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Performing Irish nationalism on and off the stage: Bulmer Hobson and Patrick Pearse

Marnie Hay

The revolutionary generation in Ireland viewed theatre as a vital part of their activities to raise nationalist consciousness.¹ Bulmer Hobson (1883-1969) and Patrick Pearse (1879-1916) were two notable members of this generation who engaged creatively with theatre as a 'nationalising force' in the early twentieth century.² Hobson and Pearse also recognised the importance of providing children with an overtly Irish nationalist education and demonstrated a commitment to preparing Irish boys for their future roles in the Irish nationalist movement. Hobson revealed this through his formation in 1902 and 1909 of two separate incarnations of a nationalist youth group called Na Fianna Éireann, while Pearse did so through the establishment of St Enda's School for boys in 1908.³ In each case these endeavours engaged with theatre, and portrayed the young male as a metaphor for the nascent Irish nation state. This essay explores the parallels between these two nationalist activists, who were not only inspired by the Irish cultural revival, but also made an active contribution to that revival through their use of theatre as a nationalising force.

Other parallels between Hobson and Pearse are also striking. Both men joined the Gaelic League in their late teens, though Hobson's efforts at attaining fluency in Irish were less successful than Pearse's. They were acclaimed public speakers who undertook American lecture tours: Hobson in 1907 to promote the new Sinn Féin ('ourselves') movement and Pearse in 1914 to raise money for St Enda's. They were founding members of the Irish Volunteers, a paramilitary organisation established in Dublin in November 1913 as a

nationalist counterblast to the Ulster Volunteer Force, which had been formed earlier in the year to coordinate Ulster unionist paramilitary [p. 24] activities in opposition to the 1912 home rule bill. Hobson and Pearse were also members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), a secret society committed to the establishment of an Irish republic through the use of physical force if necessary. Hobson's membership predated Pearse's by more than a decade, demonstrating a lengthier commitment to republican nationalism. Hobson, who had joined the IRB in 1904, swore Pearse into the organisation in late 1913 in anticipation of his lecture tour of the United States, which Hobson helped to organise.⁴ Both men engineered opportunities to perform acts of Irish nationalism on and off the stage, most famously during the 1916 Easter Rising, the event that would ensure Pearse's posthumous fame and destroy Hobson's nationalist career.

Hobson and Pearse were both of mixed Irish and English parentage, but their family backgrounds and educational and career trajectories differed. Hobson grew up in Belfast in a comfortable, middle-class Quaker family. His father, Benjamin Hobson Jnr, who hailed from a Co. Armagh farming family, was a commercial traveller by trade and a Gladstonian home ruler in politics. His mother, Mary Ann Bulmer, was a women's rights activist, amateur archaeologist and theatre enthusiast from Darlington, in the north of England. The Hobson children attended the Friends' School, a Quaker boarding school in Lisburn. After leaving school, Hobson became an apprentice printer, and later a journalist.⁵

Pearse, who was four years older than Hobson, grew up in Dublin. His father, James Pearse, was a stonemason and monumental sculptor from a London working-class family, while his mother Margaret Brady, James's second wife, was a shop assistant from an Irish Catholic nationalist family. Patrick felt a strong bond with his maternal great-aunt Margaret, who regaled him with stories and songs of an Irish nationalist flavour. He was initially privately educated before attending the Christian Brothers School at Westland Row, where

his love of the Irish language and its literature was further kindled. Academically inclined, he graduated with a BA in modern languages and a law degree. He acted as a barrister on two documented occasions,⁶ but [p. 25] directed most of his energies to his work in the Gaelic League and the running of his father's business. He founded his school, St Enda's, in 1908.

Both Hobson and Pearse engaged with drama from a young age, though Pearse appears to have done so to a greater extent. On rainy days Hobson and his siblings, Florence and Harold, dressed up the family's Irish terrier, Beppo, and staged pantomimes.⁷ Pearse's sister Mary Brigid recalled that her older brother was a prolific playwright from about the age of nine and regularly led his siblings in the production of his plays which featured plots derived from history and melodramatic romance.⁸ Hobson, however, was the first of the two to manifest his interest in theatre on the public stage, which he did while still a young adult in north Belfast.

