November 2017

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Recommended Citation

McAteer, Michael (2017) "Music, Setting, Voice: Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen*," *International Yeats Studies*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34068/IYS.02.01.01>

Available at: <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/iys/vol2/iss1/2>

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MUSIC, SETTING, VOICE: MAETERLINCK'S *PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE* AND YEATS'S *THE COUNTESS CATHLEEN*

Michael McAteer

Maurice Maeterlinck's *Le trésor des humbles* (1896) was first translated into English by Alfred Sutro in 1897 as *The Treasure of the Humble*. In one of the essays included in this volume, "The Awakening of the Soul," Maeterlinck writes of the arrival of a new spiritual epoch in his time, one in which the soul "in obedience to unknown laws, seems to rise to the very surface of humanity."¹ Later in the same essay, he observes this new moment in a transformation of the nature of silence itself, one he judges "strange and inexplicable."² As Katharine Worth has observed, Arthur Symonds believed that Maeterlinck's art itself had "come nearer that any other art to being the voice of silence."³ In his review of *The Treasure of the Humble* for *The Bookman* in July 1897, Yeats felt that while Maeterlinck's thought "lacks the definiteness of the great mystics," still his book "shows us common arts and things, with the light of the great mystics, and a new light that was not theirs, beating upon them" (CW9 341). This essay explores the extent to which Yeats shared Maeterlinck's thought. In particular, I consider what may be regarded as Maeterlinck's greatest work of Symbolist theatre, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, first performed in May 1893 at the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens under the direction of Aurelien-Marie Lugné-Poe. My purpose is to determine the influence of Maeterlinck's style of theatre in *Pelléas et Mélisande* upon Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen*.⁴ (The 1895 version of Yeats's play is the version to which I mainly refer here; it is cited as *TCC 1895* hereafter.) As James Flannery has recognized, *The Countess Cathleen* was a play of great importance to Yeats for his aspirations as a dramatist and for his complicated relationship with Maud Gonne: Yeats revised the play no less than five times over the course of thirty years.⁵ Also taking into consideration aspects of the acrimonious collaboration between Yeats and George Moore that led to a staging of *Diarmuid and Grania* in 1901 (without a definitive text of the play being published), my concern is with the music, setting, and vocal features that *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *The Countess Cathleen* shared in common. The aim is to show how both plays offer the prospect of the disclosure of movement: not physical movement for the sake of performative energy, but gesture and vocal delivery for the sake of spiritual or psychic movement.⁶

Both Yeats and Maeterlinck regarded this kind of spiritual or psychic movement as the movement of the soul, which anticipates significant aspects of Martin Heidegger's account of the destiny of being in *Being and Time*.⁷ First published in German in 1927, Heidegger's work transformed the field of ontology

and profoundly influenced the spectrum of continental European philosophy subsequently, particularly the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Derrida. This essay draws attention to the ways in which *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *The Countess Cathleen* in the 1890s–1900s evoke the spiritual nature of human existence: ways that corroborate central features of Heidegger’s notion of being as *Dasein* (Being-there), the pivotal concept in *Being and Time*. In Yeats’s plays of his later years, this would appear most strikingly in *At the Hawk’s Well* of 1916, to which I allude in the conclusion.

I—*PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE*

In his manifesto “The Reform of the Theatre,” published in *Samhain* in 1903, Yeats insisted that a new theatre movement “must get rid of everything that is restless, everything that draws the attention away from the sound of the voice, or from the few moments of intense expression, whether that expression is through the voice or through the hands.” To accompany this new attention to voice, Yeats also demanded that a new form of drama should represent less those physical movements that can be followed by the eye than those “nobler movements that the heart sees, the rhythmical movements that seem to flow up into the imagination from some deeper life than that of the individual soul” (CW8 27). These thoughts were in keeping with a certain strand in theatre during the 1890s that was particularly associated with Aurelien Lugné-Poe’s *Le Théâtre de L’Œuvre* in Paris, a company founded in 1893 that was dedicated to the production of Maeterlinck’s Symbolical drama.⁸ Stressing the importance of mood over movement, Yeats wrote that a new theatre of art would be one in which all scenery would “be forgotten the moment an actor has said, ‘It is dawn,’ or ‘It is raining,’ or ‘The Wind is shaking in the trees’” (CW8 150). These phrases were prompted in his 1899 essay by their recurrence in Maeterlinck’s plays. In the opening scene of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, published in 1892, the first servant speaks of the sun rising over the sea.⁹ The phrase that he uses is repeated exactly by Aglavaine in Act IV of *Aglavaine et Sélysette*, published four years later in 1896: “Le soleil se lève sur la mer” [“the sun rises over the sea”].¹⁰ The symbolism of the dawn is stressed once more in *Sœur Béatrice* of 1901, when Bellidor observes that “déjà l’aube blanchit” [“the dawn is already brightening”] and “l’aube s’avance” [“the dawn advances”] in the opening Act.¹¹ The phrase, “il pleut” [“it is raining”] is repeated several times through the course of Maeterlinck’s first play, *La Princesse Maleine*.¹² When the wind rises in the forest in *Les Aveugles* [*The Blind*] of 1890, the first one born blind speaks of “le vent dans les feuilles mortes” [“the wind through the dead leaves”].¹³ Yeats’s citation of Maeterlinck’s phrases in “The Reform of the Theatre” undermines James Flannery’s claim that Yeats was really only interested in Maeterlinck’s

plays from the technical point of view (particularly as they were staged by Lugné-Poe's company). Indeed Flannery contradicts himself somewhat, when pointing to Maeterlinck as the source for an important statement on the nature of tragedy as Yeats regarded it in his essay, "The Tragic Theatre:" tragic theatre as "a drowning and a breaking of the dykes that separate man from man."¹⁴

According to Joseph Holloway, Yeats made the following disclosure during the course of tea following a performance of Lady Gregory's Irish medieval play, *Kincora*, in April 1905: the playwright had never understood Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* until the two lovers had been played by Mrs. Patrick Campbell (popularly known as "Mrs. Pat") and Sarah Bernhardt "as if they were a pair of little children."¹⁵ This referred to a 1904 production of Maeterlinck's play at the Vaudeville Theatre in London. Yeats had seen and admired this 1904 performance but he had also attended the June 1898 production at the Prince of Wales' Theatre in London. According to Holloway, Yeats felt that the actor Martin Harvey as Pelléas in the 1898 production had failed to give the impression of a child-like character, but rather that of a real grown-up lover.¹⁶ Yet Roger Nichols and Richard Langham Smith have contended that this 1898 production was the one that Maeterlinck admired the most. In particular, Maeterlinck's judgment—that Harvey's performance of Pelléas as "boy-lover" was "unsurpassed"—seems to render the later verdict of Yeats that Holloway records as having a weak foundation; at least if Maeterlinck's judgment of this 1898 performance of his own play is to be relied upon.¹⁷

An even more puzzling feature of Yeats's apparent dissatisfaction with the Campbell-Harvey performance of 1898 is the fact that the production was so Pre-Raphaelite in nature. The gold tunic that Campbell wore as Mélisande was designed by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones, while Harvey wanted the costume of Pelléas to reflect the conceptions of the Pre-Raphaelites.¹⁸ Given Yeats's enthusiasm for the Pre-Raphaelite influence in painting, poetry and drama during the 1880s and 1890s, it would be natural to expect a much deeper level of enthusiasm for the Prince of Wales' Theatre production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, one that employed Jack Mackail's English translation of the play that Mrs. Patrick Campbell had commissioned.¹⁹ Katharine Worth remarks that Burne-Jones would have been "a natural designer for Yeats," given his design, not only of Campbell's gown for *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1898, but also the tableau of the weeping queens gathered round the dead Arthur in the January 1895 production of J. Comyn Carr's play, *King Arthur*, at the Lyceum.²⁰ Considering Yeats's response both to the 1898 and 1904 London productions, it is important to note that Mrs. Patrick Campbell performed the role of Mélisande in both runs of the play. She had been originally inspired to do so after attending a production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1895 at the Strand in London under the direction of Lugné-Poe, upon the invitation of J. T. Grein's

Independent Theatre Society (originally founded for the production of Ibsen's plays in London). Yeats would later recruit Mrs. Patrick Campbell for a performance of the title role in his own version of *Deirdre* with the Abbey Theatre company in Dublin and London in 1907 and 1908.

