it seems that the play fulfils a symbolic convention of the

autobiographies just as it fulfils a thematic convention of the later autobiographical volumes: for it brings together and consolidates all the various aspects of "curtain" imagery and symbolism which are found in the autobiographies, just as it brings together and consolidates the autobiographies' various themes concerning Irish literary life.

But beyond its very studied use of particular veins of theme and imagery in the autobiographies, Behind The Green Curtains does reveal something of a kind of "magpie" eclecticism in its use of little isolated details from literary conventions which have been established within, or with the aid of, the six autobiographical volumes. The magpie eclecticism of Behind The Green Curtains is not so great as to give the play the impression of being a microcosm of O'Casey's work -- the impression given in the Drums of Father Ned -- but it is quite definitely part of the nature of the play.

The picture of Parnell "a bearded man, thoughtful and stern" which is visible in the window of a house in the setting of Scene I of the play -- a picture "surrounded by a frame of vivid green bunting" (p. 3) -- recalls Pictures in the Hallway with its account of how the Casside household reacted to the news of Parnell's death:

Johnny roused himself from his book, and saw Archie take down from the wall a fine crayon drawing done by Michael some years before, which had won him a bob from his Da, a fine crayon drawing of Charles Stewart Parnell, his bold, black-bearded, cold, Irish, menacing face that hid a wild, unwearying, tumultuous love for Ireland A large lot of crape, remaining safely in the big box after his Da's death, was brought forth by their mother, who cut some of it into strips, hemming the edges, and these sombre scarves were wound round and round the picture of Parnell. Then, on a white piece of cardboard, Archie, in beautifully-formed letters, wrote down, Give My Love To My Colleagues And To The Irish Race, afterwards fixing it firmly to the bottom of the frame. Pulling over the little table as close to the window as it could go, he placed the picture on it, safely propped up by several volumes of Merle d'Aubignes History of the Reformation; and there stood Parnell, gazing out over the dim street,

as bravely and defiantly as he would ever look out upon anything again.

There he is now, said Archie, with defiant sorrow in his voice, lookin' out on the people who first denied, an' then betrayed him.

-- It's sore they'll miss him, before many days are over, said his mother; an' we may be sure, if there's such things as rewards goin', there's one for him, wherever he is.

(p. 189)

And Mrs. Casside's words are indeed prophetic in the light of the play's presentation of the modern "leaders of Ireland's thought" .

And if the setting of Scene I recalls a detail from the autobiographies, the dialogue of the scene too seems to pick up various fragments from the autobiographical volumes.

A conversation between the pious Basawn and the Communist Beoman turns into a dispute upon the subject of "miracles" including those of "Lourdes, Fatima, and Knock" (pp. 14-17) -- a subject previously dealt with in Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well and Cock-a-Doodle Dandy; and a little later, Beoman's sarcastic remark to the timorous Catholic writers that they should advance into the church "Like th' deer on mountain heather" (p. 19) recalls the use of this same line of poetry in the description of a nationalist pageant in Drums Under the Window (p.496), and in the depiction of the defeated priest and businessmen in the final act of The Drums of Father Ned (p. 104). And the issue on which the chief events of Scene I hinge -- the question as to whether Catholics should attend a Protestant funeral service-has previously been referred to in Inishfallen (pp. 223-4).

Senator Chatastray's sitting-room which provides the set of Scene II and III is clearly in the tradition of the description or depiction of capitalist's houses which began in Pictures in the Hallway and eventually

found its way into The Drums of Father Ned⁵. Some individual details of the setting -- such as a photograph of the master of the house, "a vase in which no flowers stand", "the spire of a church" as glimpsed through a window (p. 26) ^{also have their own long history within O'Casey's work .} the "Paul Henry landscapes", symbolising the cosy mediocrity of Irish art, have appeared previously in Bedtime Story, and their significance in O'Caseyan terms is explained in Inishfallen p. 169 and Rose and Crown (pp. 259-60). Other details of the setting, such as the "framed Abbey Theatre poster" and the "books, all in Gaelic" are now added to the stock Irish middle-class, capitalist setting in order to suggest not only cultural pretensions but that these pretensions go hand in hand with patriotism. It is soon pointed out by McGeelish that the books are "Clean as a new pin" and presumably unread (p. 27) and this links the play with the very ^{well} established O'Caseyan convention (it began in Kathleen Listens In, had been perpetuated in the autobiographies, and had been used as recently as the writing of The Drums of Father Ned) that pseudo-patriots are quickly exposed when their knowledge of the Irish language fails to measure up to the lip-service which they pay to it.

And so it is that stock themes from the autobiographies and plays as well as stock symbols are to be found in Scenes II and III of the play just as they are in Scene I, and the play contrives to take in such matters as the savagery of Irish Catholics in their repression of "immorality" (the "punishment" of Chatastray and Noreen),⁶ the Catholic hatred of Communism (p. 72) and the Catholic mistrust, even hatred, of women (p. 73).

Thus it is that Behind The Green Curtains draws upon, consolidates

5. See above.

6. See Sunset, pp. 647-8.

and re-expresses much material, many concerns and many traditions of O'Casey's work. Certain of its borrowings it makes very much its own and leads to a greater fulfilment than they had hitherto achieved. But its reiteration of many of the old autobiographical themes, its reversion to a gloomy view of Ireland and its use of certain of the already well-worn traditions leaves it open to the charge of staleness and to the criticism that O'Casey has, at this very late stage in his career as a dramatist, virtually nothing new to say. But if there is an impression of staleness about much of Behind The Green Curtain's treatment of the autobiographies' material, themes and influence, Figuro in the Night makes rather more creative use of the autobiographical volumes.

A play "In Two Scenes", probably written just a little later than Behind The Green Curtains,⁷ Figuro in the Night is a fantasy in the tradition of Cock-a-Doodle Dandy and Time To Go (or to go back earlier, of Kathleen Listens In); and its fantasy-form, assisted by its brevity, gives it a dramatic interest and an impetus which Behind The Green Curtains largely lacked. Also Figuro is richly and good-naturedly comic, whereas its predecessor was, apart from the "Angela and Lizzie" episode, devoid of any humour that was not heavily tinged with irony.

Moreover, Figuro is, like Father Ned optimistic as to the future of the youth of Ireland and so it moves beyond Behind The Green Curtains entirely gloomy, and in terms of O'Casey's work, already well-worn view of Ireland, and, like Father Ned fulfils in dramatic terms the spirit of optimism generated at the end of Sunset and Evening Star.

7. In her book Sean pp. 271,274 (see footnote 1 above) Mrs. O'Casey refers to the writing of Behind The Green Curtains before she mentions the writing of the other plays, which were to make up the same published volume. This would seem to suggest that Behind The Green Curtains was written, or at least begun, before Figuro and The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe.

But Figuro for all its fantasy, humour and optimism does treat deeply serious themes. And these themes are, as with the other post-autobiography plays, drawn from the heart of the autobiographies. But the fantasy and humour and the brevity of the play seem to prevent the usually somewhat stultifying prosaic, and heavily thematic influence of the late autobiographical volumes from weighing down the dramatic interest of the play itself -- and this is a fate from which not only Behind The Green Curtains but even The Drums of Father Ned had not entirely escaped.

As do the other post-autobiography plays Figuro makes use of, indeed very largely depends upon, traditions and conventions which have evolved gradually through the writing of the autobiographies, and through the interaction of those autobiographies with the plays. But the move away from the flamboyant eclecticism of The Drums of Father Ned towards a more specialised selection and more sparing use of the images and themes of the autobiographies -- a trend that began in Behind The Green Curtains -- seems to develop further in Figuro in the Night.

Like most of its predecessors from Cock-a-Doodle Dandy onwards Figuro derives much basic material from the presentations of Ireland and Irish life in Inishfallen, and it draws too upon the "Outside an Irish Window" chapter of Sunset and Evening Star. But, as did Behind The Green Curtains, it focuses largely upon one specific aspect of those presentations. The main preoccupation of Figuro is the puritanical Irish attitude to sex, and in the "Dedication" the author "prayerfully and solemnly" offers the play in the cause of "what is known as 'The Ferocious Chastity of Ireland'" (p. 87).

For the stage-set of the play, and for the action and significance of the play's opening sequence, he seems quite clearly to turn again to

the Athenry episode of Inishfallen. This episode had, of course, already seemingly exerted important influences upon Cock-a-Doodle Dandy and the Bishop's Bonfire in the presentation of their heroines, and might have been responsible for the microcosmic country-town setting not only of those plays but ^{also} of Time To Go, Father Ned and Behind The Green Curtains. But its relationship with the symbolic setting and of the opening sequence of events of Figuro seems especially precise.

As in Sean's encounter with the girl in the Athenry episode,⁸ Figuro begins with the appearance of a young girl in a drab and deserted street.

A street of one - or two-storey houses . . . The houses are dark, the blinds down, and no light showing, save in one window in the lower part of the centre house. The blind is down, too, over this window, but it is of thin material, and shows the shadow of a young girl standing or sitting close by. Once, she pulls the blind aside, and tries to peer out into the darkness; then lets the blind fall back again into its place. The street is lonely-looking, and no sound is heard. It is late evening, and a pale moon over the house gives a ghostly glow to the street. A few moments pass, then the door of the centre house opens, and the Young Girl stands within its frame, clearly seen by the light shining from the hall. She is pretty, but her face is pale and more worn than her young years should show. She is dressed in a bright-red skirt, a black jumper showing a white throat and part of a white bosom; she wears black stockings and black shoes. She has a worried look, and looks up and down the silent street.

(p. 89)

The Young Girl of the play is related to "young girl" of the autobiography not only in her prettiness, but also in her anonymity -- which, as with the girl in Inishfallen, readily suggests that she is representative of all young womanhood -- and in the impression too that the life of each has been harder than her beauty warrants. The hands of the girl

8. For an extensive quotation from the text of the Athenry episode see the above chapter on Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well and Cock-a-Doodle Dandy.

of Inishfallen "looked rough, telling him that hard work was part of the young girl's portion", while the girl of the play "is pretty, but her face is pale and more worn than her young years should show". Most of all, however, the two girls are related, as the dialogue of the play very quickly reveals, in their "longing for life".

However, O'Casey has not simply transposed the Athenry incident into the play, but rather he has re-created it, adding new dimensions and new symbols to it, and expressing the old significances more theatrically and more explicitly.

As the curtain rises "the tune of the chorus of 'Love's Old Sweet Song' is sounding, faintly at first, then clearly, fading away again when the characters begin to speak and, maybe, a voice or two singing it in the background." (p. 89). Not only does this song, replacing perhaps the ominous sound of the muffled funeral bell which accompanies the Athenry incident, itself suggest that romance and longing might be in the air; but the theatrical device of opening the scene with music in this way suggests a touch of fantasy and that magic too, as well as romance, might possibly be abroad in the night. Another modification to the autobiographical incident is that the play is set not in an old country town but "in a district just on the environs of Dublin; a new district, part of the city borough." (p. 89) This change in setting seems, initially, particularly surprising since a chief influence of the Athenry incident upon previous plays seems to have been in connection with its setting in a country town as opposed to in Dublin. But Figuro is not set in the centre of the city of Dublin, and by locating the play in a new suburb on the very edge of the city the author is making something of a new development in his plays, and in doing so gives Figuro a rather more "modern" atmosphere, and a "modern" theme that life can be just as

stagnant in a modern^{sub-}urban environment as it can in an old rural one.

A further significance which was not present in the Athenry episode but with which the author endows the setting of the play concerns the two war memorials:

An Obelisk to the memory of men who fell in the Great War stands at one end of the street; a Keltic Cross to the memory of men who fought and fell for Ireland stands at the other end.