Hobson's neighbours, the poets Alice Milligan and Anna Johnston ('Ethna Carbery'), sparked his interest in the Irish cultural revival. They provided him with inspirational reading material, such as Standish O'Grady's retellings of Irish heroic tales and their nationalist newspaper the *Shan Van Vocht*, and encouraged him to join the Gaelic League. Milligan was a noted producer of *tableaux vivants* ('living pictures') and her influence was evident in Hobson's first public theatrical venture. Inspired by *tableaux vivants* produced by the Belfast Gaelic League, Hobson organised a similar enterprise under the auspices of the Ulster Debating Club for boys, which he had founded at the age of seventeen.⁹ Johnston revealed: 'It is evident that [Hobson] was anything but unobservant during our rehearsals, for he has drawn up half-a-dozen different series of episodes in Irish History, suitable for *tableaux*, in the cleverest way.'¹⁰ The boys' club exhibited its *tableaux* on 27 December 1900 at the Avenue Minor Hall, with the Gaelic League's P.J. O'Shea providing a description of the

scenes.¹¹ The *United Irishman* pronounced the venture a success, noting that the venue was crowded.¹²

Hobson soon embarked on other ventures that used theatre as a vehicle for promoting Irish nationalism. In June 1902 he established his first incarnation of the youth group Na Fianna Éireann in Belfast. It held inter-club hurling and Gaelic football competitions and classes in Irish language and history, but also dabbled in drama. In October 1902 at a meeting of the executive of the Belfast Fianna, Hobson announced that ‘he intended to form a dramatic [p. 26] section from the various clubs’, and a meeting of qualified boys was scheduled for 4 November 1902.¹³ Séamus Robinson, who joined the Belfast Fianna circa 1903, recalled ‘an attempt by Hobson to produce a play written by him on Wolfe Tone’, but could not remember ‘if the play was ever produced’.¹⁴

Around the same time that Hobson was trying to form a dramatic section of the Fianna, he was also engaged in setting up the Ulster Branch of the Irish Literary Theatre, the forerunner of the Ulster Literary Theatre (ULT).¹⁵ Hobson and his friend David Parkhill had been impressed by the work of the Irish National Dramatic Company and journeyed to Dublin in autumn 1902 in order to meet the company’s members.¹⁶ With the production talents of the Fay brothers and the help of W.B. Yeats and George Russell (AE), the Dublin-based company produced Irish plays in small halls. Máire Quinn, one of the company’s actors, took Hobson and Parkhill to the rehearsal hall at 34 Camden Street (coincidentally, the future hall of the first Dublin Fianna troop), where they ‘met the whole crowd’, which included Yeats, AE, James Cousins, the Fays and Fred Ryan.¹⁷ Pearse would later come into contact with many of these individuals through his affiliation with the Theatre of Ireland, which was formed in 1906 as a breakaway group from the Irish National Theatre Society (in effect, the Abbey Theatre), the successor to the Irish National Dramatic Company.¹⁸ Thus,

both Hobson and Pearse were associated with theatrical companies that challenged and supplemented the Yeats-centric vision of the Irish national theatre movement.

The object of Hobson and Parkhill's visit was to gain permission to perform the company's plays and to solicit help from their actors. Hobson described everyone as 'most cordial and helpful except Yeats – haughty and aloof'.¹⁹ Yeats refused their request for permission to perform *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, a play in which the eponymous Cathleen, symbolising Ireland, inspires a young bridegroom to join the United Irishmen's rebellion of 1798. In addition to his alleged 'antipathy towards all things Ulster',²⁰ Yeats probably resented the pair's goal of bringing Ulster more fully into the Irish literary revival because the project would be outside of his sphere of control.²¹ [p. 27] Maud Gonne overrode Yeats's refusal, and so *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and James Cousins' *The Racing Lug* were staged by the newly formed Ulster Branch of the Irish Literary Theatre in November 1902 at St Mary's Minor Hall in Belfast. Despite its small size, the hall was far too big for the audience who attended the plays' two-night run.²²

Sam Hanna Bell reported that the Protestant National Society, an association co-founded by Hobson, was the force behind this first production;²³ however, this society was not formed until February 1903.²⁴ Thus, it is more likely that Hobson, Parkhill and William McDonald later formed the Protestant National Society to provide a formal structure for their various efforts to propagate the ideology of Theobald Wolfe Tone and the United Irishman amongst young Ulster protestants. Hobson's espousal of republicanism and non-sectarianism had been sparked by the centenary of the 1798 rebellion.²⁵ Having met with 'little noticeable success' in their quest to convert Ulster protestants to nationalism, the society decided to try using theatre for propaganda purposes.²⁶ This decision likely led to the next recorded production of the Ulster Branch of the Irish Literary Theatre.

