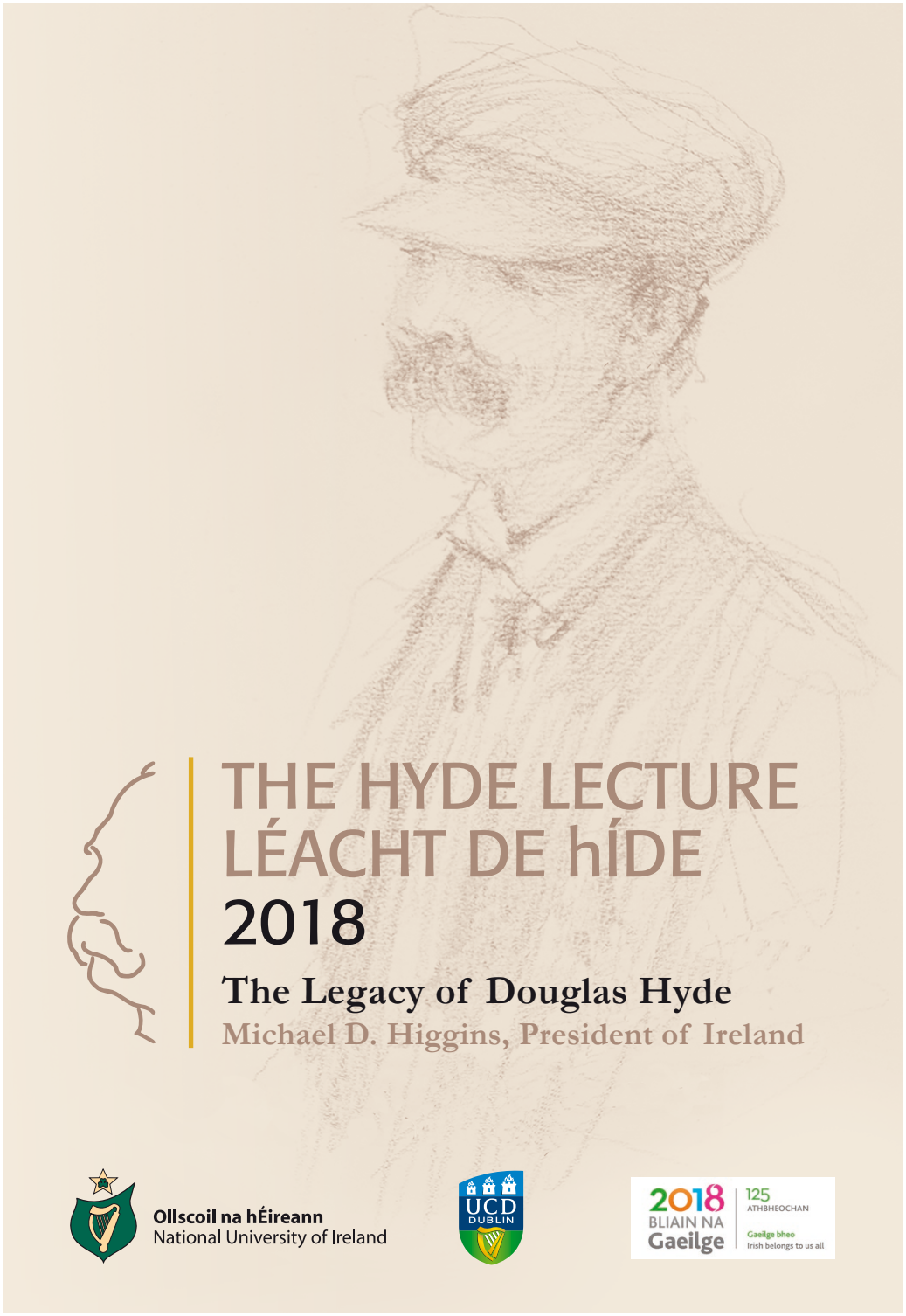

THE HYDE LECTURE
LÉACHT DE hÍDE
2018

The Legacy of Douglas Hyde

Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

Ollscoil na hÉireann
National University of Ireland

UCD DUBLIN

2018 BLIAIN NA Gaeilge 125 ATHBHEOCHAN
Gaeilge bheo
Irish belongs to us all

The Hyde Lecture 2018
Léacht de hÍde 2018

The Legacy of Douglas Hyde

Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

Monday 24 September 2018

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OPENING REMARKS

Professor Andrew Deeks, President of UCD

President Higgins, Mrs Higgins, Chancellor Manning, distinguished guests, colleagues and friends, on behalf of University College Dublin, I am delighted to welcome you here this evening to the inaugural annual Hyde lecture.

I would like to extend a special welcome to Lucy Sealy, grand-daughter of Douglas Hyde and sister of Anne, Christopher and Douglas Sealy who are no longer with us. The Sealy family's donation of archival sources on Douglas Hyde to UCD is central to our research. I take great pleasure in announcing that a range of these sources have now been made available through a funded digitisation project, led by the UCD School of Irish Celtic Studies and Folklore in collaboration with the National Folklore Collection.

The UCD School of Irish Celtic Studies and Folklore and the National University of Ireland have collaborated in the establishment of the Hyde Lecture Series to honour and celebrate the legacy of Douglas Hyde as an Irish political leader and as a pioneer of Irish language scholarship. This legacy ensured a solid foundation for research and teaching in the discipline which continues to produce internationally recognised research to acclaim.

Douglas Hyde was the first President of Ireland serving from 1938 to 1945, the first President of the Gaelic League and the first Professor of Modern Irish in UCD from 1909. In that year he was also appointed as a member of the first Senate of the National University of Ireland, and was an active member until 1919. He understood the importance of the study of Irish language, Celtic Studies and Folklore in an international context, while remaining true to the roots of the Irish speaking people from whom he first learnt the language.

When his book *Love Songs of Connacht* was published in 1895, it transformed the understanding of the scope of Irish as a living and poetic language, demonstrating a linguistic richness, which even its own native speakers did not understand fully. He had an exceptional role in moulding minds in a cultural and educational sense, demonstrating his vision for the creation of the Irish State and Irish identity which has left its mark on Irish society today.

For over one hundred and ten years UCD has built on this scholarly heritage which has been further recognised by many initiatives in national and global contexts. These include the lead that the UCD School of Irish, Celtic Studies and Folklore has taken in commemoration events and publications for the Decade of Centenaries. For example, this has resulted in the first two-volume analysis of the Irish language and literature in a global context from manuscript tradition to the present day. The last one hundred years has witnessed many other noteworthy publications and projects on the manuscript tradition, modern literature, Irish language revival and current topical areas, such as Irish language journalism and Irish on screen. Building on the international footprint of Irish language and culture, the inaugural Global Irish Diaspora Conference was organised and hosted by the School here in UCD in 2017. This work has also been assisted by the excellent Irish language sources housed in the UCD Special Collections and the recently UNESCO awarded National Folklore Collection. 2018 marks the eightieth anniversary of Douglas Hyde's presidency. It is also Bliain na Gaeilge which celebrates the revival of the Irish language over the last one hundred and twenty five years, since the establishment of the Gaelic League.

In this special year of commemoration, the National University of Ireland and University College Dublin are greatly honoured that the current President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins has agreed to inaugurate this new lecture series in commemoration of Ireland's first president, Douglas Hyde.

Please welcome President Michael D. Higgins.

Dr Eoin McEvoy, Professor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith, Dr Aoife Whelan, Mr Michael Wallace, Professor Diarmaid Ó Sé, Dr Maurice Manning, Mrs Sabina Higgins, President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, Ms Lucy Sealy, Dr Kelly FitzGerald, Dr Bairbre Ní Fhloinn, Professor Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, Professor Andrew Deeks, Professor Regina Uí Chollatáin, Ms Bairbre Ní Chonchúir and Dr Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh.

President Michael D. Higgins delivering the inaugural Léacht de hÍde in UCD.

Dr Attracta Halpin, Dr Maurice Manning, Mrs Sabina Higgins, President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, Ms Lucy Sealy (grand-daughter of Douglas Hyde), Professor Andrew Deeks, Professor Sarah Prescott and Professor Regina Uí Chollatáin.

