Banshees of the Modern Age:

On the Irishwomen's Cry for Nationalism in the Early 20th Century

K Persinger

University of California, Irvine

UCI History Undergraduate Research Journal

Abstract:

Although many accounts of the Irish nationalist movement during the early twentieth century are male-centric, women were key organizers and activists. In 1900, Maud Gonne organized a prominent organization for female nationalists, Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland), which operated until its 1914 merger with Cumann na mBan (The Irishwomen's Council). Irish women were central to the overall efforts of the Irish nationalist movement and the achievement of an independent Irish state in 1923, organizing to raise money, promote the use of the Irish language and appreciation of Irish traditions and customs, and foster a national identity. Nationalist propaganda, such as William Butler Yeats's one-act play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, which mobilized the symbol of the free Irish state as a woman in need of liberation through nationalist devotion, also helped to mobilize Irish nationalists. Through a feminist historical perspective, this paper seeks to excavate the entanglement of respectability, gender and nationalism in the Irish nationalist movement. Through this it explores the construction of normative gender relationships under colonial rule in Ireland and the way in which women both mobilized and resisted these gender roles in pursuit of expanded rights for women and independence for the Irish state.

Although Irish women were key organizers and activists of the Irish nationalist movement during the early twentieth century, their role has largely been overlooked in history. This can in part be attributed to those like William Butler Yeats, the renowned poet, who mobilized images of nationalist femininity while turning a blind eye to the work of female nationalists. It is certainly for this reason that prominent nationalists like Maud Gonne are so often written about merely as Yeats's "muse" and Countess Markievicz is remembered for her "shrill voice."[1] The purpose of feminist history is to reclaim "the previously unnoticed, holding it up to the light of day to see how it fits beside the other, better-known facts."[2] This is not simply an exercise in the appreciation of details or the politics of representation, but rather is fundamental to the understanding of historical events. Not only are all nationalisms gendered, but nationalism "cannot be understood without a theory of gender power."[3] This entanglement of gender and nationalism is particularly apparent in understanding the history of the Irish nationalist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century (1900-1914). In this paper, I use autobiography, plays, and newspaper articles written and disseminated by prominent Irish nationalist women in order to explore this entanglement. Although women were frequently marginalized within the nationalist movement, particularly in the way they were excluded from or made auxiliary to male nationalist organizations, they continued to organize and push for liberation of both Ireland and themselves. Maud Gonne and her organization, Inghindhe na hEireann (Daughters of Ireland), were central to the cultural revolution that bolstered both national identity and anti-British energies among Irish nationalists, emphasized a largely intersectional liberating framework of decolonization in Ireland, and set a precedent for women's increasing presence in the Nationalist movement.

---

[1] On Yeats influence over Markievicz's legacy, see: Steele, 424
[2] For the role of feminist history, see: Ward (1982), 21
[3] On the entanglement of nationalism and gender, see: McClintock (1993), 61

In order to excavate women's contested presence within the Irish nationalist movement it is important to understand the entanglement of Irish gender politics, the emergence of bourgeois respectability, and nationalism, particularly as they coincided at the turn of the twentieth century. Respectability is inherently an ordering discourse, producing the norms against which the abnormal or deviant is defined. In doing this, respectability intertwines ideas of both gender and nationalism in order to constitute the modern subject.[4] In Ireland, these norms were shaped in large part by the Penal Laws of 1695, which were not repealed until 1829 and had a lasting impact afterwards. These laws suppressed Irish social, economic, religious, and political activities and subsequently contoured gender patterns and relationships.[5] The lack of regular paid labor for men caused by the Penal Laws resulted in an increased importance placed on women's economic contributions to the household, and subsequently led to an outwardly patriarchal system where women inwardly held significant authority over the household's finances and decisions.[6] In essence, "women knew that they had the 'upper hand,' but that it would only last if they maintained the illusion that men were in charge."[7] The need for the illusion of male control responded to the anxieties of emasculation produced by British occupation and was particularly heightened in the context of respectability in modern Europe.[8]

In Ireland this discourse of respectability powerfully influenced how women were able to participate in the nationalist movement. The idea that "there was the 'official' head of the household, and then there was the 'real' head of the house" is central to the contestation of

