The "Primitive" Poet: Modernism, Revivalism, and the Occult

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Focusing on the Occult and Revivalist movements as organic precursors to Modernism, this essay problematizes the traditional view that Modernism "belonged to 20th century pragmatism" (Surette, 1993, Preface, ix). Instead of a radical break from tradition, Modernism in fact drew from a well of mythic and anthropological referents in an attempt to reclaim and refashion culture. At a time when the science of anthropology was changing, "primitivity" itself was becoming increasingly privileged as a cultural inoculation against the workaday industrial mentality that Revivalists, Occultists, and later Modernists saw anathema to poetic production. In their privileging of "primitive" space and mythic subconsciousness, Revivalism and Occultism served as models to later Modernists in their quest for authentic sources of artistic inspiration.

Centrándose en los movimientos de Ocultismo y Revivalismo como precursores orgánicos del Modernismo, este ensayo problematiza la visión tradicional de que el Modernismo "pertenecía al pragmatismo del siglo XX" (Surette, 1993, Prefacio, ix). En lugar de una ruptura radical con la tradición, el Modernismo de hecho se inspiró en un pozo de referentes míticos y antropológicos en un intento por reclamar y remodelar la cultura. En un momento en que la ciencia de la antropología estaba cambiando, el "primitivismo" se estaba convirtiendo cada vez más en algo privilegiado como una inoculación cultural contra la mentalidad industrial cotidiana que los revivalistas, ocultistas y modernistas posteriores vieron como anatema para la producción poética. En su privilegio del espacio "primitivo" y de la subconsciencia mítica, el Revivalismo y el Ocultismo sirvieron de modelo para los modernistas posteriores en su búsqueda de auténticas fuentes de inspiración artística.

Se concentrant sur les mouvements occultes et revivalistes en tant que précurseurs organiques du modernisme, cet essai remet en question la vision traditionnelle selon laquelle le modernisme «appartenait au pragmatisme du 20ème siècle» (Surette, 1993, Préface, ix). Au lieu de rompre radicalement avec la tradition, le modernisme s'est en effet inspiré d'un puits de référents mythologiques et anthropologiques pour tenter de reconquérir et refaçonner la culture. À une époque où la science de l'anthropologie changeait, la «primitivité» elle-même devenait de plus en plus privilégiée comme inoculation culturelle contre la mentalité industrielle quotidienne que les revivalistes, les occultistes et plus tard les modernistes voyaient anathème à la production poétique. Privilégiant l'espace «primitif» et le subconscient mythique, le revivalisme et l'occultisme ont servi de modèles aux modernistes ultérieurs dans leur quête de sources authentiques d'inspiration artistique.

Concentrandosi sui movimenti occultisti e revivalisti come diretti precursori del modernismo, questo saggio problematizza l'opinione tradizionale che riconduce il modernismo al pragmatismo del ventesimo secolo (Surette, 1993, Preface, ix). Il modernismo non rappresenta una rottura radicale rispetto alla tradizione; si ispira invece a un ampio repertorio di referenti mitici e antropologici, nel tentativo di rivendicare e rinnovare la cultura. In un'epoca in cui la disciplina dell'antropologia stava cambiando, il concetto stesso di 'primitività' diventava sempre più importante come un supposto rimedio alla mentalità produttiva che i revivalisti, gli occultisti e in seguito i modernisti consideravano come un anatema per la poesia. Con la loro preferenza per lo spazio del 'primitivo' e del subconscio mitico, il revivalismo e l'occultismo fungono da punto di riferimento per i modernisti nella loro ricerca di fonti autentiche di ispirazione poetica.

