

«Rewording in melodious guile»
W.B. Yeats's *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* and its
Evolution Towards a Musico-Literary Manifesto

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Abstract

This essay intends to explore how *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* elaborates on the notion of poetry as song, to contextualize it against the background of its (para)textual history and evolution, and emphasize its role as a musico-literary manifesto. Yeats's *Song* is able to perform its variations on «the supreme theme of Art and Song» because its atavistically unifying 'sooth' is inborn to the very substance and features of its tropical mediation between poetry and song, thus making it neither classically «cracked» (l. 9) – i.e. burst asunder, fractured – like the merely «musical tune that Chronos sings» (l. 9), nor romantically 'primeval and wild' like *The Song of the Shepherd* in Thomas Moore's *To Joseph Atkinson, Esq. From Bermuda*.

Keywords: W.B. Yeats, *The Song of the Happy Shepherd*, Irish literature and music, conception of poetry as song, musico-literary criticism

1. *W.B. Yeats and the tradition of poetry as song: some preliminary remarks*

The intertwined tropes of the poet as singer, of the poetic text as song and of poetic writing as singing were strategic for William B. Yeats: song was «the word that William Butler Yeats consistently used to describe his own poetry»¹ and «in most of his [Yeats'] literary essays emphasis crops up on the attribute of poetry as song»². Such musico-literary tradition helped him define his conception of himself as a poet³, even when his personal variations on «the supreme theme of Art and Song» (*Words for Music Perhaps: XVII. After Long Silence*, l. 6; Yeats 1997, p. 270) seemed to avert him from its traditional sources, as happened for instance when he elaborated on the centuries-long symbolic framework of Ireland as the Land of Song and on the textual portrayal

of the poet as «a singer born»⁴ (*Vacillation. VII*, l. 2; Yeats 1997, p. 256). The contribution of the notion of poetry as song to his «literary philosophy»⁵ and textual practice was so foundational and long-sighted as to support and frame the whole developmental arc of his poetry in its different editorial versions. This essay intends to explore how *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* elaborates on such a notion, both to contextualize it against the background of its (para-)textual history and evolution, and to emphasize its role as a musico-literary manifesto for the so-called «Victorian Yeats».

To Ireland in the Coming Times (Yeats 1997, pp. 46-47) is a useful term of comparison in this respect. In this so-called 'early Yeatsian' poem (1892), the Poetic I considers himself a «true brother» (v. 2) of a «company» (l. 2) whose members (cf. «Davis, Mangan, Ferguson», l. 18) were also illustrious protagonists of Irish musico-literary culture and whose communitarian experience was identified by the action of «singing» (l. 3). In the very first lines of the poem, the Poetic I also epitomizes what they «sang» (l. 3) by mentioning four different musico-literary genres: «ballad and story, rann and song»⁶ (l. 4). The textual organization of this line has never been adequately examined, in terms of both the choices of the components of these two doublets and the relationships between them in the context of a metrical background of three sixteen-line stanzas of tetrameter couplets – themselves perhaps interpretable (by applying the hermeneutical resources of textual politics)⁷ as three expansions (i.e. quadruplications!) of an original musico-literary (aabb) rann⁸ on the part of an *Anglo-Irish* poet.

Both those choices and those relationships, in fact, could be seen as textualizing a comprehensively national singing-strategy – adopted by the singing «company» above in order «to sweeten Ireland's wrong» (l. 3) – that can be only briefly sketched here without going into full detail for brevity's sake. In Yeats' retrospective reading of such a strategy, its fundamental component seems to be the double complementarity that manifests itself both within each of the two doublets and between them thanks to the intergeneric⁹ narrative resources of the first doublet («ballad and story») and the interlingual lyrical potentialities of the second one («rann and song»). This could also imply that, for Yeats, what that «company» sang «to sweeten Ireland's wrong» was also tinged with potentially interethnic, intercultural, maybe even interdenominational, etc. connotations.

Moreover, it could also be remarked that, in Yeats' poem, such double complementarity also counterpoints against other two second-level relational dynamics between the four elements of the two doublets. One could even speculate that, if the singing «company» had managed to experience and metabolize them, its cultural premises and artistic results might have been radically different. They are, on the one hand, the double parallelism between the two highly-codified poetic references «ballad» and «rann» and the two generically literary ones «story» and «song» that might have oriented them according to

socio-cultural polarities like 'professional vs popular'. On the other hand, the chiasmatic opposition between the extremes «ballad» and «song» and between the means «story» and «rann», instead, might have shattered them along the fault lines of the usually irreconcilable conflict 'universal vs particular'.

These sketchy remarks on the fourth line of *To Ireland in the Coming Times* could outline a kind of intriguing latent polyphony that seems to be deeply influential and clearly resounding from both a textual and a cultural point of view and that is confirmed by the Yeatsian stroke of genius of the rhyme between «wrong» (l. 2) and «song» (l. 3). This sheer shade of ambiguity lies heavy on the «singing» of the «company», as if its «song» were inevitably and inescapably blotted because the members of the «company» had opted not for the typically Yeatsian mediation between tradition and modernity, but for a version of the poetry-as-song trope that was ready-made, impersonal, generic, conventional and sneakily soaked with the oppressor's culture.

2. *Yeats' textualization of poetry as song in «The Dublin University Review», April-September 1885*

Traces of the representation of poetry as song, at least comparable to those just documented in *To Ireland in the Coming Times*, characterize Yeats' poetic writing since *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* (one of his earliest poems which is capable – as few others are – of articulating its author's cultural and literary experience in musico-literary terms). Unfortunately, these traces have been altogether neglected even by those few scholars who have opted for this specific hermeneutical perspective. The paratextual and editorial history of *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* can be summarized as a decade-long transition in three stages:

- 1) from the first version published in 1885 and entitled *An Epilogue / To 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker' / Spoken by a Satyr, carrying a sea-shell*,
- 2) through the second one that came out in 1889 with the title *The Song of the Last Arcadian. (He carries a sea-shell)*,
- 3) to the third and final *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* that appeared in 1895.

Such «evolution [...] from worksheet to finished poem» is in itself «a small, youthful example of what was to be the poetic method of a lifetime»¹⁰. In fact, its «circuitous route towards its eventual placement» shows that «Yeats' poetic sense never left him as editor, just as his editorial sense sometimes invaded his phrasing and continually attended his poetic activity from initial revision through final publication. Yet the paradoxical result was not fixity but fluidity in the state of his own texts»¹¹.

