
Translation of *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1935), by Teresa Deevy

Úna Kealy (Introductory essay)

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Resisting Power and Direction: *The King of Spain's Daughter* by Teresa Deevy as a Feminist Call to Action¹

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Born in 1894, into a middle-class family with nationalist sympathies, Teresa Deevy was the youngest of thirteen children whose father died when she was two years old. Her mother prioritised her daughters' education and Teresa boarded in the Ursuline Convent a short distance from her home, taught by a community of Catholic sisters with one hundred years' experience in educating young women. *St. Ursula's Annual* (1911) to which Deevy contributed, reveals a formal and informal curriculum of music, sport, dramatic, critical and journalistic writing, and debating. A debate in 1911 asked audience and participants to consider whether women should have equal social and political rights with men (*St. Ursula's Annual* 10) while a series of guest lecturers to the school that year, gave lectures on Sheridan Le Fanu, approaches to studying history, the development of Irish music, Saint Bridget and, the genre of the passion play (*St. Ursula's Annual* 34). Regular school trips to musical recitals and concerts in the city occurred and students were encouraged to write and perform original plays. In an article entitled "Books We Have Read" Deevy's love of literature emanates from her reflections on the books she and her friends read that school year. Leeney references Deevy's contributions to the annual as evidence of an "optimistic, energetic and intellectually alive" (*Irish Women Playwrights* 161) young woman while O'Doherty asserts that they attest to an "infectious ebullience" ("Wife" 25). One can add that the prioritisation of social, cultural and intellectual concerns and the development of practical skills, evident within the activities described within the annual, provided the intellectual groundwork and commitment towards social and political activism that is manifested within *The King of Spain's Daughter*.

Deevy submitted *Reserved Ground* and *After To-Morrow* to the Abbey reading committee in the 1920s. These were rejected, however, and the first of her plays, *Reapers*, was produced there in 1930.² While *Reapers* is no longer extant, quotations from it exist in articles critiquing Deevy's work written in the 1940s and 1950s and within her correspondence with Sahal in the mid-1950s. Jordan quotes a line attributed to the character of Jack Doherty who says "Pattie believes, and so do I, that life's meant to be lived, not

accepted” (Deevy in Jordan 15). Novelist and poet Mary Leslie, writing under the pseudonym Temple Lane quotes the character of Lena saying “I’ll marry. That’s the best in the long run: you’re settled then for life, or if it turns out unhappy you can take up something with real interest then, because you won’t be thinking of marriage any longer: yes, I’ll marry” (Deevy in Lane 36). These themes of challenging accepted norms of social and personal conduct, and the compromises of marriage, for women in particular, remain as central preoccupations within Deevy’s work. *A Disciple* (originally entitled *In Search of Valour*) was staged in 1931, *Temporal Powers* in 1932, *The King of Spain’s Daughter* in 1935 and *Katie Roche* and *The Wild Goose* in 1936. While all of these productions were staged in the Abbey, Deevy’s *Light Falling* was staged in 1948 in the Peacock Theatre, the smaller production space of Amharclann na Mainistreach which, though popular with theatre people, was “designed to be used for experimental productions and for performances by pupils of the Abbey School of Acting” (Blythe 2).³ After 1940, Deevy could rarely find a theatre to produce her work and, though she continued writing for theatre and other genres actively seeking theatre productions of her stage plays, she also, encouraged by a receptive programming team in Raidió Éireann in the early days of the service (Bloom), wrote drama for radio and adapted her stage plays for radio. An achievement all the more remarkable given the fact that Deevy became deaf in her early twenties.

Premiered by the Abbey Theatre on April 29, 1935, *The King of Spain’s Daughter* was staged there four times; once in 1935, twice in 1936 and once in 1939 in a production that toured that year (Abbey Theatre). The play was broadcast several times by Raidió Éireann and was also broadcast by the BBC on radio in 1936 and on television in 1939.⁴ It was published, during Deevy’s lifetime, in 1939 by Macmillan and in 1947 by New Frontiers Press. In 2003 it was included within an anthology of Deevy’s work published by the Edward Mellan Press, in 2015 within an anthology entitled *Irish Women Dramatists 1908 -2001* and in 2017 within the *Teresa Deevy Reclaimed Volume Two* anthology published by the Mint Theatre Company. Andrés Romera’s translation, *La Hija del Rey de España*, is the third translation of the play: the first two translations, both into Irish and both entitled *Iníon Rí na Spáinne*, were translated first by the poet Máirtín Ó Direáin (which was broadcast by Raidió Éireann in 1952) and again by Séamus Ó Néill (published in 1972). *The King of Spain’s Daughter* was produced by Red Kettle Theatre Company in 1985 and an excerpt was staged by Glasshouse Productions in 1993 during the second part of the “There Are No Irish Women Playwrights” festival in the Project Arts Centre. In 2015, the text was absorbed and responded to in *Talk Real Fine, Just Like a Lady* which was staged in the Peacock Theatre while the Abbey concurrently staged a production of *Katie Roche*.^{5 6} In January 2020, a touring production of *The King of Spain’s Daughter* was announced as part of *Druid: Galway 2020* (Druid).

