

**VISION OF A POET: A STUDY OF W. B.
YEATS'S POETRY FROM *CROSSWAYS* TO
*THE TOWER***

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

By

Nitai Chandra Saha

Supervisor

Professor Benoy Kr. Banerjee

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

University of North Bengal

Raja Rammohunpur, Darjeeling

West Bengal, India

2006



Ref.

821.91209

C 456 v

202034

14 FEB 2008

This Ph.D. Dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my parents for whom I have seen the light of day.



WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

B. 1865

D. 1939

“He lived, breathed, ate, drank and slept poetry.”

Katharine Tynan

DECLARATION

This is to certify that the subject matter of the dissertation is a record of work done by the candidate himself under my guidance and that the contents of this dissertation did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else and that the dissertation has not been submitted by the candidate for any research degree to any other university.

Date: 20. 9. 86.

Benoy K. Banerjee.
Signature of the
Supervisor

CONTENTS

| | Page No. |
|---------------------|----------|
| Preface | 1-4 |
| Chapter I | 5-33 |
| Chapter II | 34-43 |
| Chapter III | 44-66 |
| Chapter IV | 67-121 |
| Chapter V | 122-140 |
| Chapter VI | 141-154 |
| Chapter VII | 155-159 |
| Works Cited | 160-171 |
| Select Bibliography | 172-179 |

Preface

In its widest possible sense, however, a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account.

William James: *The Principles of Psychology*: 1950

In man creature and creator are united: in man there is not only matter, shred, excess, clay, mire, folly, chaos; but there is also the creator, the sculptor, the hardness of the hammer, the divinity of the spectator...

Nietzsche: *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*: 1954

He was single-hearted in his aim, and to pursue it he was willing to sacrifice not only himself- many can do that- but others. He had a vision.

Somerset Maugham: *The Moon and Sixpence*: 1944

To be cut-off from life and action, in one or another, is necessary as a preparation for the vision.

Frank Kermode: *Romantic Image*: 1971

When I first made my acquaintance of W.B. Yeats as a poet, I found myself mystified by the various facets of his poetic sensibilities. I would have most probably beaten a hasty retreat had it not been for the brilliant analyses to which Yeats's poetry was subjected by Professor Benoy Kr. Banerjee, who fortunately happened to be my teacher at the University of North Bengal. It is to him that I owe my renewed interest in Yeats's poetry.

The writings of Yeats have an immortal attraction and are 'chewed and digested' by readers even today. Yeats was essentially an esoteric, idiosyncratic poet who was at times obscure, for sometimes the form, the manner of writing, the language, and the imagery may have a private meaning for the poet, yet convey another aspect of experience to another. This is the joy of Yeats, for even when he is obscure he is compelling. Half the joy of poetry comes in discovery, and the other half comes in the experience or emotional response. We read Yeats to enjoy, to experience, to share and to discover his poetic vision. He speaks to us across the years- and, remarkably, more clearly and passionately as an old man than when he was young. Yeats is the master of the unusual, the paradoxical, the mystical, and the unknown: his great virtue is that his poetic vision embraces 'all from top to toe'.

Hazards are many for a poet to achieve completely the realization of the dream that obsesses him. But Yeats, harassed incessantly by his struggle with theme and technique, managed, perhaps less than others to express the vision that he saw with his mind's eye. To use the hackneyed phrase, he found himself in *The Tower* phase. He had achieved what he wanted. His life was complete. He had made a world with the wholeness of his poetic vision, braying the 'mortar' with youth and fellowship, peace and worldly hopes:

Yeats takes certain feelings of conviction attached to his vision for the thoughts which he supposes his vision to symbolize. (Richards: qtd. in Currie: 1992:14)

This is my area of interest, and my dissertation aims at exploring the poetic vision of W.B. Yeats.

To me, 'Making' suggests the act of doing something with one's hands. Obviously it entails more than 'doing': doing must be the final outcome of an amalgamation of many faculties interacting with one another and determining the final form of the thing made. Books on primary and secondary sources are of immense help to formulate my basic idea. In the course of doing the dissertation, I have not hesitated to quote extensively from Yeats's other works and from the poets and critics of repute, since I am convinced that this will help to present an integral view of the subject. Some of the ideas from the data collected on the Internet have been of much help. I have acknowledged my debts to them by citing them. I have also prepared a bibliography following the instructions of the M.L.A. Handbook.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to supervisor Dr. Benoy Kr. Banerjee, Professor at the University of North Bengal, for his inspiration, guidance, constant encouragement, solicitation and extremely constructive suggestions. He spent immense time and labour not only over the dissertation but in a detailed review of the critical areas of my thesis: the dissertation has gained substantiality as a result. This might never have been written and submitted, but for his love and support. I also take this opportunity to express my warm gratitude to Mrs. Banerjee, my aunt, and Ranju who always egged on to pursue my object. I acknowledge my debt to all my teachers belonging to the Department of English, the University of North Bengal for their inspiration.

In course of my study I got enormous help from the M/S Atlantic Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, the National Library, Kolkata, the British Council Library, Kolkata, Books Way, Kolkata, the North Bengal University Library, and the State Library, Cooch Behar. They provided and coped with my mad demand for offbeat books.

I owe my debt of gratitude to my parents for all their love, encouragement and blessings. I am also grateful to my in-laws for their support and generosity. Finally, I owe the greatest debt of gratitude to my wife, Ranjita, and our little kid, Sarthak, for love, support and just putting up with it all. I am deeply grateful to her all for the sacrifice she has made in typing the whole dissertation. Thank I must my colleagues, especially Niupamda, Debuda and others for their constant inspiration.

Chapter I

A survey of critical literature about Yeats, examining the scope of this dissertation

For all men, certainly all imaginative men, must be ever casting forth enchantments, glammers, illusions: and all men, especially tranquil men who have no powerful egotistic life, must be continually passing *under their vision...* (Italics mine)

(W.B.Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:40)

Yeats's poems have always provoked admiration, debate and, not infrequently, qualified or negative responses. Critics examining the various facets of Yeats's works, have made a significant impact on Yeats studies. In this survey of criticism, I shall indicate major critical preoccupations and comments in order to show the scope of this dissertation. Brooks and Warren (1938) and Brooks (1939), who as New critics were committed to the principle of a text or poem's autonomy, discovered, however, when faced with explicating Yeats's verse, the need to refer to Yeats's prose works and in particular to the account of his system in *A Vision*. Parkinson's two books on the process of composition, in which he argues for the significance of Yeats's involvement in the Abbey Theatre and how this subsequently transformed the nature of his poetry, are complementary. In the first volume (1951), Parkinson considers the revisions to Yeats's early poetry, in the second (1964) the composition of the later verse. The distinguishing feature of both is that he places a discussion of revisions within a larger framework of interpretation. The first book begins with an examination of the poems in *The Rose and Crossways* and of the poems in *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889) that Yeats

revised or excluded from *Poems* (1895). The work excluded, defines Yeats in 1895, and other revisions reveal a poet increasingly immersed in a Celtic world, which was simultaneously drawing closer to his own time and place. Citing the revisions made to "The Madness of King Goll" and "The Indian to his Love", Parkinson underlines how Yeats's verse becomes simpler, less pretentious, how he uses a more natural syntax with fewer inversions, how his words are more suggestive and at the same time more specific. By *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) Yeats's early lyric style culminates. His subject matter is primarily Irish, and more emphasis is given on speech, but Parkinson is quick to remind us that Yeats' rhapsodic style is limited. It is unable to handle more than one aspect of human experience. Hence, he is in need of dramatic conflict and moments of 'passionate intensity'.

Between 1899 and 1911 Yeats wrote a play in each year, and learnt in the process how to become a dramatic poet. The changes between the 1900 and the 1905 version of *The Shadowy Waters* embody a stronger sense of dramatic purpose, which is especially evident in the area of conflict, in the development of character, in the more natural syntax and diction, and in the deployment of a less esoteric symbolism. *On Baile's Strand* (1907) and other plays written during this period reminded Yeats of the necessary existence of the circumstantial world, forcing him to reconsider his entire poetic practice. A new mode of self-dramatization is evident in the *Seven Woods* (1903), but this is a still tentative-between 1903 and 1908 Yeats wrote only four lyrics. There after, his lyrical cry found expression increasingly, and *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910) displays a poet responding more vigorously than before to the demands of the immediate world. Personal speech now has the look of dramatized tension, and he seeks a relationship between a daily mood and a

moment of exaltation. This is especially evident in the poems surrounding the Hugh Lane controversy, such as "September 1913", "To a friend", and "Paudeen". From *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917), *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921), and onwards into his later verse, Yeats shows how he had learnt to subordinate his rhapsodic and ecstatic impulses to the demands of structure and situation. As to the changes Yeats made to his early verse, Parkinson makes the following observations. He insists, for example, that his study highlights not the discontinuity but the continuity of the early and later Yeats, and that there is an inherent tendency in Yeats towards conflict, which his involvement with drama brought out. The common element in his poetry in evidence both before and after 1901 is 'formal passionate speech', though after 1901 this becomes more eloquent and has more to communicate. The theatre enabled Yeats to recognize the importance of the moment of passion and how the daily world could be transfigured, and this in turn lent to his middle and later verses a dramatic structure. Parkinson also maintains that changes made to his earlier verse, sometimes motivated by a change of outlook, sometimes for technical consideration, illustrate the interdependence of attitude and technique, and how often in origin a change could be technical but in effect substantial.

Parkinson's main argument that Yeats's poetry is largely determined by his dramatic sense is expanded in 1964. He refers briefly to the presentation of the self in Eliot and Pound, the general issue of sincerity in writing, and the relationship between maker and artifact. He then addresses the issue of Yeats's search for a role, a means to transcend the daily self, and embody the truth. The poet, he suggests, has five modes available to him: the individuated person whose life gives weight to his words; the social character, the site of tension

between a social, "Vacillation", the poet as overt dramatist adopting a persona the Crazy Jane sequence; the poet as editor and maker of books. Parkinson suggests that the crucial year in Yeats's transition is 1917. Yeats career enters another phase, beginning with an act of purification in *Autobiographies* and act of elaboration in *A Vision*, and distinguished from the first phase by his ability to view his knowledge and experience as not his own.

Parkinson disputes the allegorical view of Yeats as proposed by Wilson (1958) and sides more with Kermode's (1957) belief, that a Yeats poem is a unique symbol, and cannot be read in terms of some perennial philosophy. Citing the symbol of the swan in Yeats's verse, Parkinson also takes issue with Stauffer (1949), and suggests that Yeats's verse is primarily dramatic and is not composed of symbols. There is no settled pattern of association, and it is merely confusing, for example, to identify the swan in "Leda and the Swan" with the swan in "Among School Children".

Parkinson's comment on Yeats's passionate syntax is also penetrating, informative and persuasive. He reveals how Yeats combined syllabic and stress prosody. While writing more intense lyrics, he tended to employ a fixed number of stresses. Some of Yeats' prosody, such as that to be found in "Crazy Jane and the Journeyman", is highly complicated, but this has to be understood by reference to the poem's metaphysical structure. *Last Poems* contains more anomalous prosodic features, a fact which Parkinson interprets in the context of Yeats's desire for liberation. He notes, for instance, the parallel with the decline in use of symbols after 1932, as if Yeats was aware that icons could no longer be trusted to carry the burden of a poem's argument. Parkinson reflects on two facts: firstly, that Yeats's

influence has been less than one might suppose, considering his stature as the greatest poet of the first half of the 20th century, and, secondly, that he seems out of place in the context of modern poetry.

Bradford (1965) outlines the process of composition to be found in Yeats's poems, plays and prose. General observations on Yeats's practice inevitably give way to an account of the changes from the early to the later Yeats. In this respect Bradford compares and contrasts *The Wind Among the Reeds* with the later verse. In *The Wind Among the Reeds* the principal effort is to write the poem in a single sentence, to make the poetic and grammatical penetration of his later verse. He has not yet mastered a form or a diction suited to a poem such as "Byzantium", nor has he begun to invent the forceful personae of his later verse. What Yeats lacks here is summed up by Bradford in the phrase "personal utterance" and here Bradford follows Parkinson's stress on drama. The idea of personal utterance is traced from *The Wild Swans at Coole*, a volume where Yeats writes about his life as something intended, complete, achieved, through the poems in the 1920s where the prevailing mode is public speech, and the metaphysical reflection expressed in the poems of the 1930s. Bradford's study tends to foreground the problem of transcription.

The discussion of particular poems in Stallworthy's two books (1963 and 1969) is detailed and often perceptive, but his general remarks have lasted less well. Yeats experimented in later years with half-rhymes, the typical poetic movement is from the personal to the general. More than any other English poet, Yeats wrote about individual people. His work is both retrospective and apocalyptic and he has a "razor-sharp self-critical faculty". To this extent it is of value to know, for example, that Edmund Burke and the Russian Revolution

were in Yeats's mind when he was composing "The Second Coming" or that behind "The Black Tower", a poem written a week before his death in January 1939. There stands perhaps the figure of Hitler in the poem. But equally what Stallworthy's study illustrates is how the history of Yeats criticism is not unlike a partial and hesitant discovery. Stallworthy's second book which concentrates on *Last Poems*, is more coherent, though the opening two chapters on 'The Dynastic Theme' and 'The Prophetic Voice', which are designed to orientate the reader to the major concerns of that volume, are too vague to be of real use. The dynastic theme, for example, surfaces in Yeats in the decade or so after 1908. His *Last Poems* having its association with race and eugenics, has turned it into something less gentle. Similarly, when Stallworthy compares *Last Poems* with *The Tower* and *The Wild Swans at Coole* and suggests that Yeats is now anxious to speak out because his time is short, he fails to observe that *The Tower* is his testamentary volume that *Last Poems* has the voice not so much of the prophet as of someone beyond the grave that "Politics" is as fitting a conclusion to his poetic career as "Under Ben Bulbin" and that *Last Poems* is more provisional than its title might suggest.

Clark's study (1983) concentrates on poems written between 1926 and 1931. He prepares the reader by suggesting that the best editors are those who pay attention not just to the words on the page but also to their context. The contexts that Clark invokes are the most far-reaching of any of the critics considered here. The woman in "After Long Silence" is identified by Ellmann and Parkinson as Olivia Shakespeare, but Clark, in reviewing the evidence especially in connection with *A Vision*, and "All Souls' Night", concludes that the reconciliation referred to in the poem is not with his former lover but with Mrs. Mathers, who had been upset by the portrayal of her

husband in *A Vision*. Taking issue with Parkinson, Clark also claims that it is not love which is the supreme theme but bodily decrepitude. In spite of its narrow focus on a handful of poems, this study, which has met with a lively response, extends the principles governing an inquiry into Yeats at work. It is a challenging and slightly unnerving account, for even as it sheds new light on familiar poems it makes us conscious of the extent of the darkness that perhaps surrounds the remaining poems of Yeats not included in Clark's discussion.

Yeats "didn't accumulate poems, he wrote books", declared Kenner (1955:65) in typically arresting fashion, echoing no doubt Yeats's own prophetic remark that "one poem lights up another" (1912: xi). Ironically, as an extended argument, Kenner's essay, which tends merely to repeat its original insight, is not impressive, but in the development of Yeats studies it has played a key role. In constructing a volume of poems, Yeats took care to achieve the right balance. "A prayer for my Daughter" significantly follows, and qualifies the noisy, apocalyptic strains of "The Second Coming". "Sailing to Byzantium" acts as an overture to an exploration of the intractability of history and the decline into old age, and the volume concludes with an epilogue written in 1920 entitled "All Souls' Night". Yeats's volumes often do not reflect their compositional history, but are ordered in such a way as to suggest their unity.

But the influence of Kenner's essays has been profound. Some of the best essays and books on Yeats-as well as more pedestrian ones, such as Young's (1987)-have been those, which affirm the unity of his texts. The essays by Davie on Michael Robartes and the Dancer and by Holloway on it in Donoghue and Mulryne (1965), for example, support Kenner's contention. The meaning of "Easter 1916" is enhanced when

read alongside other poems in a collection, while certain repeated rhetorical modes, such as the exhortation to woman to avoid abstraction, or a common discursive style, reinforce the unity of the volume. In terms of full-length studies, which stress unity, Grossman's reading (1969) of *The Wind Among the Reeds* is in many ways the best. This is an ambitious, intelligent, difficult, but largely sustained account of Yeats's transformation in the 1890s. Eschewing the conventional view of Yeats's escapism, Grossman traces the poet's desire for Wisdom or, we might say, the Muse and his fear that this is unattainable. *The Wind Among the Reeds*, whose basic myth is the encounter between the suitor of the absolute and its symbol, the Wisdom figure, cultivates the unattainable: the suitor undergoes an experience of the *mysterium tremendum*; this brings not happiness but the realization that Wisdom feeds malignantly on his life.

Murphy (1975) and Putzel (1986) have followed Grossman in writing full-length studies of Yeats's early work. Murphy is less convinced that *The Wind Among the Reeds* embodies the search for poetic knowledge or that the apocalypse can be equated with the imagination; for him the volume represents "a collapse into destructive vision". Putzel, on the other hand, builds on Grossman's account and not only stresses the unity of *The Wind Among the Reeds* but also makes out a good case for seeing *The Wind Among the Reeds* and *The Secret Rose* as companion volumes. Thus, both texts articulate tension between the diachronic and synchronic planes; both contain similar themes of time, love, and apocalypse. And *The Wind Among the Reeds* 'presents the "liturgy" of the symbolic system as outlined in *The Secret Rose*.

For fuller surveys of the reception of Yeats's verse we may refer to Hall and Steinmann (1950), Unterecker (1963), Stallworthy (1968), Pritchard (1972), Jeffares (1977), and Cullingford (1984). Although published in 1950, Hall and Steinmann contains seven essays from the 1930s, and five essays from *The Southern Review* of 1942; its bibliography, while excellent for giving a sense of the 'emergence' of Yeats in journals in the 1930s and 1940s, is therefore restricted.

Three areas that have figured prominently in Yeats criticism and that still continue to provoke questions among Yeats admirers: the issue of Yeats and Symbolism, Yeats's lineage, and the relationship between his briefs and his poetry. The intention is to provide a framework for further inquiry, to show connections, to trace outlines, and to shed light on the Yeats's poetry. Observations on Yeats's lineage concentrate for the most part on the Romantic inheritance- his relationship with his Irish background or with a philosophical predecessor such as Nietzsche.

*A retrospective quality is inscribed in Yeats's work. He has the "backward look" characteristic, as Frank O' Connor (1967) might see it, of Anglo-Irish literature as a whole. When *The Wild Swans at Coole* was published by Macmillan in 1919, Middleton Murry proclaimed Yeats's talents to be at an end and that this volume, with its lack of creative vigour, its languor and ineffectuality, its idle dreaming, marked "Mr. Yeats's Swan Song" (Jeffares: 1977:56). Yeats of course was partly responsible for contributing to such a reception, not least in the constant publications of 'retrospective' volumes and collections of his work. 'Hammer your thoughts into unity' has become a touchstone by which he has been assessed, but each volume seems to mark a new beginning as much as a recapitulation of the past. So criticism still takes a long time to absorb the pattern of Yeats's work. For, Yeats is*

the last Romantic who became a leading modern poet, the modern poet who sits uncomfortably in the modernist triumvirate of Yeats-Eliot-Pound, and the Anglo-Irish "hyphenated" poet who has been associated by some critics with Georgian Ireland.

Early key responses to Yeats's verse can be found in Wilson (1931), Leavis (1932) and Blackmur (1936) and we can use these to map out the subsequent critical terrain. Wilson depicts the literary history of our time as a battle between Symbolism and Naturalism, twin movements which emerged in the 19th century against the background of Romanticism and a mechanistic science. *Symbolism* began in France and was characterized by its indefiniteness, its stress on supra-rational sensations and its attempt to communicate unique personal feelings. But the battle was never properly fought out in England, and it was left to Pater to supply Yeats with an English equivalent to French Symbolist theory. Wilson notices Yeats's maturing style and the modern poet's need of a special personality as well as an antagonism between poet and world. He places his drama with the Symbolist plays of Steinberg and Maeterlinck and shows how, in his dealings with the occult, there is always a margin of scientific doubt. Yeats's symbolism in the 1890s, for example, owes as much to Irish folklore and ceremonial magic as to Pater and France. Wilson's influence, however, has been important not least in fuelling an interest in the questions of Yeats's use of symbols.

Leavis stresses the debilitating influence of the Victorian poetic tradition which admits implicitly that the actual world is alien, intractable, and unpoetical, and that no protest of withdrawal. The trajectory of Yeats's career is from dreams to reality, an inner struggle of the 19th-century mind in a heroic form. The change between *The Wind Among the Reeds* and *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* shows

the poet coming alive to the actual waking world--hard, practical, and full of modern speech--while he exhibits a ripeness in disillusion, a difficult and delicate sincerity. This view of Yeats has been very influential, but has become increasingly less so as more sophisticated accounts of Yeats's lineage have been advanced. The relationship between dreaming and reality, for example, needs much more careful handling in the context of a poet who prefaced a volume entitled *Responsibilities* with the words 'in dreams begin responsibility', and who later wrote of the "desolation of reality" that has accompanied the spread of human knowledge and civilization.

Blackmur's essay (1936), examines the way Yeats grasped reality through magic and how this affects his stature as a poet. As a tool for poetry, magic has two major defects: firstly, no available edifice of reason can be established on it; secondly, magic promises what it cannot perform--at least in poetry, for the revelation has still to be awaited. Blackmur asks if the magical material is incorporated because of its organic reference or if its presence is merely rhetorical, and concludes that magic may be a feature of the rational imagination. Even though it does not take cognizance of Yeats's dialectical nature, his essay contains some close observation of the relationship between Yeats's poetry and his ideas.

The association of Yeats with French Symbolism was given its initial impetus when his friend Arthur Symonds dedicated to him *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899), Yeats being "the chief representative of that movement in our country". This was followed by Bowra (1943), who claims that "Yeats's career is an instructive commentary on Symbolist doctrine", and by Tindall (1945), who added a cautionary note suggesting that Yeats was a symbolist poet long

before he encountered French Symbolism. These early discussions lacked sophistication regarding the concept of influence, and did not address more basic questions: for instance, if Yeats was influenced by something he must have already been open to influence, indeed, perhaps, merely seeking confirmation for ideas which were already in the process of formation. Equally, these critics were too ready to box Yeats into one particular corner, not allowing for the fact that Yeats has many contexts- not least himself. The real difficulty-leaving aside the devaluing of Yeats's autonomy as a thinker or of England's culture vis-à-vis France- stems from uncertainty about Symbolism and how it is interpreted. According to Bowra, Yeats, unlike Mallarme, made use of two kinds of symbols, emotional and intellectual, one connected with sounds and their association, the other with ideas. Bowra also claims that Yeats's mysticism is not "aesthetic rapture" or "creative ecstasy, but a belief in the powers behind the visible world"(32). But how we identify or assess such distinctions or claims depends on much more than a discussion about Symbolism. Grossman (1969), for example, accepts the distinction between emotional and intellectual symbols, but this is interpreted within the context of the Wisdom tradition, the Muse of Ireland, and the struggle for personal liberation. Equally, with regard to mysticism, as the final stanza of "Among School Children" reminds us, there is a rhapsodic quality to Yeats's work which is more than a belief in the powers behind the visible world.

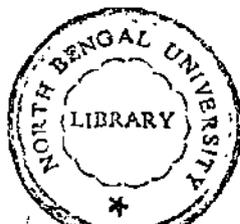
A valuable survey of Yeats and symbols can be found in Seward's little-known study (1960). Seward traces the development of the symbol of the rose in western literature from ancient myths through Dante and the Catholic Middle Ages, through the Renaissance, the Romantic heritage, and into the 20th century, where it rivals, she claims, *The Waste Land* as the symbol of our era. At each point the meaning and

function of the symbol has both changed and expanded, from a different angle. For Adams, this enhances rather than detracts but nothing is entirely lost; the symbol accrues meaning through time. Such a schema and such a view resurfaces in Yeats's multilayered symbol of the secret rose. The Romantic heritage with its new subjectivity and, later, its interest in the occult, added its own stamp, so that the rose became the focus of unorthodox transcendental longings. Later in the 19th century it was assigned a central place in Rosicrucianism. Again, both developments are there in Yeats' symbol, all this is by way of an introduction to Seward's principal concern, which is an examination of the symbol of the rose in the work of Yeats, Eliot, and Joyce whom she unfortunately describes as "British writers". She pictures Yeats as the transitional figure and the first to build a new symbolic art on the ruins of Romantic hyper subjectivity. Unlike earlier critics, Seward is less dogmatic in her approach to Yeats's lineage: she shows, for example, how the volume 'The Rose' is rooted in the English tradition, how *The Wind Among the Reeds* is influenced by French Symbolism, and how after 1903 Yeats left behind the symbol of the rose.

The connection between Yeats and Symbolism has prompted several different kinds of inquiry. Seward's study delineates a 'broader context than is to be found in; she believes that for a proper understanding of Yeats's symbols a much longer history needs to be invoked. Another approach, well represented by Stauffer (1949), has fastened into the changing use of symbols within Yeats's work as a whole. According to Stauffer, Yeats is "incorrigibly a lyric poet whose imagination is set in vivid symbolic visual pattern"(23). In passing, it can be noted that Stauffer anticipates both Kenner's essay (1955) and the more complex argument of Engelberg (1964), while his stress on

202031

14 FEB 2000



Yeats's lyricism is countered by Parkinson's view that Yeats is primarily a dramatic poet.

The influence of the occult on Yeats's symbols is another important topic. Yeats's essay on magic in *Essays & Introductions* where he states that the "great memory can be evoked by symbols", reminds us of the close association between his poetry and the occult. His interest in the occult precedes any possible influence by French Symbolism and casts an aura round his symbols that can be fully explained only by reference to his involvement in ceremonial magic. Symbols in Yeats's early verse come clothed in the garments of ceremonial magic, with the poet as mage and adept, summoning up the spirits inside or beyond the universe. Even though he became disillusioned with the Golden Dawn after the ugly confrontation between Mathers and the London Temple in 1900 and even though he increasingly sided with Art against the Adept, the presence of magic underlies Yeats's use of symbols, so that when he writes out in a verse the names of the leaders of the Easter Rising he is, as Young (1975) well observes, like the mage effecting what he does in words.

The issue of Yeats and symbolism is set fair to continue. Donoghue (1971) roots the discussion within an argument about power, how magic and poetry are forms of power, how Yeats is concerned with making a masterful style, how moral questions are answered in aesthetic terms, how Nietzsche, therefore, is the crucial figure intervening between Blake and Yeats. Symbolism is the literary form of magic, the difference being that what the mage does consciously the poet does "half consciously and half by instinct". But against the symbol stand history, and in *History and the Secret Discipline*, Donoghue shows how this opposition of symbol and history

produced in Yeats not the single response but an awareness of tension between the two. Thus, while *The Wild Swans at Coole* stresses an accommodation with history, where history is consistent with symbolism, it is symbolism "glancing ruefully at history". History and symbol, truth and system, are like rival allegiances, and fortunately, according to Donoghue, Yeats has a weakness for reality. In his best poems, therefore, we see him mastering but not resolving conflict.

One effect of Wilson's study was to direct attention to the poet's literary and cultural heritage. In a sense, of course, Yeats had given one important clue to his position on the literary map when in 1893, with Edwin Ellis, he edited a book on Blake and when in 1937 in 'The Municipal Gallery Revisited' he referred to himself as one of the 'last Romantics'. Yeats and Romanticism, a topic well suited for revealing how Yeats has been received by his critics, has been approached from several different angles. Rudd (1953) and Adams (1955) undertook two important formative studies assessing the links between Yeats and Blake in the 1950s. The essential difference between Blake and Yeats discerned by Rudd is that while the former is a prophet, the latter is simply an 'enchanter'. In Blake the world is transfigured through the eyes of love; he defies dualism by postulating an incarnate God who overcomes the false god, Urizen. Yeats, on the other hand, is content to cast a spell over the reader. The clarity of Blake's voice belongs to the Romantic age, and if Yeats's rings less clear, this stems in part from his living in a period of late Romanticism, when perceptions of the nature of reality as well as of the relationship between art and reality had dramatically altered. A marked characteristic of this period is its introspective and often frenetic attempts to realign the present with the past. Equally, Yeats's interest in ceremonial magic deserves more than the cavalier treatment to be found in Rudd, who claims that most of it

cannot be taken seriously. In fact, this is precisely what later critics have done—though this is not to say they endorse any of it.

Adams' aim is to compare the two poets in their use of symbolism; he is not primarily concerned with the question of influence, but rather with how the two poets looked at the same world from different perspectives. He outlines Blake's aesthetic in terms of its epistemology, its true vision which he identifies as a vision of apocalypse, or total resolution where the unity of reality is revealed, and its debased vision or moral allegorisation. In Blake the single image draws into it all the minute particulars, where what seemed contraries are shown to be equally true. Throughout this informative discussion of Blake, Adams brings out how Yeats is like a common man caught in a fallen world, and how, in contrast with Blake, his poetry enacts the difficulty of achieving the vision we find in Blake. In Yeats's early poetry the subject-object dichotomy is unsolved; later, he begins to champion Blakean action, but he never transcends the problem of duality, not even in *A Vision* where the single geometrical conception is composed of two symbols, one superimposed on the other, namely the Great Wheel and the interlocking cones. Adams' version of Yeats reveals a poet conscious of limits, aware that he is not a mystic, who shares the same world as Blake but approaches it from Yeats's stature as a poet.