---

[4] Sommer, 40: Referencing Anderson "Said inversely, everyone not only "has" a nationality and a gender in the same imagined way, but these imaginings constitute us as modern subjects." See also Mosse, 1.
[5] For the impact of the Penal Laws of 1695 of Irish gender patterns, see: Radosh, 270
[6] For gender in Ireland, see: Radosh, 272-273
[7] For Irish patriarchy, see: Radosh, 275
[8] For gender and respectability, see: Mosse, 1: "Analyzing the relationship between nationalism and respectability involves tracing the development of some of the most important norms that have informed our society: ideals of manliness...and their effect on the place of women; and insiders who accepted the norms, as compared to outsiders, those considered abnormal or diseased"

women's presence in nationalist organizations and actions.[9] At the turn of the twentieth century, for example, there was a reluctance amongst nationalist men to allow women a place in the nationalist movement, despite the precedent of women-led organizations like the Ladies Land League (LLL) which had, as Countess Constance Markiewicz put it, "started to do the militant things that the men only threatened and talked of" only a few decades earlier.[10] It is perhaps for this very reason that the all-male National League refused women's inclusion. Maud Gonne, for example, argued for the inclusion of women in the National League based on the precedent of the LLL's accomplishments. In response, Gonne was told that although the LLL did good work while many of the nationalist men were in jail, "they did too good work, and some of us found they could not be controlled."[11] What this suggests is that the perceived threat to male dominance posed by "uncontrollable" women took precedence over the mutual aim of achieving Irish sovereignty. Women's work was important but had to be accomplished without visibly outperforming the men.

In response to this exclusion, Gonne founded Inghinidhe na hEireann (the Daughters of Ireland) in 1900, the first prominent women's nationalist group since the LLL had disbanded nearly twenty years earlier. The organization was intended to bring together those who, like Gonne, "resented being excluded, as women, from National Organizations."[12] Gonne became the president, with Annie Egan, Anna Johnson, Jenny Wyse Power and Alice Furlong as the joint vice-presidents, Maire Quinn, Dora Hackett and Elizabeth Morgan serving as secretaries, and Sarah White and Margaret Quinn as the treasurers.[13] Inghinidhe was not a secret society but

---

[9] For patriarchy in Ireland, see Radosh, 274

[10] McCarthy, 5: The Ladies Land League took up the work of the Land League when it was declared illegal in 1881 and was the first mass Irishwomen's organization. Markiewicz is quoted in Steele, 440.

[11] For Gonne's account of being rejected from the National League, see: Gonne, 95-96

[12] For the establishment of Inghinidhe, see: Bobotis, 64. See also: Gonne, 266

[13] For founding members, see: Ward (1995), 50

required a firm commitment and potential members had to be proposed and seconded by two members and wait a week between being nominated and accepted through ballot in order to join.[14] Members also adopted Gaelic names as a method of maintaining a degree of anonymity and therefore safety.[15] As a group, Inghinidhe worked towards "the goals of spreading education, especially the Gaelic language, Irish music, history, literature and art...and the discouragement of 'vulgar' English entertainments."[16]

In addition to this educational work Inghinidhe also initiated an "intense campaign against enlistment in the British Army."[17] The ongoing Boer War (1899-1902) meant an increased recruiting effort on the British Army, and offered a particularly useful strategy for undermining the British Empire—"England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," nationalists acknowledged.[18] Irish nationalists largely positioned themselves as pro-Boer in a move which mobilized a politics of respectability. Quoting reports by Michael Davitt at length, Gonne noted that:

> England has killed 14,000 Christian children, has imprisoned 45,000 Christian women in barbed-wire enclosures…and has armed savages to help her in a war…and yet Cardinal Vaughn, in the name of the Catholic Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on behalf of the Protestants, Mr. Hugh Price Hughes of the Nonconformists of the same enlightened Christian nation, piously call down God's blessing upon the arms which are killing and exterminating little Christian nations in South Africa.[19]