What was to become *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* was, in fact, first published as *An Epilogue / To 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker' / Spoken by a Satyr, carrying a sea-shell* in 1885 in the October issue of «The Dublin

University Review»¹², a Dublin-based magazine that has been defined as «an expression of national pride and Anglo-Irish identity»¹³ and that, in those years, was edited by the Irish writer Thomas William Hazen Rolleston (1857–1920), not only «a born organizer and one of the pivots of the Irish literary revival»¹⁴, but also one Irish intellectual with whom Yeats would quarrel over the New Irish Library in 1892, suffering «a defeat from which he learned lessons that he was never to forget»¹⁵. As far as the tropical relationships between poetry and song in the context of Irish musico-literary culture are concerned, Rolleston seems to have always adhered to the Irish traditional view of the identification of the first with the second and to the habitual romantic-oriented imbalance in favour of the musical component of those relationships. Rolleston's view was further strengthened by his strong predilection for Walt Whitman (who conceived of poetry as song)¹⁶, due to his profound knowledge of Thomas Davis's musico-literary nationalism¹⁷ and by his interest in Richard Wagner's compositional thought and work¹⁸. This interpretation is also confirmed by at least two important excerpts from Rolleston's work: firstly, a passage from the final Chorus of his *Deirdre* (1897), where «many a golden deed» of «the story of the island Gael» are expressed by the «deathless flower of song and tale»¹⁹; secondly, another passage from his *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race* (1911), where he mentions a turning point in Samuel Ferguson's verse narration of Murgan's vicissitudes that is particularly relevant to the tropical relationships between poetry and song – i.e., when the young son of the «chief bard of Ireland»²⁰ Sanchan Torpest, sent by his father to Italy in search of Fergus Mac-Roy's tomb, «at last [...] conjures him by the sacred name of Song»²¹:

Since for Love thou wak'st not, [Fergus], *yet awake for the sake of Song*.
 Thou, the first in rhythmic cadence dressing life's discordant tale,
 Wars of chiefs and loves of maidens, gavest the Poem to the Gael;
 Now they've lost their noblest measure, and in dark days hard at hand,
*Song shall be the only treasure left them in their native land.*²²

These are just some of the elements of the editorial context, the politico-cultural horizon and the musico-literary culture that, in 1885, hosted Yeats' *An Epilogue / To 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker' / Spoken by a Satyr, carrying a sea-shell*. Honouring its macrotextual function, Yeats' *Epilogue* completed a composite macrotext that included the two poems mentioned in its interminable title and published in «The Dublin University Review» (abbr. DUR) before it. *The Island of Statues* came out between April and July 1885²³ and, according to Yeats himself, was «an Arcadian play in imitation of Edmund Spenser»²⁴, «good of its kind» and written when «I was [...] living a quite harmonious poetic life. Never thinking out of my depth. Always harmonious narrow, calm»²⁵; it was also described by the «music mad»²⁶ John Todhunter

(1839-1916) as «a dramatic pastoral chiefly in rhymed verse» where «Naschina, an Arcadian maiden, rescues her lover and many other youths who had been transformed into statues by an enchantress»²⁷.

In September 1885, «The Dublin University Review» also published Yeats' *The Seeker*²⁸, a *Dramatic Poem – in Two Scenes* on (again in John Todhunter's synopsis) «an aged knight [who] comes at last into the presence of a phantom he has been all his life pursuing, and finds a bearded witch whose name is Infamy»²⁹. Three years later, Yeats made the gap between these two poems explicit when he confessed, in the same letter to Katherine Tynan mentioned above, that «since I have left the 'Island' I have been going about on shoreless seas. Nothing anywhere has clear outline. Everywhere is cloud and foam. Oisín and the Seaker [sic] are the only <coherent><intelligible> readable result» (Yeats 1986, p. 98).

Such a gap between the two poems, which seem homogeneous³⁰ and linked with no break in continuity when only superficially considered, is also evident in their poetically strategic exploitation of the tropical interweaving of poetry and song. In *The Island of Statues*, such exploitation is perfectly coherent with its subtitle *An Arcadian Faery Tale*, which integrates the two world-models of Arcadia and Faery Land and goes beyond their potentially sterile dialectics by proposing their complementary combination to the readers of «The Dublin University Review» and by showing, at the same time, both the ridiculously antiquated though well-ordered limits of Arcadia, and the inescapably lethal though alluring dangers of Faery Land.

Colin and Thernot³¹ embody the Arcadian version of the poetry-as-song trope in the Arcadianworld-model of *The Island of Statues*. Their Spenserian roots go back to the institutional and programmatic strains of the *November*³² eclogue from *The Shepherdes Calender*. However, in Yeats' *Arcadian Faery Tale*, their song, accompanied on the lute, should not be interpreted as an imitation of Spenser, i.e. as the musico-literary expression of the «venerable shepherd» Thenot's «reverend age» and of Colin's «disciplined talent»³³. On the contrary, their song is semantically inane³⁴, culturally inconsistent³⁵ as well as socially and institutionally disruptive because it begets conflict, thus undermining their mutual belonging to the Arcadian community. They both try and succeed in conquering the Arcadian shepherdess Naschina, who, on her part, is «weary of [their] songs and hunter's toys» (DUR, April, 58), i.e. of her traditional Arcadian interlocutors in general, of their expressive means and of their communitarian belonging as a whole.

The hunter Almintor, instead, is the main addressee of the Faery Land version of the tropical interweaving of poetry and song in *The Island of Statues*, the paradoxical and syncretistic characteristics of which are entirely different from those of its Arcadian counterpart above. In fact, even though it is «a song of songless days» (DUR, July, 186), its invisible and primeval addresser both «sang round the tree / as I sing now to thee» «o'er the green

Eden-sod» and sang it to Almitor³⁶ «as some dead maiden's singing in a dream» (DUR, May, 82). Moreover, it is a «song that [verbally] calls» but whose «sad faery [musical] tones» are more eloquent and compelling than words (DUR, May, 82), and finally, it is a song with which puzzled listeners are led «where *harmonic* woods / nourish the panthers in dim solitudes» (DUR, May 83; italics mine). These paradoxical features clearly indicate that such a song has the universal and everlasting power of representing all time and space simultaneously in a single instant, of speaking all human languages (be they verbal or not), of conveying all the meanings possible in all languages, of articulating and interweaving all cultures at a time, of superimposing all kinds of different communities (be they human or not) without engendering conflict and contradiction.

In *The Island of Statues*, neither of the two versions of the tropical interweaving of poetry and song just mentioned manages definitely and unshakably to impose its own norms and sanctions on the composite landscape of this *Arcadian Faery Tale* and on the whole composite set of its characters and actants (be they from Arcady or from Faery Land). Naschina herself, adored by both the two shepherds Colin and Thernot and by the hunter Almitor (whose love she returns), is the real centre of *The Island of Statues* and the pivot on which that tropical interweaving of poetry and song turns. She could be seen as hovering between the monotropical song from Arcady she rejects and the polytropical one from Faery Land she longs to exorcise in order to release her lover Almitor. Perhaps herself a poet-shepherdess of non-Arcadian extraction³⁷, because of her ambiguous textual representation, Naschina will end up both self-marginalized from the Arcadian community to which she does not completely belong and ominously «shadowless» (i.e. fairy-like) though «close by [her beloved] Almitor's side» (DUR, July, 139).