Taking these factors into consideration, it is entirely plausible to take the remarks that Holloway attributed to Yeats in 1905 on the 1898 performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* with a grain of salt. It is clear that this performance was very important to Yeats, in particular for the May 1899 performance of his own play, *The Countess Cathleen*, which inaugurated the Irish Literary Theatre with Edward Martyn's *The Heather Field* at the Antient Concert Rooms in Dublin. In September 1897 Yeats had already discussed with Lady Gregory the possibility of a Dublin performance of *The Countess Cathleen* with Martyn's play, *Maeve*, to launch a new Irish Literary Theatre.²¹ While his composition of *The Countess Cathleen* goes back to 1889, the type of performance that Yeats had in mind for the play in Dublin was strongly influenced by Maeterlinck's work, particularly *Pelléas et Mélisande*. This is evident from responses to a performance of Maeterlinck's play at the Theatre Royal in Dublin in August 1900, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Mélisande. Christopher Morash alludes to the response of a friend of Joseph Holloway to the play, one who had seen a performance of *The Countess Cathleen* at the Antient Concert Rooms the previous year. For Holloway's friend, the English-language version, *Pelleas and Melisande*, was "Yates [sic] all over again."²² His response was shared, judging by negative reviews of the Theatre Royal production in *The Irish Times*. Written as a miniature play itself, an August 1900 review has a character, "Dramatic Critic," pronounce: "If this is the best Maeterlinck can do he's not so big a man as I thought him! The 'Belgian Shakespeare,' indeed! Rather the Belgian W. B. Yeats!"²³ Even in the sarcasm of its tone, the comment shows how the poor response to the Dublin performance of *Pelleas and Melisande* in 1900 was colored by some of the criticism that *The Countess Cathleen* at the Antient Concert Rooms had received the previous year, when Florence Farr had come over from London to perform the role of the poet Aleel.

II—MUSIC

In an earlier piece on the Theatre Royal performance, *The Irish Times* reviewer slyly applauds the music that was especially composed for the production in having "succeeded admirably in drowning the voices at more than one portion of the performance."²⁴ As befits many reviews of experimental productions in *The Irish Times* through the decades, the tone here is one of rather smug indifference to what was being attempted on stage. Both Yeats and Maeterlinck were interested in harmonizing alternative forms of musical composition to a new manner of using voice in the performance of their plays.

Katharine Worth suggests that the musical quality of their work for the stage was probably the element that Yeats and Maeterlinck shared most in common as dramatists.²⁵ The incidental music for the August 1900 production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* was written by Gabriel Fauré, having first been used in the 1898 production at The Prince of Wales' Theatre in London. Given Maeterlinck's own admiration for the 1898 performance, it may well have been the case that the Dublin 1900 performance was poorly executed by comparison. The London production had the obvious advantage of Gabriel Fauré conducting the orchestra, playing the incidental music that he himself had composed for *Pelléas et Mélisande* with the assistance of Charles Koechlin after Mrs. Patrick Campbell had commissioned him for this composition less than three months prior to the June 1898 performances.²⁶

For the 1899 performance of *The Countess Cathleen* at the Antient Concert Rooms, a string quartet performed a "Suite on Irish Airs" in four movements, conducted by Herr Bast before and between each of the play's four acts. While there was no formal composition such as that written by Fauré for *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a violin and a harp were used for incidental music in the production.²⁷ Ronald Schuchard discusses Yeats's experiments in verse chanting for the play that date back to the earliest phase of its composition in 1889, noting that he added a verse for chanting in the 1895 version of the play with a view to its being performed one day as poetic drama.²⁸ Ariane Murphy notes that in Claude Régy's 2016 production of Maeterlinck's *The Death of Tintagiles*, the text of the play is "almost chanted;" this suggests that the type of experiment that Yeats undertook with voice in his own time has been revived recently in the treatment of a Maeterlinck work.²⁹ Schuchard draws attention to the importance of Florence Farr in working with Yeats to develop a chanting style for the play before George Moore intervened in the certainty that *The Countess Cathleen* would be a commercial flop as a result. Yeats was forced to take the role of the Countess from Farr's niece, the seventeen-year-old Dorothy Paget, and give it to Mary Whitty at Edward Martyn's insistence, Martyn having put up the finance for the opening production of *The Countess Cathleen* together with his own play, *The Heather Field*, to inaugurate the Irish Literary Theatre in May 1899.³⁰ In spite of this setback to his new experiment with chant in drama, two of the lyrics that were sung in *The Countess Cathleen* to the accompaniment of violin and harp left a lasting impression. These were "Impetuous Heart," chanted by Florence Farr in the character of the bard Aleel, and "Who will drive with Fergus now," chanted by actor and elocutionist Anna Mather in the role of Oona, the Countess Cathleen's nurse. Schuchard discusses the effect that these pieces had on the young James Joyce, who was in the audience for the opening night along with other students from the then-Jesuit-administered University College Dublin (UCD).³¹ Based on the testimony of Joyce's brother Stanislaus and a musical

score that Anthony Burgess gave to scholar Ruth Baurele, Schuchard considers that Joyce himself may have put “Who will drive with Fergus now” from *The Countess Cathleen* to music.³² In the opening “Telemachus” episode of *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan bellows out lines from this lyric, prompting in Stephen Dedalus a memory of singing this lyric to his mother as she approached death.³³ Richard Ellmann claims that this was based on Joyce’s actual memory of singing the lyric to his mother upon her request in the last days before she died.³⁴

Fauré’s incidental music for the 1898 London performance of Maeterlinck’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* was followed most closely in Yeats’s drama of the early 1900s in the play that he co-wrote with George Moore, *Diarmuid and Grania*. Moore and Yeats had worked together on the play from 1898. The play was based on the old Irish legend of Grania, the beautiful young woman who elopes with the warrior Diarmuid just before she was to marry Finn, leader of the ancient Irish brotherhood, the Fianna. The conflict between Yeats’s pursuit of an elevated antique poetic style and Moore’s determination to treat the legend in modern realistic prose speech led to serious disagreement between them. Moore had no time for Yeats’s ideas on half-chant in performance. In an interview published in 1901, he described the actors’ chanting of lines in the 1899 performance of *The Countess Cathleen* as “lamentable” and Moore tells the interviewer that he had prayed many times during the final act of the play “that the curtains would come down at once.”³⁵ Yet we must also reckon with the fact that Moore himself was interested in lending a serious musical dimension to *Diarmuid and Grania*, if not exactly the type of sound experiment that Yeats was pursuing. Jacqueline Genet claims that Moore asked Edward Elgar to compose music for *Diarmuid and Grania* without asking Yeats’s agreement first.³⁶ This turn of events is somewhat more complicated, however. According to Jerrold Northop Moore, George Moore had first approached the English orchestra conductor Henry Wood (who had been to Bayreuth for Wagner’s *The Ring* cycle) to compose music for the play and Wood directed him to Elgar. In a letter from Moore to Elgar that Northop Moore quotes, dated September 22 or 29, 1901, Moore requested that Elgar compose music only for Diarmuid’s funeral in the final act.³⁷ Adrian Frazier states that Moore had already travelled from Dublin to London on September 4 because he had heard of Elgar’s interest in composing horn music for the funeral scene in the Moore/Yeats play, suggesting that someone other than Moore had already put the idea to him.³⁸