Keywords / Palabras clave / Mots-clé / Parole chiave

Modernism, revivalism, occultism, Synge, Yeats, Eliot, Pound

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No movement has been mis-defined, or misappropriated, as frequently as "High Modernism". One reason for this definitional problem lies in scholarship's "inability to conceptualize" the movement's "reactionary and revolutionary dimensions", as Kevin Rulo (2015: 260) has pointed out. Ezra Pound, William Butler Yeats and T. S. Eliot, three of modernism's foundational figures, all held love affairs with the mythic and pre-industrial past. Their preoccupation with such mythic "pastness" can be seen in their poetry, which glorifies the spiritual and archaic over the modern and industrial. In their minds, industrialisation, and the workaday attitude accompanying it, produced "hollow men" (Eliot, 1967: 75). Yet, because of their vocal disdain for the tenets of Romanticism and its sentimentality, focusing on "pastness" alone is not sufficient (Rulo, 2015; 260). Indeed, given the notorious complexity of this question, I am tempted to put an asterisk next to any sentence linking modernism with its predecessors.

Rulo refers to "the men of 1914" as "antimoderns", a term he borrows from Antoine Compagnon, and states:

> The 'antimodern' as a theoretical instrument can aid in discriminating and articulating persuasively certain cultural dynamics that have heretofore been imperfectly understood […] For the antimoderns [including Eliot, Pound, and Joyce], the lack of total enthusiasm for modernity […] results not in a flight to the past but in a creative response, full of excitement and freshness. (Rulo, 2015: 252).

In this anti-modern conception, Eliot, Pound and Joyce come to represent not backward-looking reactionaries, but revolutionaries interested in re-forming the past into the present. Pound's often-quoted mantra, "make it new", then, describes pastness as something that can be refashioned and refreshed; a framework in which shards of culture are remade into something new, unsentimental, and beautiful.

In the following, I will use Rulo's conception of the antimodern to explore High Modernism's affinity for past tradition with a particular focus on Occultism and the Celtic Revival. In modern academic parlance, Occultism and Revivalism are often viewed as the stunted, bastardized siblings of modernism; contemporaneous movements which, while having a moderate influence on each other, held nothing of the lasting importance of their younger sibling. How indeed can we, as enlightened scholars, legitimize Yeats' and Pound's love affair with (and actual belief in) ghosts, fairies and the occult, their preoccupation with "secret histories" (Surette, 1993: 65) and malevolent conspiracies? The habit, going back more than 50 years, has often been to simply ignore these aspects of our favorite modernists. Much like Pound's fascism, Yeats' occultism is thus often pushed under the proverbial rug. According to Leon Surette, another academic strategy, proposed by Richard Ellmann, has been to "separate" Yeats' poetry from his occult beliefs. In his book, Surette daringly seeks to work against this tendency, and "to displace the old posture which sought to inoculate Yeats, as the most exposed modernist […] by admitting his occultism but somehow isolating it from the poetry, despite the fact that everyone knows the poetry is manifestly occult in topic" (Surette, 1993: 7). In this same vein I want to explore Yeats' obsession with folk belief, Revivalism and Occultism, not as separate discourses into which he "dabbled", but as central tenets of his modernism, and, going further, of High Modernism in general. Indeed, if we use Rulo's conception of the antimodern as one who reconstructs the present from the pieces of the past, we can see Revivalism and Occultism as foundational aspects of modernism itself. All three movements, after all, preoccupy themselves with archaic beliefs and referents, and all draw from a tradition that is occluded by the positivist, scientific gaze of industrialist rationality. In Rulo's conception, modernism's appropriation of Occultism, Revivalism and anthropology did not become an anachronistic distraction, but a tool that helped Yeats and other modernists salvage and refashion the pieces of a disorganized and "rapidly vanishing culture" (Castle, 2001: 41). In this sense, Revivalism and Occultism showcase the modernist attempt to reclaim culture and refashion it in a new way. Instead of being retrogressive distractions, then, Occultism and Revivalism represent no less than a strict subscription to the foundational axiom of modernism: "make it new".

