

Greg Wilson  
English 5540 - Annotated Bibliography  
March 22, 2004

Another example: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/annotated\\_bibliographies.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/annotated_bibliographies.html)

Annotated Bibliography of Recent Scholarship on W. B. Yeats

**Stubbings, Diane. *Anglo-Irish Modernism and the Maternal*. New York: Palgrave, 2000.**

This book is an in-depth study of the role and cultural representations of mother-figures in Irish history and literature. Stubbings observes that although a “suffering” Nationalist-Mother-Madonna figure appears often in Yeats’ drama and prose fiction, mother-figures are largely absent from his early poetry. She notes that literal and figurative absences of mother-figures legitimates the authority of father-figures in *The Countess Cathleen*, “Adam’s Curse,” “The Magi,” “The Dolls,” and *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. Although acknowledging that mother-figures often generate myth and creativity, Stubbings provides numerous instances in which the child/poem creation process within Yeats’ work displaces the mother and fosters patriarchal claims to lineage.

**Daruwala, Maneck H. “Yeats and the Mask of Deirdre: ‘That love is all we need.’” *Colby Quarterly* 37 (2001): 247-66.**

This article analyzes two companion plays, *Deirdre* and *The King’s Threshold* that opened shortly following the marriage of Yeats’ first love, Maud Gonne. Daruwala emphasizes the fairy tale elements of *Deirdre* and its portrayal of a female courage that is superior to the courage of the men in the play. Daruwala claims that *Deirdre*’s all female chorus displaces the magical power of a male-identified wisdom, and Deirdre ironically triumphs over Conchubar by appealing to his misogyny. The essay provides useful details about correspondence between Yeats and Gonne that reveals their anger regarding the “servile legal status” of Irish women.

**Holderidge, Jefferson. *Those Mingled Seas: The Poetry of W. B. Yeats, the Beautiful and the Sublime*. Dublin: U College Dublin P, 2000.**

This book plunges deep into aesthetic theory and discusses Yeats’ attempts to eroticize the idea of the divine. Holderidge details Yeats’ desire to unite the experience of terrible beauty (coded as feminine) with the experience of the terrible sublime (coded as masculine). He claims that violent conflict lies at the heart of these gendered pursuits that merge tragedy and joy while striving for unity of being and unity of culture. The book focuses primarily on Yeats’ poetry while addressing issues of creative violence and the positive and negative aspects of the sublime.

**Moloney, Karen M. “Molly Astray: Revisioning Ireland in Brian Friel’s *Molly Sweeney*.” *Twentieth-Century Literature* 46 (2000): 285-310.**

The essay discusses female characters representing the Cathleen Ni Houlihan figure in two late twentieth-century works by Brian Friel, *Translations* and *Molly Sweeney*. Moloney notes that Cathleen represents Ireland in both Yeats’s and Friel’s works, but in these later works, the Cathleen figure does not necessarily demand sacrifice by the Irish male. Moloney also summarizes the eighteenth-century and pre-Christian literary genealogy of the Cathleen figure.

**Aimone, Joseph O. “Undressing Crazy Jane: Queer Acts from Yeats to Hollywood and Mine.”** *Straight With A Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality*. Ed. Calvin Thomas. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000. 232-51.

Aimone’s essay studies Yeats’ Crazy Jane poems from an angle that examines masculine attributes in a female character. However, Aimone observes that Jane’s masculine attributes appear in the context of her relationship with a man, so that Jane can be read as a transvestite gay man. Ironically, the essay effectively queers certain Yeatsian texts without attempting to queer Yeats. Aimone’s argument is complex at times, but he offers a unique and compelling reading of a prominent figure in Yeats’ later poetry.

**Dillon, Brian. “Yeats’s ‘Helen Poems’ and the Conundrum of Biographically-Based Criticism.”** *Genre* 34 (2001): 63-80.

Dillon challenges traditional interpretive links between Maud Gonne and appearances of the mythological Helen in Yeats’ poetry. Allegorical comparisons are almost always fraught with difficulties, and this obstacle aides Dillon’s thesis as he complicates both Homer’s ambiguous portrayal of Helen and Yeats’ often conflicting attitudes toward Gonne. The essay provides a limited biography on Gonne, and it explores Yeats’ skepticism toward a beauty that inspires political action. Dillon is critical of anthologies that simply assert that Helen is Maud Gonne, and he examines poems that both embrace and resist the poet’s private attraction to Gonne while condemning her external political action.

**McKinsey, Martin. “Classicism and Colonial Retrenchment.”** *Twentieth-Century Literature* 48 (2002): 174-90.

Excluding postcolonial issues, this article discusses Petrarchan images of an idealized woman through the eyes of Yeats’ Classicism or Hellenism. The article focuses primarily on “No Second Troy,” which, McKinsey argues, equates Maud Gonne with the stern femininity of a militant Greek goddess. McKinsey’s dissertation, “Hybrid Hellenisms: Cultural Difference and Identity in Yeats, Cavafy and Walcott,” also focuses on this topic.