The play’s enduring appeal reflects the fact that it evocatively conceptualises the fusion of what Sihra describes as “mutually reinforcing ideologies of the Catholic Church and the Irish Free State” (1) and exposes how restrictive social and religious orthodoxies corralled women and men into reduced ways of being. Its critique of the ways in which power operates hierarchically and directionally remain potent and relevant. *The King of Spain’s Daughter* ostensibly dramatises the moments immediately prior to and succeeding Annie Kinsella’s decision to marry Jim Harris, capturing the moment when Annie attempts to accept the life to which this choice will confine her. Resonating with an intensity of expression and atmospheric quality Deevy’s nebenscene suggests physical and paralinguistic expression, ambiguity and dramatic suspense. In so doing, the play is poetic as per Lorde’s (2017 [1977]) description of poetry as enabling a disciplined and intimate scrutiny of life experience. This brief and potent drama can be read as a feminist intervention into Irish social and cultural life as, in Annie Kinsella, Deevy creates a woman who dares to imagine the world differently. In this play Deevy engages resistantly with what is expected of women’s behaviour and

aspirations in ways immediately recognisable to contemporary feminist theatre practitioners described by Aston as

artists whose theatre practices open up critical and dialectical relations on and with those social and cultural systems that constitute and constrain ‘norms’ of gender, race, class and sexuality. (87)

In *The King of Spain’s Daughter* Deevy creates a “space of resistance” and, in Annie, a character of “radical possibility” (hooks 20), an explosive character with the potential to dismantle the existing social order in her capacity to imagine an alternative reality and orientate herself towards it. But Annie self-detonates in response to the overwhelming pressures of fear, violence and the silence and the inaction of those who look on but do not help her – characters within the drama – in the first instance and, in the final moments of the play, the audience itself. The play examines and critiques how individuals and collectives in 1930s Ireland responded to coercive and directional power to reduce the horizons of hope, ambition, intimacy and potential for Irish women and men. It illustrates the danger to society when no “community of resistance” (hooks 19) exists and seeks, as Canning asserts Hallie Flannigan and Margaret Clifford’s 1931 play *Can You Hear Their Voices?* did in 1931, “to create an experience that might transform audiences into activists for positive change” (207). Despite the eighty-five intervening years, since *The King of Spain’s Daughter* was written, Deevy’s characters’ voices continue to reverberate with purpose and emotion: the hope, anger, resignation and constraint, as experienced by Annie in particular, resonate from a text and subtext which retain their call to action.

The 1930s marked a decade where the Irish marriage rate declined to a record low since 1923 and which did not return to the figures of the early 1920s until 1940. 1936, the year after *The King of Spain’s Daughter* premiered, saw a notable dip in the Irish population and a situation in Ireland where women were twice more likely than men to be married as minors, i.e. under the age of consent, and where widowers were twice more likely than widows to remarry (CSO, xii).⁷ While the 1930s afforded increased employment opportunities for women Section Sixteen of the Conditions of Employment Act (1936) curtailed these (Government of Ireland). A church-sponsored campaign of official and civil censorship began in the mid-1920s (Horgan 1995). The *Censorship of Publications Act*, passed in 1929, reflected and supported a culture of civil censorship operational in Irish society through organisations and societies, such as the Catholic Truth Society and the Knights of Columbanus which advocated sexual self-regulation and venerated marriage and motherhood (Comyn; Crowley and Kitchin; Curtis). Throughout the first half of the 1930s a corpus of legislation, passed by the Cumann na nGaedhael-led government, reflected a dynamic period of social and attitudinal change. This legislation was drafted within a conspiratorial relationship between the Catholic Church and Eamonn de Valera’s government cementing the connection between church and state in the Constitution of 1937 and explicitly framing Catholic priorities and misogynies within articles of Irish law restricting what was legal to read, discuss and experience.⁸ As McAuliffe (2015) asserts, the 1937 Constitution supported an increasingly structured social conservatism, curtailing and diminishing equality for women in particular, that responded to the chaos of World War I (1914-1918), the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921), the Irish Civil War (1922-1923) and the formation of the Irish Free State.