THE LEGACY OF DOUGLAS HYDE

President Michael D. Higgins

> 'The legacy of Hyde can be found, above all, I believe, in his expansive vision of cultural democracy – for it was from the people he learned the Irish language, collected our folklore and manuscripts. It was to the people he looked for the regeneration of Irish culture, a culture sustained by an ancient inheritance, but also alive to new forms and innovations, and to all the possibilities and potentials of the future'.

Sheansailéir, A Uachtaráin, A dhaoine uaisle,

Gabhaim buíochas leat i dtosach, a Uachtaráin, as an bhfáilte chroíúil a chur tú rómham. Is mór an onóir dom an deis seo a bheith agam an chéad Léacht Dhubhghlas de hÍde a thabhairt, agus déanaim comhghairdeas freisin le hOllscoil na hÉireann as an tionscnaíocht a léirigh siad agus gabhaim buíochas leo as an onóir a thabhairt dom an chéad léacht sa tsraith a thabhairt.

May I say first of all, Chancellor, President and dear friends, how pleased I am and what an honour I feel it be, to have been asked to give the first inaugural lecture in the series in honour of Douglas Hyde. I am also so pleased to be able to do so in the presence of Douglas Hyde's grand-daughter Lucy, her family have made such a distinguished contribution to things Irish.

It is so fitting that University College Dublin and the National University have chosen to honour Douglas Hyde by inaugurating a lecture series, for as you have heard he was not only the first Professor of Modern Irish at University College Dublin but also one of the leading members of the Fry Commission which recommended the establishment of a National University. Now I have some difficulties to say to you straight away, and that is, I will sometimes speak in Irish and sometimes speak in English, because my research told me that

not everybody will be entirely fluent in Irish by this evening, even though you had a couple of weeks' notice! It is worth mentioning of course too that the Fry Commission advocated for the inclusion of Trinity as a constituent college within the new university. But I don't intend to discuss that issue this evening.

It is indeed too, with some trepidation that I offer my own thoughts on the legacy of Dubhghlas de hÍde for the influence of his thoughts and actions on our national culture have been so vast and deep as to still profoundly permeate our society to this day. And then too, as I was listening to being introduced, in my own political career, I have had the honour to hold two offices upon which Douglas Hyde has had a decisive and lasting influence.

Mar Aire Ealaíon, Cultúir as Gaeltachta, bhí sé dodhéanta beartas cultúrtha a chur le chéile dár bpoblacht gan fís de chultúr ár náisiúin a chuir de hÍde chun cinn san óráid cháiliúil sin dá chuid a thug sé os comhair an Chumainn Náisiúnta Litríochta i Halla Laighean i mBaile Átha Cliath ar an 25 Samhain 1892 dar teideal.

Then too and so much later, as our first President, it fell to Douglas Hyde to provide a frame for the new office, not only in establishing its precedents, but to explore its potential within the ambit of the Constitution of 1937, a period explored in Dr Brian Murphy's recent biography *Forgotten Patriot: Douglas Hyde and the Foundation of the Irish Presidency*. It was Éamon de Valera, as Taoiseach – itself a new title, if not a quite new office, created by the Constitution – who at the inauguration of President Hyde in St. Patrick's Hall in Dublin Castle, addressed the new President, first in Irish, then in English:

> 'In you we greet the successor of our rightful princes, and, in your accession to office, we hail the closing of the breach that has existed since the undoing of our nation at Kinsale'.

Well this might have been, as the historian Dr Patrick Maume has observed, a complex statement, pregnant with symbolism – visual, historical and political. I find it difficult, myself, not to wonder at its excision of any republican tendency as might have been described in that time as the 'French' ideas that after all had informed the Young Irelanders.

The ceremony itself was taking place in Dublin Castle. The magnificent painted ceiling of St. Patrick's Hall portrays three vistas, one of which is titled 'Henry II receiving the submission of the Irish chieftains'. At the time it was conceived, it may have been a convenient visual metaphor, albeit one with dubious historical content, ignoring the many centuries of resistance by Irish, Norman-Irish, and Anglo-Irish people to the authority of the Crown. Thus at that first inauguration it provided a fitting backdrop for Éamon de Valera to echo the lamentations of the Irish poets in the centuries that followed the disaster of Kinsale, a period of uncertainty that the poet and scholar Dáibhí Ó Bruadair would refer as 'briseadh an tseanghnáthaimh' – the breaking of the old customs.

Is léir go raibh obair Dhubhghlas de hÍde ina inspioráid freisin do Dhónal Ó Corcaire agus é ag iarraidh traidisiún mór filí Gaelach na Mumhan a shábháil, a d'fhoilsigh *The Hidden Ireland* i 1924. Go deimhin, rinne Ó Corcaire cur síor ar féin ag faire ar léiriú ar cheann de dhrámaí Ghaeilge de hÍde mar 'my first glimpse of the Gaeltacht'.

D'ár ndóigh, chuir scoláirí, Seán Ó Faoláin a bhí ina protégé ag Ó Corcaire tráth ina measc, in aghaidh an phríomh-smaoineamh lárnach a bhí thaobh thiar de The Hidden Ireland ón am a foilsíodh é – gur teanga frithbheartach ab ea í an Ghaeilge síos trí na céadta fhada idir Cionn tSáile agus 1798.

Summarising really the hidden Ireland of Ó Corcaire has been a matter of disputation as to whether the purpose of the Irish language was in fact to be an anti-colonising tract, a movement from its very beginnings. It certainly had a profound influence on the ideas of Éamon de Valera, strengthening his resolve to complete what he saw as the great work commenced by Douglas Hyde and others, in terms of the revival of the Irish language. It also displaced a rich source in the traditional genealogy of Irish republicanism, that of an unbroken chain of liberty forged by the United Irishmen, Young Ireland, the Fenians right through to the men and women of 1916.

When the Taoiseach hailed the new President as quote 'inheriting the authority… and the respect which the Gaels ever gave to those whom they recognised to be their rightful chiefs', it was more than an invocation of an ancient lineage of rightful authority, it was a declaration of an expansive, if specific, vision of nationality.

The ancestors of Douglas Hyde, after all, were not imagined ancient Gaels – Douglas Hyde tells us that his ancestor, Arthur Hyde, 'was a friend of the Queen's favourite, that rascal Dudley'. Perhaps as a consequence, Arthur Hyde, received a grant of 12,000 acres as part of the plantation of Munster, the very enterprise that had provoked Hugh O'Neill to rebel against the Crown and launch his people on the path that led directly to the defeat at Kinsale.

The political symbolism of greeting the descendent of the Elizabethan planter as the heir to the Gaelic princes that his ancestor had displaced was not lost at all on those assembled in St. Patrick's Hall, 80 years ago, on the 25th of June 1938.

Ireland was not to be a community of blood – an absurd proposition, but one that ruled sway in Europe – but rather a nation bound together by its spiritual, scholarly and cultural aspirations. It is perhaps easy to dismiss this rhetoric today in its entirety – for its fictional idealism obscured not only the complex reality of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but also it tended to hide those more conservative tendencies that had emerged in the newly independent state. For many the Ireland of the 1930's was being experienced as an authoritarian and carceral state, one that was not only censorious of intellectual dissent, but of deep tendencies that privileged the status of property and its associated respectability, and also contained exclusions on the basis of gender and class. Yet, if any single individual represented the idealised qualities of mind and spirit suggested by the Taoiseach, it was Douglas Hyde. Éamon de Valera addressed the new President and Uachtarán nua as 'a scholar, a Chraoibhín dhílis, you symbolise for us the things by which our people set most store'.

Douglas Hyde was not born after all to the grandeur of Carraig an Éide, Castle Hyde – the seat of his ancestors on the River Blackwater – but at Frenchpark in Co. Roscommon, where his father, Arthur, was the local Church of Ireland rector. His mother, Elizabeth, was the daughter of the John Orson Oldfield, the Archdeacon of Elphin. It is important, as the late Vivien Mercer suggested, to remember that our Irish and literary revival owes a great deal to the children and grandchildren of Church of Ireland clergymen, be it from William Butler Yeats and the Synges to Standish O'Grady, all of whom found a literary and scholarly vocation rather than a religious one.