In making this claim in such a way, Irish nationalists perpetuated the civilizing discourse of colonialism inherent in respectability politics. Although Irish nationalists used their support of the Boers towards anti-British aims, they did not position themselves as more broadly anti-

---

[14] For Inghinidhe's decision not to be a secret organization, see: Gonne, 268. For conditions of membership, see: Ward (1995), 52

[15] For revolutionary names see: Ward (1995), 52 and Hill 29

[16] For the cultural goals of Inghinidhe, see: McCallum, 23

[17] For Inghinidhe's anti-enlistment actions, see: Gonne, 266

[18] See: Gonne, 266

[19] Gonne, 273: Gonne quotes Michael Davitt at length, which she says represents "Ireland's views on the subject"

colonialist. The language Davitt uses, and which Gonne emphasizes, positions the threat of "savages" to precarious "little Christian nations" in a way which maintains the racist and colonial idea of (implicitly white) Christian superiority over colonized African peoples. This largely overlooked the possibilities of aligning Irish nationalism with broader aims of decolonization in Africa, which might have recognized and mobilized solidarity between Black South Africans and Irish nationalists.

The same politics of respectability can be evidenced in nationalist Irishwomen's response to British recruiting efforts. As part of British recruiting efforts, Queen Victoria visited Ireland in April 1900 and held a Children's Treat which was a picnic and fair for the children of Ireland that also intended to bolster military recruitment. In response, Gonne and her friends formed the Patriotic Children's Treat Committee and subsequently organized their own event for the children who had not gone to the Queen's Treat in order to encourage the development of national identity in Irish youth.[20] The counter-Treat not only proved to be successful, greatly eclipsing the queen's event, but also served to encourage women's continued involvement in nationalism as "the women who assisted Gonne in this endeavor were reluctant to retreat into the private sphere after having tasted the excitement of organizing a public nationalist spectacle."[21] It was following this success that Inghinidhe was founded, with their first official meeting held in October 1900.[22]

Anticolonial nationalisms are generally given to have an inner domain of sovereignty which precedes the outward movement against the colonizer, and this certainly holds true in the

---

[20] For the organization of the Patriotic Children's Treat see Gonne, 268 and Ward (1995), 48.

[21] For the success of the Patriotic Children's Treat, see Ward (1995), 48-49: An estimated 5,000 children attended the Queen's Treat while 25,000 attended the Patriotic Treat . For women's increased interest in public nationalism see Banerjee, 78.

[22] For the establishment of Inghinidhe, see: Ward (1995), McCallum, Banerjee. However, Gonne, 268 references Inghinidhe actions prior to Queen Victoria's Treat.

case of Irish nationalism.[23] What this means is that anticolonial nationalisms must have a private, cultural sovereignty before organized resistance against public colonization is achievable. Because of this, it must be emphasized that, owing to the gendered production of the inner/outer spheres, women were central actors in creating the inner domain of sovereignty. Two of the major ways in which women are frequently entangled with nationalism are "as biological reproducers of the members of national collectivities" and "as active transmitters and producers of the national culture."[24] Both of these roles figured prominently in the undertakings of Inghinidhe and were explicitly evoked by members in emphasizing the importance of the organization. The Patriotic Children's Treat is a particularly clear example of this, demonstrating the way that female nationalists were able to organize around acceptable ideals of national mothering despite the dominant exclusion of women from nationalist organizations. This is something Gonne in particular emphasized by asserting that, following the Treat, she drove to all of the hospitals in the city and was told that there had never been a "Sunday so free from child accidents."[25] In this way, not only did Gonne implicitly argue that nationalist women were appropriately transmitting cultural knowledge to the nation's children, but were demonstrating particularly good "mothering" by protecting the children of the nation by maintaining appropriate order.

Inghinidhe further embodies the entanglement of gender and nationalism in the way that they policed sexual relationships between Irish women and British soldiers.[26] This can be seen in

---

[23] For the inner domain of sovereignty see Chatterjee, 6; for the relevance to Irish Nationalism, see Radosh, 273: "Survival might take precedence, but anger, political mischief, and commitment to revenge against the British simmered in wait for a time of action".

