

Orientalizing the Celtic Past in W.B. Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well*: Irish Modernity in the Drawing Rooms of London's Social Elite

*This article situates the original production of W.B. Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* (staged in Lady Maud Emerald Cunard's London drawing-room on April 2 1916) within the context of the Russo-Orientalist material culture of Europe in the early twentieth century. While acknowledging the racist primitivisms of Yeats's orientalism, this article both moves beyond merely pointing out the colonial culpability of Yeats's attitudes toward the east, and refuses to recuperate his orientalism by rejecting the impulse to authoritatively restore agency and authenticity on behalf of the Eastern subjects whose personhood he erases. Instead, it demonstrates how *At the Hawk's Well* "orientalized" the Celtic past, contemporizing its ancient objects and making them a sign of radical Irish modernity. The obsession with all things "oriental" in London high society in the 1910s offered Yeats an aesthetic model which could be politicized for the purpose of transforming spectators into agents of Irish revolutionary sentiment, even if only momentarily.*

Key Words: Orientalism / Ornament / Modernism / Irish Nationalism / Materialism

Introduction

In the early 1910s, a craze for the Orientalist design of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (formed in Paris in 1909) ran rife through the echelons of London society. The company's production of *Scheherazade* (starring Vaslav Nijinsky and Ida Rubenstein, choreographed by Michel Fokine, designed by Leon Bakst, and accompanied by a libretto by Fokine and Bakst) marked the beginning of a dramatically crucial resurgence of a cosmopolitan Orientalism. In Paris, as Peter Wollen has argued, 'the Russian Ballet launched the new Orientalism, Poiret popularized it, [and] Matisse channelled it into painting and fine art'.¹ And as Bridget Elliott and Anthony Purdy state, the Ballets Russes premiere of *Scheherazade* took Paris 'by storm, with Leon Bakst's exaggerated Oriental sets and costumes' becoming a strong influence upon various artistic pursuits.² The fashion designer Paul Poiret, for example, created an "'Oriental" look' and launched his line spectacularly at a 'Thousand and Second night party' in June of 1911 and 'the costumes' for the party were 'but one element of an elaborate *mise-*

en-scene involving a sultan (Poiret himself), slaves, and caged women in a visual extravaganza of sexual role playing'.³

Scheherazade was first performed in London during the Coronation season of 1911 on the 'gorgeously decorated Covent Garden stage' and Nijinsky's performance, Urmila Seshagiri writes, 'held audiences spellbound':

With his skin darkened to copper, and clad only in an ornate breastplate and harem pants, the now-legendary Nijinsky astonished London audiences with the decisively modern language of his ballet [...]. Leon Bakst designed the Arabian costumes of billowing jewel-toned silk robes and ingeniously wrapped turbans; Michel Fokine choreographed movements for a cast of characters that included eunuchs, odalisques, and Negro and Hindu footmen.⁴

Scheherazade was marvelled at by London society, Seshagiri argues, because it was at once primitive and classical, masculine and feminine, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern'.⁵ Whatever the reason for its popularity, London society became obsessed and anything related to the Ballets Russes or faintly oriental infiltrated the everyday life of London's social elite. As the French author Paul Morand wrote in a letter dated 11 July 1914, this obsession extended to lavishly themed society parties:

On the terrace, on the rooftop, in the middle of town, a lake had been constructed upon which gondolas floated. This lake was festooned with some marvellous Japanese lanterns that looked like huge luminous oranges; a bizarrely shaped hump-back bridge, orange coloured too, crossed over it, a real Rialto from Yokohama, brought back by some Marco Polo or other. The dining room was Venetian rococo, painted by J.M. Sert, in the same style as his silver and gold designs for the ballet *Joseph*, which

Diaghilev has just put on at Convent Garden. A large table was arranged in a horse-shoe and laid for a hundred people; in front of each guest a silver plate and a candle had been placed: pheasants and peacocks, adorned with feathers, served as display pieces; the table was covered in gold cloth; in the centre of the horse-shoe was a carpet made from the skin of a polar bear, upon which Egyptian dancers and jugglers performed [...].⁶

Lady Maud Emerald Cunard, a patron for the first production of *Scheherazade* in London and in whose drawing room W.B. Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* was first staged on 2 April 1916, was one of London's social elites who led the charge in this craze for the Ballets-Russes and Bakstian design.

Cunard—by all accounts an indefatigable American-born society hostess who had married Sir Bache Cunard and climbed the ranks of London's elite—rented and moved into twenty Cavendish Square in May of 1911, after formally separating from her husband and beginning an affair with the conductor, Thomas Beecham. Cunard quickly redecorated this townhouse in the Bakstian style of the Ballets Russes, emulating the arabesque lines, bright colours, and spatial organizations of the production of *Scheherazade* in particular (see figure 1). Her aim was to create a *salon*-like environment in her drawing room within which the most artistic, intelligent, and talented personalities of her day would meet. An acquaintance, Daphne Vivian Fielding, described this décor in her biography of Maud and Nancy Cunard:

The dining-room was hung with curtains of arsenic-green *lamé*. Against one wall stood a black lacquer screen of carved porcupines framed in the nimbus of their bronze quills. On another there was a drop-cloth painted by the American artist Robert Winthrop Chandler, representing a forest of gentle leaf-eating giraffes, with light and shade pranking the trunks of the silvery birch trees which formed arabesques

with the long necks and slender dappled legs of the animals. The dining-room table was a huge circle of lapis lazuli, in the centre of which, reflecting the candlelight, stood a gilt-bronze epergne supported by naked figures of nymphs and naiads. In the hall, taking pride of place, was a great Chinese incense-burner which at Neville Holt, in springtime, had been aflame with orange, yellow and pink azaleas.⁷

Aside from providing the material for audaciously sumptuous parties, fashion, and décor, the Ballets Russes seasons in Europe during the 1910s gave birth, as Seshagiri has written, to some of ‘the most fantastic collaborative enterprises of the modernist era, bringing together visionaries from several artistic disciplines across Europe and providing a platform for many of the early twentieth century’s aesthetic revolutionaries and iconoclasts’.⁸