Fox describes 1930s Ireland as an era when women’s “options were limited and opportunities were disappearing with each legislative act” (201). Summarising a consensus of analysis that the 1937 Constitution defined women’s support to the State as most valuable within the home, Mullally describes Article 41 as “premised on the complementarity of

gender roles and a presumption of natural sex differences between women and men” (14).⁹ Kearney, Headrick and Quinn (2015) suggest the legislative pattern of the 1930s demonstrates a general consensus within Ireland, that a woman’s place was in the home.¹⁰ However, as McAuliffe notes, the legislation was the subject of much public debate and criticism. The Constitution’s treatment of women was, as Hogan asserts “the single biggest policy issue which dominated much of the debate at the time both inside and outside the Dáil” (520). Deevy’s involvement in public debate at this time and her criticism of state-sponsored censorship is evidenced by her often-quoted 1936 letter to *The Irish Times* when she demanded to know who the censors were, what right they had to hold office and how they could “in the case of proven incompetence” be removed (Deevy, “The Censorship” 4). Similarly, extracts describing Deevy’s correspondence with writers Florence Hackett and Singe Toksvig (Pihl), support the interpretation of her work as a response to this context. Ní Bheacháin asserts that Deevy’s plays expose “the shadow side of the Arcadian visions articulated by political and religious leaders within the Irish Free State” (89) while Leeney asserts that *The King of Spain’s Daughter* deals with “issues of gender and violence, and the growing silence of censorship and entrapment” (*Irish Women Playwrights* 167). Such criticism represents the approach taken by many critics (Beckett; Fitzpatrick; Fox; Maley; Morash; Murray; O’Doherty; Pilkington; Richards; Roche; Walshe; Welch) who have carefully positioned and considered the nuanced ways that Deevy’s work incorporates and responds to the social, political and cultural context of Irish life in the 1920s and 1930s.

Such approaches to Deevy’s work are essential in order to understand and critique what Kristeva (1988) terms the synchronic and diachronic resonance of any literary work and to release its intertextual dialogic significances in relation to the context from which it emanated and the meanings it creates for contemporary audiences (35-61). However, as Leeney (*Irish Women Dramatists*) and Sihra assert, additional critical opportunities emerge when historiographic and cultural-materialist methodologies are supplemented with analysis of a playwright’s proprioception of actors’ bodies, of scenography and of stage properties and costume. Deevy’s proprioception, particularly her awareness and manipulation of the resonance of kinesthesia and of stage properties, demonstrates a highly-refined skill in activating non-verbal communication. Through the actors’ bodies and her use of objects Deevy simultaneously contrasts acceptable and unacceptable patterns of behaviour while drawing attention to what directions and trajectories are permitted.

Fischer-Lichte describes a phenomenon where, when a playwright creates dialogue that simulates spoken language, the stage directions expand to encompass the linguistic signs needed to “indicate all those signs used by the dramatis personae simultaneously as, for instance, paralinguistic, mimical, gestic, or proxemics signs” (144). Both Leeney and Ní Bheacháin note the “unusual” detail (“Deevy’s Leap” 45; “Sexuality, Marriage and Women’s Life Narratives” 80) of Deevy’s stage directions and the role of physical expression within her work. Ní Bheacháin argues that Deevy’s heroines’ “sheer physicality is itself an interesting anomaly in a society that was shutting down outlets for such expression of everyday female sexuality” (80) while Leeney argues that the drama of Annie Kinsella in particular “is the wasting of [her] energies and the sublimation of [her] individuality by physical force” (*Irish Women Playwrights* 179). By applying Foucault’s theories on power, Leeney provides a focused and nuanced reading of Deevy’s work which, she argues, demonstrates a “progressive diminishment in [Deevy’s] heroines’ ability to articulate their resistance, and a growing bodily docility” (*Irish Women Playwrights* 180).

In *Discipline and Punish* (2020 [1975]) Foucault argues that a mastery of “an art of the human body” (137) enabled “a policy of coercions that act upon the body” (137-138) resulting in “the calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour” (138) and

the production of “subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile bodies’” (138). Asserting how this “art of the human body” evolved over time Foucault describes the

multiplicity of often minor processes, of different origin and scattered location, which overlap, repeat, or imitate one another, support one another, distinguish themselves from one another according to their domain of application, converge and gradually produce the blueprint of a general method. (138)

A Foucauldian analysis of Deevy’s use of space can be allied with an application of Ahmed’s conceptualisation of power as directional where power hierarchies orientate “bodies in particular ways, so they are facing a certain way” (143). Like Foucault, Ahmed argues for the existence of an intangible matrix of interactive activities and ideologies which converge and combine to generate and sustain a preferred orientation. These activities and ideologies originate from multiple points and achieve directionality through the existence of a consistency between points that do not seem to meet. Ahmed argues that this orientation establishes and maintains power hierarchies which decree and marshal accepted ways of being, resulting in a process “rather like the cement used to make walls: something is set into a holding pattern. The setting is what hardens” (140). The remaining part of this essay considers how Deevy uses the setting of *The King of Spain’s Daughter*, and her characters’ physicality within it, to explore the convergence of dispersed codes of conduct and attitudinal orientations operating collectively and directionally to cement a disturbing and dysfunctional docility in the ways in which gender roles were directed and expressed within Irish society.