(p. 89)

These reminders of Ireland's brave and turbulent past, and the Young Girl's comments, soon after the play begins, about the youth of the men who died for Ireland (p. 90) might owe their place in the play to the autobiographies frequent references and tributes to the Irishmen who died in England's service, and to Ireland's dead heroes -- references and tributes which in themselves might reflect The Plough and The Tassie. Also both plays and autobiographies contain symbolism or imagery concerning war memorials. There is a war memorial in the park-world of Within The Gates, while Sunset and Evening Star contains the comment:

Only today, as this is being written, a memorial was unveiled to men who died in the First World War. Memorialising only half done when the tide of the Second World War swept over the work. Looks like, if generals had their way, the tide of a Third World War would sweep over all before men had a real chance to see what the last war looked like. So we hang together as best we may, going through a life that has become a corridor of war memorials, built in honour of the young. . . .

(p. 659)

And the preramble of The Drums of Father Ned has, as part of its setting a Keltic Cross, dazzling in its whiteness, . . . its symbol silent now, and near forgotten (p. 1).

The first action in Figuro -- the girl's pulling aside of the blind -- is, too, an addition to the Athenry episode and momentarily

recalls the symbolism of open and closed curtains in Behind The Green Curtains -- symbolism which, in its turn, developed from a series of images through all six volumes of the autobiographies. And as the dialogue of the play begins it becomes clear that O'Casey has, in Figuro, made one more adaptation from the Athenry incident and has added a whole new dimension to it. The adaptation is that the "Young Girl" of the play, does not remain silent like her counterpart in the autobiography, but expresses her own emotions and longings in speech and also in song. The new dimension is that in expressing her thoughts and emotions she refers to "a curious feelin' of delightful hope" (p. 90) -- a hope which is certainly not to be found in the Athenry incident.

Appearing in the frame of the doorway of the house the Young Girl of the play remarks:

Ne'er a one in sight. No one goin' up the street, no one comin' down it. Silent night, unholy night; yet me heart is warm with a curious fellin' of delightful hope. [She sings]:

The houses are empty, the night it is fallin',
Not a child in a house either silent or bawlin';
There isn't a single bird even left callin',
Since all have gone off to the fair.

[She looks about her again.] Not a louse stirrin'.
[She looks toward the Keltic Cross standing to the right.]
Keltic Cross to the memory of three heroes who died for Ireland. [She looks towards the six-foot Obelisk to the left.] A pillar or slab to the memory of the twenty men who died for England on Flanders field. All near kids, an' not one of them ever got a chance to whip a girl off her feet and lay her down flat in a silent nook to -- Saints above, what am I thinkin', what am I sayin'!
[She sings again]:

My Johnny, he wanted to stay here an' mind me.
But in what state o' dhress would me ma' n' da find me?
They'd hustle me inta me room, an' then bind me,
When they hurried home from the fair.
Dear me, what can the matter be?
Dear, dear, what can the matter be?
I wish Johnny was back from the fair!
I've promised my heart a time of good kissin',
kissin', good kissin';

With nothin that's lively an' lovely left missin',
When Johnny comes back from the fair!

She begins to close the door.

The singing of the girl in the play and the hope which she expresses may, however, themselves arise as a result of a synthesis, in the symbolism and opening sequence of Figuro, of the Athenry incident with a particular passage from the closing chapter of Sunset.

In Sunset in the midst of an account of various aspects of life good or gloomy, the author suddenly says:

Ah, some young body singing in the house of life!
Sighs and songs neaver leave it. Beside the sigh,
there is always the song. A young heart full of
golden nonsense singing the challenge of love to any
power in the path of a maid's way with man.

A sour-soul'd cleric, passing near,
Saw lovers by a rowan-tree;
He curs'd its branches, berries, bloom,
Through time and through eternity.
Now evil things are waiting where
Fond lovers once found joy,
And dread of love now crowns th' thoughts
Of frighten'd girl, of frighten'd boy.

The rowan-tree's black as black can be
On Killnageera's lonely hill.
And where love's whispers once were warm,
Now blows a wind both cold and shrill.
Oh, would I had a lover brave
To mock away its power,
I'd lie there firm within his arms,
And fill with love one glorious hour!

Then branches bare would leaf again,
The twisted ones grow straight and true;
And lovers locked within its ken
Would nothing fear and nothing rue;
Its bloom would form a bridal veil
Till summer days were sped,
Then autumn berries, red, would fall
Like rubies on each nestling head.

The singing heart. The young may-mooning. Oh,
foolish over and foolish lover's lass, know ye not
that love is corrupt with the corustcation of original
sin? A sense of beauty at the sudden sight of some
image; image of cloud, flower, fern, or woman, lingers
less than a moment. Silence the sigh, for man has made

many an everlasting thing out of a moment of time.
 The lover and his lass are for ever acting on the
 stage of life, and Marlowe's glimpse of fair
 Helen's beauty didn't die with him in a tavern
 brawl. The primrose's gentle yellow blossom dies;
 every season a last rose of summer sheds its petals
 on the cynical earth; but the rose is always with
 us, and the primrose blooms again.

(pp. 655-6)

The concept of "some young body singing in the house of life! . . .
 A young heart full of golden nonsense singing the challenge of love to
 any power in the path of a maid's way with a man" certainly suggests the
 opening sequence of the play with its Young Girl emerging from the house
 to sing her O'Caseyan adaptation of "Oh, dear, what can the matter be".
 And, by superimposing the imagery and spirit of the passage from Sunset
 upon those of the Athenry incident, it seems too that O'Casey has created
 for his setting of Figuro a symbolic "house of life" -- the house in which
 the young girl lives, and to which, at the end of the play, her lover
 returns to become garbed in his "golden coat" representing "Th' golden
 apples of th' sun!" (Sc. II, p. 121).

And the parallels between the passage and the play continue as the
 play advances, indeed continue throughout the play.

The supposedly stern warning in the passage: "Oh, foolish lover
 and foolish lover's lass, know ye not that love is corrupt with the
 coruscation of original sin?" contrasts solemnly with the "young heart's"
 song. And such a contrast between natural longings and a sense of sin is
 made in the play when the young girl, after singing her song, returns to
 the house and leaves the stage to an Old Woman and Old Man who recall
 with melancholy satisfaction how an overwhelming sense of sin had, in
 their youth, saved them from the perils of romance and marriage:

Old Man. Good-looking ones, peace on their lips, fresh in
 the dew of younger years, came knocking at me door,
 even tapping at me window, but I kept to me prayers,

and used the ribbons bought for some of them as markers in the holy books I read to provoke a sound contrition. I was a great and mighty wondher to all them who lived around me.

But as in the song in the autobiography, and in keeping with the mood and theme of the passage as a whole, young love cannot be stifled, for the Young Girl twice interrupts the old people's gloomy recollections and dialogue with her singing of her challenging song in the "house of life" (pp. 98,102);

Old Woman. I hope that the commotion stirring somewhere in Dublin tonight means another step away from where we once were.

Again the window of the house is opened, and the half-figure of the Young Girl appears, looking out into the street, as she sings a verse softly:

With love in me heart an' dear Johnny beside me,
I'd dare an' I'd do; I'd do an' I'd dare;
He'd be welcome to ruffle the saucy blue ribbon
That tied up my bonnie brown hair.

She looks out for a moment, slowly closes the window again, and disappears from view.

Here the tune of the chorus of 'Love's Old Sweet Song' is heard, not loudly, and it goes on till Scene ends.

Old Man. You see? Still wailing for the blue ribbons. And you, yes, you would sanction and sing over the departure of all that is holy, all that has flowed from safe tradition, of all that is of good report.

(Sc. I, p. 102)

The play's general spirit of optimism triumphing over gloom is, of course, in keeping not only with the "house of life" passage from Sunset, which deals specifically with life in Ireland but with the closing of the "Outside an Irish Window" section of Sunset, and, indeed, with the closing pages of the volume as a whole. And O'Casey's advocacy of youth, love and life, although not their triumph, is to be found widely in the autobiographies from Inishfallen onwards, as well as widely in the plays written contemporaneously with, or after, those volumes. But the impression that this particular passage from Sunset did exert an individual influence on the thought of Figuro is suggested by the play's use of images of regeneration and of a particular

mode of thought that are to be found in the passage.

The "rowan-tree" in the autobiography's song (a song which in itself recalls something of the imagery and sentiments of O'Killigain's and Avril's dialogue about "the thorn tree" in Purple Dust⁹) was once the haunt of lovers but has been blasted by the curses of a clergyman (that is, by the pronouncements of the Church). But if the now "frighten'd girl" and "frighten'd boy" could summon enough courage to become lovers again, the branches of the tree would straighten and burst into leaf, flowers would form and, in time,

autumn berries, red, would fall
Like rubies on each nestling head.

In Scene I of the play the Young Girl has expressed her determination that she and the Young Boy are to become lovers, and, accordingly the opening stage direction of Scene II states that:

The bare trees of the former scene are full
of foliage, and many-coloured fruits, shining
like lighted globes, hang from some of them.

(p. 104)

The stage effect in itself suggests too the influence of Time To Go when barren trees burst into leaf and "illuminated fruit" with the escape of Widda Malone and Kelly. But the line of thought in Figuro, that of regeneration of life through young love, is precisely in keeping with that of the autobiographical passage, whereas it is only very generally related to the themes of Time To Go.

Bearing in mind the many other correspondences between Figuro and the passage from Sunset it can hardly be coincidence that in the dialogue of Scene I the Old Woman actually speaks of lovers "under the berried

9. See chapter on Pictures in the Hallway -- Purple Dust -- Red Roses for Me above. It is possible that Purple Dust for its part, derived the inspiration for its dialogue about the thorn tree from "The Hawthorn Tree" chapter of Pictures in the Hallway.

bushes" (p. 103). And this dialogue between the Old Woman and the Old Man seems also to reflect the passages thought, that regrets for the transience of life must quickly be stifled, since "The lover and his lass are for ever acting on the stage of life". For when the Old Man gloomily says:

Be it less or more, or soon or slow, to
that same lot, however mean or high,
Time leads safe on to the grave.

The Old Woman instantly contradicts him with the words:

Life with a lover and his lass sits
singing on the tomb, and mocks the stone.

(p. 101)

Apart from its direct influence upon the play, the passage from Sunset might too be responsible for bringing Figuro into touch with influence from other parts of the autobiographies. The passage refers to "the coruscation of original sin" and perhaps this suggested the inclusion in Scene I of a long passage about the original sin of Adam and Eve. But if the inclusion of this subject was suggested by the "house of life" passage, the substance of the part of the dialogue which discusses the matter seems to have come partly from other sections of Sunset, and partly from Drums Under The Windows.

In the "Cambridge" chapter of Sunset Sean / the author expatiates upon the average Catholic's misunderstanding of the term "original sin" and of the clergy's interest in fostering this misunderstanding:

In spite of the church's statement that disobedience was the source of original sin, most ordinary catholics hold that original sin was created by Adam acting the goat with Eve, a belief that gives the priests the delight of having it both ways; for having the desires of sex within themselves, at times voraciously, they can, at the same time, lash out ignorantly and venomously at anyone else showing the slightest sign of

it in conduct, book, or play; and this belief hands to the clerics the gift of giving the laity permission to indulge in it, after a few mumbled words have been spoken in a church; a gift that pours a handsome shower of fees into the wide-open pockets of the clerics.

(p. 502)

And a little later, in the "Deep in Devon" chapter, he writes ironically as if he believed that sex did cause the loss of the Garden of Eden.

