# YEATS'S SYMBOLIC SYMPHONY

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Abstract of

Yeats's Symbolic Symphony

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This thesis is an attempt at understanding the poetry of William Butler Yeats. It is not only concerned with the understanding of individual poems but also concerned with understanding them as parts of a highly integrated and purposive whole, a whole which I have called Yeats's Symbolic Symphony.

The approach that I have taken in trying to reach this understanding has relied heavily upon traditional wisdom as embodied in myth, both Eastern and Western, and upon the findings of modern analytical psychology as interpreted broadly by Carl Jung and his school, whose findings have also been based upon traditional wisdom as well as upon empirical observation.

The reasons for this type of approach towards an understanding of Yeats's poetry are straightforward: Yeats was a lover of tradition and took great pains in order to discover the meaning of the symbolic language of traditional poets, mystics, and occultists, not only by reading these sources but also by practising magic and by participating in spiritualistic seances; it is also evident that his findings from this search into traditional wisdom--which were later propounded as the doctrines of the Mask, Anima Mundi, etc.--correspond with certain theories of Carl Jung.

Chapters I and II, therefore, attempt to draw together what both tradition and Jungian psychology had to say about certain symbols, especially those of the sun and moon as representing the opposing

sides of the personality, and those representing the path and goal of the personality's quest for self-realization. The long Chapter III (divided into four parts), attempts to use these traditional and psychological insights as lenses through which to make a continuous interpretation of Yeats's poetry from its beginning to its close.

Broadly speaking, the result of this study has been a revelation to me, but, as after most revelations, has left me, the beholder, in the paradoxical position of being, at the same time, both happy and unhappy, both enlightened and bewildered. I both wish to exult at the magic of the mastery that Yeats has displayed over his form--both of the individual poem and of the whole symphony--and to lament the informing principle which has shaped the development and determined the goal or end of that form.

Speaking in a less personal manner, I believe this thesis has shed new light upon an aspect of Yeats's poetry which has, up until now, remained in the darkness. I am referring to what, throughout his poetry, is the strong thread of his anti-Christian bias. It is not merely that he goes out of his way to belittle Christian saints and the Christian ideal in the person of Christ, and to mock at doctrines and practices sacred to Christians, with a perverse inflexibility throughout his career; but it is also the case, as far as I can judge, that he purposely twists and perverts the truth of tradition, both pagan and Christian, Eastern and Western, in order to do so. In this regard, I think it is futile to attempt, as Virginia Moore has tried to do in The Unicorn, to range Yeats on the side of the Christian apologists let alone trying to represent him as a Christian.

Finally, I think the thesis has offered exegeses of many of the individual poems the true meaning of which has not before been clearly understood because they have not properly been seen in the context of his whole poetic output nor in the context of tradition and the theories of Jung's psychology.

TABLE OF CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | THE MYTH . . . . . | 1 |
| II. | THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE MYTH . . . . . | 14 |
| III. | THE MYTH AND THE POETRY OF YEATS . . . . . | 33 |
| | Part I: From *The Wanderings of Oisin* to *The Green Helmet* . . . . . | 33 |
| | Part II: From *The Green Helmet* to *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* . . . . . | 66 |
| | Part III: From *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* to *The Winding Stair* . . . . . | 95 |
| | Part IV: From *The Winding Stair* to *Last Poems* . . . . . | 123 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | . . . . . | 159 |

# CHAPTER I

## The Myth

## Chapter I

### The Myth

In A Vision, W.B. Yeats conjectures that "some will ask whether I believe in the actual existence of my circuits of sun and moon."[1] Shortly after, he goes on to answer the question by saying that he regards them "as stylistic arrangements of experience."[2] That seems clear enough. Poetry itself, along with other art forms, is also a stylistic arrangement of experience. But before poetry as we know it today, there were also those earlier stylistic arrangements of experience: primitive song, tribal dance, various forms of religious rite, legend and myth.

Yeats, as we know, was fully aware of the forms and symbols of tradition and sought them, as F.A.C. Wilson notes, not in any random or fanciful way but as "an informed process, by which the poet's imagination could be united to the cultural past of his own race,"[3] married "to rock and hill." The value of this kind of study, Wilson goes on to say, is that "a traditional symbol ... retained forever an archetypal validity, and would communicate with a mysterious poignancy and power."[4] Yeats speaks about two main types of symbolism[5]: the personal or emotional kind which is what for him Shakespeare generally used; and the intellectual kind which was used with a full understanding of its

1 W.B. Yeats, A Vision, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961, p. 24.
2 Ibid., p. 25.
3 F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1958, p. 31.
4 Ibid., p. 30.
5 W.B. Yeats, "The Symbolism of Poetry," Essays and Introductions, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1961, pp. 160-63.

traditional significance, as Dante and other poets had tried consistently to do. He thought that the intellectual type was to be preferred, "because it would bring men into contact with Anima Mundi and so with something probably quite ineffable."[1] Again, in speaking of Yeats's beliefs, Graham Hough repudiates the idea that his poetry arose out of ideas that were merely absurd or fantastic. He says: "I do not think that this is true, or even possible: the beliefs underlying any great poetry must represent a permanently or recurrently important phase of the human spirit, and cannot be merely individual or fashionable fantasy."[2] Hough goes on to explain why Yeats insisted on traditional imagery and symbols: "He realizes, as none of his contemporaries did, that the power of religious symbolism is not that it embodies the appeal of a graceful way of life, or supports a particular set of moral principles, but that it carries the mind back to the mystery that is at the heart of the universe, the mystery which the religious thought of the nineteenth century was bent on explaining away."[3] "The power of the symbol is that it connects the individual imagination with bygone centuries of human emotion and experience, and beyond that with the great memory from which all human emotion and experience springs."[4] Hough recapitulates Yeats's position on belief through symbolism by affirming that Yeats's "concentration on 'ancient wisdom' is not mere romantic antiquarianism: amid a good deal of fantasy in detail there remains the perfectly rational conviction that men in earlier ages

1 F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, p. 30.
2 Graham Hough, "Yeats," The Last Romantics, University Paperbacks, Univ. Press: Oxford, 1961, p. 257.
3 Ibid., p. 228.
4 Ibid., p. 229.

had accumulated much knowledge and evidence of these matters which the modern world had tacitly agreed to neglect; and that the surviving beliefs and experiences of primitive people, and those who were outside the modern scientific tradition, were therefore of primary importance."[1]

Because Yeats did take seriously traditional belief and ancient wisdom, and because he did try to embody these beliefs in his work by means of traditional symbolism, I wish to begin my study of the sun and the moon and their related symbols by presenting an early preliterate example of traditional experience stylistically arranged in the form of a myth. From there, I hope to go on to show how the findings of modern analytical psychology, especially those of Carl Jung, generally corroborate this traditional experience. Finally, I want to examine the patterns of this symbolism in the poetry of Yeats in order to see how his poetry gains in depth and strength from being rooted in such traditional soil. I do not pretend to being either a psychologist or a professional mythologist, and so whatever conclusions this study may come to will not be able to claim the protective wall of such disciplines. My only hope is that I might clarify or at least create further interest in one aspect of Yeats's poetry by bringing it in closer contact both with traditional wisdom and with modern psychology. Whether the following has served that purpose I must leave it to the reader to judge.

The myth or legend of the sun and the moon that I shall now present, is that famous one of the Central Eskimos called "Aningaat." It has previously been recorded by Knud Rasmussen in his collection[2] of Eskimo

1 Graham Hough, "Yeats," The Last Romantics, p. 260.
2 Knud Rasmussen, Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, Report of Fifth Thule Expedition, Vol. VII, No. 1.

myths from the Central Eskimos in one of the volumes of the Fifth Thule Expedition and probably also by other anthropologists. I have not however used Rasmussen's version of the myth--although it is roughly the same--but have used one which I collected from an Eskimo at Repulse Bay in 1950, approximately twenty-five years after Rasmussen collected his version. Following then is the Eskimo myth in a literal translation of a verbatim text:

Aningaat

They said that that blind boy was adopted from his own mother and was given a small house off the porch to live in. The blind boy's name was Aningaat. During the winter when he was visiting his step-mother in the main iglu, a great polar bear suddenly pushed its head through the window. His mother gave him a bow and arrow and aimed it for him, and so, they said, Aningaat shot the bear. At the time of the shooting, a little dog of theirs had done a great deal of barking--the little dog's name was Iqi--and the mother told Aningaat that he had shot the dog. Aningaat then said that it seemed by its noise to have been a much greater animal than a dog but his mother said: "Indeed it was Iqi!" and repeated that he had shot the dog. She then killed the dog and made her son use it for his food while she kept the bear for herself and for her daughter's use.

But Aningaat's sister would put some bear-meat inside the top of her skin boot whenever they ate. Then, because her brother was blind and she liked to take him on walks holding onto his arm, she fed him from the meat in her boot-top whenever they were well out of sight.

Summer was now come and they were living in tents landward from

where the loons were crying. Aningaat told his sister that he wanted to be taken to the lake which loons inhabited. His sister led him to the lake and Aningaat sat down upon its edge. He then said that he wanted to be left there. He also told her: "On the way home, build many stone markers." So on the way home, she built many stone markers at short intervals.

A loon cried and came to the shore, took Aningaat by the hand, and led him into the lake. It ducked him down into the water until he was choking for breath. When Aningaat came up, the loon licked his eyes. When Aningaat complained that it hurt and told it that that was enough, the loon said to him: "Have patience and bear with it because you are going to be able to see clearly." The loon then told him to open his eyes, and when he did he was able to see a little. The loon again licked his eyes and again told him to open them. This time when he opened them, Aningaat said he was able to see, far down in the distance, a hill whose top was shrouded in mist. The loon asked him: "But do you see the grass which grows on that smoking hill?" When Aningaat replied "No," the loon told him to close his eyes again and, even though Aningaat protested and said it was enough, the loon merely repeated: "You are going to see, so just close your eyes." So he closed his eyes again, and the loon licked them for the third time. This time when he was asked to open them, he could even see the grass on the smoking hill in the distance, and so the loon said it was enough. Nevertheless he asked Aningaat to close his eyes once more and took him towards the shore. When they reached the shore, the loon said to Aningaat: "You must not open your eyes until I reach the water." So the loon went back into the water and Aningaat opened his eyes and was able

to follow the little stone markers to find his way home.

When he got there, he saw a bearskin and a dogskin stretched out on drying racks, and he asked his mother: "Whose skins are these?" The mother replied that they were forgotten by some people who had passed by in their boats. She was of course lying to her son, for the skin belonged to the bear which he had shot previously.

At that time, there were a lot of white whales about, and Aningaat kept asking his sister whether or not their mother was fond of white whale. His sister kept replying that their mother was fond of it. So Aningaat made a harpoon and a harpoon head, and the next day said he wanted to spear a white whale. They went to the shore and Aningaat tied his mother to the end of the harpoon-line, pretending that she would haul it in when he speared it. Just then a school of white whales came close to where they stood, and his mother said: "Spear that one! It isn't strong and will be easy to haul in." Aningaat pretended to spear the one she pointed to but actually speared a great strong whale. Both Aningaat and his sister at first held onto the line but eventually let go of it. As the whale began to pull away, the mother, tied round the middle by the line, went running over the surface of the water. The whale then began to dive and she went under with it. Whenever she surfaced, she would sing: "I was not squeamish over your shit and piss when you were children, when I raised you!"

Aningaat and his sister left their home, for it was now winter. They arrived at a camp of little people with long nails called Kukiligaattiat and built their iglu. As he was thirsty after the work, Aningaat asked his sister to fetch some water from the new neighbours. His sister was obviously afraid, but Aningaat told her he would protect

her. She finally agreed and went to fetch the water. She went into her neighbour's iglu and said: "My brother, Aningaat, is thirsty and I've come to fetch water." The chief of the Long-Nails replied: "There on the meat-bench is the water! Lift up the flap of your parka and ladle!" She was a long time in lifting it up and, when she began to ladle, the Long-Nails charged her and scratched her terribly. She screamed in pain and Aningaat heard her, so he picked up his long-handled ice-chisel and approached, pushing in the window of their iglu, and spearing them to death. The chief of the Long-Nails then spoke, licking his nails it is said: "It's true I assure you that I have been telling my children that Aningaat will hit you with his big ice-chisel." Aningaat speared him also and he died spluttering indignantly. His sister's back was stripped of flesh from the scratching, and so Aningaat urinated on some new soft snow and gently rubbed the urine on her back and made it have flesh again.

The next day, they went on again and met another people called the Cup-and-Ball-Players. Each of them had two cup-and-ball apparatuses, one of them made of copper. Aningaat told his sister that he was fascinated with the game of cup-and-ball and that she should go on while he played it, and he promised to follow her. He played in the contest for a long time and then he took one of their cup-and-ball apparatuses and left them. He was followed by them but apparently got away.

Towards night, they frequently saw wind-shelters. They also found some caribou back-fat[1] which they kept trying to eat, but it tasted of

1 Back-fat is normally an Eskimo delicacy.

shit, and so they had to give it up.

They travelled on again and met another group of people who had no anuses. They went into their place and Aningaat told his sister to take a husband. At her taking of a husband, they had a huge feast and song-fest. Later she became pregnant and had a daughter. The father-in-law, one of the anusless ones, was very happy that she had borne a child and went around proudly saying that his daughter-in-law had brought forth a child with a rip, and how in the world could he himself acquire an anus. It was said that he grabbed a big sharp fork and stabbed himself in the place an anus ought to be, thus acquiring one. The others were very jealous of this one who had acquired an anus. Another one stabbed himself short of the place where it should be, and because he missed it, he died.

One time during a feast, Aningaat was out in the side iglu or house off the porch where a lamp was burning. His sister came in and blew out the lamp-flame. He kissed his sister in the dark. She was thinking that he had done so mistaking her for another woman. She became embarrassed but, as the feast was still going on in the main iglu, her brother went into the feast-room again. While he was gone, she touched her nose with black from the oil-drip pot. Aningaat came into the side iglu again and kissed her and then went out again into the feast-room. The others all laughed at him when he came in, and shouted: "I wonder who it is that you have evidently kissed, for your nose is all black!" His sister, hearing this, put on her boots and ran into the porch where another lamp was burning. She took a bundle of dried moss, dipped it in the oil, then lit it and ran outside. Her brother, embarrassed and distraught, ran to the porch and also took a bundle of

dried moss and also ran outside where he lit his moss. Then the brother and sister both rose up in the air. But the brother had forgotten to dip his bundle in the oil before he lit it, and so the flame of it went out and left nothing but burning embers. Because of this, and because he was underneath and closer, he turned into the moon, and his sister, they say, because her flame did not go out, turned into the sun.

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Apart from being a very beautiful story, "Aningaat" obviously embodies a profound psychic and spiritual journey, and is a highly stylistic arrangement of traditional experience. The temptation here is to begin interpreting the myth from the viewpoint of Jung's psychology, equating each component of the story with the archetypes and stages of psychic and spiritual growth, and no doubt this can be profitably done. This of course would be to turn it into a spiritual allegory, which to some extent it no doubt is. I am not however, in this study, interested in allegory as such, and therefore pass by this interesting aspect of the myth to concentrate upon the symbolic significance of the sun and the moon.

What is the significance of the sun and the moon in this legend? First of all, we understand that they are brother and sister and also that one is male and one is female. This is a factor shared in common with most other versions of the myth. In Graeco-Roman mythology, according to Edith Hamilton, Artemis-Diana is "Apollo's twin sister, daughter of Zeus and Leto." Further on, she comments on the confusion resulting from the identification of Apollo and Artemis with the earlier Phoebus and Phoebe, Helios and Silene: "As Phoebus was the Sun,

she was the Moon, called Phoebe and Silene (Luna in Latin). Neither name originally belonged to her. Phoebe was a Titan, one of the older gods. So too was Silene--a moon-goddess, indeed, but not connected with Apollo. She was the sister of Helios, the sun-god with whom Apollo was confused."[1] Whatever the confusions were in Greek and Roman mythology, one aspect remained unchanging: the moon and the sun were brother and sister; and not just brother and sister, but also twins.