The King of Spain’s Daughter is set in “an open space on a grassy road during the dinner hour of a day in April”; repair work is ongoing and road signs stage left and right read “Road Closed” and “No Traffic” (17) creating a confined and claustrophobic scenography, as is emphasised in Fitzpatrick’s assertion that, though the road reaches the “wider world ... it is closed at both sides” (73).¹¹ The open space is further enclosed by a “dilapidated” wall and “covered in a fine dust” where physical and linguistic barriers block access to “fields beyond” (17). First to appear on stage is Annie’s father Peter Kinsella whose physicality and property resonate with power and whose actions, “He stands in the centre, looks away to the left, shading his eyes, – then to the right” (17), create and suspend anticipation as to what he is looking at or for. Peter is joined by Jim Harris who mimics Peter’s action of “looking away to the right” (17) and the focus of their agitated physical activity is revealed in Peter’s speech, “She’s late with my dinner” (17); a deceptively simple speech encapsulating the critical consideration within the play – the examination of how a hegemonic model of power and authority prioritising men and subordinating women is established, reproduced and damaging to all enclosed within it. Beckett asserts that within Deevy’s *Katie Roche* and *Wife to James Whelan* “the familial space is uncomfortable for women *and* for men in part because the official histories of family life have begun to lose their power” (original emphasis 88). In *The King of Spain’s Daughter* Deevy explores how public spaces are similarly fraught with tension due to changing opportunities for women outside the home. In his first speech Jim admits, “With the noise of the sirens I didn’t hear the whistle, an’ I kept workin’ five minutes too long. Wasn’t that a terrible thing to have happen to me” (17). The 1930s saw the rise of employment for women, mostly unskilled work in emerging industries such as clothing, food drink and tobacco, and a corresponding decrease in employment opportunities for men (Hogan 2012). Underneath the comedy in Jim’s line is the recognition that the wail of the factory sirens, summoning women to factory work bring “terrible” consequences and, by opening the play with the sirens’ echoing, Deevy heralds the threat posed to men by women’s engagement with modernity and change.

Deevy's scenography reveals the strengthening of gendered hierarchies of power: Welch remarks on the "somewhat Beckettian scene in which the play is set – a roadway of broken stones where the labourers are quarrying" (124-125) referring to Jim Harris as a road-labourer. But Jim's task is unspecified; he and Peter Kinsella may be building a road *or* rebuilding the dilapidated wall using the "pile of stones near one of the barriers" (17). The "grassy road" suggests a narrow rural roadway while the dilapidated wall presents a definite boundary and barrier: both serve as metaphors for the social, sexual and intellectual restrictions of 1930s Ireland. Annie is sought by Peter and Jim stage right: the atmosphere between them is tense as Peter "laughs contemptuously" at Jim's inability to "force" Annie to marry him (18). Both men enter the stage through the same doorway, they are dressed alike, carry similar objects and are similarly focused on locating Annie – in this similarity of appearance and action Jim is a Peter-in-waiting, suggesting that younger men are directed in their behaviours and attitudes by their older male contemporaries. Jim and Peter are interrupted by Mrs. Marks, who, though not at the wharf, has watched the married couple's send-off, telling the men, "I seen from above" (18). Annie's movement, both her reported movement within the world of the play and her physical movement as described in the stage directions, responds to those who watch, judge and direct her. While Peter goes in search of Annie, Jim and Mrs Marks' talk turns to Annie's delinquency, her neglect of filial duty and the potentially violent consequences of this. Roche comments on the "all pervasiveness of the patriarchy" (150) and the liminal position of Deevy's heroines calling to mind hook's conceptualisation of the marginal space as a "profound edge" (19) where it is difficult to survive. Cheering is heard offstage right minutes before, in a "red dress" and "bright gold hair", Annie, accompanied by Roddy Mann, "a big lounging figure" (19), appears in the doorway positioned centre stage. After she enters the scene Annie remains poised on the margin of the performance space, literally on a threshold that is physicalised in the scenography: unaware that they are observed, Annie concedes to Roddy's demand for a kiss.

When she appears, Annie "Looks off away to the right" (22) where a newly-married couple have embarked on a small white boat and put out onto the river. The riverside is a festive place: flags fly, sunlight glints on the water, crowds have gathered and sirens sound: it represents, for Annie, a route to "sun and to adventure" (22). But the direction in which the road or wall is strengthened progresses stage left and, while Annie repeatedly physically gravitates and looks stage right, Peter orders her offstage left to "rake up the few stones I have agen the wall" (20). His instruction simultaneously corrals Annie along the direction decreed by the state as appropriate while, ironically, enlisting her as a co-builder of the architecture that restricts her. Annie mimics resistance against the forces working against her by rebounding against the boundaries of the scenography expressing her anguish and physical resistance against her coercion in "[running] to the barrier at the right side, leans against it, and moans nursing her shoulder" (21). In directing Annie's physicality so specifically, Deevy expresses and reveals the bruising nature of power and its directionality.