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In the following, I will first explore Revivalism as a prefiguring of modernism, an early attempt to reclaim a pastness in the face of the disintegration of civilisation that Eliot, Pound and Yeats continually evoke in their poetry. For Yeats and his fellow revivalist J. M. Synge, an appropriation of ethnography was essential to their modernist "refashioning" of the past into the present. While not anthropologists by training, both used a specific language of ethnography in their accounts of folk belief, an appropriation which lent credibility to their accounts. These accounts ultimately privilege a mythic Irish past over an industrial English present. Moreover, Revivalism's privileging of provincial spaces, where "psychic memory" (Synge, 1979: 68-69) is possible, over the industrial urban centres can be seen as a spatial prefiguration of modernisms' obsession with "primitive" thought and the occult. For Yeats and Synge, going "West" meant going back in time, both in the individual and collective sphere. Their desire to be among "primitive" peoples and take part in "mystic participation" directly prefigures modernism's own "romance with contemporary anthropology" (Spurr, 1994: 267). Simply put, both Revivalism and modernism utilised anthropological tools to uncover a primitive pastness, both in the external and mental sphere. This pastness, once recovered, became the foundational bedrock of both movements. After this examination, I will briefly turn to Occultism, with a specific focus on its ties to Revivalism and modernism's mytho-anthropological practice.

No reclamation of culture is possible without some utilisation, and appropriation, of anthropology. For Yeats and Synge, an appropriation of ethnographic language was central to lending Revivalism a scientific credibility. Importantly, both Yeats' and Synge's ethnographic works (specifically *The Aran Islands* and *The Celtic Twilight*) come at a turning point in the science of anthropology. Fin-de-siecle anthropology concerned itself more with culture, shifting away from the "racial determinism" of the 18th and 19th centuries. As Richard Lansdown states, "Late in the nineteenth century […] there emerged an idea that called both Darwinian and 'capsule description' approaches into question. The principle of the 'psychic unity of mankind' bypassed physical and evolutionary determinism in favor of 'specific historical, social and human factors'" (Lansdown, 2006: 279-280). This shift away from racial classification (such as cranial measurements) towards a more cultural approach coalesced with the Victorian and later modernist search for cultural significance in "primitive" cultures. More and more, anthropology was imbuing "primitivity" with a special status, privileging its very "backwardness" as a kind of inoculation against modern culture. This "special kind of historicism" increasingly sought "revelation in the ancient, discarded, suppressed, forgotten, or misunderstood works of the human imagination" (Surrete, 1993: 58). Lean Surrete, in his controversial work *The Birth of Modernism*, argues that this approach prefigured the "wave of academic research and speculation into myth as revelation that was […] particularly vigorous at the turn of the century, and hence was contemporaneous with the occult revival and the birth of modernism" (Surette: 1993: 58). Thus, in Surette's conception, a symbiotic relationship emerges between anthropology and literature that is unique to the period. Anthropology, in his rendering, is the search for the organic components of a "rapidly vanishing culture" (Castle, 2001: 41), and modernist literature appears as the *process* by which these components are re-incorporated into the culture.

This special connection between anthropology and modernist literature can be seen directly in T. S Eliot's fascination with pre-modern mythic participation. As Surette explains, after reading the anthropologist Levy Bruhl, Eliot gained a unique conception of the poet as a kind of "primitive" being:

> Levy Bruhl […] had a direct influence on literary modernism through T.S Eliot, who knew his theories and was strongly attracted to them […] Eliot's principle disagreement with Levy-Bruhl was his [Bruhl's] contention that civilized man had completely lost his capacity for 'mystical participation possessed by the primitive'. Eliot […] believed that the poet retained those cognitive properties that Levy-Bruhl assigned to the primitive – particularly the primitive's special kind of memory. (Surette, 1993: 58-59)

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In this way, there is a direct engagement between anthropology and literature, one that links the modern poet with a privileged, primitive past. Moreover, in Eliot's conception, the modernist poet becomes something like a shaman, able to engage in "mystical participation".