The position of Mrs. Patrick Campbell must also be considered in relation to Moore’s approach to Elgar in September 1901, particularly given that she had commissioned Fauré to write the incidental music for the 1898 performance of Maeterlinck’s *Pelléas et Mélisande*. According to J. C. C. Mays, Moore had been pursuing Campbell since late 1897 to play the role of Grania. Moore and Yeats met with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in her dressing room on October 26, 1900,

after she starred in Frank Harris's *Mr. and Mrs. Daventry*, in order to solicit her interest in *Diarmuid and Grania*.³⁹ In a letter addressed to Lady Gregory of December 27, 1900, Yeats tells her that Campbell had asked him why he did not write the whole play himself: apparently she begged Yeats to read the full script to her (reprinted in *VPI* 1170). Mrs. Pat may not have been directly responsible for Elgar's musical composition for the funeral of Diarmuid, but her enthusiasm for the play was a crucial factor in Elgar's decision to contribute a musical piece for *Diarmuid and Grania*, given the success of *Pelléas et Mélisande* in London in 1898 with the inclusion of Fauré's music.

It was clear that Moore had hopes beyond the stage performance of *Diarmuid and Grania* that Elgar would eventually compose a full opera based on the work that Moore had co-written with Yeats.⁴⁰ While the aspiration came to nothing, it was not surprising that Moore harbored it. Although the acrimonious co-writing of *Diarmuid and Grania* by Moore and Yeats resulted in a text that was utterly incapable of being converted to an opera on the scale of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, the example of Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* being made into an opera was one that Yeats and Moore could not ignore. In a letter to Ernst Heilborn of Sept. 3, 1901, Moore refers to the play as written in the style of the *Walküre* and of *Tristan and Isolde*, seeing no reason why *Diarmuid and Grania* could not be a success in Germany.⁴¹ Four days later Moore wrote to Elgar regarding the orchestral make up for the Gaiety Theatre production of *Diarmuid and Grania*, during which he refers to the cornet being used in works by Wagner and Gounod. He concludes the letter with a note of enticement, stating that if *Diarmuid and Grania* proves successful in Dublin, "it certainly will be produced in Germany."⁴² Raphaël Ingelbien identifies a significant Germanic element in Maeterlinck's drama that he traces to the influence of Wagner, one betraying Maeterlinck's Flemish background and providing a certain level of resistance to absorption in the French aesthetic idioms of the Parisian literary and theatre scene.⁴³

Considered in this context, Moore's notion of *Diarmuid and Grania* as an Irish *Tristan and Isolde* bears a significant affinity to the operatic treatment of Maeterlinck's drama. Claude Debussy's opera version of Maeterlinck's play premiered at the Opera-Comique in Paris on April 30, 1902, less than seven months after the performance of *Diarmuid and Grania* in Dublin. Debussy had been working on and off his composition of the opera, sometimes in dispute with Maeterlinck, since he first read *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Paris in 1893.⁴⁴ Walter Frisch contends that Arnold Schoenberg probably began composing his opera based on Maeterlinck's play in the summer of 1902.⁴⁵ While living in Berlin at this time, it is most likely that Schoenberg had at least heard about the Debussy performance in Paris. Frisch describes the process by which he transformed musically the themes of Maeterlinck's play as "richer and more

elaborate than in any of Schoenberg's earlier works."⁴⁶ Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melisande* was premiered at the Großer Musikvereins-Saal, Vienna, in January 1905, with Schoenberg himself acting as orchestra conductor, along with a first performance of Alexander von Zemlinsky's *Die Seejungfrau* [*The Mermaid*].

Thus there were strong affinities between the London 1898 performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and the Dublin 1899 performance of *The Countess Cathleen*. In view of this, Debussy and Schoenberg's development of Maeterlinck's play into an opera is important to understanding Moore's desire that Elgar compose an opera based on *Diarmuid and Grania* in the early 1900s. The composers' versions of *Pelléas et Mélisande* are also significant to the plans for an opera based on *The Countess Cathleen* that emerged in 1911, when Yeats was re-structuring the play completely. He was prompted to do so after attending what was billed as the first performance of *The Countess Cathleen* in England, one directed in a neo-medievalist style by Nugent Monck in Norwich along with *The Land of Heart's Desire* in February 1911.⁴⁷ James Flannery has asserted that Monck's production of *The Countess Cathleen* at the Abbey Theatre in December of that year was the most impressive production of the play to date: one in which Monck employed Edward Gordon Craig's experimental screens for the stage to great effect.⁴⁸ Yeats was in communication with the Italian composer Franco Leoni in the summer of 1911 with a view to *The Countess Cathleen* being produced as an opera in collaboration with Craig.⁴⁹ As with *Diarmuid and Grania*, no opera version of Yeats's play emerged in this instance, largely because by this stage Yeats's enthusiasm had waned for the chant experiments with Florence Farr that had preoccupied him in the early 1900s. The opportunity for the composition and the staging of *The Countess Cathleen* as an opera similar in stature to that of Debussy's version of *Pelléas et Mélisande* was lost because Moore was completely closed to experiment with chant that Yeats and Farr were developing, and Moore had also ruined *Diarmuid and Grania*—a tale from Irish mythology most suited to poetic drama—with his Zola-influenced realism. This left any possibility for a fruitful collaboration between Yeats, Farr, Campbell, and Elgar in composing an opera version of either *The Countess Cathleen* or *Diarmuid and Grania* effectively thwarted from the outset.

III—SETTING

The stage versions of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *The Countess Cathleen* from the 1890s share a number of important features in common. Both plays are set in forests and castles during an unspecified time in the past, with relatively little outward action. A heavy emphasis upon mystery, foreboding, and strange beauty is present in both works: forests are ominous places where characters find themselves lost or endangered. In the second scene of *Pelléas et Mélisande*,

Golaud finds himself lost in a forest when he has been hunting, unable to find his way out. There he encounters Mélisande by a spring; Mélisande herself is lost in this forest.⁵⁰ *The Countess Cathleen* opens in a cabin of the poor Irish countryman Shemus Rua (Red Seamus) in the middle of woods half hidden by twilight (TCC 1895, 69). Shemus describes the setting as “these famished woods” where his family is threatened with starvation (TCC 1895, 71). When the Countess Cathleen enters the cabin, she describes herself as the owner of “a long empty castle in these woods” (TCC 1895, 75–76). Like Golaud in the forest at the start of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the Countess Cathleen has also lost her way as she tries to find the castle before nightfall in the company of her nurse Oona, her bard Aleel, and some musicians (TCC 1895, 75–76). Shemus’s wife Maire tells the Countess that the castle she is searching for lies at the end of a tree-covered pathway “in malevolent woods” (TCC 1895, 76).