Attitudes of what was deemed acceptable behaviour for young women remained pervasive and continued to frame interpretations of Annie's character and behaviour through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Jordan summarises the play as a tragedy of "the eternal discrepancy between the world of the actual and the world that human beings make for themselves in the mind" (18) suggesting Annie's fate as tragic because of her failure to reconcile her aspirations with the material reality of her circumstances. Sahal describes Annie as "wayward" (141), Welch perceives her as a "rural Miss Julie with an insatiable appetite for life" (124) while Pilkington describes her as "an idealized peasant girl" with a "disconcertingly active sexual desire" (133). These descriptions suggest Annie's appetites and expectations as deviant and extraordinary, with Welch's reference to Strindberg's character associating Annie with mental instability. Interpretations, such as these, subtly invoke

ingrained and unquestioned judgements that rely on unspecified definitions of normalcy. As “wayward”, “insatiable”, “idealised” or “disconcertingly active” Annie is presented as abnormal, a presentation which, as Kafai (2013) argues, reinforces the power of the centre. What is extraordinary is not Annie’s behaviour, but the way in which Deevy presents it without judgment: what is disconcerting is that 1930s judgements of normalcy in relation to what was deemed as acceptable, both in terms of personal ambition and autonomy in one’s sexual activity, regardless of one’s wealth or social standing, continued to hold and direct critical judgement.

Annie’s first action is to place onto the ground the tin containing her father’s lunch, thus freeing her to kiss Roddy Mann. Her attitude towards the kiss she gives to Roddy is rendered ambiguous by the fact that she “wipes her mouth on her sleeve very thoroughly” (19) immediately afterwards. The action suggests that Annie removes all traces of Roddy’s kiss in an attempt to make her appearance acceptable to those who will see her and judge her. By placing the lunch tin, representing her duty to her father, on the ground so as to prioritise kissing Annie physically rejects the socially accepted priorities of 1930s Ireland: the kiss, prioritised over the lunch tin, constitutes a transgressive act. Similarly transgressive is Annie’s openness in keeping company with various men: she makes no attempt to remember or conceal her physical encounters as is revealed in an exchange with Jim:

JIM: When I left you last night, did you go back to Jack Bolger?

ANNIE: Last night... no, I don’t think I did, last night. (22)

Annie’s careless recollection of whether she returned to Jack Bolger or not contrasts with Jim’s graphic recollection of her physical intimacy with him, “If your father heard you were at the crossroad last night – or if the priest heard tell of it – dancin’ on the board, an’ restin’ in the ditch with your cheek agen mine and your body pressed to me” (24). This speech, simultaneously animated and restrained by verbs intimating sexual intimacy and surveillance, threatens to betray Annie to those secular and religious authorities who decree acceptable patterns of behaviour. Annie’s kissing Roddy, and her behaviour with Jack and Jim, may be that of a young woman unashamed or impenitent of her physical interactions with men, despite direction to behave otherwise. Alternatively, her behaviour may be construed as her means of bargaining with men, trading physical intimacy for opportunities to imagine something other than a drab future symbolised by unornamented grey wedding dresses and where rounds of drudgery are meted out to the drone of factory sirens or the shrill call of a whistle.

Annie and Roddy’s kiss is observed, it is reported, and she is punished accordingly: she is directed offstage left where Peter beats her with a stick (20). The punishment illustrates how deviation from sanctioned directions is immediately, violently and effectively redirected: Peter’s return to the scene is emphasised, “All look towards the doorway” (20). He enters through the doorway centre stage – that space where Annie, only moments earlier, possessed some autonomy – occupies it and, upon seeing her, ejaculates a paralinguistic threat:

PETER: (*Coming in*). Is she there? (*Sees ANNIE.*) Ah-h! (20)

Peter’s return has a powerful physical effect on Annie who reacts against the force of his presence becoming “Nervous, almost perky” (48). Ahmed describes how those accustomed to violence and resistance, both physical and psychological, anticipate it corporeally:

The violence does things. You begin to expect it. You learn to inhabit your body differently through this expectation. When you sense the world out there as a danger, it is your relation to your own body that changes: you become more cautious timid; you might withdraw in anticipation that what happened before will happen again. (24)

Neither Annie nor Jim have learned caution: they do not anticipate violence and curb their behaviour. But Mrs Marks, aware that those who are “bold” and “wild” (18) must be directed, quickly guides Jim telling him, when Peter exits stage left to beat Annie, to “Be a man now! Be a man and don’t get yourself hurt!” (21) and “The hard man wins” (21). Jim finds his bearing later when, upon Annie’s dismissal of his savings and his sustained pecuniary self-denial he catches her “Crushes her to him” (24) and restrains her. In these actions of holding, crushing and restraining Jim “inhabits” his body differently and, led by Peter’s behaviour and Mrs Marks’ encouragement, enacts the violent behaviour in which he has been instructed. This, in turn, impacts on the way that Annie inhabits her body: upon Jim’s release of her, and perhaps for the first time in the play, Annie “stands motionless” (24), withdrawing “in anticipation that what happened before will happen again” as the forces of Jim, Peter and Mrs Marks bloc to redirect her.