[24] For the five major ways in which women are entangled in nationalism see McClintock (1995), 355: McClintock cites Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias.

[25] See Gonne, 270

[26] See McClintock (1995), 355: Another way which Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias's address the ways in which women are entangled in nationalism is as "reproducers of the boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on sexual or marital relations)"

Inghinidhe's activism on O'Connell Street, a major street in Dublin which was frequented by members of the British military and their girlfriends (on the west side) as well as Dublin citizens (on the east). As a form of direct action to undermine British military recruitment efforts members of Inghinidhe would distribute fliers warning against the "the shame of Irish girls consorting with the soldiers of the enemy of their country".[27] Implicit to this action was an organization of national identity through the management of sexual relationships. In addition to using leaflets to discourage women from dating British soldiers, many of the men connected to Inghinidhe (namely brothers and sweethearts of the members) would come to "prevent [members of Inghinidhe] being insulted by the English soldiers" which meant, in practice, fighting the soldiers, often with the support of passers-by.[28] Because Inghinidhe positioned their actions as demonstrating concerns about sexual morality and a desire to prevent the spread of STIs and the births of illegitimate babies, they were able to gain the support of clergy which subsequently meant that the Dublin Police "were slow to interfere."[29] By mobilizing a politics of respectability in this way, Inghinidhe was able to offer a multifaceted resistance to the presence of British military, isolating them socially and sexually by discouraging women from going with the enemy, while simultaneously offering an increased protection from police interference for the men who supported them. The organization also undermined recruiting efforts by mobilizing religious fervor, following military recruiters into pubs and distributing leaflets on the Catholic Church's opposition to unjust wars in order to discourage Irish enlistment.[30]

In addition to these forms of direct action, Inghinidhe was deeply engaged with the preservation and development of Irish cultural productions. Prior to 1913, which largely signaled

[27] For Inghinidhe's actions on O'Connell street see Ward (1995), 54 and Gonne, 267
[28] See Gonne, 267
[29] For the support of clergy and its impact on police response see Ward (1995), 54 and Gonne, 267
[30] For Inghinidhe's anti-enlistment efforts, see: Ward (1995), 54

the increase in militarization which culminated in the Anglo-Irish War, the Irish Nationalist movement was generally focused on Gaelic revival and the promotion of Irish culture and arts.[31] This cannot be separated from the cultivation of national identity, which requires the inspiration of love demonstrated by the cultural products of nationalism.[32] The subjugation of culture is not an arbitrary facet of colonization, but rather necessary to the undermining of anticolonial nationalist efforts; because of this, reviving and revaluing Irish nationalist culture cultivated national identity through the inspiration of patriotic love and desire. Historians have argued that in the context of the Irish nationalist movement "the Gaelic revivals were just as much political as was the rise of Sinn Fein [the Irish Nationalist Party]".[33] The Gaelic revival was a central aspect of Inghinidhe's mission, no doubt at least partially because the preservation of culture could more easily be reconciled with ideas of what was women's work (again reflecting the connection between nationalism and gender). The theater was particularly important to this cultural revival. Nationalist plays had a strong effect on the national psyche. As McCallum notes: "Inghinidhe's theatre troupe and its idealized ancient Ireland, as well as many other cultural contributions, had a major impact on the creation of 'Irishness'...which impacted nationalist ideologies throughout the revolutionary period".[34] Furthermore, one might read Inghinidhe's theatrical productions as reflective of "women's embodied experience as both icon and icon maker, as well as their negotiation of nationalist and feminist politics."[35] In this sense, Inghinidhe's engagement with theater contested the inner/outer spheres of nationalist politics. Women became (in some ways) passive icons that embodied national myths in gendered ways through the characters they performed. Simultaneously, as the actors creating and transmitting

[31] For the cultural efforts of the Irish Nationalist movement, see: Ward (1995), 89
[32] For the connection between love and nationalism, see: Anderson, 141
[33] For the political implications of the Gaelic revivals, see: Lyons, 82
[34] For the importance of Inghinidhe's theater, see: McCallum, 24
[35] For embodied mythmaking, see: Hill, 27

these representations, members of Inghinidhe were taking an active role in the public sphere as nationalists.