**Chaudry, Yug Mohit. *Yeats, the Irish Literary Revival and the Politics of Print*. Cork: Cork UP, 2001.**

This work functions somewhat like a textbook that promotes socio-historical and bibliographical approaches to Yeats. It begins by examining “September 1913” in the historical and bibliographical context of its original publication, which contrast anthologized versions of the poem that produce what Chaudry describes as institutionalized “misreadings.” The next chapters re-place Yeats’ *fin de siècle* writings back into the ephemeral publications in which they originally appeared; the book then examines the engagement of these texts with certain editors and publishers in their related socio-political environments.

**Bornstein, George.** *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

Bornstein's chapter "How to Read a Page: Modernism and Material Textuality" approaches Modernist texts by emphasizing bibliographic codes, examining texts as processes, and by resisting notions of an authorized version of any given text. The book examines the textual history of Yeats' "September 1913," "When You Are Old," and *The Tower*.

**Paul, Catherine E.** *Poetry in the Museums of Modernism: Yeats Pound Moore Stein.* Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2002.

Paul offers a case study that treats poetic expression as a museum display in which the placement of objects within a display encodes the items presented similar to how bibliographic codes influence readings of literature. Accordingly, Paul devotes a chapter of the book to representations of Yeats' poetry in the Municipal Gallery in Dublin. The chapter discusses both Yeats' and the museum's shared goal to elevate the artistic tastes of Irish audiences and foster Irish national identity through art.

**Campbell, Matthew.** "Yeats in the Coming Times." *Essays in Criticism* 53 (2003): 10-32.

This piece examines how "To Ireland in the Coming Times" "continues to speak to Ireland" beyond the events that it anticipates in the poem. Campbell argues that early and late versions of the poem (from 1892 through 1925) face both the past and the future of Irish culture simultaneously. Campbell also discusses "The Fisherman [The Fish]" and *The Wind Among the Reeds* as a whole in terms of a continuous present that is generated by Yeats' lyrical symbolism.

**Greenlaw, Duncan.** "Preying on foresaid remains": Irish Identity, Obituaries, and the Limits of Mourning." *Mosaic* 34 (2001): 123-44.

This article examines constructions of Irishness by three literary figures who at some point lived as exiles from Ireland. Discussing the exiles of Yeats, Samuel Beckett, and James Joyce in terms of absence and presence, distance and nearness, allows for a re-encryption of Irishness by writers having a non-Irish experience. Using Derridean and Freudian logic, Greenlaw demonstrates how mourning the loss of Irish poets (and other historical and mythological figures) both facilitates and destabilizes concepts of Irishness because the construction is always dependent upon Irish attributes that are both present and absent. The article implicates Yeats' theory of the mask by presenting exile and mourning as impossible attempts to unite with one's opposite, which fuels perpetual renewal of individual and national identity.

**Ress, Jaura Jane.** *Tender Consciousness: Sentimental Sensibility in the Emerging Artist—Sterne, Yeats, Joyce, and Proust.* New York: Peter Lang, 2002.

Ress sees a link between the sentimental tradition of the eighteenth-century British novel and specific works by Modernist writers that recall memories of youth and a developing artistic sensibility. She finds this sentimental approach in Yeats' memoir, *Reveries over Childhood and Youth*, in which Yeats identifies himself as a self-sacrificing artist with a divided and alienated identity. Ress makes a number of comparisons between Yeats and the coming-of-age experience of Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and she discusses certain conflicts between Yeats' experience of "heightened awareness" and his encounter with the philosophy while attending art school.

**Gibson, Matthew. *Yeats, Coleridge and the Romantic Sage*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000.**

Gibson argues that scholars overemphasize Yeats' reliance on certain romantic poets, especially Shelley and Blake, while neglecting the influence of Coleridge's prose on Yeats' reading in philosophy after 1925. Yeats apparently discovered meaning in certain of Coleridge's neo-Platonist explorations and by approaching Coleridge as a philosopher-sage. Gibson places Coleridge's influence in the context of Yeats' developing theory of the mask, the writing of *A Vision*, and Yeats' interest in *phantasmagoria* and the supernatural. The study discounts certain aspects of Bloom's theory of influence and also finds Coleridge speaking to Yeats' early prose.

**Greaves, Richard. *Transition, Reception and Modernism in W. B. Yeats*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.**

This book is a study of transitions in Yeats' poetry from 1903 to 1914 that scholars typically associate with the Modernist Movement. However, the book begins with a chapter that complicates and challenges traditional definitions of Modernism in relation to personality, difficulty of reading and elitism, symbolism, and escaping romantic subjectivism. Greaves also attacks what he sees as the overemphasis of Ezra Pound's influence on Yeats during this period. The book examines transitions to Modernism specifically in *In the Seven Woods*, *The Green Helmet and Other Poems*, and *Responsibilities*.