. . . Adam was needed into life. Adam filled a vacuum. All he had to do was to keep his feet, and all would have been well, and all would have gone on living. God, what a grand world it would have been! The brontosaurus would have been a pet, and pterodactyls would have been flying in and out of our windows, chirruping just like robins! But the man had to fall down. The woman done it, sir -- pushed me down; caught me off me guard. Couldn't keep his feet for all our sakes; fell, and ruined the whole caboosh.

(p. 514)

The Old Man of the play has clearly been brought up with such theological misunderstandings and with a subsequent mistrust of women and sex, for, hearing the Young Girl's song, he complains:

There 'tis! We all know what happens when he ties up her bonnie brown hair! That's what'll shatter the counthry and toss her soul to perdition. Our life-long misery began when Adam tied a blue ribbon on the bonnie brown hair of his Eve. (ScI p-99)

But the Old Woman, curiously enough, does not share his views.

The girl's song has affected her strangely and, in recounting her own youth, ^{she} has suddenly become full of regret over the ^{sense of} fear which destroyed her potential happiness. Now suddenly she becomes, like most of the women in O'Casey's plays a courageous advocate of the life-force. And in defending Adam and Eve's leaving of the Garden of Eden she uses arguments akin to those used by O'Casey's "Eve", the archetypal woman, herself in the fantasy episode about Eden which occurs in Drums Under The Windows. The sympathy, in spirit and thought, between the Old Woman and "Eve" is so striking that a direct relationship between Figuro and Drums Under The Windows is certainly indicated.

In the play the Old Woman, contradicting the lamentations of the Old Man for the loss of Eden argues:

Adam an' Eve had to sthrike out for themselves, hadn't they? They couldn't easily forever sit undher a bread-fruit, undher a banyan, undher a bamboo tree, in a garden, eating grapes, could they?

Old Man. Oh, woe, woe,

Old Woman. Well, welcome woe, for it took man off his guard and sent him out to seek things and get things done. The fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil set us free from coddling, and gave us the pain and the power to do our own thinking, walk on our own feet; clap our own hands at what ourselves had done. The lush laziness of the garden lovely was sappin' our life away.

/dreamily/. Adam an' Eve had to rise up and get away from the thymy scents and the spicy flavours flowing from the trees sweating sweet gums that took movement from the limbs and sent the mind into a drowsy silence.

Old Man. Hush, woman, I tell you! God's favour was in the spicy breezes, and His voice spoke from the drowsy silence.

Old Woman. They needed a fresher air to breathe. Tired of an everlasting life within an everlasting lullaby. Away from the floating scents of musk to the hardier smell of sea, of heather, and of a pinewood. To hear other voices than God's and their own.

.
Man chose the distress of sweat on his face rather than oil of balsam anointing a white skin. That was the way it went, and angels were left flying over an empty garden, for man was gone; left the mighty beat of their wings for the gentle whirr of the linnet's wing over his head in the dusk of an evening.

Old Man. With death for the linnet and death for the man.

Old Woman. Death for this man, death for that woman, but greater life for all.

(pp. 99-101)

The Eden of Adam and Eve in Drums Under The Window is a primeval swamp, rather than a fragrant garden, but still it represents security; and Eve's desire to seek a more challenging and independent, and ultimately better, life elsewhere is exactly as the Old Woman describes in the play. And, as in the dialogue between the Old Man and the Old Woman, so in the dialogue between Adam and Eve, it is the woman, not the man, who questions the accepted order of things and who, in searching for a finer way of life asserts the courage and nobility of humanity.

-- We'll go from here! said Eve suddenly. Here we shall never be more than what we are, of the earth earthy, and nurtured in slime; and she girded herself into her robe of lizard skin.

-- Go from here! echoed Adam. Are you mad, woman? Go from the softness and security here to where things may be worse?

-- To where things may be better, responded Eve quietly. I've a child coming, and he won't be born here. There will be others too; and in higher ground and purer air they can start to build a Paradise of their own, safer, firmer, and more lovely than anything even a God can give. So on we go, too human to be unafraid, but too human to let fear put an end to us!

.

-- Let us be going, said Eve, fixing her cloak of skin more closely around her. By another and more dangerous way, we shall come to a finer and a firmer life. Are you afraid? she asked of Adam, seeing him hesitate, and the cold dew of fear beading his forehead; are you afraid?

-- Not with you, Eve, he replied, gripping tightly his stout, horn-topped staff; not with you, my love.

And crowds of lumbering dimnaseer and dipladoci gathered to watch them go, their huge bodies drooping and their scaly eyes dim, and as the nobled mother of man and her mate went by, they raised their heads and called out submissively, Farewell, brave beginners of the human kind, hail and farewell: those who are about to die, salute you!

(pp. 571-2)

Apart from such seemingly sustained correspondences between the play and the autobiographies, the play includes quite a number of apparently minor, but distinct, references to images and themes from the autobiographies, and from the convention established by autobiographies and plays together. For example, when in Scene II, the young man, returning from the fair, calls to the girl "Alice, where art thou?" (p. 119) this might possibly be an echo of Rose and Crown in which O'Casey commenting upon the clergy's disapproval of dancing, unless it is a dance involving little or no bodily contact, writes:

Come unto these yellow sands, but don't touch hands. Keep your distance, Harry. Don't let trousers touch skirt, or there might be trouble. This in an Alice, where art thou dance!

(p. 413)

Since the play deals with similar themes of the Church's repression of joy and impulse, since it ends in a happy dance, there might be some genuine relationship between the use of the phrase "Alice, where art thou" in autobiography and play. The phrase too occurs in Pictures in the Hallway both as the title of a chapter and in its original context as the chorus of a song. The chapter of Pictures which is entitled "Alice, Where Art Thou" describes "the sixth day" in Johnny's development into a young man, and tells of his courtship of Alice, a young girl working, like him, for the firm of Hyndim and Leadem. Having kissed Alice, and having arranged to meet her again in the evening, Johnny carries home from work:

thinking of the hour when he'd be close beside his
Alice, fondling her, and pressing sturdy kisses on
her mouth.

He lilted softly to himself as he went along,
never minding a soul:

The birds sleeping gently,
Sweet Lyra gleaming bright;
Her rays tinge the forest,
And all seems glad tonight.
The wind sighing by me,
Cooling my fevered brow,
The stream flows as ever,
Yet, Alice, where art thou?

(p. 284)

The song and phrase "Alice, where art thou?" is thus used in Pictures in the context of a young boy looking forward to seeing one of his earliest sweethearts, a context very similar to that at the end of the play when the young man calls up to the young girl's window. And it seems that a very real relationship between Pictures and the play might underlie the play's apparently insignificant use of the phrase.

Rather more obviously, Figuro is related to Behind The Green Curtains, and through it to Inishfallen, Rose and Crown and Sunset in that it expresses the author's contempt for the Irish Press. But in the fantastical medium and general creativity of Figuro even this rather well-worn theme is expressed in a new and satirically comic way. And Irish

journalism is damned through the play's depiction of a Blind Man and Deaf Man who constantly collaborate in their collection of news.

Two men, arm in arm, come in; one is deaf, the other is blind . . . one looking back towards the houses, the other looking frontways. Both of them seem to be in something of a flutter. They are linked together in a reverse way so that they have to walk in a revolving manner, and, when they stop, each looks forward in a reverse way to the other.

. . . .
Deaf man turning to face Old Man I'm a Reporter from the Irish Horn and me friend's one from the Dublin Flute. I tell him what I sees. He tells me all he hears, God help us.

(pp. 107-8)

The play also shares the O'Caseyan tradition, long established in autobiography and play, that a lack of knowledge of the Irish language reveals the hypocrisy of the supposed patriot. And hypersensitive as the Old Men and journalists are as to the good name of Ireland, it is revealed that none of them know the Irish language. Equally significantly the "Young Man" does speak Gaelic:

Young Man. . . . I know a Gaelic song that sings of the delight of the snowy breasts of a true love . . .
 I'll sing the song to show yous I'm right, so I will.

Blind Man. We want no song o' that kind sung here, boy.

Young Man. How would yous know what it was saying, anyhow, since yous don't know the Gaelic?

1st Old Man. The sound o' the syllables 'ud tell us what we didn't want to know!

(p. 115)

All in all there seems to be little of the substance or inspiration of Figuro that cannot be traced back to, or through, O'Casey's own previous work -- and this despite the press-cuttings with which he prefaces the play (p. 88) and which would, on the surface, seem to indicate that such "facts" from real life directly inspired the play.

However, "external" material or influence does seem to have some place in the play, possibly in the centre of it. For if Figuro, like The Drums of Father Ned fulfils the optimistic spirit of the closing of 'Outside

an Irish Window" of Sunset, the figure which brings about the revolution in this particular play was not purely O'Caseyan in origin, but, according to the "Dedication" of the play was inspired by:

a Postage Stamp, one printed by an Astonished Hungary of a Young Lad, in the Form of a Statue, doing an Obscene and Most Indecent Action under the Guise of an Innocent Fountain, seen, apparently for the First Time by the Embarrassed Hungarians, near the Grand' Place of Brussels, Capital City of Catholic Belgium, when they attended the International Exhibition there in 1958.

(p. 87)

But even so, despite this "external" inspiration "Figuro" of the play emerges as still very much in an O'Caseyan tradition. As an agent of the life-force he is in direct succession to the Cock of Cock-a-Doodle Dandy and Father Ned. And it is interesting that to some extent he combines fundamental aspects of the presentation of both; for like the Cock he is unequivocally a magical fantasy figure, while, just as with the "depiction" of Father Ned he does not actually appear on stage but has his doings reported by friends and foes.

Blind Man to Old Men. What's going on in the city's centre? Didyas hear?

Deaf Man turning to face Old Men. Didyas see? . . . We asked lots o' torn and tattered men staggering home what it was, but all they'd say was Figuro, Figuro.

2nd Old Man. A Figuro plumb in the centre of O'Connell Street where the bowl of light used to be; a Figuro of a more impudent, sturdier --

1st Old Man. And handsomer --

2nd Old Man. Figuro of a Peter Pan cascading consequential shame and disgrace on all beholders.

1st Old Man. Forming a scintillatin', circular, set-in fountain around himself, constantly expanding, the younger girls, strong enough to force a way to the front, sans stockings and shoes, and skirts, paddling gay in it, all chanting together, Behold, them who were lost have been found, and them who were dead have come to life again! Each of them sing, singing solemnly,

If I was th' only girl in th' world,
An' you were the only boy.

(Sc. II, p. 108)

If "Figuro" himself, however, does not appear on stage one of his deputies does. And the precise nature of his deputy a "Birdlike Lad" again be regarded as emphasising the great degree to which the inspiration and substance for the play rose essentially from O'Casey's own work. For, O'Casey had, after the completion of Sunset, created a new persona for himself as "The Green Crow" in the "Foreword" of a volume of essays with that title.¹⁰ And the "Birdlike Lad" who in Scene II of the play, announces the triumphs of Figuro all over Ireland -- North and South -- and who proclaims that "Figuro is an abounding joy everywhere at last" (p. 117) might well be a "Green Crow":

. . . .He carries a tight fitting green cap on his head with a peak projecting out and pointed like the beak of a bird. Indeed, he would look very much like a crow, but for the green cap on his head. . . .

(p. 117)

And so it seems that like Behind The Green Curtains Figuro did, by and large go back to O'Casey's previous work for its origins and substance -- and, significantly, it went back not so much to the plays of O'Casey themselves, as to the autobiographies and to joint conventions and traditions established by the plays in interaction with the autobiographies. Its ^{reference,} in one especial instance, to a work which is outside the autobiographies, and more recently published than them, might even provide a sidelight upon the role which the autobiographies themselves play as a source of inspiration and material for plays. And Figuro's creativity in the use and presentation of this inspiration and material reveals that the substance of the autobiographies can still provide fine fuel for O'Casey's dramatic imagination, even towards the very end of his career as a playwright.