Táimid fíorbhuíoch do Dhoiminic Ó Dálaigh as dialanna Dhubhghlas de hÍde ina fhear óg a aimsiú agus anailís a dhéanamh orthu, ina dtugtar léargas iontach ar a óige i Ros Comáin. Athas orm go bhfuil daoine anseo i Ros Comáin, Le déanaí a tháinig mé ar scoláireacht sárluachmhar Liam Mhic Mhathúna agus Mháire Nic an Bhaird, mar shampla san imleabhar le gairid *Éire-Ireland*.

Tosaíonn na dialanna in 1874, go gairid tar éis ceathrú breithlá déag an údair. Tá an chéad imleabhar go príomha i mBéarla, agus feictear a chéad chéimeanna sa Ghaeilge, tá an dara ceann roinnte go cothrom idir an dá theanga, agus na himleabhair eile ina dhiaidh sin i nGaeilge agus, in amanna, sa Ghearmáinis. Nochtann na himleabhair is túisce an saol a chaith boicíní nó leath-uaisle Chonnacht, ag fiach éanlaithe agus ag iascaireacht ar thailte a gcomharsan, ag baint taitneamh as pléisiúr agus cuideachta teaghlaigh agus na ndaoine áitiúla.

Douglas Hyde learned his Irish from the gamekeeper, Seamus Hart, a local woman, Mrs. Connolly, and from his friend John Lavin and his wife. One very intriguing consequence is that he adopted different modes of address for his parents in English and in Irish. In English, he refers to his father as 'Pa' or, alternatively, 'the Governor', and his mother as 'Ma'. Learning Irish from the perspective of the people, he referred to his parents as 'An Mháistir' and 'An Mháistreás', 'The Master' and 'The Mistress'. This pattern is repeated with the use of Latin, as any use of it in the diaries appears in relation to the activities of the domestic staff. Doiminic Ó Dálaigh suggests that the Hydes would have used Latin in the presence of servants if they wished to discuss a matter not for the ears of servants, I believe myself that this is a strategy that could not have been totally successful, as elder servants would have spoken a form of Latin that they would have become acquainted with from their study of not only Latin but also Greek.

Ar an 20 Nollaig 1875, cailleadh fear a raibh an-mheas air, is é sin Seamus Hart. Thaifead Dubhghlas de hÍde a bhás ina dhialann i sliocht a léiríonn ní hamháin an meas agus an cion a bhí aige ar Sheamus Hart, ach chomh tapa is a d'éirigh le de hÍde an teanga a fhoghlaim:

> 'Fuair Séamus bás inné. Fear comh geanúil sin, comh fírinneach sin, comh muíntireach sin ní fhace mé riamh. Bhí sé tinn timpeall seachtain agus ina dhiaidh sin fuair sé bás. A Shéamuis bhoicht, rinne mé foghlaim na Gaeilge uait. Fear le Gaeilge comh maith sin ní bheas déis seo.

> Ní thig liom daoine ar bith d'fheiceál feasta in a mbeidh dúil agam mar a bhí agam ionat-sa. Seacht soirbhí leat agus go raibh d'anam beannaithe ar neamh anois'.

He is, in a very emotional way, saying how indebted he is to Seamus Hart for the beautiful Irish and how lucky he, Douglas Hyde, was in having him as an instructor and someone to introduce him to the language.

The young Douglas Hyde was not dissuaded by his parents in his linguistic pursuits – far from it. He was educated at home by his father after suffering with measles only weeks into his education at a boarding school in Dublin. Though his formal language lessons were those required for a life of theological thought – Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament; Greek, the tongue of the New; and Latin, that of the Church Fathers – he was encouraged in his learning of Irish.

The diary entry for the Christmas after Seamus Hart died records the gift of *An Bíobla Naomhtha*, that Irish Bible translated in the seventeenth century by William Bedel, the Bedel Bible, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Kilmore. This supplemented the Irish copy of the New Testament left in their house by a clergyman friend of his fathers, enabled Douglas Hyde to read the language he was learning *viva voce*, as he put it, from the people. Indeed, there are very strong hints that Revered Hyde, 'An Mháistir', himself spoke Irish. The entry in Douglas Hyde's diary for August 1875 includes an anecdote:

> 'Nuair a bhí muid ag teacht ón teampaill thainig fear chuig an mháistir. Tabhair déarca dom a dhuirt sé. Táim i mo Phrotastúnach. Cé mhéid sacraimint atá ann sa teampaill seo agam a d'iarr an Mháistir air. Seacht a dúirt an fear. Muise, a duirt an Mháistir tá tú ag ligint ort, ach seo cúpla phin1gin duit'.

That a Church of Ireland clergyman of Arthur Hyde's age and education should speak both English and Irish, in addition to those languages necessary to his vocation, should not surprise us, even if the Anglican church only formally approved the use of Irish in worship in 1873. For Arthur Hyde was born in the third decade of the nineteenth century, at a time when up to four million people on our island spoke our native language, some as monoglots but many as bilingual, more than at any time in our history, before or since.

It was in use in courtrooms, in churches – Catholic, Anglican and Dissenting – in the trades, in political life by people of all faiths and backgrounds, and I think this is shown in a very important new contribution to the debate about the language. I refer to *An Irish-Speaking Island*, by that young scholar at New York University, Nicholas Wolf, and I think his book comprehensively demonstrates what I have just said.

Though the governmentality of the Irish state based in Dublin Castle may have been that of the garrison – one that sought to extirpate the Irish language – in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was forced to come to terms with Irish speakers, even to the point of providing translators when required, though of course many judges and barristers were bilingual.

In the field of electoral politics, the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 had the effect of enfranchising all landholders with a valuation of more than 40 shillings. This legislation attempted to reverse the growth of the Society of United Irishmen, who, inspired by Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man* and the Fall of the Bastille, aimed to unite Catholics, Dissenter and Anglicans behind the cause of a non-sectarian republic modelled upon French lines. The newly enfranchised Catholic electorate included many monoglot Irish speakers, requiring translators at the polling booths – this was in a time before the secrecy of the ballot had been established.

Yet, despite the presence of an Irish-speaking and bilingual culture the Irish language suffered a massive decline in a very brief space, the space of three generations, a phenomenon that scholars have termed the 'language shift'. The 1851 census records only 1.5 million Irish speakers – a consequence, above all, of the death and emigration of the principal body of Irish speakers during the Great Hunger, An Gorta Mór. For it was the cottiers and those who farmed the most marginal land and in the most precarious economic situation, upon whom the greatest burden of the famine fell. In the 1850s, there were more Irish speakers on the streets of New York than at any time in the history of the United States, before or since.

The Great Famine was the single most important event in forming our distinctive form of Irish modernity, a modernity defined by that catastrophe and its aftermath. Born then in the shadow of this in 1860, Douglas Hyde was thus raised in a society still in the throes of the terrible changes wrought by

the Famine, at a time when the language shift was so deep that the use of the Irish language was imperilled.

Indeed, when Douglas Hyde began to practice with Mrs. Connolly, who milked the cows for the Hyde family, he noted in his diary, in English, that, 'Mrs. Connolly's Irish is improving; she is better able to get her tongue around it, and it is coming back to her memory', indicating that in Mrs. Connolly's case as in so many, the language of her youth was not now her familiar language of usage on a daily basis. As Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh would put it, it had lost its 'transactional value' whether in terms of commerce at home or readiness for emigration abroad.

Like so many of the sons of Anglican clergy, Douglas Hyde went on to Trinity College, which not only provided a challenging but an alienating experience. Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh, author of the first biography of Hyde, recounted a now famous story about a fellow student insisting that Hyde must have learned his Latin at a continental academy, so alien was his pronunciation to the ears of his peers:

> 'No', answered Hyde, 'but I have modelled my pronunciation on that of Irish'.
>
> 'You do know a lot of languages, Hyde', a fellow-student remarked to him: 'How many do you know? English, German, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and French, I suppose?'
>
> 'Yes', answered Hyde, 'and I can read Italian. But the language I know best is Irish'.
>
> 'Irish!, exclaimed the fellow-student in astonishment; 'do you know Irish?'
>
> 'Yes', said Hyde quietly; 'I dream in Irish'.