One of the most influential productions Inghinidhe put on was the 1902 play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* written by William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory.[36] The play was so impactful that Yeats later wrote that he felt responsible for those who were shot in the Easter Uprising because of the role *Cathleen ni Houlihan* had played in developing the nationalist mentality.[37] The play depicts Ireland as the titular Cathleen, an elderly women walking the road who "has been put to wandering" because there are "too many strangers in the house."[38] Cathleen goes from house to house, looking for those who will come and help her. She comes upon the house of Bridget and Peter, who are preparing for the marriage of their son, Michael, to his fiancé Delia, and celebrating both the successful match and Delia's large dowry. Bridget and Peter pity Cathleen and, believing her to be a confused old woman, offer her a bit of money before she goes. However, Cathleen refuses, saying she is not looking for money but for those who are willing to give up everything to help her. Michael decides that he will go and help her, becoming focused on this to the point where he no longer remembers he was going to marry Delia and refusing to listen to Delia or his parent's efforts to get him to stay. As Cathleen leaves the house, she is no longer seen as a crone, but as a "young girl" with "the walk of a Queen", implicitly transformed by the love and support of Irishmen volunteering to give up everything and fight for her.[39]

The nationalist symbolism of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* in many ways mobilizes the image of the *Shan Van Vocht* (The Poor Old Woman), a defiant figure popular in nineteenth century

---

[36] Hill, 27; there is not standardized spelling between "Kathleen" and "Cathleen"
[37] For Yeats reflections on the impact of the play, see: Lyons, 62
[38] See: Yeats and Gregory, lines 43-44
[39] See: Yeats and Gregory, line 55

political ballads.[40] Whereas many female nationalist symbols are "sedate rather than dynamic," standing "for immutability rather than progress," the *Shan Van Vocht* paradoxically is both.[41] The immutability of pre-colonial Irish national identity embodied in this figure is inseparable from progress in an anti-colonial context, and while being poor, old, and a woman might seem to render the figure vulnerable and dependent on the surface, her defiance can be read as dynamic. Despite the fact that the use of feminine symbols in Irish nationalist productions, especially ones in need of protection like Cathleen, have been criticized as "overshadowing the genuine political accomplishments of Irish women," the figure of the *Shan Van Vocht* in *Cathleen ni Houlihan* offers a slight variation to this construct.[42] While Cathleen needs men willing to die for love of her and certainly represents an immutable Irish national identity, she is also legible as active in the way she is depicted as seeking out and calling her people to arms. Furthermore, the work of numerous Irish women in producing and popularizing Cathleen as a nationalist symbol can be seen as a genuine political accomplishment in and of itself.

In understanding the entanglement of gender and nationalism in *Cathleen ni Houlihan* it is helpful to draw on Sumathi Ramaswamy's concept of the "triangle of desire." According to this argument, nationalist literatures rely on three desiring characters: the nation, imagined as a desirable but virginal mother; the male nationalist, typically young, heterosexual, and desiring; and the female nationalist who is young and heterosexual like the male nationalist, desirable like the mother/nation, and destined to become the married mother reproducing the nation.[43] The triangle of desire as a framework provides insight into the convergence of erotic and patriotic desire within nationalist ideologies, particularly in "the use of erotic desire as a nation-building

[40] For the figure of the Shan Van Vocht, see Hill, 4.
[41] For female nationalist symbols, see: Mosse, 23
[42] For criticisms of feminine symbols, see: Bobotis, 64
[43] For the "triangle of desire" see Ramaswamy, 10. Ramaswamy also notes that this is only one possible configuration of the triangle of desire but identifies it as the most dominant.

technology."[44]Essentially, Ramaswamy argues, nationalism and erotic desire are mutually constructive. By looking through this cross-section, one can not only better understand the way gendered relationships shape nationalism, but also the way that gendered relationships are shaped *through* nationalism. Although Ramaswamy discusses the triangle of desire in the context of Tamil nationalism, these dynamics are in many ways evident in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*.