A sense of something sinister is also palpable in the first encounter between Golaud and Mélisande in the forest. She tells him that the shining thing that Golaud notices in the spring is a crown that was given to her which fell while she was sleeping. Yet she won’t say who it was that gave it to her and when Golaud offers to retrieve it for her, she says that she would rather die at once than take it again.⁵¹ When Mélisande asks him in what direction he would bring her after Golaud insists on taking her away from this spring in the wood—where at first she prefers to remain—Golaud is forced to admit that he does not know, as he too is lost.⁵² The significance of the crown that is lost in the spring remains undisclosed yet portentous throughout Maeterlinck’s play. The opening scene of Act II, with Pelléas and Mélisande at the Fountain of the Blind in the gardens of King Arkël’s estate, involves the loss of another jeweled object—the ring that Golaud has given Pelléas—in the waters of a spring.⁵³ This scene repeats the first encounter between Golaud and Pelléas in Act I. While neither a crown nor a ring appear in *The Countess Cathleen*, the demon merchants who enter Shemus’s cabin wear bands of gold around their foreheads and carry bags of gold coins with which to buy the souls of the starving Irish poor in Yeats’s version of the Faustian bargain (TCC 1895, 80). In the radically altered version of the play published in 1912,⁵⁴ Yeats set two scenes outside in the woods (represented as a painted scene). In the first of these, Shemus and his son Teig appear as the Countess looks for her house with Oona and Aleel; they give news of the men who have come into the area offering money for their souls. Frightened at their indifference to the destiny of their souls in life after death, the Countess orders her steward to sell all her possessions so as to pay the men and rescue the souls of the starving poor living among the woods (TCC 1912, 45–51).

Of course, woodlands have long been associated with danger, the unknown, and the supernatural in literature and folklore. In the case of *The Countess Cathleen*, for example, we can observe how the danger lurking in an

Irish wood recalls Irenæus's observation of the forest in Edmund Spenser's *A View of the State of Ireland* as the home of outlaws and rebels in sixteenth-century Ireland.⁵⁵ The characters' feelings of being lost in the forest both in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *The Countess Cathleen* disclose a fundamental sense of the proximity of death. The prospect of death through starvation is everywhere present in *The Countess Cathleen* and while there are just some fleeting references to people starving in the wood about the castle in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the suggestion of the imminence of death runs under the surface of the play, through the figure of Mélisande. This relates to Maeterlinck's idea of death in his essay, "The Pre-Destined," as the guide and the goal of human life: "Our death is the mould into which our life flows: it is death that has shaped our features."⁵⁶ This contradicts Ariane Murphy's contention that death is merely "the material face of the unknown" in all of Maeterlinck's early plays.⁵⁷ Death is an ontological rather than a material condition in the plays of Maeterlinck and Yeats; on this basis we can observe the ontological dimension to the forest settings in both plays.

The dislocation that these forest settings create in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *The Countess Cathleen* conjure the nature of "being" as Heidegger describes it subsequently in *Being and Time*. These settings bring forth Heidegger's idea of "Being-there" (*Dasein*) as one's most immediate encounter with the surrounding world. Even in the immediacy of this encounter, however, one experiences the surrounding environment as alien, as do the characters in the forest scenes in Maeterlinck and in Yeats's plays. Heidegger asserts that *Dasein* involves the experience of "Being-in-the-world" through what he names as the condition of being "not-at-home."⁵⁸ Mélisande's and the Countess Cathleen's homelessness relates not so much to their disconnection from a particular place as it does to their fundamental sense of belonging nowhere. Because of this, they experience *Dasein* in terms of that which Heidegger identifies as "like an alien voice."⁵⁹ As will be discussed further, Heidegger's idea of this "alien voice" is strikingly apparent in Maeterlinck's and Yeats's treatment of voice in both plays.

Pelléas et Mélisande takes place mostly within King Arkël's castle or on its grounds. All of Act II of the 1895 version of *The Countess Cathleen* takes place in the castle of the Countess. Castles in both plays are locations of authority, protection, and defense, dating back to medieval times. In this way they offer a counterpoint to the dangers of the forest. King Arkël's castle clearly represents male authority whereas that of the Countess appears more as a symbol of maternal protection in *The Countess Cathleen*.

Considered from this aspect, the Countess may be connected to the figure of the Virgin Mary, even when acknowledging Maud Gonne—the object of Yeats's love—as the primary inspiration for her character.⁶⁰ When the demon merchants knock on the door of Shemus Rua's cabin in Act I of the 1895

version of *The Countess Cathleen*, he kicks a small shrine of the Virgin Mary to pieces (TCC 1895, 80). This gave offence to Irish Catholics and was part of the motivation behind students of the Catholic University in Dublin (renamed the University College in 1880) disrupting the 1899 performance of the play in the Antient Concert Rooms. Shemus's act carries a strong undercurrent of Protestant iconoclasm and anti-Marian doctrine in Irish religious history.⁶¹ Set against the backdrop of famine in a remote part of Ireland, it would undoubtedly have brought to the minds of Irish Catholics the shrine of the Virgin that was erected in 1880 at the Catholic parish Church in the village of Knock, County Mayo, to mark the location where some villagers claimed to have witnessed an apparition of the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and St. John the Evangelist in August 1879. The village was located in one of the west of Ireland counties that was worst affected by the Famine of the 1840s and a county in which violent agitation by tenant farmers against landlords began in the late 1870s.

Yet if the Countess Cathleen might have brought to mind such landowners, it is important to observe that she functions in a similar manner to the Virgin shrine: a symbol of protection against the threats with which the local people living in cabins among the woods are faced. The demon merchants first see the Countess in the oratory of her castle, on the steps of the altar where she has fallen asleep during prayer. The second merchant tells the other that they should leave quickly in case she should awaken and resume her prayers, thereby causing them to "half stifle" (TCC 1895, 112). The concluding scene of the 1895 version of the play invites the Irish audience to regard the Countess in death as a type of Virgin Mary figure,⁶² suggesting an association with the apparition in Knock. It is one in which the darkness that has fallen is broken by a bright light that shows peasants kneeling upon the rocky slopes of a mountain, surrounded in storm cloud and flashes of lightning. Half within this light and half outside stand angels, one of whom tells Aleel that the Countess has been taken to Heaven, where the Virgin Mary has kissed her lips (TCC 1895, 154–55).

If the Countess and her ancient castle are intended as figures of maternal feminine protection against the threats that come from the surrounding woods in the form of famine and demons seeking to take possession of people's souls, it is the opposite with Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Brought by Golaud from the forest into the castle of King Arkël, she is unsettling to Geneviève, mother of Golaud and Mélisande, when Geneviève speaks of her to the old King as a "stranger out of the wood" and a "child out of the forest."⁶³ The audience's sense of the mysterious quality of Mélisande's personality is deepened in the delight that she shows at the forest surrounding the palace, particularly when Geneviève discloses to her that there are parts of this forest that are hardly ever reached by sunlight.⁶⁴ The disturbance that Mélisande's presence brings to the palace (already haunted by past events that are not made clear in

the play) connects intimately to her experience of having been brought from the darkness of the forest. In this respect at least, *Pelléas et Mélisande* may be regarded as closer in theme (if not in mood) to Moore and Yeats's *Diarmuid and Grania* than to *The Countess Cathleen*.