We find this close brother-sister relationship for the sun and moon corroborated once more in Japanese myth. Faubion Bowers, discussing the origins of the Japanese theatre, says: "The one legend we are concerned with here tells of the Sun-Goddess, Amaterasu O-mikami, who had been offended by the playfulness of her brother, and who in a fit of sulking had hidden herself in a cave and had sealed the opening with a great rock. Since the world was in darkness as a result of her concealment, the other gods assembled to persuade her to show her face again."[2] Here there is even a closer similarity to the Eskimo myth in that the incident of playfulness is mentioned in connection with the brother. There is also the agreement about the sex of the sun. She is female in both, a factor which distinguishes these two from the Greek myth. This matter of sex may be of relatively little importance, however, for it depends on whether the interpretation of experience is from the feminine or masculine viewpoint, and we find Yeats using these symbols in both ways, although usually he makes the sun male and the moon female in accordance with the masculine viewpoint. As John Unterecker says, the

1 Edith Hamilton, Mythology, New York: The New American Library, Mentor Books, 1957, p. 31.
2 Faubion Bowers, Japanese Theatre, New York: Hermitage House, 1952, p. 3.

poem "Conjunctions" came "directly out of a set of correlations Yeats had hoped to find in his children. His daughter was to illustrate democratic, Christian, 'objective' experience and his son aristocratic, pagan, 'subjective' experience."[1] In "A Prayer for My Daughter," he connects his daughter with the "spreading laurel tree," a tree which is Apollo's emblem. There is also the connection of the moon with the male in "The Shadowy Waters." Richard Ellmann notes that "as for the red hound running from the silver arrow, this is the passionate Dectora fleeing the silver (and therefore lunar, idealizing) love of Forgael."[2]

Next, we wonder about the status of this intimate brother-sister, sun-moon pair. Obviously it is more than merely physical. Is it merely a concept of psychology or is it also a metaphysical concept? Does it have both supernal and infernal implications? Are the sun and moon symbols of eternal life, of the blessed union of male and female? Ellmann says: "Another emblem for the state of blessedness is the meeting of sun and moon or of gold and silver."[3] Or are they symbols of the endlessness of this life, the pursuit, the recurrence of the cycle? "'Neither the Sun nor the Moon', says an old Japanese proverb, 'ever halt upon their journey.'"[4] It seems that in Japanese tradition we can also find evidence for the eternality of the moon. In the Buddhist sermons of Kiu-ō, we find the following: "'When the roaring waterfall

1 John Unterecker, A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats, New York: The Noonday Press, 1959, p. 252.
2 Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954, p. 82.
3 Ibid., p. 79.
4 T. Takata, (trans.), "Of a Promise Kept," Japanese Stories from Lafcadio Hearn, London: Kegan Paul Ltd., 1933, p. 52.

is shivered by the night-storm, the moonlight is reflected in each scattered drop.' Although there is but one moon, she suffices to illuminate each little scattered drop. Wonderful are the laws of Heaven! So the principle of benevolence, which is but one, illumines all the particles that make up mankind."[1]

In the Eskimo myth, we have seen the brother and sister on the human level and, because they work so closely together and complement one another, we suspect they represent also the opposites on the psychic level. What does their ascension at the end of the story mean? Have they now become royal, universally valid as an example for all, divine? Or is it a sign that there is no complete fusion of the opposites in the temporal world? At least, we suspect a psychological signification in this ascension and that it will throw some light upon the divine pair, the King-Queen nexus, in Yeats's poetry. F.A.C. Wilson notes also the "belief that divinity contains both male and female elements, and that the first creation took place by an act analogous to human sexual union" and that it is also "a convention in both Kabbalistic and Indian theology."[2]

Finally, we may refer back again to A Vision, and see what else Yeats has to say about the sun and the moon. "All these symbols," he says "can be thought of as the symbols of the relations of men and women and of the birth of children. We can think of the antithetical and primary cones, or wheels, as the domination, now by the man, now by

1 A.B. Mitford, Tales of Old Japan, "Sermon I from Sermons of Kiu-ō," London: Macmillan & Co., 1891, p. 292.
2 F.A.C. Wilson, Yeats's Iconography, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1960, p. 280.

the woman, and of a child born at Phase 15 or East as acquiring a primary character from its father who is at Phase 1, or West, and of a child born at Phase 1 or West as acquiring an antithetical character from its father at Phase 15, or East, and so on, man and woman being alternately Western and Eastern. Such symbolical children, sealed as it were by Saturn and Jupiter or Mars and Venus, cast off the mother [italics mine] and display their true characters as their cycle enters its last quarter. We may think of the wheel as an expression of alternations of passion, and think of the power of the woman beginning at symbolical East or Aries and seated in Creative Mind, and of the power of the man as seated in Will and beginning at symbolical West when Creative Mind is in Libra, or half-way through its course, and Will at Phase 1, or think of the Wheel as an expression of the birth of symbolical children bound together by a single fate. [italics mine]."[1] He also completes the discussion of the symbolism of A Vision, by saying that he need go no further "for all the symbolism of this book applies to begetting and birth, for all things are a single form which has divided and multiplied in time and space."[2]

1 W.B. Yeats, "The Completed Symbol," A Vision, pp. 211-12.
2 Ibid., p. 212.

# CHAPTER II

## The Psychological Basis of the Myth

## Chapter II

### The Psychological Basis of the Myth

In writing this essay, my main purpose of course is to arrive eventually at Yeats's poetry and to see how his use of the moon and sun and related symbols accords with traditional usage and to see also how and where it differs. But since it is obvious that Yeats's usage and traditional usage are firmly connected with psychology, it is necessary to digress further from Yeats's poetry in order to come back to it with a wider insight which might illuminate it further. I am not attempting an explication of A Vision, for, as Donald A. Stauffer notes, "Yeats spent almost twenty years on its creation, and admits that parts of it he does not fully understand."[1] (Besides, critics much more capable than I have either given it a wide berth or merely coasted cautiously about some of its better-known shores.) I merely hope that, by introducing some of the findings of Carl Jung, we may clarify the sun and moon symbolism and get a clearer perspective on its relations with other symbols of Yeats. "If we are to find any analogy in the contemporary world to Yeats's way of thinking," says Graham Hough,

> it is in the analytical psychologists. They too have been driven to dreams and fantasies to explain man's total experience, and have found analogies between them and ancient and primitive beliefs. ... the connection we are looking for is between Yeats and Jung. Many of the parallels are sufficiently obvious. Yeats's Anima Mundi from which the images of the poet are derived is Jung's collective unconscious, from which came the archetypes of myth and legend. Yeats's mask is the unconscious, in Jung's sense, not in Freud's--not the wastepaper basket for discarded experiences

1 Donald A. Stauffer, The Golden Nightingale, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949, p. 11.

> and desires, but the vehicle of the buried faculties--. The creative power which comes from the acceptance of the mask corresponds with the psychic rebirth which, in Jung's psychology, follows on the emergence of the submerged faculties.[1]

Again, Kenneth Burke notes the likeness between Yeats and Jung when he says "the fundamental distinction between the 'solar' and the 'lunar'" is "quite close to that between 'extrovert' and 'introvert'."[2]

Before going on with a short summary of Jung's individuation process and its symbolic or archetypal representations, I will first quote extensively from his discussion of a German fairy tale, "The Princess in the Tree."[3] As I merely want to draw from it certain parallels with other legends of spiritual rebirth, with the object of elucidating the sun and moon symbols, I shall not reproduce the tale here. It will be enough to say that, in this tale, there are three male-female pairs, the old woman horse-guardian and the hunter, the swineherd and Princess A, and Prince and Princess B, which represent three psychic levels. Princess B, the female representative of the highest level, is represented by a three-legged horse (a masculine triad because 3) and is therefore under the spell of a masculine triad, just as Prince B, her partner, is represented by a four-legged horse (a feminine tetrad because 4) and is under the spell of a feminine tetrad. Speaking of Princess B, Jung goes on to say: "Therefore, she is possessed by a shadow. The question now is, <u>whose</u> shadow?" By a process of elimination, Jung finds that it is the shadow of the hunter

1 Graham Hough, "Yeats," <u>The Last Romantics</u>, pp. 261-62.
2 Kenneth Burke, "On Motivation in Yeats," <u>The Permanence of Yeats</u>, New York: Collier Books, 1961, p. 225.
3 C.G. Jung, "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales," <u>Psyche and Symbol</u>, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958, p. 87.

who "stands for a formidable power which extends not only to the hero's [swineherd's] anima [Princess A] but much further, namely, to the royal brother-sister pair of whose existence the hero and his anima [Princess A] have no notion, and who appear very much out of the blue in the story itself."[1] Because of the more than individual character of the hunter's power, Jung says that "in the figure of the hunter we meet an imago Dei, a God-image...."[2] Jung continues:

> The Prince and his sister, Princess B, have therefore been seized by a pagan god and changed into horses, i.e., thrust down to the animal level, into the realm of the unconscious. The inference is that in their proper human shape the pair of them once belonged to the sphere of collective consciousness. But who are they?
>
> In order to answer this question [i.e., who are Prince and Princess B who are imprisoned in the four- and three-legged horses respectively] we must proceed from the fact that these two are an undoubted counterpart of the hero and Princess A. They are connected with the latter also because they serve as their mounts, and in consequence they appear as their lower animal halves. Because of its almost total unconsciousness the animal has always symbolized the psychic sphere in man which lies hidden in the darkness of the body's instinctual life. The hero rides the stallion [Prince], characterized by the even (feminine) number 4; Princess A rides the mare [Princess B] who has only three legs (3:a masculine number). These numbers make it clear that the transformation into animals has brought with it a modification of sex character: the stallion has a feminine attribute, the mare a masculine one. Psychology can confirm this development as follows: to the degree that a man is overpowered by the (collective) unconscious there is not only a more unbridled intrusion of the instinctual sphere, but a certain feminine character also makes its appearance, which I have suggested should be called "anima." If, on the other hand, a woman comes under the domination of the unconscious, the darker side of her feminine nature emerges all the more strongly, coupled with markedly masculine traits. These latter are comprised under the term "animus."
>
> According to the fairy tale, however, the animal form of the brother-sister pair is "unreal" and due simply to

1 C.G. Jung, "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales," Psyche and Symbol, pp. 103-4.
2 Ibid., p. 104.

the magic influence of the pagan hunter god. If they were nothing but animals, we could rest content with this interpretation. But that would be to pass over in unmerited silence the singular allusion to a modification of sex character. The white horses are no ordinary horses: they are miraculous beasts with supernatural powers. Therefore the human figures out of which the horses were magically conjured must likewise have had something supernatural about them. The fairy tale makes no comment here, but if our assumption is correct that the two animal forms correspond to the subhuman components of hero and princess, then it follows that the human forms--Prince and Princess B--must correspond to their superhuman components.[1]

The capture of Princess A was a transgression in the profane world, and the bewitching of the--as we may suppose--semidivine brother-sister pair was just such an enormity in the magical world. We do not know, but it is possible, that this heinous crime was committed before the bewitching of Princess A. At any rate both episodes point to a transgression of the evil spirit in the magical world as well as in the profane.[2]

The moral of this story is in truth exceedingly odd. The finale satisfies in so far as the swineherd [hero] and Princess A are married and become the royal pair. Prince and Princess B likewise celebrate their wedding, but this--in accordance with the archaic prerogative of kings--takes the form of incest, which, though somewhat repellent, must be regarded as more or less habitual in semidivine circles.[3]

At this point, Jung inserts the following footnote:

The assumption that they are a brother-sister pair is supported by the fact that the stallion addresses the mare as "sister." This may be just a figure of speech; on the other hand, sister means sister, whether we take it figuratively or non-figuratively. Apart from this incest plays a significant part in mythology as well as in alchemy.[4]

In his text, Jung continues:

Speaking in the spirit of the fairy tale, which unfolds its drama from the highest point, one would have to say that

1 C.G. Jung, "The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairy Tales," Psyche and Symbol, pp. 104-5.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 108.

> the world of half-gods is anterior to the profane world and produces it out of itself, just as the former must be thought of as proceeding from the world of gods. Conceived in this way, the swineherd and Princess A are nothing less than earthly simulacra of Prince and Princess B, who in their turn would be the descendants of heavenly prototypes.[1]
>
> If we wanted to explain the fairy tale personalistically the attempt would founder on the fact that the archetypes are not whimsical inventions, but autonomous elements of the unconscious psyche which were there before any invention was thought of. They represent the unalterable structure of a psychic world whose "reality" is attested by the determining effects it has upon the conscious mind. Thus, it is a significant psychic reality that the human pair (human in so far as the anima is replaced by a human person) is matched by another pair in the unconscious, the latter pair being only in appearance a reflection of the first. In reality the royal pair invariably comes first, as an a priori, so that the human pair has far more the signifacne of an individual concretization, in space and time, of an eternal and primordial image--at least in so far as its spiritual structure is imprinted upon the biological continuum.
>
> We could say, then, that the swineherd stands for the "animal" man who has a soulmate somewhere in the upper world. By her royal birth she [Princess A] betrays her connection with the pre-existent, semidivine pair. Looked at from this angle, the latter stands for everything a man can become if only he climbs high enough up the world tree. For to the degree that the young swineherd gains possession of the patrician, feminine half of himself, he approximates to the pair of half-gods and lifts himself into the sphere of kingship, that is, of universal validity. We come across the same theme in Christian Rosencreutz's Chymical Wedding, where the king's son must first free his bride from the power of a Moor, to whom she has voluntarily given herself as a concubine.[2]

We gather from Jung's discussion here that this divine, semi-divine pair, this king and queen, prince and princess, hero and heroine, etc., are traditional symbols or archetypes which represent a stage in the psychic development of the individual in his or her quest for self-realization. F.A.C. Wilson notes also that "the Rosicrucians

1 C.G. Jung, Psyche and Symbol, p. 108.
2 Ibid., pp. 108-9.

imaged the soul after death, when it arrived at its full dignity and stature, as either a prince or a princess, or even as a king or a queen, where it achieved total union with God in either his masculine or feminine aspect...."[1] In another work, Wilson, discussing The King of the Great Clock Tower, says that "this King and this Queen represent Zeus and Cybele, or the masculine and feminine principles in deity," and that "Yeats, as an occultist and a Kabbalist, saw deity as both male and female...."[2] He goes on to draw our attention to another "significance of Yeats's King and Queen. In his system, history divides into alternating cycles, subjective and objective, pagan and Christian, lunar and solar, and each cycle is dominated by an appropriate manifestation of Godhead; that is, it sees God in a certain light. God's symbol, for Yeats, is alternately King and Queen, 'wisdom and beauty'."[3] This is his reference to Yeats's own writing in A Vision where Yeats speaks of "that continual oscillation which I have symbolised elsewhere as a King and Queen, who are Sun and Moon also, and whirl round and round as they mount up through a round tower."[4] In "The Symbolism of Poetry," Yeats says that "if I look at the moon herself and remember any of her ancient names and meanings, I move among divine people, and things that have shaken off our mortality, the tower of ivory, the queen of waters...."[5]

Japanese legend, as represented in the Noh plays, also employs moon and sun symbols to convey aspects of psychic reality and to

1 F.A.C. Wilson, Yeats's Iconography, p. 263.
2 F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, p. 75.
3 Ibid., pp. 75-6.
4 Ibid., p. 76.
5 W.B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions, pp. 161-62.

represent the divine in nature. In The Battle at Yashima, from The Old Pine Tree cycle, the priest is talking to Yoshitsune's ghost:

> Priest: As your mind is cloudy, you see the sea
> you talk of;
> You will see it no more, if you achieve
> moon-like serenity.
> There is only one moon, though its shape
> changes;
> There is only one Law, with its various
> aspects.
> Ghost: The moon of spring is hazy, they say;
> but tonight
> The sky is clear, making clear the mind
> of man.[1]

In The Hōka Priests, "life" is "fickle as the moon of dawn."[2] Later in the same play, one of the priests exclaims:

> The bow? Why surely!
> Are not its two horns fashioned
> In likeness of the Hare and Crow,
> Symbols of the Moon and Sun, of Night and Day?
> Here is the primal mystery displayed
> Of fair and foul conjoined.[3]

The footnote referring to the last line, "of fair and foul conjoined," states: Sun is male, i.e., fair. Moon is female, i.e., foul. Again, in Ukai (The Cormorant-Fisher), Ukai, who is only a ghost, complains of his dreaming back:

> I have heard it told that Yūshi and Yakuyō vowed
> Their love-vows by the moon, and were changed
> To wedded stars in heaven. And even today the
> High ones of the earth are grieved by moonless
> Nights. Only I grow weary of her shining
> And welcome nights of darkness.[4]

In Seami's Hagoromo, the Moon-God is said to be an emanation of

1 Makoto Ueda, (trans.), The Old Pine Tree and Other Plays, Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1962, p. 23.
2 Arthur Waley, The Nō Plays of Japan, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922, p. 167.
3 Ibid., p. 170.
4 Ibid., p. 129.

the third person of the Trinity who sits on Amida's right hand. In this same play, Hagoromo, the moon-lady, cannot return to her heavenly abode because the fisherman has taken her cloak. When he returns it to her, she does a dance for him in gratitude:

Angel: Thus in the Moon-God's palace:
Its walls are fashioned
With an axe of jade.
Chorus: In white dress, black dress,
Thrice ten angels
In two ranks divided,
Thrice five for the waning,
Thrice five for nights of the waxing moon,
One heavenly lady on each night of the moon
Does service and fulfills
Her ritual task assigned.
Angel: I too am of their number,
A moon-lady of heaven.
Chorus: "Mine is the fruit of the moon-tree, yet
came I to the East incarnate,
Dwelt with the people of Earth, and gave them
A gift of music, song-dance of Suruga.
Now upon earth trail the long mists of Spring;
Who knows but in the valleys of the moon
The heavenly moon-tree puts her blossom on?[1]

In another play of Seami's, Kantan, Rosei's dream of the Emperor's Courtyard is described:

A courtyard strewn
With golden and silver sand;

And in the east
Over a silver hill of thirty cubits height
A golden sun-wheel rose.

And in the west
Over a golden hill of thirty cubits height
A silver moon-wheel rose.[2]

The moon is also said to be the cup out of which one drinks immortality: "Oh merry flashing light, that shall endure/ Long as the Silver Chalice

1 Arthur Waley, The Nō Plays of Japan, p. 183.
2 Ibid., pp. 159-60.

circles space."[1] In a third play of Seami's, Aya No Tsuzumi (The Damask Drum), the gardener, who is in love with the princess but in despair because he cannot have her, soliloquizes after he is told of the princess's request that he beat on the drum of the laurel tree:

> They talk of the moon-tree, the
> Laurel that grows in the Garden of the Moon ....
> But for me there is but one true tree, this
> Laurel by the lake.[2]

When he dies heart-broken in his failure to make a sound on the drum, he cries:

> Oh, why so cruelly
> Set they me to win
> Voice from a voiceless drum,
> Spending my heart in vain?
> And I spent my heart on the glimpse
> of a moon that slipped
> Through the boughs of an autumn tree.[3]

Before finally rounding out this chapter with a summary of Jung's individuation process and its symbolic representations, I wish to draw in one further aspect of the King-Queen, Sun-Moon symbolism which is also relevant to Yeats's poetry.

> It is a remarkable fact that perhaps the majority of cosmogonic gods are of a bisexual nature. The hermaphrodite means nothing less than a union of the strongest and most striking opposites. In the first place this union refers back to a primitive state of mind, a twilight where differences and contrasts were either barely separated or completely merged.[4]

But, Jung goes on to say, because the hermaphrodite continues to occupy the minds of civilized generations,

1 Arthur Waley, The Nō Plays of Japan, p. 161.
2 Ibid., p. 135.
3 Ibid., p. 139.
4 C.G. Jung, "The Special Phenomenology of the Child Archetype," Psyche and Symbol, p. 139.

> We can no longer be dealing, then, with the continued existence of a primitive phantasm, or with an original contamination of opposites. Rather, as we can see from medieval writings, the original idea has become a symbol of the creative union of opposites, a "unifying symbol" in the literal sense.[1]

> As civilization develops, the bisexual "primary being" turns into a symbol of the unity of personality, a symbol of the self where the war of opposites finds peace. In this way the primary being becomes the distant goal of man's self-development, having been from the very beginning a projection of unconscious wholeness. Man's wholeness consists in the union of the conscious and the unconscious personality. Just as every individual derives from masculine and feminine genes, so in the psyche it is only the conscious mind, in a man, that has the masculine sign, while the unconscious is by nature feminine. The reverse is true in the case of a woman.[2]

> The idea of the coniunctio of male and female, which became almost a technical concept in Hermetic philosophy, appears in Gnosticism as the mysterium iniquitatis, probably not uninfluenced by the Old Testament "divine marriage" as performed, for instance, by Hosea.[3]

Jung goes on to say that, in contradistinction to the Gnostics who seemed to have taken the coniunctio all too literally, the hermaphrodite image was usually sublimated on a lofty plane in Church mysticism.