Traces of Adams' argument, as when he writes that Yeats "could not bring himself to share his predecessor's faith in a world transformed by a vision of love and beauty" can be found in Bornstein (1970). Here, though, the comparison is between Yeats and Shelley. This study contrasts the intellectual vision of early Yeats with the antinomial vision of his later period, with 1903 as the dividing year. The early Yeats, in his search for intellectual beauty, follows Shelley in

both theme and imagery, but instead of the star and the cosmopolitan settings Yeats substituted the Rose and Ireland. Until 1900 Yeats denied Shelley's influence, and, moreover, sought to identify the origins of his predecessor's symbols in the ancient world. After 1903 the antinomial vision, with its "movement downwards upon life, not upwards out of life" (469), began to emerge. The material present now rivaled the idea, joy replaced sorrow, and the grey of Ireland overcame the colours of Shelley's Italy. In an interesting chapter where he juxtaposes Shelley's epipsyche and Yeats's Doctrine of the Mask, Bornstein shows how the mature Yeats wrestled with Shelley's idea of love. For Shelley, art should inspire and show the triumph of justice; for the mature Yeats, reality and justice go hand in hand. In a subsequent inquiry looking at modernism in terms of acts of mind, Bornstein (1976) reflects again on the last Romanticism of Yeats, this time in the context of Eliot and Stevens. Making use of the idea of the 'Greater Romantic Lyric', he asks whether Yeats's art deserves to be seen as a continuation of Romantic tradition; his conclusion is that many of the greatest mature poems written between 1918 and 1929 creatively develop out of romantic themes and modes.

Such studies do not tackle more difficult theoretical issues concerned with Yeats's unconscious, whether he merely found confirmation for his own ideas in his predecessors, or, given that Yeats is one of the 'last Romantics', how the relationship between early and late Romanticism is to be described. Bloom (1970), on the other hand, in a challenging study of Yeats's place in the English poetic tradition, confronts such questions. With Freud in mind, Bloom tells us "poetic influence... is a variety of melancholy or an anxiety-principle"(54). Bloom traces a line from Shelley through Browning and Pater to Yeats's typical poem where the poet, as quest-hero undertakes an odyssey of

spirit. The internalized quest-romance is the structure uniting Shelley's *Alastor* with *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* and *The Shadowy Waters*. Browning's antithetical quest, on the other hand, which ended with the permanent suffering of the self alone, was a warning to Yeats. Pater bequeathed to Yeats an impossible aesthetic ideal, a desperate trust in the flux of experience and an acknowledged rift between consciousness and experience. When Blake and Yeats are juxtaposed Yeats is shown to be a Gnostic, a dualist, longing for a future after death, exalting the Shadow, caught in his early career in a solipsistic reverie. Blake, on the other hand, whom Yeats wrongly imagines is a pre-Raphaelite, insists that the emotional and the natural fused in 'the condition of fire', form a single reality. .

In the actual survey of Yeats's work, Bloom seems to lose sight of the issue of influence and concentrates on a series of critical discriminations about the particular merits of individual poems or books. The early poetry of 1885-99 he values higher than the middle poems of 1899-1914; *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (1918), a "masterpiece in the tradition of marmoreal reveries", and the product of a crucial period in Yeats's imaginative life (1915-17), is promoted above *A Vision*. In contrast with Rudd, Bloom admires a poem like "Vacillation" precisely because it shows Yeats doubting his own mythologies. The most illuminating remarks occur in his promotion of the early poetry and *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. How much we need Bloom's Freudian anxiety-of-influence concept is an open question, but setting Yeats against the background of Blake and the Romantic inheritance highlights at once the continuity of a tradition and its decline, and raises doubts, as Bloom rightly observes, about Yeats's modern humanistic vision and its representative status or otherwise.

Other studies, such as Hough (1947), Kermode (1957) and Fletcher (1987), have focused on the late 19th-century context. Hough examines the genesis of Yeats's ideas in English aestheticism. With Ruskin, Rossetti, Morris, Pater, and the aesthetes behind him, Yeats cuts a different figure from when he is cast against a Romantic background. For Hough, Yeats takes his colouring from Victorian culture, from the opposition of art and society; by 1850 the ethical and social bias had spawned its antithesis, and its opposition in art, and by 1870 there was an Aesthetic Movement. Stressing the significance of the visual world, Ruskin pleaded for the integration of visual sensibility with the rest of psychic life, of art with religious experience. Both he and Morris attempted to make the world fit for artists to live in. Rossetti, claims Hough, inaugurated a period of emotional unrest. A conscious aesthete, he sought satisfaction in traditional religious symbolism but was possessed of a love that could never be satisfied, and it was this impasse and the movement inwards to the self that provided Yeats's starting-point. In contrast with Arnold's search for *certainty*, Pater emphasized the *flux of experience*. *Feeling and sincerity* acted as touchstones for an assessment of life, and he sought, therefore, a world outside of turbulence, a home to which he could withdraw. In his discussion, Hough repeats the view that Yeats learnt of French Symbolism through Symonds and stresses that Axel became for a time the poet's sacred book. Unlike the other Rhymers, however, Yeats had the tenacity and spiritual energy to take the aesthetic project further. Hough shows by implication how Yeats questions all his predecessors. Rossetti confused the physical and the spiritual; Morris sought a needed to recover contact with religion, the people and history. Unlike Morris, whose poetry was divorced from its age, Yeats draws more from contemporary Ireland than from Celtic legend and he directly engages with the life of his times. It is not altogether clear, for

example, how his discussion of the occult relates to his overall thesis about the last Romantics, or how much weight is to be attached to Yeats's Irish context, or whether Yeats, especially in the light of his modernist rejection of rhetoric, is a Victorian or a modern thinker and poet.

Yeats is both central and tangential to Kermode's study. Thus, much of the discussion in part one is devoted to Yeats; on the other hand, Yeats seems to be there to illustrate a separate argument about the Romantic basis of modern literature. Kermode links the isolation of the artist- the Romantic theme-with the modern predilection for the image, and he finds in Yeats the exemplary figure. The alienation of the artist from society deepened in the 19th century and found new articulation in the work of Arnold and Pater. Kermode stresses this native English tradition in contrast with French Symbolism, which he reads as a later version of Romanticism. His initial discussion of Yeats concentrates on "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory", an elegy that expresses the predicament of the artist in a world built for action. Yeats, in love with action, is held back from full engagement by his own artistic temperament and by the age in which he lives: hence his admiration for an artist like Gregory who has escaped into action, but who becomes in the process an image of the artist who did not escape. At the same time Yeats also discovered in the *Dancer* the great image that reconciled itself with action and contemplation, and in the *Tree* the contrasting integrity of the image which stood outside time and science and which could not therefore be subjected to any form of dissociation. In this sense Yeats, fully conscious of his heritage, worked through both the nature of the poet's isolation and the problem of the image. Part Two is devoted to exposing the Romantic roots of modernist critical theory. At each point Yeats is held up as the central figure, the

isolated artist who sought to overcome his isolation by Unity of being as expressed in the image.

Though often recommended, the overall value of Kermodé's book of Yeats remains uncertain. There is something external in his discussion of Yeats, a remoteness that comes from seeing him too readily as an exemplary figure. Kermodé emphasizes the Romantic image selectively, and aspects of the image that do not fit his argument are omitted. Had the idea of the isolation of the artist been really put to work in the case of Yeats, it demands explanation. The natural world in Yeats looks very different from its depiction in Romantic verse: it is never a subject in its own right, rarely challenges, does not share the same life-force as the human world, and its symbolic quality often insists on itself throughout. We might add that the natural world is often relegated to a term in a structured, dialectical argument, and looks not unlike part of the first stage in the adept's ascent to spiritual knowledge. As de Man (1984) rightly notices, Yeats's emblematic landscape differs fundamentally from Wordsworth's transcendental vision. Moreover, between the image and the emblem there is a conflict, an ambiguity, an area of discontinuity, which Yeats sought to bridge but could not. Against Kermodé's trumpeting of the "reconciliatory image" in "Among School Children", de Man suggests that the final line is an anguished question: "to choose the dancer means to fall into the transient world of matter for the sake of a few moments of illusive pleasure; to choose the dance means to renounce all natural joys for the sake of divine revelation"(76). Yeats, therefore, affords no reassurance from the anxieties of our post-romantic predicament.

Yeats's beliefs have often been dismissed by critics as silly or out-of-keeping with a scientific age, though in recent years there has been a tendency to cast them in a more positive light. Part of the problem is

that we are still living with the 1930s legacy and are still uncertain how to deal dispassionately with Yeats's occult ideas. Blackmur's essay (1936), for example, still reads well today, but it bears the scars of the 'Hard Fact Thirties' when critics felt obliged to separate Yeats's poetry from his convictions. In this section, with particular reference to Auden (1939), MacNeice (1941), Spender (1935), Muir (1940), Brooks (1939), Tate (1942), Ellmann (1954) and Winters (1960), I retrace the contours of that critical terrain, conscious always that it was not Yeats's personality that posed a problem for critics of the 1930s and 1940s, as Cullingford (1984) maintains, but his 'System' of beliefs.

Critics differ in the value they attach to Yeats's System. Rajan (1965) is not untypical in following Yeats' suggestion that *A Vision* gave the poet 'metaphors for poetry'. Yeats's vision is thus best approached as 'a group of interrelated symbols', and, because it is a myth or a framework, it should be imaginatively rather than literally received. As regards the importance of the System for an interpretation of the poetry, Rajan asserts that "it is to the poetry that we should direct ourselves, and though esoteric interpretation is sometimes helpful and at other times necessary, it has to be controlled by a firm sense of the poem"(37). Malins (1974) goes further, claiming that *A Vision* is "vital to a full understanding of how his poetry was nourished"(78). Some critics have noticed how Yeats's great poetry after 1917 coincides with the development of his System, the composition of which can be traced from *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (1918), through the period of automatic writing from October 1917 to March 1920, to its final shape in *A Vision* (1925-6). Other critics, however, choose to distinguish the poetry from the System or, more generally, from his ideas.

Kermode (1967) observes that Yeats's true commitment was not to the system but to poetry. The System, however, enabled him to see justice and reality together, to understand, that is, the tension between eternity and the dying generations. He laboured to speak in terms of a modern reality without forfeiting the use of paradigms, so that "the whole history of Yeats's style... reflects this regard for the reality that will not be reduced"(34). As a poet, the dream never wholly enchanted Yeats, but as a thinker, unfortunately, it did. His poetry is therefore the product of a skeptical gaze, but in his thinking he gravitates towards authoritarian politics and the dream of apocalypse and crisis. Hassett (1986), in a recent, original inquiry into the place of hatred in the poet's life and thought, suggests that, though often motivated by hatred, Yeats managed to control it when writing verse. At the end of his forthright essay condemning Yeats's fascist tendencies, O'Brien (1965) has the awkward task of returning to the connection between poetry and politics. He negotiates the dilemma not in the more conventional terms of admiring the poetry and hating the politics, but instead by trying to account for the force which surfaces in both the political prose and the poetry. O'Brien develops this by suggesting that Yeats's poetry anticipates Hitler and the Second World War but in "metaphors of such power that they thrust aside all calculated intent". O'Brien's argument serves to illustrate yet again the continuing difficulty critics encounter in incorporating Yeats' beliefs, whether religious or political, into a reading of his poetry.

"You were silly like us: your gift survived it all", wrote Auden in March 1939 in his famous elegy, the gift being 'language' and the ability to write well. Such an opposition is erected into a court-room drama when Auden (1939) presents in turn the case for the prosecution and the defence. In thirties style, the prosecution points to three

accusations the public might have against Yeats: 1] that he does not have a gift for memorable language, 2] that he did not have a profound understanding of the age he lived in, and 3] that he was unsympathetic towards the advanced thought of his time. Formulated thus, they of course miss the mark. 'How many of his lines can you remember?' asks the prosecutor rather foolishly about a poet who is famous for his aphorisms and his quotable lines. The second and third accusations now seem dated, and are turned on their head by the Defence. Yeats's convictions can be better understood in the wider context of the failure of liberal capitalist democracy, and the rise of Irish nationalism. Against the atomization of the individual under capitalism, Yeats sought "a binding force of society"; it was a religious search, and the religious solution may be unworkable, but to Yeats's credit it was based on a "true perception of a social evil". In conclusion, the Defence reminds the court that Yeats was a poet and not a politician, that art is the product of history, not a cause, and that his diction shows a steady evolution towards the true democratic style. Although probably unintended, Auden's essay and elegy, with their no-nonsense rationality, hardnosed realism and superior air, have widened the gap between Yeats's poetry and what he believed, and as a result it has proved difficult either to avoid the obligation to defend him, or to reshape the relationship between his occult ideas and his verse.

MacNeice (1941), in what for Ellmann is "still as good an introduction to [Yeats] as we have", conducts an extended debate with both High Modernism and the 1930s. As he proclaims in his preface, "a poem is both about something but [it] also is". Doubtless with Auden in mind, he seeks to rebut those who maintain that "Yeats was a silly old thing but he was a poet" (78). There is an intimate connection, between the author's life and a wider society; and the value of poetry resides in

its truthfulness to life. MacNeice suggests that, in spite of thriving on theoretical half-truths, preaching an unsound doctrine on poetry, or promulgating distortions about his family, mysticism and Ireland, "Yeats, as a poet, is characterized by integrity". Some of his guiding principles may have been wrong, but there is no guarantee that with the right beliefs he would have written better poetry. Indeed, MacNeice adds, he may not have written at all if he had thought differently. It is to Yeats's credit that he went against the age, and if he is to be an example it is that we should write according to our lights. Through it all, a picture of Yeats emerges that commands respect. MacNeice maintains, Yeats was not a mystic; he was fascinated by the metaphysical dialectic of *Being and Becoming*; he mistakenly thought he could approach popular poetry via an esoteric world; he recognized that a poem--a bridge to the Unknown--had to be constructed in terms of the known; and he learnt to compromise with the language of men, eventually adopting an admirably hard and dry style. As to what he believed, "there was always a skeptic in Yeats"(69). MacNeice stresses Yeats's Irish background and his connections with other Irish writers, how he fused Symbolist with nationalist doctrine, and how nationalism crucially intervened in saving him from theosophy and 1890s aestheticism. And politically, MacNeice argues, citing Auden's speech for the Defence, he should not be dismissed as 'a mere reactionary'. One of the strengths of MacNeice's study is to demonstrate that Yeats was both in and out of touch with his age: he shared much with other modern writers such as Rilke, Eliot, Lawrence, or other Irish writers such as Joyce, or Synge, but he was also his own man, who, for all his campaigning, in the end refused discipleship.

Spender (1935), Muir (1939) and Daiches (1940) add other Thirties voices to the debate, this time in the wider context of modern

literature and poetry. Spender, whose criticism is rooted in the familiar if unsophisticated opposition between romanticism and realism, attempts to detach the poetry from the beliefs. Thus, Yeats's occult activity has little relation to the part that the theory of magic plays in his poetry; his theory of symbolism is "orthodoxly psychological"; his method is most successful when applied to objects which are the least symbolic; his attitude to magical events is like a doctor's, not a witch doctor's, while his poetry is only magical in the sense that he can produce a certain atmosphere. Spender, therefore, admires the poetry not for its magic or its mystery but for its "passion, its humanity, its occasional marvelous lucidity, its technical mastery, its integrity, its strength, its reality and its opportunism"(69). Perhaps his most telling criticism comes in claiming that "Yeats has found, as yet, no subject of moral significance in the social life of his time. Instead of a subject, he offers us magnificent and lively rapportage about his friend"(85). For Muir, the present is a transitional period and such periods encourage apocalyptic visions or the historical sense. Unlike Kermode above, Muir is untroubled by this, content merely to have identified what he takes to be the determining historical context. This leaves him free to fasten into different features of Yeats's work: the relevance of *AVision* to an understanding of the poetry; how great poems such as "The second coming", "Leda and the Swan", and the Byzantium poems gain from a knowledge of Yeats's occult ideas; moreover, the intensity of even his occasional poems derives from Spender, Muir contrasts the range of Yeats's imagination with his narrow sympathies and alerts us to the way he lacks "moral immediacy". Daiches (1940) comes to conclusions similar to those of MacNeice. Yeats was not a mystical poet; to help him achieve an adequate poetic expression he needed a system, order and ritual; his early poetry indicates a need for pattern, which he found in folk material; Ireland rescued him from his imitative romanticism, so

that by *The Wind Among the Reeds* Irish themes and figures predominate. In a later review, significantly entitled "The Practical Visionary" (1962), Daiches continues such a line of interpretation: Yeats was not an esoteric; Ireland saved him from the Rhymers' Club; "the test of a philosophy was the degree to which illuminating poetry could be based on it, not vice-versa"(22). He concludes that Yeats was a shrewd and practical person, whose life and work formed a unity.

In American criticism, the issue of Yeats's beliefs and his poetry has been coloured both by the Hard Fact Thirties and by the presence of New Criticism. At the end of his chapter on Yeats, Brooks (1939) summarizes what the System gave the poet; concrete and traditional symbols, the ability to see the world as a great drama, a pattern which was flexible enough to allow for the complexity of experience and to take in the whole person, and a doctrine of the Mask which enabled him to break decisively with the optimism, decorum and sentimentality of Victorian poetry. Brooks's concern is not with the issue of the truth or falsity of Yeats's System, but rather with how it constitutes a world-view, the "utterance of the whole soul of man" having for its object imaginative contemplation'.

Close to the center of the New Critical view of Yeats is the issue of how much we need to know in order to appreciate the poetry. Brooks makes use of the System as expounded in *A Vision*, while Tate prefers to rely on "the ordinary critical equipment of the educated critic" (1942). Ellmann (1954), alert both to his own biographical learnings and to the New Criticism, prefers an analytical approach. In his chapter 'Assertion without Doctrine', he makes three observations. Firstly, taking up the last comment in Brooks', he submits-in a way which recalls Spender's remarks that the later poems rest on certain qualities

such as 'breeding' and 'courtesy' rather than on beliefs- that for Yeats a belief is primarily a conviction. Moreover, beliefs have to be welded into a poem, which is not, therefore, merely an expression of belief; the test of an idea is not its significance outside the poem but "its relevance to the speaker's situation". Secondly, ideas in Yeats exist to be wrestled with and overpowered. His poetry is a site of conflict where ideas are altered or qualified according to the context of the poem. Yeats's belief in reincarnation, his view of heaven or the end of the world, his religious imagery all undergo modification in his poetry. He can be skeptical about reincarnation, startlingly variable about heaven, mixed in his attitude towards esoteric doctrine and upholder by turns of both Eastern religion and western thought. Ellmann concludes that the essential standard for the poet is one of 'dwelling in the presence of certain ideas', rather than of positing them as truths demanding adherence. Thirdly, in line with Symbolist theory, Ellmann affirms that the center of a Yeats poem is not its ideological content but its mood. Moods elevate the imagination above reason; they unify the world into one imaginative substance; they can be forcefully expressed.

Hill takes issue with Ellmann's view that Yeats 'remained stubbornly loyal to the conscious mind's intelligible structure'. Following Simone Weil's suggestion that "the simultaneous composition on several planes" is the law of artistic creation, Hill suggests that poetry recognizes the primary objective world "not so much by exercising its discursive faculty as by enacting a paradigm"(99). As an heir to the Romantic tradition, Yeats was involved in distinguishing true from false masks. The true mask could be shaped either as a 'grammar of assent', where there is a reciprocity between imagination and action, or as 'syntax' or 'articulate energy'. Hill argues that 'in Yeats's poetry there is imagination; in Yeats' politics there is action; but

the one does not enrich or deepen the other'. What Hill admires about Yeats's poetry is the energy of his syntax, the 'return upon himself', as in the final lines of "The Second coming". Hill goes on to suggest that "Easter 1916" is a paradigm of the hard-won sanctity of the intellect, which distinguishes it from Newman's grammar of assent, or consciousness. This complex set of discriminations needs close attention and serves to remind us that the issue of Yeats's poetry and beliefs is correspondingly intricate.

Since the formative period of the late 1930s and early 1940s, some Yeats critics have assumed in dealing with the issue of Yeats' ideas and his poetry that they are first in the field or that others have simply got it wrong. Winters (1960) provides a good example; he joins the debate like someone breaking up a party. He accepts the need to take Yeats's ideas seriously, and summarizes them thus: all good stems from emotions; lust and rage are paraded; ignorance is valued; an agrarian society run by a landed gentry is desirable. Yeats admired women for their beauty, had a cyclical view of history, believed in Irish legends, and praised and mythologized his friends.

Despite the abundance of such critical writings, a great deal seems to have been left unexplored. Among such left out, one can speak of Yeats's vision which hardly received any serious attention. Hence, "vision" in Yeats's poetry is so integral that unless it is adequately examined, much of Yeats would remain untouched. The researcher will make an in-depth study of the same. To quote Yeats:

It has often been this vision that has evoked the most startling inspiration, calling into outer life some portion of the divine life, or of the buried reality... (1961:154)

Chapter II

Defining 'vision' and indicating its importance in Yeats's poetry

I was interested in little but the vision itself.

(W. B. Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:33)

The readers of W. B. Yeats's poetry often confuse his *A Vision* with his "vision" which is a part and parcel of poetic perception. Literally, "vision" denotes a number of meanings. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines it as

The ability to see; the idea or a picture in one's imagination; a dream or similar experience especially of a religious kind; the ability to think about or plan the future with great imagination and intelligence. (2005: 1705)

The word "vision" can be associated with a mystic, with a saint or with a literary artist. William Blake's vision is the vision of a religious mystic who believes in the union with the divine nature by means of ecstatic contemplation, and in the power of spiritual access to domains of knowledge, closed off to ordinary thought. In Bernard Shaw, Saint Joan's vision comes from her, to paraphrase Schopenhauer, extraordinary intellect which works quite independently of "the will", and therefore freely. For a literary artist, his work embodies a life vision reflective of an intensity of imaginative conviction. Rabindranath Tagore admired that in Yeats:

That Yeats had an intensity of imaginative conviction is an utter truth. He never played with imagination but

whatever he saw in the light of imagination, he perceived the truth of it in his own life. Thus imagination was not only a vehicle of his vocation as a poet for Yeats, but a part and parcel of his life. He used to feed his soul from the resources of the world by means of imagination. Whenever I met and talked with him in solitude, I felt his intensity of imaginative conviction. I was yet to go through his poems to judge his poetic talent, but that he touched upon all gamut of human experience with the help of imaginative conviction of heart, was what I felt when I came in touch with him. (Translation mine)

(Ei imaginative conviction kathata Yeats sambandhe attyanta satya. Kalpona tahar pakhhe kebol lilar samogri nahe, kalponar aloke tini ja jaha dekhiachen tahar satyatake tini jibane grahan karite pariachhen. Arthat tahar hate kalpana-jinisti kebolmatra kabitya babosajer ekta hatiar nohe, taha tahar jibaner samogri; ehar dwarai biswajagat haite tini tahar atmar khadya paneo ahoran karitechhen. Tahar sange niwrite jatobar amar alap haiache tatobar ei kathai ami anubhab kariachi. Tini je kabi taha tahar kabita padia janibar sujog akhono amar sampurnorupe ghate nai, kintu tini je kalponalokito hridayer dwara tahar choturdike pranobanrupe sparsha karitechhen taha tahar kache asiai ami anobhab karite pariachhi.) (2003:666-670)

“Literature is always personal,” says W.B. Yeats, “always one man’s vision of the world, one man’s experience, and it can be popular when men are ready to welcome the visions of others” (1962: 115). Hence, we propose to study the ‘vision’ of W. B. Yeats through his poetical works. From the very inception of his poetic career, W. B. Yeats had “grown

happier with every year of life as though gradually conquering something in" himself, certainly his miseries were not made by others but were a part of his "own mind" (1966: 11). He lived in a dream, and the reality meant nothing to him. He worked on a large canvas with all the force of his violent personality, oblivious of everything in his effort to get what he saw with the mind's eye. He was never satisfied with what he had done; it seemed to him of no consequence compared with the vision that obsessed his mind. As a result, all his poems are endeavours to capture some high, impalpable vision in a net of obscure life-experiences. Hence W. B. Yeats sorted out the avocation of a poet:

He (a poet) must make his work a part of his journey towards beauty and truth. He must picture saint or hero, or hillside, as he sees them, nor as he expected to see them, and he must comfort himself, when others cry out against what he has seen, by remembering that no two men are alike, and that there is no excellent beauty without strangeness. In this matter he must be without humility. He may, indeed, doubt the reality of his vision if men do not quarrel with him as they did with Apostles, for there is only one perfection and only one search for perfection, and it sometimes has the form of the religious life and sometimes of the artistic life; and I do not think these lives differ in their wages, for the end of art is peace... (1961: 207)

The most obvious difficulty in responding to Yeats's work is the sheer complexity of his vision. To a considerable degree, this complexity arose from a life-long conflict that raged within him—a conflict compounded of contrary impulses pulling him at once towards a life of introspection and towards a life of action and engagement. This self-

division had its origin in Yeats's childhood revolt against his father's world. Hating his father's skepticism, the young Yeats would dream the days away, but he wanted the leisure of ease as well as the pleasure of success. So, he grew up with this divided personality. Hence, he painfully turned inwards, being self-conscious of the vast gulf between his self-reality and his self-image. His poetic nature made him dream and ruminate whereas the historical period in Ireland in which he belonged, demanded concrete action. Torn between these two extremes, Yeats craved for mental stability and inner poise. Yeats's Irishness is more than a matter of using Irish themes and an Irish atmosphere. It means that his vision is something more than private, personal and literary; that it has its own rationale. It gives him the kind of advantage that he had in his mind:

I filled my mind with the popular beliefs of Ireland... I sought some symbolic language reaching far into the past and associated with familiar names and conspicuous hills that I might not be alone amid the obscure impressions of the senses... or mourned the richness or reality lost to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* because he had not discovered in England or in Ireland his Caucasus. (Yeats: 1961:150)

T. S. Eliot extols Yeats for the maturity of vision the later Yeats shows in his whole gamut of experience: "When I was a young man at the university of America, just beginning to write verse, Yeats was already a considerable figure in the world of poetry... I cannot remember that poetry at that stage made any impression upon me... For this reason the poetry of young Yeats hardly existed for me until after my enthusiasm had been won by the poetry of the older

Yeats"(1961:296-297). Eliot makes an attempt to trace the developing phenomena of Yeats's vision.

J.B.Priestley called W.B. Yeats "a poet first, last, and all of the time; not only a great but probably the greatest poet of the century"(1961:197). As a poet Yeats marked the movement away from the energy and exuberance of romanticism in Blake and Shelley, and the poetry of "current opinion" in Tennyson. It was a transition from the roles of a prophet and teacher holding up a fragile vision of beauty to a concern for what Yeats termed the "Unity of Being" and to bring the whole soul of man into activity. In June 1890, he had written:

The mind of man has two kinds of shepherds, the poets
who rouse and trouble and the poets who hush and
console. (Yeats: 1986: 222)

It was only too evident that he was not content with either and considered the need for bringing together the two impulses of romanticism in seemingly binary opposition—the pure aesthetic mode and the pure rhetorical mode. The aesthete distanced himself from the readers; the rhetorician aimed at crowds that found no authenticity and ratification in experience. Yeats summed up the issue in three lines in his poems:

Rhetorician would deceive his neighbours,
The sentimentalist himself; while art
Is but a vision of reality.
(Yeats: 1955: 182)

In the words of Yeats, "One of the means of loftiness... has been the choice of strange and far away places for the scenery of

art..."(1961: 207). Hence, he created a never- never land of love and idleness in the early phase of his poetic career. He very easily acquired the habit of shielding himself from the world by looking within and creating a personal vision of reality based upon his own dreams and fantasies. In the world created out of vision he could preserve the higher reality that his imaginations and emotions craved, and without which life seemed worthless. In his early collection of poems, Yeats brings the cult of "eternal beauty wandering on her way" with its Red Rose of "an unimagined revelation" into the world of Irish lore. In a letter to Katherine Tynan, Yeats speaks of his future aspirations in poetic creativity:

...it is almost all a flight into fairy-land from the real world and summons to that flight. The Chorus to the 'Stolen Child' sums it up—that it is not the poetry of insight and knowledge, but of longing and complaint—the cry of the heart against necessity. I hope to alter that and write poetry of insight and knowledge. (1986: 63)

Yeats's creative aspirations began to be fulfilled when he turned from fairy tale to myth, from the dream-world beyond the borders of history and reality towards a deeper "insight and knowledge". But with *The Wind Among the Reeds* the vision takes on a new character, and the poet inhabits in the dream-reality. For a new force has entered into his poetry – love. It is mainly despairing love, and the poetry is extremely poignant. The essential thing to note is that Yeats turns both exaltation and despair to the heightening of his dream-vision, his substitute for the drab quotidian actuality. In this early phase, Yeats not only searched Irish and mystical traditions for symbols but also strained to elevate all the images of his poetry to a

symbolic vision. It is a vision that "has transcended particular time and place...and becomes a living soul" (Yeats: 1961: 80).

In his *Autobiographies*, Yeats makes it clear that his vision embraces a poet's plunge into the world beyond himself. To him, "...art/ Is but a vision of reality" (1955:182). And how Yeats has perceived that "reality" through myriad stages of his life, is the central focus of this thesis. Yeats has seen "reality" with the eyes of a poet having "imaginative perception". His vision is in fact his vehicle which has radiated his poetic sensibility and the outcome is his attainment of that "truth and beauty" which Yeats felt, should be the only, the only way out of attaining the "Unity of Being":

All my life I have been haunted with the idea that the poet should know all classes of people as one of themselves, that he should combine the greatest possible personal realization with greatest possible knowledge of the speech and circumstances of the world". (1966:470)

Added to this attitude, Yeats's frustration in love, his bitter experiences in politics and in the Abbey Theatre shattered his illusions and produced the harsh and ironic tone of the Middle poems. The poet hurtles down to the hard realities of life—the grime and the dust, the sham and the swank. In "A Coat", Yeats puts into record the change from a dreamy glorification of Ireland's past to a cynical awareness of its present:

For, there's more enterprise
In walking naked.

(Yeats: 1955: 142)

And it was the poetry, which came out of this enterprise:

I have several ballads, poignant things I believe, more poignant than anything I have written. They have now come to an end I think, and I must go back to the poems of civilization (Yeats: 1961: 112)

The poet understood that "the romantic movement with its turbulent heroism, its self-assertion, is over." (Yeats: 1961:405) He wanted to make his "readers understand that explanations of the world lie one inside another"(Yeats: 1962: 434). For, "a poet is justified not by the expression of himself, but by the public he finds or creates". (Yeats: 1961: X). As such, he came to the conclusion:" Individuals and classes complete their personality and then sink back to enrich the mass". (Yeats: 1962:81). It is this creative mode of his major poetic works that enables Yeats "to wither into the truth" of life, to visualize any form of contemporary reality. This is also perhaps one of the secrets of "his ability, after becoming unquestionably the master, to remain always a cotemporary" (Eliot: 1961: 298) The poems like "The Second Coming" and "Easter 1916" offer an ideal case-study in Yeats's creative responses to the historical crises confronting Christian Europe through the first World War, the Irish rising of 1916 and its ruthless suppression by the British and such other national and international upheavals.