Just as several scenes in *Pelléas et Mélisande* are set in the castle hall, so Act I of *Diarmuid and Grania* takes place entirely in the banqueting hall of Tara, residence of the High King of Ireland in ancient times. At first the audience encounters serving men preparing the hall for the wedding banquet of Finn MacCool, chief of the brotherhood of the Fianna, and Grania, the daughter of King Cormac. Plans for the wedding feast are thrown into disrepute when Grania's mother, the druidess Laban, tells her daughter of Diarmuid, Finn's close companion, who will be coming to Tara for the occasion. Grania tells her mother that she would run into the woods to escape the marriage-bed of Finn, even though the woods are full of wolves and are lonely (*VPl* 1178–79). In the final Act, the audience encounters Diarmuid among the woods, on the slopes of Ben Bulbin mountain in County Sligo on the Irish west coast. Here Diarmuid and Grania disclose the madness of their love for one another as Finn and the Fianna advance upon Diarmuid. Grania tells Diarmuid his love for her “had become a sickness, a madness,” convinced as Diarmuid became that Grania's desire for reconciliation between the former comrades disguised her sexual desire for Finn. In desperation, Grania tells Diarmuid to kill her (*CW2* 596–97). The original magic potion through which Laban had drugged the party into sleep, in order to enable Grania make her escape with Diarmuid in Act I, returns in the form of Diarmuid's delirium among the woods and his death from the wound inflicted by a wild boar in the final act (*CW2* 602–07). As with *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the authority and protection that the castle building offers is finally destroyed by the dangers coming from the forest in Moore and Yeats's play.

IV—VOICE AND MOVEMENT

In conjunction with music and setting, the voices of actors speaking their lines in a poetic manner is another feature that displays the close affinities of Yeats's drama with that of Maeterlinck in the late 1890s and early 1900s. This is particularly evident in the voices of Cathleen, Aleel, and Oona from *The Countess Cathleen* when compared with the dialogue between Pelléas and Mélisande in Maeterlinck's play. Performed by Anna Mathers to the admiration of Joyce, Oona chants to Cathleen a song in a voice that is “thin with age:”

Who will go drive with Fergus now,
And pierce the deep wood's woven shade,
And dance upon the level shore?

Young man, lift up your russet brow,
 And lift your tender eyelids, maid,
 And brood on hopes and fear no more. (TCC 1895, 98)

The metrical pattern of each line in this sestet is consistently that of iambic tetrameter, the first three lines rhyming with the second three lines according to an “a-b-c” pattern. This end-line rhyme scheme frames a consonant sound (“shade” and “maid”) with vowel sounds (“now” and “shore” rhyming with “brow” and “more”). There is extensive internal alliteration: “who,” “will,” “wood’s,” “woven” in lines one and two; “drive,” “deep,” “dance” in lines one, two and three; “level,” “lift” (twice), “eyelids” in lines three, four and five; “brow,” “brood,” “hopes,” “no,” and “more” in lines four and six. These sound-patterns lend themselves to the type of chant that Yeats was hoping to develop in the performance of the plays, particularly when we listen to the verse with an ear to the anaphoric “And” at the beginning of lines two, three, five and six. The image that Yeats evokes here of “the wood’s woven shade” delicately entwines two images: that of the trees of the forest and their branches breaking up the light of sun or moon to cast shadows, and that woven image of scenes from Irish mythology depicted in tapestries in the castle hall (TCC 1895, 94). Through the verse sound-pattern, in which both the image and the tapestry on which is its figured are conveyed, Oona’s chant conjures not only the poignant feeling of a world that has past, but equally a strange sense of this enchanted world disclosing itself through the very act of pronouncing it.

For the most part, Maeterlinck does not write in verse form. Nonetheless, aspects of the sound-pattern that we encounter in Oona’s song from *The Countess Cathleen* are evident in the original French version of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Significant in this context is Frank Fay’s remark in a letter to Yeats of January 21, 1903, that French declamation in drama always sounded like chanting to English ears.⁶⁵ In the crucial opening scene of Act II, when Pelléas and Mélisande are alone together at the old abandoned Fountain of the Blind, the following dialogue occurs as Mélisande looks into the fountain. It is necessary to cite the passage in its original French version in order to observe the sound-patterns involved:

PELLÉAS:	Prenez garde! prenez garde!—Vous allez tomber!—Avec quoi jouez-vous?
MÉLISANDE:	Avec l’anneau qu’il m’a donné...
PELLÉAS:	Prenez garde; vous allez le perdre...
MÉLISANDE:	Non, non, je suis sûre de mes mains...
PELLÉAS:	Ne jouez pas ainsi, au-dessus d’une eau si profonde...
MÉLISANDE:	Mes mains ne tremblent pas.
PELLÉAS:	Comme il brille au soleil!—Ne le jetez pas si haut vers le ciel... ⁶⁶

While not in verse form such as that we are given in Oona's song, aspects of sound-pattern here are poetically evocative of the invisible world upon which the scene touches. Pelléas's "allez le perdre" is partly rhymed in his "eau si profonde;" Mélisande's "de mes mains" is half-rhymed in her "ne tremblent pas." Internal rhyme appears in line five of this passage in "ainsi" and "eau si." "Prenez garde" is repeated three times and Pelléas also repeats "vous allez." Likewise, Mélisande repeats "mes mains" in lines four and six. The first line carries alliteration in "vous aller" and "avec quoi." Pelléas's "ne jouez pas" in line five is echoed in his "ne le jetez pas" in line seven. His "prenez" rhymes with "allez" in the first and third lines of this dialogue. We also encounter alliteration in Pelléas's "tomber" in line one, "profonde" in line five, and Mélisande's "tremblent" in line six; Pelléas's "prenez" and "perdre" in line three. The effect of these sound-patterns in dialogue is to heighten in the listener a feeling that something is happening in the scene beyond the minimal gestures and movement. They deepen the portentous significance of the ring that Mélisande holds and the well into which she looks, conveying a moment of destiny in which the circular form of the dark well enters into relation with the circular form of the bright ring that Golaud has given Mélisande. Just before the dialogue quoted, Pelléas notes that it was also at a fountain that his brother Golaud first found Mélisande. After she has lost the ring, Mélisande observes that "Il n'y a plus qu'un grand cercle sur l'eau [there is only a circle on the water]." These aspects accentuate the circular pattern of the scene.⁶⁷ Its minimal degree of movement thus allows the pose of Pelléas and Mélisande at the well to disclose an invisible movement that the rhythms of their words connote. Katharine Worth notes that Debussy's opera version of the play stresses the rhythmic structure of its dialogue to audiences by heightening its "significant repetitions, hesitations, pauses, tailings away."⁶⁸ Yet in order to be so effective, the gaps and fadings in the dialogue rely upon the circular patterns of sound-rhyme.

During the first encounter between Cathleen and the merchants in Act II of the 1895 version of *The Countess Cathleen* that was performed in 1899, Yeats also conveys a foreboding sense of something disturbing taking place at an invisible level. Whereas the dialogue between Pelléas and Mélisande achieves its effect through a rhythm that employs poetic features such as alliteration, half-rhyme and repetition, Yeats's characters speak fully in verse-form. The effect is not quite the same as that we find in Maeterlinck's play, though it is directed to the same end: the disclosure of an invisible spiritual movement through the speaking voice.

CATHLEEN

There is something, merchant, in your voice
That makes me fear. When you were telling how

A man may lose his soul and lose his God,
 Your eyes lighted, and the strange weariness
 That hangs about you vanished. When you told
 How my poor money serves the people—both—
 Merchants, forgive me—seemed to smile.

FIRST MERCHANT

Man's sins
 Move us to laughter only, we have seen
 So many lands and seen so many men.
 How strange that all these people should be swung
 As on a lady's shoe-string — under them
 The glowing leagues of never-ending flame.