> On the other hand, in the Hermetic philosophy that throve in the Middle Ages the coniunctio was performed wholly in the physical realm in the admittedly abstract theory of the coniugium solis et lunae, which despite this drawback gave the creative imagination much occasion for anthropomorphic flights.
>
> Such being the state of affairs, it is readily understandable that the primordial image of the hermaphrodite should reappear in modern psychology in the guise of the male-female antithesis, in other words as male consciousness and personified female unconscious.[4]

Finally, I want to note some further aspects of Jung's view of the

1 C.G. Jung, "The Special Phenomenology of the Child Archetype," Psyche and Symbol, p. 139.
2 Ibid., p. 141.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 142.

psyche and of the individuation process. Jolande Jacobi tells us that, for Jung, the structure of the psyche is dynamic and that all psychic life is governed by a necessary opposition. "In Jung's view," she says, "opposition is a law inherent in human nature. For 'the psyche is...a self-regulating system', and 'there is no balance, no system of self-regulation, without opposition'."[1] Again, she quotes from Jung's "Energy" (pp. 51,52), where he says: "Over against the polymorphism of the primitive's instinctual nature there stands the regulating principle of individuation.... Together they form a pair of opposites ... often spoken of as nature and spirit.... This opposition is the expression, and perhaps also the basis, of the tension we call psychic energy."[2]

The archetypal images are contents of the unconscious and serve as transformers of energy when there is a blockage in the psychic system. "Thus for Jung the archetypes taken as a whole represent the sum of the latent potentialities of the human psyche--a vast store of ancestral knowledge about the profound relations between God, man, and cosmos. To open up this store in one's own psyche, to awaken it to new life and integrate it with consciousness, means nothing less than to save the individual from his isolation and gather him into the eternal cosmic process."[3] "Jung holds that before dealing with the material of the collective unconscious," before this "opening-up" process can begin,"we must first raise the infantile contents to consciousness and integrate

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 52.
2 Ibid., p. 60.
3 Ibid., pp. 47-8.

them."[1] As the personal unconscious must be dealt with first, "the accent must be placed on the most intimate life of the individual and the psychic contents acquired in connection with it, before the individual can begin to deal with the universal problems of human existence. This path, which leads to the activation of the archetypes and the unification of consciousness and the unconscious or a proper balance between them, is the path of 'healing' and, from the technical point of view, it is also the way followed by dream interpretation."[2]

In a footnote speaking of Jung's "Commentary on the Tibetan Book of the Dead," Jacobi notes the Tibetan belief that the personal as well as the suprapersonal realms are contained in the human psyche.

> If as Westerners we interpret the dead man's path to a new incarnation (as seen by the Tibetans) as a process of psychic growth to be travelled during our lifetime, it leads through three main realms. The first represents the land of the personal unconscious, which is a kind of gateway leading to the second realm, that of the collective images, of the numinously charged, suprapersonal figures of the archetypes (the 'blood-drinking demons' as they are called in the Tibetan funeral ritual). After passing through this realm, or confronting its 'inhabitants', the psyche comes to the 'place' where the opposites are transcended and peace is achieved, where reigns exclusively the central 'power', the self, the ordering authority which embraces and enhances all psychic processes.[3]

As we can see, the Tibetan "dead man's path" is closely related to the stages of development in the Eskimo myth "Aningaat" in the previous chapter.

The individuation process, Dr. Jacobi says, follows regular patterns and falls into two main independent parts corresponding to the first and second halves of life. The first part aims at the adaptation

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 79.
2 Ibid., p. 80.
3 Ibid., p. 100.

of the individual to the demands of his environment. The second part aims at an adaptation to inner reality, a deeper knowledge of the self and of humanity. "By raising these traits to consciousness the individual achieves an inward and outward bond with the world and the cosmic order."[1] When Jung speaks of the "individuation process," she says, it is the second half that he is primarily concerned with. "Signposts and milestones in such an individuation process as observed and described by Jung are provided by certain archetypal symbols, whose form and manifestation vary with the individual."[2]

"The first stage leads to the experience of the SHADOW, symbolizing our 'other side', our 'dark brother', who is an invisible but inseparable part of our psychic totality. For 'the living form needs deep shadow if it is to appear plastic. Without shadow it remains a two-dimensional phantom'."[3] "This dark mass of experience that is seldom or never admitted to our conscious lives bars the way to the creative depths of our unconscious."[4] "Bitter as the cup may be, no one can be spared it. For only when we have learned to distinguish ourselves from our shadow by recognizing its reality as a part of our nature, and only if we keep this insight persistently in mind, can our confrontation with the other pairs of psychic opposites be successful. For this is the beginning of the objective attitude toward our own personality without which no progress can be made along the path of wholeness."[5]

"The second stage of the individuation process is characterized by

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 105.
2 Ibid., p. 105.
3 Ibid., p. 106.
4 Ibid., p. 109.
5 Ibid., p. 110.

the encounter with the 'soul-image', which in the man Jung calls the ANIMA and in the woman, the ANIMUS. The archetypal figure of the soul-image always stands for the complementary, contrasexual part of the psyche, reflecting both our personal relation to it and the universal human experience of the contrasexual. It represents the image of the other sex that we carry in us as individuals and also as members of the species."[1] "As the conscious realization of the shadow makes possible the knowledge of our other, dark side in so far as it pertains to our own sex, so realization of the soul-image enables us to know the contrasexual aspect of our own psyche. Once the image is recognized and revealed, it ceases to operate from out of the unconscious. At last we can differentiate this contrasexual part of the psyche and integrate it with our conscious attitude. The result is an extraordinary enrichment of the contents of consciousness and a great broadening of our personality.

One more stretch of the way has been opened up. When all the perils of confrontation with the soul-image have been overcome, new archetypal figures arise. We shall have to come to terms with them and once more take our bearings."[2] "Thus it is no accident that the next step after the confrontation with the soul-image should be characterized by the appearance of the archetype of the WISE OLD MAN, the personification of the spiritual principle. Its counterpart in the woman's individuation process is MAGNA MATER, the great earth mother who represents the cold, impersonal truth of nature."[3] "Here we shall not,

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 111.
2 Ibid., p. 120.
3 Ibid., pp. 120-21.

as in dealing with the animus and the anima, be exploring the contrasexual part of the psyche, but pursuing the innermost essence of the psyche of either sex back to its source, back to the primordial image from which it was formed."[1] Jung calls these "mana personalities" and the consolidation of the contents which they represent gives the individual extraordinary power and there is the danger of becoming arrogant and vain. But the conscious realization of this archetype means, Jacobi says, quoting Jung, "for the man the second and real liberation from the father, and, for the woman, liberation from the mother, and with it comes the first genuine sense of his or her true individuality."[2]

"We are now not far from the goal. The dark side has been made conscious, the contrasexual element in us has been differentiated, our relation to spirit and primordial nature has been clarified." "Our consciousness as vehicle of our personal uniqueness has been confronted with our unconscious as vehicle of our share of the collective and universal."[3] But there is one more step to capture the hoard, the magic talisman, the invincible weapon. "The archetypal image which leads from this polarity to a union of the two psychic systems—consciousness and the unconscious--through a midpoint common to both is the SELF. It is the last station on the path of individuation, which Jung also calls self-realization."[4] "Both ethically and intellectually, this is an extremely difficult task, which can be successfully performed

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 121.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 123.
4 Ibid.

only by the fortunate few, those elected and favoured by grace."[1] "During this process one is 'bitten' by animals; in other words, we have to expose ourselves to the animal impulses of the unconscious without identifying ourselves with them and without 'running away'; for flight from the unconscious would defeat the purpose of the whole proceeding."[2] "The idea of the self, which is solely a limiting concept comparable to Kant's 'Ding an sich', is thus essentially a transcendental postulate, 'which, although justifiable psychologically, does not allow of scientific proof'. But this postulate serves only to formulate the processes that have been empirically established and to link them together. For the self is simply an indication of the primal, unfathomable ground of the psyche."[3] It is, nevertheless, Jacobi says, a "psychic category and can be experienced as such; to depart for the moment from the language of psychology, we might call it the 'central fire', our individual share in God...."[4]

"The archetypal image of this coincidentia oppositorum, this transformation of the opposites into a third term, a higher synthesis, is expressed by the so-called UNITING SYMBOL" and "symbols of this kind, representing a primordial image of psychic totality, always exhibit more or less abstract form, because their basic law and essence demand a symmetrical arrangement of the parts round a midpoint. Such symbolic figures have been fashioned from time immemorial in the orient; the most significant examples being the so-called MANDALAS, or

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 123.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 127.
4 Ibid., p. 128.

'magic circles'."[1] Although the symbol of the self does not always take this form, "it is the mandalas which most eloquently and aptly symbolize a unified synthetic view of the psyche."[2]

Dr. Jacobi goes on to say that mandala symbols can appear during any part of an individuation process and may merely mean the achievement of a relative wholeness. However, they are expressions of order, and they represent the "middle way," which is called Tao in the East. Jung says that

> Very ancient magical effects lie hidden in this symbol for it derives originally from the "enclosing circle," the "charmed circle," the magic of which has been preserved in countless folk-customs. The image has the obvious purpose of drawing a sulcus primigenius, a magical furrow around the center, the templum, or temenos (sacred precinct), of the innermost personality, in order to prevent "flowing out," or to guard by apotropaeic means against deflections through external influences.[3]

> The "enclosure," or circumambulatio, is expressed ... by the idea of a "circulation." The "circulation" is not merely motion in a circle, but means, on the one hand, the marking off of the sacred precinct, and, on the other, fixation and concentration. The sun wheel begins to run; that is to say, the sun is animated, and begins to take its course, or, in other words, tao begins to work and to take over the leadership. Action is reversed into nonaction; all that is peripheral is subjected to the command of what is central. Therefore it is said: "Movement is only another name for mastery." Psychologically, this circulation would be the "turning in a circle around oneself," whereby, obviously, all sides of the personality become involved. "The poles of light and darkness are made to rotate," that is, day and night alternate.[4]

Dr. Jacobi also notes that "a similar primordial concept of an absolutely complete creature is that of the Platonic man, round on all

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, pp. 130-31.
2 Ibid., p. 131.
3 C.G. Jung, "Commentary on The Secret of The Golden Flower," Psyche and Symbol, p. 321.
4 Ibid., p. 322.

sides and uniting within himself the two sexes. This unity, this union of the two sexes to form a whole is symbolized in the corresponding pictures by a coniunctio between two contrasexual figures, e.g., Shiva and Shakti or Sol and Luna, or by a hermaphroditic figure."[1]

I hope that, by drawing together the material from tradition and from Jung's psychology, I as well as the reader have gained a clearer perspective on the sun and moon symbols. We can see that they not only represent the life cycle, the self-regulating organic system--macrocosmic, human, and microcosmic--but that they also connect the cycle with the idea of purposiveness. In all of the traditional sources, we find, beyond the path, the goal of self-realization: the transcendence of the brother and sister in the Eskimo myth into cosmic dimension; the final establishment of the authority of Prince and Princess B in their kingdom on top of the world tree; and the arrival of Rosei at the Emperor's palace where he drinks the cup of immortality. We also note that this self-realization or uniting of the opposites is closely connected with or, most frequently, emanates from the abstract idea of the circle or sphere. The brother and sister come out of their round iglu with its central flame, the Prince and Princess leave from a kingdom whose borders are now firmly established, and Rosei is in the Emperor's courtyard, the sacred precinct of the God. This idea is also connected with the hermaphrodite or the Platonic man who is "round on all sides," with the coniunctio of the alchemists and hermeticists, the round philosopher's stone, with the wheel of the Buddhists, Yoga

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 136.

concentration points, and with the doodles of psychotherapists' analysands. All somehow are symbols of psychic wholeness, cosmic process, the protected point of creation, the movement of the whole around its center.

It will not be difficult, either, to draw up a whole list of symbols of Yeats which are closely connected to these ideas of union of the opposites, self-realization, the goal, the sphere or circle. Nearly all work in and find their meaning in this central, cyclic process of self-realization: ladder, stair, tree, tower, sphere, egg, dome, gyres, dance, and others. Perhaps now, with this wider perspective, we can see more clearly what Yeats has done with the symbols of the sun and the moon.

# CHAPTER III

## The Myth and The Poetry of Yeats

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### Part I: From The Wanderings of Oisin to The Green Helmet

In coming to the poetry of Yeats, I shall not be concerned with the biographical data of when and how the poet found his sources for the sun and moon symbolism nor, particularly, how this symbolism reflects aspects of his life. Because Yeats is a lyric poet, however, criticism of his lyric poems inevitably criss-crosses and intermeshes with his biography and, no doubt, I will be unable to avoid references to his life. It should, nevertheless, be worthwhile to see whether the ideas we have gathered from tradition and modern psychology in the preceding chapters can shed any light upon the poems themselves and whether they can help to set the individual poems in a perspective, in a harmony with the whole. As Graham Hough says: "To trace in order Yeats's various attempts to find a satisfying mythology would be almost to give a complete history of his poetic development. The chronology of his work and the split between his earlier and his later writing have perhaps been over-emphasised, and his leading ideas are pretty constantly active throughout his career."[1]

I shall therefore refer to the poems generally in the order in which they are placed in the Macmillan (London) edition of The Collected Poems of 1950. The only exception will be that of The Wanderings of Oisin, which, in that edition, is placed near the end of the book and which I shall deal with first.

1 Graham Hough, "Yeats," The Last Romantics, p. 226.

It is true that, as William York Tindall says, "the symbols of Yeats' early poems, like those of Villiers and of Lévi, are occult in character" and that "characteristic [in his early poems] are his arbitrary occult symbols of rose, cross, lily, bird, water, tree, moon, and sun, which he could find in the Kabalistic, Theosophical, and the other profound works which constituted the greater part of his reading."[1] Arbitrarily though Yeats may have used such symbols in the early works, we nevertheless cannot dismiss them as mere toys, newly discovered, of a boy who is trying to devise games which his less imaginative adult associates will not be able to understand. Symbols, especially such traditional ones as the sun and the moon, have a way of meaning much more than one expects even when used in the constructions of children's pastime.

At the beginning of The Wanderings of Oisin, Saint Patrick describes Oisin as "You who are bent, and bald, and blind,/ With a heavy heart and a wandering mind," and then charges him with having "known three centuries, poets sing,/ Of dalliance with a demon thing." In the next verse paragraph, Oisin conjures up a few highlights of his dalliance, and then cuts off with: "But the tale, though words be lighter than air,/ Must live to be old like the wandering moon" (p. 409). There is of course the obvious "romantic" trapping of the old "wandering moon" which we are, I take it, to connect up with Oisin's old "wandering mind." But this reference to the tale as having to "live to be old like the wandering moon" has more to it than that as I think we shall see.

1 W.Y. Tindall, "The Symbolism of W.B. Yeats," Yeats: A Collection of Critical Essays, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963, p. 47.

In the third verse paragraph, where the tale proper begins, Oisin sings: "Caoilte, and Conan, and Finn were there,/ When we followed a deer with our baying hounds... " (p. 409). The pursuit image, which crops up frequently in this poem, no doubt has connections with the sun and moon. F.A.C. Wilson, in discussing The Wanderings of Oisin, has this to say: "As for the images of man and running woman, they are patently as Yeats explains them in an early note, symbols of 'the immortal desire of Immortals', and so of that love which is unending in the heaven Yeats inherited from Swedenborg and the classical tradition."[1] Again, in the same paragraph, he finds "on the dove-gray edge of the sea/ A pearl-pale, high-born lady, who rode/ On a horse with bridle of findrinny" (p. 409). This "high-born" lady is Niamh, who will be his companion throughout his adventures and who obviously has come out of the sea. One is immediately reminded of the Japanese myth Urashima in which the daughter of the Dragon-King comes out of the sea and appears to the fisher-boy who is dreaming in his boat and reminds one also of the woman "down there," Sanna, the sea-woman of Eskimo myth. I do not think we are reading too much into the poem if we connect her with Lady Anima.

Niamh wonders at the sadness of the heroes: "Why do you wind no horn? she said/ And every hero droop his head?" She then confirms her origin by saying that her "country" is far "Beyond the tumbling of this tide" (p. 410), and her virgin condition: "I have not yet, war-weary king,/ Been spoken of with any man" (p. 411). She then encourages him to go to her home of delights, where there is eternal revel, and where everything is perfectly balanced--"and a hundred spears and a hundred

1 F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, p. 84.

bows," and "a hundred ladies" and "a hundred youths", etc.--just as the daughter of the Dragon-King had encouraged Urashima. Again there is the connection with the sun and the moon when she says:

> Music and love and sleep await,
> Where I would be when the white moon climbs,
> The red sun falls and the world grows dim. (p. 412)

But obviously there is something wrong about the whole event because

> Caoilte, Conan, and Finn came near,
> And wept, and raised their lamenting hands,
> And bid me stay, with many a tear;
> But we rode out from the human lands. (p. 412)

Oisin is evading life, the hardship of the pursuit, the cycles of sun and moon, and is giving up his humanity, his foothold of consciousness, and is consenting to be swallowed up by his unconscious.

On the journey with Niamh over the sea, he has one last warning:

> We galloped; now a hornless deer
> Passed by us, chased by a phantom hound
> All pearly white, save one red ear;
> And now a lady rode like the wind
> With an apple of gold in her tossing hand;
> And a beautiful young man followed behind
> With quenchless gaze and fluttering hair. (p. 413)

He childishly questions Niamh about these visions, asking: "Were these two born in the Danaan land,/ Or have they breathed the mortal air?" But she quietens him as a mother would an infant:

> 'Vex them no longer,' Niamh said,
> And sighing bowed her gentle head,
> And sighing laid the pearly tip
> Of one long finger on my lip. (p. 414)

Then the world fades, the world of the sun, leaving only the world of the subconscious:

> But now the moon like a white rose shone
> In the pale west, and the sun's rim sank,
> And clouds arrayed their rank on rank
> About his fading crimson ball. (p. 414)

The journey down into the sea is described:

> And with low murmurs, we rode on,
> Where many a trumpet-twisted shell
> That in immortal silence sleeps
> Dreaming of her own melting hues,
> Her golds, her ambers, and her blues,
> Pierced with soft light the shallowing deeps. (p. 414)

The world of Aengus is "shadowy," "purple," "dim," and the like, and is no doubt to be connected with Yeats's Innisfree, for Aengus is described as "a beautiful young man" who "dreamed within/ A house of wattles, clay, and skin" (p. 417).

But Oisin still has mortal longings and does not care for the changelessness of the place; so Niamh has to give him a change of scene. Before emerging into the world, however, she makes sure he is "wrapped in dreams" and even at that only risks the passage at sunset when

> Under the golden evening light,
> The Immortals moved among the fountains
> By rivers and the woods' old night. (p. 421)

Although the same visions are seen on this passage above the sea as were seen on the first one, Oisin doesn't say anything but merely looks at them: "And now fled by, mist-covered, without sound,/ The youth and lady and the deer and hound." Still, Niamh is not sure that they will not affect him, and so tells him to "Gaze no more on the phantoms," and kisses his eyes to prevent further sight (p. 423).