In early 1904, the company revived *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and added George Russell's *Deirdre* to the bill, playing to 'sparse audiences' and harvesting 'poor receipts', possibly because the overt 'Irishness' of the plays did not appeal to a Belfast audience.²⁷ As Harry Morrow ('Gerald MacNamara') put it, 'The Belfast public [...] were not taken by *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. Ninety-nine per cent of the population had never heard of the lady – and cared less; in fact someone in the audience said that the show was going "rightly" til *she* came on.'²⁸ MacNamara's recollection reflects the challenges that Hobson and his colleagues faced in Ireland's northern bastion of 'British' culture.

They soon faced another challenge when George Roberts, the secretary of the Irish National Theatre Society, sent them 'an indignant letter' stating that they had no right to use the society's former name (Irish Literary Theatre) and demanded royalties for the production of its plays.²⁹ In response, the Belfast company changed its name to the Ulster Literary Theatre and began to write its own plays,³⁰ beginning with the staging of *Brian of Banba* by Hobson and *The Reformers* by Parkhill ('Lewis Purcell') on four nights in November and December 1904 in the Ulster Minor Hall.³¹ [p. 28]

Brian of Banba, which had been published in the *United Irishman* on 2 August 1902, is divided into two scenes and lasts about half an hour. It opens in the death chamber of Cennedigh Mac-Lorcan, where the ailing King of Thomond, heir to the Munster kingship, shares out the inheritances of his two sons, Mahon and Brian. While Mahon is content to be a tributary king under the Vikings, Brian prefers to fight the Northmen, against his father's advice. Disguised as a beggar, Brian later returns home to admonish his brother Mahon, the new king, for not providing him with aid when he first set out. Fired by Brian's tales of victory, Mahon agrees to support his next campaign against the Vikings. Eugene McNulty has read the play 'as a coded call for nationalists throughout Ireland to remember, and thus not leave isolated, their northern "counterparts", who were feeling ever more squeezed by the

ideological pressures building around them'.³² The character of Brian can also be seen as symbolising Hobson's own project to propagate advanced Irish nationalism in the north of Ireland. In this reading, the Vikings are equated to the British, while Mahon and Cennedigh are interpreted as home rulers or even unionists in need of advanced nationalist conversion. As contemporary critics were quick to point out, *Brian of Banba* was derivative of Yeats's mythological plays. Christopher Morash has compared it to Alice Milligan's *Last Feast of the Fianna* and James Cousins' *The Sleep of the King*: all three plays featured 'heroes wearing horned helmets [spouting] interminable purple prose'.³³

Contemporary reaction to the play was mixed, and in his monograph on the ULT, McNulty even concluded that *Brian of Banba* was 'something of a flop'.³⁴ Fred Morrow's direction and scenery and Jack Morrow's costumes attracted praise, whereas Hobson's performance in the title role provoked a comment that his 'written conception' of Brian 'was certainly better than his acted one'.³⁵ Writing in the ULT's own journal, *Uladh*, James Winder Good opined that Brian and Mahon were 'abiding types' whose possibilities Hobson had not realised to the full. He added that Hobson's work was 'hampered by the fact that it suggests, inevitably, a contrast with the plays of Mr Yeats; and there are few living poets who can bear the comparison unscathed'.³⁶ Hobson's playwriting needed a little more originality and a little [p. 29] less emulation. The play garnered a more positive review from the *Irish News* critic, who described it as 'a picture-play and a very beautiful one at that' and praised 'a *caoine* sung by three female voices at the close of the first scene' for being 'full of a sad haunting sweetness'.³⁷ In contrast, the *United Irishman* considered the *caoine* to be the 'gravest' fault of construction in the play because 'it refused to blend with the drama, and remained a thing apart'.³⁸

Brian of Banba was later presented, along with Purcell's *The enthusiast*, at a *feis* (festival) in Toomebridge, Co. Antrim, in early August 1905.³⁹ The performances stayed in

the memory of one thirteen-year-old member of the audience, future journalist and labour activist Cathal O'Shannon: 'I was interested enough in *Brian of Banba*, because I know the story [...] but what really did impress me was *The enthusiast*, because for the first time I saw the kind of people that I knew and lived among in County Antrim and County Derry were there alive and talking as they talked at home.'⁴⁰ O'Shannon's opinion predicted the ULT's future, which lay in contemporary plays with a regional accent, like *The enthusiast*, rather than what Morash has called the cul-de-sac of the Irish mythological play.⁴¹ As its commercial success grew, the ULT abandoned its derivative, propagandist roots, as exemplified by Hobson's play, in favour of works that promoted a blossoming regional identity.⁴²