CATHLEEN

There is something in you that I fear:
 A something not of us. (*TCC* 1895, 124–25)

Except for the opening and closing lines, the speech is in iambic pentameter throughout this dialogue. The sound-pattern is rich in poetic devices of alliteration, internal and end-line half-rhyme, and repetition, lending itself to the chant-like delivery towards which Yeats aspired. In Cathleen's speech above, the first three lines end in the half-rhyme of "voice," "how," and "God," with half-rhyme recurring at the end of lines five and six in "told" and "both." Lines two and three of the first merchant's speech end in the half-rhyme of "seen" and "men," while the three lines that follow end in the half-rhyme of "swung," "them," and "flame." Cathleen's speech also carries internal half-rhymes: "lose," "soul," and "God" in line three; "lighted" and "vanished" in lines four and five; and "people" and "smile" in lines six and seven. Her speech is also full of alliteration: "makes me" and "man may" in lines two and three; "poor" and "people" in line six; and "seemed" and "smile" in line seven.

These sound-patterns are underwritten by the repetition of "merchant" in line one as "Merchants" in line seven and, above all, by the repetition of Cathleen's opening words to the merchants in this passage—"something, merchant, in your voice"—as "something in you that I fear," in her response to the merchant's speech. The attention that she directs to the sound of the merchant's voice in this instance points to the voice itself as that from which the movement in the play arises. The uncanny element that Cathleen hears in the voice of the merchant alerts us not simply to the alien nature of his presence in her castle. It also indicates a strange quality in the very condition of being itself that prepares for the confounding disclosure of *Dasein* in the form of Cathleen's ultimate, incomprehensible sacrifice: the sacrifice of her own soul.

Like *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *The Countess Cathleen* unfolds the movement towards this singular event—Cathleen’s sacrifice of sacrifice itself, so to speak—precisely through a reduction of physical movement on stage to a limited series of actions throughout. These include the appearance of the merchants on the threshold of Sheamus and Maire’s cabin in Act I; Oona’s soothing of Cathleen’s worries in the castle of the Countess in Act II; the warnings of the gardener and of the peasants, and the appearance of the merchants outside the oratory in which Cathleen has fallen asleep in prayer. Finally in Act III, there is the scene of the merchants paying gold for the souls of the peasants before the intervention of the Countess, followed by her death and the appearance of an angel, announcing that she has been taken to Heaven. In the 1911 version of the play that Craig produced, this action was reduced even further in order to allow the symbolism of voice and movement to appear with greater sharpness.

To appreciate what Yeats was attempting through the verse-form of speech in *The Countess Cathleen*, it is helpful to note some comments in his 1902 piece, “Speaking to the Psalter.” Believing that one could get “an endless variety of expression” from speaking to a single note that was sounded faintly on the psalter, Yeats regards the performance of his poetic drama, and Florence Farr speaking his verse to the accompaniment of Arnold Dolmetsch’s psalter, as an attempt to realize a new kind of drama. This would be one in which the abundance of characters, movement, speech, and conversation in performances of his time would eventually be replaced by a type of performance in which all the movement and variety within a play arose out of the voice (CW4 15–16). As in the plays of Maeterlinck, what physical movement did occur would acquire deeper significance in allowing the words of the speakers to bring hidden realities to light. *The Countess Cathleen* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* would require not only a new kind of speaking, but also a new kind of hearing.

To what end? For Yeats and Maeterlinck, their new form of Symbolist drama was directed to the end of disclosing the movements of the immortal soul within time, movements that occur within speech itself. This does not necessarily require of the audience any particular religious belief in order to be appreciated, however. The speech forms through which the spiritual movement of both plays are disclosed approximate to Heidegger’s view of “poetical” discourse as a form of language in which the disclosure of existence itself is the end.⁶⁹ When Yeats writes of the new art that he envisages having to “train its hearers as well as its speakers,” he anticipates a theme that Heidegger takes up later in the idea of hearkening. This is a form of listening in which speech and hearing are existentially possible: meaning that what is spoken and what is heard are disposed to one another in a primordial manner.⁷⁰ In the unsaid of what is spoken, this predisposition of speaking to hearing becomes most manifest.

In the second scene of the final Act of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, just after she has given birth to a child and soon before she dies, King Arkël tells Mélisande that he does not understand what she says. She replies as follows: “Je ne comprends pas plus tout ce que je dis, voyez-vous... Je ne sais pas ce que je dis... Je ne sais pas ce que je sais... Je ne dis plus ce que je veux...”⁷¹ The king admits that he does not understand Mélisande, while Mélisande admits that she does not understand what she says and that she does not know what she knows. Instead of misunderstanding, this exchange presents the audience with an instance of hearkening. Heidegger alludes to a German proverb: “Wer nich hören kann, muss fühlen” [he who cannot heed, must feel]. He suggests it may well be that the one who “cannot hear” is the one who hearkens.⁷² *The Countess Cathleen* intimates this strongly through Oona in Act II of the 1895 version: the old nurse who is deaf on one side, yet who understands the words of the Countess more deeply than anyone else. In Maeterlinck’s work, the pauses between her utterances form an important element in Mélisande’s response to King Arkël’s confusion, as she speaks of knowing what she does not know. Allowing the mystery of her words to crystallize more luminously out of the silence from whence they arise, they anticipate Heidegger’s idea of silence as a fundamental ontological condition of speech. Heidegger suggests that one who retains silence may allow understanding to emerge more profoundly than one who speaks without pause.⁷³ The pauses that intervene between the phrases that Mélisande utters to the King allow the nature of her knowledge—of what she does not know—to announce itself. This is the movement of her spirit between birth—that of her new child—and her imminent death. Likewise, it is not what the merchant says but the way that he says it that frightens the Countess in the Act II passage quoted above. The Countess Cathleen hears the element of the unspoken in the words of the merchant. Hers is a form of listening in which the speaking and the hearing are attuned to one another in a primordial manner, disclosing the spiritual movement in the speech that is voiced.

V—MAETERLINCK AFTER *THE COUNTESS CATHLEEN*

Theatre audiences in Ireland and England grew more aware of the close associations of Maeterlinck’s drama with that of Yeats after the Dublin 1899 performance of *The Countess Cathleen* and the Dublin performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* the following year. In a piece published on Yeats and the new Irish theatre movement in the Literary Supplement of *The Irish Times* in January 1905, the writer welcomes the new experiment with scenic art towards which Yeats works. In the process, he compares Yeats’s idea of light reflected out of

mirrors to that of paper scenery used in a Paris production of Maeterlinck's *Joyzelle*; to the London performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* behind a gauze veil; and to the opera version of Maeterlinck's play with colored electric lighting.⁷⁴ A number of commentators responded to the short plays of the new Irish Theatre movement in the early 1900s in terms of Maeterlinck's influence. In the spring of 1906, a review appeared in *The Manchester Guardian* of a performance at the Midland Hall of Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*, together with Yeats and Lady Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and Gregory's *Spreading the News*. The reviewer wrote of the obvious debt to Maeterlinck's *L'Intruse* (*The Intruder*) in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*.⁷⁵ Commenting on the composure and rhythm of the Irish plays in a further piece published in the same newspaper two days later, the reviewer wrote that Maeterlinck—"of whom the Irish theatre so often reminds you"—uses the same techniques more full in *L'Intérieur* (*The Interior*).⁷⁶ Following a Belfast performance of Yeats's *The Hour-Glass* along with Lady Gregory's *Hyacinth Halvey* and *Spreading the News*, Yeats's play reminded *The Irish News* reviewer of Maeterlinck's "beautiful dramatic forms."⁷⁷ Most notable of all was the positive response to the first foreign play performed at the Abbey Theatre, Maeterlinck's *L'Intérieur*, which was staged in English as *The Interior* on Saturday, March 16, 1907, along with Yeats's *On Baile's Strand*, and Yeats and Gregory's *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Describing the play as "unutterably sad," *The Irish Times* expressed the view that it was the finest performance that Frank Fay had delivered to date, in his role of the Old Man: a performance in which he "excelled all previous efforts by the depth of feeling and perfection of expression with which he delivered his lines."⁷⁸ The W. J. Henderson newspaper cuttings hold another review, possibly from the *Dublin Daily Express* or *The Freeman's Journal*, extolling the excellence of this same performance of *L'Intérieur* as a "complete and triumphant success." Once again, Fay's performance as the Old Man is singled out for adulation: "If M. Maeterlinck could have seen him play, he would have said, 'That is exactly how it should be, and no other way.'"⁷⁹