Unlike *The Island of Statues*, *The Seeker*, which was published immediately after it in the September issue of «The Dublin University Review», does not mention the intertwined tropes between poetry and song *in praesentia*, but counterpoints with them *in absentia*. In fact, when the Old Knight – whose spirit is searching for the source of the voice that has been calling him during «threescore years of dream-led wandering» (DUR, September, 120) – meets the Three Shepherds, their encounter with him overturns their musico-literary experience and culture by emblematically evoking two musico-literary elements that are radically alternative to those tropes: firstly, the instrumental and «possessed» (i.e. etymologically inanimate and animate at the same time) symbol of a paradoxical Arcadian «flute»³⁸ that emits firstly «a piercing cry» and, secondly, «a voice [...] still more mournful» (DUR, September, 120-121) when played by two of the three Shepherds; secondly, the inhuman «songs of fearful things» sung by the «goblin snakes» (DUR, September, 121), creeping out of the traditionally Irish «goblin kingdom»³⁹ to bring death to an otherwise apparently 'harmonious' Arcadian landscape.

3. Yeats' conception of poetry as song in the three 'versions' of The Song of the Happy Shepherd (1885, 1889, 1895)

In its second section, this essay attempted to show how Yeats elaborated songs as a trope for poetry in *The Island of Statues* and *The Seeker* and how such compositional strategy was fundamental for both poems. Immediately after these poems, in its issue of October 1885, «The Dublin University Review» also published Yeats' *An Epilogue / To 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker' / Spoken by a Satyr, carrying a sea-shell* – which can be read as a commentary on both and as their conclusion, and which was to become first *The Song of the Last Arcadian* (1889) and, finally, *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* (1895) in the years ahead. Yeatsian scholars, who have made only very scant comments on *The Song of the Last Arcadian* and, with very few exceptions, only very general ones on *The Song of the Happy Shepherd*, have thoroughly neglected *An Epilogue* and its representation of poetry as song, even though it is the actual textual matrix of the whole macrotextual sequence examined in this essay. My contention here, instead, is that its tropical treatment of poetry as song is the key to effectively interpreting it and can be considered a solution to the way in which the preceding poems dealt with it. Once again, this approach shows that the notion of poetry as song is at the deepest core of Yeats' poetic experience and work from its very beginning and that he began very early in his poetic career to textualize it according to a perspective that was not only personal, but also evidently dialogical, especially with respect to what has been defined as both (somewhat hastily) «the bardic tradition of poetry as song»⁴⁰ and (more accurately) «the synthesis of Gaelic convention (poetry as song)»⁴¹. From this point of view, in fact, it must be no accident that the sections that vary on the theme of poetry as song in *An Epilogue* and in the cognate poems are the least subject to changes in their texts.

Before examining these sections of *An Epilogue*, there are three other paratextual components of the subheading of its full title that Yeatsian scholars should have taken into more serious consideration. Firstly, the Arcadian Poetic I of the poem is a Satyr⁴² (a Faun⁴³ in the stage-direction of the manuscript), not a shepherd or a hunter like those that people in *The Island of Statues* or *The Seeker*. This is no little difference in the symbolic dynamics (e.g. satyr-shepherd) of pastoral drama, since – as, Friedrich Nietzsche wrote around those same years in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872; English translation, 1909):

[...] *the satyr, like the idyllic shepherd of our more recent time, is the offspring of a longing after the Primitive and Natural*; but mark with what firmness and fearlessness the Greek embraced *the man of the woods*, and again, how coyly and mawkishly the modern man dallied with the flattering picture of a tender, flute-playing, soft-natured shepherd! [*The satyr*] was the archetype of man, the embodiment of his highest and strongest emotions, as the enthusiastic reveller enraptured by the proximity of his god, as the fellow-suffering companion in whom the suffering of the god repeats itself,

as the herald of wisdom speaking from the very depths of nature, as the emblem of the sexual omnipotence of nature, which the Greek were wont to contemplate with reverential awe.⁴⁴

On the basis of Nietzsche's views, Yeats' Satyr, who is the almost unique representative of his mythological genus in Yeats' poetical work, could be interpreted more as an atavistic metatheatrical spokesman for the poet himself than as a mere Spenserian imitation.

The second paratextual component of the subheading of *An Epilogue* one should accurately weigh is that this Satyr – who is not the traditional shepherd-singer at his bucolic song⁴⁵ but, nonetheless, «is one of these mythic woodland beings for whom music comes naturally»⁴⁶ – does not *sing a song* like those that abound e.g. in *The Island of Statues*, but delivers a speech that, towards its end (ll. 51-54), announces the speaker's intention to «soothe» a «hapless faun» (l. 52) with «mirthful songs» (l. 54), as his «glad singing» (l. 58) did in the past with «songs of old earth's dreamy youth» (l. 59). His speech is, thus, more a verbal and rational declaration (*à la* Matthew Arnold?) that «words alone are certain good» – charged with the Satyr's mytho-anthropological energy (*selon* Nietzsche above) and «spoken» before starting to sing – than a direct musico-literary implementation of that same principle according to the Irish figuration of poetry as song, perhaps interpreted not – strictly speaking – *à la* Thomas Moore, but against the background of Yeats' innovative and exacting «compl[i]mentary dream»⁴⁷. Thus, from this paratextual point of view, Yeats' *An Epilogue* is more of a verbal manifesto by an *Anglo-Irish* poet than a musico-literary manifesto by an *Anglo-Irish* poet.

In the whole set of the paratextual components of the subheading of *An Epilogue*, third comes a high-potential musico-literary element that undoubtedly would have deserved more scholarly attention. In the poem, the Satyr's soundscape is aptly epitomized by the «sea-shell» (a «shell» in the manuscript; Yeats 1994, 203) he carries in his hand. Usually, such a symbol is (contradictorily) read as an emblem either of past «pleasures which are but echoes – pleasures which can please no more», as the Anglican Dean of Canterbury Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903) wrote in 1898⁴⁸, or of «poetic prophecy», i.e. the poetic prefiguration of things to come. Harold Bloom chose the latter meaning for this occurrence in Yeats and likened it to those in Wordsworth and Shelley, but did not give a clear indication as to the version of the poem to which he was actually referring⁴⁹. However, what is more relevant to this paper is not so much its temporal-oriented symbolic implications, as the fact that, in the context of Yeats' coeval musico-literary symbolics, the «sea-shell» is the aptest possible musical instrument for his Satyr not only because it is compatible with the mytho-anthropological nature with which he was endowed (e.g. according to Nietzsche), but also because of a number of other microtextual and macrotextual reasons of much consequence, some of which could be condensed as follows.