The primary focus of Hobson's nationalist activities gradually shifted from cultural to political concerns as he became increasingly involved in the Sinn Féin movement and the IRB, although he continued to recognise the importance of cultural performances for promoting Irish nationalism. When he and Countess Markievicz established a new incarnation of Na Fianna Éireann as a nationalist boy-scout group in Dublin in 1909, they created an organisation that offered its members a combination of military training, outdoor activities and Irish cultural pursuits. Members with the requisite talent and inclination were afforded many opportunities to display their dramatic and musical abilities. For instance, a Dublin-based drama group called the Fianna Players performed a number of Irish plays; however, it was [p.30] Markievicz, rather than Hobson, who spearheaded this endeavour. Among the plays performed by the group was Padraic Colum's *The Saxon Shilling*.⁴³ Colum was a writer associated with the Irish literary revival, whose play had been rejected previously by the Irish National Theatre Society on the grounds that it was merely anti-military recruitment propaganda.⁴⁴ The play's message, however, was in keeping with the promise made by Fianna members 'never to join England's armed forces'.⁴⁵ Elsewhere in

Ireland, the Fianna troop in Tuam, Co. Galway held a dramatic class and Belfast Fianna members performed in two plays at their annual concert in 1914.⁴⁶

The Fianna also lent their talents to fundraising events, such as the Lang Benefit Concert held in Dublin in early 1915, at which members were among the performers of Irish songs, dances, recitations and sketches.⁴⁷ The Fianna hall on Camden Street in Dublin and the meeting rooms of other troops served as the venues for *céilís* and other social occasions ‘at which nothing but Irish songs and dances were permitted’. According to Dublin Fianna member, Seán Prendergast, hosting such fundraising events helped the youth group to gain ‘friends’ among older nationalists – and ‘among the cailíní [girls]’.⁴⁸

Hobson’s public involvement in theatre may have started earlier than Pearse’s, but the latter proved the more talented and prolific playwright. Of Pearse’s plays written between 1909 and 1916, eight scripts survive (one of which, *Eoghan Gabha*, remained unfinished) while three scripts are lost.⁴⁹ Pearse’s first formal affiliation with a theatrical company came in 1906 through his membership on the first committee of the Theatre of Ireland.⁵⁰ When Pearse launched St Enda’s in 1908, theatrical productions became a regular part of school life and helped to raise public awareness of the school’s approach to providing a progressive and thoroughly Irish education. Pearse produced St Enda’s first dramatic productions in February 1909, staging Standish O’Grady’s *The coming of Fionn* and Douglas Hyde’s *An naomh ar iarraidh* [p. 31] (The Lost Saint), but soon began writing his own plays. He wrote the pageant *Macghníomhartha Chúchulainn* (The Boyhood Deeds of Cúchulainn) in May 1909, staging it at St Enda’s on the grounds of Cullenswood House on 22 June 1909.⁵¹ As this example illustrates, the Ulster and Fionn cycles of heroic tales inspired some of Pearse’s theatrical work, particularly the pageants. Christian imagery provided another source of inspiration. His miracle play *Íosagán*, which was first produced at St Enda’s in February 1910, features a manifestation of the child Jesus in Connemara. An expanded version of the play was

performed in the Abbey Theatre in April 1910.⁵² Pearse's plays *Owen* (1913) and *The master* (1915) explore the bond between teacher and pupil, a rather chilling theme given future events: *Owen* features the motif of a sacrificial child, while almost the entire cast of the original production of *The master* went on to participate in the Easter Rising.⁵³ Róisín Ní Ghairbhí and Eugene McNulty have demonstrated that 'at the time of their first performance Pearse's plays were viewed by a who's who of the Dublin literati and were reported on and discussed widely and positively in the press'.⁵⁴ The same cannot be said for Hobson's *Brian of Banba*.