In most discussions of the production in Cunard’s drawing-room, scholars fail to comment on the performance space itself, other than to say that the choice of venue—combined with Yeats’s boast that he had sent away a photographer because the production had no need for publicity or the money it could bring—alerts us to the elitism of the project.⁹ This passing observation often leads scholars to conclude that the production was ‘archaic’ and ‘remote’. It has also been commonplace, in Yeatsian criticism, to note that Noh answered Yeats’s desire to be ‘the advocate of poetry against the actor’ and that this was achieved in part through the minimalist staging which the Noh stage justified for Yeats: ‘the stage’ as Yeats’s directions state, is to be ‘any bare space before a wall against which stands a patterned screen’.¹⁰

And yet as James Longenbach’s description of the event reveals, this first production of *At the Hawk’s Well* was also an overwhelming exhibition of the kind of affected modernity that was to be found in London Society salons in the 1910s. In addition (and despite Yeats’s own directions) the play was certainly not performed in a ‘bare space’:

In the London drawing room of Lady Cunard, on a Sunday afternoon in April 1916, a handful of invited guests gathered for the premiere of *At the Hawk's Well*, a new play by W. B. Yeats. There was no scenery, no stage. The musicians' faces were made to appear sunburned, as if they'd wandered into the room after a long journey. The actors wore masks. A square of blue cloth lay on the carpet, suggesting the well to which the play's title refers but also refusing to be anything but cloth: it existed side by side with the French novels arranged on Lady Cunard's Louis XV coffee table.¹¹

This tension between the 'archaic' nature of the play's content and the hypermodern immediacy of production elements, including the unintended elements of Lady Cunard's décor, is aptly summed up in Edward Marsh's letter to Cathleen Nesbitt:

I had to go away in the middle, which was wretched, as I was getting quite worked up and impressed. It's the beginning of an attempt to give poetic plays in such an inexpensive way that they can be done for quite small audiences—many of the conventions taken from the traditional dramas—rather unluckily for us called the No-drama, of the Japanese nobility (when is a play not a play? When it's a No-drama). I find I can manage quite well without *any* scenery at all—but they had been a little too careful not to disturb the room, and I couldn't help being disconcerted, just when I had persuaded myself that I had before me a wild mountain tract of semi-historic Ireland, to notice the characters skirting round a Louis XV table covered with French novels.¹²

Yeats's stage directions may have called for 'any bare space against a wall' but as Marsh's comments illustrate, Lady Cunard's drawing room was anything but bare. As Longenbach points out, the 'place' of the play was not 'an elegant drawing room' but a temporally and

spatially remote Irish landscape evoked and ‘bound together’ in the mind through poetry; at the same time, the audience ‘could see only a coffee table and a square of blue cloth’.¹³

The formal innovations of *At the Hawk's Well*, as has been discussed by many critics, were of course influenced by Yeats's brush with the Noh drama of Japan.¹⁴ This 1916 production is often cited as the point at which Yeats definitively turned his back on the middle-class audiences of Dublin for what he considered to be a more sophisticated audience that was better equipped to understand his poetic approach to the theatre. In the introduction to *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*, Yeats writes that ‘realism is created for the common folk and was always their peculiar delight’. It is, he writes, the ‘delight’ of ‘those whose minds, educated alone by school masters and newspapers, are without the memory of beauty and emotional subtlety’.¹⁵ For Yeats, Joseph Lennon argues, ‘beauty and emotional subtlety’ were the ‘characteristics of cultures that had not experienced the materialism of Europe, which for him included both the Orient and the Celts (or the rural Irish)’.¹⁶ Furthermore, Lennon argues that Japan was for Yeats ‘a traditional culture par excellence’¹⁷: it was filled with arts that showed a ‘high breeding of poetical style’¹⁸ and produced an audience of ‘learned people’ who had been ‘bred to appreciate art’.¹⁹ Yeats's ‘audience for this Celtic-Oriental drama’ Lennon argues, were expected to have been ‘educated not only in poetic cadence, but also in dramatic form and mythological allusions’.²⁰ In Yeats's infamous dialectical fashion, English materialism was the culturally destructive antithesis of exquisite Oriental and Celtic cultures, but the material culture of English socialites and the artists who surrounded them in the first two decades of the twentieth century could help to form a strategy of defence against that cultural destruction. And in the drawing rooms and studios of London's elite, Yeats found an audience to test out his strategies for making Irish modernity in the theatre.

Because of the production's formal borrowing of Japanese theatre and its idealization of Michio Ito's body, *At the Hawk's Well* does of course carry with it the tinge of Orientalist

appropriation. Furthermore, as Roy Foster has written, Yeats's knowledge of Japanese theatre was superficial and his 'introduction' to Noh 'was more a matter of [Pound's] aggressive marketing than original discovery', especially given that the craze for Japanese art and material culture had been rife amongst the artistic world of London from the 1880s.²¹ But as Anne Anlin Cheng has argued in response to Edward Said's formulation of Orientalism, 'the ideological suspects (imperialism, white racism, etc.)' that are inherent in Orientalist discourse 'are far from surprising, and surely it is our job as thinkers to do more than repeatedly point out the fixity of colonial culpability'.²² Given the huge body of eloquent scholarship that does just this, I do not attempt in this chapter to repeat these analyses by attempting to extrapolate how Yeats contributes to problematic representations of the East. Nor do I attempt to recuperate Yeats's orientalism. Doing so would run the risk of offering up another corrective reading that in Cheng's words would ultimately reinforce 'the empirical, geographical, and biological fact of boundaries and borders, recalling the imperatives they seek to undermine'.²³

Furthermore, interpretations of Oriental objects which focus on how they function as the 'exotic' or 'unknown Orient', as Thomas W. Kim has argued, tend to immediately relegate the Orient as the alternative space of the antimodern.²⁴ This article therefore also avoids treating the Oriental objects found within Yeats's production of *At the Hawk's Well* as signs of his desire for the exotic and unknown antimodern Orient. On the contrary, it explicates Yeats's Celtic significations in the spaces of London studios and drawing rooms, during a time of resurgent Orientalism, in order to show how he consciously mimics the ways in which the Orient as a concept is signified. In mimicking these operations, Yeats applies their same logic to the objects of the Celtic past that had hitherto been considered to be 'antimodern'. Yeats's Celtic significations, in *At the Hawk's Well*, thereby condition and

trouble the concepts of Irish nationalism, modernity, and state formation in the period before the Easter Rising.