Of all the plays that Yeats wrote in later years, *At the Hawk's Well* (1916) is the one in which the legacy of Maeterlinck is most evident. As we have seen, the two most crucial encounters in *Pelléas et Mélisande* take place by a well: Golaud's first discovery of Mélisande by a well among the woods in the second scene of Act I; and Mélisande accidentally dropping the ring that Golaud had given her into the old abandoned well known as the Fountain of the Blind in the company of Pelléas during first scene of Act II. Likewise Yeats's play is set in a remote spot where lies an old abandoned well and an Old Man waiting beside it in the hope that one day its waters would flow again (a reminder of Frank Fay as the Old Man in the Dublin 1907 performance of *The Interior*). The repetition of Golaud's first encounter with Mélisande in the scene of Pelléas with Mélisande at the Fountain of the Blind associates the well symbolically with the destiny of

Mélisande that unfolds in Maeterlinck's play. The destiny of the Old Man who waits by the well in the presence of the silent Guardian of the Well is entirely tied up with the flow of water in *At the Hawk's Well*. While waiting over fifty years for the water of the well to flow miraculously, on three occasions he awoke suddenly from sleep to find that its stones were wet (VPI 406). The theme of blindness, suggested by the Fountain of the Blind in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, is taken up in the blank gaze of the Guardian of the Well who remains completely silent when the Old Man speaks to her (VPI 402). In her silence, and the cry of the Hawk that is not hers but the spirit of the Woman of the Sidhe speaking through her, the Guardian of the Well recollects Maeterlinck's Mélisande, both in the extended silences that intervene in her speech and in her knowledge of what she does not know, as she says to King Arkël in the final scene of Maeterlinck's play. As with the silence of the Guardian of the Well in *At the Hawk's Well*, Mélisande's silences draw attention to being in its most fundamental aspect: that which Heidegger names as *Dasein*. Her silences heighten the audience's sense that she is destined to die. In this respect, Mélisande not only embodies Heidegger's assertion that the nature of *Dasein* is that of Being-towards-death. She also exemplifies Heidegger's claim that awakening to the nature of Being-there is experienced as a "call": a call that appears uncanny by *keeping silent*.⁸⁰ Mélisande's silences are just as much a disclosure of Being-there as are the words that she utters and the voice through which she utters them.

The hidden moment of the flow of the well's waters, disclosed through the Hawk dance in *At the Hawk's Well*, recalls the hidden power of this destiny that is also disclosed momentarily in Golaud's ring falling into the well in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Both are moments of loss:

PELLÉAS: I think I see it glitter...
 MÉLISANDE: My ring?
 PELLÉAS: Yes, yes; see there!...
 MÉLISANDE: Oh, it is too deep—no, no; that is not
 it!... That is not it!... It is lost, lost —
 there is only a circle on the water... what
 can we do?... What are we to do now?...⁸¹

The sense of a profound spiritual movement having occurred here is also present in the lamentation of the Old Man when he awakens from sleep to discover once again that the stones of the well are wet:

The stones are dark and yet the well is empty;
 The water flowed and emptied while I slept.
 You have deluded me my whole life through,
 Accursed dancers, you have stolen my life. (VPI 411)

In both instances the audience encounters what Heidegger describes as the “moment of vision.” Apart from Mélisande dropping her ring, nothing really happens in either scene: certainly nothing spectacular as audiences might expect for theatrical sensation. Yet this is precisely what Heidegger means by a moment of vision: one in which nothing can occur but one in which we encounter for the first time what can be “in a time.”⁸² These moments are, in other words, those in which the condition for happening itself is brought into view. In this aspect, the profound consonance of Maeterlinck’s vision of drama with that of Yeats, a consonance most strongly felt between *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *The Countess Cathleen*, finds its most compelling expression. It is one that illustrates how profoundly both dramatists anticipated the revolutionary interpretation of the nature of being that Heidegger set out in *Being and Time* over thirty years after these plays received their earliest performances.

Notes

1. Maurice Maeterlinck, “The Awakening of the Soul,” in *The Treasure of the Humble*, trans. Alfred Sutro (London: George Allen, 1897), 25–26.
2. Maeterlinck, “Awakening,” 32.
3. Quoted in Katharine Worth, *The Irish Drama of Europe From Yeats to Beckett* (1978) (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 12.
4. *The Countess Cathleen*, in W. B. Yeats, *Poems* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895). As John P. Harrington states, the May 1899 performance of this play was an important break with theatrical practices of the time, particularly the theatre scene in Dublin. Harrington, “The Founding Years and the Irish National Theatre That Was Not,” in *A Century of Irish Drama: Widening the Stage*, eds. Stephen Watt, Eileen Morgan and Shakir Mustafa (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2000), 3.
5. James W. Flannery, *W. B. Yeats and the Idea of a Theatre* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976), 142–44.
6. Effective production is a crucial matter for these plays in particular. Worth notes Max Beer-bohm’s remark on audiences tittering during the romantic scene of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, when Mélisande releases her long hair over the tower in King Arkël’s castle. She surmises that such moments were probably fairly common because of the overly elaborate, heavy productions of Maeterlinck’s plays that were given so often. See Worth, *Irish Drama*, 144.
7. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1962), trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 321.
8. Five years prior to “The Reform of the Theatre,” Arthur Symons criticized restless physical movement in drama even more emphatically than Yeats when he recalled it having once been said that action was “only a way of spoiling something” in performance. Symons, “Ballet, Pantomime, and Poetic Drama,” *The Dome*, 1 (1898), 69.
9. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892), in Maeterlinck, *Oeuvres II: Théâtre*, Tome 1 (Bruxelles: Editions complex, 1999), 374.
10. Maeterlinck, *Aglavaine et Sélysette* (1896), in Maeterlinck, *Oeuvres II*, 619.
11. Maeterlinck, *Sœur Béatrice* (1901), in Maeterlinck, *Oeuvres II*, 51, 54.
12. Maeterlinck, *La Princesse Maleine* (1889), in Maeterlinck, *Oeuvres II*, 85, 112, 123, 186, 189, 214, 225.