Mrs Marks functions as a rhetorical element, emblematic of the paradigmatic concerns of the play. Her dialogue and actions are animated through repeated association with objects and actions that uphold societal values and reinforce the status quo, thus supporting Fitzpatrick’s assertion that the play “portrays women as complicit in their own dispossession, and compliant in the misogyny of their society” (80). Mrs Marks’ complicity is symbolised in the basket she carries containing what she describes as a “terrible weight” (18). The basket is full of what remains colloquially termed in Ireland as ‘messages’, i.e., small purchases or objects for delivery or collection. Through her speech and actions Mrs Marks exposes the role women play in marshalling power directionally and in directing younger women and men to curb what Walsh describes as “maverick instincts” (133). Her occupation is that of messenger and she functions as a metonymic character communicating patriarchal values directing the behaviour of women and men.

Mrs Marks promotes marriage and motherhood conflating these roles with suffering in a bid to realign Annie’s expectations of marriage with “the rest of the world” (25). In Annie’s imagination the bride appears “like a livin’ flame ... dressed in flamin’ red from top to toe, and...*(puts her hand to her breast)* Here she had a diamond clasp” (21); “in shimmerin’ green from head to foot” (19); “in pale, pale gold and *(hands to her breast)* two red flowers were crushed agen her here” (21). When Jim tells her that the bride was “dressed in grey” and “had no flowers” (21) Annie’s refusal to accept so little from life, when so much seems possible, tells in her body:

ANNIE: *(Gets up slowly.)* You are a pack of blind owls—all the lot of you! I saw what I saw! *(Turns from him.)* (22)

Despite the material reality of the wedding, Annie wants and imagines more – more colour, more beauty and more choice – her turning away from Jim at this point embodies her rejection of the limitations of reality as it exists and as it will continue to exist because those limitations are accepted by those around her. Jordan asserts that Annie is unable to “credit the validity of the actual” and that she is “extravagant” in her “aspirations” (18): an alternative reading of Annie’s imaginative vision is that it is motivated by her keen and clear perception of “the actual” and that she understands, although is unable to articulate that “The monothestic patriarchal meta-narrative valorized the heterosexual family unit and glorified

the role of motherhood” (Sihra, 1). Annie, like the King of Spain’s daughter within Colum’s poem “A Drover” (1916), as quoted in the play, wants to sail out “into the sun, and to adventure” (22) precisely *because* she is acutely aware that marriage presents a life-sentence of “lookin’ back” (19) until a bearable numbness takes the place of regret. Her imagination is a life-preserving action that anticipates and yet seeks to avoid Mrs Marks’ comically sorrowful reflection that thoughts of her own wedding day “would sadden anyone” (19). The comedy in that line is undercut by Mrs Marks’ subsequent line, “That’s how it is; the truth is best told in the end” (19) and is followed with a statement that is unambiguous in its pathos, “After that you don’t mind – you haven’t the feelin’ – exceptin’ maybe an odd day, like today” (19). Annie, like Mrs Marks, appreciates only too well the limitations of the life she may expect as wife and mother and seeks solace and strength in her imaginative vision. Deevy’s incorporation of a stanza from “A Drover” (Colum) is noteworthy as the poem affirms the autonomy of a cattle drover, an imaginative individual who follows his own path free of obligations to land, master or money. Amid a community focused on material gain the drover retains his imaginative capacity and his autonomy. In her imaginative vision and her rejection of the values of her community, Annie presents as a similar character: unlike the drover, however, she cannot resist the violence she encounters and is redirected.

This violence is physically enacted when Peter beats her while Mrs Marks and Jim do not intervene and is psychologically enacted through the alliance of opposing forces and the threat of implied punishment as in the exchange between Peter and Jim:

PETER: Was she teasin’ you?

JIM: She was.

PETER: Tauntin’ you like?

JIM: She was.

PETER: I know...leadin’ you on?

JIM: That’s it.

PETER: Well, me fine lady, we’ll put a stop to your fun. Stay where you are! (24)

In this exchange, made sinister by the degree to which Annie’s sexual allure is recognised by Peter, Annie is accused of taking her own direction and “leading” Jim, but she is stopped and redirected through blame, shame and the threat that she will be made drudge in a factory. Acknowledging that all ways are blocked, even those within her imagination, she asks “Where would I ever find a way out of here” (24) and, describing herself as “ruined” (24), she resigns herself to a marriage in which Jim plans to “shut the house door” (23) isolating her from the rest of the world. Interpreted in this way, Jim’s obsessive desire to confine her within the home, expressed through his compulsive saving, represents an insidious attempt by young men in the 1930s to reverse the gains made by women during first wave feminism in Ireland.