Orientalism, Celticism, and Irish Modernity

The birth of this specifically Russian orientalism which so greatly influenced the spectacle of *At the Hawk's Well* was not, in fact, a miraculous one. Diaghilev, who had become acquainted with the late *Japonisme* of Decadent artists, including Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley, as they circulated through France in the years before he formed the Ballets Russes, was influenced by the wayward circulation of oriental objects from the artistic circles of fin-de-siècle London. Bakst was likewise influenced by Beardsley's drawings (particularly his *Salome* illustrations) in both his costume and set design, and Michio Ito, Yeats's infamous Japanese "Noh" dancer who danced the role of the Hawk in this first production, was in fact 'a disciple of Nijinsky and the *Ballets Russes*' and had been trained in Dalcroze's eurythmics.²⁵ Yeats had attended at least one Ballets Russes performance, *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, with Charles Ricketts on the 7th of March 1913 and wrote afterwards to Lady Gregory, telling her that 'this time I was well in front & could see the whole picture' and 'thought it most exquisite, most simple & strangely profound. The one beautiful thing I have seen on the stage of recent years'.²⁶

Yeats's encounters with the Ballets Russes and the unavoidable immersion in the rage for sumptuous orientalism that it produced, stayed with him over the next twenty-five years and was clearly in his mind as he was developing *At the Hawk's Well*. On the 10 December 1915, for example, he wrote to his sister Lily, telling her that he attended her 'show' at the Irish Literary Society and was told by the 'woman who was in charge for you' that 'buyers wanted stronger colour & liked anything distinctive — Celtic design for instance'. As he explained, 'the sense of design had changed' thanks to 'the scenery of the Russian Ballet &

the design for it by Bakst' (for an example of Bakst's costume design, see figure 2).²⁷ Then only a month later, as he was about to begin writing *At the Hawk's Well* at Stone Cottage in January 1916, he wrote to Lady Gregory expressing his desire for the production of *The Player Queen* to utilize 'scenery in the manner of Bakst'—but he immediately rejected the possibility of materializing such a performance in anticipation of an expected riot: 'I imagine that Dublin would outdo its Playboy enterprise', he writes ruefully.²⁸

Yeats's encounter with a Bakstian-style orientalism in London may have made him hyper-aware of the impossibility of replicating such a decadent style on Irish stages, but it also offered him a new strategy for making the heroic Celtic past a sign of Irish modernity. The fact that Orientalist material culture was eagerly adopted by the social and artistic elite of London as a sign of *their* modernity suggested that it was indeed possible for the archaic, the remote, and the timeless to be materialized as a hypermodern cultural object. The London obsession with all things oriental thus proved that what was once seen as the sentimentally backward and primitive might come to be re-presented as a signifier of modernist sensibilities.

Writing about the circulation of Oriental objects in American consumerism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Thomas W. Kim argues that collectors and consumers of Oriental objects created a 'concretizing effect' in which 'citations of Oriental objects' embed 'the Orient as the a priori signifier of beauty and grace, but also of goods and merchandise'.²⁹ By collecting and consuming these objects the 'sense of the Orient as an object of knowledge' became 'graspable and mappable' through an 'enunciatory process of materialization'. The 'Orient-as-concept', Kim argues, is thereby produced and lent 'a materiality and intelligibility that comes to seem definitional: [...] the Orient is recognized and (re)cited as a series of objects, in a discourse that produces the effect that it names [...]. The objects themselves instantiate the Orient.'³⁰ Furthermore, Kim argues, 'the ways in

which the Orient is conceived' are conditioned by its operations, including cultural consumerism, and 'this idea of the Orient with its discursive operations is inseparable from thinking about oneself as modern'.³¹ Oriental objects 'produce a new modern sensibility, conditioning the individual with a new attitude toward consumption, making legible the contradictions that mass culture presents to the consumer'. The 'Oriental object in the living room', as Kim argues, 'does not merely cite the other, the far away, the distant; it does not always or merely represent an "escape" or alternative to modernity', nor does it 'arouse a fascination with the primitive' or 'serve merely as artefacts of premodern civilizations'; rather, it 'marks a kind of modern modality'.³²

In Ireland at the turn of the century, the desire to cite literary and artistic objects of the Celtic past, by 'collecting' these objects in literature in order to concretize a sense of the Celtic world as the a priori signifier not only of beauty and grace, but of revolutionary power, is precisely what Yeats and his fellow Revivalists were trying to achieve. As many critics have pointed out, the Revivalist discourse consisted of a series of ritualized repetitions which effectively came to produce the rural West of Ireland. Revivalist discourse about the West of Ireland thereby produced the concept that it named. Yeats's own early drama, however, was doing something more complex: to use Kim's terms, in his early plays Yeats attempted to lend the Rural West as a concept 'a materiality and intelligibility' that might come 'to seem definitional'.³³ But the problem with Yeats's early Revivalist experiments, as Barbara A. Suss has pointed out, was that his dramatically materialized social critiques of Irish materialism and his less-than-idyllic representations of rural Ireland, in plays like *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and *The Countess Cathleen* for example, were not actually (re)citations of the spiritually grounded, anti-materialist rural West that Revivalist discourse had made to seem definitional.³⁴ Yeats's early plays were a contradiction rather than a (re)citation of that discourse. Yeats was in these plays therefore writing against the grain of Revivalist

(re)citations in an attempt to *materially* produce the idea of the rural west as a haven of spirituality and anti-materialism, but not of anti-modernity. For Yeats, Revivalist discourse had produced an abstract concept only, albeit one that had come to seem definitional. The challenge, as Yeats saw it, was in finding a way to produce this idea as a modern reality, and not simply as something that could only exist outside of, or as an ideal alternative to, an Irish modernity corrupted by English materialism.