For modernism, then, anthropology was both a tool to uncover a communal past, as well as a direct link to one's own primitive subconscious. Eliot stresses this in his conceptualisation of poetry, stating that "the prelogical mentality persists in civilized man, but becomes available only *to* or *through* the poet" (Eliot, 1939: 148; emphasis added). For Eliot, this prelogical mentality in poetry "may make us aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings, which form the substratum of our being to which we rarely penetrate". The poet, then, becomes a privileged being "hyperbolically […] older than other human beings" (Eliot, 1939: 155), who, like the "primitive", has access to a prelogical mentality that forms the very basis of his inspiration. In this way, Eliot uses anthropology as a tool to uncover primitive practices which, in turn, help the poet to gain access to a primitive past. As David Spurr notes, "more than a metaphor, the figure of poetry's savage origins acquires scientific authority from ethnological research" (Spurr, 1993: 272). Summing up Eliot's conception, Spurr states: "The origin of poetry is thus located simultaneously in prehistory, primitive culture, and a primitive consciousness indistinguishable from contemporary notions of the unconscious" (Spurr, 1993: 273). The subconscious becomes primitive thought, and the poet becomes a kind of intrinsic anthropologist, attempting to access the privileged primitive spaces of his own head. Anthropology is thus used both intrinsically (mentally) and extrinsically (through ethnography) as a tool for the creation of poetry. It becomes a communal, as well as an individual-subconscious well of "deeper", "older" and more "primitive" creative referents.

Eliot's privileging of the poet as primitive, while elitist and exclusionary, is in keeping with the anthropological conception of the "psychic unity of mankind" which was a central conception of Yeats' "universal mind". Yeats explained this Weltanschauung in his essay "Irish Fairies, Ghosts, Witches, etc.": "When reading Irish folklore" he states, "more and more one is convinced that some clue there must be. Even if it is all dreaming, why have they dreamed this particular dream?" (Yeats, 1994: 74). For Yeats, the Sidhe (fairy-folk) of Ireland represented a kind of universal dream similar to the "psychic unity of mankind" espoused by anthropologists like Franz Boas.[1] Furthermore, in keeping with Eliot's self-conception of the poet as somehow in touch with primitivity, Yeats "identified himself with the Celtic bard – that powerful amalgam of historian, genealogist, poet, courier, educator, scholar and wanderer" (Castle, 2001: 136). Pound as well "clung to the belief that some lost virtue or wisdom of the past could be recovered through *scholarship or meditation* thereby saving civilization" (Surette, 1993: 58). As Surette explains:

> This is the sense of Pound's much-cited slogan from Mencius: 'Make it new'. Pound does not mean – as some readers perversely suppose – 'throw it away and replace it!'. Obviously he means that we should recover the old for use in the present" (Surette, 1993: 58).

Thus, for Eliot, Pound and Yeats, the creative process itself was a kind of anthropological endeavour, and the line between the "scholarship" of anthropology and the "meditation" of a self anthropology is completely effaced. In addition to searching for a primitive past in other cultures, they sought the "particular dream" in their own heads as well.

J. M. Synge also conceptualised himself, like Yeats (and later Eliot and Pound), as a kind of shaman, drawing inspiration from a mythic primitivity. In his 1907 ethnographic work, *The Aran Islands*, he describes his own dreams, appropriating an ethnographic language to make his description credible. The passage, coming between observations of island life, seems strange at first:

> Some dreams I have had in this cottage seem to give strength to the opinion that there is a *psychic memory attached to certain neighbourhoods*. Last night, after walking in a dream among buildings,

[1] See Lansdown, 2006: 279.

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> I heard a faint rhythm of music beginning far away on some stringed instrument […] When it was quite near, the sound began to move in my nerves and blood, and urge me to dance […] In a moment I was swept away in a whirlwind of notes. (Synge, 1979: 68-69; emphasis added).