The youth-oriented endeavours of Pearse and Hobson converged in June 1913 when the boys of St Enda's and the Fianna braved rainy weather conditions to participate in public presentations at the St Enda's fête held at Jones's Road (now Croke Park) to raise money for the school's building fund. Hobson served on the fête's organising committee.⁵⁵ While St Enda's students performed in Pearse's pageants *The Fianna of Fionn* and *The defence of the ford*, Hobson's Fianna boys provided a difference type of performance – a display of tent-pitching, camp work, skirmishing and military drill.⁵⁶ Elaine Sisson has asserted that 'St Enda's secured national identity to the body of the male youth and paraded youthful male bodies as a visual metaphor for the nation state', adding that this exercise 'was reflected in European-wide practices of annexing the "physical culture" of masculinity to moral strength'.⁵⁷ This uncomfortable link with an aspect of fascism holds true for the Fianna as well. Na Fianna Éireann exhibited young male bodies as 'a visual metaphor for the nation state' during stage performances, route marches, nationalist parades, and public demonstrations of the practical skills that the boys had gained through camping and military training, such as their display at the St Enda's fête. The purpose of such training was to prepare the boys for their [p. 32] future role in the Irish revolution, the first act of which was the Easter Rising of April 1916.

The paths of Pearse and Hobson diverged due to the rebellion. As one of the leaders of the Rising, Pearse staged his most legendary theatrical performance when he proclaimed the Irish republic against the backdrop of the General Post Office on Easter Monday 1916. Hobson, in dramatic contrast, was incarcerated in the home of an IRB member at 76 Cabra Park in Phibsborough, north Dublin, where his republican brothers were holding him at gunpoint. Hobson had opposed the rebellion, instead favouring a policy of guerrilla warfare should the British government attempt to disarm the Irish Volunteers or impose conscription on Ireland. As general secretary of the Irish Volunteers and chairman of the Dublin Centres Board of the IRB, Hobson possessed the capacity to scupper the insurrection. To avert this possibility, the IRB kidnapped him on Good Friday.⁵⁸

Pearse apparently told Irish Volunteers at St Enda's that although 'he did not share Hobson's policy or approve his attitude' in relation to the rebellion, 'Hobson was not lacking in physical courage', but in 'the imagination and decision of a revolutionary leader'.⁵⁹

Hobson's retrospective view of Pearse was far less gracious:

He was a sentimental egotist, full of curious Old Testament theories about being the scapegoat for the people, and he became convinced of the necessity for a periodic blood sacrifice to keep the National spirit alive. There was a certain strain of abnormality in all this. He did not contribute greatly to the hard grinding work of building up the movement, but as soon as we had succeeded in getting a small organisation [the Irish Volunteers] and a handful of arms he seized the opportunity to bring about the blood sacrifice.⁶⁰

In Pearse's opinion, Hobson did not have what it took to be a revolutionary leader. For Hobson, Pearse was – in relation to the republican movement – a Johnny-come-lately with a death wish.

In contrast to Hobson, many former and current members of the Fianna participated in the Rising as commanders, fighters, dispatch carriers and scouts. Seven were killed during the rebellion. The estimated number of past [p. 33] pupils of St Enda's who joined the Rising ranges between twelve and seventeen. Among the fifteen individuals executed for their roles in the rebellion were two young men connected with the Fianna: Seán Heuston and Con Colbert. The latter also taught physical drill at St Enda's and was among the five men associated with the school who were executed, the others being Patrick and Willie Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett. Hobson's co-founder of the Fianna, Countess Markievicz, who had been one of the commanders at St Stephen's Green and the College of Surgeons, was spared the same fate because of her gender.⁶¹

While Pearse's execution for his leadership of the Rising ensured an afterlife of fame, Hobson lived a life of relative obscurity after 1916. He went into hiding after the rebellion and successfully evaded arrest. His opposition to the Rising and subsequent disappearance fuelled scurrilous rumours that he was a coward and a traitor. When he emerged after the amnesty in June 1917, he found himself frozen out of the nationalist movement and withdrew from public life, playing no part in the subsequent events that led to the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922. He initially worked in book publishing before becoming a civil servant in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.⁶²

In his free time Hobson reawakened his interest in theatre. In the late 1920s he and his wife Claire (née Gregan), whom he had married while on the run in June 1916, supported the establishment of the Gate Theatre in Dublin. An *Irish Times* columnist described Claire Hobson as 'strikingly handsome' and praised her 'sound judgement' in relation to literature and theatre. The Hobsons were known for hosting gatherings at their south Dublin home, the Mill House on Whitechurch Road in Rathfarnham, at which 'the most diffident artists' were encouraged 'to express themselves'.⁶³