The play ends with Annie convinced that Jim’s decision to save two shillings every week over the preceding four years means he will likely become a violently-jealous husband. Her imagination reconfigures a means of escape from a fate of being no more than simply a wife. She becomes “exultant” (26) at the prospect that her life may become exceptional through emotional or physical violence within her marriage to a man jealous, obsessive and violent enough to murder her. It is an unexpected and unsettling ending. In a letter to Mathew O’Mahoney and H. L. Morrow, Deevy describes the play as a “comedy” (Deevy in Morash xiv). Jordan concludes that the ending of *The King of Spain’s Daughter* is “grimly ironical” (19) while Morash asserts it is “darkly comic” (xiv). Fitzpatrick records that audiences and critics in 1935 were confused by the play’s ending and that Joseph Holloway and the reviewer for *The Irish Times* both reinterpreted the ending of the play thinking that Annie chose to run away, possibly to London. Fitzpatrick concludes that Annie’s “speech and behaviour

transgress the range of meanings commonly shared in 1930s Ireland” (73). Fitzpatrick’s conclusion grapples with the fact that the term ‘comedy’, even with the prefix ‘dark’ fails to capture the intricate nuances at work in the final moments of the play. Annie’s final line, “He put by two shillin’s for two hundred weeks. I think he’s a man that – supposin’ he was jealous – might cut your throat!” (26), is ambiguous but her psychological and physical attitude towards such a prospect are not: the stage directions describe her laughing “exultantly” (25) and leaving the stage “quiet” and “exultant” (26). Her joy, triumph and determination manifests in the simple confidence of her physicality, “she goes” (26). This confidence and attitude may represent her “refusal to settle for seclusion and stagnation” (364) which Maley asserts inspires Ellie Irwin in *In Search of Valour*. Alternatively, Annie’s willing embrace of such terrible violence against her own body reads as a disturbing psychological and physical acceptance of dangerous levels of docility. That Annie willingly accepts a fate where extreme domination is terminated only by violent death is profoundly disturbing. It is not life that Annie embraces exultantly, but a fantasy of domination, death or both: as such the ending of the play is unsettling, difficult to understand, preposterous even – phrases that recall criticisms levelled at the character of Annie herself.

Taking time to consider the contrary ending of *The King of Spain’s Daughter* affords an opportunity to reflect on important dramaturgical choices and the impact of these on the theatrical script. Contrasting early versions of the script furnishes material for this critique. The final lines of the script used for the 1935 production of the play edit out Mrs Marks’ final line and insert a handwritten stage direction which reads “X Mrs Marks to centre opening + look back exit Right” [sic].¹² This stage direction is joined by a pencil line to the stage direction that reads “(Quiet, exultant)”, indicating that Mrs Marks leaves Annie alone on the stage after the former’s line “God save us all!”. Thus, the last line in the 1935 production was given, not to Mrs Marks as originally written, but to Annie who was the last character to exit the stage which was, consequently, left empty in the final moment of that production. The decision to cut Mrs Marks’ final line may be the result of the confusion in 1935 as to whether or not Annie had run away. If the actress playing Annie (Ria Mooney in 1935) either decided or was directed to give Annie’s last line, “I think that he is a man supposin’ he was jealous – might cut your throat” in fear, an audience might have reasonably concluded that Annie has decided to run away. Knowing for certain how Mooney delivered the line is not essential as the impact on the theatrical text is the same: the removal of Mrs Marks’ final line creates an ambiguity around Annie’s attitude.

In the 1939 Abbey production, however, the play ends differently and the ambiguity is removed. The stage manager’s script, containing excerpts of spoken cues directly before and after offstage sound effects and curtain cues, reads as follows:

ANNIE. (Miss Ryan). He put by two shillings for two hundred weeks. I think that he is a man supposin he was jealous – might cut your throat.

She goes off [sic].

Underneath this is handwritten:

Miss Craig “The Lord preserve us! that she’d find joy in such a thought!”
Curtain.¹³

May Craig played the role of Mrs Marks in the Abbey production of *The King of Spain’s Daughter* in 1939, while Phyllis Ryan took the role of Annie, and the handwritten instruction evidences that intervention was considered appropriate in relation to the ending of the play for that production. Mrs Marks’ final line is reinstated, as originally written, and is delivered following Annie’s departure from the stage. Restoring Mrs Marks’ line and her presence on

stage in the final moments of the play changes the dynamic of the final moments as it allows for clarification to the audience that Annie's emotional and psychological reaction to her realisation that Jim is potentially violent is one of exultation. Mrs Marks' line is unequivocal "The Lord preserve us that she'd find joy in such a thought", thus clarifying Annie's joyful embrace of her fate. Also, significantly, it is Mrs Marks, the character who has absorbed and regurgitated all the patriarchal values and messages within the play, who is given a last and final message. It is a message, not for Annie – she is no longer present onstage – but for the audience. In the final moments of the play Deevy undermines the conventions of realism by making direct comic appeal to the audience. Mrs Marks' last speech constitutes a deliberate breaking of the fourth wall, a comic device that facilitates this 'messenger' character to deliver a final stark warning that, if women and men are directed to live repressed both physically and psychologically dysfunction will ensue. The line is a direct plea from Deevy to audiences to form what hooks terms a "community of resistance" (19), what Mouffe and Aston term "networks of resistance" (Mouffe 95; Aston, "Agitating for Change" 5) and what Ahmed might term an assembly of fragments: it is, ironically, a call to feminist activism by a woman character who conspires with the patriarchy. Paradoxically, it is Annie's willingness to commit herself to Jim's obsessive and potentially violent jealousy following her disturbing epiphany which is combined with Mrs Marks' observation and reporting of it, that exposes and critiques what Ward describes as "the sterile mindsets" (21) of early twentieth century Ireland that governed and trapped women and men within damaging ideological and directional power orthodoxies. It is Mrs Marks' last line that Deevy left echoing in her original script and it is this line that continues to reverberate disturbingly and that continues to serve as a feminist call to action.