The struggle between humanist and would-be saint formed the essence of Yeats's vision of life. In *The Tower* phase onwards, the fundamental theme of his work was the war of the spiritual with the natural. Hence Yeats had begun "to see things double—doubled in history, personal history.... In my own life I have never felt so acutely the presence of spiritual virtue and that is accompanied by intensified

desire. You must feel plunged as I do into the madness of vision, into a sense of relation of separated things that you cannot explain, and that deeply disturbs emotion." (Yeats: 1961: 113) Now the poet came to the vantage point of age and experience. At this hour, he "had nothing to distract" his "thoughts that run through" his "past loves, neither numerous nor happy, back to the Platonic love of boyhood, the most impassioned of all, and was plunged into hopeless misery." (Yeats: 1962: 40) Thus, Yeats had made a distinction between the perfection that is from a man's combat with himself and that which is from a combat with circumstance. With this simple distinction he built up a vision of eternal world, quite faint in the initial phase of his poetic career. In his reply to Lady Gregory's letter, Yeats wrote:

And I put *The Tower* and *The Winding Stair* into evidence to show that my poetry has gained in self-possession and power. I owe this change to an incredible experience. (1962:8)

In *The Tower*, the poet achieves a kind of ripeness. Each moment gives value to the poet's life. He is capable of excitement, for he can now "make his soul". He turns with a pang from the varied "sensual music" of the world, but he is drawn towards the 'monuments of unaging intellect'. He does not deceive himself about what he has lost in old age, but the regret itself becomes a positive assertion of life:

We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest.

(Yeats: 1955: 269)

Hence, the poet justified his quest for eternal glory in BBC, Belfast, 8 Sept. 1931:

Now I am trying to write about the state of my soul, for it is right for an old man to make his soul. And some of my thoughts upon that subject I have put into a poem 'Sailing to Byzantium'.... Byzantium was the center of European civilization and the source of its spiritual philosophy, so I symbolize the search for the spiritual life by a journey to that city. (Yeats: 1984: 213)

In 1938, Yeats admonished his fellow poets: "Irish poets, learn your trade". At its core was this realization: "Only that which does not teach, which does not persuade, which does not cry out, which does not condescend, which does not explain, is irresistible". The poet hoped "to have attained the distance from life which can make credible strange events..." (Yeats: 1961: 221) It is for this mature vision that T.S. Eliot called Yeats "the greatest poet of our time – certainly the greatest in this language, and so far as I am able to judge, in any language". (T. S. Eliot: 1961: 296) In his vast life-span, Yeats's vision adumbrates these:

- i) The poet as an individual whose life gives weight to his words.
- ii) The poet as the social character, the site of tension between a social and personal identity.
- iii) The poet as prophet revealing truth.

Chapter III

Formation of Yeats's vision

It is the work of writers who are moulded by influences that are moulding their arts, and who write out of so deep a life that they are accepted there in the end.

(W. B. Yeats: *Explorations*: 1962:156)

W. B. Yeats, observed T.S. Eliot, " who is capable of experience finds himself in a different world in every decade of his life; as he sees it with different eyes, the material of his art is continually renewed. But in fact, very few poets have shown this capacity of adaptation to the years. It requires, indeed, an exceptional honesty and courage to face the change." (1961:301-302) Hence, Yeats's vision undergoes a radical change in course of his vast life span. Born in Ireland, the poet spent much of his boyhood and school holidays in Sligo with his grand parents. This country – its scenery, folklore, and supernatural legend – coloured Yeats's work and formed the vision of many of his poems. In 1880, when his family was in Dublin, the young Yeats gathered experiences by coming in contact with other poets and artists. Meanwhile, when the family moved back to London in 1887, Yeats took up the life of a professional writer. He joined the Theosophical Society, whose mysticism appealed to him because it was a form of imaginative life far removed from the work-a-day world. The age of science was repellent to Yeats. He was a visionary and he insisted upon surrounding himself with poetic images. He began a study of the prophetic works of William Blake, and this enterprise brought him into contact with other visionary traditions, such as the Platonic, the Neoplatonic, the Swedenborgian, and the alchemical. Yeats quickly became involved in the literary life of London. He became friends with William Morris and W.E.Henley, and he was cofounder of the Rhymers' Club,

whose members included his friends Lionel Johnson and Arthur Symons. Yeats's chance meeting with and loss of heart to the Irish beauty Maud Gonne, played a vital part in shaping his early poetic vision. From that moment, as he wrote, "the troubling of my life began". Maud Gonne was a public figure, and to win her he had to spend far more time on public activities than he would have otherwise done. Rejected, the poet began writing about his lost love. In the later phase of his career, Yeats's poetic vision is shaped by a galaxy of men of letters. Those interactions and influences contribute to the growth of the poet's vision.

Yeats writes to Katharine Tynan; "My life has been in my poems. To make them I have broken my life into mortar as it were. I have brayed it, in youth and fellowship, peace and worldly hopes. I have seen others enjoying while I stood alone with myself- commenting, commenting-a mere dead mirror on which things reflect themselves"(Yeats: 1986:93-94) Hence, our study of W.B. Yeats through the "mirror" which he has created in his poetry.

Yeats was born in 1865, a son of a painter John Butler Yeats, and of Susan Mary Pollexfen. His brother, Jack, also wanted to become a renowned painter, and Yeats himself studied painting once he had finished his unhappy schooldays in London and Dublin. At home his family considered that he would become a writer, and his father encouraged the boy's growing interest in poetry. When the poet was fifteen or sixteen his father had talked to him of Blake and Rossetti, given him works to read, and told him of his own essentially pre-Raphaelite literary principles. Since his father considered dramatic poetry the superior of all other kinds, the young Yeats wrote his first poetry in imitation of Spenser and Shelley.

Yeats's family moved between the two places, and the Yeats children often spent their holidays with their maternal grandmother in Sligo, whose landscape, with curiously formed shape of Ben Bulbin became literally and symbolically Yeats's country of the heart's desire. Keeping Sligo always in memory, the world he imagined in his early poems was a retreat to the memory lane. As soon as his family moved from Howth to Ashfield Terrace, Yeats had begun to collect specimens of human nature, apart from his keen interest in natural phenomena. And holidays in Sligo again rooted him in his own world. It may be noted in this connection that Yeats's father was an agnostic and his lack of belief had affected the young poet, for it made him think of the credibility of religious doctrines. Hating his father's skepticism as days passed by, the young Yeats would dream the days away, but he wanted the leisure of ease as well as the pleasure of success.

Yeats's first published poem appeared in *The Dublin University Review* in which the two poems, "Song of the Faeries" and "Voices" reveal the gentle languor of the poet. The first poem is all the more relevant, for it draws attention to the three elements in his early poetry: his love of natural beauty, his growing interest in the supernatural and his desire for quietude. Yeats often used to walk round Laugh Gill, which involved his sleeping in Sleuth Wood, the experience of which formed the poetic vision of the early poet. John Butler Yeats had read Thoreau's *Walden* to the poet that in fact gradually stimulated him to live like Thoreau in search of wisdom in Innisfree, a wooded island in Laugh Gill. On the other hand, the mysterious fires of the village of Ballisodare left an indelible influence upon Yeats who began to take a greater interest in fairy talks of old men and women. He told people about things to be believed rather than to be doubted: "But I was

already to deny or turn into a joke what was for all that secret fanaticism" (Yeats: 1966:97).

The shyness of his nature added to his gentleness, and he lived in a fairy world of dreamy thought, which his early verse reflects:

A man has a hope for heaven
But soulless a fairy dies,
As a leaf that is old, and withered and cold
When the wintry vapours rise

(Yeats: 1949:28)

True to his spirit, another romantic poem of almost same vein, "The Island of Statues" shows the influence of Spenser and Shelley. The whole tone of the poem is melancholy, imbued with a sense of loneliness amid a delicate beauty of nature. Thus, Yeats was writing under the spell of a fervid imagination that had its root in literary sources available to him and romantic surroundings around him.

Yeats despised traditional ethnographic practice and is thus better classified as a mystic rather than as a folklorist. Indeed, he "railed against scientific folk-lore which treated what he considered living things as specimens not to be felt or allowed to penetrate the present"(Thuente: 1981: 65). This aversion was due in part to his interests in the spiritual movements of the day. According to Mary Catherine Flannery,

Yeats was predisposed to an interest in Eastern philosophy, having rejected an earlier flirtation with science...Like many young men of his time, Yeats finds science and established religion incapable of answering

the questions he finds most important--here stated as the nature and immortality of the soul (1978:17).

Though he eventually lost interest in the folklore movement, Yeats continued to believe in the correlation between poetry and mysticism (or "magic") throughout his entire life: "He was given to long walks in the country...and begin to play at being a sage, a magician or a poet. For Yeats to be a poet was to be sexually potent and to be a sage and magician too. Sex, magic and poetry were to be part of the same whole for him" (Flannery: 1978: 15). Thus, his consequent interest in peasant folklore, according to Mary Helen Thuente, was born out of his interests in mysticism:

Yeats was not only interested in the peasant as visionary, but in the most extravagant, unexplainable examples of their imaginary and visionary powers (1981:87).

At the same time, Yeats was also highly influenced by the Irish Nationalist movement. One of the most damaging effects of prolonged colonial influence was the general degradation of Irish culture: "For centuries the character of the Irish people and consequently their literature and culture, had been the objects of derision in English eyes. England's ban on the teaching of Irish, through which it hoped to destroy the last remnants of Irish culture in nineteenth century Ireland was typical of the English attitude towards Irish culture" (Thuente: 1981: 7). Though Protestant, Yeats believed in the value of Celtic folklore, and the need to "canonize" it as the legacy of the Irish: "Yeats tells how he had realized that he must build a new tradition...It was Yeats himself...that revived a dying tradition and united the shattered fragments into a symbolical, mythical, coherence" (Raine: 1981: 17).

Yeats reiterates this hope in his collection of original folklore, *The Celtic Twilight*:

I have desired to show in a vision something of the face of Ireland to any of my own people who care for things of this kind. I have therefore written down accurately and candidly much that I have heard and seen, and, except by way of commentary, nothing that I have merely imagined (1981:32).

Thus his involvement in the folklore movement of the time was one of recapturing of identity, culture, and society. His goal was to restore voice to those who he believed not only possessed a greater spiritual and visionary awareness, but indeed maintained a link to the true Irish identity, lost due to centuries of Colonial rule.

Scholars, however, raise questions about Yeats' involvement in the folklore movement. Though he claimed that his works were reflective of intimate knowledge of his subjects and not the product of his personal vision, the Introduction to *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland* indicates otherwise:

These folk tales are full of simplicity and musical occurrence for they are the literature of a class for whom every incident in the old rut of birth, love, pain and death has cropped up unchanged for centuries: who have steeped everything in the heart: to whom everything is a symbol. They have spade over which man has leant from the beginning. The people of the cities have the machine, which is prose and a parvenu. They have few events (Yeats: 1973: 5).

This personal vision is apparent in "The Stolen Child," which appeared as the only original work in his first collection of folklore, *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland*. In "The Stolen Child," Yeats creates a distinct contrast between the urban world that he originated from, and the imagined "Other": the mystical world of the Irish Peasant.

In the poem, the contemporary urban world, the world of the "machine," is a cold and cruel one, while the fairy world (here a metaphor for the "authentic" Irish peasant) is "at one" with nature: "Come away, O, human child! / To the woods and waters wild/ With a fairy hand in hand" (Yeats: 1955:20). Indeed, the world of the fairy is empowering in its distance from the urban world: "Where dips the rocky highland/ Of Sleuth Wood in the lake/ There lies a leafy island/ Where flapping herons wake" (1955:20). This "Otherworld" is one of mystery, dance and joy: "Where the wave of moonlight glosses/ The dim grey sands with light/ Far off by farthest Rosses/ We foot it all the night/ Weaving olden dances, / Mingling hands and mingling glances/ Till the moon has taken flight" (1955:20). The poem concludes with the impression that the child will be offered a better life among the fairies: "Away with us he's going/ The solemn eyed/ He'll hear no more the lowing/ Of the calves on the warm hill-side/ Or the kettle on the hob/Sing peace unto his breast...With a fairy hand in hand, / From the world's more full of weeping than he can understand" (1955:21).

"Into the Twilight," which first appeared in Yeats collection of original folklore, *The Celtic Twilight*, also reveals the opposition of Yeats's imagined "mystical" peasant and the contemporary urban world. In contrast to an "out-worn heart, in a time out-worn," (1955:65), Yeats states that "your mother Eire [Ireland] is always

young/Dew ever shining and twilight grey" (65). This "youthful" land is a supernatural one, which is connected to nature and is thus the authentic self: "Come heart, where hill is heaped upon hill/For there the mystical brotherhood/Of sun and moon and hollow and wood/And river and stream work out their will" (66). In contrast to Yeats's vision however, the reality of colonial occupation distances his hope of returning to this perceived authentic state: " And time and the world are ever in flight/And love is less kind than the grey twilight/And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn" (66).

In the era which William Butler Yeats lived, the occult was not as inaccessible as it is today. Magic proved to be a solution to the ennui which pervaded many lives of the Anglo-Irish cast. Yeats, a member of this circle, was eager to discover his own identity as an Irishman. To accomplish this, he developed his own form of magic via incorporating the Celtic myths of his native land. Maud Gonne, the object of his desire throughout his life, was fused with his vision, thus creating a sense of a new generation that must be spawned to create the perfect Irish race. Yeats's early poetry is laden with some of the most complex yet classic images in the occult, which are often misunderstood in contemporary times. Yeats's 1899 collection of poems, *The Wind Among the Reeds* proved to generate "reactions to the volume [that] were quizzical. In some quarters bewilderment was expressed at [Yeats's] deliberate search for obscurity...above all, the new volume's reliance on elaborate magical symbols was worrying" (Foster:1998: 217).

In the poem, "The Song of Wandering Aengus", one can clearly see Yeats's fascination with the occult as a way of incorporating classic pagan and Celtic myths as a means of creating an alternative reality for his own nationalistic intentions. Maud Gonne is more than the tangible woman for Yeats--she is a symbol of that entire he is trying to attain.

Therefore, Gonne is not just the physical woman, but is a place of stature in the occult community, and of a new Irish race. In the poem, Yeats magically transports the reader into a Celtic collective subconscious where a union between himself and Maud Gonne is displayed as the hopeful salvation of the Irish race.

As Yeats had begun to study psychical research and mysticism, he naturally broke away from his father's influence. Though his father's skepticism had a great effect on him, he still wished for some system of philosophy, which would include his belief that the legends, personality, and emotions handed down by poets and painters, philosophers and theologians were the nearest approach to truth. Steeped in Shelley, bubbling with romance, it was only natural that he should desire larger achievements than his father's expectation. He found in O' Leary the more inspiring idealism and positive patriotism that he sought, and turned from ideas of dream-land to the more absolute demands of nationalism. O' Leary, whom Yeats first met at the contemporary club, had the air of a sage and martyr that the poet's reading and imagination demanded of any leader. As A. Norman Jeffares points out, "It was to O' Leary that he owed his knowledge of Irish literature"(1949:37). John O' Leary's influence helped him formulate his ideas, and introduced him to the national elements in the verse, hence setting the example of a man, the service of whom was nonetheless devoted to a romantic ideal, a romantic concept of nationalism. At last Yeats realized the need for a style, un-English, and yet musical and colourful, a non-political tradition. As Yeats says in his *Essays and Introduction*:

Then with a deliberateness that still surprises me, for in my heart of hearts I have never seen quite certain that

one should be more than an artist, that even patriotism is more than an impure desire in an artist, I set to work to find a style and things to write about that the ballad writers might be the better (1961:4).

In 1887, Yeats's family had moved to London, and the poet gained an opportunity to expand the fields of his personal relationships. Although disappointed, Yeats was still in all things romantic, and in all things pre-Raphaelite. Despite his admiration for Morris, he became less socialistic in his ideas. The benefit of over-valuing moral zest made him tiresome. Meanwhile, the poet's growing interest in mysticism and psychical research maddened his father who happened to be a disciple of John Stuart Mill. Yeats first met Madame Blavatsky in a house at Norwood out of a great and passionate being, out of touch with the commonplace formalism. He was all praise for the theosophists, for they possessed an aim of improving mankind. He thought that wisdom could be found in the world only in some lonely mind aspiring for divine grace. He had also been admitted to the Esoteric Section of the society, which had its weekly discussion on oriental mysticism.

Yeats came also under the influence of Macgregor Mathers who was the author of the *Kabbla Unveiled*. The latter introduced Yeats to a society of Christian cabbalists, "the Hermatic Student", known to the members as the order of golden dawn. Swayed by the august companions of Madame Blavatsky and Macgregor Mathers, Yeats became interested in their symbolic systems, and the upshot of these upon his writing was to make it more sensuous and vivid, and his mind drifted from image to image. He believed that only images could afford more profound states of the soul. Thus, Yeats's first step away from his

father's intellectual acumen had been his interest in mysticism and psychical research. Yeats saw nothing good in London, an unhappy creature throughout. His longing to go back to the Sligo setting and his passion for Ireland did never go away. A letter, which Yeats wrote to Katherine Tynan in December 1891, props up this:

I have an ambition to be taken as an Irish novelist, not as an English or cosmopolitan one, choosing Ireland as a background. I studied my characters in Ireland and described a typical Irish feeling... I remember when we were children how intense our devotion was to all things in Sligo and I still see in my mother the old feeling.
(1986:274-275)

Yeats's home-sickness for Ireland, and in particular, Sligo incited his poem "The Lake Isle of Innisfree". The poem, probably still the best-known example of Yeats's work, owed its success to the proper fusion of universality and personal emotion. The poet was touched by the universal appeal of the subject, and lulled by the lure of the hermit's life spent amid beautiful surroundings.

London is always horrible to Yeats. According to the poet, the mere presence of more cultivated people is a gain, of course, but nothing in the world can make amends for the tranquil hours of one's own countryside. Still the poet's Irish background retained its certain charm and haunted him always. The strangeness of his interest, his vehemence, and his never-ending babble of conversational monologue added to the effect of originality. Yeats's passion for "know thyself" as well as the world outside impressed Ernest Rhys, who wrote fairy and folks tales of the Irish peasantry. Yeats later discussed with Rhys the need for the poets to know one another. The result was the Rhymers'

club, formed by the efforts of Yeats, Rhys and T.W. Rolleston. As Norman Jeffares observes, "The foundation of the club in 1891 was a climax to Yeats's efforts to escape nostalgia or loneliness"(1949:66). His ability to act a part was necessary for his poetic vision.

However, the greatest change that came upon his poetry and did most to bring him fame as a poet was due to his loss of heart to the Irish beauty Maud Gonne. His poetry was inspired by her and its wistful strain was all for the beloved. The poet sought to serve her, and she found in him a useful friend. But as ill luck would have it, after his proposal and her refusal in 1891, his position was unsatisfactory and full of stain. He was her close friend, and he had some hope in his own mind that his romantic devotion might have some reward. But he suffered much anxiety and torture on her account also. Yeats sought reasons for her unhappiness and began to persuade her that her political activities were swamping her noble qualities. He was to turn to political activity himself, partly because of his own ambition. It is evident that Yeats's attitude toward Maud Gonne had a great deal to do with the state of mind that generated Yeats's poetry. A public figure that Maud Gonne was, Yeats had to spend far more time on public activities that he would have otherwise done. As a result, the dream life became harder for Yeats to sustain. In poems such as "To my heart, bidding it have no Fear" and "His bids his Beloved at peace", Yeats makes his passion unrecognizable by subduing it. His love for Maud Gonne was so deep that he was always in uncertainty as to how she would finally act towards him. Unfortunately for the man but may be fortunately for the poet, his passion was not requited. This frustration led the deserted lover to unlock his heart in such poems, as "When You are Old":

But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And love the sorrows of your changing face.

[Yeats 1955:46]

Yeats did everything to impress Maud Gonne. Mysticism, which fascinated him, was not enough to hold his beloved's interest. He began to take a more active part in life itself. He rushed into the vacuum caused by the death of Parnell with the aim of establishing societies. It seemed to him that with the death of Parnell all romance had left Irish public life and that youthful national feeling would seek apolitical channels for some years to come. He seemed to himself 'for the only time in his life to be the popular personage, my name to the crowd', and remembered in the affections of the wise. In his political activities, the one indispensable figure was John O' Leary, whose personality towered head and shoulder above the other nationalists. As time passed by, Yeats immersed himself in works, activities and enthusiasm as a means of creating better Irish literature and art. The vacillation of the poet's personality resulted in dichotomy between his subsequent writing for the Irish and the English audience. His poetic vision was very much shaped by the poets of the Rhymers' club.

Lionel Johnson's thought dominated the scene and gave the Rhymers' club its character. The authentic poet had learnt from him to assume a dignity and courtliness of manner that gained in sincerity and strength with later years. He turned to a more artificial concept of what a poet should be. Yeats was able to distance his life from his poetry, for he realized that the secret of producing pure poetry was to seek a chosen pattern, untainted by personal life-experiences.

The friendship with Johnson was replaced by a closer companionship with Arthur Symons, who "took a hold

upon my friendship that became very strong in later years... he was nothing in literature but a source of impassioned philosophy (Qtd. in Jeffares: 1949:99)

Since he grew in Yeats's mind interest about Verlaine and Mallarme, Symons had a large effect upon the poet's vision. Yeats found encouragement and help in this.

A more congenial influence, however, came from Lady Augusta Gregory, the living symbol of the old Irish Aristocracy, whose house at Coole park was a second home for Yeats and with whom he collaborated in the collection of the old legends and ballads, and later in the founding of the Irish national stage, which in time, emerged as the Abbey theatre. He later summed up their achievement in "The Municipal Gallery Revisited":

John Synge, Augusta Gregory, and I thought
All that we did, all that we said or sang
Must come from contact with the soil, from that
Contact everything Antaeus-like grew strong
We three alone in modern times had brought
Everything down to that sole test again,
Dream of the noble and the beggar-man

(Yeats 1955:369).

Yeats's nationalism, thus, was primarily literary and artistic, not political. He was concerned more with the cultivation of the taste of his people than with the oratory. Through art and literature he sought to heal the old breach between the Catholic and Protestant religions. United Ireland will become the real country of his golden dream, which the work of William Morris had inspired in him. As to his attitude

towards England, he confessed frankly in his "A General Introduction for My Work":

The 'Irishry' have preserved their ancient 'deposit' through wars, which, during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, became wars of extension; no people, Lecky said at the opening of his Ireland in the eighteenth century, have undergone greater persecution, nor did that persecution altogether cease up to our own day. No people hate as we do in whom that past is always alive, there are moments where hatred poisons my life and I accuse myself of effeminacy because I have not given it adequate expression. It is not enough to have put it into the mouth of a rambling peasant poet. Then I remind myself that though mine is the first English marriage I know of in the direct line, all my family names are English, and that I own my soul to Shakespeare, to Spenser and to Blake, perhaps to William Morris, and to the English language in which I think speak, and write, that everything I love has come to me through English; my hatred tortures me with love, my love with hate. I am like the Tibetan monk who dreams at his imitation that he is eaten by a wild beast and learns on waking that he himself is eater and eaten.

(Yeats: 1961:519).

It was no wonder, therefore, that Yeats gradually drifted away from the contemporary trends of Irish politics. In practical life, he frequently came in direct clash with the common multitude, their selfishness, their irrational fury and modern democracy, which led him to prefer a benign dictatorship. At any cost the romantic Ireland was dead for him and was in the grave along with O'Leary. In isolation he

developed a passion for the country aristocracy as the fostering mother of culture, art and courtesy and much did it grieve his heart to contemplate the vandalism of the Irish partisans in the civil war. Disgusted with the present, his fond imagination retreated to the past round Ireland of eighteenth century. It is quite amazing to note that even in the days of disillusionment Yeats never ceased to respond quickly and whole-heartedly to the heroism and sacrifice of the political leaders. The pen, which was reluctant to respond to the terrible slaughter of the First World War, was animated with passionate intensity to celebrate the martyrs of the Easter of 1916.

And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they did?
I write it out in a verse--
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn
Are changed, changed utterly
A terrible beauty is born

(Yeats: 1955: 204-205)

Yeats's meeting with Synge exercised a lasting influence on his poetic vision. Synge's theory that "before verse can be human again, it must learn to be brutal" influenced the poet profoundly, and the terseness and violence that we find in the maturer vision of Yeats's later poetry owe much to Synge. He learnt from Synge defiant gaiety and brutal irony and the command over living speech. Yeats appeared to have attained the poet's lifelong goal of an impersonal poetic vision free from the exigencies of everyday life through his interaction with

Synge. He knew that the poet "had to take the plunge into the world beyond himself, the first plunge always from himself that is always pure technique, the delight in doing..."(Yeats: 1966:344). Combined with this and his sense of the historical pattern in which the past and present form a new synthesis, Yeats produced the great and magnificent poetry of his mature years.

The contact with Ezra Pound affected greatly the quality of Yeats's poetry. Pound attempted to convert the poet to the modern movement. He insisted on the distinct presentation of something concrete and accuracy, precision and economy of language. Yeats himself felt an inner necessity to change his style, and Pound theory reinforced his own attitude. The most distinctive trait reflected in the later poems is an increase of self-consciousness, which may be traced not only to Pound's influence but also to Donne's. The intricate pattern of thought and passion in Donne's poetry impressed him greatly and he learnt to control the fury of passion in his later poems.

The influence of George Russel on Yeats's poetic craft cannot be ignored. Yeats met George Russel, "A.E., the poet and mystic" (1956: 80) at the Metropolitan school of Art in Kildare Street, Dublin. A.E. did not set any pattern as others tried to, "for some other image rose always before his eyes" (80), and he spoke to Yeats of his visions. This gift for vision impressed the poet. It was with the help of Charles Johnston and George Russell that Yeats founded the "Dublin Hermetic Society" (1885). With their association Yeats was convinced that images welled up before the mind's eye from a deeper source than merely conscious or subconscious memory. This affirmed Yeats's belief in the "anima mundi", a concept that influenced much of his thinking on art and philosophy.

Shortly after his marriage with Miss Hyde Less, Yeats discovered his wife's "automatic writings" which formed the very hub of his book *A Vision*. The doctrine that a man desires his opposite and that there is a clash of personality within the same person, has been logically worked out in the volume, and much of Yeats's later poetry is related to this theory. Yeats writes:

If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are, and try to assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves. Active virtue, as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a code, is, therefore, theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask (1966:469).

Bearing in mind Yeats's grooming in mysticism from an intensive study of the human heart and the mind, he launches his mystic experience of civilization from a purely penetrating analyzing of the future of mankind—the future which denotes man's life in arduous and serene contemplation and thought of action, and poignance of cathedral of saner ideas and experiences:

Civilization is hoped together, brought
Under a rule, under the semblance of peace
By manifold illusion; but man's life is thought
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
Ravening through century after century,
Into the desolation of reality:
Egypt and Greece good-bye, and good-bye, Rome!
Hermits upon mount Meru or Everest,
Caverned in night under the drifted snow,
Or where that snow and winter's dreadful blast
Beat down upon their naked bodies, know,

That day brings round the night,
That before dawn
His glory and his monuments are gone.

(1955:333)

Notwithstanding the sadistic vision that sometimes lurks in the backdrop of the folly of human being, Yeats never compromises with constraints, petty or legion whatsoever. Rather he is interested in going deep into the thin rope of hope where human passions and sentiments find efflorescences and make new rooms for living the life not merely as a challenge but also as a means of fulfillment.

Yeats's vision of mystic endlessness gets its sustenance from Rabindranath Tagore's mystic quest where life and love are intermingled for a journey beyond with a view to making a promise that "We are blest by everything, / Everything we look is blest."(1955:267):

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This
frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it
ever with fresh life.

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and
dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally
new.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses
its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small
hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and
still there is room to fill. (Tagore: 1983: 1-2)

Yeats was very much fascinated by "Asiatic form", which he "first found in [Tagore's] books and afterwards in certain Chinese poetry and Japanese prose writers." (qtd. in Chatterjee: 1931: 269)

The poetry of W.B. Yeats also bears his long sojourn for mystic fulfilment. The background is well made and the common thread of poetry as it is and poetry of mystic consciousness assures an invitation of what may be called religion in the form of skepticism and vice-versa. As Jeffares rightly points in an elaborate fashion on the role of religion, skepticism and magic of Yeats in his association with a great Indian creative writer, Mohini Chatterjee:

Yeats was by nature at once religious and skeptical. He wanted a faith, he wanted to believe, but what was he to believe in? His father's unbelief had a very strong influence on him when he was a child and so the Christianity of his day seemed to be ruled out. His youthful interest in science did not last long. It was replaced by a passion for poetry—stimulated no doubt by the effect on him of Laura Armstrong, a dashing girl for whom he wrote his first verse plays. At the High School he had joined with some friends in inviting an Indian, Mohini Chatterjee, to come from London to discuss his beliefs with them in the Hermetic Society they had formed in Dublin. Yeats was interested in theosophy, but soon after he joined the Theosophist in London, he was asked to resign—the skeptical side of him having wanted proofs. Magic then occupied him; he joined the Order of the Golden Dawn in 1890, and his interest in Rosicrucianism and Cabbalism developed. Study of the occult formed a large part of his life, though he kept it, in general, out of his writing. He wrote to John O'Leary in July 1892 that it was absurd to hold

him 'weak' or otherwise because he close to persist in a study which he had decided four or five years earlier to make, next to his poetry, 'the most important pursuit of my life'. He went on to say that if he had not made magic his constant study, he could not have written a single word of his Blake book nor would The Countess Kathleen ever have come to exist. (Jaffares: 1991: xxiv)

An associate of Madame Blavatsky, Mohini Chatterjee drew Yeats's attention through his ideas on rebirth. In his poem addressed to Mohini Chatterjee, Yeats is preoccupied with the idea of reincarnation:

Birth is heaped on birth
That such cannonade
May thunder time away,
Birth-hour and death-hour meet,
Or, as great sages say,
Men dance on deathless feet.