First and foremost, unlike the other musical instruments of the Arcadian world-model, the (literally!) unheard-of organology of the «sea-shell» not only combines the music of nature (ll. 36-37) and the art of music (l. 42), but even provides a «rewording in melodious guile» (l. 40) for the «fretful» (l. 41) narrative verblatness of everybody's «story» (l. 38)⁵⁰ – i.e., in such a way that, by combining with the melodic tricks or «guiles» (l. 40) of «song» (l. 42), mankind's «fretful words» are beguiled into finding «comfort» (l. 39) and «fad[ing] in ruth» (l. 42). Thus, thanks to the «brotherhood» of «ruth and joy» (l. 43), such «ruth» can resonate with the «antique joy» (l. 2) of the «woods of Arcady» (l. 1) – the death of which (which is not – strictly speaking – the death of Arcady itself) the Satyr had announced in its very first line of *An Epilogue*. This is why, after inviting his audience to abstain from a merely historicist (ll. 11-23), spiritualistic (ll. 24-27), or scientific (ll. 28-35) search for truth *extra se* (i.e. outside themselves), he exhorts them (be they Arcadian, Irish or universal) to search for it within themselves, because «there is no truth / saving in thine own heart» (ll. 27-28) – a symbolic location, however, which should be more accurately defined according to Yeats' anthropology of those early years. To this purpose, the 'actions' of «dreaming» (l. 62) and «singing» (l. 45) (not simply their passive experience and/or their final results!) are to be ceaselessly cultivated «for this is also sooth» (ll. 45 and 62) – this «singing» being a very explicitly programmatic option of an early poetics based on the power of poetry as song and formulated in the purely verbal context of the Satyr's speech.

Moreover, as further macrotextual evidence of such early programmatic musico-literary poetics, it should also be added that, from a specifically organological point of view, the «sea-shell» mentioned in the subheading of *An Epilogue* is also of great help in distinguishing it from both *The Island of Statues* and *The Seeker*, where more traditionally Arcadian and man-made musical instruments are employed. In *The Island of Statues*, on the one hand, the shepherds Colin and Thernot sing accompanying themselves on their lutes, thus following a «more socially palatable strategy»⁵¹ than the Satyr in their hypercodified embodiment of the conception of poetry as song, while, on the other hand, the scenic presence and the dramatic action of the hunter Almintor and his page Antonio are musico-literarily underpinned and punctuated by horns. As to the organology of *The Seeker*, the «possessed» (i.e. etymologically inanimate and animate at the same time) paradoxical Arcadian «flute» played by two of the three Shepherds has already been mentioned and discussed above.

On the basis of the micro- and macro-textual data that has been condensed in the last paragraphs (as well as many others that have been omitted here for brevity's sake), it is logical to infer that Yeats' *An Epilogue / To 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker' / Spoken by a Satyr, carrying a sea-shell* is not merely a juvenile iteration of the highly frequented and hypercodified «pastoral process of putting the complex into the simple»⁵², but is, rather, the

young Yeats' personalization – uncommonly and precociously effective and with strongly outspoken programmatic intentions and consequences – of that traditional «pastoral process», above all by means of his conscious exploitation of the centuries-long tradition of song as a trope for poetry⁵³.

In 1889, Yeats decided to include *An Epilogue* in the volume *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*, printed by the London-based publisher Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. in 1889, a «firm» that «always preferred to be literary and scholarly» and «to lend a helping hand to any young authors in whom we saw promise rather than immediate profit»⁵⁴. In this second publishing format, the poem's title became *The Song of the Last Arcadian*. (*He carries a sea-shell*), and its sixty-two lines (though unmodified from those in «The Dublin University Review» and positioned as tenth in the poetry collection's macrotextual sequence) lost any direct or indirect editorial connections with both *The Island of Statues* (here in the Romantic-oriented textual form of *A Fragment*) and *The Seeker*, which were placed as the last two poems in the volume. This loss, which could be interpreted as an emancipation from the compositional origins, was in fact counterbalanced by both the acquisition and the preservation of the musico-literary features rooted in the tropical tradition of poetry as song and endowed with complementary implications which were highly appreciated by contemporary reviewers⁵⁵.

What was a speech became a song. Thus, it was enriched by the more comprehensively expressive gamut afforded by the joint anthropological resources of verbal language and music, while retaining the naturally echoic contributions from an infinitely resounding «sea-shell», which is precisely the same as that which the formerly-speaking-now-singing Poetic I persists in carrying from the previous 1885 version and which, potentially, could reformulate narrative fragments from any sphere of human experience by «rewording [them] in melodious guile». It should also be noticed that, in the poem included in *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*, the Faun of the manuscript and its cognate Satyr of «The Dublin University Review» underwent another radical change and were epitomized in the *Last Arcadian*. In this way, all the extant population of Arcadia – no matter which is its mytho-anthropological identity – and its inborn habit of thinking of poetry as song were ideally subsumed under the Poetic I of the new version, located against the background of the Irish-oriented macrotextual *persona* of the whole verse collection and re-interpreted in the «Irish frame in diminished echo of the original [1885] bibliographic code» (Bornstein 1983, p. 183) provided by a book published in London by an Anglo-Irish poet.

In the third step of its editorial history, the decade-long paratextual transition from *An Epilogue* / *To 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker' / Spoken by a Satyr, carrying a sea-shell* (1885) through *The Song of the Last Arcadian*. (*He carries a sea-shell*) (1889) to *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* (1895) was eventually carried out in *The Poems* under the London publishing house of Thomas

Fisher Unwin (1848-1935), who, «by all accounts an imposing figure and an excellent salesman, [...] was a member of a distinguished printing family [and] focused on works of literary merit by new or unknown authors», because «he always believed that such books would make their way in the end, even if the authors were unknown»⁵⁶. As George Bornstein wrote, «the poem reached its final title [...] and placement as the first poem of *Crossways*, a section that recapitulated Yeats' bibliographical progression from Arcadian or cosmopolitan to Irish settings and themes»; however, «in that volume, as in its successors down through 1929, *Crossways* was the last section (rather than the current first one), so that, although the poem opened *Crossways*, it did not open the volume as a whole» (Bornstein 1993, pp. 183 and 179). In fact, *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* – now divided into three parts and reduced to fifty-seven lines – was finally «reconstructed» as «the inaugural utterance of Yeats' poetic career [...] in his *Collected Poems*»⁵⁷, published in 1933.