In this second land of the unconscious, "The Isle of Many Fears," everything is again seen in "green" and "phosophorus" light, things move in "misty smother," and "moonlit steps" glimmer. They come upon "a lady with soft eyes like funeral tapers,/ And face that seemed wrought out of moonlit vapours," who is tied "with a wave-rusted chain"

To two old eagles, full of ancient pride,
That with dim eyeballs stood on either side.
Few feathers were on their dishevelled wings,
For their dim minds were with the ancient things. (p. 425)

Since Yeats has always used the eagle with primary, objective associations and has connected it to the sun, and since the lady the eagles are chained to is obviously a moon lady, this picture, I am willing to guess, represents some sort of stunted or warped personality development. Jolande Jacobi tells us that "the aniums and anima can also be symbolized by animals and even by objects of a specifically masculine or feminine character, particularly when the animus or anima has not yet reached the level of the human figure and appears in purely instinctual form. Thus the anima may take the form of a cow, a cat, a tiger, a ship, a cave, etc., and the animus may appear as an eagle, a bull, a lion, a lance, a tower, or as some kind of phallic shape."[1] It may even be another warning to Oisin, or perhaps merely a torment, for by now he is likely beyond the help of warnings. At any rate, Oisin dares the demon by striking and bursting the chain, which action releases the moon lady.

In this place, we seem to have hit a deeper level of the unconscious, for Oisin, describing the great hall with "basalt floor," says:

I saw a foam-white seagull drift and float
Under the roof, and with a straining throat
Shouted, and hailed him: he hung there a star,
For no man's cry shall ever mount so far.... (p. 426)

After releasing her, they go deeper into the recesses of this place, where we find Oisin holding "a sword whose shine"

No centuries could dim, and a word ran
Thereon in Ogham letters, 'Manannan';

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 112.

> That sea-god's name, who in a deep content
> Sprang dripping, and, with captive demons sent
> Out of the sevenfold seas, built the dark hall
> Rooted in foam and clouds, and cried to all
> The mightier masters of a mightier race;
> And at his cry there came no milk-pale face
> Under a crown of thorns and dark with blood,
> But only exultant faces. (p. 427)

Besides having trouble with his syntax here, Yeats presents quite a mishmash of images. The name suddenly conjures up a sea-god who "sprang dripping" "in a deep content," and who, with his demons, "built the dark hall/ Rooted in foam and clouds...." Perhaps we are in the palace of the Dragon-King or perhaps in Milton's Hell when Satan built Pandemonium. Likely not the latter though, for "there came no milk-pale face/ Under a crown of thorns," i.e., it is no harrowing of Hell. Rather, it is likely some mirage in which the young Yeats was able to let off steam by chastising Christ and praising his pagan heroes with their "exultant faces."

At least Oisin now seems to be more active than before, more solicitous for Niamh, whom he bids "hide under the shadows till the tumults" die. She now plays a sweeter, more defenceless role--no longer that of the hushing mother--and, after despatching the demon whose eyes "burned/ Like wings of kingfishers" who also barks, he casts his body into the water "lest Niamh shudder." Strangely enough, along with this change in Niamh, we are given a view of the sun who "once more in saffron stept,/ Rolling his flagrant wheel out of the deep." Oisin seems to be having a return of consciousness or at least the semblance of such a return. Or perhaps it is a prelude to his next moralizing aside as he suddenly remembers again that he is talking to Saint Patrick: "But now the lying clerics murder song/ With barren

words and flatteries of the weak." This aside seems Miltonic but we shall see later that it is merely Yeatsian. Yeats obviously intends making Saint Patrick thoroughly unloveable, for his replies are either condescendingly clipped or crustily self-righteous. Obviously, these two will never agree for Saint Patrick hears the thunder as God speaking "His angry mind" and Oisin hears it as the gallop of "Fenian horses." It is the usual Christian vs. pagan type of argument. But Oisin's vigour is only a feint. He has lost himself after all, for the demon keeps renewing itself and he cannot kill it.

This time when they come up and cross over the sea, there is no sun and moon, no lady and youth. There is only "drifting greyness" and "the clangour of the wind and sea."

> 'I hear my soul drop down into decay,
> And Manannan's dark tower, stone after stone,
> Gather sea-slime and fall the seaward way,
> And the moon goad the waters night and day,
> That all be overthrown.
>
> 'But till the moon has taken all, I wage
> War on the mightiest men under the skies,
> And they have fallen or fled, age after age.
> Light is man's love, and lighter is man's rage;
> His purpose drifts and dies.' (pp. 430-31)

The soul of Oisin decays, the "dark tower"--some sort of objective correlative to his soul--crumbles from the wash of the sea, the moon is master of the waters both "night and day": total victory of the unconscious. Therefore his boast of waging "war on the mightiest men" is empty defiance. Niamh is described as "lost" as they go to the Island of Forgetfulness.

The last place, although it has green grass and "dripping trees," is the land of the dead: "For no live creatures lived there, no weasels moved in the dark." It is hard to imagine what kind of people

these sleeping giants are who "have faces alive with such beauty" and yet "weary with passions that faded when the sevenfold seas were young" (p. 435). After Oisin and Niamh lay down to "rest"--in Hell it seems--strange and sinister figures pass by them: Fergus "who feastward of old time slunk" (Fergus the feast-slinker); Cook Barach, the traitor, who was also a very poor shot with his spittle; and Dark Balor with his "mighty head sunk/ Helpless, men lifting the lids of his weary and death-making eye." This is quite a cast; they should at least be able to understudy three of the Vices (pp. 437-38). Oisin describes this existence as "living and living not," as "a long iron sleep, as a fish in the water goes dumb as a stone" (p. 438). This existence sounds like that of ghouls, of the "living dead." But "at times" their "slumber was lightened. When the sun was on silver or gold" (p. 438). It is also difficult to know what he means here. Usually the silver-gold nexus is symbolic of some kind of unity of the opposites, some kind of goal of perfection. Since he says silver or gold here, it would seem that we cannot take it in this sense for, in that case, it would be incongruous or contradictory; there can be no attaining the hard-won goal when one merely allows himself to be swallowed up by the unconscious.

When Oisin gets the roaming urge again, Niamh says to him: "But weep for your Niamh, O Oisin, weep; for if only your shoe/ Brush lightly as haymouse earth's pebbles, you will come no more to my side" (p. 440). This is almost the exact warning which the daughter of the Dragon-King gives to Urashima when he longs to go and see his family once more, the only difference being that Urashima is given a little box tied with cords--containing his soul--and is told not to open it while in the world of mortals. In the next stanza, she continues, calling

Oisin: "O flaming lion of the world," that is, he is described as a sun figure, and predicts that he shall not come back. When he rides up out of the sea, he is surprised,

> Much wondering to see upon all hands, of wattles and
> woodwork made,
> Your bell-mounted churches, and guardless the sacred
> cairn and the rath,
> And a small and a feeble populace stooping with
> mattock and spade,
>
> Or weeding or ploughing with faces a-shining with
> much-toil wet;
> While in this place and that place, with bodies
> unglorious, their chieftains stood,
> Awaiting in patience the straw-death, croziered one,
> caught in your net:
> Went the laughter of scorn from my mouth like the
> roaring of wind in a wood. (p. 443)

Here again, there is a parallel with the Japanese myth, where Urashima is surprised to see his old village so changed, so surprised that he asks an old man on the path about it. He also asks the way to his parents' house, and is given an incredulous stare in return. He asks again, and the old man finally tells him that his parents have been dead for three hundred years. When Oisin shouts at the villagers: "The Fenians hunt wolves in the night,/ So sleep thee by daytime," the answer he receives is that "The Fenians a long time are dead" (p. 443). Oisin stumbles on the path and so his three hundred years fall on him; Urashima opens the box out of curiosity and the same happens to him, but his three hundred years fall more heavily and he dies, not having had time to argue or to berate anyone.

The moral--if we may be allowed to speak of morals in this era of newer criticism--of the Japanese myth is obvious. Urashima has surrendered himself completely to his unconscious and has lost his soul. An empirical psychologist would not likely use such terminology, but I

feel sure that at the least he would describe the story in accordance with the traditional meaning as a drastic failure of the life process, a weak-kneed surrender to death, a denial of the principle of the opposites, of life. Yet, on the other hand, we have Yeats attempting to turn the legend of Oisin into a song of defiant triumph for the pagan way of life: "Homer is my example and his unchristened heart." He makes his Saint Patrick a caricature by having him gloat outrageously that

> On the flaming stones, without refuge, the
> limbs of the Fenians are tost;
> None war on the masters of Hell, who could break
> up the world in their rage;
> But kneel and wear out the flags and pray for
> your soul that is lost
> Through the demon love of its youth and its
> godless and passionate age. (p. 446)

It is not only outrageous gloating but also nonsense, for there is little use praying for your soul if it is lost. Oisin however is given, in obvious defiance of the whole meaning of the myth, the victory, pyrrhic though it is: "I will go.../ And dwell in the house of the Fenians, be they in flames or at feast." This is of course an analysis of the final version of the poem; and I am not attempting a comparative study of the various versions. Such a study would likely prove interesting, especially in connection with the later trend of Yeats's thought.

Crossways is a continuation of many of the themes Yeats has enunciated in The Wanderings of Oisin. The opening of the first poem there, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," makes this apparent:

> The woods of Arcady are dead,
> And over is their antique joy;
> Of old the world on dreaming fed;
> Grey Truth is now her painted toy;

> Yet still she turns her restless head:
> But O, sick children of the world,
> Of all the many changing things
> In dreary dancing past us whirled,
> To the cracked tune that Chronos sings,
> Words alone are certain good. (p. 7)

There is the lamentation over "the woods of Arcady"--another symbol of the unconscious--where "the world on dreaming fed," and a disgust with the world of "many changing things" where its inhabitants are "sick" and where Chronos--an objective primary figure--sings a "cracked tune." Yeats's advice is not to "worship dusty deeds" but to "go gather by the humming sea/ Some twisted, echo-harbouring shell,/ And to its lips thy story tell" (p. 8), or to go where "there is a grave/ Where daffodil and lily wave," but above all to "Dream, dream." It is at least ironic to call this shepherd "happy," for there is no appreciable difference between him and the next one in "The Sad Shepherd." Again, he is anima-dominated and cannot keep away from the "humming sands" or the "shore." But the sea-woman is again, if not soul-destroying, at least of no help, for she "changed all he sang to inarticulate moan/ Among her wildering whirls, forgetting him" (p. 9).

The prefatory remarks to the dialogue, "Anashuya and Vijaya," almost beg a psychological interpretation:

> A little Indian temple in the Golden Age. Around it a garden; around that the forest. Anashuya, the young priestess, kneeling within the temple. (p. 10)

Here we have the priestess guarding the sacred precinct, the centre of the personality, which is surrounded on all sides by outer levels of decreasing consciousness. But she is completely inexorable: "And if he love another,/ May panthers end him." She refers to Vijaya as "our king" and further emphasizes the royal origin of herself and him by saying: "May we two stand,/ When we are dead, beyond the setting suns,/

A little from the other shades apart," and--presupposing the state of self-realization--adds: "With mingling hair, and play upon one lute" (p. 11).

But the relationship is as unbalanced as that of the stereotyped modern American pair:

> Vijaya. [entering and throwing a lily at her]. Hail! hail, my Anashuya.
>
> Anashuya. No: be still.
> I, priestess of this temple, offer up
> Prayers for the land.
>
> Vijaya. I will wait here, Amrita.
>
> Anashuya. By mighty Brahma's ever-rustling robe,
> Who is Amrita? Sorrow of all sorrows!
> Another fills your mind.
>
> Vijaya. My mother's name.

I cannot help thinking that what makes the episode of the lily-throwing so amusing--despite the sacredness of the occasion and the place, and despite the fact that it is probably intended to signal the purity of Vijaya's intentions--is that it reminds one of Jiggs, come home in the middle of the night, throwing his hat into the parlour to see whether or not it will be flung out again by Maggie. The comedy continues when his hearty and ingratiating "Hail! hail" is met with such a killing rejoinder. She is so chilling and fierce that he immediately stumbles into another booboo and calls her by another's name for which mistake he is thoroughly chastised by a couple of tiger-eating oaths and then immediately accused of mental infidelity. His last reply gives us a clue to his personality: he seems to be mother-dominated. Far from detracting from the piece, the comedy enhances it and makes it thoroughly delightful.

Next, we note that Vijaya does not get into the temple and so

Anashuya comes out into the courtyard or garden. Here, there is a quite formal counterpoint of song and description which is reminiscent of the movement of opposites, of the formal dance for the Emperor representing the sun and moon alternations. First, there is Anashuya's six-line song to the stars telling them to praise Brahma, followed by a three-line description of the setting sun--Yeats is forever staging his scenes in Celtic Twilight. Vijaya responds to this latter, with a three-line description of what seems to be the moon. Then Anashuya describes the sacred flamingoes in a twelve-line stanza, finishing it with a characteristic scolding of Vijaya who does not thank her quickly enough for her kiss. Vijaya then sings his six-line song to the stars complementing Anashuya's first song and then goes on in what likely might have been a twelve-line stanza describing the pilots of the stars and complementing her earlier one on the flamingoes. But on the eleventh line he makes the fatal error of mentioning another's name; Anashuya cannot bear such a mention and charges him again with infidelity.

Here we discover the reason for their unstable relationship: Vijaya admits loving his mother and of course, psychologically speaking, he must rid himself of this power before he can take on the proper relationship with his anima. The mother lives on the "village border" and is married to a wood-cutter; that is, she has an opposite who inhabits the unconscious and, therefore, that is also her place. She is, however, still hovering about, for Vijaya says: "I saw her standing in her door but now" (p. 13). Anashuya then demands that Vijaya swear by the gods--the gods who live in the high realms of light and consciousness--that he will give up this mother complex. She then

dismisses Vijaya when he swears his oath and will not even let him speak. There is definitely no resolution to the difficulty, the soul-mate is not ready, and Anashuya prays: "And may no restless fay with fidget finger/ Trouble his sleeping: give him dreams of me" (p. 14).

The rest of the poems in Crossways, except for the three final ballads, represent either the hero's desire to escape into this deep twilight world or else depict the hero and heroine as on the verge of doing so. In "The Indian to His Love," the pair will go "murmuring softly lip to lip,/ Along the grass, along the sands,/ Murmuring how far away are the unquiet lands" (p. 15), and, in "The Falling of the Leaves," where "autumn is over," they agree to part because their "sad souls" are "weary and worn" (p. 16). In "Ephemera," "she" suggests that

> 'Although our love is waning, let us stand
> By the lone border of the lake once more,
> Together in that hour of gentleness
> When the poor tired child, Passion, falls asleep.
> How far away the stars seem, and how far
> Is our first kiss, and ah, how old my heart!' (p. 16)

They seem just about ready to welcome a horse with a "bridle of findrinny." There is no doubt either that King Goll's "madness" has something to do with the escape into the unconscious. He is reported to be the one who "drives away the Northern cold" and, like the rest of Yeats's pagan heroes, he is either revelling or calling his "loud brazen battle-cars" (p. 18). The point at which he goes mad is described as a perfect Dionysiac frenzy:

> But slowly, as I shouting slew
> And trampled in the bubbling mire,
> In my most secret spirit grew
> A whirling and a wandering fire:
> I stood: keen stars above me shone,
> Around me shone keen eyes of men:

I laughed aloud and hurried on
By rocky shore and rushy fen;
I laughed because birds fluttered by,
And starlight gleamed, and clouds flew high,
And rushes waved and waters rolled. (p. 18)

Needless to say that these "keen stars" and "keen eyes" are hallucinations, the result of desiring to live where "Orchil shakes out her long dark hair/ That hides away the dying sun/ And sheds faint odours through the air" (p. 19). The escape world however has worse penalties: "They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, the beech leaves old." "The Stolen Child," and "To An Isle in the Water" are also obviously escapist in theme. Even the poem, "The Meditation of the Old Fisherman," presents the favourite image of the couples "who paced in the eve by the nets on the pebbly shore" (p. 23). It is about this time also that Yeats was writing plays with this same theme, the enticement into the world of the faeries. The Land of Heart's Desire and Cathleen Ni Houlihan are both based upon it.

In the poems of The Rose (1893) the same dim twilight atmosphere generally prevails, and Yeats has still obviously not solved his own personal problems; but there seems to be a hint of his awareness that the path into the dim woods, the enchantment with the borders of the sea, the line of least resistance, will not bring any lasting peace. In the opening lines of "To the Rose Upon the Rood of Time," he asks the Red Rose to come near while he sings of "Cuchulain battling with the bitter tide" and of "The Druid, grey, wood-nurtured, quiet-eyed,/ Who cast round Fergus dreams, and ruin untold" (p. 35). He appears to be awakening to the dangers of the path of sheer impulse unbridled by any restraint as exemplified in his Dionysiac Irish heroes, Oisin, Cuchulain, and Fergus, when he says: "Come near,"

Lest I no more hear common things that crave;
The weak worm hiding down in its small cave,
The field-mouse running by me in the grass,
And heavy mortal hopes that toil and pass. (p. 35)

"Fergus and the Druid," however, is as plain an example of giving up responsibility as one could wish. Fergus explains to the Druid that

what to me was burden without end,
To him seemed easy, so I laid the crown
Upon his head to cast away my sorrow. (p. 36)

Paying no attention to the Druid's question, he goes on to explain his trouble:

A king and proud! and that is my despair.
I feast amid my people on the hill,
And pace the woods, and drive my chariot-wheels
In the white border of the murmuring sea;
And still I feel the crown upon my head. (p. 36)

In short, Fergus is saying that, having given up his actual authority, his conscience tells him that he should not have done so, even though he tries to forget it in revels, in battle, and by succumbing to the "murmuring sea." Finally, he directly answers the Druid's question, "What would you, Fergus?":

Be no more a king
But learn the dreaming wisdom that is yours. (p. 36)

Obviously, he does not mean "king" in the physical sense, for he has given the crown to Conchubar. He means it in the moral sense whereby he can give up the struggle of the opposites, succumb completely to the desires of the unconscious, return to the infantile state of an un-individuated psyche. It is no whim that tradition has labelled the opposing sides of the personality struggling towards a goal as "king" and "queen." But Fergus wants only a "bag of dreams" because "a king is but a foolish labourer." He can now solace himself for the loss of

his personality, his kingship, by falling back on the dangerous--in his case--doctrine of transmigration. Why worry about loss of personality if, in the next life, you are going to be "a green drop in the surge," or, in the next, "a fir-tree on a hill" (p. 37)? But this doctrine is no answer as the final lines of the poem attest.