(1955:280)

Chatterjee's philosophy established the poet's "vague speculations and seemed at once logical and boundless" (Yeats: 1956:92). Jeffares confirms that "The Indian upon God" and "The Indian to his love" were "inspired by the Brahmin Theosophist (1984:07). Mohini Chatterjee "taught that everything we perceive, including so-called apparitions, exist in the external world; that this is a stream which flows on, out of human control; that we are nothing but a mirror, and that deliverance consists in turning the mirror away so that it reflects nothing"(Hone 1942:48).

Purohit Swami, an Indian monk, largely influenced Yeats. The poet incorporated many of his ideas in relation to the Indian conception of the identity of the Soul and the Brahma. Yeats read the monk's autobiography, wrote introductions to Purohit Swami's books, and translated *Upanishads* in collaboration with him. That the soul is liberated from the bondage of action and becomes aware of its identity is a concept Yeats enunciated by means of his august association with Swami.

During the later period of his life, Yeats read Spangler's *Decline of the West*, which corroborated his vision of the disintegration of the present historical cycle. The year 1918 saw the publication of the present historical cycle. The year 1918 saw the publication of *The Tower*, in which he reached almost the summit of his creative vision. The intricate beauty of *The Tower*, effected by a combination of a tense, astringent bareness with mythological embroideries, was fully retained in the poems of the *Winding Stair* in 1933. *Words for Music* perhaps with its *Crazy Jane* and *Old Tom the lunatic*, was published in 1932, and showed a new vision of Yeats's poetry--a vigorous and passionate zest for life with curious mingling of the sensuous and the cerebral, which found an effective outlet in the heroic, defiant, ironical gaiety of the *Last Poems* (1936—39). The last phase shows the antimony between the body and the soul, between the self and the anti-self, between the recluse and the man of action, which is really resolved, but there is an attempt to have encompassed a fuller vision of life.

Yeats had lifelong desire for three things—truth, knowledge and mystery of life and love. He does not know how to compromise love with mere facts, nor does he want to know how to lose mystery or desire for knowledge to be lost unattended and ignored in the human experience

and human sensibility. The adventure of life and love as he delineates in his sonnets with skilful handling of emotions and sensibilities—sometimes passionate and sometimes poised—brings forth a new wonderland of serenity of vision where all intuitions and expectations, promises and performances are baked in the warmth of mystic resonance. In fact, Yeats has a promise, quite unlike others, to look at himself not merely in isolation but also in association with all experience—insignificants or otherwise. All these contribute to a mystic grandeur. As he frankly admits:

I sing what was lost and dread what was won,
I walk in a battle fought over gain
My king a lost king,
And lost soldiers my men;
Feet to the Rising and Setting may run,
They always beat on the same small stone.

Yeats makes a quest for expressing himself clearly in all his visions where the medium of poetry gives an added advantage—the advantage of making oneself restrained in tone and temperament. His joy of entering into the world of mysticism in wonder and fulfilment thrills and excites us. Yeats makes an earnest endeavour in almost all the poems to make us sharers in his visionary experience.

Chapter IV

Evolution of vision from *Crossways to Michael Robartes and the Dancer*

Artists and poets, who are taught by the nature of their craft to sympathise with all living things, and who, the more pure and fragrant is their lamp, pass the further from all limitations, to come at last to forget good and evil in an absorbing vision of the happy and the unhappy.

(W.B. Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:129)

W.B. Yeats was a lifelong quester for the holy grail of poetic perfection. In his wanderings, he started from the never-never land of dream and romance, of awe and wonder and waded through the distopia of disillusionment where beauty "grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies" and where "men sit and hear each other groan" (Fifteen Poets 1999:360). Hence, the thesis aims at tracing the evolution of poetic vision of W.B. Yeats. It is a necessity to show how the poet undergoes "the paths untrodden" in order to attain a fuller vision as an artist. The evolution of his vision as a poet seems to reflect both the spirit and letter of Shakespeare's "Seven ages of Men".

Both the fancy of the infancy and the exuberance of the early youth find expression in the early poems. Yeats's early poetry is mainly introspective and escapist and he lays bare, though symbols and myths, to the inexpressible longings of his soul. His early period explores two trends of his vision- his romantic longing and his nationalistic urge to revive Celtic past and build a New Ireland of heroic standards. Yeats "had an intricate searching mind that reached deeply

into legends and superstitions of Ireland, and was capable of penetrating below the surface of human ambiguity" (Edel: 1955:21).

The poet's passion for Irish legends and myths of yore can be found in his atheism. As Yeats lacked any faith and stability of a true religion, he created a vision of his own. In his *Autobiographies*, Yeats writes: "I had made a new religion, an infallible church, of poetic tradition, of fardel of stories"(1992:10). Yeats turned his country of his into a dreamland, a Celtic utopian world of fancy. This earlier phase of his poetry is commonly known as "The Celtic twilight". In the Introduction to "The Celtic twilight" Yeats wrote:

I have desired, like every artist, to create a little world out of beautiful pleasant, and significant things of this marred and clumsy world, and to show in a vision something of the face of Ireland to any of my own people who would to look where I bid them (1970:6).

Yeats's early poems are a mapping out of an imaginary country for which the consistent inspiration is Ireland: its folklore, mythology, natural and supernatural landscapes. Both in its imaginary and real aspects, the poet continues to explore Ireland during the whole of his career in increasingly experimental ways. The two major sources of poetic inspiration are the occult and the Irish folklore. The poet was very much ambitious to adopt Irish myths, themes and settings in order to create a "new religion", which is "an infallible church of poetic tradition"(Yeats 1992:10). The Irish folklore around which Yeats designs his early poetry was particularly rich in legends and stories, banshees, enchantments, the sidhe and visionary Druid-poets. The content of folklore is essentially metaphysical in the sense of the interrelation of the "two worlds"—"the natural" and "the supernatural".

The occult, in the forms in which Yeats encountered it, offered complex metaphysical doctrines, reincarnation, magic and spiritual alchemy, often from ransacking the world-wide variety of religion, mythologies and symbolisms. Both folklore and occult used exile, the quest and the voyage as symbols of the spirit's journey from life to death. But as Michael J. Sidnell puts it, "In his own early poetry, Yeats not only searched Irish and mystical traditions for symbols but strained to elevate all the images of his poetry to symbolic status" (1996:07). Yeats also prescribes an image that "has transcended particular time and place becomes a living soul" (1970:80).

Yeats's hope to create a new Irish poetry-national but with occult perspectives, Celtic but written in English, manifested his need to sink himself imaginatively in Ireland. It may be noted in this connection that he spent much of his early life in London. The poet's longing to go back to Ireland of yore emphasized the contrast between the ugliness of modern English urban life and the simplicities of traditional Irish peasant life. Hence, the idea of Ireland as a pastoral retreat forms the very hub of Yeats's early poems.

Yeats's early literary career shows to a great extent the influence of Blake, Spenser and Shelley. He began as a famous poet of pastoral verse dramas based on English literary models and as an anthologist of Irish folklore. The poems of the earlier phase of his life are escapes into an imaginary world from an uncongenial, unpoetical real world. They are critiques of a kind of poetry of fancy. Group of Yeats's early poems includes under the title *Crossways* (1889), which bespeaks of the poet's longing for a flight away from the world of reality in favour of pastoral settings.

"The Song of the Happy Shepherd" is a call to a vanishing world of dream as against the modern world of "sick hurry" and "divided aims". Like the romantics, Yeats finds happiness and certitude a far cry in the world of reality. The poem provides a relatively plain-spoken commentary on the limits of pastoral in the late nineteenth century: "The woods of Arcady are dead"(Yeats: 1955:07). The contrast is drawn between the world of Arcadian pastoral ("dreaming") and the new "grey truth" of scientific or materialist philosophy. The "antique joy" is contrasted with the artificial "painted toy", and the emphasis is on the face of the golden world. The expression-"words alone are certain good" (1955:07) - speaks of the survival of language over the onslaught of time. The invitation into a world of illusion overshadows reality. The poet of "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" has made a decision to get away from the world of action and deeds, science and technology into that of fancy and fauns, the daffodils and lilies. The only truth that is worth seeking is the truth in "thine own heart" (1955:08). Round his shattered statue, "the lone and level sands stretch far away" (1955:07). As action ends in smoke, Yeats asks rhetorically "Where are now the warring kings" (1955:07)? In the cracked tune that 'Chronos' sings, there is little chance of happiness or certitude. Hence, the poet comes to the conclusion that the best alternative is to look within his heart.

On the contrary, "The Sad Shepherd" captures the same vision of pastoral world with sad overtone. In this, the elements of earth and sea are suggestive of impermanence and intangibility. The sea "cried her old cry still" (09) represents the flux of time. The sad shepherd is wandering about in a hostile world seeking to share his sorrow with some other creatures. But unfortunately, all his attempts are futile, as he has found no comforter. Then he picks up a seashell to breathe

sadness of his heart through 'a hollow, pearly heart' in order to get rid of ancient burden". But instead he hears the echo of his own misery:

But the sad dweller by the sea-ways lone
Changed all he sang to inarticulate moan

(Yeats: 1955:09)

Thus, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" and "The Sad Shepherd" are poems of provoking antithesis and Yeats was haunted all his life by the conflicting claims of the 'poetic word' and 'the dusty deeds' (1955:07). In the graceful lyric, "The Cloak, the Boat, and the Shoes", the dark sorrow of the sad shepherd is dressed in a cloak, fair and bright and lovely and shod in the shoes of white wool in order that, its soundless footfall be light in all men's ears. Poetry can at least soften the edge of human misery.

The anxiety to get away from the world of reality permeates in "The Stolen Child". Fed up with the troubles of the world; the poet seeks a refuge for the survival of his own soul. Yeats believes at the core of his heart that poetry should maintain remoteness away from the world of humdrum reality. "The Stolen Child" strikes the keynote of this escapism, common in Romantic poetry, a longing to step into a world beyond the reach of the cares and heartaches, which infest the human world.

In fact, Yeats is always pining for "what is not" in the world which is "full of weeping than you can understand" (Yeats: 1955:20). Thus, Yeats is ignoring the world of reality and engages in exploring the world of fancy, imagination, myths and legends. The poem consists of four stanzas, each ending with and driving home the lesson:

Come away, O human child
To the waters and the wild
With the fairy hand in hand
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand
(Yeats: 1955:20)

The child the poet represents is not only an individual but an archetype of everyman. While the fairies invite one child to come away, the poet is suggesting to all the readers the one way to happiness. The human child is given the vision of the world of fancy. No wonder that the child, "solemn eyed", baffled by a weeping world, leaves it for the faeries' island. This island is seen as retreat from the disorder of the world to a never-never land of love and idleness, which we also find in "An Isle in the Water". In fact, "The stolen child" "reveals the dreamy-eyed sensitive romantic that Yeats chose to mask for purposes of both poetry and perhaps, for sheer survival" (Unterecker: 1969:73)

Still a poet of fancy and imagination, Yeats of "The Rose" (1893) is matured a bit by seeking wisdom in the heart of nature. "The Lake isle of Innisfree" is not only a poem of longing, it is a longing for wisdom and knowledge. Yeats's poems of escape contain much poetry of earth also, and his Innisfree cabin is at once a realm of imagination and an actual island in Sligo. The tone of the poem is the same romantic poet's longing to create a myth for the survival of his soul. The poem is again a vision of an 'elsewhere' of rural, isolated reflective peace- an idealized Irish pastoral setting:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

(Yeats: 1955:44)

Yeats commented that the poem was written in London, and that it represented his "ambition of living in imitation of Thoreau on... a little island in Lough Gill". Like Thoreau's *Walden*, which set on a lake, Yeats's *Innisfree* becomes a transcendental mirror of nature. For, *Innisfree* as an island is symbolically isolated, cut-off from the mainland of cities, roads, time and change with which the poem concludes. It represents a harmonious setting at a distance from ordinary life. The *Innisfree* beckons Yeats with its promise of 'soma peace' away from London's 'pavements grey' (Yeats: 1955:44). The poet's world is here seen not in full sunlight but in starlight and twilight and unearthly cold light of dawn, and under visionary powers.

"The Valley of the Black Pig" from *The Wind Among The Reeds* (1899) is obviously a different kind of poem, with a mythological emphasis suggested by the mysterious title. But the romantic frame of mind still persists. What the poem itself evokes is surely a sense of mysterious dreams and sudden awakening from them into a world of battle of an archaic kind with spears and horsemen. The poet associates himself with those who 'labour by the cromlech on the shore' (Yeats: 1955:73), who are evidently seeking some kind of higher reality than that of 'world's empires'. These are prepared to worship an unnamed spiritual power that is described in the mysterious final line of the poem as "Master of still stars and of the flaming door". The reader also feels on the edge of another world, perhaps to be approached through the 'flaming door' (1955:73), which may suggest a kind of purgatorial experience. The poem marks it off from other poems as we have moved away from the landscape of Ireland to mythology, although a mythology with Irish associations.

In the earlier phase of his poetic career, Yeats's poetic nature made him dream and ruminate whereas the historical period in Ireland in which he belonged demanded concrete action. Torn between these two extremes, Yeats craved for a sense of balance and equilibrium. But far as he would, he failed to reconcile Yeats, the inveterate dreamer with Yeats, the intended man of action. Moreover, his chance meeting with and loss of heart to the Irish beauty Maud Gonne further complicated the matter. It is evident then that Yeats's attitude toward his beloved had a great deal to do with the state of mind that generated his early poetry. Maud Gonne was a public figure, and to win her he had to spend far more time on public activities than he would have otherwise done. As a result, the dream life became harder for Yeats to sustain.

Though Yeats was right in believing that his genuine poetry lay in 'personal utterance', he recognized as well that personal frustrations and feelings of hopelessness alone could not organize a body of lyric poetry and drama into the organic structure he hoped to build. For, personal feelings, as he had discovered in his earliest experiments in verse, are beset always with the danger of sentimentality, which leads poetry away from the reality. As Yeats himself said:

One of the means of loftiness, has been the choice of strange and far-away places for the scenery of art, but this choice has grown bitter to me (1970:296).

Further, Yeats's frustration in love, and his bitter experiences in politics and in the Abbey theatre shattered his illusions and produced the harsh, sardonic tone of the Middle poems. The poet hurtled down to the hard realities- the grime and the dust, the sham and swank. In "A

Coat', Yeats expressed the change from a dreamy glorification of Ireland's past to a cynical awareness of its present:

I made my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies.
From heel to throat;
But the fools caught it,
Wore it in the world's eyes.
As though they'd wrought it.
Song, let them take it,
For, there's more enterprise
In walking naked.

(Yeats: 1955:142)

In his *Autobiographies*, Yeats speaks about his need to encompass a wide vision of life:

All my life I have been haunted with the idea that the poet should know all classes of men as one of themselves, that he should combine the greatest possible personal realization with the greatest possible knowledge of the speech and circumstances of the world (1966:470).

Maud Gonne's marriage to McBride may be said to complicate Yeats's middle years. These were years, not only of emotional strain, but also of the poet's many literary and political wrangles at home. The poet had been thrust out of his chosen fairyland; the waters and the wild, the lake isle of Innisfree and its bee-loud glade had no place for him. In the frustration of early love, apparently he has paid the price of escaping to fairyland, and the memory of it is bitter: he still champions, he still puts above everything the nobility and splendour of the

imagination; he must face life's hard condition. And the consciousness of inexorable limits has brought his art to a sharper focus- the unbinding of "youth's dreamy load" has made him a better poet. No longer content with the ice-eyed queens of fairyland, Yeats applies to poetry all the vigour of his intellect and the energy of his passion.

The transition had already shown itself in "The Folly of Being Comforted" in which the poet is denied any comfort for his love. From then on, the development runs faster than any expectation. Language gains the force of gesture. "No Second Troy" from *The Green Helmet and the Other Poems* (1910) is a dramatic poem, though we hear only one voice, that of the poet discussing the woman who has caused him to suffer. The poem does not blame the woman, but rather the times in which she is living. The note of challenge is struck in the first question- "Why should I blame her"? If she has caused revolutionary violence- which we link with the Irish nationalist struggle against English -and caused the poet suffering, this is simply because she is a heroic figure whose archaic qualities find inadequate expression in the modern world. The image of the "tightened bow" surely suggests tension and danger, and leads forward to the suggestion in the final line that the woman is the successor of Helen, whose beauty had led to the destruction of Troy. Thus, Yeats is leading the reader on to the plane of heroic legend and myth to which his imagination was powerfully attracted, and which we encountered in "The Valley of Black Pig". A marked feature of the poem is, of course, the series of urgent questions, which helps to create the dramatic feeling and bring the heroic past into a vivid relationship with contrastingly unheroic present.

In "September 1913" from *Responsibilities* (1919), the poet is contrasting the impulsive and courageous nationalist leader of the past

with modern Irishmen who are concerned only “to pay and save”: to save their souls by “shivering prayers”. The refrain—“Romantic Ireland’s dead and gone” (Yeats: 1955:121), contrasts the reckless heroism of O’Leary (died in 1907) and his patriotic peers with the petty modern Irishmen who “fumble in a greasy till/And add the halfpence to the pence” (Yeats: 1955:120). The sacrifices of the past heroes seem pointless if they have led only to the materialistic, selfish state of the Ireland of 1913, in which notions of self-sacrifice are so remote that the heroic gestures would now be regarded as mad romanticism. The “delirium of the brave”, according to Eliot, constitutes the corner stone of the dignity and progress of humanity:

My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful Dearing of a moment’s surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract
By this and this only we have existed

(Jain: 1996:58).

Men whose motto is to “give”, not to “receive”, perform such deeds of reckless courage but the petty agitators of today (Ireland after 1913) cannot even imagine that men can be capable of such a noble strain of public spirit. By the end of the poem, though, the surviving feelings are of reluctant acceptance, but there is no point in trying to retain the notions of the heroic in modern Ireland. The poem, indeed, expresses complete disillusionment, but does so with striking vigour.

Yeats’ *The Wild Swans at Coole* works as a collection. The collection creates in the reader an imagined figure of the poet who, through the collection, searches for a poetic vision. The ordering of the poems in the collection creates a narrative in which the imagined poet discards poetic identities in order to arrive at a singular poetic practice.

Yeats' 1919 collection *The Wild Swans at Coole* marks a turning point in the trajectory of his poetic career. He was already well known and, according to C.K. Stead, "widely regarded as the most important living poet writing in English" (1986:13) by the time he began his artistic relationship with Ezra Pound in the early 1910s. However, it is Yeats's later work, beginning with the 1921 collection *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, from which his greatest poems have emerged. In 1915, a year after the publication of the collection *Responsibilities*, Yeats was offered a knighthood by the British government, which he declined for political reasons. As Ireland's national poet, Yeats's acceptance of knighthood from his country's colonizers, the English, would have been demoralizing not only to his nationalistic poetic project, but also to Ireland, for which he sought to create an autonomous literary style. Two years after the publication of *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Between the honours of his declined knighthood and the Nobel Prize, Yeats radically changed his relationship to his poetry. While he once stated that "We will have to make a literature for [Ireland]... The poets will save the people," by 1915, he was beginning to see his position as Ireland's national poet in a different light. (Qtd. in Marcus: 1970:5) In *The Wild Swans at Coole*, Yeats finds himself at a crossroads and ill at ease with the Irish nationalism and Irish mysticism so prominent in his earlier work. Biographically, he had turned fifty years of age in 1915, during which he was writing many of the poems in the collection. Yeats' personal life was itself at a crossroads: he had proposed and been turned down by both Maud Gonne, with whom he had been obsessed for the previous twenty-five years, and her daughter Iseult during the conception of many of the poems. Furthermore, he had married George Hyde-Lees in 1917. Thus, the period between 1915, in which the first poems of the

collection were published, and 1919 mark a turning point in both Yeats's life and work.

Yeats's position with respect to the English canon presents a key conflict in the collection. In 1892, he had written that "no man who deserts his own literature for another's can hope for the highest rank." (Qtd. in Marcus: 1970:14) It is not that he did not think there was anything for an Irish poet to gain from reading the literature of the colonizing English; one should not "imitate" another country's literature, he stated in 1893 but, rather, "study them constantly and learn from them the secret of their greatness." (Qtd. in Marcus: 1970:18) The project of his early poetry and plays, then, was to create a "native" Irish style using the English language. In studying Irish dialects of English, Yeats sought to invent a literary style that was wholly Irish; he intended for Ireland to have both its own voice and symbolic lexicon, working towards the latter by appropriating symbols from Irish mythology in his poetry. By 1915, however, his own poetic voice had become more personal and less the "native" Irish voice. He and John M. Synge had sought to invent in creating a literature for Ireland.

In *The Wild Swans at Coole*, this change in Yeats's poetry comes from a reprioritization, a change in his self-identity as a visionary. In order to examine the collection, however, we want to look at the poem "Easter, 1916," because it illuminates several central concerns in *The Wild Swans at Coole*. In the poem, Yeats states that his "part" as a poet is "To murmur name upon name" (Yeats: 1955:204), elegizing the Irish nationalists who were sentenced to death after the Easter rebellion of 1916. We can see in the poem a questioning of the place of nationalism in poetry. "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the

quarrel with ourselves, poetry," Yeats hesitates in his theoretical treatise *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. The poem presents Yeats's inner dialogue about the merits of the rebellion. "Too long a sacrifice/ Can make a stone of the heart," he states of the rebels (1955:204). Of the first of the historical Yeats's handful of proposals to Maud Gonne in 1891, when she told him that their "parts" were to work towards the Irish cause and not domesticity, Hugh Kenner states "[Yeats] imagined her selling her soul to the devil to free the Irish from bondage"(1983:30). This struggle between the personal and the political is one of the many issues Yeats tackles in *The Wild Swans at Coole* as he searches for a poetic identity. At the poem's end, Yeats acknowledges that the rebels' deaths were perhaps not "needless... after all" as "Now and in time to be, / Wherever green is worn, / Are changed" (205). However, the ambiguity is important, as the "changing" of the rebels only concerns Yeats's nationalistic project because the Irish national identity has also been changed. The rebels had become martyrs and, in doing so, as Edward Malins states in *Yeats and the Easter Rising*, "[provided] an emotional stimulus for the birth of a nation no less than that of Paul Revere and the Minutemen of Lexington."(Qtd. in Jeffares: 1968: 228-229).

The poem's internal dialogue enacts Yeats's poetic shift; the poet's "part" is that of a mythologizer—he has gone from portraying mythological Irish heroes such as Oisín to creating contemporary ones—but it is certainly not that of a rhetorician. Furthermore, though the rebels he mythologizes become heroes, they do not necessarily stir up revolutionary fervour in Yeats. "We know their dream," he states in the poem, or at least "enough/ To know they dreamed and are dead" (1955: 204). He implies, then, that to sympathize with the rebels is not the same as being aroused by their martyrdom. He knows what they

mean to Ireland and its people, but their deaths do not incite in him what the death of Robert Gregory does in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," namely the poetic impulse that drives Yeats's poetry. As an Irish poet, however, it is his duty, his "part," to mythologize the rebels, regardless of whether they incite in him the revolutionary zeal which they do in others. The poem, then, is not a failed attempt at a political poem but, rather, an examination of the political responses in Yeats's work, specifically of his role as Ireland's national poet. For Yeats, identity is dependent on symbols. In "The Symbolism of Poetry," Yeats writes that the function of poetic symbols is to "evoke an emotion which cannot be evoked by any other arrangement of colours and sounds and forms."(1977: 156) For the symbol to be effective, that is, evocative, the poet must himself be moved to create it as such. That MacDonagh, MacBride, Connolly, and Pearse fail to stir in him revolutionary zeal is akin to his failure to create, in the collection's title poem, symbolic swans that move him. Furthermore, "Easter, 1916" illustrates nicely the way Yeats strips away poetic identities, as he fulfils his function as national poet, but is at odds with the role.

He feels obligated to elegeize the Easter rebels because they are Irish heroes, but is not altogether convinced that he can perform the role with passion. The rebels, then, become mere names, their entire lives have been essentialized into their act of sacrifice. Yeats memorializes them as historical figures rather than as the living presences. "Easter 1916," then, provides a nice preface to *The Wild Swans at Coole's* title poem. Yeats' failure in "Easter 1916" to share the dream of the rebels becomes a failure to derive poetic feeling from the swans in the title poem. The refrain

All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born (1955: 205)
becomes "The Wild Swans at Coole"'s
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trode with a lighter tread
And now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful

(1955: 147).

In examining Yeats' relationship to his themes, we see him feeling with many poetic roles and, as we have already seen in "Easter 1916" and will see in the title poem, he dramatizes a poetic failure in the poems in order to investigate what kind of poetic vision he wants to achieve. The figure of Yeats we uncover from the poems is constantly changing as he finds himself lacking passion for his themes and symbols. "Ego Dominus Tuus," "The Phases of the Moon," and "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" are good cases in point. It is in "Ego Dominus Tuus," however, that Yeats finds a centered poetic identity, that is of a visionary poet. Here again we look at the poems' ordering and how the final poem, "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," represents the culmination of the poems that precede it. Having arrived at a poetic identity, Yeats, in composing "Ego Dominus Tuus" and "The Phases of the Moon," sets up necessary failures to frame the success of the final poem. Hence, we examine the collection as a whole, identifying the reconciliation of memory and imagination as the "unity of being" for which his poetry is a search.

In "Lines Written in Dejection," Yeats laments the impermanence of symbols that were once alive to him. The witches,

centaurs, and moon, all symbols from Yeats's earlier work and, furthermore, figures from his conception of Irish mysticism have disappeared from his poetic vision. In their stead, he is left with the "timid sun." Richard Ellman states of the poem, "His symbols had lost their power in part because of over-use, but also because he had abandoned projects of which they had once been a part... there would be no Irish mystical order and no magical rites... The future of Ireland... did not stir him as much as in the past, and the Irish gods were accordingly of less interest"(1978:195). The poem, then, is less about the powerlessness of symbols than his loss of interest in the themes for which they stand. In the poem, Yeats does not gain a new passion. Indeed, in both "Lines Written in Dejection" and "Easter, 1916," he enacts their inability to inspire him. The poems' true inspiration, then, is Yeats' s loss of a position of a true poetic role.

As "Lines Written in Dejection" literalizes Yeats' lack of passion through his inability to see centaurs, witches, and the moon, in "The Wild Swans at Coole," Yeats finds that the swans' meaning has disappeared for him. The poem opens the collection depicting a return to a scene that was previously filled with meaning and emphasizes an inability to be moved by its subject, the swans that inhabit Coole, as poetic symbols. In the case of the poem "The Wild Swans at Coole," the swans, a symbol that he had used earlier in his poetry and that exists in Irish mythology, change from the swans he had known nineteen years earlier when he first encountered them at Coole Park. The poem, with the poet's return to Coole Park and his inability to take from the scene what he once did, recalls Wordsworth's return to the banks of the Wye in "Lines Written a Few Miles over Tintern Abbey." In the poem, Wordsworth returns to the Wye only to find that he cannot derive from

it the same passion he had derived in youth. However, he discovers in its stead "abundant recompense," as he has

...learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity.

(Ed. Hayden, John O: 1994:68)

However, Yeats does not achieve the Romantic recompense that Wordsworth does. Rather, the similarity of the beginning of "The Wild Swans at Coole" and "Tintern Abbey" creates the expectation of recompense and, the poem failing to meet the expectation, draws attention to Yeats's movement away from his Romantic predecessors.

One reason for the poem's movement away from the Romantic expectation it introduces is political. Embracing the literature of his English colonizers represented defeat in that it ceded to them cultural dominance over Ireland. We know that Yeats had read Shelley before 1900— which he had stated in his essay of that year "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry", "I have re-read his *Prometheus Unbound* for the first time for many years"(Yeats: 1977:77). However, his poetry had, before the poems of *The Wild Swans at Coole*, resisted the English Romantic influence, using instead characters and themes from Irish mythology. This is not to say that his poetry had, before "The Wild Swans at Coole," not been Romantic; rather, that he had previously written into his English vague Romanticism an Irish landscape. "The Wild Swans at Coole" is not a Romantic poem. It enacts the process by which Yeats struggles between two voices: that of the Irish voice with which he had felt the responsibility to peak in his poetry and that of the English

tradition. One source for the symbol of the swans is Shelley's "Alastor," in which Shelley's character of the visionary poet watches a swan fly away and imagines it going home to meet its mate while lamenting his inability to find consummation in the external world (Complete Works of Shelley: 1901: 31-43) The struggle between the inner and the outer world—not to mention that of the competing English and Irish influences on Yeats's poetic vision—is a recurring theme in Yeats's collection. It is fitting that *The Wild Swans at Coole* takes its name from a poem in which Yeats attempts to tame swans for his poetry. He attempts to depict them in his poem as wild, but they are, instead, domestic. He finds them "beautiful," but also "mysterious" (Yeats: 1955:147). The speaker is forced to struggle with his subjects and eventually depict them as merely elusive.