Scholars have fleetingly commented on the further elaboration of the conventional poetry-as-song trope that is proposed in *The Song of the Happy Shepherd*. For instance, Hugh Kenner has indicated some intertextual sources for its «melodious shepherds»⁵⁸, thus unduly emphasizing the importance of the melodic component in their musico-literary art and contradicting the strategic relationship between words and music that Yeats performed in his *Song* by «rewording [fretful words] in melodious guile» (l. 39). Brian Arkins has taken the Happy Shepherd's desertion of a dead and uninhabitable Arcady for granted and has concluded that «with this loss [of the old, idyllic Arcadia] the poem attempts to come to terms by substituting for Arcadia the supremacy of art in the form of song or poetry, and the song of the shepherd can therefore be called 'happy' because it can offer an alternative to Arcadia»⁵⁹. In her feminist-oriented reading of this poem, Elizabeth Butler Cullingford has also remarked that:

[...] the happy shepherd, a verbal narcissist, suggests that the male find a sympathetic female who will repeat his words in her own way. She will add nothing original, nor will she speak of herself: *man provides the lyrics, woman the melody*. This hierarchical opposition, however, is complicated by the fact that in rewording Logos the 'echo-harboured shell' also transforms it into poetry: for Yeats the supremely important act.⁶⁰

What these critical interpretations of *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* – though subtle and authoritative like those of *An Epilogue* and *The Song of the Last Arcadian* mentioned above – tend to undervalue is the autonomous cultural specificity of the musico-literary components of Yeats' representation of poetry as song, their foundational role and their strategic contribution to the poem's «literary philosophy» – all of them, in fact, deserving of hermeneutical respect and attention. All the more so in this case because, in the 1895 volume, *The Song of the Happy Shepherd* is programmatically antedated to 1885, thus

explicitly discarding the preceding two editorial steps of this poem and their paratexts as by then textually experimental and socio-culturally irrelevant. This chronological adjustment could be interpreted as indicating three neat poetic options, distinct though tightly interconnected and with enduring programmatic consequences on Yeats' lifelong poetic work. Firstly, the *Song* should have always been a *Song* with the musico-literary characteristics and implications as regards the poetry-as-song trope that have been suggested above. Secondly, its performer should have always been a singing *Shepherd*, thus dismissing both the *Satyr* (and his energetic though mytho-anthropologically ambiguous *poetic persona*) who delivered it in speech form in the 1885 version and the *Arcadian* – and his (para)textual role as the representative of the whole community of Arcadia, with his uncomfortable qualification as *Last* – who performed it in the 1889 version. Thirdly, happiness should have always been the singing Shepherd's emotional condition because, as Joseph Swann has acutely remarked, «the pearly brotherhood of words abstracted from the movements of the heart was giving way to a lasting discourse in which words moved by the heart were to be both theme and protagonist»⁶¹.

However, the happiness of Yeats' *Shepherd* raises a further and final question that needs to be addressed here: does Yeats' singing *Shepherd* expect his listeners (and Yeats' readers, far away from him in the Irish late nineteenth-century future and beyond) to conclude that he is (masochistically?) 'happy' because «the woods of Arcady are dead» (l. 1) or because a friend of his – «the hapless faun» (l. 47) – is dead and «buried under the sleepy ground» (l. 48), etc.? Of course not. His (paratextual) happiness has gradually emerged in connection with the (paratextual) evolution of his poetic text from speech to song, thus witnessing both Yeats' very early personalization of the anthropological tradition of poetry as song and his indefatigable adaptation of its tropical features and potentialities to his «dreams» of communitarian unity. This makes the *Shepherd* happy, on the one hand, from a personal standpoint because his *Song* is the best inwardly unifying antidote to the heart-rending (cf. l. 33) outward truths of «the warring kings» (l. 11) and «the starry men» (l. 28); and, on the other hand, from a communitarian standpoint because, if his *Song's* unifying power is even capable of reducing the apparently unbridgeable gap between the dead and the (merely) alive in Arcady, nothing will be able to prevent it from contributing to the unity of the universal human community of the living⁶², whatever their time and place.

The Song of the Happy Shepherd – Yeats' earliest musico-literary manifesto – is able to perform its variations on «the supreme theme of Art and Song» because its atavistically unifying 'sooth' is inborn to the very substance and features of its tropical mediation between poetry and song, thus making it neither classically «cracked» (l. 9) – i.e. burst asunder, fractured – like the merely musical «tune that Chronos sings» (l. 9), nor romantically 'primeval and wild' like *The Song of the Shepherd* in Thomas Moore's *To Joseph Atkinson, Esq. From Bermuda* (1780)⁶³.

Notes

¹ W. Fleisch, *Thomas Moore (1779-1852)*, in *The Facts on File Companion to British Poetry. 19th Century*, Facts on File, New York 2010, p. 246.

² O. Maduakor, *Nsukka: Yeats and the African Writer*, in W. Feuser, M. Pape, E.O. Dunu (eds), *Wahlverwandtschaften – Elective Affinities. Eine Gedenkschrift. Tributes and Essays on Germanic and African Studies in Memory of Edith Ihekweazu (1941-1991)*, Boomerang Press, Bayreuth 1993, p. 71.

³ Cf. M. Berley, *After the Heavenly Tune. English Poetry and the Aspiration to Song*, Duquesne UP, Pittsburgh 2000, p. 3. See here p. 11: «A claim to song is for some poets merely a figurative literary gesture; for others it is as near as possible to a literal expression of what a poet is and does – a deep examination of the potential musical activities of human consciousness».

⁴ The phrase «singer born» is hyphenated as «singer-born» in Yeats' letter To Olivia Shakespear, 3 January 1932 (*The Collected Letters of William Butler Yeats*, Oxford UP, IntelX Electronic Edition, Oxford 2002, Accession Number: 5556). Such appreciation of the poet as «a singer born» incorporates but goes beyond what V.M. Bell has observed in *Yeats and the Logic of Formalism* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia-London 2006, p. 167): «to be a “singer born” means, in effect, to have no choice in the matter, and since the cause and the meaning of all song is that all things pass away, the poet, like the conqueror, owes his very existence to eternal mutability. Salvation by transcendence, which the soul urges, is thus a negation of existential identity».

⁵ Yeats used this expression in an article on *Miss Fiona Macleod as a Poet* (1896), in W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Works. Volume IX. Early Articles and Reviews*, ed. by J.P. Frayne, M. Mar-chaterre, Scribner, New York 2004, p. 323.

⁶ Another series of four musico-literary genres («rann, tale, old saw, or quaint rhyme»), coeval with that mentioned in *To Ireland in the Coming Times* though differently structured and organized, can be found in the short story *The Last Gleeman* (1893), contained in *The Celtic Twilight* (1893) and then included by Yeats in *Mythologies* (Macmillan, London-Basingstoke 1959, p. 53): it refers to the musico-literary pieces performed by some «ballad-singers» after M.J. Moran's death (ca. 1794-1846), one of the most famous among them, also known as Zosimus, «The Last of the Gleemen» and «The Blind Bard of the Liberties». On Zosimus cf. also P. Muldoon, *To Ireland, I*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2000, pp. 134-136.