Notes

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² Jordan in his 1956 article in *Irish University Review* entitles the play *Reapers* and had a typescript copy of the play on loan from Deevy. Jordan also confirmed that Deevy informed him that this was the play's correct title despite the fact that the Abbey's production programme entitled it *The Reapers* (Jordan interviewed by Kearney 1984, in O'Doherty, "A Bibliography" 168). Sahal repeatedly refers to the play as *The Reapers* and, as Sahal used a typescript copy belonging to Deevy, and was in correspondence with her during the mid-1950s, it seems appropriate to adopt the title *The Reapers*. However, Maley notes that Sahal erroneously asserts that in *A Disciple* Ellie Irwin "once saw some schoolboys" (136) perform *Coriolanus* whereas in Deevy's play Ellie was, in fact, inspired by Coriolanus as performed by a girl. The fact that Sahal also refers to *The King of Spain's Daughter* as a "hilarious comedy" (141) also prompts one to pause and evaluate Sahal's attention to the subtleties of interpretation and accuracy. Consequentially, I use the title *Reapers*. For an account of existing material relating to *Reapers* see Troupe's "TSI: Teresa Deevy, or What do we know about *The Reapers*?" Available at: http://deevy.nuim.ie/exhibits/show/reapers/what-do-we-know-about-reapers-#_ftn18

³ In an undated document written c. 1928 entitled "The Irish Theatre" playwright Kathleen O'Brennan describes the Peacock as "one of the most interesting spots in Dublin" (2).

⁴ For details of plays broadcast by RTÉ radio and BBC radio and television see Martina Ann O'Doherty's "Deevy: A Bibliography". *Irish University Review* 25. 1 (1995). 166.

⁵ *Talk Real Fine, Just Like a Lady* was produced by Live Collision and devised by: Amanda Coogan; Lianne Quigley; Alvean Jones; Breda O'Grady; Valerie Moore and Paula Clarke. For more on this production see Kealy & McCarthy, "Shape shifting the silence: an analysis of *Talk Real Fine, Just Like a Lady* by Amanda Coogan in collaboration with Dublin Theatre of the Deaf, an appropriation of Teresa Deevy's *The King of Spain's Daughter*" in *The Golden Thread: Irish Women Playwrights (1716-2016)* Eds. David Clare, Justine Nakase and Fiona McDonagh. Liverpool: Liverpool Press, forthcoming.

⁶ See *Abbey Theatre Resource Pack: Katie Roche: Teresa Deevy*. Ed. Marie Kelly. Dublin: Abbey Theatre, 2015.

⁷ In Ireland in 1922, the minimum legal age for entry into marriage was 12 for girls and 14 for boys and the age of majority, i.e. the age by which an individual could enter into marriage without the consent of a parent, was 21. In 1935, the age of consent in Ireland increased from 15 to 17.

⁸ See John Cooney's *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland*. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1999.

⁹ Article 41 referred particularly to Irish women's role as confined to the domestic sphere.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive list of the legislation regulating sexual conduct in Ireland from 1923 to 1937 see "Table 1: Key Reports and Government Acts Concerning the Regulation of Sexuality" in "Producing 'Decent Girls': Governmentality and the Moral Geographies of Sexual Conduct in Ireland (1922-1937)" by Una Crowley and Rob Kitchin in *Anniversary Essays: Forty Years of Geography at Maynooth. Volume 2*. Maynooth: National University of Maynooth, 2012: 2-3.

¹¹ All quotations from *The King of Spain's Daughter*, with the exception of those where it is explicitly stated otherwise, are taken from the play as published within *Teresa Deevy Reclaimed: Volume Two*. Eds. Jonathan Bank, John P. Harrington and Christopher Morash. New York: The Mint Theatre, 2017.

¹² Abbey Theatre Collection: *The King of Spain's Daughter*: "Final page from the Abbey Theatre prompt script of *The King of Spain's Daughter* by Teresa Deevy", PS 0001/20.

¹³ Abbey Theatre Collection : *The King of Spain's Daughter*: "Curtain cues and time sheet for the 1939 Abbey Theatre production of *The King of Spain's Daughter* by Teresa Deevy", SM 0001/03.

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