The poem resists both the Shelleyan Romantic symbolic vocabulary and Wordsworthian premise Yeats imports. As the poem introduces itself as Romantic, it is difficult to avoid reading the swans as cousins of Shelley's domestic swans. Domesticity is obviously an issue in the poem; however Yeats' attitude towards domesticity is difficult to determine. We know that the historical Yeats feels alienated from it. Maud Gonne had told Yeats when he first proposed her that neither he nor she was the type to marry, as the "parts" which they were destined to play were with the Irish cause. When she married Easter rebel John MacBride in 1903, Yeats was devastated. "What would he do now that his most cherished dream was gone?" asks biographer Richard Ellman rhetorically (Ellman 1978:195). "I am exhausted, I can do no more," Yeats told Lady Gregory when she offered him money to get married in order to release himself from his obsession with Gonne (Qtd. in Ellman 1978:162) Roughly twenty years later, if we can read his poem as an accurate indicator of his feelings towards domesticity,

he still lacks energy—due in no small part, as he presents himself in the poems, to feelings of dejection and futility. He again became infatuated with Gonne after MacBride's execution and asked her to marry him once more, but, as Ellman suggests, he had anticipated and was, perhaps, relieved that she again declined his proposal. (1978:222) Rather than, as Gonne had suggested, choosing between domesticity and nationalism, Yeats chose a third route: the tower. For Yeats, the tower—an actual tower in a castle on the edge of Lady Gregory's Coole estate that he made his home shortly after marrying George Hyde-Lees in 1917—is a symbol of solitude and distance from the external world, precluding both love and nationalism. As we see beginning with the second poem of the collection, Yeats uses the tower in his poetry as a fortress of imagination and solitude, his actual marriage notwithstanding. His marriage to Hyde-Lees represented to him not only domesticity but also a visionary poetics; shortly after their wedding, she attempted automatic writing. Though Yeats came to embrace his marriage, in marrying her, he was in part looking for a means with which to end the absence of passion and indecisiveness that marks *The Wild Swans at Coole* and, on a personal level, rid himself of his longstanding obsession with Maud Gonne. "[He] felt that she would help him move forward," states Ellman (1978:222). Yeats is unsure what form he wants the swans to take in "The Wild Swans at Coole," yet they no longer elude him as they once did; he can now finish counting them before they fly away. However, though he presents them, like Shelley's swans, as lovers, his count yields 59, an odd number. The swans resist their narrator, as the poem, in its inability to represent the swans as objects of desire, resists the English Romantic tradition. Similarly, Yeats' return to Coole Park does not yield the same result as does Wordsworth's return to the banks of the Wye. Yeats does not, as Wordsworth does in "Tintern Abbey," find in place of the feelings once

evoked a deeper feeling but, instead, finds the swans "mysterious" and the true meaning of the swans still eludes him. Rather than seeing the swans through the clearer eyes that come with age, Yeats imagines the swans elsewhere, delighting someone else's eyes. By the end of the poem, the swans have become so elusive that they are hypothetical. They are no longer Shelleyan figures of desire or Irish mythological swans; they are merely symbols of their own elusiveness. In the third stanza, the narrator begins to cease deriving passion from the swans and, instead, aims at merely incorporating them into the poem. The poem becomes a marveling at his inability to be moved by the swans:

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trode with a lighter tread.

(Yeats: 1955:147)

In the second stanza, the swans had been figures of desire that flew away before he could finish counting them; he could incorporate them into his poetry as elusive symbols whose brilliance he sought to, but which could not reflect his own spirit. Yeats's "heart is sore" because "All's changed." However, his declaration that "All's changed" both marks the shift from the present to memory and the extinction of his desire to make symbols of the swans.

But now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful.

(1955:147).

No longer does he find the swans brilliant but, instead, can only find their beauty "mysterious." His desire for what the swans had once been to him becomes wonder at their not being so. As Yeats is unable to use the swans as figures for poetic desire, the poem loses its connection to a present reality. He cannot achieve the straightforward symbolism of the swans reflecting his desire, as they do not act as he would like them to. In the last stanza, then, he removes the swans from his landscape, transporting them into a vision of an imagined future:

Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

(1955:147)

The Wordsworthian recompense from which the poet imagines creating poetry is replaced with an inability to write about real or ideal swans. They can only exist as elusive mysteries in the poetry. The swans neither sing swan songs nor die; instead, they appear to become domestic, pairing up, their hearts having not grown old. As they no longer reflect how Yeats feels, they pair up with one another and fly away to "build" at "other rushes" and reflect someone else's feelings. The swans that scattered when he counted them but never flew away had been a constant preoccupation with Yeats. But he can no longer, as he had done for nineteen years, watch them and admire them as figures of desire. He had achieved a domesticity with the swans—he had returned to the scene every autumn. He portrays the swans as migrating to settle domestically elsewhere, delighting their new beholders and finding symbolic rest. Literally, they still inhabit Coole, but now mystify Yeats, who finds them at once "beautiful" and "mysterious." As symbols, then, they do not do what swans should,

that is, sing and die. Rather, it is Yeats who sings here a swan song. The poem is not only a valediction to the swans as the figures of desire but does provide symbolic import. Part of the poet he had been, is dead. In scattering before he could finish counting them, the swans enraptured him. However, the swans do not become symbols for Yeats's newfound inability to derive delight; in the third stanza, all changes. Instead, as he does not understand their symbolic function in the poem, they come to stand for his indifference to what is lost. Edward Said and Seamus Deane argue that Yeats's mysticism comes out of his passion for a culturally self-determined Ireland—"Yeats's wilful mysticism and incoherence embody a revolutionary potential, and the poet insists "that Ireland should retain its culture by keeping awake its consciousness of metaphysical questions,"" Said states, quoting Deane (1993:227-228). Yeats's mythologizing is similar to his use of Irish dialects: giving Ireland a language of its own rather than using the language of its colonizers, the English. However, we find Yeats the Irish nationalist in *The Wild Swans at Coole*.

"In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," he calls Robert Gregory "our Sidney." If Gregory is Sidney, then Yeats, the elegist, is Edmund Spenser, who wrote "Astrophel," an elegy for Sidney. This aligning of himself with the English tradition becomes more conspicuous when viewed in light of his diminishing passion for Ireland in the poem. The argument can be made that comparing himself with Spenser, who was England's national poet, Yeats is exerting his Irish nationalism. In 1596, he wrote *View of the Present State of Ireland*, in which, Said states, he "boldly [proposed] that since the Irish were barbarian Scythians, most of them should be exterminated" (1993: 222). Yeats, when comparing himself with Spenser, is making a bold statement about his relationship to both Ireland and England. Furthermore,

Gregory—the subject of the elegy—died fighting for England in the First World War, hardly a nationalistic act for an Irishman.

“In Memory of Major Robert Gregory” begins as an elegy to Yeats’ dead friends, each a historical Irish figure. However, as in “The Wild Swans at Coole,” he lacks feeling for his subjects until he reaches Gregory, around whom he, as the poem’s title suggests, refocuses the poem. John Synge, he states, though dying, “chose the living world for text” (149). The “living world” chosen by Synge is presented in contradistinction to the dead world of Lionel Johnson, whom Yeats elegizes in the previous stanza. In the poem, Yeats states that Johnson “loved his learning better than mankind” and, indeed, his learning is removed from the living world as it is “Greek and Latin learning” (148, 149). Johnson’s remoteness in devoting himself exclusively to the Classics, then, is comparable to Yeats’s symbolic retreat to his tower, in which the poem takes place. For Yeats, Johnson was already dead in life. Synge, on the other hand, is concerned with Ireland, for him “the living world.” However, Yeats is unable to derive poetic inspiration from Synge, as he is unable to do from Johnson and Alfred Pollexfen, the third dead friend Yeats attempts to make present in the poem. He thus proceeds to devote the remainder of the poem to Gregory: “I am accustomed to their lack of breath, / But not that of my dear friend’s dear son” (150). While Yeats’s attitude towards Johnson’s death points to Johnson’s biography, his inability to feel the same passion for the deaths of Synge and Pollexfen as he does for Gregory’s death, points to his own failure, as Synge and Pollexfen, unlike Johnson, were not dead in life. As with the elusiveness of the symbols in “Lines Written in Dejection” and the swans in “The Wild Swans at Coole,” Yeats is no longer moved by what once moved him. The poem shows his loss of interest in Irish heroism, Synge and Pollexfen being Irish heroes, and

the emergence of his self-image as something other than Ireland's national poet. No longer does Yeats seek to create a "native" Irish style or symbolic lexicon. As we also see in "Easter, 1916," he is even at a distance from the heroic deaths he mythologizes. Yeats tellingly chooses "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death" to follow "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory". In the latter, he states that Gregory's death "took all my heart for speech," extinguishing his passion for elegizing Synge, Johnson, and Pollexfen (152). In the former, he creates the Airman, an idealization of Gregory in his act of dying. Whereas Johnson, Synge, and Pollexfen "burn damp faggots," Gregory

...may consume

The entire combustible world in one small room

As though dried straw, and if we turn about

The bare chimney is gone black out

Because the work had finished in that flare.

(1955: 159).

The "measureless consummation" to which Johnson's learning draws him ever nearer but which he nonetheless never attains is achieved by Gregory not through Johnson's death-in-life but, as we see in the following poem, through an active embrace of death. The Airman, unlike Johnson, seeks death rather than merely rejecting life. In "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," Yeats writes of Synge:

But that, long travelling, he had come

Towards nightfall upon certain set apart

In a most desolate stony place,

Towards nightfall upon a race

Passionate and simple like his heart.

(1955: 149)

In the end, Synge's passion leads to the same fate as that of Johnson, a solitary death. Where Synge was simple of heart, and from this simplicity came his passion, Yeats is dispassionate precisely because he sees the desolation that Synge, though he chose "the living world," encountered. In contradistinction to Synge and Pollexfen in the elegy and the rebels in "Easter, 1916," then, Yeats creates in "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death" a character of Gregory who is decidedly unheroic. Speaking through the Airman's voice, Yeats states,

Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.

(1955: 152)

These lines ally Yeats with the anti-English camp; however, while Yeats, speaking through the voice of his idealized Gregory, has reservations about defending his colonizers, the poem also shows his reservations about the cause of Irish self-determination. The Airman chooses to fight for the English, despite the fact that they are his colonizers. The Airman distances himself from the Irish cause: he fights for the enemy, yet he does not care if they win. Lacking passion in remembering Synge, Yeats, like Johnson, turns away from the world. If worldly action can only lead to a solitary death, then Yeats, through the voice of the Airman, has no use for the world. Yeats's reference to the Airman's consummation in or with death is not an example of making present his visionary death through absence. Rather, it is an enactment of Yeats's inability to produce anything in his poetry—"We have no gift to set a statesman right," he writes in "On Being Asked for a War Poem"—

except for absence (3). The Airman exists as an extinguishing of Yeats's nationalistic impulse. Seamus Deane states that the Easter rebels created "a new and specifically Irish version of modern, existential heroism" and that "Easter Week made the Great War look like a mindless, despiritualized carnage"(1987:46). The Airman's death is a reaction similar to that of the Easter rebels, only his death affects himself alone. The Airman's embrace of the futility of the Irish cause mirrors Yeats' own: the pursuit of "a lonely impulse of desire" as opposed to reinventing the Irish national identity. In "The Phases of the Moon," Yeats, through the voice of Michael Robartes, states of himself, "he seeks in book or manuscript/ What he shall never find" (184). Like the Airman, who retreats into himself and literally escapesto a "tumult in the clouds," the second character of the poet in "The Phases of the Moon" hides from the world in his tower. Yeats ends "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death":

The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.
(1955: 152).

However, unlike the Airman's life-in-death, what Yeats seeks is a visionary transcendence that does not come at the expense of his life. Gregory's "lonely impulse of delight" at once marks his self-removal from the world and his entrance into the absolute present, which extinguish his breath, and intimate his visionary experience in death.

Yeats, the poet, however, does not achieve Gregory's transcendence with his ventriloquism; instead, his poem points to the final step he claims Gregory had taken but that he, in his tower, will not and, in his poetry, cannot take. Like Johnson, then, his

"measureless consummation" is deferred. This poetry is a poetry of absence, which is devoid of passion. And passion, as evidenced by the life and death of Synge, inevitably ends in a solitude too like Johnson's. *The Wild Swans at Coole*, a collection based on loss, is concerned with this loss of passion for his older concerns and purpose. Instead of finding loss numinous or finding recompense in loss, as Wordsworth does in *Ode to Intimations on Immortality*, the poetry in *The Wild Swans at Coole* is a reflection on loss. In the Gregory and Airman poems, Yeats is unable to represent the passion he claims to feel in poetry. He states in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," that his passion in thinking of Gregory's death "took all my heart for speech." Yeats, then, does have passion, as he is moved in imagining Gregory's death, but cannot make it present in his poetry. His portrayal of Gregory's death in the Gregory elegy is not, as was his goal at the beginning of the poem, to perform a séance to conjure his dead countrymen, making them present in the poem. Similarly, for the Airman, all is "waste of breath" except for his moment of visionary experience. Unable to represent the passion he does feel—namely, for Gregory and the Airman's visionary deaths—early in the collection, Yeats can only point to the visionary ascent of Gregory and the Airman, unable or unwilling to make their fates his own.

The Wild Swans at Coole enacts his search for a centered poetic identity from which he can achieve the symbolic vision. As the consecutive poems "To a Young Beauty," "To a Young Girl," and "The Scholars" follow the trajectory of the collection as a whole. In "To A Young Beauty," Yeats claims that he "may dine at journey's end/ With Landor and with Donne," aligning himself with the English tradition (1955: 157). As a Protestant, thus Anglo-Irish as opposed to Irish Catholic, he is estranged from the Irish dialects with which he and

John Synge had once sought to create a "native" Irish style. The Irish dialects to which he gives voice in his poetry, then, are not his own; his use of them is akin to that of a colonizer—the Anglo-Irish making up Ireland's ruling class. Norman Jeffares states that, "Yeats disapproved of the Bohemian company Iseult Gonne [the poem's young beauty] was keeping in Dublin" (1968: 167). Choosing to align himself with the English canon rather than with his countrymen, Yeats seems to doubt the possibility of creating an independent Irish literature. In *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, also, he states that Landor "lived loving and hating, ridiculous and unconquered, into extreme old age, all lost but the favour of his Muses"(Yeats: 1959:342). As with most things Yeats writes, his assessment of Landor is ambivalent. Like Yeats, Landor is faced with a choice between the external and internal and his choice of the internal allows him to produce poetry. However, Yeats cautions that for a poet to seek that which Landor achieved, there comes a risk of ending up like Wordsworth, who, he states in the same paragraph, "[withered] into eighty years, honoured and empty-witted, and [climbed] to some waste room and [found], forgotten there by youth, some bitter crust." (Yeats: 1959:342)

In "Men Improve with the Years," he describes Maud Gonne's beauty as "a pictured beauty" as if "found in a book,"(152-150) comparing his feelings for her to his lack of passion for Johnson, Synge, and Pollexfen in the Gregory elegy, whose faces he stated "[seemed] to look/ Out of some old picture-book" (149). Furthermore, the introduction of the younger Gonne continues the theme of aging introduced in the title poem. Yeats' "praise [for] the winters gone" presents a progression from his anxiety with aging in "Men Improve with the Years" and the lines

O heart we are old;
The living beauty is for younger men:
We cannot pay its tribute of wild tears

(1955: 156)

in "The Living Beauty." In "The Living Beauty," he finds in age an escape from his passion for Maud Gonne. However, as we have seen, the canonicity that comes with his distancing of himself from the younger men who chase beauty is but another identity that he eventually sheds in "The Scholars." J. Middleton Murry writes of "Men Improve with the Years": "He is not worn out with dreams, but with the vain effort to master them and submit them to his own creative energy," a sentiment that can be applied to the entire collection. (1961: 11) "To a Young Beauty," "To a Young Girl," and "The Scholars," ordered as they are in the collection as opposed to chronological order, mirror Yeats's struggle in "Men Improve with the Years":

...men improve with the years;
And yet, and yet,
Is this my dream, or the truth?

(1955: 153)

The opposing forces that allow him to write at once allow him to write through them, attempting to arrive at a vision without such preoccupations. He does arrive at such a vision but ultimately cannot maintain the distilled poetic vocation at which he arrives.

The shedding of poetic identities that we see in the beginning of *The Wild Swans at Coole* takes a decided turn in "Ego Dominus Tuus." In "Ego Dominus Tuus" Yeats seems to have decided what kind of poet he wants to be—though by the end of the final poem, "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," he is no longer so sure. He revisits the symbolic swans he could not tame in the title poem and seeks a poetry

in which his symbols do not elude him. It is only through such a resolution that his poetry can come to a rest. It is in particular the narrative structure of the last poems that reveals the last poetic identity on which Yeats settles. In "Ego Dominus Tuus," Yeats presents a dramatic dialogue between Hic and Ille, the objective and subjective voices. The narrative framing of using a dramatic persona takes us into the ultimate end in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes." In "Ego Dominus Tuus," Yeats shows his method in attempting to achieve the visionary transcendence—Harold Bloom states that the poem "is a touch... too much the expository text Yeats had been working to achieve" and "expounds itself, as though the poet had become his own academy, his future critics" (1970: 197) In "The Phases of the Moon," the second character of the poet watches over Robartes and his companion Owen Ahernie as Robartes explains the system that the book inherited by Ille would presumably contain. Many of the ideas contained in "The Phases of the Moon," "Ego Dominus Tuus," and "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" come from the historical Yeats's ideas that eventually became his grandiose theoretical work *A Vision*. *A Vision* creates a system, which equates personality profiles with the twenty-eight phases of the moon. In this system, humanity is drawn between the opposing forces of subjectivity, symbolized by the first phase of the moon, and objectivity, symbolized by the twenty-eighth. In *A Vision*, the fifteenth phase is the ideal: "the consummation of a slow process" and "the phase of complete beauty." (Yeats: 1977:135) It is this phase, where the poles of subjectivity and objectivity are balanced, in which one can find unity of being. Having written through the method and the system, "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," contains the visionary transcendence, a symbolic recovery of the swans lost in the collection's first poem, for which Yeats spends an entire collection searching.

The self-consciousness of Yeats's poetic enterprise in "The Wild Swans at Coole" and his ventriloquism in "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death" provide an antecedent to the narrative frames of the poems at the end of *The Wild Swans at Coole*. First, Yeats writes himself—or, as I have stated, a thinly disguised version thereof—into "Ego Dominus Tuus." Ille, having inherited the books of Michael Robartes, seeks a Shelleyan vision, yet cannot achieve it, despite having the instructions by which to do so. "We are but critics, or but half create," Ille states (180). Yeats's tower figuratively presents a distancing of the poet from his characters. We first encounter the tower in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory." In it, the poet composes the poem from the tower he had just purchased—he begins the poem, "Now that we're almost settled in our house"—emphasizing his solitude in composing the poem. As he imagines Gregory's death at the end of the poem, his séance to call up his dead countrymen becomes, like "The Wild Swans at Coole," a failed memory. In the second stanza, he states, imagining a dinner party with the dead:

...not a friend that I would bring [to the tower]
This night can set us quarrelling,
For all that come into my mind are dead.

(1955: 148)

In comparing a dinner party with calling to "mind" his dead friends, Yeats introduces the tower as a symbol for the mind. Later in the collection, the tower comes to stand for Yeats's position outside of the world, the tower standing for poetic imagination—"Under the Round Tower," for example, is about the dreams of a beggar. "Ego Dominus Tuus" is a literalization of Yeats's poetic project, Ille's tracing of characters from his book in the sand standing for Yeats's creation of

emblems, as opposed to *images*, that have their own power. The vision Yeats seeks is a unity of mind and body; as the tower stands for the mind, Ille must descend from it back into the world in order to put theory into practice. When, in "The Phases of the Moon," Yeats portrays Aherne and Robartes in opposition to the poet in the tower, he further draws out the polarity of the mind and the body. "Ego Dominus Tuus" and "The Phases of the Moon" both draw heavily from what was to become *A Vision*. Indeed, in *A Vision*, the historical Yeats regrets being "fool enough to write half a dozen poems that are unintelligible without it." (1977:19) However, instead of explicating Yeats's complex systems as *A Vision* does, "Ego Dominus Tuus" and "The Phases of the Moon" portray his relationship to the system. Both state that what is found in books cannot by itself lead its reader—or composer—to the visionary experience for which Yeats by this point so longs:

I seek an image not a book

(1955:182)

And now he seeks in book or manuscript

What he shall never find

(1955:184)

As Bloom points out, the irony of "Ego Dominus Tuus" is that the historical Yeats goes on to write *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* and *A Vision*, precisely the kind of books Ille and Robartes possess. Hovering over the poem is Yeats the poet, enacting his internal debate on his poetic project. Yeats cannot commit his poems to the real (*images*) or the imaginary (*emblems*). *De Man* states that

[Yeats] presents emblems disguised as natural images. On the other hand, when the poems are more openly emblematic in imagery, this is often counterbalanced by

a thematic insistence on the value of incarnated beauty.

(1984:203-204)

Yeats seeks the visionary transcendence of the completed *image*, but he cannot achieve it through mere representation. The symbols for which he strives must find a balance between the self-sufficiency of the *image* and the visionary power of the *emblem*. Yeats's symbol of the dancer presents his poetic ideal of resolving his conflict between memory and imagination. In "The Phases of the Moon," he finds a unity of body and mind, a resolution of the two poles. One achieves, Yeats explains, such a unity at the fifteenth phase, which is, for him, humanity at its most transcendent:

All thought becomes an image and the soul

Becomes a body: that body and that soul

Too perfect at the full to lie in a cradle

(1955: 185).

In his system, the two poles that govern human existence, the objective and the subjective, cannot exist in human form in their absolute form, symbolized by the first and last phases of the moon. Thus, to transcend the living world, one must achieve a perfect balance of the two. The dancer, as we will see in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," becomes an intersection of *image* and *emblem*: imaginary and real, moving and still, natural and transcendent. It is precisely the emblematic meanings of the Buddha and Sphinx between which she dances that creates dancer *image*. For Yeats, such a vision can only be achieved through poetry. In "The Wild Swans at Coole", Yeats presents a visual scene that does not reveal any more than a two-dimensional representation in order to introduce the conflict between the real—Yeats does not seem to differentiate between reality and reality

mediated through memory and the imaginary. Yeats plays out this conflict in "Ego Dominus Tuus" and the poems that follow; however, even the resolution we find in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" is not a satisfying resolution.

In "Ego Dominus Tuus," as in so many of the poems in *The Wild Swans at Coole*, Yeats points to the visionary moment he seeks but does not achieve it in the poem. Unlike "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death," in which Yeats ventriloquizes the Airman and intimates his imminent transcendence—a transcendence not achieved within the poem—in "Ego Dominus Tuus," Ille cannot do even that. The characters do not conjure the vision he seeks; for Yeats, creating *emblems* is not enough. "Ego Dominus Tuus" merely tells the reader that such a vision is attainable and the ways in which one cannot achieve it:

Hic. Yet surely there are men who have made their art

Out of no tragic war, lovers of life,
Impulsive men that look for happiness
And sing when they have found it.

Ille. No, not sing,

For those that love the world serve it in action,
Grow rich, popular and full of influence,
And should they paint or write, still it is action
...art

Is but a vision of reality.

(1955:181-182)

The irony, of course, is that Ille is a figure for the poet, who is attempting in writing the poem to "sing" and not "act." Despite Ille and Yeats' efforts, the poem does not transcend reality—to find the "vision" he seeks—but is, instead, didactic; Ille instructs Hic as Yeats explicates

his theories that are to become *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* and *A Vision* to the reader. Like "Ego Dominus Tuus," "The Phases of the Moon" also fails to produce the vision Yeats seeks; however, Michael Robartes, whose book *Ille* inherits, possesses the insight *Ille* does not. Here, Robartes is capable of "envisioning," but does not do so, withholding his visionary practice from the second character of the poet in the tower. Again, the poem is didactic, and the narrative frame comes out of a conflict. While Robartes mocks the poet—again a figure for Yeats himself—the poet is at the same time, within the fiction of the poem, composing this mockery, speaking through Robartes. Robartes understands the system and relates it to Aherne. However, understanding the system does not translate into being able to achieve the visionary transcendence that Robartes and Yeats seek. Robartes alone is capable of "envisioning." The poet relates the system through Robartes, but is unable to produce the vision as he watches Robartes's performance. He can imagine that—but not what—Robartes sees; "he seeks in book or manuscript/ What he shall never find" (1955:189). For him, the poem presents a failed attempt to produce a vision. Robartes and Aherne's mockery of him, then, is a self-flagellation—"He'd crack his wits/ Day after day, yet never find the meaning," states Aherne (1955:188). For Yeats, the mockery is an enactment of the elusiveness of his poetic project and an acknowledgement that his ventriloquism of the Airman earlier in the collection did not satisfy him, as it stopped short of its transcendent climax.

In creating the second character of the poet, Yeats draws attention to himself in the poem. He had devised a system through which he intended to achieve visionary transcendence, a transcendence that would have raised Robartes out from beneath the tower and Yeats himself from the tower into an imaginary realm. However, as Bloom

states, the failure of the poem is that it is merely a system, and Yeats can "never... find anything but endless cycle." (Yeats: 1970:206) To use Yeats's terminology, "The Phases of the Moon" does not peak at the fifteenth phase; rather, it builds to the end when the light in the tower goes out. The individual poem, as Bloom states, is a failure—Yeats makes this clear when Robartes, to the dissatisfaction of Aherne, finishes his song with "The first crescent is wheeled round once more" (1955:187). However, in the scope of the collection, the poem builds to Yeats' escape from the tower. That the light in the tower goes out is Yeats' metaphorical transcendence of the tower. Yeats, then, has taken the reader through the system and is ready to conceive his vision in poetry. Both Yeats and the character leave the tower, having composed the system through Robartes, to engage with the vision Robartes achieves in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes." The tension between Yeats and the second character of the poet in the tower comes from two conflicting tensions: on one hand, it is the tension between the real—the poet—and the imaginary—Robartes and the second character of the poet.

In "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," we see the realization of Yeats's work towards transcendence. He creates an image of the Sphinx and Buddha watching the dancer between them. It is clear, even within the narrative fiction of the poem, that the scene is imaginary, as we are told that we are hearing Michael Robartes relating his vision. While we cannot create a mental picture of the intersection of the Sphinx and Buddha's respective gazes at "all things known, all things unknown" and "all things loved, all things unloved," the intensity of the two beings coming together at a perfect balance gives imagistic life to the dancer (1955: 193). As opposed to "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death," in which the Airman narrates his internal dialogue

leading to his decision to die a visionary death, Yeats presents Robartes's vision as a presence. The first line of the second movement recalls Yeats' 1914 poem "The Cold Heaven" and his 1923 poem "Leda and the Swan." In "The Cold Heaven," the abruptness of the first line, "Suddenly I saw the cold and rock-delighting heaven," makes the poem's narrative palpable to the reader. In "Leda and the Swan," we see a similar device, except that it is the action in the poem, "a sudden blow," that comes to life. In the poem, we do not watch the violence of the swan's swoop from afar, but experience it. It is as if it takes place through the reader, the reader neither experiencing the action through Leda nor the swan but in the action itself. It is this type of narration that creates an inhabitable space for the reader. In "The Wild Swans at Coole," the disruption of

I saw...

All [of the swans] *suddenly* [my italics] mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings

(1955:147)

brings us into Yeats' memory, but only for a moment, as he frames his one vital image with "I have looked upon these brilliant creatures, / And now my heart is sore," again distancing the reader (147). The suddenness of Robartes's vision, then, brings Yeats's initial memory of the swans back into mind of the reader, establishing himself as like the man on the lake's edge where the swans have resettled. "The Double Vision" differs from the failure dramatized in "The Wild Swans at Coole" in that, in the former, Yeats displays a mastery of his symbols. If we carry over the conceit of "The Phases of the Moon," Robartes achieves transcendence while Yeats, the poet, but overhears and translates it into verse. What kind of symbolic resolution, then, does "The Double

Vision of Michael Robartes" present? Robartes achieves the fifteenth phase of the moon: Yeats symbolizes his transcendence through his ability to watch the dancer—the figure of absolute beauty—achieving the delight Yeats attempted but failed to portray in the title poem. Yeats, however, is removed from the dancer, as it is not the voice of the poet that relates the vision but that of Robartes. Robartes states that, seeing the dancer, he has seen the girl in his "dreams that fly" (194). Still, Yeats finds himself wholly rooted in the imaginary and having mastered his symbols. In "The Double Vision," the reader imagines Yeats achieving the dual victory of making of the swans into both an *image*, portraying his delight in remembering them, and an *emblem*, as, understanding the symbolic practice of "Ego Dominus Tuus" and "The Phases of the Moon" in "The Double Vision," he implies a symbolic mastery that extends to an understanding of that which the swans did not yield in the opening poem. In portraying Robartes's vision, is Yeats merely simulating a vision or does "The Double Vision" truly mark the victory he seeks through the collection? If Yeats concerns himself solely with what Ellman calls "Esoteric Yeatsism," what of Ireland? Oisín spends hundreds of years away from his kingdom at a Calypso's Island with the fairy Niamh. Returning, he finds everyone he had known dead and a ruined castle the only remnants of his kingdom. It is at this point that the mask of Robartes disappears, exposing Yeats behind it.

It is clear in ["The Wild Swans at Coole"] that the poet has not obeyed the holy law of visionary ascent, that he has lost the fiercer life of passion derived from vision. Indeed, this is a poem of remembered vision only, a poet generated by a dejected sense of physical and imaginative change. (*Yeats Annual*: 1993: 113)

As we travel from the wild swans at the beginning of the collection to the emblematic Sphinx and Buddha at its end, the theme of memory draws ever closer to the theme of imagination. They begin as opposites, the collection's first two poems are seen passing from memory into imagination. But the collection concludes with the two coming together in Michael Robartes's vision. He cannot derive passion from the swans—they cannot become figures for him—because he is without a centered identity of which to make them figures. That the swans have changed with him, sedentary as he is now contemplative, disallows the comparison implied by the poem's first three stanzas and, instead, leads him to venture into the imaginary. In doing so, he creates a metaphysical distance between himself and the swans, a distance that he must constantly attempt to make up, but that can never be completely bridged. The collection of which "The Wild Swans at Coole" is the first poem, then, becomes Yeats's process of recovering the swans; he wants to become the man at the imagined lake's side where the swans have resettled. Such a project presents a symbolic retrieval of the swans that have eluded him. The swans begin as symbols for his younger self—that he is no longer moved by them initiates a comparison between his current and younger selves. However, the swans resist his symbolism. Realizing that he cannot recreate a memory of his earlier visits to Coole Park, Yeats creates an imaginary world in which the swans do fulfil their symbolic function: to delight their beholder, be he the poem's narrator, or the man on the other lake's edge. However, this imaginary world does not yield different swans; rather, as is the case throughout the collection, it is the beholder who must be able to find delight in his symbols. The images—the swans and Michael Robartes's dancer—become themselves symbols for Yeats's visionary impulse. That the swans delight the imaginary man's eyes, then—like the fact that the vision of the dancer can only be

seen by Michael Robartes—exposes the failure of the poet. Yeats' failure is not merely that he cannot recreate a memory convincingly so much as he is not satisfied by such an enterprise. He seeks in memory the visionary nature of imagination. Yeats's quest for a poetic self-identity, a process in which he discards persona after persona, ends with a visionary poetics. In "Ego Dominus Tuus," Yeats takes up the role of the visionary poet, his poetic goal becoming a reconciliation of memory and imagination in creating in poetry a vision. He discards his poetic personae to distill his project. It was Robert Gregory's various talents that led to his demise. Yeats elegizes Gregory not because he was a soldier, scholar, and a horseman but, rather, because his being an artist—for Yeats, Gregory's primary occupation—was strong enough to consume him in his quest—again, as an artist—to achieve unity of being.