13. Maeterlinck, *Les Aveugles* (1890), in Maeterlinck, *Oeuvres II*, 310.
14. Quoted in Flannery, *W. B. Yeats*, 125. Yeats's phrase, reiterated at the end of "The Tragic Theatre" when he writes of tragic art as "the drowner of dykes," derives from an observation that Maeterlinck, "Awakening," 29, makes concerning characters in Racine's drama: "Racine's characters have no knowledge of themselves beyond the words with which they express themselves, and not one of these words can pierce the dykes that keep back the sea."
15. Joseph Holloway, *Joseph Holloway's Abbey Theatre: A Selection from His Unpublished Journal "Impressions of a Dublin Playgoer"* (1967), eds. Robert Hogan, Michael J. O'Neill and Harry T. Moore (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009), 59.
16. Holloway, *Abbey Theatre*, 59.
17. Roger Nichols and Richard Langham Smith, *Claude Debussy: Pelléas et Mélisande* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5–6.
18. Nichols and Smith, *Claude Debussy*, 6.
19. See Robert Orledge, *Debussy and the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 57–8.
20. Worth, *Irish Drama*, 28.
21. Lady Augusta Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Diaries, 1892–1902*, ed. James Pethica (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1996), 152–53.
22. Quoted in Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 119.
23. "At Pelleas and Melisande," *The Irish Times*, Aug. 28, 1900, 6.
24. "Pelleas and Melisande," at the Theatre Royal," *The Irish Times*, Aug. 27, 1900, 6.
25. Worth, *Irish Drama*, 41.
26. See Jean-Michel Nectoux, *Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, trans. Roger Nichols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 513–14.
27. See *Beltaine*, vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1899), 2.
28. Ronald Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 16, 28.
29. Ariane Murphy, "Yeats's and Maeterlinck's Dramatic Symbolism," *The Yeats Journal of Koorae*, 52 (2017), 74–75.
30. Describing the intervention of George Moore, Adrian Frazier relies on Moore's humorously mocking description of Yeats and Farr's rehearsals for *The Countess Cathleen* in "Ave," volume one of Moore's autobiography *Hail and Farewell!* See Frazier, *George Moore, 1852–1933* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 269–70.
31. The Catholic University, founded in Dublin by John Henry Newman in 1854, was re-formed after 1880 when the Royal University of Ireland was created, providing accreditation to degrees awarded at the Catholic University, after which it was renamed as University College Dublin (UCD).
32. Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels*, 36–37. Stanislaus Joyce writes of James sitting down at the piano and singing "the melancholy chant" to which he had set Yeats's lines from *The Countess Cathleen* to his younger brother Georgie, who was then in an advanced stage of illness and close to death. Stanislaus Joyce, *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years*, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: the Viking Press, 1958), 134.
33. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922), The Bodley Head edn. (London: Penguin, 1992), 6.
34. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 135–36.
35. "The Irish Literary Theatre," reprinted in *The Abbey Theatre: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. E. H. Mikhail (London: Macmillan, 1988), 8.
36. Jacqueline Genet, "Words for Music Perhaps": le "new art" de Yeats / "Words for Music Perhaps": Yeats's "new art" (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2010), 45.

37. Jerrold Northop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 354.
38. Frazier, *George Moore*, 303.
39. W. B. Yeats and George Moore, *Diarmuid and Grania: Manuscript Materials*, ed. J. C. C. Mays (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), xxxiv.
40. See Yeats and Moore, *Diarmuid and Grania: Manuscript Materials*, xxxiv; Northop Moore, *Edward Elgar*, 354.
41. Quoted by Mays in Yeats and Moore, *Diarmuid and Grania: Manuscript Materials*, xl.
42. Moore to Elgar, Sat. 7 Sept., 1901, in Eileen Kennedy, "George Moore to Edward Elgar: Eighteen Letters on *Diarmuid and Grania* and Operatic Dreams," *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1978), 171–72.
43. Raphaël Ingelbien, "Symbolism at the Periphery: Yeats, Maeterlinck, and Cultural Nationalism," *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 42, no. 3 (2005), 183–204.
44. Nichols and Langham Smith, *Claude Debussy*, 30.
45. Walter Frisch, *The Early Works of Arnold Schoenberg, 1893–1908* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 158.
46. Frisch, *Early Works*, 160.
47. Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels*, 291.
48. Flannery, *W. B. Yeats*, 273–74.
49. See *Life* 1, 440.
50. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande*, trans. Erving Winslow (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1894), 20–22.
51. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande* (1894), 22–23.
52. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande* (1894), 26.
53. The name Arkél is also spelled as Arkél or Arkel in various French-language and English-language editions of Maeterlinck's play. For the purposes of this essay, I use the original spelling.
54. W. B. Yeats, *The Countess Cathleen*, in *Poems* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912); hereafter TCC 1912.
55. Edmund Spenser, *A View of the State of Ireland: From the First Printed Edition (1633)*, eds. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 57.
56. Maeterlinck, "Awakening," 52.
57. Murphy, "Dramatic Symbolism," 65.
58. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 233.
59. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 321.
60. Discussing Yeats's late poem, "The Circus Animals' Desertion," Helen Vendler observes that although the original thought of Maud Gonne and Yeats's love for her may have prompted the original composition of *The Countess Cathleen*, this thought and feeling "are translated into concern about the fictional Countess." Vendler, *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 274.
61. For an absorbing reflection on the continuing legacy of this pattern in poetry from the period of the Northern Irish Troubles, see, Gail McConnell, *Northern Irish Poetry and Theology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
62. At first taking the demon merchants simply as merchants selling meal, the Countess gives thanks "to God, to Mary, and the Angels" that she has money to buy meal from them to feed the poor (TCC 1895, 122). Before entering the oratory at the end of Act II she turns to the peasants and says, "Mary queen of angels / And all you clouds on clouds of saints, farewell" (130). Typical of Yeats, the line can be read in two completely opposing ways: the Countess identifying with the figure of the Mary as queen of Heaven; or the Countess saying farewell

to Mary and the communion of saints. Interpreted in the first way, the line is deeply Catholic; interpreted in the second, it is deeply Protestant.

63. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande* (1894), 29.
64. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande* (1894), 31.
65. Quoted in Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels*, 120.
66. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892), 389. Erving Winslow translates the passage as follows:
 PÉLLÉAS: Take care, take care!—you will fall in!—What have you playing with there?
 MÉLISANDE: The ring that he gave me.
 PÉLLÉAS: Take care, you will lose it...
 MÉLISANDE: No, no, my hands are steady...
 PÉLLÉAS: Do not play with it, where the water is so deep...
 MÉLISANDE: My hold is secure.
 PÉLLÉAS: How it shines in the sun!—Do not throw it up so in the sky..." (Winslow 39–40)
67. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892), 388.
68. Worth, *Irish Drama*, 22.
69. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 205.
70. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 207–08.
71. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892), 444–45; for the translation see Winslow 124.
72. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 207.
73. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 208.
74. "Mr. Yeats on the Irish Theatre," *The Irish Times Weekly Edition Literary Supplement*, Jan. 6, 1905, W. J. Henderson Press Cuttings, NLI MS 1730.
75. C. E. N., Review, *The Manchester Guardian*, April 23, 1906; W. J. Henderson Press Cuttings, NLI MS 1730.
76. C. E. N., Review, *The Manchester Guardian*, April 25, 1906, W. J. Henderson Press Cuttings, NLI MS 1730.
77. Review of *The Hour-Glass*, *Hyacinth Halvey* and *Spreading the News*, *The Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, Dec. 4, 1908, W. J. Henderson Press Cuttings, NLI MS 1731.
78. "Abbey Theatre," *The Irish Times*, Mar. 18, 1907, 10.
79. F. M. A., "Maeterlinck Play at the Abbey Theatre," W. J. Henderson Press Cuttings, NLI MS 1730.
80. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 322.
81. Maeterlinck, *Pelléas and Mélisande* (1894), 41.
82. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 338.