



Blood Kindred: The Politics of W. B. Yeats and his Death

W J McCormack

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In June 1934, W. B. Yeats gratefully received the award of a Goethe-Plakette from Oberbürgermeister Krebs, four months after his early play *The Countess Cathleen* had been produced in Frankfurt by SS Untersturmführer Bethge. Four years later, the poet publicly commended Nazi legislation before leaving Dublin to die in southern France. These hitherto neglected, isolated and scandalous details stand at the heart of this reflective study of Yeats's life, his attitudes towards death, and his politics.

Blood Kindred identifies an obsession with family as the link connecting Yeats's late engagement with fascism to his Irish Victorian origins in suburban Dublin and industrializing Ulster. It carefully documents and analyses his involvement with both Maud Gonne and her daughter Iseult, his secretive consultations with Irish army officers during his Senate years, his incidental anti-Semitism, and his approval of the right-wing royalist group L'Action Française in the 1920s.

The familiar peaks and troughs of Irish history, such as the 1916 Rising and the death of Parnell, are re-oriented within a radical new interpretation of Yeats's life and thought, his poetry and plays. As far as possible Bill McCormack lets Yeats speak for himself through generous quotation from his newly accessible correspondence. The result is a combative, entertaining biography which allows Ireland's greatest literary figure to be seen in the round for the first time.

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