Trinity was not then a friendly house for the Irish language. Indeed, Janet and Gareth Dunleavy have suggested that it was at Trinity that Hyde adopted his now famous pen-name, *An Craoibhín Aoibhinn*, in an effort to disguise his identity while writing Irish-language poetry for *The Shamrock* and *The Irishman*, two magazines that were flirting with separatism.

Critics would often note that his mode of expression grew more exuberant, and certainly more nationalist, when he wrote in Irish, as his Irish language poems attest. Hyde himself was greatly amused at frequent references by critics to him as Dr. Jeykll and Mr. Hyde.

Coming of age in the turbulent 1880s, the decade of Parnell and the Land League – the great alliance of parliamentary party, the land movement and the Fenian movement – schooled by his neighbours in the traditions of nationalist struggle it is not surprising that Hyde evinced, as a young man, separate, separatist nationalist feelings.

Nationalist sentiments were not wholly unusual sentiments for a young Irish Protestant – we need only recall the example of Thomas Davis or indeed, John Kells Ingram, the author, in 1843, of the ballad 'The Memory of the Dead', later translated into Irish by Hyde. Kells Ingram, another son of an Anglican clergyman and a very fine sociologist and economist – indeed, someone who pioneered using the historical, inductive method in economics – was perhaps more typical than Davis. He drifted towards advocacy for a form of independence heavily influenced by his own reading of the work of Auguste Comte (sometimes referred to as the founder of the modern subject Sociology) a rarefied and unique view of independence, one that required a moral transformation rather than a political one.

Yet, Douglas Hyde, for all the force of his poetry, was always suspicious of the capacity of physical force to achieve independence. He certainly admired the veteran Fenians, John O'Mahony, distinguished Irish scholar in his own right, writing a moving encomium titled 'O'Mahony's lament', and O'Donovan Rossa, a native speaker and man of great courage and vitality.

Yet, when Hyde came to revise one of his youthful poems celebrating the exploits of Craoibhín's grandfather – a fictional character – in the 1798 rising he implicitly criticised O'Donovan Rossa for provoking the people to a rebellion which could only lead to inevitable defeat. His youthful suspicion of violence as a political method would abide with him throughout life. Yet again I am saying, I announce a reservation to any generalisation even since I wrote this piece, I am alerted to the recent work of Timothy G. McMahon together with the work of Liam Mac Mathúna and Máire Nic an Bhaird in the current issue of *Éire-Ireland* (Volume 53) which I strongly recommend.

As a teenager, Hyde had become a member of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, established in 1877, but it was antiquarian in emphasis rather than being dedicated to the living language still spoken by the people of the West. Hyde would join the more active Gaelic Union – while a member he contributed an essay to the 1886 edition of *Dublin University Review* entitled 'A plea for the Irish language', this was to be a precursor to the many of ideas developed in *The necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland* which would come later.

It was somewhat less strident in tone, calling only for the establishment of, 'for all time a bi-lingual population in those parts of Ireland where Irish now spoken', yet it was an early indication of the great work to which Douglas Hyde would devote his life. He was not truly convinced of the struggle until, six years later, he saw his friend Eóin MacNeill in the Royal Irish Academy Library on Dame Street, reading the great medieval manuscript *Lebor Laignech*, the Book of Leinster, as if it were but a novel as he put it.

As important as contemporaries such as Eóin MacNeill and Thomas O'Neill Russell were as formative influences, it was perhaps Thomas Davis, more than any other, who was the antecedent to Douglas Hyde's efforts. In his short life, Davis drew together many strands – the egalitarian republicanism of the United Irishmen, the linguistic and cultural nationalism of Johann Herder, the universalist emancipatory ideals of revolutionary France and, may I say, the danger-filled romantic nationalism of the German lands of the 1830s. The great inclusive project of Young Ireland after all – with its civic republicanism was programmatic in its intent – extending from the public provision of libraries in every town and village in Ireland to even, during the Famine and after Davis' death, offering a cogent critique of the then dominant liberal political economy which has had such catastrophic effects on the people of Ireland.

It is not difficult to discern the influence of Davis on that famous essay of Hyde's *The necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland*. When Hyde gave that address, he was responding to a speech given by Dr George Sigerson, scientist, self-taught Irish speaker, and a liberal critic of Fenianism and physical force nationalism – a friend then, and sympathetic one at that, not dissimilar by inclination or upbringing to Hyde.

Indeed, as Hyde himself commented in a preface to the third edition of the *Bards of the Gael and the Gall* – a title indicative of Sigerson's adherence and advocacy to a form of syncretism – the only translated books of Irish poetry between 1860 and 1895 were Sigerson's *Poets and Poetry of Munster* and Hyde's *Love Songs of Connacht*. Sigerson had delivered a lecture on 'Irish Literature: Its Origin, Environment and Influence' in which he lauded the Irish contribution to European literature and thought from earliest times.

As learned as the lecture was, and as generous in its sentiments, it is Hyde's reply to the lecture which has survived for posterity. This interest in the reply came as a surprise to his contemporaries. The next evening at the Contemporary Club, Hyde's reply came up for discussion, only to be causally dismissed by the brilliant lawyer W.F. Bailey, who said, 'let us turn to something of importance and reality'.

Ba é an achainí a rinne de hÍde an lá sin ná go mbeadh cultúr náisiúnta ann – sa litríocht, san amhránaíocht, san éadach fiú – ceann a chreid sé a d'fhéadfadh muintir na hÉireann a thabhairt le chéile, bíodh siad ina n-aontachtóirí nó ina náisiúnaithe. Mar a deir Declan Kiberd, bhí críonnacht leis an gcaoi a ndearna sé an achainí. D'iarr de hÍde, nuair a bhí sé ag aimsiú an chontrárthacht a bhí i gceist, conas a bhféadfadh na gluaiseachtaí móra náisiúnacha, Parnellachas agus Éire Óg, an comhbhá sin a spreagadh, i measc daoine fiú, agus ag an am céanna cultúr Éireannach níos sine á chaitheamh i dtraipisí acu – an teanga thar aon ní eile.

> 'It has been very curious to me', Hyde said, 'how Irish sentiment sticks in this half-way house – how it continues to apparently hate the English, and at the same time continues to imitate them; how it continues to clamour for recognition as a distinct nation, and at the same time throws away with both hands what would make it so'.

The historical narrative that Hyde presented, of the maintenance of a vigorous Irish literary culture in post-Williamite Ireland, of eighteenth-century townlands which could still boast of storied poets, of Roscommon peasants reciting the poems of 'Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh' – born sixty years before Chaucer – came to shape the *weltanschauung* of the men and women whose writings, books, pamphlets, plays and poems would come to make ground for a distinctly Irish independence. That movement which we call the Revival.

There is much in the de-Anglicisation address that betrays its nineteenth-century origins. Frequent references to the 'Celtic' race, for example, not only indicate the influence of Victorians such as Matthew Arnold, who created various racial categories and applied characteristics to them – unsurprisingly, perhaps, the Celts had drawn a short straw in Arnold's view.

Despite loose invocations of the racial concept, Hyde's locus of Irishness was not racial but linguistic, echoing a Romantic identification of language and nationality. Indeed, he could not imagine the possibility of national freedom without cultural distinctiveness:

> 'As long as the Irish nation, goes on as it is doing I cannot have much hope of its ultimately taking its place amongst the nations of the earth, for if it does, it will have proceeded upon different lines from every other nationality that God ever created'.

Instead, as Declan Kiberd has so pithily summarised, '[Hyde] wanted to found Irish pride on something more positive and lasting than mere hatred of England'.

He proposed nothing less than the restoration of the language, a reversion to Irish place-names and surnames, a re-cultivation of Irish music and a return to what was then viewed as traditional national dress in lieu of what he called 'the cast-off clothes of the English bourgeois', which he later himself acknowledged was somewhat of a 'quixotic plea'. I do recall followers such as Claude Cervasse who took this literally.