As we have seen in the title poem, alone, neither memory nor imagination can represent the kind of vision, achieved through unity of being Yeats seeks. In "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," the recollections of Johnson, Synge, and Pollexfen fail to incite the ability to bring life through an act of imagination. It creates a presence in his fortress of artistic solitude. Through such a bringing of life, then, he transcends the stolid intellectualism of the tower, as Johnson never could. At the same time, Yeats's shedding of poetic personae includes stripping himself of his ties to specific people and causes, most notably Maud Gonne and the cause of Irish independence. Yeats's project is not to exchange his life for unity of being—were it even possible. His goal is to bring such unity into being through narrative layers in poetry. As in the collection's title poem, his recollection of Gregory in the elegy loses its rootedness in memory and becomes an envisioning of Gregory's momentary vision as he dies. This envisioning of Gregory's death brings

life to the tower through the poem's passage into imagination, creating a presence the only way a solitary poet can. Gregory's transubstantiation in the Gregory elegy, his consuming of—

The entire combustible world in one small room
As though dried straw, and if we turn about
The bare chimney is gone black out —

(1955:151)

achieving unity of being from living to ceasing, comes to determine the trajectory of his poetry. The poem ends, "A thought/ Of that late death took all my heart for speech" (152). Thus, Gregory's visionary act—as well as that of the Airman—at once give Yeats the empathetic release he desires, given what he aims to achieve: poetry, or, rather, creating a vision therein. Yeats cannot, as Gregory and the Airman do, achieve an all-consuming vision. Simply put, it is not his project to achieve a vision as his characters do but, rather, to create one in poetry. Frank Kermode states of "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death":

The impulse is from within; it is an impulse to resolve the tension between the growing absorption of the dream and the desire for society and the pleasures of action. For a moment an equilibrium is achieved; the tensions resolved, there is life, life of extraordinary fullness; but at the cost, the world being what it is, of immediate extinction. This unifying and destructive delight, the singular achievement of life itself, is [also] a leading motive in ["In Memory of Major Robert Gregory"].
(1957:37)

The Airman is an idealization of Gregory, but that the Airman is unnamed in the poem prevents us from simply assuming that the

Airman is the same character as the preceding poem's Gregory. According to the Gregory elegy, Gregory dies because, as an artist, what he can and, indeed, must achieve can only come, as Kermode argues, at the expense of life. However, the poem does not speak of his inclination towards self-destruction but, rather, suggests that, as an artist of such talent, his actions are so intense that they are necessarily, though unintentionally, self-destructive. The comparison the elegy makes between Gregory and Johnson, then, is of the intensity of their respective acts, as Johnson's scholarship is also action. Both act in pursuit of "measureless consummation," that is, Yeats's vision: a transcendence of the world. However, Gregory's action, because of his immense artistic talent, is more intense than that of Johnson. The imagined figure of Yeats, then, is not like Gregory in this respect. Rather, he seeks to create a vision. In both the Gregory elegy and "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death," he merely points to those of others. In the Gregory elegy, he states that of which Gregory is capable—the intensity of his talent that "may" consume the world—and, the poem being an elegy, implies what Gregory has done with intensity with which he lived his life of passionate to sustain in the living world. In the case of the Airman, Yeats literally stops just short of the vision, the Airman's narration taking the reader through his reasoning, but not through his actual visionary death. The Gregory elegy fails to achieve Yeats's goal because it, like "The Wild Swans at Coole," passes from memory into imagination but does not find rootedness in the imaginary world it creates. Just as the question

Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

(1955:147)

opens up an imaginary world in which the swans delight their beholder, the rhetorical question, "What made us dream that he could comb grey hair?" opens up a world that immediately closes on the poet. "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death" fails to create a vision because the poem takes place entirely within the Airman's mind. The poem cannot progress beyond its last line, as there is no imaginary space for the reader to inhabit. The poem is a self-contained internal monologue, leading up to but withholding from the reader the reward of the Airman's reasoning. We can compare the poem to the collection as a whole, which is Yeats' internal discussion leading up to his renunciation of politics and pursuit of visionary experience. However, Yeats is able to achieve through Robartes what he cannot through the Airman because the Airman's transcendence is an existential gesture towards the politics that afflict him whereas Robartes is focused on the visionary experience itself. That the Airman's reasoning comes into question—indeed, it acts as the center of the poem—refers back to Yeats, who has not extinguished politics from his poetics. Without the necessary concentration, the poet, within the fiction of the collection that Yeats presents, cannot portray the vision. George Bornstein states that,

The student [whom I call "the second character of the poet"] in the tower of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' and 'The Phases of the Moon' represents Yeats' antiself in being solitary, constant, and devoted to one activity. He is one of those images of passionate intensity and (because wholly devoted to one object) simplicity through which Yeats's many-faceted self sought Unity of Being. (1970:138)

In this system, then, memory is concrete; it is historically fixed and must be given presence. Like Robartes's "dreams that fly," Yeats's imagination of the swans in the title poem and of Gregory being old in the elegy are dreams. The worlds the poems create are uninhabitable because they are not concrete. While memory is generally malleable, for Yeats, it is a fixed account of an actual event. To bring such rootedness into imagination, then, is to make the created imaginary world inhabitable for the reader. Only when a vision is conceived with sufficient intensity, then, it is possible to create a concrete memory of it. Still, Yeats is not the mere documenter of visionary experience. He creates the character, Robartes, through whom he narrates the vision. "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" walks the reader through Robartes's experience of his vision, mediated through memory. Yeats seeks transcendence; however, unlike Gregory and the Airman, Yeats must create an imaginary world in which to present his vision. Rather than escaping into pure experience like Gregory and the Airman, who do not need to and, indeed, cannot reconcile memory and imagination, the poet must frame his vision in terms of time and space. Thus, the character of Robartes, through whom Yeats does create a successful poetic vision, plays the part of the poet within the poem. Like the Airman, Robartes narrates the process of his vision; however, Robartes does not stop short. Thus, Yeats must invest the character of Robartes with the poetic problems that befall him and the solutions with which to solve them. Yeats, then, occupies the same space in the poem as the reader in the second section of "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," taking in Robartes's account of his vision and experiencing it through him. The narrative framework, however, falls apart in the third section, where the concerns of the poet reemerge as the mask of Robartes disappears, exposing Yeats writing through him. Through his narrative layers, then, Yeats creates the transcendent vision he seeks.

Yeats's concerns—the external world he had ignored in favor of an internal imagination—which he sheds from his poetry in pursuit of visionary transcendence, return. The collection achieves an interesting symmetry here: Yeats, having achieved his momentary vision, finds himself again an old man, the same preoccupation with which he begins the collection in its title poem. Using the Irish myth of Oisín, then, our figure of Yeats is thrust back into his role as Ireland's national poet. Though he has had to remove it from his poetics to achieve his ultimate goal in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," his national inheritance remains. It is important to remember that, while the historical Yeats is composing "The Phases of the Moon" and "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," he also has a cache of political poems. Among them are "Easter 1916" and "Sixteen Dead Men," which eventually make up much of his 1921 collection *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. In November of 1919, the same year as "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" was completed, Yeats composed "Under Saturn" (published in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*), a remembrance of Irish heroes. The poem ends with these lines (one of the heroes, an ancestral Yeats who the poet states "died/ Before my time", speaks the two lines in quotations):

...You have come again,
And surely after twenty years it was time to come.'
I am thinking of a child's vow sworn in vain
Never to leave that valley his fathers called their home.

(1955:202)

These lines reflect Yeats's Ossianic homecoming from his imaginary world back to Ireland and the real world, returning to the national theme that both before the collection and after it occupied much of his

work. Furthermore, the theme of national and cultural inheritance is at play in "Easter, 1916," in which the lines

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart
(1955:204)

are in part a reference to Maud Gonne's oft-quoted claim that she and Yeats should not marry as their lives were better spent participating in the Irish cause than in domesticity. For the historical Yeats, then, national and political poems can find rootedness in the personal, where visionary poems must deny all ancillary themes. His conflation of duty with the personal exposes his conception of national duty as rooted in a personal sense of inheritance. However, while Hic in "Ego Dominus Tuus" inherits the book of Michael Robartes, there is no such thing as visionary inheritance. While knowledge, in the form of Robartes' book, is passed on, visionary prowess is not. Thus, to propose a continued poetic career, Yeats cannot claim to rest in the realm of vision.

Even if we do not look outside of *The Wild Swans at Coole*, we can see the end of "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" as a passage back into the varied poetic identities with which Yeats begins the collection. Robartes's claim that he "had been undone/ By Homer's Paragon" is, Jeffares states, a reference to Maud Gonne (55-56). (Jeffares: 1968: 216) The fact that she "never gave the burning town a thought" at once refers to her marriage to the Easter rebel John MacBride and reflects Yeats's own temporary suppression of the Irish nationalist impulse—be it political or literary—that obviously occupied him earlier in the collection. That Robartes is "undone" by Homer's Paragon presents a double meaning for Yeats: he is at once reminded of the Irish cause that he suppressed while Gonne embraced it and of his

own feelings for Gonne, around which many of the collection's earlier poems centered. The two themes converge to "undo" his envisioning of the dancer through Robartes. As these themes and poetic identities return, the poem cannot sustain the memory of the vision. Robartes's memory, then, loses the presence that made it inhabitable and, for Yeats, successful, and becomes, like the swans in the title poem, detached from the mind of the poet. Robartes finds himself, his vision "undone," "caught between the pull/ Of the dark moon and the full" (1955: 194). His vision of the dancers having a transcendence of temporality in it, time is "overthrown." This transcendence comes from a balancing of the opposing forces of the dark and full of the moon, which Yeats allegorizes in the figures the Sphinx and Buddha. In *A Vision*, Yeats creates a system of interlocking and opposing gyres one standing for objectivity, the other subjectivity. The cycle begins with a phase of pure objectivity, in which human life cannot exist. As the objective gyre grows smaller, the subjective gyre grows larger; Robartes's vision takes place in the fifteenth phase, in which subjectivity and objectivity are balanced. Like the Airman, Robartes achieves his vision when the forces that act upon him are in balance. However, where the Airman's transcendence consumes him, Robartes' is momentary, though it seems not to take place within time. After the vision, then, after the fifteenth phase has passed, the two forces are again at an imbalance, and pull him away from the unity of being he had achieved. At this point, Robartes is no longer like the man on the lake's edge, his eyes delighted by the swans. In fact, he no longer even exists. The poetic mask of Robartes disappears as the themes from earlier in the collection reemerge and it is Yeats who is rewarded—because the speaker at the end of the poem speaks from "Cormac's ruined house." The tower, introduced in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," is the collection's final image. We are no longer seeing the

imaginary world through Robartes's eyes but, rather, we see Yeats looking at himself—remember that he is, throughout the collection, in the tower. The end of the collection marks a self-reexamination and finds Yeats back where he began, struggling with poetic self-identity. He is very much the poet in the tower; however, he is no longer, as he was in the Gregory elegy, unable to be moved by Irish heroes and attempting to commune with the dead. Instead, he is occupied with love and national duty. Cormac's castle fulfils a double-fold symbolic role: it at once resonates with the loneliness of Yeats's own solitary tower and reminds him of Ireland, which he has ignored—"ignorant for so long"—while in pursuit of visionary transcendence (194). In looking at the castle with which he has been "rewarded," he sees the isolation that he had criticized in Johnson. The reemergent concerns informed Yeats's impulse to examine his tower for what it is; that he presents it as a ruin implies the close of his poetic project of visionary transcendence. This is not to say that the historical Yeats is no longer interested in visionary poetics—after all, he publishes the collection *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* two years after *The Wild Swans at Coole* while *A Vision*, which he began writing in earnest in 1916, does not see completion until 1925. It is, rather, that the figure of Yeats we imagine to be composing the collection has lost the unity of focus that allows Robartes's vision to come into being.

The poetic identity at the end of the collection is the same as that of the beginning: one that does not know what it is but is burdened with much inheritance. As I have stated, the historical Yeats enters the collection with the burden of being Ireland's national poet weighing heavily on his poetics. As well, his thirty-year obsession with Maud Gonne came to a head and was, by many accounts, finally exorcised when he married George Hyde-Lees. As Michael Robartes's vision

dissipates in the collection's final poem, our imagined figure of Yeats discovers Gonne behind the dancer, his figure of absolute beauty. In "Yeats and the Idea of Revolution," Seamus Deane calls the Easter rebels specifically Irish modern, existential heroes:

The men of 1916 had offered their deaths to history. In doing so, they had broken the cycle of eternal recurrence... Cuchulain's (and, by extension, Ireland's) cycle of recurrence became finally complete in the sacrifice of [the Easter rebel] Pearse. (1987:46)

However, neither Yeats nor Robartes can do as the Easter rebels—or, for that matter, the Airman. The Airman's transcendence of politics points to its importance. His death is an existential triumph over England, the only way to stop the repeating cycle of Irish history that dates back to well before Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland*. Yeats's "The Second Coming" shows the cyclical nature of history, undoing the symbolic victory of 1916. However, for the rebels, the cycle has come to a close. They are dead and immortalized; their memory—no matter that it is problematized in "Easter, 1916," as the problematization points more to Yeats than to them—is fixed. They exist in mythology, not with the concerns of the living world. Thus, they have transcended the cycle of history. Yeats, however, has not. "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," then, presents Yeats's hope for the living: a momentary rupture in the cycle or, in Aherne's words, "The strange reward of all that discipline." (1955:185) The title poem is an attempt to disrupt the cycle; no longer looking at Ireland's mythological past to create a renaissance of its future, Yeats's swans become disembodied. Yeats cannot break the cycle, only enjoy the "reward" once a revolution and that is why the swans escape, so that he can recover them. In doing so, he momentarily forgets that the cycle exists

and ventures to its center. He at once sheds his worldly preoccupations and creates the play of emblems that makes him like the man at the other lake's edge:

What is it but nightfall?

No, no, not night but death.

(1955:204)

For the Easter rebels, it is death but, for Yeats, merely nightfall. It will pass again into day, just as the rough beast in "The Second Coming" will be (re-) born. The beauty in "Easter, 1916" is terrible because it is ephemeral; Yeats cannot shake himself of the awareness that his victories are temporary. It is for the same reason that his beautiful swans are "mysterious." Graham Martin states,

When the swans lift from the lake they establish their independence of this personal meaning [as reminders of Yeats' youth]... The action of the poem embodies his discovery that far from commanding the swans he is commanded by them and must resign himself to the situation they represent (for him): physical-emotional life as an order of transcendence. (1966:62)

Thus, Yeats begins the poem intending the physicality of the swans to correspond with his emotional state. The swans' beauty, then, like the terrible beauty of the Easter rebellion, cannot last. Like the falcons in "The Second Coming," the swans evade their falconer's control and scatter in "great broken wings"; the center cannot hold. In the scope of the historical Yeats's career, the 1927 poem "Sailing to Byzantium" presents a transcendence of his concerns in *The Wild Swans at Coole*. He escapes the recurring cycle of history by sailing to "the artifice of eternity," in which he becomes an artificial bird, achieving timelessness

in an afterworld ruled by "monuments of unageing intellect" (1955: 217-218). Yeats, then, comes to the conclusion that art—disembodied art, no less—and not "sensual music" will save him from the eternal succession of lives and deaths. However, our imagined figure of Yeats in *The Wild Swans at Coole* has not yet come to this conclusion. For him, unity of being, ephemeral as it is, is the only possible transcendence—save, of course, death. Transcendence necessarily comes with the consciousness of its undoing. Even in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," the strange reward of the collection, his consciousness of time being overturned points to his understanding that it, too, will pass. *The Wild Swans at Coole*, then, is framed by two instances of suddenness. In the title poem, Yeats momentarily creates the memory of the swans as they "suddenly mount," a living presence in memory he will never again achieve in the collection. In "The Double Vision," as he "suddenly" sees the Sphinx and Buddha, he finally replaces the living presence in memory he can no longer achieve with visionary experience, imaginary presence in memory. Yet, as we see in the poem's third movement, he must return to his tower: Cormac's ruined house. Like Oisín, he must also touch the ground; he can escape neither the real world nor aging. Robartes's song is the opposite of that of the artificial birds in "Sailing to Byzantium." To the drowsy emperor of Byzantium, detached from the movement of time and the cycle of history, singing of "what is past, or passing, or to come" affirms his transcendence of history (218). To our imagined figure of Yeats, Robartes's song of his momentary transcendence comes with an understanding of an imminent descent. Robartes's double vision yields two rewards. In the poem's second movement, he attains what Aherne in "The Phases of the Moon" calls "the strange reward of all this discipline," his visionary experience of the dancer's dance. At the end of the poem, he is "rewarded thus, / in Cormac's ruined house," his vision

ended and his worldly concerns reemerging. His second reward, then, is constant motion. We are, in reading *The Wild Swans at Coole*, constantly "passing." In the memory and the vision that frame the collection—the two instances in the collection in which Yeats creates a presence. It is impossible, then, to decide on a final vision for Yeats, as his identity is at all points changing, though in a cyclical fashion.

W.B. Yeats rightly asserts in his *Autobiographies*, a poet "had to take the first plunge into the world beyond himself, the first plunge away from himself that is always pure technique, the delight in doing, not because one would or should, but merely because one would or should, but merely because one can do." The entire sequence of this realization matured into that fine poem, "The Fisherman",

All day I'd looked in the face
What I had hoped 'twould be
To write for my own race
And the reality.

(1955:166).

For this, the poet had to imagine a man, his sun-freckled face, his grey Connemara cloth. Perhaps the idea is no longer merely a product of sentiment. Perhaps the fisherman is "A man who does not exit, / A man who is but a dream"(Yeats: 1955:167). Yet the dream of the poet still remained to do a poem for such a man

Before I am old
I shall have written him one
Poem may be as cold
And passionate as the dawn.

(1955:167).

Michael Robertes And The Dancer (1921) is the volume in which Yeats's mature style—"violent and terrible"—is fully evinced. Irish political activity had its impact on him and he had joined the search for "certain noble qualities of beauty, certain forms of sensuous loveliness, separated from all the purposes of life". "Easter 1916" is one of the finest poems on a public theme, which reveals this quality. It is indeed a beautiful movement of the poem, from the temporal—the comic Dublin after the 1916 rising against British occupation—to the timeless:

I met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth century houses.

(1955: 202)

Then comes the warning:
All changed, changed utterly
A terrible beauty is born

(1955: 203).

So, the poet here thinks back, as he had known them earlier, in a world of 'polite meaningless words': suddenly everything is changed, 'changed utterly'. The transformation, whatever its human cost, has occurred, and Irishmen will forever remember those who took part in this decisive act.

For Yeats realized, as he wrote to Augusta Gregory after the rebellion, "that all the work of years has been overturned, all the bringing together of classes, all the freeing of Irish literature and criticism from politics"(1954:13). The years of war unleashed by 1916

wrought in Yeats's mind an even more complex response. As W.I. Thomson observes,

The longer Yeats thought of men of 1916, the more their deaths took on the tragic joy that Yeats esteemed as the highest wisdom man could embody in action (1967:163-164).

Yeats "has completed his emancipation from the twilight, has securely achieved the self-conquest that is style and has fought his way into the twentieth century" (Rajan: 1965:79).

Chapter V

Culmination of vision in *The Tower*

A poet speaks out of some spiritual passion in words and types and metaphors that draw one's imagination as far as possible from the complexities of modern life and thought.

(W.B.Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:191)

I remember that when I first began to write I desired to describe outward things as vividly as possible, and took pleasure, in which there was, perhaps, a little discontent, in picturesque and declamatory books. And then quite suddenly I lost the desire of describing outward things, and found that I took little pleasure in a book unless it was spiritual and unemphatic.

(W.B.Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:189)

The world of imagination is the world of Eternity. It is the Divine bosom into which we shall go after the death of the vegetated body. The world of imagination is infinite and eternal, whereas the world of generation or vegetation is finite and temporal.

(W.B.Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:151)

A poet must be philosophical above everything, even about the arts, for he can only return the way he came, and so escape from weariness, by philosophy.

In the *Essays and Introductions*, W.B. Yeats sorts out the vocation of a poet. "He must make his work a part of his own journey toward beauty and truth" (1970:207):

He has to withdraw so much of his thought out of his life that he may learn his craft... he should never be without style, which is but high breeding in words and in argument (Yeats: 1970:253).

Yeats's journey toward truth and beauty--the culmination of his vision--finds an effective outlet in *The Tower* poems. Yeats wrote to Olivia Shakespeare shortly after *The Tower* was published in 1928,

I was astonished at its bitterness... Yet the bitterness gave the book its power and it is the best book I have written (1969:170).

In this phase of his poetic career, Yeats is deeply troubled with his growing consciousness of "decrepit age", which forms the very hub of *The Tower* poems. There are two obvious reasons of this bitterness--his illness which brought Yeats to the brink of death in 1917 and the terror of the British forces of repression which posed a real threat to all the artistic and aristocratic qualities Yeats valued dearly. Images of sterility and desolation apparently seem to dominate *The Tower* poems but the vision implicit in this phase also gives us alternative; for a sense of regrets and bitterness that afflict the poet to a large extent does not become the sole determinant of this phase. Thus, *The Tower* describes a journey that begins in a world of regrets and lamentations, and progresses to a state of spiritual and intellectual gain.

When *The Tower* was published in 1928, of which "Sailing to Byzantium" is a representative poem, Yeats was in his sixties. Having lost the youthful power of physique, he was passing through a spell of melancholy and hence clutched at the powers of psyche. The Byzantium of 10th century opulence became his fictional sanctuary to which he voyaged across the seas of time and space in the post-independent Ireland. In this, the poet confronts the problem of ageing with verve and determination.

The poem opens with the complaint of an aged man who is on a mental voyage out of his native country, which is given to youth and sensual pleasures. The opening word of the poem "that" indicated that the poet has already turned his back upon the country of youth because it is not fit for the life appropriate to the old men. So the old poet feels insecure: "That is no country for old men" (Yeats: 1955:217). The poem then goes on to evoke the life of the country, from which the old man feels alienated, in vigorous lines, full of natural imagery linked to the season of summer. The word "dies"--referring back to "Those dying generations"--is a reminder to the poet of what is the underlying reality, but it does nothing to disturb the young "in one another's arms" (1955:217). They are said to be "caught in that sensual music", the word "caught" implying a trap, that of mortality, of which they are unaware. The young men and women are caught up in the sensual urge of generation, which is only a process of death. They are all drifting on the stream of flux and are heartily revelling in sexual delight, necessary for keeping the world of procreation and death in motion. But soon an alternative is offered: "Monuments of unageing intellect" (Yeats: 1955:217). The sculptural image supersedes the musical in the search for something beyond the cycle of natural

change, and 'intellect' is offered as opposed to the senses in the world of the young.

The second stanza focuses on the condition of age, in the undignified image of the scarecrow. But again there is an alternative: "Soul", strikingly personified in human terms, can transcend its own condition, its "mortal dress" (1955:217) of the body, clapping and singing in an ecstasy which it can teach itself by studying the assertion of super sensual values. An aged man's mellowed vision leads him on a quest away from his country and across the seas and the time to an imaginary one. In a similar fashion, Tennyson's Ulysses is restless to travel towards the unattainable world of the ideal:

I am part of that I have met,
Yet all experience is an arch
Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.

(Fifteen Poets: 1999:409)

The third stanza is addressed to some unnamed sages who stand in god's holy fire in a world of perfection like that represented in the 'gold mosaic' in a Byzantium wall. The sages are asked to "come" and "be the singing masters of my soul", teaching the higher wisdom which the ageing man needs (1955:217). The intensity now increases all the more as the line helps to create the note of anguish at the human body. The stanza, however, ends with a confident appeal to be "gathered"- a protective word- "into the artifice of eternity" (Yeats: 1955:218). This suggests an achieved perfection beyond time.

The fourth stanza meditates on the eternity by stating confidently that "once out of nature", the poet will not take his "bodily form from

any natural thing" (1955:218). There is a suggestion of the idea of reincarnation here, with "the artifice of eternity", splendid and valuable, singing forever to the Emperor and his "lords and ladies" (1955:217). A splendid artefact has superseded the "birds in the trees" of the country of the young in the first stanza.

In "Sailing to Byzantium", the poet rejected wholesale the quagmire of birth-death cycle and craves to be transfigured into an art object. In this poem, we also find the hopeful side of Yeats in his equation of the Byzantium of yore with the Ireland of the future in its insightful and artistic excellence. There is a suggestion of spiritual journey reaching tranquility. Thus, the poem remains a 'monument' for us, as it was for Yeats.

The title poem of *The Tower* opens in a vigorous address to the poet's heart about the problem of age. It clearly thus relates in theme to "Sailing to Byzantium", but now the "I" seems closer to ordinary reality. The poem conveys an urgent concern about the poet's present plight: he is an ageing man, but his imagination and senses are more active than even before in his life. Exploring the dilemma of old age, when the body is frozen, decayed and misshapen, the poem begins with a breast-beating expostulation: "What shall I do with this absurdity" (Yeats: 1955:218). "Decrepit age" has been fastened onto the poet's "troubled heart" like "A sort of fettered kettle of the heel" (Yeats: 1955:219). The word "caricature" sets the tone of the poem: old age may be a caricature, but the poet further caricatured old age a clattering tin can, curiously separable from the poet's dog's body. And again like the scarecrow old man of "Sailing to Byzantium" - the poet can in this absurd condition no longer sing sensual songs: "It seems that I must bid the Muse go pack" (Yeats: 1955:218). He can cultivate instead

philosophy, represented by Plato and Plotinus, who deal with 'abstract things' and can help the poet to do so. All these summoned to answer a question arising from the problem of Part I: Did they all "rich and poor", being old, "rage / As I do now against old age?" (1955:221) The poet allows others to leave the world, but retains his own creation, Hanrahan, to whom he addressed another question:

Does the imagination dwell the most
Upon a woman won or woman lost?

(Yeats: 1955:222)

Part III of the poem gives a speedy and resolute effect, in keeping with the decisive state of mind. He has come to a conclusion, and can make his will, leaving his pride to "upstanding men", fisherman, representatives of human energy and skill. The strong positive value referred to here is associated with a particular group of people:

...people that were
Bound neither to cause nor to State,
Neither to slaves that were spat on,
Nor to the tyrants that spat,
The people of Burke and of Grattan
That gave, though free to refuse

(Yeats: 1955:222-223)

Yeats's passionate commitment to the tradition as such is usually described as Anglo-Irish or the protestant Ascendancy.

Evidently Yeats's sense of himself as part of the Anglo-Irish tradition, and the pride that he feels, enable him to achieve the confidence of his new declaration of faith, in which he dismisses Plato and Plotinus. Instead of accepting their transcendentalism, to which

man is nothing but subordinate, the poet asserts a kind of humanism: it is man who created "death and life... out of his bitter soul" (Yeats: 1955:223). The sun, moon and stars are human creations, and man is even able to go beyond death:

...being dead, we rise,
Dream and so create
Translunar Paradise.

(Yeats: 1955:223)

This is an extraordinary affirmation, based on faith in the human ability to dream in the human imagination. After this assertion the poetry becomes quieter, for, the poet asserts how he has made his peace in preparation for death. He comes to believe that remorse is at last futile and destructive in life. In this, Yeats seems to have been inspired by Blake's vision:

... an old man, feeble and tottering, but not in spirit and
life, not in the real man, the imagination, which liveth
for ever. In that I am stronger and stronger as this
foolish body decays (1970:138).

Yeats comes to realise that man is somehow freed from the wreck of his body if he can learn to transform it all into song. Thus, in the concluding portion of the poem, Yeats attains a remarkable transfiguration:

Now shall I make soul,
Compelling it to study
In a learned school
Till the wreck of my body,
Slow decay of blood,

Testy delirium
Or dull decrepitude,
Or what worse evil come—
The death of friends, or death
Of every brilliant eye
That made a catch in the breath—

(Yeats: 1955:224).

Soul has to be rebuilt through an unflinching devotion to his own philosophy, which will make him forgetful of all the accidents and mishaps of life-- the decrepitude of body and the decay of heart. All these evils will then fade away like clouds on the horizon or the sleepy notes of drowsy birds in the gathering gloom of night. "The Tower" revolves round one conflict-- the conflict between the contemplative soul and the passionate heart that lives through experience. The soul wins the round, and the poem ends facing towards eternity.

"Meditations in time of Civil War" is one of the memorable poems occasioned by the troubled times of civil war (1921-22) which posed a great threat to all the noble houses including the tower itself which was very near to the depredations of destructive forces. The poem begins with a section, "Ancestral houses", which moves with a dignified meditative slowness as it ponders over the values represented by the great houses of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. The first stanza evokes civilized and leisurely way of life, free from "ambitious pains", symbolized by the "fountain". But belief in this way of life is dismissed as "mere dreams". The third stanza argues that houses were created by "violent bitter" men seeking to create in stone a sweetness and gentleness antithetical to their own natures. The final stanza repeats the paradox with enhanced force, making us think upon the disturbing

suggestion that bitterness and violence are the necessary spurs to the creation of civilization.

In "My Table", the "sword" has remained unchanged over the years, its changelessness is a function of man's "aching heart", which is aware of change. The tradition was passed on unchangingly too, and its inheritors came to share 'the soul's unchanging look'. The section is quite interesting as the unchanging beauty of the sword is contrasted with the changing phases of civilization.