By the time of writing his introduction to Ezra Pound's *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (1916), Yeats had turned away from Revivalist constructions of the West of Ireland and from the institution of the Abbey that still supported those constructions above all else, stating that it is 'in London where alone I can find the help I need'. Edmund Dulac's 'mastery of design' and Michio Ito's 'genius of movement' are cited by Yeats as being London's main drawcards.³⁵ But what he also finds is an environment where displaying one's modernity is made manifest through one's ability to collect, wear, and appreciate 'Oriental' objects of accomplished and archaic decorative beauty. The way in which the Ballets Russes Orientalized the Eastern world (including Russia itself), offering it up as an array of cultural objects to be consumed by Parisian and London audiences, sparked a (re)citation and commodification of the Orient as not only one of beauty, nature, and aestheticism, but as one which was constituted by, and constitutive of, Parisian and London modernity. Yeats's encounters with the *salons* of London socialites (like Lady Cunard), his appreciation for Bakst and the Ballets Russes, his exposure to the *Japonisme* of the late nineteenth century, and his introduction to Fenollosa's papers on the Noh and to Pound's aggressive marketing of the Noh form, were all at the forefront of his mind when he began to make plans for the first production of *At the Hawk's Well*. In Maud Cunard's drawing-room, Yeats could generate an encounter between the audience and action, whereby the archaic was worshiped as a powerful sign of modernity rather than as something relegated to abyss of the anti-modern.

The Celtic world, which the play reproduced with the help of the ‘ornaments’ displayed in Lady Cunard’s drawing room, was materialized not merely as an “‘outside” or alternative to modernity’.³⁶ Nor did the objects of this Celtic world ‘become merely instruments within some independently operating superstructure.’³⁷ *At the Hawk’s Well* became an experiment in ‘Celticizing’ Ireland’s mythic and heroic past in a way which would, like the Orientalism of London in the 1910s, offer a method for staging a drama which might bring that world into the drawing-rooms of the English as objects constituted by and constitutive of modernity itself.

Re-citing Celtic Objects in *At the Hawk’s Well*

When Cuchulain arrives at the ‘desolate’ place where he finds the well of immortality dry and ‘half-choke[d]’ by the ‘withered leaves’ of the three hazel trees, the old ‘dissolute’ man who has wasted his life away waiting to drink from the ever-elusive waters says to Cuchulain,

If I may judge by the gold

On head and feet and glittering in your coat

You are not of those who hate the living world.³⁸

The Old Man is not wrong in his judgement of Cuchulain’s attitude to the material pleasures of life. Immediately, Cuchulain enumerates the ways he is tied to the living world: ‘I am Sualtim’s son’, Cuchulain says, ‘I have an ancient house beyond the sea,’ suggesting a richness of biological, mythical, and material heritage. He also tells the Old Man that ‘a story told over the wine towards dawn’ was what lured him to this place to seek out the well, pointing toward his luxurious mode of living that is uninhibited by quotidian obligations.³⁹

The Old Man likewise points out accurately that Cuchulain is ‘like those / who are crazy for the shedding of men’s blood, / And for the love of women’, but he misunderstands when he assumes that Cuchulain will realize he is wasting his time once he knows ‘there is no house to sack’, no ‘beautiful woman to be carried off.’⁴⁰ Cuchulain has certainly come to the well intending to plunder its riches, but unlike the Old Man, who after fifty years is so driven to possess this desired object of immortality that he has reached the point of self-abasement, Cuchulain has other heroic commitments in mind.

The Old Man’s commitment to the singular object of waiting for the waters has caused him to live, as Cuchulain says, ‘As though you had no part in life’, but the Old Man makes it clear that he was not always like this: as he says to Cuchulain, ‘I came like you / When young in body and in mind’.⁴¹ Yet after fifty years of being beaten down by the wind—a symbol, as Norman Jeffares writes in regard to *The Wind Among the Reeds*, of ‘vague desires and hopes’⁴²—the Old Man has been converted into a tragi-comic and ‘dissolute’ figure. The Old Man hates the living and lives a hateful life, and yet he waits obsessively for his chance at immortality for no reason other than the fact that he has waited this long, in frustration, while the ‘shades’ consistently delude him. Thanks to his fruitless vigil over the well, the Old Man has been turned into a pitiful figure with the ‘pallor of an ivory face’ and a ‘lofty dissolute air’.⁴³ He eats grass, drinks the rain, and sees only ‘broken rocks, / And ragged thorns, and that one stupid face’ belonging to the Guardian of the Well.⁴⁴ And yet, as he says, even after all his disappointment he still clings in greedy desperation to the ‘place’ that ‘belongs to me, that girl, and those others’, or as he says later, ‘to me [...] / To all that’s old and withered’.⁴⁵ Unbeknownst to him, he has also all but become the assistant to the guardian of the well: he speaks to her as if they are companions, and is angered when she does not respond; he burns the leaves which the guardian clears from the well that ‘rustle and diminish’ from her side; and he seems, as Cuchulain says, to have been

‘set down there, / to threaten all who come, and scare them off’.⁴⁶ The Old Man is no longer simply the competition of those who seek the well’s waters. He has, over his years of waiting, become an obstruction that ensures the Guardian’s task of blocking the way to the waters is a success.

This remote and barren place is one which only those who ‘hate the living world’ can inhabit: becoming dogmatically obsessed with the well and with its promise of gaining the ideal object of immortality ultimately leads to the Old Man’s state of barbaric dissolution. As someone who has left the human world and all its material culture behind, the Old Man’s life signifies the danger of living in such a manner that ensures that the ideal, eternal, and spiritual world cannot be made manifest in the immediate present through objects of culture, and particularly not in those that are considered beautiful. In contrast, the statuesque pose held by the Guardian, in a reflection of the exquisite but static objects surrounding her in Lady Cunard’s drawing room, suddenly dissolves into dance. This sudden transition from static object to flowing movement leads to Cuchulain’s trance-like state, reminding the audience of the power that the aesthetic object (which may otherwise *seem* fixed and stable) holds. The Guardian’s transformation from statue to dancer therefore calls the audience’s attention to the ways in which ostensibly stable objects have the power to express a vitality that motivates action. And just as the guardian appears statuesque to Cuchulain and the Old Man, and yet reveals a fluid vitality, the Old Man and Cuchulain (who both wear masks designed by Edmund Dulac) appear to be ‘archaic Greek statue[s]’ that hold ‘the power’ for spectators even ‘when you are quite close.’⁴⁷