⁷ Cf. e.g., on this hermeneutical perspective, J.L. Lemke, *Textual Politics. Discourse and Social Dynamics*, Taylor and Francis, London 1995.

⁸ Edward Bunting, the Irish musician and folk-music collector (1773-1843), translates the Gaelic denomination of the rann *musico-literarily* as «song» in the chapter *Of the Method of Playing and Musical Vocabulary of the Old Irish Harpers* of his *The Ancient Music of Ireland: Arranged for the Piano*, 1840 (Dover Publications, New York 2000, p. 35). According to the Irish historian and antiquarian John O'Donovan (1806-1861), a rann is merely «a quatrain» and «every rann or quatrain must make perfect sense by itself, without any dependence on the next; nay, the first couplet may produce a perfect sense without any dependence on the second» (*A Grammar of the Irish Language*, Hodges and Smith, Dublin 1845, p. 413).

⁹ On the concept of intergenre or intergeneric discourse see e.g. S. Sturm-Maddox, D. Maddox, *Genre and Intergene in Medieval French literature*, «Esprit Créateur», XXXIII, 1993, pp. 3-9.

¹⁰ M. Witt, *Yeats's "The Song of the Happy Shepherd"*, «Philological Quarterly», XXXII, 1953, p. 8. See D.A. Ross, *Critical Companion to William Butler Yeats. A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, Facts on File, New York 2009, pp. 229-230: «Though it was published in Yeats's 20th year, the poem iterates themes that would become permanent elements of his mature work: a sense of cultural rapture, a repudiation of science and politics, an insistence that there is no truth save that discovered in one's own heart»; and R.F. Foster, *Words Alone. Yeats and His Inheritances*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2011, p. xv: this is «one of the few very early poems to make the cut and remain, though much rewritten, in the body of his *Collected Poems*».

¹¹ G. Bornstein, *What is the Text of a Poem by Yeats?*, in G. Bornstein, R.G. Williams (eds), *Palimpsest. Editorial Theory in the Humanities*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1993, pp. 168 and 179.

¹² *An Epilogue / To 'The Island of Statues' and 'The Seeker' / Spoken by a Satyr, carrying a sea-shell*, «The Dublin University Review», I, 9, 1885, pp. 230-231. George Bornstein has written pointedly that, in this editorial version, Yeats's poem «thus first appears within a strongly Irish context that identifies it as a production of an Irish writer and places it within the mild cultural nationalism of the modern Irish cultural renaissance and within the Protestant power structure that contributed so much to that recuperation. The context thus suggests the alliance between ancient Greek modes and later Irish ones that Yeats would explore intermittently throughout his career, and it marks him as a more Irish writer than the poem does when severed from its initial bibliographic code» (Bornstein 1993, p. 183).

¹³ Y.M. Chaudhri, *Yeats, the Irish Literary Revival and the Politics of Print*, Cork UP, Cork 2001, p. 48.

¹⁴ J. Kelly, *General Introduction*, in W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Letters. Volume I: 1865-1895*, ed. by J. Kelly, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1986, p. xlii.

¹⁵ Ivi, p. xxxv.

¹⁶ Rolleston delivered a lecture on Whitman in Dresden in 1883 and then published it in T.W. Rolleston, H.B. Cotterill, *Über Wordsworth und Walt Whitman: Zwei Vorträge gehalten vor dem Literarischen Verein zu Dresden*, Tittmann, Dresden 1883. Cf. also H. Frenz (ed.), *Whitman and Rolleston: a correspondence*, Indiana UP, Bloomington 1951, and J.P. Krieg, *Whitman and the Irish*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City 2000, esp. pp. 213-217.

¹⁷ Rolleston worked on the editing of Davis's *Prose Writings* probably between 1889 and 1890 (cf. T.W. Rolleston, ed., *Prose Writings of Thomas Davis*, W. Scott, London 1890).

¹⁸ Cf., for example, *Three Love Tales after Richard Wagner. Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Parsifal [In verse]*, G.G. Harrap & Co., London 1920.

¹⁹ T.W. Rolleston, *Deirdre. The Feis Ceoil Prize Cantata*, M. H. Gill & Son – E. Ponsonby, Dublin 1897, p. 17, ll. 57, 58, 60.

²⁰ S. Ferguson, *Lays of the Western Gael*, in T.W. Rolleston, *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race* (1911), Constable and Company Ltd., London 1985, p. 234.

²¹ W.B. Yeats, *The Poetry of Samuel Ferguson – II* (1886), in Yeats 2004, p. 21 (italics mine).

²² S. Ferguson, *Lays of the Western Gael*, in Rolleston 1985, p. 235 (italics mine).

²³ *The Island of Statues. An Arcadian Faery Tale. In Two Acts: Act I, Scene I*, «The Dublin University Review», I, 4, 1885, pp. 56-58; *The Island of Statues. An Arcadian Faery Tale. In Two Acts: Act I, Scene II and III*, «The Dublin University Review», I, 5, 1885, pp. 82-84; *The Island of Statues. An Arcadian Faery Tale. In Two Acts: Act II, Scene I and II*, «The Dublin University Review», I, 6, 1885, pp. 110-112; *The Island of Statues. An Arcadian Faery Tale. In Two Acts: Act II, Scene III*, «The Dublin University Review», I, 7, 1885, pp. 136-139.

²⁴ W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Works. Volume III. Autobiographies*, ed. by W.H. O'Donnell, D.N. Archibald, Scribner, New York 1999, p. 98.

²⁵ Letter To Katharine Tynan [22-28 September 1888], in Yeats 1986, p. 98 (italics mine).

²⁶ W.B. Yeats, *John Todhunter*, in Yeats 2004, p. 87.

²⁷ J. Todhunter, *A Review of "The Wanderings of Oisín and other poems"* (1889), in A.N. Jeffares (ed.), *W.B. Yeats: The Critical Heritage*, Routledge, London 1977, p. 71.

²⁸ *The Seeker*, «The Dublin University Review», I, 8, 1885, pp. 120-123.

²⁹ J. Todhunter, *A review of "The Wanderings of Oisín and other poems"* (1889), in Jeffares, 1977, p. 71.

³⁰ Curiously enough, Richard Ellmann decided to completely remove any connections whatever between *The Seeker* and the other two poems in the following hyperconcise passage: in *The Island of Statues*, «a shepherd and shepherdess succeed, after numerous contretemps, in overcoming the Circe of an enchanted island, and in finding the flower which will restore to life the men who had been turned into statues. Once reanimated, the statues are given their choice to live on in an Arcady or to return to the world. They choose to remain Arcadians.