Much the same attitude is shown by Cuchulain and his unknown son in "Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea." The ideals they hold and the oaths they swear are those of the Dionysiac nature which has a doctrine something like "All, or nothing at all." When the messenger returns, he brings the son's foolish answer:

> 'He bade me let all know he gives his name
> At the sword-point, and waits till we have found
> Some feasting man that the same oath has bound.' (p. 39)

Meetings or dealings must be honoured in revels or feasting, must be bound in blood. So he kills his son. The poem nevertheless is true to the psychology of the pagan nature. Conchubar, fearful of the fury that he knows will well up from Cuchulain's sorrow, orders the Druids to put him in a spell so that he can take out his wildness on the sea. Like King Goll and like the Roman emperor, Caligula, Cuchulain ends up a madman fighting phantoms, and we see again that drooling "philosophy" is not the only end result of giving up the struggle of life.

In the next three Rose poems, Yeats is concerned with his "queen" as some sort of religious figure, perhaps some pagan goddess, but she gives him no comfort, and "Amid men's souls.../ Lives on this lonely face" (p. 41). He is certainly hoping to find some sort of peace through his new soul-mate, "a peace of Heaven with Hell" (p. 42), that is, bring into balance the opposites of his personality. In "The Rose of Battle," he is still beside the troubled waters, and "a band/ With blown, spray-

dabbled hair gather at hand" near him. Who is this band? They must be the faery riders of the sea, Maeve and her followers, Aengus and Niamh and the rest of the sea enchanters. "Turn if you may from battles never done," he calls them as they go by, for

> Danger no refuge holds, and war no peace,
> For him who hears love sing and never cease,
> Beside her clean-swept hearth, her quiet shade:
> But gather all for whom no love hath made
> A woven silence, or but came to cast
> A song into the air, and singing passed
> To smile on the pale dawn; and gather you
> Who have sought more than is in rain or dew,
> Or in the sun and moon, or on the earth,
> Or sighs amid the wandering, starry mirth,
> Or comes in laughter from the sea's sad lips,
> And wage God's battles in the long grey ships. (p. 42)

Although the syntax is rather tortuous, I think I may be right in interpreting this as Yeats's plea for the stability which is imaged by "her clean-swept hearth, her quiet shade." But those who do not have this stability, this "woven silence," or those like the faeries who merely dance and sing between dusk and dawn, or those who have sought more than is in "sun and moon" or on "the earth," he calls to wage "God's battles in the long grey ships." Is he calling the faery people to himself as a lovelorn and as a poet and asking them to group with him and fight for God? The idea seems somewhat confused and naive when we consider who these people are and when we consider that Yeats, in seeking more than is "in the sun and moon," is actually seeking much less. But we do not yet know what he means by "God."

Then he announces that the Rose too has

> come where the dim tides are hurled
> Upon the wharves of sorrow, and heard ring
> The bell that calls us on; the sweet far thing.
> Beauty grown sad with its eternity
> Made you of us, and of the dim grey sea. (p. 43)

I can interpret "the bell" and "the sweet far thing" as nothing else

than the fatal singing of the sirens, and the quest that he calls her to join as nothing else but a further evasion of reality. What else can it be? He forecasts the end, saying that

> when at last, defeated in His wars,
> They have gone down under the same white stars,
> We shall no longer hear the little cry
> Of our sad hearts, that may not live nor die. (p. 43)

The "God" sounds suspiciously capricious and unreliable, a pagan god likely. He is still longing to be with the sea-folk, longing to live under the sea, but at the same time pretending that this longing is a result of having joined forces with the Rose in God's wars.

I pass by "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," Yeats's most representative piece on the theme of escape, and come to three small poems in which we find his soul-mate sinking into the waters of despair. In "The Pity of Love," everything is threatening her: "the folk who are buying and selling," the clouds, the winds, and finally "the shadowy hazel grove/ Where mouse-grey waters are flowing." In "The Sorrow of Love," she arose with "red mournful lips/ And seemed the greatness of the world in tears,/ Doomed like Odysseus and the labouring ships... " (p. 46). In "The White Birds," they want to go down together:

> I am haunted by numberless islands, and many a
> Danaan shore,
> Where Time would surely forget us, and Sorrow come
> near us no more;
> Soon far from the rose and the lily and fret of the
> flames we would be,
> Were we only white birds, my beloved, buoyed out on
> the foam of the sea! (p. 47)

"The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland" is again on the theme of defiance and bitter despair though an improvement in technique. Each stanza begins with the poet, or if we must, the protagonist, listening for "the sweet far thing" of the Rose poem, or wanting to be wrapped

in a "bag of dreams" like Fergus. Each location is a typical one for Yeats and each is increasingly lonely and cut off. In the first stanza, "he stood among a crowd," although he is no doubt as lonely as the man in "Innisfree" who stands on the "pavements grey," and soon succumbs to the song the fishes sing of

> a woven world-forgotten isle
> Where people love beside the ravelled seas;
> That time can never mar a lover's vows
> Under that woven changeless roof of boughs:
> The singing shook him out of his new ease. (p. 49)

He is still trying to avoid the world where a lover's vows can be marred; the "singing," unfortunately, did not shake him nearly hard enough. Next, "He wandered by the sands of Lissadell," by the sea shore, one of his favourite places because it is the entry to Aengus's world. This time, it is a lug-worm who sings

> that somewhere to north or west or south
> There dwelt a gay, exulting, gentle race
> Under the golden or the silver skies;
> That if a dancer stayed his hungry foot
> It seemed the sun and moon were in the fruit:
> And at that singing he was no more wise. (p. 50)

We have no need to ask who that "exulting" race is, for they are his old pals, the faeries, or at least the Fenians. Again, they live in a one-sided world, "under the golden or the silver skies," but not one in which the opposites are harmonized through struggle. It is not completely clear what the following two lines mean, but I would guess that Yeats, at this time, conceives faeryland, where all is feasting and dancing, as a place where there is no bitter fruit, that is, where one need only pick to find the fruit of harmony and balance and not have to make the arduous climb of the world tree for it. F.A.C. Wilson explains the connection between the world tree and the sun and moon as traditional: "In his translation of Kabbala Unveiled, Mathers explains that the

typical Kabbalistic representation of the Tree of Life is as an apple tree, which grows from the earth to the apex of heaven and bears the sun and moon for fruit; its image grows within the soul of every man and connects him with God."[1] We have also noted, in the previous chapter, a similar idea in Japanese legend.

In the third stanza, the protagonist muses "beside the well of Scanavin," obviously contemplating suicide, a suicide which would have become a "country tale"--like that in "The Tower" of the man who drowned in the "great bog of Cloone." This time, however, the "knot-grass" interrupts his suicidal mood--and he calls it an "unnecessary cruel voice" for doing so--by singing where

> Old silence bids its chosen race rejoice,
> Whatever ravelled waters rise and fall
> Or stormy silver fret the gold of day,
> And midnight there enfold them like a fleece
> And lover there by lover be at peace. (p. 50)

It is of course still the world of faery where the "chosen race rejoice" regardless of the world where the struggle must be kept up, where "stormy silver" frets "the gold of day." In the faery world, there is no struggle: "lover there by lover" can "be at peace." We must remember this in its connection with the swans of "The Wild Swans at Coole." The swans he sees as living in this faery world as well:

> Unwearied still, lover by lover,
> They paddle in the cold
> Companionable streams or climb the air;
> Their hearts have not grown old;
> Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
> Attend upon them still. (p. 147)

In the last stanza, he is dead, but even in death he is able to hear the the proclamation of the worms which tell him that it is from God's

1 F.A.C. Wilson, Yeats's Iconography, p. 250.

fingers that "glittering summer runs/ Upon the dancer by the dreamless wave." Does he mean that the world of faery, the world undersea, the world one goes to by succumbing from the struggle, is a type of authorized heaven? Or is he merely speaking of God as the peacock, the great herne, and of this place as a type of pagan heaven? At any rate, he predicts some kind of apocalypse where "God" will "burn Nature with a kiss." Death, however, is no answer, for he "has found no comfort in the grave."

Yeats is inwardly suffering, there is no doubt, in the following poems, where he abuses Ireland, "that country where a man can be so crossed"(p. 51), and he is considering himself prematurely old in "The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner." He is here taking a bitter and critical look at himself, and one feels that this little poem is breaking through all the films of "fleeces," "dreams," and purple twilights, into something sharp and clear devoid of sentiment and pity. The images are all jagged and piercing, the "broken tree" of the first and last stanzas and the "pikes" of the middle stanza, the lines are as simple as sword-strokes, and there is the reiteration of the awareness that he is "transfigured" by Time. He seems, temporarily at least, to have gotten rid of his dreamy burden, to have become aware of his shadow, and he finishes the poem in clear defiance:

> I spit into the face of Time
> That has transfigured me. (p. 52)

In "The Two Trees," which follows shortly after this, Yeats literally flowers out with a sudden new richness. He has no need now of contrived images or tortured syntax, and the words begin to flow smoothly, at least much more smoothly than before. He is now seeing

himself, his inner self, as a more unified thing; he is no longer avoiding the dark side but facing it. If he is still uneasy, it is because he has newly confronted something he would not admit before.

> Beloved, gaze in thine own heart,
> The holy tree is growing there;
> From joy the holy branches start,
> And all the trembling flowers they bear.
> The changing colours of its fruit
> Have dowered the stars with merry light;
> The surety of its hidden root
> Has planted quiet in the night;
> The shaking of its leafy head
> Has given the waves their melody,
> And made my lips and music wed,
> Murmuring a wizard song for thee. (p. 54-5)

Surely here there is a distinct change of tone, an attitude of happiness and freedom not often seen in the earlier poems. He obviously feels more at one with outward things, the "stars" are "dowered" with "merry light," the "waves" are melodious, and his own "lips," his poetic voice, are "wed" to the "music" of the universe, uniting him more surely to his soul-mate. He no longer leans over the shore with her but is joyously "gyring, spiring to and fro."

It is true that the complementary stanza centres on the dark half of the personality, but he does not speak of it in confusion or fear but with a certain objectivity. It is a warning to himself to

> Gaze no more in the bitter glass
> The demons, with their subtle guile,
> Lift up before us when they pass,
> Or only gaze a little while. (p. 55)

This "dim glass the demons hold" is the state of unawareness of the animal side because this side has not been brought into consciousness. Newly released into consciousness after long repression, it can be terrifying:

The ravens of unresting thought;
Flying, crying, to and fro,
Cruel claw and hungry throat.... (p. 55)

In the final two poems of The Rose, Yeats is preoccupied with this new-found dark side of the personality. He comes to a further insight into its nature in "To Some I Have Talked With By the Fire":

While I wrought out these fitful Danaan rhymes,
My heart would brim with dreams about the times
When we bent down above the fading coals
And talked of the dark folk who live in souls
Of passionate men, like bats in the dead trees;
And of the wayward twilight companies
Who sigh with mingled sorrow and content,
Because their blossoming dreams have never bent
Under the fruit of evil and of good.... (p. 56)

There plainly is an obvious reference to his dark side, imaged in the infantile instinctual form of "bats." Could the other member of "we" be Maude Gonne? I would guess so, because, in "Among School Children," she was described as "a Ledaean body, bent/ Above a sinking fire...," and Yeats, like most great artists, usually keeps faithfully to certain associations and attitudes to describe recurrent subjects in his work. He also remembers that they talked of the faery-folk, the "twilight companies" and the "embattled flaming multitude," and makes a comment about them that he has not done before. These people are not the idyllically happy people he had thought; they "sigh with mingled sorrow and content." Why? It is "because their blossoming dreams have never bent/ Under the fruit of evil and of good." The price of blossoming in the world of Adam is bending and suffering the struggle of evil and good; but, in the world of the faeries, there is no real blossoming because there is no struggle.

In "To Ireland in the Coming Times," Yeats makes further remarks about his connections with poetry, marking out a distinction between

his role as a public poet and a private poet, and what part the "elemental creatures" play in this two-fold allegiance. "Know," he says,

> that I would accounted be
> True brother of a company
> That sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong,
> Ballad and story, rann and song;
> Nor be I any less of them,
> Because the red-rose-bordered hem
> Of her, whose history began
> Before God made the angelic clan,
> Trails all about the written page. (p. 56)

He says that he is just as much a patriot poet, writing verse with the purpose of helping or complaining about the Irish cause, as are Davis, Mangan, and Ferguson, despite the fact that his poetry is interwoven with the strands of his studies in the occult. In fact, he says in the second stanza, he should not be considered less one of them

> Because, to him who ponders well,
> My rhymes more than their rhyming tell
> Of things discovered in the deep,
> Where only body's laid asleep.
> For the elemental creatures go
> About my table to and fro,
> That hurry from unmeasured mind
> To rant and rage in flood and wind;
> Yet he who treads in measured ways
> May surely barter gaze for gaze.
> Man ever journeys on with them
> After the red-rose-bordered hem.
> Ah, faeries, dancing under the moon,
> A Druid land, a Druid tune! (p. 57)

I interpret broadly that he considers a poetry of Ireland not just a description of historic events but also of the inner soul of pagan Ireland, of events from Anima Mundi, of the race memory, which are only to be discovered by following "the red-rose-bordered hem," his occult studies, and by allowing the contents of Anima Mundi to come into his consciousness through dreams and visions, i.e., "where only body's laid asleep." These things, the "elemental creatures," the faeries

"dancing under the moon," are essentially, he believes, a part of the Irish heritage. Ireland is "a Druid land" and therefore he must sing "a Druid tune." There is a definite increase in objectivity in these latter poems.

After the breakthrough from his despairing moods represented by the last few poems, the poems of The Wind Among the Reeds (1899) are a definite retrogression. Many of them are mere dressed-up snatches of dream, dreary trivial things which he has caught from the night before of troubled sleep: "I bring you with reverent hands/ The books of my numberless dreams... " (p. 70). Many are mere repetitions of his encounters with his anima, and these encounters still are troubled and imperfect. Either she is over-protective, "The shadowy blossom of my hair/ Will hide us from the bitter storm" (p. 67), or else he wants to be protected from the "Shadowy Horses" of his dreams and visions:

> Beloved, let your eyes half close, and your heart beat
> Over my heart, and your hair fall over my breast,
> Drowning love's lonely hour in deep twilight of rest,
> And hiding their tossing manes and their tumultuous feet. (p. 69)

Sometimes, as in "The Cap and Bells," his anima at first rejects him:

> But the young queen would not listen;
> She rose in her pale night-gown;
> She drew in the heavy casement
> And pushed the latches down. (p. 72)

Then, unaccountably, she receives him:

> She opened her door and her window,
> And the heart and the soul came through,
> To her right hand came the red one,
> To her left hand came the blue. (p. 72)

There is also here the complementarity, the reds and the blues, the rights and the lefts, so common in psychic phenomena. Sometimes, she takes on a sinister or elfin aspect:

I dreamed that I stood in a valley, and amid sighs,
For happy lovers passed two by two where I stood;
And I dreamed my lost love came stealthily out of the wood.... (p. 74)

These changing aspects of Yeats's anima are not unusual. Jolande Jacobi once again explains that "the variety of forms in which the soul-image may appear is well-nigh inexhaustible. It is seldom unequivocal, almost always complex and ambiguous; the traits belonging to it must be typical of one or the other sex, but otherwise may embody all sorts of contradictions. The anima can equally well take the form of a sweet young maiden, a goddess, a witch, an angel, a demon, a beggar woman, a whore, a devoted companion, an amazon, etc."[1]

In these poems also, there is markedly noticeable the dreary influence of the Pre-Raphaelites. Pale "eyelids" and "brows," "pearl-pale hands," "dream-dimmed eyes," and long dim "hair," are epithets which he uses over and over in this volume, but which are certainly not original with him. Again, he is affecting the chryselephantine style of Rossetti when he opens a poem with the line: "When the flaming lute-thronged angelic door is wide" (p. 78). He also borrows another Rossetti or Swinburne habit in several poems where he mixes Christian images, Christ's Passion, The Magi, with images of sensuousness:

Our hearts endure the scourge, the plaited thorns,
the way
Crowded with bitter faces, the wounds in palm and
side,
The vinegar-heavy sponge, the flowers by Kedron
stream;
We will bend down and loosen our hair over you,
That it may drop faint perfume, and be heavy with
dew,
Lilies of death-pale hope, roses of passionate dream. (pp. 78-9)

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 112.

The last line is a real staple of Tennysonian and Pre-Raphaelite poetic merchandise. It reminds one immediately of Swinburne's lines: "The lilies and langours of virtue,/ For the raptures and roses of vice." It is also just as much a purposeful mockery of the Christian ideal.

He continues, however, some of his previous subjects such as the faeries and their connections with the sun and moon symbols. In "The Hosting of the Sidhe," Niamh tells him that

> if any gaze on our rushing band,
> We come between him and the deed of his hand,
> We come between him and the hope of his heart. (p. 61)

Apparently he feels that his dreams of "elemental creatures" are hindering him both in his work and in his love quest. In "The Everlasting Voices," there is this same note of ambiguity towards the faeries when he tells them: "O sweet everlasting Voices, be still."

His feeling of opposition within himself is expressed in "Into The Twilight":

> Out-worn heart, in a time out-worn,
> Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;
> Laugh, heart, again in the grey twilight,
> Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn. (p. 65)

In order to end this frustrating division, he calls his heart to join in the cosmic process:

> 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. (p. 66)

But the very fact that he only laughs "in the grey twilight," the time of the imagination, of the faery activity, and that he sighs "again in the dew of the morn," means that he is not realizing any sort of balance within himself. The poem, therefore, ends on the note of

hopelessness with which it began.

"The Song of Wandering Aengus" is obviously another attempt at finding the answer to his disharmony. The "girl/ With apple blossom in her hair"--who is thus connected with his world-tree anima--has "faded through the brightening air," and he is determined to search for her though it take him the rest of his life. He says he

> will find out where she has gone,
> And kiss her lips and take her hands;
> And walk among long dappled grass,
> And pluck till time and times are done
> The silver apples of the moon,
> The golden apples of the sun. (p. 67)

Here, at least, he seems to realize that the union of opposites is an arduous task. There is a close connection, of course, between this image of plucking the sun and moon and that of the second stanza of "The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland." Again, realizing the union with his anima is conceived of as arriving in faeryland. William York Tyndall says that, although the first two stanzas of this poem are from a dream, "the sun, moon, and apple of the third stanza are conscious occult symbols meaning intellect, imagination, and the tree of good and evil."[1] This, of course, is merely to say that the sun represents consciousness and the moon the unconscious.