This reminder of the re-citability of objects, a re-citability that alerts us to the possibility that the stable and archaic might become the fluid and modern, is reinforced through the actors’ entrances and exits into the performance space of Cunard’s drawing room. The actors’ movements, as they are described in the stage directions in the published text, are

extremely minimal. Once the musicians unfold the cloth, signalling the opening of the play, the Guardian of the well enters in obscurity behind it, and thus appears at the opening to be atemporally fixed in her position next to the square cloth representing the well. This remains the case right up until the moment in which she dances. After the musicians sing the opening song, which establishes that the place of this play is a remote and barren landscape in Ireland, the Old Man enters through the audience and ‘stands for a moment motionless by the side of the stage with bowed head’, before moving forward to the front of the stage to crouch and mime the action of lighting a fire.⁴⁸ After the Old Man’s one-sided conversation with the Guardian, Cuchulain then enters through the audience, as did the Old Man, and as the Guardian rises to begin her dance, Cuchulain moves to her spot at the well while the Old Man sits and sleeps. At the end of the dance, the Guardian leaves and Cuchulain drops his spear and follows her, and the Old Man wakes and ‘creeps up to the well’.⁴⁹ Cuchulain then returns once more, reporting that the Guardian has fled from him, and he picks up his spear and charges out to meet Aoife, stating ‘He comes! Cuchulain, son of Sualtim comes.’⁵⁰ The Old Man, who has been left on stage alone, exits after the musicians have come forward and hidden him behind the cloth. The action of the play, after the unfolding and folding of the cloth, therefore begins with the statuesque Guardian on stage and ends with the Old Man frozen in place. The final line of the play’s action is given to Cuchulain, who says ‘I will face them’, in response to the Old Man’s plea for him to stay because he does ‘not now deceive [Cuchulain].’⁵¹

The drawing room of Lady Cunard’s Cavendish Square Georgian home was located at the top of a staircase, the walls of which were decorated with ‘two large, architectural capricci, attributed [...] to John Devoto, the principal scene painter at the Drury Lane Theatre’ in the 1720s when the house was built (see figure 3).⁵² The drawing room was large and could be partitioned at about a third of the way in, with separate doors leading to each

smaller space (see figure 4). While there are no accounts of the specific partitioning of the room for this performance, it was likely that the smaller part of the room served as the playing space and the door to this section at the top of the stairs served the entrance of the Guardian at the beginning of the play and the exit of the Old Man at the end. The second door at the front of the larger section of the room likely served the entrances and exits of the audience and of the characters through the audience.

Given this architectural lay-out, the Guardian would have entered, unseen, through one door which had *not* been used by the audience, and then would have exited out of the second door which *had* provided the entry to the room for the audience. The opposite movement would have been true for the Old Man's entry and exit—he would have entered after the audience through their own door and exited through the 'stage door' that they had not used. This would have created an effect wherein the audience begins the play feeling alienated from the Guardian and aligned with the Old Man. By the end of the play this alienation and alignment would have been reversed: after witnessing Cuchulain's intrusion upon the Guardian and the Old Man, the audience come to be aligned with the Guardian as she leaves, through their door, and with Cuchulain as he re-enters, in energetic determination after losing track of the Guardian, again through their own door. At the end of the play, the audience finds themselves definitively aligned with Cuchulain, who rushes out to the battle through them after hearing the war cries of Aoife and the 'fierce women of the hills'.⁵³ The audience is, in this way, introduced to a world that is static and fixed, but then morphs into one of action, and they follow Cuchulain out of this remote and archaic world as they physically exit Lady Cunard's townhouse, moving down the stairs after him and out into streets of London. By aligning the audience with Cuchulain and having them follow him heroically out into the street, Yeats ensures that his spectators leave his production with a sense of elated heroism. As is the case with the guardian of the well, who is woken to dance

by the feeling of Fand's 'horrible deathless body / Sliding through the veins of a sudden', Cuchulain and his heroic attitude pumps through the audience's veins in this closing action as they are led out into the modern world of London after him.⁵⁴

Unlike Yeats's earlier plays wherein he presents a mythic or supernatural solution to a material problem within a realist theatre space, thus requiring audience members to willingly elide the reality of objects for the sake of mimetic 'truth', *At the Hawk's Well* presents a mythic-heroic solution to an equally mythic problem in a space designed to call attention to real material things and thus to the way in which material objects, when collected, cited, and turned into signs, come to seem a definitional part of one's own modernity. Drawing attention to the material objects in space also makes audiences hyper-aware of the artistically constructed object that is the play itself. The play, in other words, is no more or less an object than are the square of blue cloth representing the well, Lady Cunard's Louis XV table, French novels, or Han dynasty incense burner. And in the same way in which the archaic décor of the room has become a constitutive part of this audience's sense of their own modernity, Yeats's 'experiment' in the drawing room is an attempt at making the Celtic heroic past another one of those constituting objects of modernity. As a model for making the nation-state, presenting this mythic world unequivocally *as* something so distinctly remote and archaic within the material present is what allows its archaic and otherwise remote values to be incorporated as a constitutive part of contemporary Irish modernity.

Yeats uses the material riches of the social and artistic elite in conjunction with the conflict of values represented by Cuchulain and the Old Man in order to make two points: first, that the materialist desire for comfort is a choice which fails to interrogate the complications and contradictions of a nation under the thumb of English materialism; and second, that the anti-materialist Revivalist desire for an impossible ideal that can never be materialized is a form of lofty, dissolute stasis which ultimately compromises the ability of

future generations to attempt heroic action. Depicted in the play as the Old Man's choice between the 'pleasant life' of comfort at the expense of wisdom, and the endless wait for waters that will not come, it becomes evident that, for Yeats, both are ineffectual methods for making the Irish nation-state. What *would* be efficacious, the play proposes, is the attempt to make one's own fate by refusing to keep steadfastly in the mind one fixed material or ideal object, and to embrace instead the multiple potentialities for materializing the modern state through the incorporation of Cuchulain's repeatedly passionate and heroic actions and Fand's sense of herself, described in the musicians' final song, as 'being but a mouthful of sweet air', liable and content to perish at any given moment.⁵⁵