Synge continues to describe his dream in detail, dancing to the music in a kind of "uncontrollable frenzy" from which he tries to escape. When he finally comes to, "there was no sound anywhere on the island" (Synge, 1979: 68-69*)*. Today, Synge's description reads like a journalistic account of a new age rave, full of shamanistic dancing and auditory hallucinations. Yet, we can see Synge engaging in the kind of anthro-psychological debate about "psychic memory" that modernism drew from a decade later. Because Synge is among "primitive people", he is advocating, through this description, that he has the "capacity for mystical participation" (Surette, 1993: 58) that only poets and primitive people have. As I have mentioned, this ethnographic Weltanschauung is in keeping with contemporaneous anthropological work, and is directly expressed around the same time by Levy-Bruhl in *La Mentalité Primitive*. In his appropriation of such "scientific" discourse, Synge is using a kind of "hybrid social authority" (Castle, 2001: 68), as both scientific anthropologist and privileged poet, to articulate his very belief in the "psychic memory" of mankind. This articulation privileges place (the Aran Islands), his fellow island "primitives" and *himself* as having the "capacity for mystical participation" (Surette, quoting Levy-Bruhl, 1993: 58). This unique capacity is in keeping with the Revivalist bardic tradition of Yeats, and also the anthropological conception of primitive poetry seen (later) in Eliot's interpretation of Levy-Bruhl. Importantly, Synge's articulation privileges the "primitive" Celt above the modern, workaday mentality of England. Thus, Synge's "certain neighbourhoods" can only be found outside the metropolitan city centre; the shamanistic music playing "far away" from the industrial "buildings" of his dream.

This type of reasoning, pitting "primitive" space against the industrial centre, directly supports the contemporaneous anthropological work of Walter Evenz-Wenz. In his work, Evenz-Wenz emphasises how certain non-industrial places are more likely to engender Celtic mythmaking: "We have frequently emphasized how truly the modern Celtic peasant in certain non-commercialized localities has kept to the faith of his pagan ancestors" (Evenz-Wentz, 1911: 22). This privileging of certain localities, and, along with it, the glorification of a "primitive" "Celtic Peasant", can further be seen in Yeats' conception of nationalism, which, "in Yeats's eyes, was not an outbreak of 'race pride' but an assertion of the value of particular traditions against the creeping uniformity of modern materialist civilization" (Cullingford, 1981: 10). According to Elizabeth Cullingford, "Yeats saw the struggle between Ireland and England as a conflict between the cultural and spiritual democracy of the past, and the class-ridden materialism of the present" (Cullingford, 1981: 10). This "spiritual democracy of the past" is spatial as well as temporal, and can be seen in Synge's linking "psychic memory" to specific Irish localities; localities which are far away from the industrial centres of the world. His participatory "dream" serves to place himself at the very centre of his ethnography as a kind of shamanistic poet engaging in this act of "psychic memory". In this way, in Revivalism's nascent stage, we see a dialectic forming, linked with Anthropology, which pits a past-looking, psychic primitivity against the "creeping uniformity" of modern life.

Synge was not the first to privilege the Aran Islands and their anthro-spiritual capacity to inspire. In an early letter to William Sharp, Yeats describes how he has "just returned from the Aran Islands", where he "met two days ago an old man who hears the fairies" (Yeats, 1954: 266). Yeats does not limit his Irish mysticism to second hand accounts, however:

> I have had some singular experiences myself. I invoked one night the spirits of the moon and saw between sleep and waking a beautiful woman firing an arrow among the stars. That night she appeared to [Arthur] Symons […] and so impressed him that he wrote a poem on her" (Yeats, 1954: 266).

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Here, Yeats showcases the Aran Islands and Tulira Castle (where he is staying) as privileged, having a spiritual and contagious effect on visitors. Not only can the local fisherman see the fairies, but so to can Yeats and his fellow travelling companion (and poet) Arthur Symons. Symons catches the mystical bug through Yeats' own invocation, but Yeats' invocation is contingent upon the space they are in. Yeats thus prefigures Synge by showcasing non-industrial spaces, such as the Aran Islands, as centres where the poet can engage in communal, as well as intrinsic spiritual-ethnographic work.