Although presented as a crone, Cathleen speaks to the erotics of nationalism while maintaining the virginal purity required of the mother/nation.[45] In the play Cathleen says that "many a man has died for love of me," but that "with all the lovers that brought me their love, I never set out the bed for any."[46] Here Cathleen is offered as an erotic symbol of the nation, desired by many but preserving her virginity. Furthermore, Cathleen's erotic portrayal evokes the threat of sexual violence. Colonization frequently involves a feminization which is conducive to an iconography of rape. Colonized peoples and lands are typically feminized as part of the colonial process of subjugations and colonial narratives often speak to the "erotics of engulfment" which occurs through this feminization.[47] At the same time, anti-colonial nationalisms mobilize the feminized nation to render colonization as rape, thereby calling nationalists to "her" protection.[48] Because of this one can extrapolate that the virginal purity of the nation becomes so central in part because of the way rape becomes a colonial metaphor. In this context the sexual purity of the female national icon not only reflects a respectable feminine

---

[44] See Ramaswamy, 9 and 36.
[45] For the significance of nation as virgin mother, see Ramaswamy 17; see also Bobotis, 64 for the connection between the symbol of the Virgin Mary and the Mother of the Nation in Irish nationalism
[46] Yeats and Gregory, line 45 and 47
[47] For colonization as a feminizing process, see McClintock (1995), 24-30. See also Ryan, 75 for its relevance to British colonization in Ireland.
[48] For Irish nationalist mobilization of British violation of Ireland see Ryan, 75 referencing Sabina Sharkey (1994)

sexuality, but also embodies the refusal of colonial violation. For the male nationalist, the idea of dying for one's nation speaks to what Anderson calls "purity through fatality."[49]

This purity is evident throughout the play and is particularly embodied in the way in which the male nationalist becomes central to the play. Michael is called to have no love save for his country. When Cathleen states "It is not a man going to his marriage that I look to for help," Michael chooses to follow her rather than stay and marry his fiancé Delia.[50] In this way, the female nationalist becomes an absent presence in the play: although the triangle of desire depends on three mutually reinforcing components and it was female nationalists who put on the play, the play itself offers no space for the female nationalist to fight for her country. Rather than being called to act, as the male nationalist is, or be the desirable reflection of her mother/nation and reproduce the nation, Delia seems to be incompatible with the aims of Irish nationalism. Not only is she not called to action herself, but she is entirely unable to understand why Michael is choosing to leave and follow Cathleen. In this way, the play demonstrates how the female nationalist is simultaneously imperative to the success of Irish cultural productions and imagery, and yet continuously obscured from the broader movement.

Although the female nationalist is missing from the play, Ramaswamy's description of this figure in many ways echoes the experiences of Irish nationalist women, namely in the way nationalist femininity was dominantly constructed along normative, heterosexual lines of respectability. Furthermore, the role of the female nationalist as desirable is particularly evident in the way that Gonne's nationalist activities were shaped by men's romantic interest in her, which was in turn connected to Gonne's desirability as a nationalist figure. Despite having previously turned down other theatrical roles out of the desire to keep her time free for other

[49] See: Anderson, 144

[50] See: Yeats and Gregory, line 49

nationalist activities Gonne took on the role of Cathleen, because, as she explained in her memoir, "it was only on that condition that Willie Yeats would give us [Inghinidhe] the right to producing his play, and I felt that play would have great importance for the Nationalist movement."[51] In this way we can see how Gonne navigated the objectifying desire that male nationalists felt towards her and redirected the admiration and affection of she received into her projects.[52]

Furthermore, Gonne often used her national embodiment of the character Cathleen when challenging Queen Victoria's own construction of herself as a "maternal" figure over the British empire. Queen Victoria often tried to convey the image that she, as the British monarch, was a mother taking care of her Irish children. Gonne took advantage of both this idea and the concept of Ireland as a female maternal entity conveyed through Inghinidhe's production of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* to create in her own rhetoric a "rival maternity" between Ireland and England. In doing so, Gonne challenged Victoria's claim to respectable motherhood by portraying her as "The Famine Queen," the bad mother who had let her children starve while she lived in luxury.[53]