As the final lines of the musicians' song ask, 'Who but an idiot would praise / A withered tree?'⁵⁶ The kind of sacrifice that the Old Man makes which leaves him stranded in this barren and desolate world, so far away from the exquisite material culture that adorns Cuchulain upon his arrival, is of course a sacrifice which could 'make a stone of the heart', as Yeats would write in the aftermath of the Rising that occurred less than three weeks later.⁵⁷ And this is something that the Old Man in fact seems to want to protect Cuchulain from. It is true that at the Old Man wants to be rid of Cuchulain out of a desire to protect his own chances at drinking from the well, but it is also the case that he seems to want to save Cuchulain from the fate of withering away in this remote place until he becomes as statuesque as the Old Man and the guardian herself. But the Old Man wrongly assumes that Cuchulain is fated to only one of two possible paths: either to stay and wait, sacrificing the comforts of life for a heroic ideal, but becoming choked up and turned to stone as he praises a 'withered tree', or to leave this 'withered tree' behind and live a worldly life of pleasure in his 'ancient house beyond the sea'.⁵⁸ By the end of the play, Cuchulain has shown the old man that he can make his own fate, a third option, by choosing to go out and fight Aoife, using the spear designed by Dulac (see figure 5) which was likely ornately made out of wood,

as was the mask worn by Cuchulain (see figure 6). This failure to realize a third fate, on the part of the Old Man, leaves him in such a state of desolation that he suddenly changes his mind and pleads for Cuchulain to stay.

And the musicians make this same mistake in their song of ‘disturbing ambivalence’, as Richard Allen Cave has described it. As Cave writes, the song suggests that there is always only a futile choice to be made, ‘between the sensuous attractions of indolence and the bitter life that accompanies the pursuit of wisdom’.⁵⁹ But this production in Lady Cunard’s drawing room sought to remind audiences that there might be an alternative for the course of Irish modernity. The static can become fluid and filled with life and vitality, the archaic can become modern, and the withered tree can come to life again through the politicized aesthetics of a re-citable Celticism grounded not in an atemporal world of pre-contact *jouissance qua* fullness, but in the immediate present.⁶⁰ But Easter 1916 changed the course of Irish modernity, leaving revolutionary nationalists looking back to the withered tree of the pre-contact past for a fantasy site of *jouissance qua* fullness that would, like the well’s waters, never be acquired. The archaic, remote, and timeless Celtic heroic past which Yeats hope to materialize as an immediately present cultural object of radical Irish modernity thereafter became, as the Old Man of the *Death of Cuchulain* states bitterly, merely ‘antiquated romantic stuff’.⁶¹

Conclusion: Irish Nationalism and Modernity

In ‘From Empire to Europe: the Irish State 1922-73’ J.J. Lee writes of Irish political modernity that the ‘idea of “nation” was more central to Irish political thinking than that of “state”—the state was simply regarded as the material expression of the spiritual idea, the nation’.⁶² Or as Linda King and Elain Sisson write in ‘Materiality, Modernity and the Shaping of Identity: An Overview’, the “nation” in nationalist discourse was consistently

presented as a spiritual entity, while the political reality of a “state” was a material afterthought’.⁶³ In both essays, the modern nation is conceived in terms of the spiritual, the abstract, and the ideal, while the state is thought of as the materialization, successful or not, of that imagined, fantasized, and constructed ideal. Yet as an entry in his 1909 diary reveals, Yeats conceived of the relationship between modernity, the nation, and its materialization differently: ‘You cannot keep the *idea* of a nation alive’, he writes, ‘without a model of it in the mind of the people. You can call it “Cathleen ni Houlihan” or the “Shan van Voght” in a mood of simple feeling, and love that image, but for general purposes of life you must have a complex mass of images, something like an architect’s model’.⁶⁴ And it is in the work of the literary revivalists, he claims, that even a ‘school of journalists with simple moral ideas’ might ‘find right building material to create a historical and literary nationalism as powerful as the old and nobler’.⁶⁵ Schooled in the paradoxical tenets of symbolist theatre—which aimed to undermine ‘the whole edifice of a logical, explicable world of matter’ in reach of a reality that lay ‘beyond and below’ but which needed that very material surface of the ‘here and now’ in order to seek ‘reconnections with “lost” pasts rich in associations, analogies, and resonances’—Yeats was hyper-conscious of the need to first materially construct a model of the nation, through images, in order to then build that nation at the supra-material level.⁶⁶

Influenced by the French symbolist hostility to the ‘smug materialistic world, celebrated as *la belle époque*, which was obsessed by modernity and progress and prided itself on being technologically advanced’⁶⁷, Yeats did indeed cultivate for himself the reputation of belonging to a class of Anglo-Irish elite who despised the materialism of the middle classes; yet it does not follow that as a playwright, poet, and self-styled man of culture, he despised the material world. While we may, as Paige Reynolds has acknowledged, be invited ‘to confuse his antipathy for materialism with a wide ranging disdain for the material world,’ and for modernity, the fact is that his ‘abiding passion for the arts, and in

particular the decorative arts, confirms that Yeats valued certain beautiful, hand-crafted objects populating the “mere world of things”.⁶⁸ By tracing the use of the severed head from Yeats’s early to late drama, Reynolds argues that Yeats’s attitudes toward the material world of things and the function of the material object in theatre evolves so that in the later plays, Yeats ‘explore[s] the power of material culture that he aggressively refused in his early work’.⁶⁹ As she points out, the anti-materialism of the Revival led Yeats to ‘muddle the material and materialism’ in early plays such as *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and *Countess Cathleen*. In these plays, an embrace of the ‘remote, spiritual, and ideal’ is synonymous with a rejection of wealth, material comfort, and the world of things. Translated into dramatic form, this rejection leads Yeats to presume that if he could ‘jettison the material object’ he could ‘make its complications evaporate’.⁷⁰

But as Yeats found out through his audiences’ reactions to his dramatic experiments with immaterial worlds, jettisoning and evaporating the complications of the material world in the theatre was virtually impossible. As Reynolds writes, Yeats found that,