In a small twelve-line poem shortly after this (p. 68), the whole question is once more threshed out, and in it are combined images from The Wanderings of Oisin, "Into the Twilight," and "The Song of Wandering Aengus." The pursuit image of the "hound with one red ear" following the "white deer with no horns" has been introduced in Oisin as a sun-moon parallel. He has been changed, he says, and now realizes

1 William York Tyndall, "The Symbolism of W.B. Yeats," Yeats: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 51.

that his calling "is but the calling of a hound," that is, he must pursue his mate--but this could also be taken to mean that he must follow the moon as an ideal--while "Time and Birth and Change are hurrying by." But now comes the difficulty. He realizes what he must do, but, because for so long he has not joined in pursuit, he finds it terribly difficult, and so the poem ends again on a note of savage disgust:

> I would that the Boar without bristles had come from
> the West
> And had rooted the sun and moon and stars out of the sky
> And lay in the darkness, grunting, and turning to his
> rest. (p. 68)

The rest of this volume is filled out with poems expressing various degrees of despair and frustration.

The first few poems of the next volume, In The Seven Woods (1904), are hardly memorable, and the nature of their themes can be gained by citing their titles: "The Folly of Being Comforted," "Old Memory," "Never Give All the Heart." With "The Withering of the Boughs," which has a certain wavering metrical beauty together with the mesmeric effect of repetition of certain words, we return once more to the theme of his anima quest. In the first stanza, he is on the "roads" which "are unending" and he falls asleep under the moon. We are once again prepared for the description of the dream. In stanza two, we are in the dream world where one aspect of the anima--"the witches" who "come with their crowns of pearl and their spindles of wool,/ And their secret smile, out of the depths of the lake" (p. 88)--is seen, and where the faeries dance. In the last stanza, the picture of "a king and a queen" who "are wandering there" so "happy and hopeless" (p. 88), together with their counterparts, the "swans" who "fly round/

Coupled with golden chains," take us both back to "The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland" and ahead to "The Wild Swans at Coole" by relating the king-queen image of the union of opposites to the swan image, "lover by lover." Giorgio Melchiori, in an editorial note which he adds to a quotation from the second volume of Madame Blavatsky's The Secret Doctrine, shows that, in her system, "the White Swan from the Starry Vault" is equivalent to the moon.[1]

Three other poems in this volume also describe dreams which reveal varying attitudes of Yeats towards his anima expressed in sun-moon or gold-silver oppositions. In fact, the three titles, "Under the Moon," "The Ragged Wood," and "The Happy Townland," are now Yeatsian euphemisms for "dream." They might easily have been titled "Dream One," "Dream Two," and "Dream Three." "Under The Moon" merely expresses his opinion that

> Because of something told under the famished horn
> Of the hunter's moon, that hung between the night
> and the day,
> To dream of women whose beauty was folded in
> dismay,
> Even in an old story, is a burden not to be borne. (p. 92)

Earlier in the poem, he merely lists particular mythical women that he finds no happiness in dreaming of, nor happiness in dreaming of

> lands that seem too dim to be burdens on the
> heart:
> Land-under-Wave, where out of the moon's light and
> the sun's
> Seven old sisters wind the threads of the long-lived
> ones,
> Land-of-the-Tower.... (p. 91)

His own personal love is enough without taking on all the anima figures of Anima Mundi or the collective unconscious.

In "The Ragged Wood," after drawing on the images of "stag and his lady" and "queen-woman of the sky" and sun as lover-pairs, Yeats again

1 Giorgio Melchiori, The Whole Mystery of Art, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960, pp. 141-42.

emphasizes--only more vehemently--his wish for more personal involvement:

> O hurry to the ragged wood, for there
> I will drive all those lovers out and cry--
> O my share of the world, O yellow hair!
> No one has ever loved but you and I. (p. 92)

"The Happy Townland" mainly expresses the antithesis between the world of dreams and that of reality by contrasting the endless revel and ease of the faeries, where "Queens, their eyes blue like the ice,/ Are dancing in a crowd," and the endless harmony of that world, where "they unhook their heavy swords/ From golden and silver boughs;/ But all that are killed in battle/ Awaken to life again," against the world of the farmer where a "heart would break in two" and where men walk "on wet roads" (pp. 94-6). The refrain just repeats again Yeats's inability to bring the two together, even on a relative level:

> <u>But the little red fox murmured,</u>
> <u>"O do not pluck at his rein,</u>
> <u>He is riding to the townland</u>
> <u>That is the world's bane."</u> (p. 96)

## Chapter III

## The Myth and the Poetry of Yeats

### Part II: From The Green Helmet to Michael Robartes and the Dancer

The Green Helmet and Other Poems (1910) is, as has often been noted, a new start again for Yeats. It is in the years preceding the publication of this volume that he formulates his doctrine of the Mask. He is hard at work in the cause of the Irish Theatre Movement, not just writing plays but also directing them and accepting responsibility as a director in its everyday affairs. He no longer will mope in the woods and moonlit landscapes of his dreams, and what poetry he is writing at this time has a new firmness of tone, a new clarity of purpose, a new objectivity in its subject matter.

There is little doubt that this change in Yeats had something to do with Maude Gonne's marriage to John MacBride in 1903. Regardless of his liaison with Diana Vernon in the nineties, he had never stopped loving Maude, and later he described the news of her marriage as blinding and deafening him. Richard Ellmann speaks of the occasion in these words: "Yeats did not know what to do. Then he went through with his lecture, and afterwards members of the audience congratulated him on its excellence, but he could never remember a word of what he had said."[1] There is no doubt that it was both a killing and a transforming experience in Yeats's life. Ellmann goes on to enlarge upon it, comparing it to a wind that uprooted and toppled his trees. "The forest he had planted," he says, "with so much tenderness and care toppled

1 Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1958, pp. 159-60.

suddenly and left

> Roots half hidden under snows,
> Broken boughs and blackened leaves.

He was broad-awake and thirty-seven years old, half of his life over. What would he do now that his most cherished dream was gone?"[1] The lines of Ellmann's quotation, with which he compares the event, are from "The Two Trees," a poem which Yeats had written long before this. Nevertheless, there is a poem in the Green Helmet volume which, it seems to me, is much more pertinent to the change noted in Yeats's life at this time.

Oddly enough, this poem, "His Dream," is the very first in a series of poems which are decidedly objective in content and which avoid the dream world of In The Seven Woods. It is obviously a poem at the turning-point and its topic, appropriately enough, deals with a most decided change, that of death. Whose death? Obviously not Yeats's, for he is swaying upon the "gaudy stern" of the boat using "the butt-end of a steering-oar" and reacting in various ways to the crowd "running at the brim." I suggest that it is Maude Gonne's death, that is, in so far as he is concerned, in so far as he can no longer project his soul-image upon her. The crowd asks: "What is the figure in a shroud/ Upon a gaudy bed?" Yeats gives us very little in the way of identification: we know that "it had such dignity of limb" and also that the "running crowd" and Yeats, on the "gaudy ship,"

> Cried out the whole night long,
>
> Crying amid the glittering sea,
> Naming it with ecstatic breath,

1 Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and The Masks, p. 160.

Because it had such dignity,
By the sweet name of Death. (p. 99)

Surely it is someone of utmost importance to Yeats that he could cry "out the whole night long" with the crowd and name "it with ecstatic breath," and someone that he reverenced as a goddess that he could describe it has having "such dignity of limb" and universalize it in the appellation "sweet name of Death."

Jolande Jacobi explains that "as in dealing with the shadow and all unconscious contents, we must distinguish between an inner and an outward manifestation. We encounter the inner form of animus or anima in our dreams, fantasies, visions, and other expressions of the unconscious when they disclose contrasexual traits of our own psyche; we are dealing with the outward form when we project a part or the whole of our unconscious psyche upon someone in our environment and fail to realize that this other person who confronts us is in a way our own inner self."[1] I am suggesting that Yeats has realized that he can no longer have Maude Gonne, that she is no longer available as someone to project his anima upon, and that, once again, he will have to withdraw that projection and seek her in himself. The locale of the dream or the poem, the boat on the sea, is also strangely appropriate to such a withdrawal. Reluctant as Yeats is, it seems that there is nothing that he can do to avoid it:

Though I'd my finger on my lip,
What could I but take up the song?

It seems that he is forced to take her back into the sea, the unconscious.

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 111.

Whether or not my suggestion is true, at least Dr. Jacobi provides an example of this kind of event in another famous poet. In speaking of Goethe's Faust, she says:

> In the first half Gretchen carries the projection of Faust's anima. But the tragic end of this relationship compels him to withdraw the projection from the outside world and to seek this part of his psyche in himself. He finds it in another world, in the 'underworld' of his unconscious, symbolized by Helen of Troy. The second part of Faust portrays an individuation process with all its archetypal figures; Helen is the typical anima figure, Faust's soul image. He wrestles with it in different transformations and on different levels up to its supreme manifestation, the Mater Gloriosa. Only then is he redeemed, permitted to enter the world of eternity where all the opposites are transcended.[1]

Again, I suggest that Yeats makes a similar struggle andthat he encounters his anima next as Maude Gonne-Helen of Troy.

Several of the next poems are about Maude Gonne in the shape of Helen. "A Woman Homer Sung" expresses, in the short space of three small stanzas, almost the whole past history of his adoration for her, the present state of his acceptance of his role in relation to her, and his future vision of her. In the first stanza, he was deadly jealous of any men who approached her, and, at the same time, hated them if they "could pass her by/ With an indifferent eye." In the second, now that he has acquired his art at the expense of the body, he can at least solace himself that he has immortalized her in song for coming generations just as Homer had done for Helen. In the third, the memory comes rushing back so that he cannot help exclaiming that

> she had fiery blood
> When I was young,
> And trod so sweetly proud
> As 'twere upon a cloud,

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, pp. 119-20.

A woman Homer sung,
That life and letters seem
But an heroic dream. (p. 100)

The past and present associations are so intense for him that they blend and create the state of vision, "an heroic dream."

The next two poems, "Words" and "No Second Troy," are equally beautiful and touching because of the objectivity with which he can look now at their relationship. There is no doubt, as these poems show, that he has undergone a kind of suffering and death, for it is true now that "words obey" his "call." Not only is his art transfigured and powerful, but the quality of his love for her has changed to something verging upon adoration, making all excuses for her: it is now the love of giving and not of taking. "Why should I blame her that she filled my days/ With misery," he says. He accepts her as she is and loves her still:

Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
Was there another Troy for her to burn? (p. 101)

"Reconciliation" is the poem in which he describes his reaction to the news of her marriage, "on the day

When, the ears being deafened, the sight of the eyes
blind
With lightning, you went from me, and I could find
Nothing to make a song about but kings,
Helmets, and swords, and half-forgotten things
That were like memories of you--but now
We'll out, for the world lives as long ago;
And while we're in our laughing, weeping fit,
Hurl helmets, crowns, and swords into the pit. (p. 102)

"Peace" is another fine little poem in which he cleverly captures the flash of tension and ambiguity as he plays, sun-like, between the opposites of time and timelessness, life and art:

Ah, that Time could touch a form
That could show what Homer's age
Bred to be a hero's wage.

It seems here that "Ah" is a sigh of regret, expressing sorrow that Time could touch such a woman. He goes on to praise her as a subject for artists, and ends with:

> Ah, but peace that comes at length,
> Came when Time had touched her form. (p. 103)

Here there is the surprise, the revelation, that Time, also an artist, an even greater artist than men, can produce greater beauty and, what is more, peace by touching her.

In "Against Unworthy Praise," he realizes that the new outlook upon her has not only brought a happy indifference to what others think--"Nor knave nor dolt can break/ What's not for their applause"--but that it has also brought positive gain in the renewal of his strength for his art.

With the new level of objectivity, there is also new wisdom and, with it, new arrogance. This is not unusual after a psychic readjustment such as Yeats probably had. There are many terse little thrusts, almost oracular in form:

> Though leaves are many, the root is one;
> Through all the lying days of my youth
> I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
> Now I may wither into the truth. (p. 105)

The accompanying arrogance--perfectly understandable--is there also:

> You say, as I have often given tongue
> In praise of what another's said or sung,
> 'Twere politic to do the like by these;
> But was there ever dog that praised his fleas? (p. 105)

Mirroring the objectivity also is the frequent use here of the sun, or other objective, "primary" images, as symbols. He compares himself to a lion when he says: "Enough if the work has seemed,/ So did she your strength renew,/ A dream that a lion had dreamed... " (p. 103).

In "The Mask," the mask itself, symbol of the persona which is in direct relation to his anima, representing his new extrovert attitude, is made of "burning gold." In "Upon A House Shaken by the Land Agitation," he describes the aristocratic natures which are bred in such houses:

> How should the world be luckier if this house,
> Where passion and precision have been one
> Time out of mind, became too ruinous
> To breed the lidless eye that loves the sun?
> And the sweet laughing eagle thoughts that grow
> Where wings have memory of wings, and all
> That comes of the best knit to the best? (p. 106)

We know, of course, from other of his poems that the eagle is also an "objective" symbol, and also, from tradition, that both lion and eagle are emblems of kings and emperors. In "These Are the Clouds," we have perhaps a forecast or inkling of the development of his cyclical theory:

> These are the clouds about the fallen sun,
> The majesty that shuts his burning eye:
> The weak lay hand on what the strong has done,
> Till that be tumbled that was lifted high
> And discord follow upon unison,
> And all things at one common level lie. (pp. 107-8)

Despite his loss which has given him his new freedom, Yeats is feeling the strength in himself, feeling himself something of a king especially in the command, insight, and arrogance of his poetry. In this last poem, there is a quality which is completely Shakespearian, especially the Shakespeare who preaches the majesty and divinity of kingship. There is in "At Galway Races" also the note of arrogance in contrasting "horsemen" with the "merchant and the clerk" and also another mention of something which sounds like his cyclical theory.

The volume of 1914, Responsibilities, contains many of his old

themes handled with a continuing assurance of authority and knowledge of his power. If I were asked to pick any one theme as the central one of this book, I would choose that of the lonely king. Yeats has learned to use his mask, but he cannot hide the loneliness that exists behind it. There is also some mention of the Helen theme, some poems again glorifying the Dionysiac ideal, some, especially the Paudeen poems, expressing his aristocratic tendencies, and, for the first time, he leans heavily on the theme of the beggar.

In "The Three Beggars," King Guaire, apparently not finding answers to his questions amid the wisemen of his court, turns to the three beggars whom he meets. While being amused by their flippant answers, he does not really find in them any wisdom, although they respectively suggest that happiness is sex, dignity, and sport. They are unprincipled, and even in their poverty and need they cannot overcome their greed at the thought of the reward and brazenly sham their sleep. They represent, no doubt, the mob, the absolutely vicious element of humanity. It is significant that they are compared to dogs, forever caught by "the frenzy of the beggars' moon," dogs that "shouted till their anger grew/ And they were whirling in a heap" (p. 126).

By contrast, in the opening and closing sections, the other kind of life is represented in "the old crane of Gort." He sits back and waits but does not get anything and is hungry. I think that Yeats means to represent the suffering inactive Christian by the crane making him look even more ridiculous than the pagan beggars:

> It's certain there are trout somewhere
> And maybe I shall take a trout
> If but I do not seem to care. (p. 126)

The unprincipled and the patient, the antithetical and the primary man: which way should one go? Old Guaire, or Yeats, has not found any satisfactory answer. "Running to Paradise" harks on much the same theme with its refrain: "And there the king is but as the beggar" (p. 129). It is appropriate here also that Yeats has written his famous poem "The Magi." Apart from its obvious connection with future poems on the inception of the historical cycles such as "The Second Coming," "Leda and the Swan," and "The Mother of God," it also repeats the idea of the lonely king. The three kings, "the pale unsatisfied ones," are also on a journey hoping to find "the uncontrollable mystery." In "That The Night Come," "her soul" is compared to "a king"

> That packed his marriage day
> With banneret and pennon,
> Trumpet and kettledrum,
> And the outrageous cannon,
> To bundle time away
> That the night come. (p. 140)

The lonely king is searching and sifting, asking beggars, queens, former poet friends, patriot friends, still travelling on the road, but with gnawing dissatisfaction.

He still keeps wrestling with the anima figure of Helen. "When Helen Lived" comes to the realization that, immortal as Helen may be through the artist's song, she was probably quite human, and perhaps even a subject of jest to her contemporaries as she walked the walls of Troy "with her boy" (p. 124). But his deeper feeling for Maude Gonne is more nearly expressed in "Fallen Majesty." Here is the Helen that receives his unlimited homage. Even if the crowd's admiration is a fickle thing, his "hand alone" will record her for posterity.

> The lineaments, a heart that laughter has made sweet,
> These, these remain, but I record what's gone. A crowd
> Will gather, and not know it walks the very street
> Whereon a thing once walked that seemed a burning cloud. (p. 138)

In "Friends," regardless of what conscious attitude he may take toward her from time to time, he expresses his ultimate helplessness before her image:

> When day begins to break
> I count my good and bad,
> Being wakeful for her sake,
> Remembering what she had,
> What eagle look still shows,
> While up from my heart's root
> So great a sweetness flows
> I shake from head to foot. (p. 139)

The Dionysiac themes are still obvious here and there. There is some fine picture painting of the gods at their revels "at Slievenamon" in "The Grey Rock." There are also the modern Irish heroes mourned in "September 1913." They are like Oisin returning from Land-Under-Wave to find no answer to the question:

> And what, God help us, could they save?
> Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
> It's with O'Leary in the grave. (p. 121)

Yeats brings back the shade of Parnell only to tell him: "Away, away! You are safer in the tomb" (p. 123). In "The Hour Before Dawn," there is again the return to the idea of giving up the struggle. In the person of the sleeper who has gotten the liquor of the immortals--"the beer/ I dragged from Goban's mountain-top" (p. 131)--he expresses again the impulsive Dionysiac hero's way of avoiding sorrow. If it is not the sinking into the sea of Oisin, the revelling of Fergus, the blood lust of Cuchulain, then it is the alcoholism of the sleeper of this piece. Crawl into a hole, stay in bed and never get up, dive into the sea, retreat into insanity! All these actions are justifiable

if one believes in the Dionysiac tenet that "all life longs for the Last Day... " (p. 133). At any rate, he juxtaposes with the drunkard another type of antithetical man, the cursing beggar, who does not mind sheltering for the night in a cairn, or pagan grave.

Out of this seeking, of this weighing of two attitudes towards life, Yeats sees no alternative but that of nakedness. Between the moon-crazed beggars and the weak inactive crane, between the "pale unsatisfied" kings who travel to the birth of Christ and the toper drunk with the wine of the gods, he cannot make up his mind although he is strongly attracted towards the "lunar" principle. "The Cold Heaven" seems to be a confession of this terrible confusion:

> And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
> Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
> Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to
> quicken,
> Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent
> Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken
> By the injustice of the skies for punishment? (p. 140)

He seems to be reaching a new breaking point in his struggle to come to some harmony with the opposites. He must, at this time, have alternately felt like a flea-bitten beggar and a starving contemplative crane. What has he but his "priceless things," his poetry, his work for the Irish theatre, his belief in an aristocratic ideal, in traditional wisdom, which "are but a post the passing dogs defile"? Yet he still has his artist's personality and potentiality, the integrity of his belief:

> Song, let them take it,
> For there's more enterprise
> In walking naked. (p. 142)

He feels himself reduced to the position of Lear walking bare-headed on the heath.