10. The Green Crow, New York, Braziller, 1956; London, W.H. Allen, 1957.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe

No matter how creative is the relationship between Figuro in the Night and the autobiographies, it seems fitting that The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe should complete O'Casey's work as a dramatist¹.

For unpretentious as this simple one-act comedy sketch appears to be, in inspiration and substance it spans the whole of O'Casey's known dramatic career.

Some of the roots of the play seem to stretch back to the early years of O'Casey's career as a dramatist, and possibly back even to the days before he began work on The Shadow of a Gunman.

In his study of O'Casey's literary papers and manuscripts Dr. Ayling has come to some very interesting conclusions as to O'Casey's working methods, and he emphasises the extent to which, throughout his career, O'Casey seems to have relied not only upon memory of past personal experience to provide material for his plays, but also upon his collection of documents and notebooks which reinforced those memories. The example which Dr. Ayling chooses in order to illustrate this argument happens to concern The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe:

As early as the 1920s (if not earlier, for it is difficult to date some entries precisely) O'Casey had planned to write a play concerned with the railway, no doubt drawing upon his own knowledge of working for the G.N.R.I. He wrote several pages of recollections of his work on the railway, which, though obviously intended for inclusion in one of the autobiographical books, progressed no further than an early typescript stage. In one note he thought of "The Signal" as a possible title for a play. In another entry he mentions the possibility of using a man named Rankin, a building worker with whom he worked on the railways, as a character in a play. Yet though these entries were made in

¹ There is no published evidence as to which of the plays Figuro in the Night or The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe was actually the last to be completed. Mrs O'Casey (see Ch. 16, note 1) seems to suggest that the three last plays were all finished together. But since The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe appears as the last play in the volume Behind the Green Curtains, it does effectively close O'Casey's dramatic work.

the 1920s, it is not until the early 1940s that he uses the railway as a background to a play. That is in Red Roses for Me (published 1942), in which the protagonist is a railwayman and the setting is a house near a shunting yard; the top of a railway signal can be seen through the window and the noise of steam engines can occasionally be heard. Later, in The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe, published in 1961, the entire setting of the action is a railway station. It is not until 1955, when The Bishop's Bonfire was published, that the figure of Rankin was used in a play; here, the dramatic creation appears similar in character to that of the Rankin that O'Casey knew round about 1907, but though he is still a building worker, he is not connected with the railway. In this way, we see O'Casey returning to earlier ideas and adapting them for different purposes later in life.²

But this history of the origins of The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe, a history based on the notebooks of O'Casey, is very far from complete; for after the initial idea in the 1920's for a play about the railway, The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe and essentially literary seems to have had a long evolution through the autobiographies and plays, with Pictures in the Hallway, Drums Under the Windows, and Inishfallen helping, in turn, to keep alive the idea of the proposed play, and eventually transmitting that idea into the play form.

In a newspaper interview given shortly after his arrival in London in 1926, O'Casey is reported as saying:

'Oh, yes, I have lots of ideas for new plays. I want to write one called The Signal, about the railway;³

No such play was written at that time, but during the 1930's when so much of his dramatic spirit, inspiration and material, was channelled into the first and second volumes of autobiography, something of the envisaged play about the railway seems to have found its way into Pictures in the Hallway. In a chapter entitled "The Sword of Light" Johnny is depicted as pursuing his studies of literature in a room which overlooked the railway. The description of the railway signals which can be seen from the windows of Johnny's room is coupled with a

² Ronald Ayling: "A Note on Sean O'Casey's Manuscripts and His Working Methods", p.365.

³ "Too Shy to See his Own Play: Sean O'Casey's First Night in London" Daily Graphic (London), 6 March 1926, p.2. reprinted in The Sting and the Twinkle, pp.25-6 quotation from p.26.

description of a Church tower, and might itself owe its place in Pictures in the Hallway to the influence of the symbolism of The Star Turns Red⁴. But the chapter "The Sword of Light" is one of the parts of Pictures in the Hallway which contributed a very substantial amount of material directly to the play Red Roses for Me, and it was much more likely to be through the medium of this autobiography rather than, as Dr. Ayling seems to suggest, directly from the notebooks' record of an original idea of a play about the railway that Acts I and II of Red Roses for Me derived their suggestions of a railway-setting.

When The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe came to be written many years later, a railway signal was to be a prominent, and elaborately described, part of the play's setting:

To the right of this hut, a little way to the rear, the signal stands about three or four feet above the roof, rising to the cross-blade painted white, with a black thick stroke down its middle; on the reverse, painted red with a white panel perpendicularly traversing the middle of it; at the side are the movable coloured slides, one red, the other green, which when placed before the lighted lantern throw a red or a green light a good distance, telling an engine-driver whether to halt, when it shows red, or to go on, when it shows green. At present, the signal is showing a green light. The signalman reaches them by going up an iron ladder attached to the standard, to fit the lantern in its bed. A ladder leads to the upper storey of the hut, and here there is a hand-lever at the butt of the signal-standard which enables him to switch a point on any rare occasion.
(pp.125-6)

The fact that O'Casey's long projected railway play had always been given the title of "The Signal" indicates clearly enough that the idea was for a signal as part of the setting for The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe did not originate in Pictures or Red Roses but was perpetuated in them and through them transmitted from the early idea of a railway play to the actual play The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe. But once it has

⁴ See chapter on The Drums of Father Ned which refers to the railway signals of Pictures and Red Roses in connection with the tracing of the symbol of the Church spire in O'Casey's work.

inherited the signal as part of its setting, The Moon Shines makes the detail very much its own. The signal is not only included in the action - it is changed twice during the course of the play, and plays a part in an argument of the porter, Sean Tomasheen, with the Guard and Driver of a train - but even more importantly its potential as a dramatic symbol is developed when Lord Leslieson, a hapless English passenger from the train, who is driven to distraction and despair by the desolate surroundings in which he finds himself, and by his apparent inability to understand, or be understood by, the temperamental natives - sees the "stop" sign of the signal as a manifestation of the Irish way of life:

Sean /Bending down closer to him/. Eh, sir, you seen no Red Light, did ye now? /Before Lord Leslieson can answer/. No, of course not. Th' Green Light was goin' all th' time, wasn't it; all th' time?

L. Leslieson. It's here still.

Sean. What is?

L. Leslieson. The Red Light - it shines over all this country!

(p.154)

That the hero of Red Roses for Me is a railway man, need not necessarily suggest the influence of the ideas for The Signal, for it may simply reflect the fact that O'Casey himself had, as a young man, worked on the railway. Furthermore, the writing of Pictures, rather than thoughts of The Signal, may, in so far as it led O'Casey to recreate his youth and to cast a persona of himself in the role of hero, have greatly influenced him towards writing a play which drew so heavily on autobiographical material and of which the hero possessed many of the personal attributes of Johnny/O'Casey. But Pictures itself did not present Johnny as a railwayman since as a volume of autobiography it deals with a period of O'Casey's life before he joined the railway. And it is in the opening pages of the next volume Drums Under the Windows written, in part at least, contemporaneously with Red Roses for Me that the O'Casey figure - now known as "Sean" is

first depicted as working on the railway:

Pug-faced, pleasant-hearted Georgie Middleton had pulled him to the job, hearing he was idle; big gang at work on a railway siding, more wanted; make a man of you. He brought Sean straight to the Foreman, had whispered into his ear, One of ourselves, and the Foreman, a modified true-blue, had decided to give him a start (p.405)

Both the opening chapter, "At the Sign of the Pick and Shovel", and the later chapter, "House of the Dead", give glimpses of Sean's/O'Casey's experiences on the railway and of some of the men he worked with - particularly Christy Mahon, the ganger. The chief purpose of the inclusion in the autobiography of accounts, brief as they are, of Sean's work in the railway is apparently simply that the autobiography might reflect the period of O'Casey's life in which he worked on the G.N.R.I. And there need not be any suggestion that O'Casey was prompted to write of the railway in Drums because he had had an idea for a play about the same subject. Indeed it seems, from the brevity of his accounts of railway life in Drums as if he might well have been withholding much material about the railway from Drums - withholding it because he was planning to use it in a play. Further evidence in support of this view is the fact that Dr. Ayling has discovered, amongst the manuscripts, pages of recollections about the railway, pages which though "obviously intended for inclusion in one of the autobiographical books" (presumably in Drums Under the Windows since this deals with the relevant chronological period), were not to be utilised in the autobiographical volume.

But whatever the reason for the non-appearance in Drums Under the Windows of extensive material about the railways it would seem that this non-appearance would stimulate him still more to find expression for that material yet still neither "The Signal" nor any play about the railway appeared. Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well, however, contains two railway episodes, not seemingly drawn from recollections of his work on the G.N.R.I. at all, but both prefiguring with apparent precision

and directness The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe - the "railway" play which was eventually written at the very end of O'Casey's dramatic career.

Both the episodes in Inishfallen concern Sean's visits to Lady Gregory's home in county Galway. The first of them, which is to be found in the "Blessed Bridget O'Coole" chapter, is remarkable not only for its points of detailed correspondences with The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe but also for its dramatic spirit^{and} for the vigour of its dialogue which make it a very fitting prototype for, and inspiration for, a play.

A newly-fledged Abbey playwright, Sean has mixed feelings about Lady Gregory's invitation to visit her at Coole Park. "Eager to go" he was, nevertheless, as a staunch Dubliner, "a little nervous at the thought of setting out to visit foreign parts". And his subsequent unfortunate experiences at a railway station in Dublin could only serve to increase his state of nervous tension about the journey. The train for Galway, which Sean has to catch in order to meet Lady Gregory at Athenry, is to leave at 8 a.m. Sean stands in front of the closed booking office, waiting for the shutter to be removed that he might buy his ticket. But the minutes creep on and the office remains closed. "Thirty or forty" other passengers are, by this time, as anxious as he:

- Thry a rap on th' shutter, there, said a voice in the background; aw, a sharper one than that, man! for Sean had knocked gently.

- There'll be a holy rush, now, when it does open, complained a second voice.

- Ay; that's if it ever opens! said a third voice with the sound of anger hopping off it.

There, in the centre of the wide door leading to the platform, stood the guard, glaring at them, green flag in hand in readiness to wave the train away.

- Is it out again he is? queries the guard maliciously; yez are wastin' your time waitin' for that fella. He glanced at the grinning clock, and then looked at his watch. Yez have got four minutes left, so make th' most o' them, an' get your tickets, an' hurry up an' take your seats; and he hurried off to his van.

Several fists now battered an angry tattoo on the shutter of the booking-office window, but no answer came to the knocking, though the hands of the jeering clock crept close to the unhallowed hour. Nice experience for Sean, and he a respectable traveller for the first time in his life. And getting up so early in the morning to be in time!

- Is it there yez are still like a lot o' frightened crows!

blared in the voice of the guard on them again. Don't yez know that the ticket-givin' boyo's undisturbed be the thought of a given thrain havin' to leave a given station at a given hour? D'yez know th' time it is? Isn't there one among yez with brains enough to guess tht the boyo's curled up in a warm sleep in a warmer bed, regardless of thrain or tickets?

- Can we take our seats without possessing tickets? asked Sean politely.

- What a gaum y'are! answered the guard sarcastically. What are yez waitin' there for, if yez haven't to have tickets? Yez are not goin' to get me to advise yez to do what yez shouldn't do. An' don't batter down th' place, either - yez are to demand your tickets in an orderly, sensible way.