If poetry, thanks to the power of metaphor, can de-materialize the world, drama is more resistant to this strategy. The sparse and uncomplicated props, scenery, and costumes of Yeats’s drama attempt to release the audience from the distraction of things. At the same time, theatre and its objects rivet our attention on things, keeping the audience rooted in the material world, much to Yeats’s consternation.⁷¹ (Reynolds 448)

And the same could be said for the cultural nationalist political leadership on the threshold of establishing an Irish state. As Michael Mays has argued, early ‘cultural nationalists had embarked upon an important new beginning, the imagination of a national identity upon

which a postcolonial Irish state could be founded’, yet ‘such a project turned inexorably toward acts of archaeology and divination, to a search for beginnings or origins’.⁷²

These kinds of nationalist projects, like that which we find in Yeats’s early drama, worked by superimposing spiritual and archaic ideals upon ‘conditions which were complex and inherently unstable’ and this led to ‘the actual and bitter contradictions of the time’ being ‘effectively elided’.⁷³ The problem, as Mays states, is that this kind of utopic ‘revolutionary nationalism makes for a lousy state’.⁷⁴ After the Rising, solidifying Sinn Fein’s political base meant acknowledging the material conditions of Ireland, and as J.J. Lee writes, this meant the ‘endorsement of the social and economic status quo’:

That made political sense. The Proclamation of the Republic, in which Pearse and Connelly appeared, however vaguely, to commit the rebels to building a new society, promising equality of social and economic opportunity, would make little appeal to the established interests now shifting to the new Sinn Fein as the best guarantor of their inherited status.⁷⁵

The dilemma of bitter and complicated material conditions therefore confronted the architects of the new state’.⁷⁶ The issue of figuring out ‘how best to reconcile the bourgeois interests of that new leadership class with the conflicting claims of a revolutionary nationalism grounded in a Manichean opposition to Englishness defined as modern, pragmatic, utilitarian, and explicitly or implicitly middle-class’ thereby became the primary objective.⁷⁷ In effect, the material conditions of the modern Irish State began to determine the ‘mass of images’ meant to sustain an ‘ethos capable of consolidating national unity by integrating class (and other) differences in the name of the nation’. This led, for the most part, to a ‘set of back-ward looking ideal images through which [the state] could “produce” the people’.⁷⁸ As a result,

‘revolutionary nationalism came to be supplanted in the first decades of Irish independence by a middle-class nationalism noted almost exclusively for its provinciality, its insularity, and its rigid devotion to a narrowly defined republicanism’.⁷⁹

Yeats was indeed, as Mays writes, ‘instrumental in shaping an Irish nationalist antipathy towards what he called English “materialism,” that amalgamation of industrialism and utilitarianism against which he situated an essential Irish “idealism”’.⁸⁰ This antipathy toward materialism certainly did, to his bitter disappointment, lead to ‘the triumphant ascendance of bourgeois nationalism rooted in [...] simplistic images’ within the Free State.⁸¹ It might also seem to suggest that Yeats sought to keep the Celtic past free from the corruption of modernity. The irony however, as this article has shown, is that while Yeats was vocally condemning the materialism of middle-class Ireland in the 1910s, he was simultaneously enjoying an upper-class form of materialism and hypermodernity in the studios and luxurious drawing-rooms of London’s social and artistic elite. It is this encounter with the material culture of artists and socialites in London—a culture influenced by the specifically Russian Orientalism of the Ballets Russes—that helped Yeats to ‘unmuddle’ materialism and the material, and the role of the archaic in the modern, and to acknowledge that if the material object could not be jettisoned in the theatre, then at the very least its complications could be used to his advantage. This encounter offered Yeats an alternative model for the construction of both the nation and the mutually constitutive relationship between Irish modernism and modernity. The experiment that resulted from this encounter, Yeats’s production of *At the Hawk’s Well* in Lady Maud ‘Emerald’ Cunard’s drawing room at 20 Cavendish Square on April 2 1916 seemed, for a brief moment before the events of Easter 1916, to suggest that rather than constructing a postcolonial Irish modernity out of the socio-political or cultural hegemonies of the nascent nation-state, it might be possible for a utopic and modern Irish Free State to be constructed out of the exquisite objects of an Irish

material culture that was valued by a heterogenous mass of individuals. In the end, it was the Irish revolutionaries and politicians who, for better or worse and in the words of Yeats's final ballad singer in *The Death of Cuchulain*, succeeded in materializing the past as they 'thought Cuchulain till it seemed / He stood where they had stood'.⁸²

¹ Peter Wollen, *Raiding the Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth Century Culture* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), 1-34 (p. 3).

² Bridget Elliott and Anthony Purdy, '(Re)Dressing French Modernism: Decor, Costume, and the Decorative in an Interarts Perspective', in *Modernism*, ed. by Astradur Eysteinnsson and Vivian Liska, *Comparative History of Literatures*, XXI, 2 vols (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2007), I (2007) pp. 501-512 (p. 501).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Urmila Seshagiri, 'Racial Politics, Modernist Poetics', in *Modernism*, ed. by Astradur Eysteinnsson and Vivian Liska, *Comparative History of Literatures*, XXI, 2 vols (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2007), II (2007) pp. 573-590 (p.573).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Paul Morand, *Venices*, trans. by Euan Cameron (London: Pushkin Press, 2012), p.xx.

⁷ Daphne Fielding, *Those Remarkable Cunards: Emerald and Nancy* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), p.43. This 'Chinese incense-burner' was in fact a Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD) earthenware stove which Cunard donated to the British Museum in 1920.

⁸ Seshagiri, p. 573.

⁹ For an account of Yeats's refusal of publicity, see James Longenbach. *Stone Cottage Pound, Yeats, and Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). For examples of critical appraisals of the elitism of the project see R. F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), II: The Arch

Poet; Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004); and Wit Piętrzak, *The Critical Thought of W.B. Yeats* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

¹⁰ William Butler Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well* in *The Plays* ed. by David R. Clark and Rosalind E. Clark, *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats*, 14 vols (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1961-), II: *The Plays* (2001), pp. 297-306 (p.297).

¹¹ James Longenbach, 'The Longest Poem in the English Language', *The Yale Review*, 104 (2016), 37–60 (p. 37).