His model for this programme was, and here perhaps we can hear An *Craoibhín* speaking of the Fenians:

> 'In order to keep the Irish language alive where it is still spoken – which is the utmost we can at present aspire to – nothing less than a house-to-house visitation and exhortation of the people themselves will do, something – though with a very different purpose – analogous to the procedure that James Stephens adopted throughout Ireland when he found her like a corpse on the dissecting table'.

Bunaíodh an eagraíocht a threoródh an tionscadal mór a raibh de hÍde ag labhairt air, Conradh na Gaeilge, ar an 31 Iúil 1893 i seomraí Mháirtín Uí Cheallaigh ag uimhir a 9 Sráid Uí Chonaill. Dearbhaíodh ag an gcéad chruinniú gurb é an aidhm a bhí acu an Ghaeilge a chaomhnú mar theanga labhartha in Éirinn, 'le haghaidh Teanga na Gaedhilge do choinneáil dá labhairt in Éirinn'. Toghadh Dubhghlas de hÍde mar an chéad Uachtarán.

That league having been established and Hyde then its President, shortly thereafter, he married Lucy Kurtz and settled at Ratra in Frenchpark to live the life of a country gentlemen – his friends would describe him as a 'duine uasal thiar i Ros Comáin'. It was nonetheless a most fruitful time for his scholarship, marked by the publication of ten books including his magnum opus, the *Literary History of Ireland*, a bold scholarly attempt at recovery of the Irish literature since the earliest times, by which Hyde of course meant, Irish literature in Irish.

D'éirigh níos fearr leis an gConradh ná mar a bhí a bhunaitheoirí ag súil leis, ní hamháin, mar a cheap siad, san Iarthar agus sna Gaeltachtaí, áit a raibh daoine á múineadh chun an teanga a léamh, ach go príomha i mbailte na hÉireann inar labhraíodh Béarla, áit ar múineadh do dhaoine í a léamh agus a labhairt.

Roghnaigh Patrick Maume an teideal *The Long Gestation* chun cur síos a dhéanamh ar a chuntas ar an saol náisiúnach idir titim Parnell agus toghadh na chéad Dála. Is trí gníomhaíochtaí cultúrtha a cuireadh go leor de dhíograis *fin de siècle* na hÉireann i lathair, agus iad ag tabhairt droim láimhe den chogaíocht idir bhaill de Pháirtí Parlaiminteach na hÉireann, a rinne dochar don dá thaobh, agus mar thoradh a chuir cuma díbheo agus coimeádach air, in ainneoin a cheannasachta.

Trí chomhaltacht a bhí ag méadú agus a bhí níos gníomhaí de shíor, bhí an Conradh in ann leabhair agus leabhráin, scéalta béaloidis, filíocht, amhránaíocht a fhoilsiú agus lámhscríbhinní a aisghabháil, agus a thionchar a chur i bhfeidhm ar Pháirtí Parlaiminteach na hÉireann agus ar údaráis eile in Éirinn.

Mrs Sabina Higgins, President Michael D. Higgins and Ms Lucy Sealy (grand-daughter of Douglas Hyde) looking at Douglas Hyde material in the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

Mrs Sabina Higgins and President Michael D. Higgins examine the Douglas Hyde material in the National Folklore Collection.

Mrs Sabina Higgins, Ms Lucy Sealy and President Michael D. Higgins with Dr Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh of the National Folklore Collection.

Dr Eoin McEvoy,
President Michael D. Higgins
and Mrs Sarah McEvoy.

Dr Deirdre McGillicuddy, Róise,
President Michael D. Higgins,
Mr Michael Wallace, Oisín and Fionn.

Dr Maurice Manning and
President Michael D. Higgins.

As President of the Gaelic League, and as a scholar of great learning, Hyde was more than capable in engaging in disputation, of out-mastering his opponents, particularly when they emerged from Trinity College. When the Commission on Intermediate Education heard evidence from, among others, Professors Mahaffy and Atkinson, against the teaching of Irish, Hyde not only assembled evidence from the leading Celticists of his day, such as his friend Kuno Meyer, who later took up a position as Professor in the Celtic Languages at the Royal Irish Academy and initiated the *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, but Hyde delivered a veritable coup-de-grace against one of his old Trinity interlocutors by observing that his opponent was a brilliant scholar who could speak the languages of every country save his own. In such a reply there are echoes of Thomas Davis famous plea for the teaching of Irish history in Trinity sixty years earlier: 'Gentlemen, you have a country!'.

During a fundraising tour of the United States in 1905-6, that trip took six months, and you will see in the manuscripts that you have here, he describes on the strength of the collections from the different cities, he didn't get much in Bute, Montana, did well in San Francisco, but gave a third of it back because they had the fire. But during that fundraising tour recorded in his 'Mo Thuras go Meiriceá', 'My Trip to America', he was recognised as an accomplished public orator by Irish-American audiences often speaking for two hours. He was hailed as a hero, on his return, with O'Connell Street packed with people, from the Rotunda to the GPO. As I have mentioned earlier, of course, Hyde played a foundational role in the National University of Ireland.

When the University was established, it was immediately subject to controversy as to whether Irish was to be compulsory for matriculation. It split the country, and thus split the United Irish League, the mass movement that sustained the Irish Parliamentary Party. The League was able to summon tens of thousands onto the streets in support and it was Hyde's oration to the Ardfheis of the United Irish League in 1909 that won the support of the League, which in turn secured a majority for 'essential Irish' in the University Senate.

In this Decade of Centenaries, it was important to recall the account of the resignation of the Douglas Hyde following the Oireachtas of 1915. The Oireachtas passed, by a very large majority, a resolution to amend the constitution of the League to include amongst its objectives the necessity to make Ireland 'free of foreign domination'. A Coiste Gnótha of the League

dominated by members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, by the way, was elected, leaving Hyde, as he saw it, but little choice but to step down as President in protest at what he felt was an unwarranted politicisation of the League.

Of course, it was in this institution, UCD, that he practised his vocation as the first Professor of Modern Irish. And by the accounts of his students, not many of them here now, he was a much-loved teacher, closer and more informal than those colleagues wearing the rather stern mien cultivated by so many lecturers of that generation as felt by them as appropriate to their status. Above all, he was capable of eliciting a passion for the language from his students, reflecting perhaps the passion, that had awakened in the teenage years in Frenchpark in Roscommon.

In *Mise agus an Conradh*, Hyde records a letter from that great scholar of Old Irish, Osborn Bergin:

> 'Is maith is cuimhin liom roinnt bliadhanta ó shin tuarasgbháil ar leabhar ded leabhraibh-se d'fheicsin dam, agus gan focal Gaedhilge fán am sin agam. Sin é, is dócha, an chéad ní do bhrostaigh mé chun na Gaedhilge d'fhoglaim agus do ghrádhughadh thar aon teangaidh eile dá labharthar nó dár labhradh riamh san domhan mór. Dá bhrígh sin, is tusa fé ndeara dham bheith mar atáim anois, tré chúis dhírigh agus tré chúis imchéin'.

It was said that Hyde was also generous in his attitude towards encouraging the use of the language – one of his students, Gerard Murphy, later the Professor of History of Celtic Literature here in UCD, records that Hyde frequently chided those who would correct his students over some grammatical error, 'we must not be purists' he said. An invocation not always followed I am afraid in succeeding generations.

For all the nineteenth-century peculiarities of the address that Douglas Hyde gave at Leinster Hall one hundred and twenty-six years ago – the Arnoldian references to race, or, as Bruce Stewart has highlighted, the unfortunate description of the Ulster plantation – it still remains a profoundly important legacy for us today, not only because of the great movement of thought and action which it launched.

I refer not to what might be construed as any simple linear association between language and nationhood. Despite the apparent power of such a construction, the claims of Young Ireland to national self-determination owed through its idealism when experienced, so much more to republican ideals of civic nationalism and democracy, indeed while Patrick Pearse, as evidenced by his writings, whether in *Ghosts* or *The Sovereign People*, ultimately his claim to national freedom on the idea of popular sovereignty.

The strangely unrepublican language then used by Éamon de Valera at the inauguration of our first President, which so clearly drew on the tradition and language of resistance of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Irish poets, as suggested by Corcaire, is not near the fulness of President Dubhghlas de hÍde's vision. It would in my view be an inadequate encapsulation.