In the strain and struggle of Responsibilities, there has been little mention of the sun and moon symbols proper. They have been replaced by varying human counterparts. In this trying period, the struggle of the opposing sides of the personality has been removed from the level of the purely legendary and occult and has been brought down into the world he is working in. It is here, in Ireland, in the weather, at the theatre, at the grave, in the shop, on the roads, that he has decided to find himself and come to a balance.

In the volume of 1919, The Wild Swans at Coole, there is a continuing struggle for balance and then at least a temporary peace which levels out onto a new and wider plane. Since the time of the Responsibilities volume, of course, there has intervened the First World War and troubles in Ireland, Yeats's loneliness and his second rejection by Maude Gonne after her husband died in 1916, then his marriage in 1917 which gave him a measure of stability, and the work in establishing his tower-home at Thoor Ballylee, and the preparation of his system in A Vision. Therefore, there are many new themes and the continuation of many old ones.

There is still the continuing praise of the aristocratic, antithetical ideal, especially in connection with Robert Gregory, and its elaboration into types personified by various friends. Gregory is the simple and proud "soldier, scholar, horseman" who, as an Irish airman, goes to the war because "a lonely impulse of delight/ Drove to this tumult in the clouds" (p. 152). John Synge, his former poet friend, had gone "towards nightfall upon a certain set apart/ In a most desolate stony place,/ Towards nightfall upon a race/ Passionate and simple like his heart" (p. 149). George Pollexfen, who in "muscular

youth" was certainly a type of this proud antithetical man, strangely enough, in the latter half of his life, had "grown sluggish and contemplative," a process which is almost the reverse of Yeats's own experience. There is also the fisherman, closely modelled on Synge, that is thought of as "cold and passionate as the dawn." He is so proud and simple and antithetical that he is "a man who does not exist,/ A man who is but a dream" (p. 167). There are also the female counterparts, sometimes still referring to Maude Gonne and her daughter Iseult, who might

> Have walked to the altar
> Through the holy images
> At Pallas Athene's side,
> Or been fit spoil for a centaur
> Drunk with the unmixed wine. (p. 172)

Maude Gonne is definitely referred to in such poems as "His Phoenix" and "Broken Dreams," where she is familiarly described as "that sprightly girl trodden by a bird," a description which is both reminiscent of the Helen poems in the Green Helmet volume and predicative of "Leda and the Swan." In "Broken Dreams," she is firmly connected to the proud solitary swan who "will run/ And paddle to the wrist/ In that mysterious, always brimming lake" (p. 173). There is also the brave gay sister of Aubrey Beardsley, with her aristocratic dolls, who, in facing death, is connected with the swan character:

> What if a laughing eye
> Have looked into your face?
> It is about to die. (p. 180)

The birds he writes of in this volume are also symbolic of the antithetical aristocratic ideal. We have already seen this in connection with Maude Gonne, but in "The Wild Swans at Coole," the swans are described:

Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still. (p. 147)

The hawk, traditional bird of aristocracy and kings, is also the subject of a poem in which it says:

'I will not be clapped in a hood,
Nor a cage, nor alight upon wrist,
Now I have learnt to be proud
Hovering over the wood
In the broken mist
Or tumbling cloud.' (pp. 167-68)

Although, from this passage, we need little proof of it, F.A.C. Wilson notes the traditional association of the hawk with the moon. In discussing the woman of the Sidhe in The Only Jealousy of Emer, he notes her connection with Fand, the hawk goddess of At The Hawk's Well, who "stands for heavenly beauty because her symbol is the full moon, an emblem which is given her in the first place at the level of nature-myth, but also serves to relate her to the fifteenth of Yeats's 'lunar phases': to the fifteenth rebirth."[1]

The cat and the race-horse are also animal symbols of this ideal. In "The Cat and the Moon," Minnaloushe is described as "the nearest kin of the moon" and as creeping

through the grass
Alone, important and wise,
And lifts to the changing moon
His changing eyes. (p. 189)

The horse, which, as a racer or hunter, is always connected with members of the landed aristocracy such as Gregory and Pollexfen, has, of course, other traditional associations. It is connected with the primary symbol through the myth of Apollo and his sun-chargers. In The King's Threshold, Yeats connects it with the opposites of sun and moon when

1 F.A.C. Wilson, Yeats's Iconography, p. 104.

he has the king welcome the pupils of Seanchan, describing them as having "the mastery/ Of two kinds of Music: the one kind/ Being like a woman, the other like a man." The first kind of music is that of stringed instruments which mingle "words and notes together." The second kind is that of the "twisted horn," and those who play it "understand the notes"

> That lacking words escape Time's chariot;
> For the high angels that drive the horse of Time--
> The golden one by day, by night the silver--
> Are not more welcome to one that loves the world
> For some fair woman's sake.1

But more often Yeats uses the horse in connection with the antithetical lunar side of his system. It is the antithetical poet's winged horse, Pegasus,--Japanese myth also has its "lunar" horse of poetry, Kirin--it is the war-steed of the impulsive, Dionysiac Fenians like Cuchulain, it is the sea-horse of the faeries with bridles of "findrinny," and, in transformation, the unicorn of legend symbolizing supernatural and kingly powers.

This and other themes support and interweave with one another, not only within The Wild Swans at Coole itself but also backward and forward to form a symbolic tapestry of all his poetry. This theme of the antithetical ideal is also supported by such poems as "The Phases of the Moon," "The Saint and the Hunchback," "Two Songs Of a Fool," and others, which either outline directly or comment indirectly upon the lunar cycle of A Vision and its psychological counterparts and types. There are several poems which refer to Yeats's ideas on the transmigration of souls which both take us back to such earlier poems as "Fergus and the Druid" and "The Three Hermits" and ahead to

1 W.B. Yeats, The Collected Plays, London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1960, p. 107.

the more elaborated formulation in "The Phases of the Moon." Some of these poems also are presented as dreams or visions, and these not only interweave with the other themes but take us back to the line which we have been trying to follow, the struggle for transcendence of the opposites through the symbolism of sun and moon.

In referring once more to the opening poem of the volume, "The Wild Swans at Coole," my intention is only that of drawing out further indications of Yeats's anima quest and of his attempt to transcend the division in himself. In the first place, the poem presents us with the usual setting of his earlier dreams in In The Seven Woods. There are the "trees" "in their autumn beauty" and the "brimming water" where the swans float. These are all props of earlier dream poems such as "The Withering of the Boughs" and "The Ragged Wood." The time is not only autumn, but twilight, and this is always his time for dreams, the time of the faeries' activity and dance. Next the swans "mount" and their flight is compared to music and dance:

> The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
> Trod with a lighter tread. (p. 147)

Not only that; they do their dancing, flying, or swimming in pairs, in harmony or counterpoint, just as they flew in "The Withering of the Boughs" or as the queens danced or the kings fought with their swords in "The Happy Townland." They are in the world of magic, of faeryland, of the psyche, as

> Unwearied still, lover by lover,
> They paddle in the cold
> Companionable streams or climb the air;
> Their hearts have not grown old;
> Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
> Attend upon them still. (p. 147)

Yeats sees them with longing and regret, for he is far below them and

will have to "climb" much higher to reach such a unity.

By the time Yeats has written "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," he is apparently married and preparing the tower, for he begins:

> Now that we're almost settled in our house
> I'll name the friends that cannot sup with us
> Beside a fire of turf in th' ancient tower,
> And having talked to some late hour
> Climb up the narrow winding stair to bed;
> Discoverers of forgotten truth
> Or mere companions of my youth,
> All, all are in my thoughts tonight being dead. (p. 148)

Again, we have so many of the symbols closely associated with the way of transcendence. In the first place, he is now within the precincts of the tower, within the sacred square or circle, in which one prays to the god or conjures up visions or dreams of the dead, the spiritual. He calls these people of his visions, whom he is going to call up, "discoverers of forgotten truth" as are psychic phenomena and spiritual visions. He says that later he will "climb up the narrow winding stair to bed." No doubt, this is the objective truth but it is much more: it is the dance of king and queen, the flight of the swans, the prancing of the horses, up the ladder of self-realization, up the world tree, up the "winding stair," whose extreme goal is "bed," which is as much as to say, "sleep," where one has the sublime vision of union, or copulation, where one has the temporary physical union, or, finally, death, which is ultimately the place of final union. These extensions are valid because union can be realized, at least partially, on all these planes, but only finally in death; but then this poem is about death.

The men he conjures up all have something in common: they were cut off in some unnatural or accidental way from union. Johnson by his learning and his alcoholism, John Synge by his illness, Pollexfen

by some psychic or spiritual change, and finally Robert Gregory by his accident. Like the impulsive antithetical men they were, they finished "in that flare" and then went "black out." He comes out of the vision, by noticing "the wind that shakes the shutter," to realize, in "a thought" that "took all" his "heart for speech," that he also can be cut short.

"The Collar-Bone of a Hare" plays on the theme from a rather playfully bitter and one-sided and immature attitude. This time, the world of transcendence is merely stated as a wish, but it has the same people and places, the kings and queens, the ideal happiness and the dancing, the trees and the water, of his dreams. Somehow or other this is the egotistic artist's attitude towards people who are not gifted with their special abilities, and is characteristic of the growing arrogance that Yeats displays at this time. He says in effect that he has learned, through his dreams and artist's imagination, how to travel back and forth between the psychic world, the world of the faeries, and the "old bitter world where they marry in churches," and, like a boy, more or less despises those who do not have this psychic mobility. It is premature gloating over a half-digested, half-realized new-found ability, reminiscent of some of the attitudes of poets like Shelley and Swinburne, and reveals the length of the way that Yeats has yet to travel in order to find true spiritual self-realization.

"Under the Round Tower" is another piece on the theme of the union of opposites. Richard Ellmann says that "here his subject matter is the interaction of the two cones, but he makes them into a dance of sun and moon in a round tower (the sphere), the wild dream

of a beggarman."[1] I agree with Ellmann in this, but I also see in the poem more than just a "humorous use" of the system of A Vision. Although, for a reading of the poem, it is not absolutely necessary that one identify the beggar, Billy Byrne, with Yeats, yet nevertheless Yeats frequently identifies himself with such antithetical figures in later poems, and we are justified in assuming it since it is a dream which Yeats has frequently drawn our attention to as his own. It is clearly pointed out to us that Billy Byrne is a pagan, for he has no qualms about lying down upon the "old battered tombstone" where he dreams

> Of sun and moon that a good hour
> Bellowed and pranced in the round tower;
>
> Of golden king and silver lady,
> Bellowing up and bellowing round,
> Till toes mastered a sweet measure,
> Mouth mastered a sweet sound,
> Prancing round and prancing up
> Until they pranced upon the top.
>
> That golden king and that wild lady
> Sang till stars began to fade,
> Hands gripped in hands, toes close together,
> Hair spread on the wind they made;
> That lady and that golden king
> Could like a brace of blackbirds sing. (p. 154)

This, of course, resembles closely the picture of the alchemical conception of one of the stages of the coniunctio: the marriage of Sol and Luna, brother and sister, and, for the alchemists, would likely be meant in a basically spiritual sense. In this picture of Yeats, however, there is little to lead one to take it in such a sense. With all the "prancing" and "bellowing," the wildness of the lady, and the "hair spread on the wind," it seems more like a frenzied

1 Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 231.

Dionysiac dance of centaurs or horses which will be consummated in sexual union. At any rate, this would be more in keeping with Billy Byrne or Yeats in his present humour. But why the tombstone? Surely it is more than just the whim of a rambling jailbird. Yeats, it seems to me, meant this dream as a parallel to the dream of someone already dead. We will see later that this poem is connected with the pagan idea of communication with the dead in their graves. He is saying then that perfect union of the opposites only comes with death and that, since he is still alive and generative, he does not particularly want any more visions of such a kind. And why does Billy say: "Although I'd lie lapped up in linen/ A deal I'd sweat and little earn...."? Because he is being compared to a dead man in a shroud. And why, at the end, does he also say: "It's certain that my luck is broken"? Because his dream was too perfect, because it mirrored the union that can only be had in death. He will go back to life, pick-pocketing and jail terms and all, because he is familiar with that. He only understands the flux and frenzy of this earth and finds visions of eternal peace both incomprehensible and terrifying. Again, here, we have the idea of the circle entering into the transcendence theme in the figure of the "round" tower.

In "Solomon to Sheba," we have our pair of opposites united again this time on the historical level and emphasizing the sexual aspect of the union. Again, the circle is introduced and presented, not as the protective base from which creation and transcendence spring, but rather as a prison:

> All day long from shadowless noon
> We have gone round and round
> In the narrow theme of love
> Like an old horse in a pound. (p. 155)

Sheba replies that it is not "the theme of love" that is "a pound," but her thoughts. Solomon answers that, although no one can match their learning--presumably thought of as a widening process--yet even they are narrowed into a pound when caught by the "sensual music" of love.

When we come to a poem like "Lines Written in Dejection," one's belief that Yeats is still struggling with his anima or soul-image seems to be confirmed. It is quite possible that Richard Ellmann is right when he says that Yeats

> fell deeply in love with his wife and knew for the first time the happiness of a relatively uncomplicated relationship with another person. He was astonished to find himself playing the role of husband, and, after February, 1919, of father without feeling that it was a role at all. 'The marriage bed,' he wrote later, 'is the symbol of the solved antinomy.' Certainly it was so for him, and the ecstacy of the solution shines through the worldly humor of the poems, 'Solomon and the Witch' and 'Solomon to Sheba,' which he wrote in 1918. A great serenity came over Yeats as he emerged from the isolation and eccentricity of bachelorhood into peace and harmony.[1]

I would not like to deny that he loved his wife, for I am sure that he did, nor would I deny that he was finding a measure of external peace and comfort unknown to him before this time. However, in this poem and others much later, there is still a great deal of unfinished business with Maude Gonne in his attempt to consolidate this anima problem. I believe that it is overstating the case to say that, at this time, "he emerged from the isolation and eccentricity of bachelorhood into peace and harmony" [italics mine], especially if the statement is based upon Yeats's later statement that "the

1 Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 221.

marriage bed is the symbol of the solved antinomy."

It is true, in this poem, that he says that "the dark leopards," "the wild witches," and the "noble ladies," "are gone" (pp. 163-64). These are all various transformations of his anima at different times, a running index to the state of his psyche. But the very fact that he has to mention them in a poem is surely indicative that "heroic mother moon" has not been entirely "banished," and that, rather than enduring "the timid sun," his objective state, he is spitting in its eye.

"The Dawn" is also connected with Yeats's attitude towards solving the antinomy. Dawn is somewhere between the moon's course--on a night of moon--and the sun's course. He says he would be outside and above, looking down on, the "old queen measuring a town," i.e., the moon figure, and "rocking the glittering coach" of the sun. It seems clear that he means that he would be free of the struggle of the opposites, merely a spectator or a mover, but not one moved by them. He would like to be free, "ignorant and wanton as the dawn," he says, probably because he is not.

"On Woman" seems to confirm the belief that the marriage bed is the symbol of the solved antinomy. He describes the sexual union of Solomon and Sheba as "shudder that made them one" (p. 165). Yet, although Yeats still has his virility, he says that

> To find what once I had
> And know what once I have known,
> Until I am driven mad,
> Sleep driven from my bed,
> By tenderness and care,
> Pity, an aching head,
> Gnashing of teeth, despair;
> And all because of some one
> Perverse creature of chance,

And live like Solomon
That Sheba led a dance. (pp. 165-66)

If Yeats is at peace, why is he thinking about his possible next rebirth and driving himself mad wondering whether he might the next time marry his soul-image as Solomon did Sheba?

I only refer to "The Fisherman" once more in order to show that it has certain connections with "The Dawn" and therefore with the main theme. This ideal man, who does not even exist, is a personification of Yeats's previous ideas about dawn. He looks down upon the struggle of the opposites, not moved by them. He is self-sufficient, wise and simple, with his "grey Connemara clothes" that give him the qualities of the very rock, the "grey place on a hill," from which he fishes. He is beyond the rise and ebb of the passions, has found self-realization. But he is not Yeats, for Yeats has said that he is a "man who is but a dream." Again, even if he did exist, he would not be Yeats, for Yeats is still hating, loving, complaining about "the insolent unreproved" and about "great Art beaten down." He is a picture of the impossible, a man of the fifteenth phase. Yet he is startlingly like John Synge as described in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory."

"The People" is again pertinent to this study because it is connected with "The Dawn" and "The Fisherman" in that the idea of the dawn as a point outside the struggle of the opposites is common to them all. At the beginning, Yeats is complaining of the ingratitude and treachery of those whom he has served, and goes on to say that he might have lived out of or relatively out of "the bitter world where they marry in churches" or the world of the moon-struck beggars

by living in an old Italian city or by climbing "among the images of the past," just as the fisherman climbs "up to a place where stone is dark under froth." The "past" is that of the Italian Renaissance princes as described by Castiglione in The Book of the Courtier:

> The unperturbed and courtly images--
> Evening and morning, the steep street of Urbino
> To where the Duchess and her people talked
> The stately midnight through until they stood
> In their great window looking at the dawn;
> I might have had no friend that could not mix
> Courtesy and passion into one like those
> That saw the wicks grow yellow in the dawn. (p. 169)

The images then recede and his "phoenix"--Maude Gonne--speaks of the ingratitude shown to her as well by people she had helped. The difference is that he complains of "the people" while she does not. He explains this difference in attitude as one of types: she has lived in deed and has "the purity of a natural force" while he is a thinker and "can neither close/ The eye of the mind nor keep" his "tongue from speech" (p. 170). Is he explaining the difference between himself and Maude here as basically that of "antithetical" and "primary"? At any rate, the images of the Duke's court where "courtesy and passion" are one and where "the wicks grow yellow"--another meaning for the blending of silver and gold--stand for the ideal state away from the struggle of the opposites and divide the conflicting opinions of the two speakers. He has "climbed" up and out of the struggle momentarily, as Solomon and Sheba do in their union, as the fisherman does. Again it is an impossible state for him and Maude, only an image of the past, a collective image of the fifteenth phase.

Yeats has become quite fond of the formal pattern in which an

ideal state of transcendence is surrounded or enclosed by the state of the divided opposites or of the world of time. "Under the Round Tower" and "On Woman" are similar in this regard. "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" also is something like this. Others, like "The Fisherman," reverse the process and begin and end with the vision of the ideal.