¹² Quoted in Christopher Hassall, *A Biography of Edward Marsh* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1959), pp. 383-84.

¹³ Longenbach, p. 38.

¹⁴ See Helen Caldwell, *Michio Ito: The Dancer and His Dances* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Okifumi Komesu, *The Double Perspective of Yeats's Aesthetic*, *Irish Literary Studies*, 20 (Gerrards Cross: C. Smythe, 1984); Masaru Sekine and Christopher Murray, *Yeats and the Noh: A Comparative Study* (Savage, Md.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1990); Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004); and S. Ellis, *The Plays of W. B. Yeats: Yeats and the Dancer* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2016).

¹⁵ W.B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions* (London: Macmillan, 1961), p. 155.

¹⁶ Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp. 281-82.

¹⁷ Lennon, p. 282.

¹⁸ Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p. 156.

¹⁹ Lennon p. 282.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ As Roy Foster writes, ‘WBY’s friends Charles Ricketts and Max Beerbohm admired the Kabuki theatrical effects brought by the Imperial Court Company to London at the turn of the century; Symons, always attuned to the current vogue, had some time ago led him to the Japanese prints in the British museum [...]. He knew Binyon’s commentaries on Japanese art by 1909, and long before, in his *Savoy* days, had met Osman Edwards who published on Noh drama in 1901. In the spring of 1914 Yone Noguchi had lectured on Noh theatre in London; four years before, Noh dancing had been featured in a Japanese-British exhibition at Shepherd’s Bush, further popularizing images familiar since *The Mikado*, and a *Times* special supplement carried an article about the revival of what it called the “lyrical drama” of the Noh.’ See R. F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 34-35.

²² Anne Anlin Cheng, ‘The Wayward Life of Objects’, *Novel*, 45 (2012), 3–5 (p. 4).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Thomas W. Kim, ‘Being Modern: The Circulation of Oriental Objects’, *American Quarterly*, 58 (2006), 379–406.

²⁵ Foster, p. 38.

²⁶ Yeats to Lady Gregory, 8 March 1913, quoted in *The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats*, ed. by John Kelly, Electronic Edition, 4 vols, (Charlottesville: InteLex Corp., 2002), IV: Unpublished Letters.

²⁷ Yeats to Susan Mary (Lilly) Yeats, 10 December 1915, quoted in *The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats*, IV.

²⁸ Yeats to Lady Gregory, 7 January 1916, quoted in *Collected Letters*, IV.

²⁹ Kim, p. 383.

³⁰ Kim, p. 384.

³¹ Kim, pp. 387-87.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kim, p. 384.

³⁴ Barbara Ann Suess, *Progress and Identity in the Plays of W.B. Yeats, 1892-1907* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 68-76.

³⁵ Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p. 236.

³⁶ Kim, p. 386.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well*, pp. 297-99, 300.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 301.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 300-301.

⁴¹ Ibid. pp. 303, 302.

⁴² Quoted in W.B. Yeats, *Yeats's Poems*, ed. by A. Norman Jeffares (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989) p. 514.

⁴³ Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well*, p. 298.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 302.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 302.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 303.

⁴⁷ Yeats to Lady Gregory, 28 March 1916, *Collected Letters*, IV.

⁴⁸ Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well*, p. 299.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 305.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 306.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 305.

⁵² Peter Guillery, 'Cavendish Square 4: No. 20 (the Royal College of Nursing)', *The Survey of London*, 2016 <<http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/survey-of-london/2016/04/29/cavendish-square-4-no-20-the-royal-college-of-nursing/>> [accessed 26 March 2019].

⁵³ Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well*, p. 305.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Yeats, *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, ed. by Richard J. Finneran, Rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Scribner, 1996) p. 181.

⁵⁸ Yeats, *At the Hawk's Well*, p. 300.

⁵⁹ Richard Allen Cave in W.B. Yeats, *Selected Plays*, ed. by Richard Allen Cave, Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics (London: Penguin Books, 1997) pp. 321-22.

⁶⁰ In *The Lacanian Left* Yannis Stavrakakis utilizes the concept of *jouissance* to explore the reasons why nationalism 'has benefited enormously from a focus on the affective dimension of identity formation: on *jouissance* in its most obscene forms'. The sacrifice of a Lacanian 'presymbolic *jouissance qua* fullness' is the prerequisite for any development of desire on the part of the social subject including 'the desire to identify with particular political projects, ideologies, and discourses'. It is therefore 'the imaginary promise of recapturing our lost/impossible enjoyment that provides, above all, the fantasy support for many of our political projects and choices', including that of nationalism. Yannis Stavrakakis, *The Lacanian Left: Psychoanalysis, Theory, Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007) pp. 21, 196.

⁶¹ Yeats, *The Death of Cuchulain* in *The Plays* ed. by David R. Clark and Rosalind E. Clark, *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats*, 14 vols (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1961-), II: *The Plays* (2001), pp. 545-554 (p.545).

⁶² J.J. Lee, 'From Empire to Europe: The Irish State 1922-73', in *Contesting the State: Lessons from the Irish Case*, ed. by Maura Adshead, Peadar Kirby, and Michelle Millar (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 25-49 (p. 27).

⁶³ Linda King and Elaine Sisson, ‘Materiality, Modernity and the Shaping of Identity: An Overview’, in *Ireland, Design and Visual Culture: Negotiating Modernity, 1922-1992*, ed. by Linda King and Elaine Sisson (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2011) p.30.

⁶⁴ W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan Press, 1991) p. 493.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

⁶⁶ Daniel Gerould, ‘The Symbolist Legacy’, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 31 (2009), 80–90 (pp. 80-1).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁸ Paige Reynolds, “‘A Theatre of the Head’”: Material Culture, Severed Heads, and the Late Drama of W.B. Yeats’, *Modern Drama*, 58 (2015), 437–60. (pp. 439, 437).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 455.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 440, 446.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 448.

⁷² Michael Mays, *Nation States: The Cultures of Irish Nationalism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007) p. 66.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁷⁵ J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) p. 38.

⁷⁶ Mays, p, 87.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 96

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁸² Yeats, *The Death of Cuchulain*, p. 554.