- Then what are we do do? plaintively asked a voice from the crowd.

- Now how do I know what yez are to do! retorted the guard angrily. All I know, an' all that I need to know, is that th' train starts in a minute or two. D'ye hear that now? Th' thrain's got to set off in another minute, so make up your minds. Are yez goin' to thtravel to Galway, or are yez goin' to stay where yez are? I'm warnin' yez, mind, that th' thrain'll go empty, if yez don't get your tickets an' take your seats. A shrill blast from the engine told the guard that it was time to go. There y'are - hear that now? Have yez decided to settle down where yez are, an' die there, or what? He clicked his tongue viciously; dtch dtch! An' we're supposed to be an educated people! Half a minute more's all yez have, an' if yez aren't where yez ought to be, I'll leave yez where I found yez to make your minds up in your own sweet way be tomorrow mornin'; and he walked away in scorn.

Sean seized his suitcase, hurried on to the platform, and jumped into the train. Ticket or no ticket, he'd be in Athenry to meet the Old Lady. He was astonished to see the whole crowd follow his example. Sheep, he thought, sheep. In his seat, he thought it odd the way fear took people. He had noticed two priests in the crowd who had been just as fearful and agitated as he was himself, or the old agricultural labourer on his way to Galway who hadn't, maybe, more than his bare fare to bring him there. These would surely have defied the Black and Tans, and yet they shook at the thought of venturing on a journey without a ticket, through no fault of their own. When the money was collected Sean found he had to pay seven and six more than the ticket would have cost; and the labourer found the fare he had only enough to bring him to Athenry. There he would have to get out, and walk the rest of the way to Galway. Sean started help by offering two shillings, and the rest of the kindly passengers added enough to permit the old man to travel on in peace. (pp.109-10)

This episode prefigures the play in much more than its railway setting. Sean as a nervous and bewildered passenger, with no control over the situation in which he finds himself, has a great deal in common with Lord Leslieson, the unfortunate traveller of the play. And although the railway guard with whom Sean comes into contact is a great deal more unpleasant than the basically kind-hearted railway employees, including a guard, whom Lord Leslieson encounters, yet they too are un-

-helpful in their advice and almost reduce their poor passenger to tears:

Lord Leslieson. I say gentlemen, would you tell me the way out, please?

Guard [turning round]. Way out?

Sean. You're in th'way out just as you're in th' way in, sir.

L. Leslieson [a bit puzzled]. Eh? Oh, I mean the way out or the way into Kylenamoe.

Guard. You couldn't be in it more'n y'æ. Right here you're right there.

L. Leslieson [more puzzled]. Eh? Oh, I see - the Irish way of joking. [He gives a feeble laugh]. Heh heh heh! What I wish, gentlemen, is to be directed to Kylenamoe.

Guard. You're there, I'm tellin' you.

L. Leslieson. The town, sir; the town.

Guard. What town have you got in your mind, sir?

L. Leslieson. The town of Kylenamoe, of course.

Sean. Town is it? [Sweeping his arms around in a circle]. This whole expanse is th' town. [To the guard] Isn't it, Mick?

Guard. Yis; if yeh take it that way, it's the biggest town in th' land.

(pp.129-30)

.....

Andy O'Hurrie, the engine-driver, appears round the corner of Corny's house; ...

Andy. [loudly and angrily]. What th' hell! Are we puttin' up here for th' night, or wha?

L. Leslieson [getting down from standing on top of the box, sitting down on it despairingly instead, elbows on his knees, and his face hidden in his hands]. Another one of them!

Sean [indicating Lord Leslieson]. Fella sittin' on th' box is to blame for it.

Andy. What's he want; who is he?

L. Leslison [with a moan] I'm Lord Leslison of Ottery St. Oswald.

Andy. Is that so?

Guard. He want to get to the town.

Andy [coming over to the group]. Town? What town?

Sean. Town o' Kylenamoe.

Andy. [with a touch of sympathy]. Someone musta been pullin' his leg.
(pp.141-2)

If Lord Leslieson is in a plight which has something in common with Sean's in Inishfallen, the crowd of Sean's fellow-passengers who share his anxiety in trying to buy a ticket, suffer too the ill-temper of the

guard and finally follow like "sheep" when Sean boards the train - seem actually to find their way into the play. All the while that the Guard and the Driver have been trying to sort out Lord Leslieson's affairs, their train has been standing in Kylenamoe station and the remaining passengers have become increasingly restive. Eventually a deputation appears, behind an intrepid leader:

[/.... a little crowd of passengers, headed by a young woman, appear at the corner of Corny's hut. They stand there, all looking a little anxious and bewildered.

Woman Passenger [in front of group]. Th' passengers have asked me to inquire into th' motionless condition of th' thrain for near a half hour o' time? Th' poor passengers is furious! So yous had better pop back to your thrain at once without measurin' out any more of your parleyvoo.

.....
(p.148)

Perhaps too in the Woman Passenger's complain that if the train is late in reaching Kylenatoraf then

Maybe, th' conveyance sent to bring me home'll have got tired of waitin', an gone, so that I'll have to trudge timid for eight miles through a dark an' lonesome land! (p.149)

contains just a suggestion of the plight of the "old agricultural labourer" in Inishfallen who, on account of the negligence of railway employees seemed to be faced with the prospect of walking from Athenry to Galway.

Another possible correspondence between the autobiographical episode and the play concerns the incident of the driver's blast on the engine's whistle to indicate that it is time to leave. In the autobiography the Guard responds to the summons and warns the passengers that the train is departing; in the play however the tiny, apparently insignificant, detail is developed into the core of long and uproarious argument between the porter and the Guard.

.....

L. Leslieson. I beg you, gentlemen, no joking. I'm Lord Leslieson of -

[As he says this, a shrill whistle comes from the engine

out to the right, either a warning or a summoning blast.

Sean [to the Guard]. There's your buttie engine - driver
whisperin' you to come back, Mick.

Guard [testily]. I know - I heard him!

Sean. Well, aren't you goin'?

Guard [more testily still]. I'll be goin' when I go!
That damned whistlin' laddo'll do harm yet sthrivin' to be
before time. I'm told when he was a kid, he was always hurtin'
himself runnin' to get in front of himself!

Sean. You said a minute ago yourself, you were in a hurry.

Guard [indignantly]. I did not!

Sean [vehemently]. Yes, yeh did! You were in such a sweat of
a hurry you were nearly growin' wings to fly off when I was
signin' th' docketts!

.....

[..... the engine whistles again, this time shriller and
longer than the whistle that sounded before. The Guard and
Sean gape at each other while the whistle blows.

Guard [Challengingly to Sean, after a pause]. Were yeh goin'
to say something?

Sean. No, no; [he looks towards the right where the engine
is, lifts his head a little to lilt more cleary, and sings the
line]:

I hear you ca-ll-ing me-e-e!

Guard [turning to Lord Leslieson]. Hear that? There's Kylenamoe
for you!

.....

(pp.130-2)

[Once more the engine whistles; this time, three short,
sharp whistles, insistent and imperative.

Sean [unable to resist the inclination, singing]:
I hear you ca-ll-ing me!

Guard. All th' pharmaceutical chemists of th' world couldn't mix
a man into a bigger bastard than you, Tomasheen!

(p.137)

Such "twartin' an' tormentin" is truly worthy of The Covey, Peter
and Fluther. And Sean Tomasheen and the Guard, in their verbal agility
and genius for quarrelling, could easily be characters from the author's
early Dublin plays. In fact the dialogue of the play as a whole is
infinitely less constrained and is intrinsically far more humorous than that
of any part of the other post-autobiography
'plays - with the exception perhaps of the "Angela and Lizzie" episode
of Behind The Green Curtains which is itself out of keeping with the
stiffness and polemical nature of the dialogue of the rest of the play.

But like the Dublin plays, the humour of The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe
 Thomasheen
 is not without tinges of sadness. As Sean and his colleagues argue
 and play with words, the situation for Lord Leslieson becomes bleaker
 and bleaker. The play is, as a whole, light-hearted, but this does
 not preclude a really serious note in the play when Lord Leslieson,
 abandoned by his would-be helpers, is left to spend the night on a
 deserted railway station with only a lantern for company. Of course
 the play ^{assumes} nothing like the tragicomic proportions of Juno or
The Plough; but it does touch upon their kind of tragi-comic tradition,
 and again it seems, as with episodes in the autobiographies and in
 plays prior to The Moon Shines On Kylenamoe, that something in the
 nature of his material has brought the author back into touch with
 the spirit of the early plays. And, as before, it seems that this particular
 element concerns Dublin. The Moon Shines is set in a village in the
 depths of the countryside, but its inspiration and its material do
 have links with Dublin. O'Casey was living in Dublin when he himself
 worked on the railway and presumably most of his colleagues were
 Dubliners. Also the incident in the "Blessed Bridget O'Coole" chapter
 of Inishfallen, which seems to have made not an insubstantial contribution
 to the play, took place in, or is set in, Dublin, and the Guard in that
 incident is himself worthy of a place in one of the Dublin plays.

But the eventual setting of the railway play in the Irish country-
 side as opposed to in Dublin has, of course, its own significance and
 has its own particular history in the autobiographies. Most of the later
 plays of O'Casey from Cock-a-doodle Dandy onwards are set in the Irish
 countryside, and this generally seems to have been the result of the
 "Athenry" episode in Inishfallen, in which the atmosphere of a ram-
 shackle country town seems to embody the spiritual climate of the entire
 country more readily than would the atmosphere of Dublin. But The Moon
Shines On Kylenamoe not only partakes of this general influence but,
 like Figuro in the Night its immediate predecessor, appears to have its

own direct relationship with the episode. For the Athenry episode has a basic affinity with the play in that it begins and ends in a dismal railway station, and it is perhaps rather more than coincidence that not only does it, in some respects, prefigure the eventual play, but in ^{an} important respect ^{it also} looks back to the railway episode in "Blessed Bridget O'Coole" - since the Athenry episode takes place during Sean's return, with Lady Gregory, from such a visit to Coole as the earlier incident prefaces:

Returning with her once from Coole to Dublin, they had come from Gort to Athenry, and got out there to wait an hour and a half for the train to Dublin. The two of them had eaten a lunch of ham and hard-boiled eggs, sitting on a bench in the dreary station. After they had eaten, Lady Gregory said she'd have a liddle rest, while he went to have a look at the town, returning in good time to be ready for the incoming train from Galway.

.....
He looked at his watch: it was time to go back to Lady Gregory, back towards Dublin. He went slowly back to the gloomy station.

(pp.164-5)

Certainly it seems as if the atmosphere of provincial lifelessness created in the Athenry episode has found its way directly into the play, although the stillness of Kyleneamoe initially seems rather more benign than Sean finds that of Athenry, and is explained largely by the fact that it is now nighttime:

Just above the distant green mountains, the pale moon is shining, giving a quiet silence to the valley of Kyleneamoe in the County of Melloe. It is just on midnight and here within the fifteen or so houses forming the village in the valley, all life is sleeping, the moon housing all the quiet homes there with a gentle lullaby light. Even the lover and his lass, if such there ever be on road, boreen, or field-path, in the village of Kyleneamoe, had gone away from active service, and no further life would come to light till the sun of a new morning rose again - or so it seemed.

(p.125)

In the midst of his exploration of Athenry in Inishfallen, Sean hears the sound of a train:

Away over the bridge, above, the seepy silence seemed startled by a passing train; passing by swiftly, as if possessed by fear; passing by noisily, as if to give itself courage; straining to get away, as if in fear of being caught in the fearsome plight of life here, standing still to watch its own decay, and to wait for its own departure.