No, Douglas Hyde's vision still stands today as both statement and enduring invitation for a cultural democracy. As an alternative vision to Irish modernity – it can be best considered an appeal to collectively construct a national culture. For as complex as debates on the language shift are, we should recall that it occurred in the context of a very particular political economy – both in its pre-Famine and post-Famine contexts. In post-Famine Ireland our native language carried, in the words of Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, 'little transactional value'. Brought up in the aftermath of catastrophe, Hyde implicitly recognised this – how could he not, learning Irish from people who had lived through the Great Hunger.

And while a failure of political leadership and clerical influence are often suggested as proximate causes for the decline of the language, Douglas Hyde spoke of a past in which as he put it 'the Irish peasantry… were all to some extent cultured men, and many of the better off ones were scholars and poets'. This is the description of a form of cultural democracy, in which every man and woman can participate in creating and shaping their own culture. It is not merely a description of the past, but also a prospectus for a more hopeful inclusive future.

'We find ourselves despoiled of the bricks of nationality,' Hyde said, 'The old bricks that lasted eighteen hundred years are destroyed; we must now set to, to bake new ones, if we can, on other ground and of other clay'.

Inár n-ám féin, is minic a bhíonn an talamh agus an chré lom maidir leis an timpeallacht ina bhfuil na hacmhainní ríthábhachtacha sin. Tá na h-úirlisí agus na modhanna cur chun cinn cumarsáide chultúrtha agus eolais i lámha an mhargadh meán monaplach, agus tá siamsaíocht tráchtearraithe agus homaiginithe le haireachtáil mar thoradh. Éilíonn ár ndaonlathas cultúrtha talamh torthúil agus cré somhúnlaithe, agus ní féidir na coinníollacha sin a chothabháil ach nuair a bhíonn acmhainní cuí acu ag na daoine ar fad, úirlísí na léinn agus na teicneolíochta.

Those bricks and new materials of which Hyde speaks are very difficult to envisage if we are in conditions of monopoly in matters cultural and matters associated with the media. To be able to in fact, ensure that his vision becomes practical we need to be able to know that culture really above all else, is a resource of the people, of all of the people. Finally, in this regard, I recall the insightful report prepared for UNESCO in 1981 by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, chaired by that great Irish citizen and champion of human rights, Seán MacBride. His report, whose remit was nothing less than 'to study the totality of communications problems in modern societies' in order to address the many inequalities in information between the Global North and the Global South. After centuries of struggle against the imperial powers, the newly free nations of the Global South sought a space in which to cultivate their own national cultures. They wanted the right to tell the news in a fair way rather than to be the victims of monopoly in relation to the construction of news and it divided UNESCO.

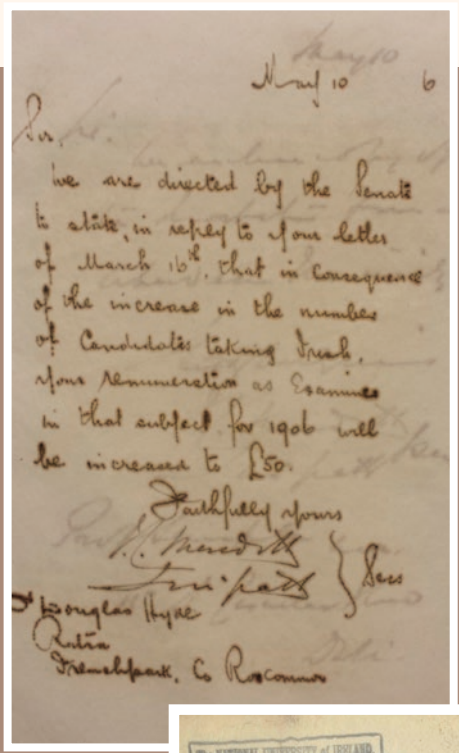
The wisdom that is contained in the conclusion of that Report remains with us as valid for today. It recognised that the vindication of the right to information and of the right to communicate, required a right to participate in the production of information, the guarantee of diversity of voices and opinion, a strong public service media, the restriction of private media monopolies, the guarantee of the freedom of the press, and reciprocity in the flow of information between North and South. Since the publication of the MacBride Report certain trends, as I have said, have accelerated – above all, the growth of a commercial media which, when it exists in a market whose bounds have widened to subsume all human activity.

Eighty years ago, at the inauguration of our first President, Éamon de Valera spoke directly to *An Craoibhín*:

> 'Your sole foresight in saving from death our own sweet language, which your work and that of our colleagues of half a century ago have made it possible for us now to restore, merits the gratitude of all generations of the Irish that are to come'.

That legacy of Hyde can be found, above all, I believe, in his expansive vision of cultural democracy – for it was from the people he learned the Irish language, collected our folklore and manuscripts. It was to the people he looked for the regeneration of Irish culture, a culture sustained by an ancient inheritance, but also alive to new forms and innovations, of imagination and to all the possibilities and potentials of the future. Let us, in our time, seek to equip not only our citizens, but the people of other countries, with the resources – material and intellectual – to shape their own culture, to become their poets, singers, authors and dreamers. Be it in the language of their own and the language of others.

Míle buíochas go raibh maith.



Nov 10 6

Sir,

We are directed by the Senate to state, in reply to your letter of March 16th, that in consequence of the increase in the number of Candidates taking Irish, your remuneration as Examiner in that subject for 1906 will be increased to £50.

Faithfully yours

[illegible] Secs

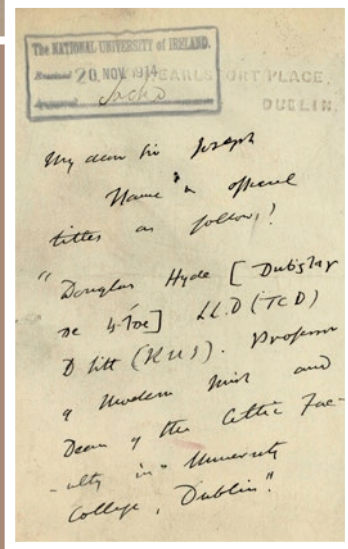
Douglas Hyde

Ratra

Frenchpark, Co Roscommon

Left – A letter from the Standing Committee of the Royal University of Ireland, which preceded the National University of Ireland, to Hyde regarding the increase in the numbers of students taking Irish. (NUI Archive)

Below – Letter from Douglas Hyde to Sir Joseph McGrath, Registrar of NUI, informing him of his name in Irish and his official title, 1914. (NUI Archive)

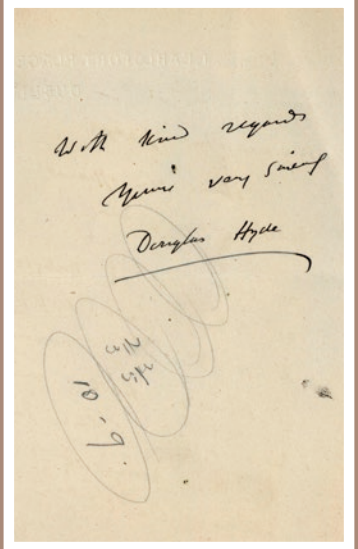


The NATIONAL UNIVERSITY of IRELAND.
Received 20 NOV 1914
Answered
EARLSFORT PLACE,
DUBLIN.

Dear Sir Joseph

Name & Special titles as follows!

"Douglas Hyde [Dubhglas de Hóc] LL.D (TCD) D litt (NUI). Professor of Modern Irish and Dean of the Celtic Faculty in the University College, Dublin."



With kind regards
Yours very sincerely
Douglas Hyde

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of NUI

A Uachtarán, agus a cairde,

President, on behalf of everybody here tonight, I want to thank you for a really splendid launch to the Douglas Hyde lecture series. It was an extraordinary lecture. It covered so much ground, it was so insightful and it moved in so many different spheres. And it was at all times engaging, at times amusing, and I think you've left us almost breathless at the end of what was a tour de force. So thank you very much.