In rejecting the "bad mothering" of Victoria, Inghinidhe was also actively engaged comprehensively improving the conditions of Irish nationals and demonstrated interest in feminism and issues surrounding women's rights and welfare. Although there were debates as to how best various political aims could be achieved, it is important to keep in mind that "the "nationalist world" was not a separate sphere of Dublin society but was integrated with other radical political spheres, including socialism, suffrage, and vegetarianism."[54] This is something which was reflected in Inghinidhe's nationalist paper *Bean na hEireann* (Women of Ireland),

[51] For Gonne's decision to play Cathleen, see: Gonne, 177
[52] For Gonne's mobilization of men's interest in her towards the aims of nationalism, see: Ward (1995), 47
[53] For Gonne's "rival maternity", see: Bobotis 65, 73-75
[54] For the connection of radical politics in Dublin, see: Arrington, 51.

which was printed from 1908-1913.[55] The paper largely served to "enlist women in political activism, to legitimate female militantism, and, implicitly, to unite suffragists and nationalists in a common cause," and it "discussed the conditions of women and appealed for the organization of women workers...detailing victimization of women workers and highlighting the legal and social obstacles to advancing women's status."[56] Furthermore, members of Inghinidhe recognized the connection between the economic subjugation of the Irish and the broader aims of British colonization. In one article in the paper, "The Ethics of Anti-Enlisting," an anonymous author writes "It is only a great love of country, a high sense of duty, and a great feeling of national responsibility that will make a man choose starvation and the workhouse to enlisting."[57] The importance of women's economic contributions to household budgets and the overall poor economic conditions caused by British occupation made labor activism a particularly important cause for members of Inghinidhe as both women and nationalists.

Although the question of suffrage was similarly important, it was a far more contested topic with many nationalists divided between whether it was more important to achieve a free Irish state or raise the status of women through voting rights while still subjects of Britain. Furthermore, the patriarchal politics within Irish nationalism meant further divisions. Constance Markievicz in particular pointed to the limitations of suffrage through a British regime while simultaneously chastising male nationalists who were against the development of a free Irish state wherein Irishwomen enjoyed equal rights of citizenship. Markievicz pointed to the fact that "the national heroes of Ireland are felons and convicts" and argued that "Irish suffragists must also be Irish nationalists, since national sovereignty and female emancipation went hand in

[55] For the establishment of *Bean na hEireann* see: McCarthy, 25 and Owens, 34.
[56] See: Steele, 427 and Owens 34-35 for the goals of the paper.
[57] See: *Bean na hEireann* (December 1910), 5

hand."[58] Markievicz's decolonizing framework points to the problematics of seeking to expand access to the state regime when the state is itself illegitimate. For Irish nationalists, the colonial state denied access to legitimate governance through its very existence, criminalizing those whom they viewed as heroes. Because of this, seeking the privileges of citizenship through the colonial government would only serve to strengthen colonial rule.

In addition to engaging with the goals of nationalism in an intersectional manner, Inghinidhe also began to encourage women to be ready to take a more militarized role. Although suffrage and female militancy pushed beyond the limitations of respectable womanhood in some ways, *Bean na hEireann* typically deployed normative femininity in its work towards nationalist aims. Its articles combined topics traditionally associated with women's work with metaphors for (increasingly militant) nationalism. One of the most profound examples of this is found in Markievicz's gardening column where she encouraged women to take an active role in the nationalist movement. In these pieces she often wrote about the sympathy she felt for "the enthusiastic pruner whose fingers 'itch to hold her knife'" and compared the British occupiers to slugs and other garden pests that needed to be smashed. She also used seasonal planting guides to "chronicle the experiences of the past patriots and colonized countries."[59] Not only did these allegories serve as a way of obscuring the meaning in order to create a kind of plausible deniability against the British and Unionists, but through these comparisons Markievicz sought to encourage and normalize the role of militant women in the nationalist movement. Although this was not immediately effective, it arguably helped open doors to female participation as the movement grew.