In an epilogue the poet praises and defends their choice, exalting «*literature above life and song above science*» (Yeats. *The Man and the Masks*, Oxford UP, Oxford 1979, p. 36; italics mine).

³¹ Cf. G. Bornstein, *Introduction*, in W.B. Yeats, *The Early Poetry. Volume I: Mosada and The Island of Statues. Manuscript Materials by W.B. Yeats*, ed. by G. Bornstein, Cornell UP, Ithaca-London 1987, p. 12: «The names of the singing shepherds Colin and Thernot (or Thenot, as Yeats sometimes wrote in the drafts) recall the Colin and Thenot who appear throughout *The Shepherd's Calendar*».

³² Cf. S.K. Heninger Jr., *The Shepherdes Calender*, in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1990, p. 650: «E.K. gives no reason for his claim that *November* [in *The Shepherdes Calender*] surpasses all the other eclogues, but probably the dirge for him epitomized the pastoral tradition. The tension between the ideal and reality, between what is longed for and what actually occurs, provides the impetus for pastoral, and the image of death in an idyllic setting presents most coincisely this opposition».

³³ Cf. *ivi*, pp. 649 and 650.

³⁴ Cf. E.B. Loizeaux, *Yeats and the Visual Arts*, Syracuse UP, New York 2003, p. 54: «The play opens with the shepherds Colin and Thernot contending for the love of the shepherdes Naschina by singing songs that compete in the extravagance of their natural description».

³⁵ Cf., for example, Anon., *Review of "The Dublin University Review"*, [April] 1885, «Oxford Magazine», 29 April 1885, p. 192: *The Island of Statues*, «an Arcadian Fairy Tale in heroic verse, of which only one scene is given, does not strike us as yet as very happy; Colin and Thernot speak in the metre of Gay, but their euphuism is as the euphuism of the Victorian minor poets, and that needs no further comment».

³⁶ Almintor or Amintor belongs to the numerous group of «stock pastoral names» (N.D. Nace, *Filling Blanks in the Richardson Circle: The Unsuccessful Mentorship of Urania Johnson*, in A.W. Lee (ed.), *Mentoring in Eighteenth-century British Literature and Culture*, Ashgate, Farnham 2010, p. 121, note 39). On Almintor/Amintor in Yeats's *The Island of Statues* cf. also George Bornstein, *Introduction*, in Yeats, 1987, p. 12.

³⁷ A passage from William Jacob's *Travels in the South of Spain, in letters written A.D. 1809 and 1810* – which also mentions the name of Mosada, chosen by Yeats for the eponymous «Moorish lady» of the dramatic poem he published in «The Dublin University Review» in June 1886, just a few months after *The Island of Statues* – indicates an Arabian or Moorish origin for Naschina's name (his second and final choice after Evadne, his initial one from Greek mythology, used in the first draft) and its implications would deserve more interpretive attention than the mere remark that «the ascription of "exotic" names to the characters is pure Shelley» (A. Dalsimer, *The Unappreciable Shadow: Shelley's Influence on Yeats*, Garland, New York 1988, p. 13): «so general was the love of learning in Granada, that it extended, notwithstanding the prohibitions of Mahomed, to the softer sex. *Naschina* acquired celebrity as a poetess; *Mosada* as an Historian; and *Leila* as a mathematician and universal scholar» (*Travels in the South of Spain, in letters written A.D. 1809 and 1810*, J. Johnson and Co.-W. Miller, London 1811, p. 272; italics mine). According to Jacob, who does «not enter into the question how far this display of knowledge, this taste for literature, tended to soften the harsh feature of the Mahomedan religion, or to mollify the despotism of its government» (p. 272), Granada was «one of the different Spanish cities under the dominion of the Arabs in the twelfth century and «a little kingdom [...], the only remaining portion of the light of knowledge» (p. 271). On William Jacob (1761-1851), who was a London merchant and a Member of Parliament who wrote much on agriculture, trade and economics including articles for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, see G. Goodwin (rev. M.J. Mercer), see 'Jacob, William (1761/2–1851)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2004-2012 (online edition). The authoritativeness of William Jacob's remarks on Naschina is confirmed by many nineteenth-century encyclopaedic sources; cf., e.g., D. Brewster (ed.), *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, Joseph and Edward Parker, Philadelphia 1832, Volume X, p. 52 (see «Granada»), and Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (Great Britain), *Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, Charles Knight & Co., London 1838, Volume XI, p. 349 (see «Granada»).

³⁸ Cf. e.g. A.A. Markley, *Stateliest Measures. Tennyson and the Literature of Greece and Rome*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2004, p. 75: «The Arcadian flute [...] represents the poetry of the ancients, which Tennyson and his friend “sang and piped” [...] along with “old philosophy”».

³⁹ Cf. *An Irish Story-Teller*, in W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Works. Volume VI. Prefaces and Introductions*, ed. by W.H. O'Donnell, Macmillan, London 1988, p. 58: «I am often doubted when I say that the Irish peasantry still believe in fairies. People think I am merely trying to bring back a little of the old dead beautiful world of romance into this century of great engines and spinning-jennies. Surely the hum of wheels and clatter of printing presses, to let alone the lecturers with their black coats and tumblers of water, have driven away the *goblin kingdom* and made silent the feet of the little dancers» (italics mine).

⁴⁰ Cf. e.g. D. Kane, *All Poets Welcome: The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 2003, p. 72.

⁴¹ H. White, *Words Alone: Seamus Heaney, Music, and the Jurisdiction of Literary Forms*, in Id., *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2008, p. 238.

⁴² Cf. one of the very few passages by W.B. Yeats on satyrs and their origins: «one of those [mortal] inhabitants of the desert called fauns, satyrs, and incubi, by the Gentiles» (*Appendix 3. Notes (u. 1914) to Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland, by Lady Gregory (1920)*, in W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Works. Volume V. Later Essays*, ed. by W.H. O'Donnell, Scribner, New York 1994, p. 262).

⁴³ W.B. Yeats, *The Early Poetry. Volume II: “The Wanderings of Oisín” and Other Early Poems to 1895. Manuscript Materials*, ed. by G. Bornstein, Ithaca-London, Cornell UP, 1994, p. 203.

⁴⁴ F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy. Or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. by W.A. Haussmann, George Allen and Unwin, London; The Macmillan Company, New York 1909, p. 63 (italics mine). Edward O'Shea certifies that this English translation of Nietzsche's first book was in Yeats's library (*A Descriptive Catalog of W. B. Yeats's Library*, Garland Publishing, New York 1985, p. 189, item *1437).

⁴⁵ Cf., e.g., by P.J. Alpers, *The Singer of the Eclogues. A Study of Virgilian Pastoral*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1979, and *What is Pastoral?*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1996.