The actor Hilton Edwards pitched his plan for the foundation of a new theatre for the production of international and Irish plays to a group of Dublin residents one spring night in 1928. This meeting took place in the Little Theatre, one of the few nightclubs in Dublin at the time. Run by [p. 34] Madame Daisy Bannard Cogley – known as ‘Toto’ – and her partner Gearóid Ó Lochlainn, it could be found ‘in an obscure thoroughfare at the back of Grafton Street’.⁶⁴ Cogley, a petite French woman who had married an Irish republican, held a cabaret there every Saturday night.⁶⁵ The writer Mervyn Wall recalled that Claire Hobson ‘was one of a bohemian group who frequented’ this night-club during the Emergency years,⁶⁶ possibly after the break-up of her marriage to Hobson circa 1940-41.⁶⁷

In late 1928 Cogley and Ó Lochlainn joined Edwards and Micheál Mac Liammóir as the founding directors of what was to become the Gate Theatre. To fund the theatre’s first season of plays, Edwards asked interested people to pay a one guinea subscription.⁶⁸ The Hobsons joined a committee to organise the business side of the burgeoning theatre company,⁶⁹ and helped Mac Liammóir to research famous episodes in Dublin history for a pageant in honour of the city’s annual civic week in September 1929. *The ford of the hurdles* was a historic epic covering the period from the Viking invasion to the Easter Rising.⁷⁰ In 1934 Hobson edited an attractively illustrated book, entitled *The Gate Theatre*, which summarised the theatrical company’s first six years of existence and served as a fundraiser for future productions.⁷¹

In conclusion, Hobson and Pearse were not only inspired by the Irish cultural revival, but also made an active contribution to that revival through their use of theatre as a nationalising force. Hobson served a brief stint as an actor and playwright and helped to set up two theatrical companies. Pearse also helped to build up a theatrical company, but, more significantly, appears ‘to have been involved in almost every element of the production of his plays’, particularly at St Enda’s.⁷² Hobson and Pearse challenged Yeats’s hegemonic grip on

the Irish national theatre movement through their involvement with the ULT and the Theatre of Ireland respectively. In time, ULT productions and Pearse's work were performed on the Abbey stage. As a dramatist, Pearse was the more talented and prolific of the two. A serious creative practitioner, his commitment to the creation of theatrical productions was deeper and more sustained. Hobson, at least during his Belfast years, seems to have [p. 35] been more interested in using theatre as a vehicle for propagating Irish nationalism. His later involvement in the foundation of the Gate Theatre reflected his commitment to building up the cultural institutions of the new state. Finally, both men recognised the importance of youth to the nationalist movement and engineered opportunities for boys to perform acts of Irish nationalism both on and off the stage, most famously during the Easter Rising, the event that would ensure Pearse's posthumous fame and destroy Hobson's nationalist career. [p. 36]

¹ See chapter 3 of R.F. Foster, *Vivid faces: the revolutionary generation in Ireland, 1890-1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2014).

² *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³ For a more detailed look at these endeavours, see Marnie Hay, 'The foundation and development of Na Fianna Éireann, 1909-16', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxvi, no. 141 (May 2008), pp 53-71; Marnie Hay, 'An Irish nationalist adolescence: Na Fianna Éireann, 1909-23' in Catherine Cox and Susannah Riordan (eds), *Adolescence in modern Irish history* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp 103-28; Elaine Sisson, *Pearse's patriots* (Cork: Cork UP, 2004, reprinted 2005); Brendan Walsh, *The pedagogy of protest: the educational thought and work of Patrick H. Pearse* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁴ Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland yesterday and tomorrow* (Tralee: Anvil Books Ltd., 1968), pp 31, 75; Joost Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse: the making of a revolutionary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 205; Bulmer Hobson, witness statement, 26 Jan. 1948 (Military Archives [MA], Bureau of Military History [BMH], WS 84), p. 1.

⁵ Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the nationalist movement in twentieth-century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009), pp 6-10. The 1901 census records him as an 18-year-old apprentice printer while the 1911 census lists him as 28-year-old journalist,

census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1901/Antrim/Clifton_Ward_Belfast/Hopefield_Avenue/1004537/;
 census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/911/Down/Hollywood_Urban/Ballycultra/232384/ (accessed online 11 Jan. 2011).