**Sikka, Shalina. *W. B. Yeats and the Upanishads*. New York: Peter, 2002.**

Sikka offers an in-depth study of Yeats' relationship with eastern philosophy and his work with Purohit Swāmi in translating *The Ten Principal Upanishads*. Yeats' interest in the Upanishads stem from his search for a pre-Christian tradition that escapes the limits of modernist biases. Death, immortality, the passionate body versus the celestial body, unity of being and the self, and imagination and symbolism are significant issues addressed in the book.

**Ingelbien, Raphael. "From Hardy to Yeats?: Larkin's Poetry of Aging." *Essays in Criticism* 53 (2003): 262-77.**

Ingelbien examines Phillip Larkin's rejection of a youthful obsession with Yeats' transcendental symbolism to embrace the perceived authenticity and experiential wisdom of Thomas Hardy; at the time Larkin championed Hardy over Yeats, whom he viewed as artificial and posturing. However, Ingelbien identifies Yeatsian tendencies that remain in Larkin's poetry even during Larkin's Hardy-esque period. Furthermore, Larkin's latest poetry on aging and death embraces Yeatsian influences once again in connection with Yeats' anxieties over childlessness, lost youth, and the "price paid for poetic privilege" (275).

**Bauer, Mark.** *This Composite Voice: The Role of W. B. Yeats in James Merrill's Poetry.* Ed. William Cain. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Bauer examines the influence of Yeats' occult and critical prose on the life and work of the poet, James Merrill. This book devotes most of its energy to Merrill's biography; however, it connects Merrill's interest in spiritualist experiences to Yeats' *A Vision*, *Essays and Introductions*, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, and "The Phases of the Moon." Bauer also highlights Merrill's critical response to Yeats that attempts to complicate what he sees as Yeats' tendency for "authoritative pronouncement." Bauer also complicates Harold Bloom's theory on the anxiety of influence in connection with these two poets.

**Matthews, Steven.** *Yeats as Precursor: Readings in Irish, British and American Poetry.* New York: St. Martin's, 2000.

After devoting a long chapter to the complexities of inquiries into the study of artistic influence, Matthews discusses a long list of Irish writers who deal with Yeatsian concerns with national identity, war and resistance, postcolonial issues, Formalism, and Romanticism. The chapter on British writers focuses mainly on W. H. Auden, who deals with Yeatsian concerns about the relation of the poet as human being to his or her art and the relation of aesthetics to politics and history. Matthews presents the Americans who engage Yeats as poets concerned with the role of the poet in society and cultural discourse.

**Krause, David.** *Revisionary Views: Some Counter Statements About Irish Life and Literature.* Dublin: Maunsel, 2002.

Krause offers a chapter titled "In Defense of Yeats" in which he challenges scholars who criticize Yeats' anti-democratic prejudices and his poetry for not actively speaking on behalf of the oppressed classes in Northern Ireland. He attacks these critics by demonstrating that they approach literature only in relation to politics and by emphasizing the diversity in Yeats' artistic content. Krause defends Yeats against charges of racism and fascism, and he offers a short chapter on Michael Yeats' political career and his relationship to his father's poetry.

**Moloney, Karen M.** "Molly Astray: Revisioning Ireland in Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney*." *Twentieth-Century Literature* 46 (2000): 285-310.

Only the first two pages of this article relate indirectly to studies in Yeats. The essay discusses female characters that represent the Cathleen Ni Houlihan figure in two late twentieth-century works by Brian Friel, *Translations* and *Molly Sweeney*. As in Yeats, Cathleen represents Ireland in Friel's work, but in these later works, the Cathleen figure does not necessarily demand sacrifice by the Irish male. Moloney also summarizes the eighteenth-century and pre-Christian literary genealogy of the Cathleen figure.

**Haskell, Dennis.** "W. B. Yeats." *The Kenyon Review* 23 (2001): 168-75.

This article is a review of Yeats' career, which discusses the ceremonial attributes of Yeats' drama and Yeats' fascination with ritual, order, and tradition. Haskell offers a commentary on "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" and a comparison between Yeats and T. S. Eliot. The review discusses prominent themes in Yeats' work, such as the mask as a personal mythology, the "permanence of symbol," and the function of passion in literature. Haskell teaches English at the University of Western Australia and edits *Westerly*, a leading Australian literary journal.

**Gardiner, David. *“Befitting Emblems of Adversity”*: A Modern Irish View of Edmund Spenser from W. B. Yeats to the Present. Omaha: Creighton UP, 2001.**

Gardiner examines significant crossroads between W. B. Yeats and Edmund Spenser’s writings about Ireland, including *The Faery Queene*, which begins and ends in Ireland. Although Spenser often derisively stereotypes the Irish people, Gardiner claims that Yeats was the first critic to separate Spenser’s poetry from his politics, and he discusses in detail Yeats’ publication of *The Poems of Edmund Spenser* (1906) and Yeats’ lifelong attention to Spenser’s influence on Ireland. The book perhaps fits best in a postcolonial study of Yeats.