A few years after this letter, Yeats urged his fellow revivalist Synge to visit the Islands. In his letter, Yeats tells Synge explicitly to "give up Paris" and "go to the Aran Islands. Live there as if you were one of the people themselves. Express a life that has never found expression" (Lonergan, quoting Yeats, 2013: 272). Patrick Lonergan argues that this exhortation showcases how authenticity, for Revivalism, was something not necessarily intrinsic to space, but rather, intrinsic to the poet. For Lonergan, "Synge's task, according to Yeats, was to retrieve something original from the regions and to convey it in a form that can be understood in metropolitan and cosmopolitan literary centres" (Lornegan, 2013: 73). In this way, the poet, as in Eliot's later conceptualisation, becomes a sort of shamanistic mediator-cum-translator between the original, primitive mythic consciousness (which is unintelligible to "the modern mind"[2]) and the metropolitan centre. Synge himself directly showcases the literary usefulness of these regional spaces *contra* the metropolitan centre:

In countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, *which is the root of all poetry*, in a comprehensive and natural form. In the modern literature of towns, however, richness is found only in sonnets, or prose poems, or in one or two elaborate books that are *far away* from the profound and common interests of life (Lonergan quoting Synge, 2013: 76; emphasis added)

Here we can see Synge directly prefiguring the later modernist sentiment which privileges primitive consciousness as the root of all poetry, and the primitive, provincial space as engendering that poetry. Synge goes further, however, showcasing the "literature of towns" as being "far away" from the more important "reality" he finds in both himself and the "primitive" regions. In this way, Synge turns provincialism on its head; it is the cities which are, in fact, "far away" from the "profound and common interests of life".

In *The Aran Islands,* Synge continually displays the victimisation of "primitive" and mythic space at the hands of modern industrialisation. In an early passage, he describes an eviction party, in which a steamer from the mainland, carrying numerous police officers, lands on the Island to root out indigent homeowners. The scene unfolds in comic fashion at first, as the islanders rush to hide their assets: "About half-past nine the steamer came in sight […] and immediately a last effort was made to hide the cows and sheep of the families that were most in debt" (Synge, 1979: 54). Once the policemen arrive, however, the tone is grim. Synge describes the policeman in stark contrast with the islanders:

> After my weeks spent among the primitive men this glimpse of the newer types of humanity was not reassuring. Yet these *mechanical* police, with the *commonplace agents* and sheriffs, and the *rabble* they had hired, represented aptly enough the civilisation [sic] for which the homes of the island were to be desecrated. (Synge, 1979: 54; emphasis added)

In Synge's conception of "the newer types of humanity", we see an engagement with the anthropological idea of the "great chain of being", in which certain civilisations were deemed to be stuck in time and cultural progression. However, for Synge, Yeats, and

[2] See Eliot, 1939: 121. While Eliot's essay appears in 1939, it is useful in understanding early 20th century conceptualizations of modernity and its anti-artistic effects. Eliot reflects back, through much of the essay, on early fin-de-siecle conceptions of poetry and art. Thus, in light of the essay's retrospective nature, the above reference is not anachronistic.

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later modernists like Pound and Eliot, the positivist, progressive notion of history was replaced by a view of the "historical process as degenerative" (Surette, 1993: 38). Thus, Synge's "pain" (Synge, 1979: 54) upon seeing the encroachment of modernism on the island is in keeping with his desire to "redeem a primitive society form the encroachment of modernity" (Castle, 2001: 141). His use of the word "desecrated" further showcases how the "mechanical police" are working to destroy something both sacred and elemental. "The outrage to a tomb in China", Synge later relays, "gives no greater shock to the Chinese man than the outrage to a hearth in Inishmaan gives to the people" (Synge, 1979: 55). While Synge never set foot in China, we can see here a further appropriation of anthropological language to privilege the "primitive" islander's space over the "mechanical" police and the modern society they represent. Moreover, we can see how spatial and temporal conceptions become conflated; "primitive" space representing "primitive" time in a symbiotic fashion.