(p.164)

And this description perhaps suggested, or influenced, another part of the play's opening stage direction concerning the isolated little country station, where trains hardly ever seem to stop:

The place is what the residents of Kylenamoe call a Railway Station, but there is only one train stopping in the early morning, and one, once in a while, stopping there at night, though many more whirl through it during the day, and several goods trains rumble through during the night, hardly knowing that they pass through a Railway Station.

(p.125)

The play might also be drawing on the same incident and image from the autobiography when later a disgruntled passenger from the delayed train complains:

When're we goin' to start? Th' man left on th' engine says th' whole thrain's swollen with anxiety to get goin'!

(p.150)

But if the stillness of Kylenamoe is, at the outset, less chilling than that of Athenry, gradually, and through dialogue which is often comic in itself, a picture of Kylenamoe and its environs is built up which to the stranger, Lord Leslieson, and to the audience, is depressing indeed. And such a picture is very clearly in keeping not only with the impression of Irish provincial and country life given in the Athenry incident, but also with that given in the closing chapters of Inishfallen as a whole, and in much of Sunset and Evening Star, and in the gloomy parts of those plays which had ^{themselves} previously drawn on one or both of these autobiographies. According to the Guard, before Lord Leslieson arrives, no passenger has ever stepped "out of a thrain goin' up or one comin' down to plant a Christian or a heathen foot on th' holy soil of Kyleanamoe", for the little that there is to be seen there can be seen "from a safe distance" (p.128). Lord Leslieson himself regards Kylenamoe as a "desolate district" and Sean Tomasheen's heated response to this remark only serves to emphasise just how much of a backwater the place actually is:

Desolate? What d'ye mean, desolate? What's desolate about it? There's houses here, there's people here, there's Callaghan's Stores only five or so miles away; so how th' hell d'ye call it desolate? (p.133)

The sudden appearance of a "lover and his lass" abroad in Kylenamoe is such a rare phenomenon that it evokes great surprise and much disapproval on the part of the local residents, and Sean Tomasheen feels that he will be obliged to report the matter "to th' priest, first thing in th' morning" (p.136). And slowly it is revealed that Kylenamoe which Lord Leslieson insists on regarding as a "town", where it will be possible to hire a car, really consists of:

This here, and thirty houses a mile away, fourteen of them empty. with a somewhat elderly population:

Man alive, th' lot o' them, man an' woman, if not there already, is on th' tip o' 70. Car! I dunno if one o' them has ever seen one, even from a distance. Neither kid nor car! (p.144)

Until this point the descriptions of Kylenamoe and its way of life have been relieved with humour, and some of them have been, in their context, extremely comical. But now the humour is wearing away from such remarks; and when the Woman Passenger speaks of the possibility that she will "have to trudge timid for eight miles through a dark an' lonesome land" (p.149) a note of real sombreness enters the play - a sombreness which is reinforced when Lord Leslieson seizes upon her words: "My God, it's all a dark and a lonesome land!" (p.150).

A few minutes later, after the train has departed and Lord Leslieson is left alone with Sean Tomasheen, he speaks of "The Red Light" which "shines over all this country!" And the situation seems to become even more dismal as Sean Tomasheen describes his own home circumstances:

You can't stay there all night, man. My place has only two rooms; I'm but a lodger; th' woman o' th' house spends herself mindin' a husband dyin' of' cancer.

L. Leslieson [agonizedly]. A country of desolation, of aimless chatter, dirt, and disease!

(p.154)

The nadir of the atmosphere of desolation and depression is reached as Sean Tomasheen, singing an ironically appropriate song, leaves the now pathetic figure of Lord Leslieson to spend a cold and dreary

night in the open air and with only a lantern for company:

Sean ... [He moves off lilting]:

The mind will in its worst despair
Still ponder o'er the past.

[He comes back towards Leslieson. Anxious] I don't like leavin' you. [A pause]. I'll leave th' lantern anyway; it'll warm your fingers anyhow. [He leaves the lantern a little way from Lord Leslieson]. It'll keep yeh company anyhow. [A pause]. Well, good night. You've the moon with you, anyway, thank God. [He pauses again, but as Lord Leslieson is silent, he goes slowly out. Lilting as he goes]:

That can no comfort bring,
That can no comfort, no comfort bring.

But the play does not end here, and if The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe derives its depiction of the more dismal aspect of Irish life from Inishfallen and the two late volumes of autobiography, it, like its predecessors Father Ned and Figuro partakes too of the ultimate optimism of the closing chapters of Sunset and Evening Star. For much of the play the remarks describing Kylenamoes' desolation are humorous in their context of expression; Lord Leslieson's superior English attitude to Ireland and the Irish deserves something of a check; the young lovers are obviously completely impervious to the criticisms and malice which they encounter; and just as Lord Leslieson's plight seems to be hopeless indeed, all is made well as Corny Conroy, who had previously left the scene, returns, on the promptings of his wife, shyly to offer hospitality to the traveller, and to offer assistance to help him complete his journey on the following day. And the play ends in an aura of kindness and comfort and mutual understanding and respect:

[Mrs. Conroy has appeared at the door, and stands a matronly figure in the centre of the warm, golden glow flooding from the cosy, sheltering home.]

Martha [stretching out her two hands in welcome]. Come on in, sir. You're welcome, an' God save you kindly.

L. Leslieson [very much moved]. Thank you, thank you, an' God save you and your good man kindly, too.

[They go in. The door shuts slowly. The forgotten lantern stands where it had been left, burning brightly. Away in the distance the faint sound of the engine's siren is heard, and]

THE PLAY ENDS

Bearing in mind the apparent relationship between the play and Inishfallen's account of Sean's trials and tribulations on his journey to meet Lady Gregory, it is perhaps a little more than coincidence that the welcoming gesture and words with which Martha welcomes the weary traveller into her home:

[Stretching out her two hands in welcome]. Come on in, sir. You're welcome, an' God save you kindly.

are reminiscent of the kindly and homely way in which Lady Gregory welcomed her nervous and travel-weary guest and set him at his ease:

Lady Gregory was a Connacht^hwoman, knowing every foot of the province; every story told by every bush and stone in the counties of Galway and Clare; and she showed her Connacht rearing by compelling her seventy-odd years to climb down, like a stiff gazelle, from the high seat of the side-car, running to the threshold of the house, turning, and stretching out her two hands to say, with a beaming smile, One and twenty welcomes, Sean, to the House of Coole!

(p.114)

of the play
Corny's sudden appearance on the scene | to set all to rights seems to parallel the author's sudden recognition, at the end of the "Outside and Irish Window" chapter of Sunset that there is hope for Ireland's future after all:

What's that? An eagle's whistle! And another, a number of them! Jasus, there are eagles flying among the grey tits and the flat snipe! Brennan's skill on the moor. There are brave men and women in Ireland still; and will be, will be, always, for ever.

(p.648)

And the lantern which burns brightly as the play ends pierces the metaphorical darkness which, in Inishfallen, Sean predicted was about to descend on Ireland, and which did literally engulf the endings of Cock-a-doodle Dand, The Bishops Bonfire and Behind the Green Curtains.

And so, although The Moon Shines on Kilenamoe depicts no great revolution of youth, or the dawn of a new era, yet in its simple assertion that the old Irish values of hospitality and good nature remain still, and that they extend even to an English Lord, if he takes them in good faith, this last play of O'Casey's is very much in the optimistic tradition of the last phase of his thoughts upon Ireland.

Thus it is that the germ of an idea for a railway play, an idea conceived while O'Casey was still in the "Dublin" phase of his work, and long before he began to write the autobiographies, was kept alive together with something of the spirit of the Dublin plays in Pictures in the Hallway and Red Roses for Me, was positively fostered in two episodes of Inishfallen, and needed only the influence of the hopeful spirit of the last volume of autobiography to allow it to emerge, like its predecessors Father Ned and Figuro, as a play expressive of O'Casey's final thoughts about Ireland and her future. In this way The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe spans O'Casey's different phases of writing and reveals, with perfect clarity, the autobiographies as a medium for the keeping alive of ideas for plays; for nourishing these ideas; adding substance to them; for partially expressing, and regenerating them; until that pitch of dramatic momentum and inspiration is reached at which the author can actually write his play.

Unlike the other plays of O'Casey's "post-autobiography" period The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe does not seem to have arisen in compensation for that channel of direct communication of opinion which the author lost when he completed the autobiographies. The roots of The Moon Shines go back far too deeply in his career and writings for that to be the case. And, unlike The Drums of Father Ned it does not, in its relationship with the autobiography, pursue eclecticism as an end in itself. In fact in the relationship between The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe and the autobiographies the shift away from widespread 'fragmentary' eclecticism towards sustained correspondences with a few specific autobiographical passages - a trend discernible in Figuro in the Night - becomes very marked indeed. And if the kaleidoscopic eclecticism of the Drums of Father Ned, the first play written after the completion of the autobiographies, is representative of all O'Casey's writing in so far as it unites into one microcosm, aspects

of all O'Casey's autobiographies, and O'Caseyan conventions which are the products of many successive interactions between play and autobiography and autobiography and play; The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe, his last play, is representative of all O'Casey's writing in so far as it, in a clear and simple "linear" way, illustrates the basic and complete kind of chain of relationship and interaction which wove together play and autobiography, autobiography and play, profoundly influencing the nature of both. Moreover, The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe, albeit in its own small scale and quiet unpretentious way, reveals this influence at its most positive, creative and rewarding. For it seems as if the play would never have been written if the autobiographies had not kept alive the idea of the railway play and had not nurtured and nourished it with material of their own; and yet the play which emerges is, through the creativity of its author's use of the autobiographies' contributions, greater than the sum total of the passages of material upon which it has drawn. The process is, indeed, one of evolution or cumulation with the final product superceding and surpassing what has gone before.

Conclusion

"The forgotten lantern" which is left "burning brightly" as the curtain falls at the close of The Moon Shines on Kyleneamoe constitutes not only the final symbol in O'Casey's final play: but in its interpretation of "Outside an Irish Window's" expression of an abiding hope for Ireland's future, and in, perhaps too, its quiet affirmation of Sunset's concluding thought upon life, "Hurrah!", it is the final product of a long, varied, but unbroken, relationship between the autobiographies and the plays of its author.

Those plays of O'Casey's which were written before the autobiographies seem to have drawn their substance basically from the author's experiences in Dublin at particular points in Ireland's recent history. These experiences were translated into art in the plays, but through the plays they were eventually to go forward to provide substance and inspiration for the autobiographical volumes, which were, by nature, akin to the plays in that they too were concerned with the artistic presentation of the author's experience. The manner in which the substance of these earlier works was to be reworked in the autobiographies seems to have depended largely upon the nature and achievement of the original plays.

The Shadow of a Gunman was thoroughly reworked, or recreated, as a complete artistic whole within two sections of Inishfallen, not only that it might provide an account of the Anglo-Irish War within the historical sequence of the autobiographies, but seemingly that the material and potential of the play ^{might} be granted a finer artistic expression than was achieved in the original play. Kathleen Listens In too had, it seems, failed to satisfy the creative consciousness of the author, for as the autobiographical volumes progress it seems as if the play and its material

are persistently presenting themselves to the author as worthy of being given a new dimension of expression in the autobiographies. A difference between the opinions of the author in the "topical" play and his retrospective views upon the same situation in the autobiographies, however, precluded a thorough reworking of Kathleen, but various aspects of the play, particularly its symbols, achieved some measure of re-expression on their ^{own} account, and the relationship between the play and the autobiographies was crowned when the play's "heroine", reappeared in a finely envisaged fantasy sequence in Sunset. The relationship between Nannie's Night Out and the autobiographies is notable indeed. The author's dissatisfaction with this play is well-documented, as is too his intention to write a new play that would do more justice to its heroine. And all in all it seems that the consummate reworking of the play which takes place within a chapter or "dramatic" episode in Drums Under The Windows, can only be, in conscious purpose and artist design, Nannie's long promised "richer picture". And so it seems that for those early plays of O'Casey's which did not satisfy the creative consciousness of the author, the autobiographies were a possible medium for artistic refinement upon their nature and material, and even for an artistic fulfilment of their potential.