⁴⁶ J.S. Powell, “*Pourquoi toujours des bergers?*” Molière, Lully, and the pastoral *divertissement*, in J.H. Heyer (ed.), *Lully Studies*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge 2000, p. 174.

⁴⁷ On this hermeneutical perspective in Yeats' studies cf. E. Reggiani, *The Compl[i]mentary Dream, Perhaps. Saggi su William Butler Yeats*. Aracne, Roma 2010.

⁴⁸ F.W. Farrar, *The Basilisk and the Leopard; or, the Story of Florian and Ardens*, in Id., *Allegories*, Longmans, Green and Co., London 1898, p. 242.

⁴⁹ H. Bloom, *Yeats*, Oxford UP, Oxford 1970, p. 54: «Though Yeats rejected *The Seeker* as he had *The Island of Statues*, he chose long afterward to open his *Collected Poems* with a Song originally printed as an Epilogue to both *The Island of Statues* and *The Seeker*. A satyr enters, carrying a sea-shell, emblem of poetic prophecy in Wordsworth and Shelley».

⁵⁰ Cf. e.g. Ronald Schuchard's definition of Yeats «as a modern bard dedicated to transmuting and *remaking* a utilitarian world whose citizenry could not thrive so long as the life of the imagination was not an integral part of national life» (*The Last Minstrels. Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts*, Oxford UP, Oxford 2008, p. xxv).

⁵¹ M.K. Ray, “*La castità conquistata*”. *The Function of the Satyr in Pastoral Drama*, «Romance Languages Annual», 1998, IX, p. 314.

⁵² W. Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, New Directions Press, Norfolk 1960, p. 25.

⁵³ Cf. Bornstein, 1993, p. 183: «Yeats's Arcadian “Epilogue” [...] first appears within a strongly Irish context that identifies it as a production of an Irish writer and places it within the mild cultural nationalism of the modern Irish cultural renaissance and within the Protestant power structure that contributed so much to that recuperation. The context thus suggests the alliance between ancient Greek modes and later Irish ones that Yeats would explore intermittently throughout his career, and it marks him as a more Irish writer than the poem does when severed from its initial bibliographic code».

⁵⁴ *Memories*, K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd, London 1899, pp. 294-295. Cf. *Letter To Father Matthew Russell, 6 March [1888]*, in Yeats 1986, pp. 52-53, note 3: «Charles Kegan Paul (1828-1902) was the son of a clergyman and took the cloth himself, but his High Church leanings towards ritualism and his radical politics (he was associated with F.D. Maurice, Tom Hughes, and the Christian socialist movement) brought him into conflict with some sections of the Anglican hierarchy, and in 1874 he gave up his living and moved to London to pursue a literary career. In 1877 he took over the publishing house of Henry Samuel King and in 1881 Alfred Chenevix Trench (b. 1859), third son of Richard Chenevix Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, joined the new company as a partner. The firm prided itself on lending “a helping hand to any young authors in whom we saw promise”, but, with the exception of Blunt, Coventry Patmore, and Morris, Kegan Paul found “no one now worthy of being called a poet” and thought that literature was not in itself a profession [cf. his *Memories*, 1899, 278]». The very final pages of Kegan Paul’s *Memories* (pp. 364-377) also register «the end of [his religious] wandering» and his conversion to Catholicism in 1890.

⁵⁵ For instance, the anonymous reviewer of the «Saturday Review» wrote that «[Mr W.B. Yeats] draws on *the primitive sources of song*, and proves them to be not yet exhausted. [... *H*] *is song is like that of a singer of old* for freshness and force and buoyancy» («Saturday Review», 9 March 1889, p. 293; italics mine). Moreover, in the «Scots Observer», after appreciating the fragment from *The Island of Statues* for its echoes of «the charm of the *Shelleyan manner and music*», William Ernest Henley praised *The Song of the Last Arcadian* as «the subtlest in thought of all the pieces in the volume» and for «*the wilding charm, the wayward grace touched with elfishness, characteristic of true Irish song*»: his highly emblematic inference was that “this new Irish poet was not an *effeminate Arnoldian Celi*” (Anon. [W.E. Henley (1849-1903)], *A New Irish Poet*, «Scots Observer», 9 March 1889, p. 446; italics mine). Cf. M. Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, Smith, Elder & Co., London 1867, pp. 103-104: «Take the more spiritual arts of music and poetry. All that emotion can do in music the Celt has done; the very soul of emotion breathes in the Scotch and Irish airs; but with all this power of musical feeling, what has the Celt, so eager for emotion that has no patience for science, effected in music, to be compared with what the less emotional German, steadily developing his musical feeling with the science of a Sebastian Bach or a Beethoven, has effected? In poetry, again, – poetry which the Celt has so passionately, so nobly loved; poetry where emotion counts for so much, but where reason, too, reason, measure, sanity, also count for so much, – the Celt has shown genius, indeed, splendid genius; but even here his faults have clung to him, and hindered him from producing great works».

⁵⁶ T.J. Bassett, *T. Fisher Unwin’s Pseudonym Library: Literary Marketing and Authorial Identity*, «English Literature in Transition», XLVII, 2, 2004, p. 143. Cf. *Letter To Katherine Tynan, 6 October [1890]*, in Yeats 1986, p. 230, note 4: «Unwin, who had started as a publisher in 1882 when he bought the firm of Marshal Japp & Co., and had subsequently moved to Paternoster Square, was a reserved man who had the knack of finding able and decisive lieutenants such as [Edward] Garnett and later his nephew Stanley Unwin; but owing to his parsimoniousness and authoritarian business methods, he had difficulty in holding on to his staff».

⁵⁷ M. McKinsey, *Classicism and colonial retrenchment in W.B. Yeats’s “No Second Troy”*, «Twentieth Century Literature», XLVIII, 2, 2002, p. 174.

⁵⁸ H. Kenner, *A Colder Eye. The Modern Irish Writers*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1983, p. 72 (italics mine).

⁵⁹ B. Arkins, *Builders of My Soul: Greek and Roman Themes in Yeats*, Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross 1990, p. 87.

⁶⁰ E.B. Cullingford, *Gender and History in Yeats’s Love Poetry*, Syracuse UP, New York 1996, p. 19 (italics mine).

⁶¹ J. Swann, *The Breaking of Language: Blake and the Development of Yeats’s Imagery*, in J. McMinn (ed.), *The Internationalism of Irish Literature and Drama*, Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross 1992, p. 222; cf. also p. 218: «this was the Pre-Raphaelite age, and Yeats leaves us in no doubt about his poetic allegiance».

⁶² On the Yeatsian difference between «fully living» and «merely alive» cf. Reggiani, 2010, pp. 80-82.

⁶³ T. Moore, *The Poetical Works. Complete in One Volume*, Longmans, Greene and Co., London 1865, p. 332, l. 33.

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