[58] For Markievicz discussion of nationalism and suffrage see: Arrington, 54 and 57
[59] For Markievicz's gardening allegories see: Steele, 432 and 434

Women like Maud Gonne, Constance Markievicz and other members of Inghinidhe na hEireann played an essential role in the Irish nationalist movement, working to develop a nationalist identity and paving the way for women's increasingly militant role within the movement. Attentiveness to the entanglement of gender, respectability, and nation not only grant insight into the role these women played, but the logics that led to the obscuring of their presence. The members of Inghinidhe not only utilized the roles they were traditionally given in society to further the nationalist movement through fundraising, cultural revival, and first aid, but through both a mobilization of normative gender expectations as well as contestation of these roles pushed the boundaries and took an active role in the movement as soldiers and strategists. Though they are often overlooked or reduced to icons in a male dominant movement, Gonne, Markiewicz and the women of Inghinidhe na hEireann defined an era, fighting and eventually achieving sovereignty not only for Ireland but for themselves.

Works Cited

Anderson, Benedict. “Introduction” and “Chapter 8.” *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 2000, pp 1-7, 141-154.

Arrington, Lauren. *Revolutionary Lives: Constance and Casimir Markievicz*. Princeton University Press, Princeton; Oxford, 2016.

Banerjee, Sikata. “Irish and Indian Women in Muscular Nationalism (1914–1932).” *Muscular Nationalism: Gender, Violence, and Empire in India and Ireland, 1914-2004*, NYU Press, New York; London, 2012, pp. 75–106. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfwgs.7.

Boboits, Andrea. “Rival Maternities: Maud Gonne, Queen Victoria, And The Reign of the Political Mother.” *Victorian Studies* 49.1 (2006): 63-83. Print.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories.* Princeton University, The Trustees of Princeton University, 1993.

Defence Forces Ireland Military Archives. "Copy of Bean Na hÉireann, a monthly magazine published by Inghínidhe Na hÉireann.South Dublin County Libraries, 1913-1915: Preparation. Web. http://hdl.handle.net/10599/10464.

Hill, Shonagh. *Women and Embodied Mythmaking in Irish Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Gonne, Maud. *The Autobiography of Maud Gonne: A Servant of the Queen*. Edited by A. Norman Jeffares and Anna MacBride White, University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Lyons, F.S. *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

McCallum, Christi. “And They’ll March with their Brothers to Freedom: Cumann Na mBan, Nationalism, and Women’s Rights in Ireland, 1900-1923.” Diss. Florida State University

College of Arts and Sciences, 2005. Print.

McCarthy, Cal. *Cumann Na mBan and the Irish Revolution*. The Collins Press, 2013.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest,* Routledge, 1995.

McClintock, Anne. "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family." *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61-80. Print.

Mosse, George L. 1988. "Chapter 1" and "Chapter 9." Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe. Madison: University of Wisconsin Pres, pp. 181-191).

Owens, Rosemary. "'Votes for Ladies, Votes for Women' Organised Labour and the Suffrage Movement, 1876-1922." *Saothar*, vol. 9, 1983, pp. 32–47. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23193862.

Ramaswamy, Sumathi. "Virgin Mother, Beloved Other: The Erotics of Tamil Nationalism in Colonial and Post-colonial India." Thamyris, 1997, pp. 9-39.

Ryan, Louise. "'Drunken Tans': Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919-21)." *Feminist Review*, no. 66, 2000, pp. 73–94. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1395833.

Sommer, Doris. "Part II: Love and Country: An Allegorical Speculation*." Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Steele, Karen. "Constance Markievicz's Allegorical Garden: Femininity, Militancy, and the Press, 1909-1915." *Women's Studies* 29 (2000): 423-447. Print

Ward, Margaret. “Suffrage First, Above All Else! An Account of the Irish Suffrage Movement.” *Feminist Review* 10.1 (1982): 21-36. Print.

Ward, Margaret. *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism*. 2nd ed., Pluto Press, London; East Haven, CT, 1995.

Yeats, William Butler, and Lady Gregory. “Cathleen Ni Houlihan.” *The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Collected Works in Verse and Prose of William Butler Yeats, Vol. 4 (of 8), by William Butler Yeats*. N pag.

Yeats, William Butler. “Easter 1916.” *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (1989)*. Poetry Foundation, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43289/easter-1916.