Now President, I know that you, like the NUI, are above politics, so I will speak in that context. As Chancellor of the National University I want to thank you for what you have done over the past seven years. And I want to thank you in particular because of your support for scholarship. You understand, the importance, not just of universities and ordinary learning, but of real scholarship. You have encouraged scholarship, and as a university man, you have been a great supporter of the universities. You care passionately, and you are somebody also who values ideas, the importance of ideas, the importance of dialogue, of, even conflict at times over ideas. But you have raised our national debate to a higher level something I think which, we all value, but from which we all gain. And, speaking personally, I hope that after a short suss, you will be in a position to continue to make that same contribution.

Now to the origin of this series, we in the NUI decided that it was very important, that in the Decade of Centenaries, the people who had made important contributions to the development of our modern state and society, who had come from the universities should be properly and fully recognised.

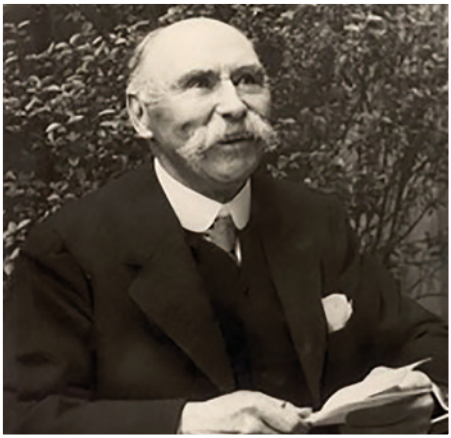
And we are doing that in various ways. The Uachtarán tonight mentioned three names in particular; Éamon De Valera, Dubhghlas de hÍde and Eóin MacNeill. All three are intimately associated with the National University of Ireland and with this university, my own alma mater, UCD. Éamon De Valera was our Chancellor for fifty-four years. I don't think I'll make it. I started a bit too late! We had planned an event in honour of Éamon De Valera, unfortunately the death of that great historian Ronan Fanning meant that we couldn't go ahead. But we will be honouring the contribution of Éamon De Valera in the future. The second of course is Douglas Hyde and the Uachtarán again four years ago launched our new edition of Lia Fáil. The beginning of our commemoration of Douglas Hyde. In the meantime Dr Brian Murphy's very fine biography has appeared, so we do have a much fuller picture of Douglas Hyde and this lecture series will be a monument to him. And in particular to Douglas Hyde the scholar, because when UCD was set up in 1908, there were very few real scholars available. There was no money, there was no tradition and Hyde was one of the few international scholars, the sort of person other scholars came to study with and learn from. And it is as a scholar in particular, although he was also a very fine President, that we will continue to commemorate Douglas Hyde. And the third person, again mentioned in the lecture this evening was Eóin MacNeill. Of course Eóin MacNeill a colleague and a friend of Douglas Hyde, was again at that time and subsequently, one of our great, great scholars. The NUI have already held a seminar and will be publishing a major study of Eóin MacNeill within the next year.

So that is the reason and the context why we are here this evening. I think that this lecture could not have gotten the series off to a better start. I'm going to conclude by telling about a little research I did myself, about Douglas Hyde and Eóin MacNeill. As the President mentioned, when the NUI was set up, the big and very bitter debate was on Irish and the place that Irish would have. The meetings of the NUI, which was a very august body presided over by an Archbishop with some leading figures of the sort described by the President in his lecture – people who took themselves rather seriously. But every meeting after a while I noticed began with a complaint, what we would call today, a leak to the press. What then was called unauthorised disclosure appeared, and this went on for almost a year at the beginning of every meeting. There would be a complaint, no names would be mentioned.

But I did my own bit of detective work, and all of the leaks were designed to favour those who wanted a strong Irish language policy. There were two people, there were two suspects, Eóin MacNeill and Douglas Hyde. I still don't know, haven't found yet which of them leaked. In any case, we have to leave that mystery there as to who was the person who leaked. I'm sure the President here has many such stories as well.

May I conclude, by once again thanking all of you for being here tonight. It was a pleasure to have everyone here and to thank our President for a truly wonderful evening.

DOUGLAS HYDE
1860-1949



Rugadh Dubhghlas de hÍde (An Craoibhín) ar an 17 Eanáir 1860 i dTeach Longfoirt, An Caisleán Riabhach, Contae Ros Comáin. Fuair sé bás ar an 12 Iúil 1949. Ba cheannródaí é. Ba é bunaitheoir agus an chéad uachtarán ar Chonradh na Gaeilge é, an ghluaiseacht náisiúnta ar athbheochan na Gaeilge. Ba é an chéad Ollamh le Nua-Ghaeilge é sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, agus ba bhall gníomhach é den chéad Seanad de chuid Ollscoil na hÉireann. Sa bhliain 1938, ceapadh é gan freasúra mar an chéad Uachtarán ar Éirinn go mí Mheithimh 1945.

Aithníodh de hÍde go forleathan lena ainm cleite An Craoibhín Aoibhinn nó An Craoibhín. Ba údar é ar roinnt saothair scoláireachta, The Love Songs of Connacht (1893) agus A Literary History of Ireland (1899) san áireamh.

Buíochas le tiomnacht fhlaitiúil ón Dr Adam Boyd Simson, sa bhliain 1922, ghlac Seanad OÉ le moladh chun irisleabhar taighde Gaeilge a bhunú. Ceapadh de hÍde mar eagarthóir air. Foilsíodh an iris a tháinig as, Lia Fáil idir 1925 agus 1932. Sa bhliain 2013, d'athchruthaigh OÉ eagrán macasamhlach de Lia Fáil agus rinne an tUachtarán Mícheál D. Ó hUigínn é a sheoladh.

Douglas Ross Hyde (Dubhghlas de hÍde) was born on 17 January 1860 in Longford House, Castlerea, Co Roscommon. He died on 12 July 1949. He was a man of firsts. He was the founder and first President of Conradh na Gaeilge (the Gaelic League), the national movement for the revival of the Irish language. He was the first Professor of Modern Irish in University College Dublin, and an active member of the first National University of Ireland Senate. In 1938, he was elected unopposed as the first President of Ireland and served until June 1945.

Pictured at the launch of Lia Fáil facsimile in 2013, Dr Attracta Halpin, Registrar NUI, Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of NUI, Professor Liam Mac Mathúna, editor of facsimile, President Michael D. Higgins and Sabina Higgins

Dr Maurice Manning presenting President Higgins with a copy of Lia Fáil (LF in italics)

Hyde was commonly known to his contemporaries by his pen-name, *An Craoibhín Aoibhinn* or *An Craoibhín*. He was the author of a number of scholarly works including *The Love Songs of Connacht* (1893) and *A Literary History of Ireland* (1899).

Thanks to the generous bequest from Dr Adam Boyd Simpson, in 1922 the NUI Senate accepted a recommendation to found a journal of Irish research. Hyde was appointed editor. The resulting journal, *Lia Fáil*, was published between 1925 and 1932. In 2013, NUI reproduced a facsimile of Lia Fáil which was launched by President Higgins.

'His presidency had been a modest one in every sense but it was appropriate to its time in Irish history, proved deeply popular and was a unifying force at a time of great political division. It established, in a lasting way, the essential characteristics of the office and laid down foundations that have endured'.

Dr Maurice Manning, 'Douglas Hyde, First President of Ireland: Background and Early Development of the Office of Head of State, 1922-45', in Halpin & Mannion (eds), *Douglas Hyde: the Professor of Irish who became President of Ireland* (NUI: Dublin, 2016), p. 93.

'Ba é Dubhghlas de hÍde a threoraigh gluaiseacht na hAthbheochana mar Uachtarán Chonradh na Gaeilge agus mar údar a d'aithin saibhreas Ghaeilge bheo iarthar na hÉireann. Nuair a foilsíodh a leabhar Ábhráin Grádh Cúige Chonnacht or Love Songs of Connacht athraíodh scóip na Gaeilge mar theanga bheo fhileata a léirigh saibhreas teanga nár thuig lucht a labhartha féin. Ghríosaigh sé pearsana móra athbheochana chun dul i mbun pinn agus i mbun gnímh chun luachanna oidhreachta agus fréamhacha dúchais na hÉireann a thógáil amach ó dhorchadas an naoú haois déag. Bhí ról eiseamláireach aige i múnlú mheon an phobail léannta ó chaomhnú na hoidhreachta go hathbheochan na teanga agus an chultúir Ghaelaigh. Mar uachtarán Chonradh na Gaeilge, mar an chéad Ollamh le Gaeilge in Ollscoil Náisiúnta na hÉireann sa Choláiste Ollscoile Baile Átha Cliath agus mar an chéad Uachtarán ar Éirinn, léirigh sé gur laoch iltréitheach fadradharcach a bhí ann le fís do chruthú an Stáit agus na féiniúlachta Éireannaí a bhfuil a rian fós le braistint ar Éirinn mar thír a bhfuil a háit greanta aici anois i measc tíortha uile an domhain'.