Synge espouses his anti-modern dialectic numerous times in this passage. In a later description of the police, he describes them as explicitly alien to the primitive island environment. "The police when not in motion lay sweating and gasping under the walls with their tunics unbuttoned. They were not attractive, and I kept comparing them with the island men, who walked up and down as cool and fresh-looking as the sea-gulls" (Synge, 1979: 56). Synge's zoomorphic description of the islanders is in direct contrast to the robotic "mechanical police", and showcases, quite literally, how "for Synge, and revivalism, the primitive is akin to the natural" (Castle, 2001: 119). This type of glorification of a victimised, natural culture at war with industrial modernity directly pre-figures High Modernism's privileging of a "mythic" cultural elite in touch with its primitive, poetic roots.

While many of Synge's passages are speculative, the ethnographic language makes them seem scientific. As Gregory Castle succinctly relates, Synge "illicitly wields ethnographic authority in order to circumvent the debilitating effects of modernity" (Castle, 2001: 141). For Synge, as for the other Revivalists, this appropriation serves to "create a text that *looks* authentic" (Castle, 2001: 141), but which is in reality a biased rendering of a natural "primitive" elite over a mechanized modern society. This conflict shows itself increasingly in Revivalist texts, as well as in modernism's more canonical referents. We can thus view *The Aran Islands* and other revivalist texts as precursors to modernism's privileging of the "primitive".

Revivalism's privileging of "mythic" space and "primitive" consciousness prefigures modernism in much the same fashion as Occultism. I will thus briefly switch my focus here to examine Occultism as similarly contributing to modernism's "affinity for the past" (Surette 1993: Introduction) and "primitivity". While both movements privilege mythic space, Occultism increasingly lends modernism new ways to activate this space; for modernists like Pound and Eliot, the search for mythic space is thus an increasingly internal and mental endeavour. Whereas Yeats and Synge went "West" in search of mythic authenticity, Pound and Eliot continually sought it in their own privileged "primitive" minds.

While both Occultism and Revivalism are distinct movements, one specifically literary, and springing out of a nationalistic spirit, the other multidisciplinary, and emerging out of various archaic traditions, we can see, in their preoccupation with mythic and archaic referents, a prefiguration of many of High Modernism's central "anti-modern" tenets. In this framework, we can view modernism's affinity for these two movements as organic and originary, and not fused and artificial. While, on the surface, this conception "flies in the face of the standard view first formulated by [T. E.] Hulme that modernism was a turn away from Romanticism" (Surette, 1993: 29), it fits quite well with Rulo's conception of the modernist movement as "antimodern".

Leon Surette argues that modernism's preoccupation with myth springs directly from Occultism. Surette, like Rulo, argues against Hulme's conception of modernism, seeing a link between modernism and

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preceding movements. "I find a continuity", Surette writes, "between modernism and its precursors […]. However, I go behind *Symbolisme* […] to [find its] inspiration in Wagnerian, Nietzschean, and occult ideas, attitudes, and concerns". For Surette, "new criticism's ahistorical bias" has "conspired to disguise the extent to which the paradigmatic products of literary modernism are historiographic and political in inspiration" (Surette, 1993: 73). He suggests that the problem of this ahistorical "disguise" is its complete effacing of many of modernism's foundational referents. Modernism's historical outlook is thus erased, and consequently denied its deep well of past cultural referents. This well, while nourished from many springs, draws predominantly, Surette believes, from the Occult tradition. "The relationship between modernism and the occult is complex and intricate", he suggests, yet "one line of filiation" between the two "is clearly the importance of myth as both stylistic resource […] and as a source of inspiration and thematic enrichment" (Surette, 1993: 18). Much like Revivalism, modernism finds inspiration in primitive myth and archaic referents, this is the "line of filiation" that is traced most notably through the three movements, and showcases a symbiosis which challenges "the conventional view that literary modernism belonged to 20th century scientific materialism" (Surette, 1993: Preface, ix).