⁶ For more on Pearse's limited activities as a barrister, see Eugene McNulty's essay in this collection. Augusteijn, *Patrick Pearse*, pp 7, 17, 21, 26, 38, 63-7, 72; J.J. Lee, 'Pearse, Patrick Henry' in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009).

⁷ Mary Hobson, *Memoirs of six generations* (Belfast: Graham and Heslip Ltd., 1947), p. 52.

⁸ Róisín Ní Ghairbhí and Eugene McNulty (eds.), *Patrick Pearse: collected plays* (Sallins: Irish Academic Press, 2013), p. 7.

⁹ *United Irishman*, 10 Nov. 1900, p. 5.

¹⁰ Anna Johnston ('Ethna Carbery') to Seamus O'Kelly, 11 Nov. 1900 (National Library of Ireland [NLI], Bulmer Hobson Papers, MS 18,461).

¹¹ *United Irishman*, 22 Dec. 1900; Hobson, *Ireland*, p. 14.

¹² *United Irishman*, 5 Jan. 1901, p. 5.

¹³ Fianna minute book, 1902 (NLI, Hobson Papers, MS 18,461).

¹⁴ Séamus Robinson, witness statement, 26 Oct. 1948 (MA, BMH, WS 156), pp 3-4.

¹⁵ For a detailed examination of the ULT, see Eugene McNulty, *The Ulster Literary Theatre and the Northern Revival* (Cork: Cork UP, 2008). For a more detailed discussion of Hobson's involvement in the ULT, see chapter 2 of Hay, *Bulmer Hobson*.

¹⁶ Sam Hanna Bell, *The theatre in Ulster* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), p. 1.

¹⁷ Hobson to Bell, 2 July 1965, qtd. in Bell, *Theatre in Ulster*, p. 2.

¹⁸ Ní Ghairbhí and McNulty (eds), *Patrick Pearse*, pp 12-13.

¹⁹ Hobson to Bell, 2 July 1965, qtd. in Bell, *Theatre in Ulster*, p. 2.

²⁰ Bell, *Theatre in Ulster*, p. 2.

²¹ Mark Phelan, 'The rise and fall of the Ulster Literary Theatre' (MPhil thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1998), p. 49.

²² Bell, *Theatre in Ulster*, pp 2-3.

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- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ *United Irishman*, 28 Feb. 1903, p. 4.
- ²⁵ Hobson, *Ireland*, p. 2.
- ²⁶ Bell, *Theatre in Ulster*, p. 3.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Qtd. in *ibid*, pp 3-4.
- ²⁹ George Russell to Lady Gregory, circa April 1904, qtd. in R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: a life, I: the apprentice mage, 1865-1914* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), p. 320.
- ³⁰ Bell, *Theatre in Ulster*, p. 2.
- ³¹ ULT ticket and programme, 1904 (NLI, Hobson Papers, MS 13,175).
- ³² McNulty, *Ulster Literary Theatre*, p. 101.
- ³³ Christopher Morash, *A history of Irish theatre 1601-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), pp 120-21.
- ³⁴ McNulty, *Ulster Literary Theatre*, p. 101.
- ³⁵ *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 9 Dec. 1904, p. 6.
- ³⁶ *Uladh*, Feb. 1905, p. 6. For a discussion of *Uladh*, which Hobson co-founded, see chapter 4 of McNulty, *Ulster Literary Theatre*; Marnie Hay, 'Explaining *Uladh*: cultural nationalism in Ulster' in Betsey Taylor FitzSimon and James H. Murphy (eds), *The Irish Revival reappraised* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp 119-31; Eugene McNulty, "'Draw it not too rigidly": *Ulad* and the cultural partition debate' in Alison O'Malley-Younger and Frank Beardow (eds), *Representing Ireland: past, present and future* (Sunderland, 2005).
- ³⁷ *Irish News*, 8 Dec. 1904, p. 4.
- ³⁸ *United Irishman*, 24 Dec. 1904, p. 1.
- ³⁹ *Uladh*, Sept. 1905, p. 2.
- ⁴⁰ Qtd. in Bell, *Theatre in Ulster*, p. 25.
- ⁴¹ Morash, *Irish theatre*, p. 120.
- ⁴² David Kennedy, 'Ulster unionism and the new nationalism' in Kevin B. Nowlan (ed.), *The making of 1916* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1969), pp 74-5.
- ⁴³ Seumas Mac Caisin (James Cashen), witness statement, 8 June 1947 (MA, BMH, WS 8), pp 5-6. The members of the Fianna Players were Seumas Mac Caisin, Percy Reynolds, Con Colbert, Theo Fitzgerald, Sean

(Jack) Shallow, [?] MacGowan, Andy Dunne, Harry Walpole and Brian Callender, as well as Countess Markievicz and Helena Molony.