An tOllamh Regina Úi Chollatáin, Ceann na Scoile, Scoil na Gaeilge, an Léinn Cheiltigh agus an Bhéaloidis, An Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath.

'The care taken by the National University of Ireland with the facsimile of Lia Fáil, and the recognition accorded by President Michael D. Higgins to its editor and his predecessor, Dr Douglas Hyde, may be taken as being indicative of an ongoing national commitment to Irish language scholarship, which will continue to have its central forum in the pages of Éigse: A Journal of Irish Studies, the successor to Lia Fáil'.

Professor Liam Mac Mathúna, Editor of *Éigse: a Journal of Irish Studies. Éigse* volume 40 will be published shortly.

PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

On 11 November 2011, Michael D. Higgins was inaugurated as the ninth President of Ireland. A passionate political voice, a poet and writer, academic and statesman, human rights advocate, promoter of inclusive citizenship and champion of creativity within Irish society, Michael D. Higgins has previously served at almost every level of public life in Ireland, including as Ireland's first Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht.

Michael D. Higgins was born on 18 April 1941 in Limerick city and was raised in County Clare. He was a factory worker and a clerk before becoming the first in his family to access higher education. He studied at the University College Galway, the University of Manchester and Indiana University.

Michael D. Higgins is married to Sabina Higgins, and they have four children. Sabina Higgins attended the Stanislavsky Studio of acting in Dublin and was a founding member of the Focus Theatre.

As a lecturer in political science and sociology in National University of Ireland, Galway, and in the United States, Michael D. Higgins was a passionate proponent for the extension of access to third level education beyond the walls of established Universities. He was centrally involved in the development of extra-mural studies at National University of Ireland, Galway, and he travelled extensively across the West of Ireland to provide accessible evening classes for interested citizens.

A desire to work more directly for equality and justice led Michael D. Higgins to enter public life and he went on to serve as a public representative at many levels from Councillor and Mayor to 9 years in the Seanad and 25 in Dáil Éireann.

As Ireland's first Minister for the Arts in 1993-97, Michael D. Higgins's achievements include the reinvigoration of the Irish film industry, the establishment of Teilifís na Gaeilge, now TG4, and the repeal of censorship under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Acts.

He also established a rich network of local arts and cultural venues which brought a crucial access to citizens across Ireland to these facilities. Moreover, he drove the revitalisation of Ireland's canal network, resulting in over 1,000 kilometres of navigable waterways, supporting thousands of jobs, and creating wealth in many rural and economically-deprived areas of the State.

Michael D. Higgins has, like many in Ireland, seen generations of his family emigrate. He has a strong interest and solidarity with the Irish abroad and has been a regular visitor to Irish Centres in Britain.

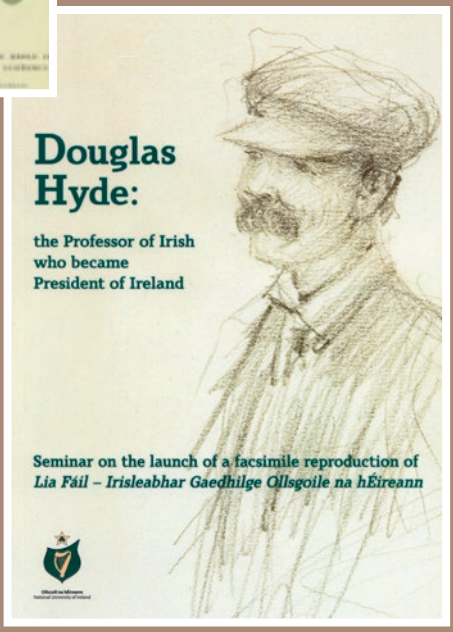
Throughout his life, Michael D. Higgins has campaigned for human rights and for the promotion of peace and democracy in Ireland and in many other parts of the world, from Nicaragua and Chile to Cambodia, Iraq and Somalia. In 1992, Michael D. Higgins was the first recipient of the Seán MacBride Peace Prize from the International Peace Bureau in Helsinki, in recognition of his work for peace and justice in many parts of the world.

Michael D. Higgins is also a writer and poet, contributing to many books covering diverse aspects of Irish politics, sociology, history and culture. He has published two collections of essays: *Causes for Concern – Irish Politics, Culture* and *Society* and *Renewing the Republic*. He has also published four collections of poetry: *The Betrayal; The Season of Fire; An Arid Season and New* and *Selected Poems*.

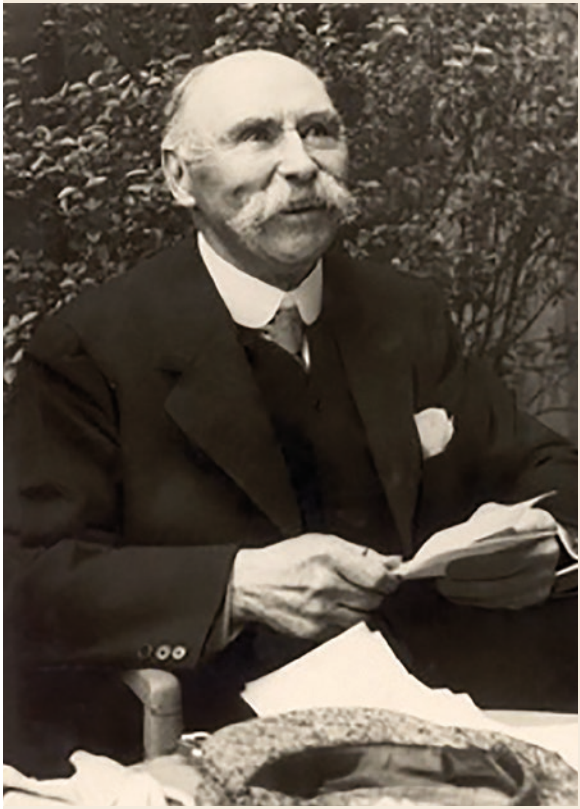
Among the other appointments Michael D. Higgins has held are:

- Member of Dáil Éireann for 25 years;
- Member of Seanad Éireann (the Irish Senate) for 9 years;
- Ireland's first Cabinet Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht 1993-97;
- As Minister, he had direct responsibility for the promotion of the Irish language and for the economic and social development of Irish-speaking areas in the State;
- Labour Party Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs in the Irish Parliament and founder member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs;
- Lord Mayor of Galway on two occasions;
- Honorary Adjunct Professor at the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland, Galway;
- Regular columnist for the popular 'Hot Press' magazine over the period 1982-1992, during which he engaged a young audience in the social issues of the day.

Lia Fáil was originally published by National University of Ireland between 1925 and 1932, and appeared in four parts. The facsimile published in 2013, involved the scanning of the original material to produce one complete volume, with the addition of some ancillary text at the beginning. It was edited by Professor Liam Mathúna.



Douglas Hyde: the Professor of Irish who became President of Ireland was published by NUI in 2016. Proceedings of a seminar held on the launch of a facsimile reproduction of Lia Fáil – Irisleabhar Gaedhilge Ollsgoile na hÉireann. Edited by Attracta Halpin, Registrar of NUI and Áine Mannion.



Dubhghlas de hÍde
Douglas Hyde
An Craoibhín Aoibhinn 1860-1949

Photograph from the NUI archives.

Cover picture: John B. Yeats (1839-1922) Portrait of Douglas Hyde, 1901, pencil on paper.
The Niland Collection. Presented by James A. Healy 1966 (John & Catherine Healy Memorial Collection).
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