Another line of filiation linking modernism to Revivalism and Occultism is a particular strain of "cultural elitism". In Eliot's and Pound's conception of modernism, a cultural literary elite is pitted against masses of "hollow men" who are conceptualised as machine-like and brainless. For Surette, this is in keeping with occult and modernist history "as a story of conflict between superior individuals of small number […] and an oppressive inferior mass" (Surette, 1993: 38). Because both Occultism and modernism have similar self-conceptions of cultural elitism, Surette argues for a further connection between the two movements. This connection is crystallized in Pound's famous stylising of modernism as a "conspiracy of intelligence" (Surette, quoting Pound, 1993: 43). In Surette's "elitist" conception of both modernism and Occultism, we see a mirroring of Revivalism's special privileging of the "mythic Bard", and its promotion of "certain neighbourhoods" where psychic experiences are possible. All three movements, it seems, showcase a privileging of a cultural elite who are elite precisely in their backwardness, "primitivity", and "capacity for mystical participation" (Surette, 1993: 58-59).

Andrew Miller argues that many of the modernists, especially Eliot and Pound, were "engaged in a struggle against cosmopolitan rootlessness", and were "seeking […] to establish a metaphorical sense of location that would be simultaneously local and general" (Alexander and Moran, quoting Miller, 2013: 2). In his conception, we see modernism's turn inwards, towards mythical primitivity, in order to combat the "cosmopolitan rootlessness" which so preoccupies the Modernist movement. This mental turn away from the metropolis is often accompanied by a physical escape, but this escape is less evident than the blatant ethnographic work of the Revivalists. Thus, we see Pound and Yeats, between the winters of 1913 and 1915, set out to Stone Cottage in order to "get back to the definite and concrete, away from modern abstractions" (Logenbach quoting Pound, 1991: 19). The place itself, described by Yeats as "the most perfect and most lonely place" (Logenbach, quoting Yeats, 1991: 29), as well as "possibly fairie" (Logenbach, quoting Yeats, 1991: 7), suggests that the poets set out directly to counter the "whirl of the metropolis" (Logenbach, quoting Yeats, 1991: 26) they thought anathema to poetic production. We see a similar styling in Pound's "Ikon", written at Stone Cottage, where the poet expounds: "going out into tenantless spaces we have with us all that is needful – an abundance of sounds and patterns to entertain us in that long dreaming" (Logenbach, quoting Pound, 1991: 32). Because both "Pound and Yeats agreed that knowledge came from participation in eternal memory" (Logenbach, 1991: 229) their going out into "tenantless" spaces, spaces like Stone Cottage, suggest a continuity with the anthropological spatial privileging of the younger Yeats

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and Synge. Now, however, instead of engaging with the local community, they are searching for primitivity exclusively in their own heads.

In this essay I have examined an organic link between modernism and the preceding movements of Occultism and Revivalism. By tracing the cultural and mytho-spatial symbiosis among all three, I have showcased the nature of modernism's fascination with, and appropriation of, Occult and Revivalist worldviews. Rather than problematising these movements, I have worked to incorporate Occultism and Revivalism into what I deemed a workable context provided by Rulo's "antimodern" conception. In this way, I have shown how modernism, Revivalism and Occultism all worked together to reframe archaic cultural referents in new and startling ways. More specifically, I hope to have questioned "the intrinsically internationalist, metropolitan profile ascribed to modernist literature" (Moran and Alexander, 2013: 5) by demonstrating that modernism, like Occultism and Revivalism, was far more concerned with regional and "primitive" space than is often believed. For the Modernists, and their Revivalist predecessors, this regional space was strangely temporal and mental in addition to being physical. Yeats' and Synge's Irish countryside thus becomes both a physical and mental space where primitive "psychic participation" is possible. This space then prefigures Eliot's, Yeats' and Pound's later anthropological and occult imaginings of the poet as inherently in touch with his primitive roots. In this way, the modernists continually aligned themselves with a spatial, temporal and psychological "primitivity" in order to reclaim a past and refashion it anew. This process, the reclamation and reformation of a mythic culture, undermines more traditional views of literary modernism as rational and positivistic. Ultimately, however, I believe it should better inform our understanding of modernism's relationship with its more problematic siblings.

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