"My descendants" meditates on the possibilities of heredity, without confidence. The descent into "common greenness" strikes a strong anti-Nationalist note. His descendants may "lose the flower", become degenerate; if so he would like the "stark tower" to become a ruin again, only be a habitation only for the owl. Section V introduces the civil war directly. The tower is visited by representatives of both the Republican Irregular and the Government forces. The poet himself goes back towards his chamber with a great sense of loneliness. Section VI culminates in ballad-like appeal to the honeybees to build their nest in that house left empty by starlings. The natural feeling of the first stanza gives way to the powerful evocation of the violence of the war in the second and third. There is a sense of confusion:

Yet no clear fact to be discerned:
That dread young soldier in his blood
(Yeats: 1955:230)

The last stanza of this section sums up the errors of the previous years with an emphasis on England rather than a positive sense of national unity:

More substance in our enmities
Than our love;

(Yeats: 1955:231)

In these circumstances, the poet's only answer is a kind of prayer to the honeybees. These creatures have, of course, a long history as symbols of creativity and constructive action. They also attractively symbolise the spirit, which Ireland needs to heal its wounds and lead it to fulfilment, a spirit which is associated with nature rather than with the abstract fantasies. The poet successfully integrates his private experience with the needs of the whole nation.

The last section is strange, as the poet climbs on the top of the tower and sees a mist sweeping over the countryside under a sword-like moon. In the final stanza, the poet leaves the "brazen" hawks behind to make a choice of the poet's life rather than that of a man of action. He realizes that the satisfaction of worldly success would never have been enough for him. The final sentence is a confident assertion that the poet's vocation still "suffices" him, as it has always done. He can find satisfaction in an "abstract joy" and in trying to read the "wisdom of daemonic images" which have brought Yeats intimations of immortality in old age (Yeats: 1955:232).

"Nineteen hundred and Nineteen" is thematically connected with "Meditation in the time of Civil War", when the growing fury of the British mercenary soldiers, the Black and the Tans, had brought home to Yeats the growing murderousness of the times likely to bring about the total destruction of all values of life. The poem seems to suggest that chaos envelops the European scene. The poet emphasizes that

lovely things are in reality guaranteed no survival. Not one authentic work of Phidias remains. Men who had thought, "All teeth were drawn" discover to their utter amazement that they are "but weasels fighting in a hole" (1955:233). These things lead to the melancholy meditation on the banishment of social and moral values, which once formed the rich possession of the poet and his compatriots.

The poem scales the dizzy height when the poet conjures up the apocalyptic vision of a civilization being trodden down by the cruel forces of darkness. Yet there is a kind of cold comfort. These weasels fighting in a hole are, in the abstract, man, and, "Man is in love and loves what vanishes" (Yeats: 1955:234). Seeing always the double nature of all things, Yeats cannot paint a picture so bleak so entirely to eliminate the artist. The aged poet is now able to face with a kind of equanimity the destruction of social institution. The 'ghostly solitude' that exhilarated and appalled is now an accepted condition of life. Though the end is coming, though the second coming brings its rough beast out of the two thousand years of stony sleep, the poet incorporates the dragon into art. Chaos is coming, Yeats angers: men move to the "barbarous clangour of a gong" (Yeats: 1955:234). Yet at the same time those men are artists. Though the music they dance to is 'barbarous', "All men are dancers" (1955:234).

"Hammer your thoughts into unity" was for Yeats a vision he sought for a long time. "Among School Children" seeks union of body and soul, beauty and suffering, wisdom and labour, tree and one fruit, artist and art. It is an ideal of personality embodied in poetry, and one seeks it by undertaking in poetry a quest. In this quest, the poet attempts to overcome loss by fitting it, through an act of self-

interpretation, in a harmonious pattern thus making his life into a unity. "Among School Children" enacts such a quest.

The "kernel" of "Among School Children" was Yeats's "old thought" that "life prepares for what never happens". This "old thought" suggests that one aspect of the problem is of harmonizing one's present with one's past. The poet feels the need for this harmony strongly; as Lawrence Lipking has argued, poets try to interpret their pasts in a way that will enable them to see what they have done as necessary preparation of their present work. The poet seeks to create a tradition of himself, to define himself and his work. His is a quest to write a poem, which might provide the sense of an ending that would encompass and make sense of all he had previously experienced.

In Yeats's vision of unity in "Among School Children", Maud Gonne represents both his ideal and loss. Yeats remembers the moment of their youth in which their "two natures blent /Into a sphere". But he knows it well that moment is fleeting, that he never achieved a lasting union with Maud Gonne. Yet just as, in their youth it had been the memory of tragedy that had led to that moment of unity, here also it is loss that will "set its maker to the work" (Yeats: 1970:329). *A Vision* provides one explanation. It states:

The relation of man and woman is so far as it is
passionate, reproduces the relation of man and Daimon
(Yeats: 1970:27).

Yeats's desire for union with Maud thus would be more than simply the desire of love to achieve its object, because passionate union with a woman symbolises a unity.

Indeed, "Among School Children" does not really seek union with Maud at all, for an ideal with her could exist only in a fantasy of past. Maud is important in the poem because she had been important to Yeats. What the poet's object here is not to imagine a passionate union with her, but to accept his loss of her and then negate it by understanding and justifying it. It would then take necessary places in his life, and form part of a harmony. Yeats's task is to unify the sixty-year-old smiling man with the one who shared moment with a "Ledaen body". If Yeats cannot reconcile his experience with Maud with a harmonious view of his life, the quest fails. In the midst of considering his own past and possible connection to Maud--"And I though never of Ledaean kind/Had pretty plumage once"--he stops: "enough of that, / Better to smile on all that smile (Yeats: 1955:243). Yet the poem and the quest go on past the fourth stanza, where he leaves Maud behind.

The quest never leads smoothly to its end; instead, at the moment when it seems to fail, it may engender a new process or turn into a vision. Yeats's *A Vision* suggests that a poet's attempt should be "to relate that which is lost that which has snatched it away, to the image of desire" (1970:142). The poem urges that the limited and personal search for unity through Maud Gonne has exhausted itself, and what takes its places is a new inquiry concerning unity more impersonally. Although in the stanzas Yeats's personal concern disappears, (recalling his own age, and in the scarecrow image concluding stanza VI, which recalls his self-characterization at the end of stanza IV), they consider the problem of connecting the part with the whole in a more general way. Indeed, Yeats sees unity as a broad problem transcending his particular case.

In the fifth stanza, Yeats portrays a mind looking at two isolated stages in a temporal process. The problem he presents seems to be the bodily decrepitude of the man "with sixty or more winters on his head" (1955:244). The problem stems not simply from that decrepitude but also from the viewpoint of the man's mother. The situation Yeats proposes is one in which the mother sees both an old man and a baby- but only an old man and baby. From this perspective, Yeats suggests, the mother will see no "compensation for the pang of his faith/Or the uncertainty of his setting forth" (1955:244)? Man's life will seem a failure unless one can see a process as a unity in which everything necessarily includes everything else.

In stanza VI, which portrays Aristotle, and Pythagoras, Yeats follows up the relationship between creator and creation, which was implicit in his example of mother and child. But in seventh stanza, Yeats's attitude gives rise to such a question--can a creation represent a creator? Yeats has examined mother's images, which mirror a son but cannot encompass the latter's past as well as present. By contrast, nun's images- religious icons- can connect man and his ideals. The stanza begins from the similarity between the situation of nuns and mothers, to the distinction between them-

But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,

(Yeats: 1955:244)

But then back to their similarity -
And yet they too break hearts

(1955:244)

The reference "presences" in stanza VII can symbolize "heavenly glory" which holds out an ideal of the poet. Now in Yeats, discouragement

resulting from unsatisfied desires is purified: "the passions, when we know that they cannot find fulfilment, become vision" (Yeats: 1966:341). In his *Autobiographies*, Yeats describes a parallel process:

art come(s) when a nature ceases to judge itself, exhausts personal emotion in action or desire so completely that something impersonal, something that has nothing to do with action or desire, suddenly starts into its place, something which is as unforeseen, as completely organized, even as unique, as the images that pass before the mind between sleeping and waking (1970:200).

Thus in the final stanza, Yeats is able to construct a vision of his ideal. "Among School Children" is an effort to synthesize a "sixty-year-old smiling public man", the aged one-time lover, and the would-be philosopher into something organic as a "chestnut tree". The "chestnut tree" is neither "the leaf, blossom, or the bole", which finds essence in all parts of itself, which indivisibly exists. The tree is a whole living creature, the blossom inconceivable without the great roots; the dancer in the dance is an indissoluble unity. In this context, the figure of the dancer is an important one in late nineteenth century, as Frank Kermode showed in *Romantic Image*:

There is tormenting contrast between these images and the living beauty. And out of the contrast grows the need for a poetic image which will resemble the living beauty rather than the marble or bronze. No static image will now serve; there must be movement, the different sort of life that a dance has by comparison with the most perfect object of art. (1957:85)

This would suggest that the poem ends with a satisfying and convincing assertion of life. But an American critic, Yvor Winters has his own way of saying things,

The body is always bruised to pleasure soul; wisdom is
always born out of midnight oil or something
comparable (1960:14)

Although there is an element of grim truth about the comment, but it seems to deny the right of the poet to use his imagination to create images of perfection which is surely one of the pleasures that literature and art can give. "Among School Children" is, thus, a construct from the destructive ravages of time a final justification of life, which is brought about, according to F.R. Leavis, by "a perfect cogency of musical logic".

"All souls' night", the final poem in *The Tower* poems is an elaborate poem in which the poet tries to summon and address the spirits of the dead. All Souls' Night falls on November and is dedicated by the Christian church to the remembrance of the departed souls and prayers for their peace and tranquility in purgatory.

The opening stanza creates an atmosphere of midnight mystery, leading to the suggestion that "A ghost may come" to "drink form the wine-breath" while the "gross palates" of the living consume the misacted itself. The poet is seeking an audience, the second stanza tells us, "Because I have a marvelous thing to say"- something so remarkable that the living mock at it (Yeats: 1955:256). He, therefore, seeks to impart it to a mind that can retain its serenity:

...stay

Would in mind's pondering

A mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound.

(1955:256)

The simile gives a strange physicality to "mind's ponderings"- a physicality which enables to protest and enclose the mind itself.

The next six stanzas are devoted to summoning three approximate spirits from among Yeats's dead acquaintances: -William Thomas Horton (1864-1919), a painter and "illustrator of mystical scenes"; Florence Farr Emery (1864-1917), an actress who had worked in the Irish literary theatre with the young Yeats; and Mac Gregor Mathers (1854-1918), one of the founders of the occultist order of the Golden Dawn to which Yeats belonged in the 1880s.

The last two stanzas, like those of "Among School Children", rise towards ecstasy. Names are dismissed as nothing: all that matters is that those summoned are spirits with finer elements than those of the living, who, therefore, constitute the audience he wants for the "mummy truths" he has to tell. The truths of the esoteric tradition to which Yeats, like his three friends, are hidden from the living nevertheless preserve their fineness. Here "mummy" is the symbol of the old hoary wisdom, which the poet has mastered.

The last stanza achieves its sense of ecstasy by the repetition of "such thoughts". The first six lines affirm the power of vision given by the "thought" to pierce beyond the material world to those of the spirits of the damned and the blessed souls dance in ecstasy. The confidence of the poet in the value of his "thoughts" gives him complete security,

like that of the "mummies in the mummy-cloth". His achieved attitude is one of serenity: "I need no other thing" (Yeats: 1955:259).

The poet himself, in the course of "All Souls'Night" has become a spiritualized voice who achieves the security of spiritual vision. What poetry can convey better than other forms of writing is a sense of experience, in this case the experience of powerful vision finding security in the spiritual. The pilgrim's progress from sublunary world to the translunar celestial vision comes to colour *The Tower* poems.

For Yeats, especially in this phase of his poetic career, poetry is not his means of livelihood but of self-realisation. "He who lives does not work". "One must die to life in order to be utterly a creator"(Mann: 1964:149). Yeats "is the fountain alike of the creative imagination and the mystic life"(Underhill: 1960:74). His poetry "presents itself to our gaze all at once, it almost always succeeds in snatching us, although only for a few moments, from subjectivity, from the thralldom of the will, and transferring us into the state of pure knowledge"(Schopenhauer: 197:1966). Yeats seems to have been inspired by Eastern philosophy:

East and west seem each other's contraries—the East so independent spiritually, so ready to submit to the conquerer; the West so independent politically, so ready to submit to its Church (1961:432)

"I had found something of what I wanted"(1961: 429)—Yeats's belief as such connects him with an Indian monk, Purohit Swami. He feels that "the Indian approaches through vision, speaks continually of the beauty and terror" of existence (1961:431):

The care for the spontaneity of the soul seems to me
Asia at its finest ...

The third eye, no physical organ, but the mind's direct
apprehension of the truth, above all antimonies, as the
mark itself is above eyes, ears, nostrils, in their duality—
'Splendour of that Divine Being.'

The soul has but one life to find or lose salvation
(1961:427, 436,437).

Rabindranath Tagore has also "stirred" Yeats's "blood as nothing for
years" (1961: 387) to achieve a complete cosmic vision in *The Tower*
phase:

I so much admire the completeness of his life.

These lyrics ... display in their thought a world I have
dreamed of all my life long.

We fight and make money and fill our heads with
politics—all dull things in the doing—while Mr. Tagore,
like the Indian civilization itself, has been content to
discover the soul and surrender himself to its
spontaneity. (1961: 388, 390, 394)

Chapter VI

Decline of vision in the post-*The Tower* poems

The four things I have all my life most hated fall upon me together—coughing and old age, sickness and sorrow. I am old, I am alone, shapeliness and warmth are gone from me, the couch of honors shall be no more mine; I am miserable, I am bent on my crutch.

(W.B.Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:181)

We must then be artists in all things, and understand that love and old age and death first among the arts.

(W.B.Yeats: *Essays and Introductions*: 1961:139)

If the pattern of the poems in *A Full Moon in March* is chaotic vision and seems to accept chaos as its central image, the pattern of *Last Poems* wings towards an ambivalent and declining vision. The poet finds order in his old age, for he is at ease with it. All things may be meaningless, Yeats seems to be asserting, but the man who comprehends the meaningless designs has achieved the most that can be accompanied in life. Having lifted himself to the vantage point of age, Yeats is able to form a final mood in the *Last poems*. Though in seventy

years, he claims in the little lyric "Imitated from the Japanese" "... never have I danced for joy", now joy is at last to be his (Yeats: 1955:340). It is not the lover's joy, the young man's fragile joy in spiritual union. But rather it is a reckless joy of a "wild old wicked man" who, looking on all things with a careless eye, is free to enjoy them for themselves. Seeing the form of "The Gyres" from the height of his hard-won freedom, he is able to "laugh in tragic joy" (1955:337).

All said, the poet has his mixed feelings so far as the theme of ageing is concerned in *The Last Poems*. This attitude of himself at war in relation to ageing can be best illustrated by a poetical debate between Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold. In "Rabbi Ben Ezra" the ever-optimistic Browning exhorts the readers.

Grow old with me
The best is yet to be.
(Fifteen poets: 1999:433)

But in "Growing old", the chastened Arnold pointed out:

It is - last stage of all
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves
(Fifteen poets: 1999:488)

W.B. Yeats lived to the ripe old age to know firsthand the pride and the pangs of the "second childhood". There is an interesting statement in Yeats's "A Prayer for old age" which spells out the very tone of the *Last Poems*:

God guard me from those thoughts men think
In the mind alone;
He that sings a lasting song

Thinks in a marrow- bone;
I pray— for fashion's word is out
And prayer comes round again—
That I may see, though I die old,
A foolish, passionate man.

(Yeats; 1955:326)

In "The Bounty of Sweden", the poet also acknowledged the element of lusty youth in his poems of decrepit age:

I was good—looking once... but my unpracticed verse was full of infirmity, my muse old, as it were, and now I am old and rheumatic and nothing to look at, but my muse is young. I am even persuaded that she is like those angles in Swedenborg's vision, and moves perpetually towards the day-spring of her youth. (Yeats: 1966:541)

Soon Yeats realizes that what is appropriate to the poetry of one's youth is not necessarily proper and justifiable in the poetry of one's old age. The fact of the old poet's "vulgarity" has to be accepted as a part of his comprehensive vision of life and his growing interest in Michael Angelo, the artist of the energetic body, whose picture of "walking Adam" can warm the bowels of the "globe-tottering madam". But more important is the Lear-mask of tragic gaiety, which the poet has assumed in many of his key poems where the impending catastrophe over a dying civilization is accepted as the necessary part of a universal process, which symbolizes the recurring rhythm of birth, death and rebirth. Things are doomed to pass away, but their death is not the final word, for a creative process in retaliation will bring them back into existence. Yeats stated that we begin to live only when we conceive life as a tragic

vision and great poems of this collection demonstrate that the poet has lived his life with his conviction.

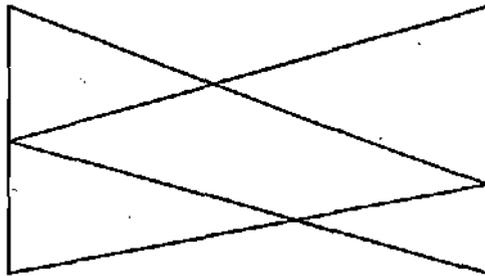
The *Last Poems* is quite worthy of the vigorous old age of a poet who devoted practically his whole life to the service of the muses and coveted no other crown but that which they can bestow. The section opens with "The Gyres" which presents the old poet's reaction to the murderousness of his epoch, which is symbolic of the impending dissolution of the current European civilization. What is new in the poem is the poet's mood, which the growing tempo of disintegration has generated. Yeats would have us believe that the new mood is the result of the deeper insight into the nature of the historical rhythm, which the years have engendered in him:

When a man grows old his joy
Grows more deep day after day,
His empty heart is full at length,
But he has need of all that strength.
Because of the increasing Night
That opens her mystery and fright.

(Yeats: 1955:387)

The prophetic poet, contemplating the violence and the confusion prevailing upon the world, is convinced that life gyre of the present civilization has reached the highest point of its expansion and its collapse is near at hand. But instead of being stunned by the impending catastrophe, he is exhilarated by it and offers a joyful welcome. The rhythm of the line, "The gyres! Old Rocky Face, look forth" has a joyful throb about it (Yeats: 1955:337). If there were nothing unusual about his death and disappearance of old ideals or when their loss is temporary one should waste no regret over them. Old ways, thoughts and ideals are now outmoded, beautiful women have

lost their loveliness, the worthy things have sunk into oblivion. The earth is submerged in the tide of wanton violence, cruelty and bloodshed. But Yeats sees the vision in terms derived from the Greek philosopher Empedocles as a continual tension between the forces of Discord and Concord, whose contrary movement forms an ever-whirling vortex. To make his point clear, Yeats provides a diagram of the two antithetical gyres and commentary on the interpenetrating vortexes in *A Vision*.



If I call the unshaded cone 'Discord' and the other 'concord' and think of each as the bound of a gyre, I see that the gyre of 'concord' diminishes as that of 'Discord' increases, and can imagine after that the gyre of 'Concord' increasing while that of 'Discord' diminishes, and so on, one gyre within the other always. Here the thought of Heraclitus dominates all: 'Dying each other's life, living each other death (Yeats: 1962:68)

If we understand Yeats's vision as such, it seems that the old tragedy of Troy, the death of Hector and the burning of the whole city, symbolic of the total annihilation of a phase of civilization, are supposed to recycle and repeat in the process. The poet-spectator seeing the spectacle of a whole civilization breaking to pieces is filled with a secret delight. The joy is arising out of a deeper understanding of

the tragedy. Though "numb nightmare" now determines world history, though the end of a historical cycle draws nearer, nothing that happens is of real significance. The wiser poet will never bother because from the "cavern of prophecy" issues the voice audible to the ear of his heart that he should rejoice in the face of universal tragedy. The life of antithetical gyre will obliterate darkness and death. Ultimately the now-unfashionable gyre of "workmen, noble and saint will return", history will reverse itself, as displayed in the diagram. "We that look on", artists and philosophers—not participants but wise spectacle—"laugh in tragic joy". That the artist finds delight in the world spectacle is also expressed by Yeats in his essay "J. M. Synge and the Ireland of His Time":

There is in the creative joy an acceptance of what life brings, because we have understood the beauty of what life brings.... That we laugh aloud and mock, in the terror or the sweetness of our exaltation, at death and oblivion". (1970:321)

Though all themes are tragic, though gyres whirl the world over and over again, through cycles of triumph and necessary defeat, the artist is free to respond to the voice from darkness which articulates the command, no artist dare reject, "that one world Rejoice" (Yeats: 1955:337). This is the essence of the tragic wisdom which has come to the old man and keeps him gay and rejoicing in the face of dark night of chaos hovering over the present world of insane brutality.

Yeats wrote to Dorothy Wellesley: "The poem 'Lapis Lazuli' is almost the best I have made of recent years..." (1986:93-94) The poem presents three types of tragic gaiety, pertaining to the artist, the constructive worker and the saint respectively, as contrasted with the

sentimental hysteria of weak women who are crying for some immediate effective remedy to avert the threatening danger of German invasion. The second stanza of the poem describes the "tragic gaiety" of the artist, which is born out of a deeper insight into the nature of tragedy. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle makes the positive statement that tragedy, as an art form, must be an object of delight, which reminds us of an equally significant remark of Yeats in "On the Boiler".

The true arts are all the bridal chambers of joy. No tragedy is legitimate unless it leads some great character to his final joy. Polonius may go out wretchedly. But I can hear the dance music in 'Absent thee from a while', or in Hamlet's speech over the dead Ophelia, and what of Cleopatra's last farewells, Lear's rage under the lightning, Oedipus sinking down at the story's end into an earth riven' by love? Some Frenchman has said that farce is the struggle against a ridiculous object, comedy against a movable object, tragedy against an immovable; and because the will or energy, is greatest in tragedy, tragedy is the more noble; but I add that 'will or energy is eternal delight', and when its limit is reached it may become a pure, aimless joy, though the man, the shade, still mourns his lost object. (1962:448)

This is practically the substance of the second stanza, which refers to great Shakespearean heroes who are not seen lamenting over their fate. Hamlet and Lear are gay and this gaiety of their heart has transformed all the horrors of the gloomy events about to engulf them. Man opposes with his indomitable will the horror of tragedy and wrings delight out of it. The world is a tragic drama and great actors play it through without breaking down:

They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread.

(Yeats: 1955:338)

Yeats had said in his "Introduction" to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*: "In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies" (Qtd. in Stock: 1961: 224). The progress of a tragic hero is a march from darkness into light, from ignorance into knowledge, from the surface of suffering into the joy hidden in its bosom. In the stanza that follows the poet describes the joy of men of action who build a new civilization out of the debris of the old one. Civilizations also are subject to the law of death and rebirth. Destruction is followed by construction and as soon as the destruction has done its work, the team of builders proceeds to erect the structure of new city. Man is not upset by the depredations of time. The last section of the poem expresses the gaiety of the sages, sitting on the high attitude of their philosophical wisdom and contemplating the tragedy enacting in the world below. The eyes of those withered and wrinkled sages are glittering with delight when they witness the new life emerging out of tragic scene.

"What then?" would seem to be a self-consuming artifact. The poem interacts with such poems as "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" and "The Choice". The latter begins, "The intellect of man is forced to choose/ Perfection of the life, or of the work" (Yeats: 1955:278); "What then?" specifies that the "Something to perfection brought" was 'the work' (1955:348). And then "The Choice" must be faced: "And if it take the second must refuse/ A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark" (1955:278). Though it is not 'he' but the 'fools' who do the raging in "What then?" the spiritual question remains: 'What then?' "The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland" is a catalogue of might-have-beens. The

tenderness of love, freedom from 'money cares', the maintenance of "a fine angry mood" leading to vengeance upon mockers, and, finally "unhaunted sleep" in the grave—all have been lost by the golden and silver other world of immutable beauty. Yeats's delicate lyricism emphasizes first the pathos, then the bitter frustration of a dreamer who succumbs to the lure of the unattainable. Responding almost point by point in "What Then?", Yeats presents us with an old man who has entered fully into the world of human experience. No dreams of fairyland have thwarted this man in his pursuit and attainment. Living and writing well, the poem claims and demonstrates, is the best vengeance against mocking voice, whether human or superhuman. If the paralyzed dreamer of the "Faeryland" poem is a worldly "failure", and the old man of "What Then?" is a worldly success, that success, however real, is recognized as less than all: the voice of the other world sings on.

If "What Then?" seems to suggest that all meaningless planned events of life are inadequate, "Beautiful Lofty Thing" reverses the proposition to conclude that events trivial in themselves prove ultimately significant. And each of those events, unplanned, Yeats asserts, is necessarily unique: "a thing never known again." The feeling of helpless pathos before time's fatal obliterating impact that all men share, the irrevocable blow which cancels out all persons and things—the poem locates in the experience of individual life's meaning. Discovering the beautiful, lofty thing—what James Joyce called an epiphany—is for the old poet of supreme importance. The significant act, the defiant necessary gesture which marks the individual as unique, is precisely the thing that the artist must capture if he is to create work of real value: That value can give the authentic poets like Yeats the never-failing feeling of joy.

"An Acre of Grass" is a work of a septuagenarian sage. Though there is apparently no fears-bitterness in this poem, the characteristic vision of fear, desolation and disillusionment, attending upon old age cast a dark shadow of despondency. A prayer for a creative frenzy befitting legendary characters and figures is swiftly followed by a sad realization of the limitations that the fading years have brought in.

"An Acre of Grass" presents a graphic vignette of old age. With deft but one-touch brush-strokes, Yeats paints wonderful words and expressions such as "acre of grass", "midnight", "old house", "nothing stirs but a mouse", and "old man's eagle mind" which imply various aspects which are generally associated with an old man's life. (Yeats: 1955:346-347).

The old man is also tempted by the "quiet" of the house surrounding himself with companionship, tenderness and love. By emphasizing the need of only "an acre of grass /For air and exercise" (346) and probably for a burial place Yeats points out the limited necessities and relative self-sufficiency of old age. But the subsequent picture of "midnight", "old house" and stirring of only a mouse contrapuntally suggests all-pervasive desolation, an outcast state and social stigmata that accompany the advancing years. The juxtaposition of these positive and negative aspects of ageing leads the poet to realize the futility of trying to attain truth by physical means. For, he knows that with the onset of life's winter, the "strength of body goes" (Yeats: 1955:346). This realization in turn, prompts the poet to pray for an "old man's frenzy" (347). It is a mind inspired by "frenzy", for only such frenzy "can make the truth known"(346) by enabling one to "remake" the "self" and the "soul". The hero, Yeats wrote in *A Vision*, is "wrought

to a frenzy of desire for truth of self" (1962:127). Yeats is also in accord with the Nietzschean doctrine of "frenzy":

If there is to be art, if there is to be any aesthetic doing and seeing, one physiological condition is indispensable: frenzy... All kinds of frenzy... above all, the frenzy of sexual excitement, this most ancient and original form of frenzy... what is essential in such frenzy is the feeling of increased strength and fullness... a man in this state transforms things until they mirror his power until they are reflections of his perfection. This having to transform into perfection is—art. (Nietzsche: 1889: 463, 563)

The poet's goal here is the dizzy heights of mental acumen attained by such legendary characters as Shakespeare's Timon and Lear or word painters like Blake and picture-scribe Michael Angelo. The "frenzy" referred to in the poem made Timon such a terrible figure in his adversity, pouring his scorn and malediction on the rotten society. It was the frenzy of old Lear, who naked and unprotected set the fury of wind and storm and all the might of the wicked world at defiance. Blake assaulted the citadel of truth and kept on hammering at its wall till mysteries stood open before his frenzied vision. The last old man on whom the old poet desires to model his life is Michael Angelo, 'the old man with eagle mind' whose gaze could pierce the cloud to arrive at the mysteries of heaven. These men through sufferings and meditations had experienced the epiphany of self-knowledge. Like these men, the poet wants to have the passionate and indomitable will to cram his days with activity, in the absence of which the life of the old man is worthless. He wants to have the raging, ravaging mind, which can penetrate into the desolation of reality and give him a full taste of life's experience at the same time.

Yeats's attitude to ageing may recall C. G. Jung's "The Stages of Life" in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*:

The afternoon of human life must also have significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life's morning, for the ageing person it is a duty and a necessity to give serious attention to himself. After having lavished its light upon the world, the sun withdraws its rays in order to illumine itself. (1962:125)

"Are You content?", a unique poem published during the life time of the poet, invokes the judgment of his dead ancestors to let him know if his work, as a poet and dreamer, can come up to their standard of excellence. He has become old and stands at the fag end of life, so he wants to know if the work done by him can entitle him to a place in the rank of good, worthy men. Can he claim wisdom in his old age? So far as the estimation of his work is concerned, he is not content. The poet does not want only to rest on his oars, but "to strive and thrive". He reminds us of Tennyson's Ulysses:

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, and not to shine in use
As though to breath were life.

(Fifteen poets: 1999:409)

There is no standing for him even in the company of god. He must be still moving.

"Imitated from the Japanese" reiterates Yeats's old-age "astonishing" discovery of tragic joy and shows us the dance image, which the poet associates with experiences of insight. Yeats's dancers

move always in a self-contained coherent universe. They experience an incommunicable sense of order. "Sweet Dancer", another poem, also illustrates this sort of dance experience. Though the dancing girl seems "crazy", out of touch with reality, she has, in fact, Yeats argues, come at last to sweetness, to the discovery of artistic form and through that discovery to ecstasy.

"The Circus Animals Desertion" is another poem, which the poet had written from the perspective of an old man. Fallen from the zenith of a fertile creativity, Yeats gropes in the nadir of poetic sterility in search of a suitable theme for a poem, new. But alas! the muses have left him to his lot. Now, what he can stumble on, are only the old themes, which he had dwelt upon in the past. Poems and figures of his former years well up on his mind and he equates them with his circus animals. First comes up the sea-rider Oisín from his "The Wanderings of Oisín". Then appear the Fool and the Blind man, two characters from "On Baile's Strand" along with the Irish Achilles—Cuchulain. Countess Cathleen next comes into the view and the poet is literally swarmed by them all.