⁴⁴ Robert Welch (ed.), *The concise Oxford companion to Irish literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), pp 64-5.

⁴⁵ ‘Na Fianna Éireann’, *Irish Freedom*, Sept. 1912, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Liam Ó Maoil Íosa (Liam Mellows), ‘Boy Scouts Organising Notes’, *Irish Volunteer*, 7 Feb. 1914, p. 14; ‘Boy Scouts Organising Notes’, *Irish Volunteer*, 28 Mar. 1914, p. 9.

⁴⁷ Photocopy of Lang Benefit Concert Programme (MA, BMH, James FitzGerald Collection, CD 91/5).

⁴⁸ Seán Prendergast, witness statement, no date (MA, BMH, WS 755), p. 25.

⁴⁹ Extant scripts and treatments of the ‘scriptless’ plays are included in Ní Ghairbhí and McNulty (eds), *Patrick Pearse: collected plays*. A manuscript source for *The master* has recently come to light. See Barbara McCormack, ‘Patrick Pearse: The master’ in David Bracken (ed.), *The end of all things earthly* (Dublin, 2016).

⁵⁰ Ní Ghairbhí and McNulty (eds), *Patrick Pearse: collected plays*, pp. 12-13.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp 16, 24.

⁵² *Ibid*, pp 16, 27-30.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp 36, 39.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp 18, 22.

⁵⁶ ‘Touching the St Enda’s Fete’, *An Macaomh*, May 1913, p. 46.

⁵⁷ Sisson, *Pearse’s patriots*, p. 113.

⁵⁸ Marnie Hay, ‘Kidnapped: Bulmer Hobson, the IRB and the 1916 Easter Rising’, *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Spring 2009), pp 55-6.

⁵⁹ Louis N. Le Roux, *Patrick H. Pearse* (Dublin: Talbot Press Ltd., 1932), p. 337.

⁶⁰ Bulmer Hobson, witness statement, 26 Jan. 1948 (MA, BMH, WS 84), p. 2.

⁶¹ Hay, ‘Foundation and development of Na Fianna’, p. 69; Brendan Walsh, ‘Radicalising the classroom: Pearse, pedagogy of progressivism’ in Roisín Higgins and Regina Uí Chollatáin (eds), *The life and after-life of P.H. Pearse* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), p. 230; Sisson, *Pearse’s patriots*, p. 156. Among the Fianna members killed was dispatch carrier Gerald Keogh, whom Sisson has cited as the only St Enda’s boy killed.

⁶² For a discussion of Hobson’s post-1916 career, see Marnie Hay, ‘From rogue revolutionary to rogue civil servant: the resurrection of Bulmer Hobson’ in Diarmaid Ferriter and Susannah Riordan (eds), *Years of turbulence: the Irish revolution and its aftermath* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2015), pp 209-23.

⁶³ Quidnunc, 'An Irishman's Diary', *Irish Times*, 26 Feb. 1958.

⁶⁴ W.D.J., 'The making of the theatre' in Bulmer Hobson (ed.), *The Gate Theatre* (Dublin: The Gate Theatre, 1934), pp 11-12.

⁶⁵ Phyllis Ryan, *The company I kept* (Dublin: Town House, 1996), p. 134.

⁶⁶ Mervyn Wall to Des Gunning, 16 Jan. 1995 (photocopy of letter in possession of author).

⁶⁷ Roger Mitchell to Marnie Hay, 9 June 2012 (email in possession of author).

⁶⁸ Micheál Mac Liammóir, *All for Hecuba* (Dublin: Progress House, 1961), pp 60-1.

⁶⁹ Mac Liammóir, *All for Hecuba*, pp 87-8.

⁷⁰ Mac Liammóir, *All for Hecuba*, pp 82-3; W.D.J., 'The making of the theatre', p. 15.

⁷¹ See Hobson (ed.), *The Gate Theatre*.

⁷² Ní Ghairbhí and McNulty (eds.), *Patrick Pearse: collected plays*, p. 19.