Those plays which did, apparently, more fully satisfy their author with their achievement in their original form were, in being reworked into the autobiographies, broken down into their elements, with each element being reworked separately according to the needs and dictates of the artistic scheme of the autobiographies. As successive plays became more and more complex in nature, they were accordingly fragmented more and more when being reworked into the autobiographies. June and the Paycock was dichotomised, with its historical background and material being reworked within the autobiographies' own artistic designs in three civil

war chapters of Inishfallen, while its "universal" theme of the griefs of motherhood is to be found in a series of dramatic incidents which runs throughout all six volumes of the autobiographies. A rudimentary third element in the reworking of Juno -- that of the use within the autobiography of "literary" characters from the play -- is perhaps just observable. Butⁱ in connection with the reworking of The Plough that such an element comes into its own, with virtually all the characters of the play making some kind of appearance within the spread of the six autobiographical volumes. The Plough also contributes no less than three kinds of historical material to the historical narrative of Drums Under The Windows -- substance relating to the Great War, substance relating to the Nationalists and the Nationalists' cause in the years leading up to the Easter Rising of 1916, and substance relating to the events of the Rising as viewed through civilian eyes. Furthermore, the early history of The Plough in production is utilised within the artistic and thematic framework of Inishfallen as a significant part of Sean's/the author's experience, and hence something of a new dimension is added to the relationship between the autobiographies and the plays.

In its relationship with the autobiographies The Silver Tassie, although written in England, reveals itself to be much more essentially akin to those plays which preceded it than to those which followed it. To Drums Under The Windows it contributes historical material concerning the Great War, an additional artistic colouring to the account of an episode in O'Casey's life at the time of the War, some symbolism, and even perhaps a passage of impressionistic prose. In the volumes up to and including Drums Under The Windows it enriches the portrayal of the Casside family's tradition of service with the British Army, and in the succeeding volumes it inspires or adds fuel to themes such as the service of Irishmen in

Britain's armed forces, and the appalling waste of youth in war. And the history of the writing and production of The Tassie is incorporated into the pattern of the author's significant experience in Rose and Crown as constituting Sean's/the author's final break with the literary world of Dublin.

Of all of the plays which were written before the autobiographies only Kathleen Listens In, and this for special reasons, is not worked completely within the autobiographies. And even much of Kathleen does find re-expression. Later plays will contribute much to the material of the autobiographies written after them, but no single play after The Silver Tassie will seemingly contribute so fully to the autobiographical volumes. Also all the pre-autobiography plays are reworked ^{with marked creativity} within the autobiographical volumes. But whereas the reworking of The Gunman and Nannie takes the form of, and that of Kathleen attempts to take the form of, the creation out of the original play of a new sustained, composite, and, in many respects, self-contained piece of art; the reworking of Juno, The Plough and The Tassie takes the form of an analysis of the plays into their constituent elements, each of which is reworked separately into the fabric and scheme of the autobiographies. And while in the reworking of The Gunman, Kathleen and Nannie the impression is given that a new expression of the play itself is being sought, in connection with the reworking of Juno, The Plough, and The Tassie it seems that the object is not to add a new dimension to the achievement of the original play, but to enrich the fabric of the autobiographies.

Moreover, all the early plays do manifestly contribute to the autobiographies, not only in terms of material but in terms too of dramatic spirit -- for wherever material from a pre-autobiography play appears within the autobiographies, be it within a late volume or an

early one, the material of the play will usually inspire or spur the prose of the autobiography to dialogue and ^{to} the dramatic envisagement of a "scene".

But the pre-autobiography plays contribute much more to the autobiographies than simply identifiable passages of substance, and an intermittent dramatic inspiration to the individual volumes from the individual plays; ^{for} they were, collectively, to help inspire the autobiographies as a whole and to help determine their nature. For the writing of the pre-autobiography plays, out of his experience of life in Dublin, seems to have led the author to an awareness of how great a part the substance of his life, hitherto almost all lived in Ireland, had played in the creation of his art.

But as this awareness was being reached he was arbitrarily deciding to write a play, Within The Gates, which would take its inspiration and substance not from his past experiences in Dublin, nor even from any very deeply personal experience at all, but from observations made in an, as yet, strange city. Moreover the new play was to have an arbitrarily imposed manner, depriving the author of that freedom of form in which he had been hitherto accustomed to write.

It seems, too, perhaps more importantly than first meets the eye, that Within The Gates in taking a male artist figure as its hero, was denying O'Casey of a particular motive for writing that had been very much in evidence, even inspirational, in most, although not all, of the pre-autobiography plays -- that of paying tribute to his mother's memory within the portrayal of the central female characters.

As the composition of Within The Gates somewhat arduously progressed, O'Casey seemingly began to write, by way of compensation or fulfilment of creative needs the kind of work which not only gave him opportunity for almost unlimited expression of the kind of personal Dublin experience which had inspired his earlier plays, and the richness of which he was just beginning to appreciate, but could also give him almost unlimited scope for pursuing whatever manner of form or style pleased him. Such a work was an autobiography of unconventional form. Furthermore, in its imaginative recreation of the author's boyhood, there was almost unlimited opportunity for tribute to the author's mother, and the inspiration which had flowed, from the memory of her, into the portrayal of the finest and most courageous women characters in the earlier plays, now flowed back into the autobiographies into the portrayal of "Mrs Casside".

As Within The Gates became more fixed in its arbitrary nature, so, in reaction, the autobiographical writing became confirmed in its nature, and thrived upon and, thus, perpetuated, all those qualities which had abounded in the earlier plays but which had been firmly excluded from Within The Gates. And thus the first volume of the autobiographies in particular, but through it all the autobiographies, were founded in, and thus perpetuated, the dramatic spirit and traditions of the earlier plays. Inspired initially by the writing of plays, and having their nature moulded in the gulf which separated the nature of past plays from the arbitrary nature of a present one, the autobiographies were from the outset inextricably bound up with O'Casey's career as a dramatist, and as time passed they grew to be as inspirational and influential in determining the nature of his present and future plays, as they themselves were indebted and reactive to the nature of present and past ones.

But even though so widely different in substance and manner, Within The Gates and the early autobiographical writing, each, it seems, in weaving a pattern ^{in its own way} from its own designated substance, soon began to cast tiny threads of inspiration into the complementary, but hitherto, self-contained, pattern of the play which was being woven alongside it.

Meanwhile two minor plays The End of the Beginning and A Pound on Demand, commissioned to fulfil a purpose which strictly limited their manner and form, revealed their playwright to be in full control of his craft, but as obliged to look outside his own life and work for material for his plays. With the completion of Within The Gates and the many difficulties and bitter disappointments over its stage-productions, the author, apparently alienated from the theatre, turned again for some creative solace to the writing of autobiographical chapters, in the prose form of which he personally could at least be absolute master of the final, permanent, and finest presentation of his work. And it seems, in lieu of writing a play, he channelled more and more of his dramatic imagination and talents into the autobiographical sketches. The autobiography itself, was, too, continuing to draw on the traditions and traditional substance of the earlier plays, and was gradually but increasingly incorporating into its own design fragments of the material of the early plays themselves.

The author ^{having been} long at a loss for inspiration for a play, the impending tragedy of current political events in the world, perhaps an external dramatic influence, the release, in a published volume of articles, of bitter feelings about the theatrical world, and perhaps too, by no means least, the writing of the autobiography, and the keeping alive of the dramatic spirit within the autobiography, all contributed, it seems to the writing of another play The Star Turns Red. The autobiography and a stream of thought which it provoked seem to have been responsible for what are, in effect,

The Star's Dublin setting and historical background. And they contributed also qualities of characterisation which were out of keeping with, and helped to undermine, its Labour Play format. On the other hand the spirit of indignation provoked within the autobiography at the injustices of the society in the time of O'Casey's youth might, though channelled through carefully controlled artistic expression in the autobiography, have contributed very greatly to the polemical nature of The Star, which though a playⁱⁿ form was, paradoxically, less "dramatic" than the autobiography at this point in the author's career. But if the autobiographies were, with the writing of The Star, beginning to influence the nature and material of the plays directly, rather than through contraries, The Star seems, in its turn, to have made its contribution to the presentation of certain characters in, and to the tone of, certain autobiographical chapters.

From now on as O'Casey really got into his stride in the writing of the autobiographies -- as the first batch of autobiographical sketches became a volume and two more volumes were planned -- he was never further, it seems, at a loss for inspiration or material for plays. The writing of the autobiographies, and the reliving of early experiences which it involved, brought into being a flood of potential dramatic material, and of potential dramatic inspiration; and, it seems that O'Casey was increasingly becoming aware of the autobiographies as a source of material and inspiration for his plays. The second great creative phase in his career was soon underway with plays and volumes of autobiography following each other in rapid succession.

Purple Dust, a very fine play, perhaps owed its specifically Irish setting to the autobiographies and drew something of its actual substance

and something of its diction and atmosphere from certain passages of I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway. The central symbolism of Red Roses for Me, perhaps one of O'Casey's finest plays of all, was inspired directly by the writing of a particular chapter of Pictures in the Hallway, and virtually the entire play consists of a subtle and highly creative development of elements and material from I Knock at the Door, Pictures in the Hallway, and material and thoughts concerning Drums Under The Windows. The portrayal of the hero of the play as a dramatic character who, nevertheless, possesses certain recognisable associations with the author, is perhaps very closely linked with the author's dramatic portrayal of himself as Johnny/Sean Casside in the autobiographies. And the appearance within this play of not only a young figure representative of certain aspects of the author, but also an older figure, was perhaps inspired by the kind of perspective through which the early autobiographies were written -- that of a middle-aged man looking back on his youth, and doubtless becoming aware, by the contrast, as much of his personality at the time ^{of writing as of his personality during the time} recaptured and perpetuated in the autobiography. The characterisation of the hero's mother within the plays owes much to the autobiographies' presentation of "Mrs. Casside". The autobiographies' role of paying tribute to the author's mother, a role which they inherited from the pre-autobiography plays, was only, however, handed back to the plays upon this one occasion. And on the whole, by providing a medium for the keeping alive of "Mrs. Casside's" memory, the autobiographies seem to have left the plays clear for the portrayal of heroes or of consortship of young hero and heroine who certainly derive their ideals, and, in the case of the heroes, sometimes, traces of their personality, from the author's dramatic portrayal of himself as Johnny/Sean in the autobiographies.

After the author's triumphant use of the dramatic form and spirit in Purple Dust and Red Roses for Me the next autobiographical volume, Drums Under The Windows, reveals O'Casey's dramatic imagination to be flowing away from the autobiographies and back once more into the plays. But the autobiography continues to derive some sense of dramatic spirit from sustained reworkings of the material of pre-autobiography plays. And since the period of the historical settings of the plays coincide with the period of Drums' historical narrative, material can pass very readily from one form into the other.

Oak Leaves and Lavender, turning noticeably to "English" contemporary events for much of its substance, nevertheless seems to have drawn something of its symbolism from the previous autobiographies, and seems to have drawn inspiration for its chief characters from "Irish" recollections-which were, just a little later, to provide substance for Drums Under The Windows.- and, again, from the dual image of the author's self which was apparently reflected as he thought about, and wrote, the autobiographies. But although Oak Leaves does draw, even in its English aspects, upon material of personal significance to the author -- as the later inclusion of that material within the autobiographies reveals - and while the play ^{does} draw some strength from the inspiration of the "Irish" autobiographies, it nevertheless remains one of O'Casey's weaker plays.

Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well ^{fourth autobiography} the ^{seems} in its inherent nature, be something less dramatic than its predecessors. And with the continued flow of the author's dramatic imagination away from the autobiographies and back into the plays, room was opened up within Inishfallen for the intrusion of directly expressed authorial comment and opinion. But if Inishfallen is not in essence so markedly dramatic as any of its predecessors, it provides a medium for the reworking, with the utmost

artistic subtlety and creativity, of The Shadow of a Gunman; and the gloomy images of Free State Ireland which it presents -- notably in its "A Terrible Beauty is Borneo" chapter and in its "Athenry episode", which is, in itself a finely and dramatically conceived piece of writing -- were to form virtually the basis of almost all of O'Casey's plays from that point in his career onwards.

Certainly Cock-a-doodle Dandy, itself perhaps one of O'Casey's greatest plays, seems to take its inspiration, symbolism, central themes and substance from the very heart of Inishfallen, and perhaps, in turn contributes to the way in which "Sean's" actual departure from Ireland at the end of the play is artistically conceived and presented. And in the depiction at the end of Inishfallen, of Ireland as a place of metaphorical darkness, Inishfallen and Cock-a-doodle Dandy together begin a convention of which use was to be made in several plays which were then in the future.

Inishfallen completing as it does the portrayal of the author's life in Ireland, the next autobiographical volume, Rose and Crown is inevitably set in England. This fact together with the change in the social circle which the autobiographies now describe, and together with O'Casey's natural hesitance, even reticence, in divulging matters relating to his family life -- which, during the period recorded by the late autobiographies constituted, such a very deeply meaningful part of his existence -- seems to contribute to a further decline of dramatic, even of artistic, interest and spirit within the autogiographies. However, under the inspiration of direct influence from a play, such as that of Purple Dust in the bluff Englishman/clever Irishman dialogue of the "Rose and Crown" chapter, or even, on its own account in, for example,

the dialogue between the women on the mail boat, Rose and Crown can still recapture the dramatic spirit of the earlier autobiographies. And it seems that the relaxation in artistic structure, and in dramatic and artistic tensions, ^{within} Rose and Crown, might not be evidence of a "failure", or "break down" in the artistic nature of the autobiographies, but evidence of a new and complementary and even supplementary role which the autobiographies are now fulfilling in conjunction with the plays -- that of providing a medium in which the author can expand upon the themes of his plays, or even evolve themes for new works.

But though this role is directly related to the plays as a whole, the nature of Rose and Crown was not sufficient, in itself, to provide inspiration or basic substance for the three one-act plays which were written contemporaneously with it. And in their return to the "Irish" volumes of the autobiography for their substance and for their inspiration, and in their selection each of a markedly different form and manner, the reaction of the Hall of Healing, Time To Go and Bedtime Story away from the English setting and uniform manner of Rose and Crown to some extent mirrors the reaction of the earlier autobiographies away from Within The Gates.

As Sunset and Evening Star proceeds towards the completion of the autobiographical narrative, something of a firmer and more ordered artistic structure seems to ^{re-}assert itself, and though the general quality of the writing of Sunset is essay-like, rather than dramatic, in spirit and quality, yet still, and to the last, the basic conception of the autobiographies seems to be a dramatic one. And the dramatic spirit leaps into flame again in the presentation of certain characters and, perhaps most notably of all, in the reappearance of the heroine of Kathleen Listens In,

who brings with her an aura of the fantasy world of the play.

The play, The Bishop's Bonfire, which was written while the author was working on Sunset, reverts back to Inishfallen for its substance and inspiration, and it is becoming increasingly apparent that the images of Ireland which O'Casey presents in his plays from Cock-a-doodle Dandy onwards are actually literary images derived from Inishfallen.

And it seems that a chief function of the autobiographies within the scheme of O'Casey's work has not simply been that of keeping the image of his own earlier experiences alive as material and inspiration for plays, but also that of, almost throughout his "exile", perpetuating his knowledge of, and vision of Ireland.

The autobiographies themselves had in some instances, although not in connection with the Free State Ireland of Inishfallen, drawn on pre-autobiography plays - which are themselves artistic accounts of certain periods in Irish life - as part of their historical narrative. And now the autobiographies' imaginatively created and evolved, and artistically presented images of Ireland and her history, were being passed on to the plays. Since Rose and Crown and Sunset were set in England they presented little scope for the evolution of new literary images of Ireland, hence the reversion of Time To Go, Bedtime Story and The Bishop's Bonfire to the image of Ireland as given in Inishfallen. But after the completion of The Bishop's Bonfire, O'Casey turns in the penultimate chapter of Sunset, and thus of the autobiographies as a whole, to a survey of Ireland and Irish life. The Bishop's Bonfire contributes something of a dramatic spirit, and also some material to this chapter of Sunset, which itself reflects the image of the Ireland which Sean left behind at the end of Inishfallen. But such is the literary and artistic nature of the image

of Ireland which O'Casey presents in his autobiographies, and, through the autobiographies, in the plays, that it seems O'Casey cannot resist evolving the literary image just one step further before the autobiographies close. And this he does in a sudden affirmation that no matter how dismal life in his native country appears to be, there are still, and will always be, fine and brave men and women in Ireland.

Not only did the autobiographies, over the span of time in which they were written and were in the process of being published -- some twenty three years -- provide visions and images of Ireland as the background, and often the substance too, of many of his plays, but they, in their interaction with the many and various plays, built up a stock of much smaller images and references which O'Casey could use almost as a symbolic short-hand in his later plays. And it is this O'Caseyan convention or stock of references and images, together with the larger composite images of Ireland formed in the autobiographies, and, most particularly with Sunset's glimpse of a brighter vision of Ireland, which form the chief legacy that the autobiographies as a whole hand on to the later plays.

The Drums of Father Ned, the first play to be written after the completion of the autobiographies, is fully in the spirit of optimism generated at the end of the "Outside an Irish Window" chapter of Sunset. And in its portrayal of old "historic" images of Ireland, and of the Free State image of Ireland -- all derived from Inishfallen -- as being superseded by a new Ireland, which is created from the autobiographical volumes' many and various presentations of Johnny's/Sean's ideals and vision of life, and in its abundant use too of the smaller individual symbols and traditions of the convention which the autobiographies helped

to bring into being, The Drums of Father Ned, the so-called "Microcosm of Ireland" becomes, indeed, is, essentially a microcosm of O'Casey's work.

Ironically, The Drums of Father Ned, with its prophecy of a new spiritual freedom for Ireland, was at the centre of a storm concerning the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and the Dublin Theatre Festival as part of which the play was to be performed. It is not, therefore, surprising that Behind The Green Curtains, O'Casey's next play should revert back to the gloom of the image of Ireland as presented in Inishfallen. But if the play returns to the pessimistic spirit of this image, it does not take over the image itself, but instead creates, out of the themes of Inishfallen, Rose and Crown and Sunset, an image or microcosm of the Irish literary world, which had not previously been consolidated within the autobiographies themselves. For its plot-structure of disillusionment leading to exile, the play turns to Inishfallen; and for its central symbolism of the "Green Curtains", and for smaller details in its substance it turns to the conventions established by the autobiographies and plays. And this strongly retrospective quality in the play, and, indeed, too, in its successors, emphasises, perhaps, how greatly O'Casey's plays had, in the course of time, come to rely upon the autobiographies for inspiration and substance. So greatly had they done so that when the autobiographies were completed, and were no longer a "contemporary" source of material for or inspiration and influence upon the writing of drama, the author, apparently not finding, or not even looking, for any further source of inspiration and material, continued to turn to the autobiographies as a source for his plays -- even though this now meant turning back to the autobiographies. Perhaps Behind The Green Curtains marks the point of over-dependence of the plays upon the autobiographies for the themes, and even

many of the conventions, which it expresses, seem to have become somewhat stale. Indeed, as a whole O'Casey's post-autobiography plays never really develop very far beyond the guidelines set out in the autobiographies (even the optimistic vision of Father Ned was first pre-figured in Sunset). A further unfortunate aspect of the relationship between the autobiographies and Behind The Green Curtains, seems to be that this play takes on some of the less dramatic roles which the autobiographies had hitherto fulfilled in O'Casey's literary life. In the late autobiographies these roles included attacks on Irish writers and critics (in response to attacks from them) and an assertion of the rightness of his decision to leave Ireland and live in England. It is, it seems, the play's assumption of such roles as these that leads to the polemical tone of much of the dialogue in the play, and a general neglect of characterisation, and even of dramatic incident.

Figure in the Night, however, turns again to Sunset's prophecy of hope for Ireland, and, if it does draw very heavily upon the conventions established by the autobiography, it re-expresses them very creatively indeed and reveals the autobiographies, completed as they are, to be still capable of truly inspiring the author's dramatic imagination even at this late stage in his career, although in its inclusion of a "Green Crow" figure ^{the play} seems to be looking towards a more contemporary source of material also.

But perhaps The Moon Shines on Kylenamoe is the finest of these last plays, for within this play themes, albeit specifically the themes of the later autobiographies, are clothed in characterisation; while symbolism, material, and images of Ireland, as derived from the O'Caseyan convention, are used sparingly and with the utmost care, and thus to very

great and concentrated effect. The play itself seems virtually to embody a convention which has run through O'Casey's work from the days, possibly, before he began work on The Shadow of a Gunman -- the idea of a railway play. And it seems largely due to the autobiographies and their interaction with the plays that this idea should have been kept alive for so many years and eventually, when the time was right, brought to blossom and bear fruit in O'Casey's very last play.

Thus it seems the autobiographies had been from their very beginning an integral part of O'Casey's dramatic career and in form, nature and substance essentially and inextricably bound up with the nature of his plays and the course which his career as a dramatist took. And it seems too that ^{their} influence upon, and contribution to, the plays did not cease until the last play was written.

Indeed it seems as if the writing of the autobiographies and the subsequent relationship and interaction between them and the plays might well have been a chief guiding force, and perhaps, just possibly, even the chief guiding force, in O'Casey's career as a playwright. Certainly it seems as if some of the individual plays would not have come into being at all if they had not been inspired by the autobiography, while many of the others would, perhaps, have been very different if the autobiographies had not provided their substance and shaped their nature.

The questions as to what would have been the nature of the individual plays, and as to what course O'Casey's career as a dramatist would have taken had the autobiographies not been written are, of course, unanswerable. And so, largely unanswerable too is the question as to whether the autobiographies' relationship with and influence upon the

plays was generally for good or for ^{ill} λ . In terms of individual plays the relationship and interaction between the autobiographies and the plays varied at almost every point. And while a relationship between one play and the autobiographies might result in a fine flowering of creativity -- in the autobiographies or in the play, or in both -- a relationship involving the autobiographies and another play might result in the play being weighed down with directly expressed themes borrowed from the late autobiographies.

In terms of O'Casey's plays collectively and ^{of} λ his autobiographies collectively, however, the flow of inspiration and material between the two groups of writings seems to have been, on the whole, an enrichment to both. But, what is ^{more} λ , in terms of O'Casey's plays and autobiographies ^{complete} as one continuous sequence representing his λ career as an imaginative writer, the relationship and interaction between them can be seen in the light of being a constant generator of creative inspiration, a constant supplier of creative substance, and a constant force towards the evolution of a more complete, more refined, and personally more satisfying expression of what the author, as a dedicated and consummate artist, wished to say about life.

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