For the artist, Yeats claims, the problem of construction often becomes more exciting than life itself. In the last stanza, Yeats turns once more to an examination of the "masterful images" that he had made. That they existed is obvious, but he searches for their source. And he concludes, as he had a character in his youthful story "Rosa Alchemica", "that all life proceeds out of corruption". "The foul rag-and-bone shop of heart" (1955:398) —what in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" had been "that most fecund ditch of all" (267) or in "Byzantium" the rejected "fury and mire of human veins"(280)—is at the foot of the ladder of artistic creation. The ladder roots always necessarily in a

place where rags are sold, and bones of man's heart are found. That heart's progress becomes the poem in fact.

"Under Ben Bulbin" measures the change in the man. He no longer veils his certainty in hesitant terms but asserts it article by article defiantly. He believes in the immortals, and in man's two eternities of race and soul, and the integrity that is achieved only by battle. He believes that we live on earth to realize, through eternities, "profane perfection of mankind", and that art translates the vision of celestial perfection into a palpable model for embodied soul. He believes that our civilization is running down, and calls on Irish poets and artists to recreate it from the most elements of their life.

Sing the peasantry, and then
Hard-riding country gentlemen,
The holiness of monks, and after
Porter-drinkers' randy laughter.

(Yeats: 1955:400)

And then—his last words are spoken:

No marble, no conventional phrase;
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words are cut:

*Cast a cold eye
On life, on death
Horseman, pass by!*

(Yeats: 1955:401)

Chapter VII

Conclusion

A feeling for the form of life, for the graciousness of life, for the dignity of life, for the moving limbs of life, for the nobleness of life, for all that cannot be written in codes, has always been greatest among the gifts of literature to mankind.

(W. B. Yeats: *Explorations*: 1966:162)

If we trace Yeats's poetical career, we can find that the more he matures the better his poetic output. Yeats, as he grows old, acts with growing assurance and spontaneity the difficult part of himself. The acting in the end, having gone through the stages of lyrical mime and heroic and satirical tirade, becomes almost naturalistic. We should turn to Yeats for his wisdom and sage-like vision towards life in his maturer years.

"The last romantic", Yeats was one who successfully bridged the gulf between the nineteenth century romantic literature and the modernist literature of the twentieth century, which was produced in direct and deliberate opposition to that tradition. Chronologically speaking, Yeats was connected with the last generation of the romantic poets, the members of the Rhymer's Club and of the Pre-Raphaelites. It is evident that his early writings are coloured by these associations. From these poets he obviously learnt the necessity of form and pattern of art and craft, the devotion to ideal beauty, the absence of which may doom an artist to a life of loneliness in the materialistic society. He, of

course, dwelt on the basic limitations of the art for art's sake cult. His own early poetry has all the characteristic flavour of romantic verse. Like the mythical Bedivere, the last Knight of the Arthurian 'Round Table,' Yeats was the last flower of romantic bloom.

Fed on the poetic diet of Spenser, Blake, Shelley and Keats- the young Yeats grew up to be a disciple of Rossetti and Morris. His poetry, however, shares some common characteristics with his romantic predecessors. When we think of the romantic poetry as an outpouring of the poet's own mind, in Yeats the man and the poet become one. As Yeats himself writes:

A poet writes always of his personal life, in his finest work out of his tragedy, what ever it be, remorse, lost love or mere loneliness (1962:509).

Like Blake before him, Yeats too believed that the poet's experience is closely allied to the mystic's and that it may give to the poet a direct access to a vision of transcendental world. Lacking faith in both science and organized religion, he was in search of an esoteric system that would unveil the inscrutable mysteries of the universe and establish communion with a higher reality.

The early work of Yeats contains a number of romantic love poems. In poems such as "He Reproves the Curlew," Yeats expresses a vain longing for his beloved. Poems like 'He Tells of the Perfect Beauty' celebrate the ivory complexion and the divine beauty. Similarly, in 'When You are Old', the poet pictures an aged Maud Gonne, deprived of her youthful charm and grace and assures her of unflagging loyalty. In passing, it may be noted that a streak of melancholy runs through

Yeats's poetic works. Showing his romantic lineage, Yeats remained an escapist throughout his early poetic career. A tendency to escape into the land of romance or peaceful bosom of nature haunts the poet. His early poems rarely make us see anything; we can weave our own daydreams round them. Yeats followed the romantics in theory as well as in practice. Following Wordsworth he too stressed the spontaneous nature of poetic tradition.

But as Yeats advanced in years he became critical of the theory and practice of the romantics of the nineties. In course of a long life he also assimilated the changing trends brought in by the so-called 'Age of interrogation'. Thus, with his advancing years Yeats shore off some of the characteristics of the romantics.

As Yeats said in "Certain Noble Plays of Japan":

I hope to have attained the distance from life which can make credible strange events... (1961:221)

In "Discoveries", the poet elucidates the need of having a vision:

I had set out on life with the thought of putting my very self into poetry, and had understood this as a representation of my own vision and attempt to cut away the non-essential, but as I imagined the vision outside myself my imagination became full of decorative landscape and of still life. (1961:271)

In his comprehensive vision, Yeats finds solace against the quagmire of temporal life at the very fag end of his career. He realized that the

more worn out the clothes of an aged man, the more happy should his soul feel. The older a man, the greater the spiritual exaltation.

In his later poetry Yeats cultivates subtler, more varied, and more dramatically balanced cadences. His vocabulary is enlarged, metaphors are fresh and taken from a vastly wider range of references. The imaginative structure is both more firmly wrought and more spontaneous in effect. His nostalgia takes another direction. If he still longs to escape from the world of reality, it is no longer into an "other world" of dreams. He wants to be gathered into the "artifice of eternity". It is there, "sages standing in God's holy fire" that the soul of the old man would "clap its hand and sing, and louder sing." His later poetry is elevated without pomposity, refined without mawkishness, and intense without violence. It is his later poetry that he works out best verse under the pressure of the conflicting tension and attains a panoramic vision.

In *The Tower*, Yeats reaches the richest texture of poetry. He "had devoted his life to poetry to the Celtic Twilight, but now life had become so exciting that poetry must devote to it" (Jeffares: 1961: 42). As a result, there are contradictions and a strain of bitterness. Bitterness is strange, for he was a happy fortunate sage at this time. F. R. Leavis says that in *The Tower* Yeats achieves a kind of ripeness in disillusionment. He turns with a pang from the sensual magic of the world, and is drawn positively towards the "monuments of unageing intellect." "An aged man is but a paltry thing" (Yeats: 1955:217). This is the voice of one who knows intellectual passion. He does not deceive himself about what he has lost. His regrets help him to find out an antidote. He has achieved a delicate sincerity. The dreams of Byzantium are his compensation for the 'paradise lost'.

The vision that he gains in exploring themes and techniques in *The Tower* partly germinates from previous poetry. As Richard Ellman observes:

From the boy who dreamed of controlling the world by a magician's wand to the old man who cried out "I make the truth", he laboured to state with a growing vision which he developed in adolescence (1960:29):

I must lie where all the ladder start
In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.

(1955:392)

WORKS CITED

- Yeats, W.B. *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan Rpt., 1966.
- ... *A Vision*. London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1962.
- ... *Collected Poems*. Kolkata: Rupa and Co., 1993
- ... *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*. London: Macmillan, 1955.
- ... *Essays*. London: Macmillan, 1924.
- ... *Essays and Introductions*. London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, Rpt., 1961.
- ... *Explorations*. London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1962.
- ... *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland*. New York: Macmillan, 1973.
- ... Introduction. *Gitanjali*. London: Macmillan, 1913.
- ... *Letters on Poetry to Dorothy Wellesley*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- ... *Memoirs*. Ed. Donoghue, D. London: Macmillan, 1972.
- ... *Mythologies*. London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, Rpt, 1970.
- ... *The Celtic Twilight*. Great Britain: Colin Smythe Limited, 1981.
- ... *The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats*. Ed. John Kelley.

- Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- ... *The Letters of W.B. Yeats*. Ed. Allan Wade. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.
- The Senate Speeches of W.B. Yeats*. Ed. D.R. Pearce. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- The Variorum Edition of The Poems of W.B. Yeats*. Ed. P. Allt and R.K. Alspraach. New York: Macmillan, 1957.
- The Words Upon the Window Pane*. Dublin: Caula Press, 1934.
- Uncollected Prose*. Ed. Jhon P. Frayne. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.
- Archer, William, "William Butler Yeats," *Poets of the Younger Generation*, London: Lane, 1902.
- Auden, W.H. "The Public v. the Late Mr. W. B. Yeats" (1939). Pritchard, W. (ed.). *W.B. Yeats: A Critical Anthology*. London: Penguin, 1972.
- Baker, Suzanne. *Binarisms and Duality: Magic Realism and Postcolonialism*. Center For Research in Culture and Communication, Murdoch University: The Culture and Communication Literature Reading Room, 1997.
- Baring, M. *Mr. Yeats's Poems, Punch and Judy and Other Essays*, London: Heinemann, 1924.
- Barlow, Adrian. *Post Colonial Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Bax, Clifford, ed. *Florence Farr, Bernard Shaw and W.B. Yeats*, Dublin: Cuala Press, 1941.
- Bax, Sir Arnold. *Farewell My Youth*. London: Longmans, Green, 1943.

- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Blackmur, R.P., 'The Later Poetry of W.B. Yeats' (1936), Rpt. in *Language as Gesture: Essays in Poetry*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954.
- Blavatsky, H.P *Iris Unveiled* . Vol 2. New York: J.W. Bouton, 1877.
- ...*The Secret Doctrine*. Vol 1. London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1908.
- Bloom, Harold. *Yeats*. New York: Oxford University Press, 197
- Bose, Abinash Chandra. *William Butler Yeats, Three Mystic Poets*, Kolhapur (India): School & College Book Stall, 1945.
- Bowra, C.M. *William Butler Yeats: The Heritage of Symbolism*. London: Macmillan, 1943.
- Boyd, E.A. *William Butler Yeats. Contemporary Drama of Ireland* Boston: Little, Brown, 1917.
- Bornstein, G. *Yeats and Shelley*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970....*Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976.
- Bowra, C.M. *The Heritage of Symbolism*. London: Macmillan, 1943.
- Seward, B. *The Symbolic Rose*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Bradford, C. *Yeats at Work*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965.
- Bradbrook, M.C., "Songs of Experience," *Scrutiny*, II, 1 (June, 1933).
- Brenner, Rica, "William Butler Yeats," *Poets of Our Time*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1941.
- Brooks, C. *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939, Rpt 1965)
- and Warren, R.P. *Understanding Poetry*. London: Holt, 1938.

- Bullough, Geoffrey. *W.B. Yeats and Walter De La Mare, The Trend of Modern Poetry*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd. 1934.
- Chatterjee, B. *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*. London: Orient Longman, 1962.
- Church, Richard. *The Later Yeats, Eight for Immortality*. London: Dent, 1941.
- Clarke, Austin. *The Celtic Twilight and the Nineties*. Chester Springs: Dufour Editions, 1969.
- Clark, D. *W.B. Yeats and the Theatre of Desolate Reality*. London: Dolmen Press, 1965.
- *Yeats Songs and Choruses*. London: Colin Smythe, 1983.
- --- "The Three Deaths of Yeats", in *Yeats: An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies*. Vol. V, 1987
- Drake, Nicolas. *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*. London: Penguin Books, 1991
- Daiches, D. *Poetry in the Modern World: a Study of Poetry in England Between 1900 and 1839*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1940.
- Day, Lewis C. *A Note on W.B. Yeats and the Aristocratic Tradition, Scattering Branches*. ed. Stephen Gwynn. New York: Macmillan, 1940.
- Dodds, E.R., ed. *Journal and Letters of Stephen MacKenna*, New York: Morrow, [1936], passim.
- Donoghue, D. *The Third Voice: Modern British and American Verse Drama*. UK: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Drew, Elizabeth, and Sweeney, John L. *W.B. Yeats, Directions in Modern Poetry*, New York: Norton, 1940.
- Edel, L. *The New Republic*, 1955.
- Ellis-Fermor, Una. *W.B. Yeats, The Irish Dramatic Movement*. London, Methuen, 1939.
- Ellman, Richard. *Yeats: The Man and The Masks*, London. Faber & Faber, 1960.

Engelberg, E. *The Vast Design: Patterns in W.B. Yeats's Aesthetic*. Toronto: Toronto University press, 1964.

Ervine, St. John R. *W.B. Yeats: Some Impressions of My Elders*. New York: Macmillan, 1922.

Evans, B. Ifor. *W.B. Yeats and the Continuance of Tradition, tradition and Romanticism*, London: Methuen, 1940.

Faulkner, Peter. *Yeats*, Philadelphia :Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987.

Fifteen Poets. Chennai: Oxford University Press, Rpt. 1999.

Figgis, Darrell. *Mr. W.B. Yeats's Poetry, Studies and Appreciations*, London: 1912.

Flannery, Mary Catherine. *Yeats and Magic: The Earlier Works*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978.

Fletcher, I. *Review of Yeats at Songs and Choruses in Yeats Annual no.3*. London: Macmillan, 1985.

Foster, D. *W.B. Yeats's Poetry*: London: Macmillan, 1998.

Freyer, Grattan. *The Politics of W.B Yeats: Politics and Letters*:1,1(Summer,1947).

Gradner, Helen(ed), *The Metaphysical Poets*. London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Griffin, Gerald, "William Butler Yeats", *The Wild Geese*, London, Jarrolds

Hackett, F, "William Butler Yeats", *The Invisible Censor*, New York,Huebsch, 1921.

Hall , James and Steinmann, Martin, *The Permanence of Yeats*, Collier Books, New York, 1961.

- Harper, George Mills (Ed.). *Yeats and the Occult*. Canada: Macmillan of Canada, 1975.
- Henn, T.R. *The Lonely Tower. Studies in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats*. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1966.
- ... *W. B. Yeats and the Poetry of War*, 'From the Proceedings of the British Academy'. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Handley, Graham. *W.B. Yeats: Selected Poetry*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992.
- Hill, G. "The Conscious Mind's Intelligible Structure": A Debate. Vol. 9 No. 4 and Vol. 10 No. 1: Autumn/ Winter 1971-2.
- Hicks, Granville, *Figures of Transition*, New York: Macmillan. 1939.
- Higgins, F.R. *Yeats and Poetic Drama in Ireland, The Irish Theatre*. ed. Lennox Robinson. London: Macmillan, 1940.
- Hone, Joseph. *W.B. Yeats, 1965-1939*. London: Macmillan, 1942.
- Henn, T.R.: *The Lonely Tower*. London :Methuen, 1950.
- Hough, Graham. *The Mystery Religion of W.B. Yeats*. New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1984.
- Jain Manju. *T.S.Eliot: Selected Poems*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, Rpt, 1996.
- Jackson, Holbrook. *The Discovery of the Celt, The Eighteen Ninetics*. New York: Knopf, 1922.
- Jackson, Schuyler *William Butler Yeats*. London: Mercury, XI, 64(February, 1925).
- Jameson, Grace E., "Mysticism in A E and in Yeats in Relation to Oriental and American Thought," Ohio State University Abstracts of Doctors' Dissertations, No.9 (1932).

Jarrell, Randall, "The Development of Yeats's Sense of reality," *Southern Review*, VII, 3 (Winter, 1942).

Jeffares, A. Norman, *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*, London, Edward Arnold Ltd, 1961.

Jeffares, A. Norman. *A New Commentary on the Poems of W. B. Yeats*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1984.

... *W. B. Yeats: Man and Poet*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.

... *W. B. Yeats: The Critical Heritage*. London: Reutledge, Kegan and Paul, 1977.

... *Yeats: Selected Criticism*. London: Macmillan, 1964.

Jung, C.G. *Modern man in Search of a Soul*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.

Kenner, H. *A Colder Eye: The Modern Irish Writers*. London: Penguin, 1984.

Kermode, F. *Romantic Image*. London: Collins, 1976.

---*The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Kinahan, Frank. *Yeats, Floklore and Occultism: Contexts of the Early Work and Thought*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988.

Knights, L.C. *Poetry and Social Criticism: The Work of W.B. Yeats*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1946.

Leavis, F.R. *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1963.

Lucas, F.L. *Sense and Sensibility, Authors Dead and Living*. New York: Macmillan, 1926.

Mabbott, T.O. Yeats's "The Wild Swans at Coole." *Explicator*, III,1 (October, 1944).

MacNeice, Louis: *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*. London: Oxford University Press, 1941.

Mann, Thomas. *Death in Venice*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964

Martin, Graham. *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Maxwell, D.E.S. and Bushrui, S.B. Ed. *W. B. Yeats: 1865-1939: Centenary Essays*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Maugham Somerset, *The Moon and sixpence*. London: Years- 1944.

McGrath, John, "W.B. Yeats and Ireland," *Westminster Review*, CLXXVI,1 (July, 1911)

Menon, V.K. Narayana, *The Development of William Butler Yeats*, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1942.

Muir, E. *The Present Age From 1914*: The Cresset Press, 1939.

Murphy, William. M. *The Yeats Family and the Pollexfens of Sligo*. Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1971.

Murphy, F. *Yeats's Early Poetry: The Quest for Reconciliation*. Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1975.

Murphy, W. *The Yeats Family and the Pollexfens of Sligo*. London: Dolmen Press, 1971.

Murphy, Gwendolen. *The Modern Poet*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, [1938].

Nietzsche, F. *The Protable Nietzsche*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1981

--- *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. New York: Modern Library, 1954.

Nietzsche. *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*. Ed. W.H. Wright. 1927. Rpt. new York: Modern Library, 1954.

O'Connor, F. *The Irish Theatre*. London: Macmillan, 1939.

O'Connell, J.P., *Sailing to Byzantium* (Harvard Honors Theses in English, No. 11), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939.

Parkinson, T. W.B. *Yeats: The Later Poetry* (1964), Rpt. *W.B. Yeats Self Critic and W.B. Yeats: The later Poetry*. California: University of California Press, 1971

Peacock, Ronald. *Yeats, The Poet in the Theatre*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946.

Pritchard, W. (ed.) *W.B. Yeats: A Critical Anthology*. London: Penguin, 1972.

Putzel, S. *Reconstructing Yeats: The Secret Rose and The Wind Among the Reeds*. London: Gill and Macmillan, 1986.

Raine, Kathleen. "Introduction." *The Celtic Twilight*. W.B. Yeats. Great Britain: Colin Smythe Limited, 1981. 7-29.

Rajan, B. *W.B. Yeats- A Critical Introduction*, London, Hutchinson University Library, 1965.

Rosenthal, L.M. *The Modern Poets: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Rudd, M. *Divided Image: A Study Of William Blake and W.B. Yeats*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953.

Said, Edward. "Yeats and Decolonization." *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Random, 1994.

...*Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976.

Schopenhauer. *The World as Will and Representation*. New York: Dover, 1974.

Seward, B. *The Symbolic Rose*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.

Sidnell, M.J. *Yeats's Poetry and Poetics*. London: Macmillian Press, Ltd, 1996.

Sitwell, Edith. *William Butler Yeats, Aspects of Modern Poetry*. London: Duckworth, 1934.

Slemon, Stephen. "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse" *Canadian Literature* -116, 1988.

Smith, A.J.M. *A Poet Young and Old-W.B. Yeats*. University of Toronto Quarterly, VIII, 3 (April, 1939).

Spencer, Theodore. *The Later Poetry of W.B. Yeats, Literary Opinion in America*, ed. Morton Dauwen Zabel. New York: Harper, 1938.

Spender, S. *The Destructive Element: A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs*: Jonathan Cape, 1935.

Stallworthy, J. *Between the Lines: Yeats' Poetry in the Making*. London: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Stauffer, D. *The Golden Nightingale: Essays on Some Principles of Poetry in the Lyrics of William Butler Yeats*. London: Macmillan, 1949.

Stock, A.G. *W.B. Yeats: His Poetry and Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.

Tagore, Rabinadrnanath. *Rabindra Rachanabali*. Kolkata: Bishwabharati, 2003.

... Gitanjali. New Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd, 1983.

Thomson, W.I. *The Imagination of An Insurrection*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

- Thuente, Mary Helen. *W.B. Yeats and Irish Folklore*. New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1981.
- Tynan, Katharine. *The Middle Years (1892-1911)*. London: Canstable, 1916.
- Ulingford, E., *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism*. London: Macmillan, 1981.
- (ed.), *Yeats: Poems, 1919-1935*. London: Macmillan, 1984.
- Underhill, Evelyn. *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*. London: Methuen, 1960
- Unterecker, J.A. *Collection of Critical Essays*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1963.
- ... *A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1969.
- Webster, S. Brenda. *Yeats: A Psychoanalytic Study*. London: Macmillan, 1974.
- Willams, Charles, "W.B.Yeats", *Poetry at present* Oxford , Clarendon, 1930.
- Wilson, Edmund *Axel's Castle*. Collins:Fontana, 1959.
- Wilson, F.A.C. *W.B. Yeats and Tradition*. London: Victor Gollanes Ltd., 1958.
- Winters, Y. *The Poetry Of W.B.Yeats*. Denver: Colorado, 1960.
- Witt, Marion, W. *William Butler Yeats, English Institute Essays*. New York: Colombia Univesity Press, 1947.
- Wrenn, C.L. *W.B. Yeats: A Literary Study*. London : Murby, 1920.

Periodicals and Journals

- Caswell, W.B. Yeats's Odd Swan at Coole. *Eire Ireland*. 4,1969.

Fox, L.Linda. Nine and Fifty as Symbol in Yeats's 'The Wild Swans at Coole'. *English Language Notes*. Vol.26(1),1988.

Jackaman, R. Black and White: The Balanced View in Yeats's Poets's Poetry. *Ariel*. Vol.9(4),1978.

Puhvel, Martin. Yeats's The Wild Swans at Coole . *The Explicator*.45, Fall, 1986.

Rhys, Ernest. W. B. Yeats: Early Recollections. *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1935.

Shapiro, Karl. Prosody as the Meaning. *Poetry* 73, March 1949.

Zwerdling, A. W. B. Yeats: Variations on the Visionary Quest. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 1960.

Internate Source

Handler, Richard. Nationalism and the Politics of Culture.

www.nationalismproject.org/Ireland/handler.html.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Yeats, W.B. *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan and co. Ltd., 1956.
- ... *A Vision* London: Macmillan, 1937.
- ... *Collected Poems*. London: Macmillan, 1958.
- ... *Essays and Introductions*. London: Macmillan, 1961.
- ... *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. London: Walter Scott, 1988.
- ... *Ganconagh, John Sherman and Dhoya*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1891.
- ... *Ideas of Good and Evil*. London: H. Bullen, 1903.
- ... *Irish Fairy Tales*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1892.
- ... *Letters to the New Island*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934.
- ... *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, Ed. Jhon Kelly. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- ... *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*. Ed. Allan Wade. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.

Secondary Sources

- Adams, Joseph. *Yeats and the Makes of Syntax*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

Albright, Daniel. *The Myth against Myth*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Armstrong, E.A. *The Folklore of Birds*. London: Macmillan, 1958.

Bachchan, H.R. *W. B. Yeats and Occultism*. Delhi: OPU, 1955.

Bennett, Richard. *The Black and Tans*. London: Methuen, 1959.

Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Stage Publications, 1995.

Bjersby, Birgit. *The Cuchulain Legend in the Works of W. B. Yeats*. Dublin: Gill, 1972.

Bowra, C.M. *The Heritage of Symbolism*. London: Macmillan, 1947.

Boyd, E.A. *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*. London: Maunsel, 1916.

... *Portraits: Real and Imaginary*. London: Cape, 1925.

Carroll, Denis. *Religion in Ireland: Past, Present and feature*. Dublin: Colombia Press, 1999.

Chapman, W.K. *W.B. Yeats and English Renaissance Literature*. London: Macmillan, 1991.

Cronin, Sean. *Irish Nationalism: A History of its Roots and Ideology*. Dublin: Academy Press, 1980.

Cullingford, E. *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism*. New York: New York University Press, 1981.

Curran, C.P. *Under the Receding Wave*. London: Macmillan, 1970.

Curtin, Jeremiah. *Myths and Folklore of Ireland*. New York: British Book Center, 1975.

Davis, Thomas. *National and Other Poems*. Dublin: Gill, 1907.

- Deane, Seamus. *Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature, 1880-1980*. London: Faber, 1985.
- ... Introduction. *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*. By Eagleton T,F. Jameson and Edward W. Said. London: University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, 1990.
- Donoghue, D. Ed. *Selected Essays of R.P.Blackmur*. New York: Ecco Press, 1985.
- ... *The Integrity of Yeats*. Cork: The Mercier Press, 1964.
- Drake, Nicholas. *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Eagleton, T.,F. Jameson, E.W. Said. *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*. London: University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, 1990.
- Eglinton, J.A *Memoir of AE*. London: Macmillan, 1937.
- Ellis Fermor, U.M . *The Irish Dramatic Movement*. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1964.
- Ellmann, Richard. *Eminent Domain: Yeats among Wilde, Joyce, Pound, Eliot and Auden*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Finneran, R.J. Ed. *Anglo-Irish Literature: A Review of Research*. New York: The Modern Language Associations of America, 1976.
- Flower, Robin. *The Irish Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- Gogarty, Oliver. St. John. *W.B. Yeats: A Memoir*. Dublin: Duffy, 1963.
- Gregory, Augusta. *Coole*. Dublin: Cuala Press, 1931.

- ... Journals. Ed. *Lennox Robinson*. London: Putnam, 1946.
- ... *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*. London: Murray, 1902.
- ... *Gods and Fighting Men*. London: Murray, 1904.
- ... *Ideals in Ireland*. Ed. London: Fisher Unwin, 1901.
- ... *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*. London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1920.
- Gwynn, Stephen. *Irish Literature and Drama*. London: Nelson, 1936.
- ... Ed. *Scattering Branches*. London: Macmillan, 1940.
- Hone, Joseph. *J.B. Yeats, Letters to this son W.B. Yeats and others*. London: Faber and Faber, 1944.
- Howarth, H. *The Irish Writers, 1880-1940*. London: Macmillan, 1948.
- Kee, Robert. *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism*. London: Penguin, 2000.
- Keogh, Dermot. *Twentieth Century Ireland: Nation and State*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1994.
- Knights, L.C. *Explorations: Poetry and Social Criticism*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1946.
- MacDonagh, T. *Literature in Ireland*. Dublin, 1916.
- MacManus, Francis. Ed. *The Yeats We Know*. Cork: The Mercier Press, 1965.
- MacNeice, Louis. *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Man, Paul de. *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

- Masefield, J. *Some Memories of W.B. Yeats*. Dublin Cuala Press, 1940.
- Mcleod, Jhon. *Beginning Post Colonialism*. New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Malchiori, G. *The Whole Mystery of Art*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Mikhail, E.H. *W. B. Yeats: Interviews and Recollections*. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- Murray, Patrick. *Oracles of God: The Roman Catholic Church and Irish Politics, 1922-37*. Dublin University College Dublin Press, 2000.
- O' Grady, Standish. *History of Ireland, the Heroic Period*. London: Sampson Low, Searle, Marston and Rivington, 1878.
- Orr, Leonard. Ed. *Yeats and Post Modernism*. Synacuse University Press, 1991.
- Perkins, David. *A History of Modern Poetry: From 1890s to the High Modernist Mode*. London: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Reid, Forest. *W.B. Yeats: A Critical Study*. London: Secker, 1915.
- Rumpf. E. and A.c. Hepburn. *Nationalism and Socialism in Twentieth Century Ireland*. Liverpool University Press, 1977.
- Seiden, I.M. *William Bulter Yeats: The Poet as Mythmaker*. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1975.
- Seymour, St. Jhon. D. *Anglo Irish Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929.
- ... *Irish Witchcraft and Demonology*. Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1913.

Skelton, R. and Saddlemyer, A. *The World of W.B. Yeats: Essays in perspective*. Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1965.

Strong, L.A.G. *W.B. Yeats: Personal Remarks*. London: Peter Nevill, 1953.

Ure, Peter. *Towards a Mythology: Studies in the Poetry of W.B. Yeats*. London: Macmillan, 1958.

Watson, G.J. *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival: Synge, Yeats, Joyce and O'Casey*. London: Croom Helm, 1979.

Wilson, E. *Axel's Castle*. London: Scribners, 1931.

Wilson, F.A.C. *Yeats's Iconography*. London : Victor Gollanes Ltd., 1960.

Yeats, J.B. *Early Memories: Some Chapters of Autobiography*. Dublin: Cuala Press, 1923.

... *Essays Irish and American*. Dublin: Talbot Press, 1918.

... *Letters to his son W.B. Yeats and Others*. London: Faber and Faber, 1944.

Articles and Journals

Adorno, T.W. *Lyric Poetry and Society*. Telso 20, 1974.

Canny Nicholas. *The Formation of the Irish Mind: Religion, Politics and Gaelic Irish Literature, 1580-1750. Past and Present*. May no. 95., 1987,91-116.

Dutt-Roy, S.Labour. *Truth and Beauth in Yeats's Autobiographical Poems*. Journal of Modern Literature. Vol 17 (1) , Summer 1990.

Levine, H.J. *Freeing the Swana: Yeats's Exorcism of Maud Gonne*. English Literaray History 48, 1981.

Macgreevy, T. *W.B. Yeats's : A Generation Later* . University Review, Dublin 111. no. 8, 1966, 3-14.

O'Connor, Frank. *Yeats's Phantasmagoria. Two Friends: Yeats and A.E.* Yale Review XXIX, no.1, Sept. 1939,60-88.

Radcliffe, Evan. *Yeats and the Quest for unity*. Colby Library Quarterly. Vol 21. 1985.

Renza, L.A. *Veto of the Imagination*. New Litarary History, IX:I. Autumn 1977.

Rodgers, W.R. *W.B. Yeats: Irish Literary Portraits*. London. B.B.C. 1977.1-21.

Vance, Thomas. *Dante, Yeats, and Unityj of Being*. Shenandoah, XVII, 1965.

Inernate Sources

<http://www.kie.berkeley.edu/people/foley/thesis.html>.

<http://www.flag.blackened.net/revolt/cc1913/flag.html>

http://www.flag.blackened.net/revolt/ws/ws50_nation.html

<http://www.Cyberpat.com/shirlsite/essays/irish.html>

<http://amol.org.au/craft/omjournal/volume2/cooke.pdf>

<http://iselandnow.com/ulstercycle>.

http://indigo.ie/~ijac/sound_eye_index.html.