"His Phoenix" is another example of Yeats's inability to settle and harmonize his external and internal reality. The refrain, "I knew a phoenix in my youth, so let them have their day," is, of course, resigned in tone, but the images of the "sprightly girl trodden by a bird," and of the "proud look," are an obsession with him. He is helpless before it:

> I mourn for that most lonely thing; and yet God's will
> be done:
> I knew a phoenix in my youth, so let them have their day. (p. 172)

"Broken Dreams" is another disturbing repetition of the same theme. He describes himself as "the poet stubborn with his passion" but, in the following stanza, reveals that it is something beyond mere passion:

> Vague memories, nothing but memories,
> But in the grave all, all, shall be renewed.
> The certainty that I shall see that lady
> Leaning or standing or walking
> In the first loveliness of womanhood,
> And with the fervour of my youthful eyes,
> Has set me muttering like a fool.
>
> You are more beautiful than any one.... (p. 173)

Then he goes on with the beautiful stanza describing her as the swan-lady. In the simplicity of its lines, the honesty of its admissions, and in its spiritual intensity, I find this poem triumphant and I am dumb and bleary-eyed myself before it.

"A Deep-Sworn Vow" and "Presences" are continuations of his visions and dreams of her. "Presences" is more to our purpose, for it again shows the variety of the forms in which he dreams of her, and he wishes that she would climb up his "creaking stair":

> One is a harlot, and one a child
> That never looked upon man with desire,
> And one, it may be, a queen. (p. 174)

"Ego Dominus Tuus," like "The Phases of the Moon," and the latter poems of the book, is a commentary upon A Vision, though of course quite independent in itself. I am not particularly interested in tracing the "cradles" or pairing them with famous men and women. Yeats has made these things evident enough: his guess is as good as mine or anyone else's. There is however much made in this poem and in "The Phases of the Moon" of the tower image. "On the grey sand beside the shallow stream," where Ille traces images in the sand, "a lamp burns on beside the open book" in the "old wind-beaten tower" (p. 180). In the middle of the poem, Dante is described as having been "driven out"

> To climb that stair and eat that bitter bread,

where

> He found the unpersuadable justice, he found
> The most exalted lady loved by a man. (p. 181)

Yeats is not noticeably attracted towards the Christian ideal, and so, in describing Dante's quest, is not likely referring to his own striving up the winding stair. This new level would be similar to that of Goethe's towards the Mater Gloriosa which we have already remarked.[1] It is to be noted here also that the "bitter bread" Dante must eat is probably a parallel with the bitter "caribou back-fat" of

1 See p. 69

the Eskimo legend. Yeats then goes on to speak of Keats and I think perhaps a little disparagingly. Surely we must grant Keats, young and sensuous though he was, a higher level of anima aspiration than a handful of peppermint sticks!

Ille finishes the poem, saying:

> I call to the mysterious one who yet
> Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream
> And look most like me, being indeed my double,
> And prove of all imaginable things
> The most unlike, being my anti-self,
> And, standing by these characters, disclose
> All that I seek; and whisper it as though
> He were afraid the birds, who cry aloud
> Their momentary cries before it is dawn,
> Would carry it away to blasphemous men. (p. 182-83)

Who is the "double" or the "anti-self" who will "disclose" all that Ille seeks, who will interpret the characters he has written in the sand? If Yeats, what exactly does he mean by "double" and "anti-self"? Jolande Jacobi has told us that, in the individuation process, there are various levels at which we make unconscious contents of our psyches conscious, that is, we know ourselves stage by stage in relation to the various elements that are a part of our natures. First of all, one knows his dark side, knows himself as instinctual man, when he consolidates his "shadow." This is sometimes referred to popularly as a "double" or "alter-ego" of a person, and examples in literature would be Mr. Hyde's Dr. Jekyll or Faust's Mephisto. Next, we raise the contrasexual element in ourselves and know ourselves as feminine if men, and the contrary if women. Again, we raise the spiritual element, our share of God, in ourselves and know ourselves as spirit. But the final goal of unity of the opposites can only come after our relation to our primordial, contrasexual, and spiritual natures have

been clarified. Surely Yeats, in having raised his anima to the point of the Mater Gloriosa or, if not, at least to the level of the demi-goddess Leda, is not still referring to "double" as the lowest level of individuation, i.e., Jung's "shadow." If so, then he can hardly be as far on the path as one is led to believe by his frequent images of union of the opposites even though many of these images are used consciously. It seems clear also that he can hardly have gotten to the beginning of the last stage, the stage in which the consciousness as a vehicle of our personal uniqueness has been confronted with our unconscious as vehicle of our share of the collective and universal. For that stage is well beyond the struggle with the anima transformations. It is the stage in which Dante eats "bitter bread," the stage in which the sister is torn by the claws of the Kukiligaattiat in the Eskimo myth, the stage in which the Tibetan soul enters the realm of the "blood-drinking demons"; it is the dark night of the soul. I am not qualified to know with what exactitude Yeat's doctrine of the Mask corresponds to Jung's well-outlined theory of the stages of psychic transformation.

At any rate, whatever the "double" or "anti-self" is going to disclose to Ille is not to be a revelation, for he is to

> whisper it as though
> He were afraid the birds, who cry aloud
> Their momentary cries before it is dawn,
> Would carry it away to blasphemous men.

Again, in "The Phases of the Moon," the outline of the lunar cycle is prefaced by images of the light in the tower and ended by the extinction of the light. He is compared to Milton's Platonist or Shelley's visionary prince who has found "mere images." Then

Robartes says: "And now he seeks in book or manuscript/ What he shall never find" (p. 184). Does this mean that there is no rebirth, or that there is nothing but rebirth after rebirth and no end? Likely the latter, since they go on to discuss the "cradles." Robartes and Aherne are purposely difficult; they are not going to tell him anything, in fact, they even think of purposely confusing him as though they were the communicators or the frustrators of A Vision.

Then the light in the tower goes out. Again, we are reminded of the sleep with its dream, the death with its vision, when Yeats and his wife "climb up the narrow winding stair to bed" in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory." But while the tower light was on, while Robartes and Aherne were travelling through the circuit of the moon's phases, the vision--A Vision--was being revealed to us. When Aherne described the last three phases, "Hunchback and Saint and Fool," we reached the dark of the moon, the completely objective phase in which no life is possible, and so therefore obviously the light went out.

## Chapter III

## The Myth and the Poetry of Yeats

### Part III: From Michael Robartes and the Dancer to The Winding Stair

Although in Michael Robartes and the Dancer Yeats is frequently preoccupied with thoughts of the Irish Rebellion and with former friends and associates who took part in it, and also with his own relation to Ireland, he continues to write poems in which the struggle for inner harmony is still evident. The first poem in the book, "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," is interesting as an example of one character type: the "animus-possessed woman." Jolande Jacobi tells us that "the soul-image is a more or less solidly constituted functional complex, and inability to differentiate oneself from it leads to such phenomena as the moody man, dominated by feminine drives, buffeted by emotions, or the animus-possessed woman, opinionated and argumentative, the female know-it-all, who reacts in a masculine way and not instinctively."[1] In this poem, He describes the knight fighting the dragon in the tapestry and says that the "half-dead dragon," which rises again every morning to fight again, is his damsel's thought, and that, if the lady would only stop to look at herself, she would stop instantly and "grow wise." She replies: "You mean they argued" (p. 197). The woman continues to ask the man whether she might not go to school or be "learned like a man." The man keeps referring her to figures like Athene, Veronese and Michael Angelo, to remind her that "impassioned gravity," the "vigorous thigh," the "proud, soft, ceremonious" women of Veronese,

1 Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 111.

and also the bodies of Michael Angelo's art, are schooling by which a woman might better fulfil her nature. He then introduces a scholastic text, quoting professorially, saying that "beautiful women may/ Live in uncomposite blessedness," and may also lead men to do the same, if they "will banish every thought, unless" they think it as well "even from the foot-sole" (p. 198). A woman should think intuitively; that is, her conscious feminine element should not be dominated by her animus soul-mate and thus make her argue like a man. This dragon, which is the lady's thought, might also be compared profitably with the dragon in Book I, Canto I, XX, of The Faerie Queene. Part of the poison the dragon spews, when the Knight grips her gorge, is books: "Her vomit full of bookes and papers was...." In Book I, Canto VIII, Duessa, the false temptress, is closely connected with the dragon. In stanza VI, she comes out of the castle with the giant, "high mounted on her many headed beast," and, after the giant is defeated and she is made to disrobe (stanzas XLVI to XLVIII) she is seen to have the nether parts of a beast, so awful that Spenser's "chaster Muse" blushes to write of them. I think it is evident that Duessa and the dragon are two variants of an anima figure and therefore correspond to Yeats's use of them here.

The discussion in "Solomon and the Witch" centres on whether sexual union is not only the resolution of the antinomy but also the ushering in of the new historical cycle. Sheba's cry, coming neither from her nor from Solomon, is explained as coming from "a cockerel" who

> Crew from a blossoming apple bough
> Three hundred years before the Fall,
> And never crew again till now,
> And would not now but that he thought,
> Chance being at one with Choice at last,
> All that the brigand apple brought
> And this foul world were dead at last.

He that crowed out eternity
Thought to have crowed it in again. (p. 199)

Here, we have the beginning of the poems in which the bird of paradise, outside the struggle of life, makes the revelatory cry ushering in a new cycle in conjunction with the sexual union of the king and queen. This bird is usually called a cock, or cockerel, or even a "cock of Hades," as in "Byzantium." Traditionally, the cry of the cock is associated with dawn; in fact, it is a stereotyped substitute for dawn. We saw in the Wild Swans volume that Yeats, in poems like "The Dawn," "The Fisherman," and "The People," placed a considerable emphasis on the idea of dawn as symbolizing the state of the resolved opposites, the state in which one is unmoved by the struggle, the state, in fact, in which there are no human types, only the ideal, the state of the "unperturbed and courtly images" (p. 169). Yeats thus can use traditional associations in order to give him variety and mobility in his symbolic play: that is, he can take a visual symbol like "dawn," make it into an auditory image like the "cry" of the cock, change it into a kinaesthetic image like the "encircling arms" of Solomon and Sheba, change it again into an almost olfactory image in which "oil and wick are burned in one," change it again into an abstract philosophical concept such as "Chance being at one with Choice at last," and so on.

The humour of this piece is that the cockerel is represented as not being certain that this was the right time to crow. Maybe the sexual union alone is not enough to resolve the antinomy:

Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,
For each an imagined image brings
And finds a real image there. (p. 199)

I understand that Yeats means that, although there is physical union, there may not be spiritual or psychic union, that is, the lovers may

not be soul-mates. Apparently this is the case, for the other speaker, perhaps Sheba, replies: "Yet the world stays" (p. 200). The world of struggle did not vanish because there was mere physical union. The explanation given to answer this empirical observation is equivocal, and plays upon the difference between and respective effects of "real" and "imagined" images. Maybe the "imagined" image, the anima or animus as seen subjectively, is "too strong," too well related to another personality, to complement the "real" image, the objective lover, or maybe it is "not strong enough," not well enough related to the personality of the objective lover. At any rate, since the cockerel may have made a mistake, Sheba thinks they may have also. They are in the right place, "the forbidden sacred grove," the time is right, "night has fallen," and the opposite is willing, "the moon is wilder every minute" (p. 200). Sheba therefore pleads: "O! Solomon! let us try again."

"An Image From A Past Life" is very directly related to "Michael Robartes and the Dancer." She places her hands over his eyes because she sees an image of another woman, "a sweetheart from another life" (p. 201). He, with his reason, wonders why she should start and be afraid that an image from a past life, even the image of one who had driven him mad, would do anything more than make him fonder of her. She, with her intuition, says she doesn't know why the image has thrown her arms above her head, but what she does know is that she feels afraid of it. She has learned the lesson given to her by He in his earlier lecture in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer." He has forgotten his own lecture. Perhaps, they are now in a new cradle.

The theme of the animus-dominated woman seems to be repeated in

the very beautiful poem "On a Political Prisoner." The woman is in prison and, although she had little patience "from childhood on," now has plenty of time, time enough to feed a grey gull at her window. But he asks:

> Did she in touching that lone wing
> Recall the years before her mind
> Became a bitter, an abstract thing,
> Her thought some popular enmity. (p. 207)

In order to see the masterly way in which Yeats has handled his material here, we must return again to the first stanza. The mature woman sitting in prison is an almost perfect objective correlative of her own psychic state: she is in the prison of her unconscious animus. Again, the picture is perfect: the grey gull, the wild intuitive bird, which is eating from the tip of her fingers, is another objective correlative of her own past youth. Yeats tells us as much in the passage quoted above from the second stanza. Does she recognize her true self in that bird?

The third and fourth stanzas complete perfectly this relation between her subjective and objective states. If she does not recognize herself in the bird, Yeats makes sure that we do, for he says:

> She seemed to have grown clean and sweet
> Like any rock-bred, sea-borne bird:
>
> Sea-borne, or balanced on the air
> When first it sprang out of the nest
> Upon some lofty rock to stare
> Upon the cloudy canopy,
> While under its storm-beaten breast
> Cried out the hollows of the sea. (p. 207)

He has lifted the whole story into final perspective in a few short lines, and our external vision, rising over the sea with the gull, is, at the same time, our complete understanding of what that woman should

have been. The intuitive gull of her conscience should be guiding and directing her, while, at the same time, finding its nourishment in and being at home with the sea of her unconscious.

The question to be answered in "Towards Break of Day" is stated clearly in the first stanza:

> Was it the double of my dream
> The woman that by me lay
> Dreamed, or did we halve a dream
> Under the first cold gleam of day? (p. 208)

We notice that the dreams took place "towards break of day," or dawn, and that dawn has been associated with the time of the union of the opposites. But does the picture in their respective dreams correspond to any such union?

Yeats, or I, dreams of "a waterfall/ Upon Ben Bulben side" (p. 208), that is, of a fountain of youth by which the soul is regenerated. In his essay on William Morris, "The Happiest of Poets," Yeats refers to this connection of water and the soul as "understood by old writers, who thought that the generation of all things was through water."[1] In a later poem, "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931," he asks: "What's water but the generated soul?" (p. 275). Usually, however, if the water is to be truly generative, it must be found or drunk or washed in in conjunction with the anima, that is, at the time that the unconscious is fully made conscious in its contrasexual aspect. We have seen that, in the Eskimo myth "Aningaat," it was the sister who both led Aningaat to the lake of the loon and who also went to fetch water for him from the house of the Long-Nails. In William Morris's "The Well at the World's End," the hero and heroine find the well together and drink from it.

1 W.B. Yeats, "The Happiest of Poets," Essays and Introductions, London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1961, p. 54.

It is only then that the personality takes on a unity, or a relative unity, with which it can continue its work in the world.

It is true, of course, that there are many myths which portray the failure of this generation because of inadequate consolidation of the contrasexual part of the unconscious before the reaching of the well or fountain. In the Japanese myth "The Fountain of Youth," the woodcutter finds the well by himself, drinks from it, and becomes young again. He then, of course, wishes his wife to drink from it so that she will also become young. But he makes the fatal error of letting her go to the well by herself, allowing her--his anima--to dominate him and go against his better judgement. She, as a result, like the uncontrolled greedy unconscious, drinks far too much and becomes a puling infant, that is, the anima has been allowed to revert to an almost unindividuated infantile state, with a resulting imbalance of the personality.

In "Towards Break of Day," Yeats emphasizes the "child" aspect of his dream. He says that it was one which "all my childhood counted dear," and that his "memories had magnified" this "childish delight" "so many times" (p. 208). Again, he repeats it in the third stanza:

> I would have touched it like a child
> But knew my finger could but have touched
> Cold stone and water. I grew wild,
> Even accusing Heaven because
> It had set down among its laws:
> Nothing that we love over-much
> Is ponderable to our touch. (p. 208)

It is a child's dream or at least a dream which is lacking the consolidated anima figure. His "wildness" is no doubt due to the fact that, despite the "delightful" associations he has with the waterfall, it is no longer adequate to him as an adult; there is no anima figure.

The beautiful final stanza is concerned with the woman's dream. This dream, on the contrary, contains her animus, "the lofty white stag," which is, typically enough, connected with the moon. Yeats had said in "The Symbolism of Poetry": "if I look at the moon herself and remember any of her ancient names and meanings, I move among divine people, and things that have shaken off our mortality, the tower of ivory, the queen of waters, the shining stag among enchanted woods...."[1] This "lofty white stag" is again to be associated with the other proud and lonely antithetical figures, Minnaloushe the cat, the "yellow-eyed hawk of the mind" "hovering over the wood," and the swan drifting "upon a darkening flood." If he is at the well of regeneration, wild and not even wanting to touch the water, she, "in her bitterer sleep," is watching her soul-mate, who is still in an animal state, escaping her, leaping away "from mountain steep to steep" (p. 209). Both are angry and disappointed in their dreams so that they may, in this sense, be called "doubles," but surely they are at different levels of realization of the soul-image. If his anima is undifferentiated from the unconscious as a child's, hers is differentiated at least to the extent of being in the form of the stag. The only other possibility would be to interpret the waterfall itself as an anima symbol. Water, as a symbol of regeneration, is closely connected in tradition with the moon. I find it impossible, however, to give his dream this interpretation because it does not accord with his "wildness," his accusation of Heaven for not allowing that which "we love over-much" to be "ponderable to our touch." Therefore, I

1 W.B. Yeats, "The Symbolism of Poetry," Essays and Introductions, p. 161.

do not think that the dreams were doubles.

If, then, we reason on the assumption that his dream must be either a double of her dream or the first half of her dream and nothing else, we are only left with the latter possibility. Trying to interpret the dreams as two halves of the same dream would seem to accord better with the logic of the whole. First of all, he comes to the waterfall which he has often remembered with delight from childhood. Perhaps he associates some person he loves with it having met her there at some time, or perhaps he associates it only with some pleasant event that happened there, or perhaps it was merely only the childish delight of seeing the beautiful phenomenon. At any rate, he refuses to touch it or drink from it, even though it has, from both a personal and a traditional point of view, a sacred meaning for him. He even pollutes the water by his curse upon Heaven.

Can we now, in interpreting the last half, substitute for Yeats the white stag? It would seem, if we are going to consider them two halves of one dream, that we must do so. Perhaps it is not entirely untenable to imagine that, because of his blasphemy, he has been turned into the white stag. Certainly, this kind of thing is not uncommon in myth and we have had an example of it in the German myth which Jung has analyzed.[1] Now the soul-mate comes to the fountain and finds it polluted and her animus, whom she thought would be a man, gone. She is disturbed. Then she looks up towards the mountain--the one prop which is common to both dreams--and sees the reason for her disturbance: her soul-mate is not only turned into an animal, but is fleeing away from her in his proud independent flight, avoiding the true path of regeneration which is entered by way of the fountain in company with

1 See pp. 16-17.

her.

Both "Demon and Beast" and the beautiful "A Prayer for My Daughter" have some connection with our theme, but, because of the scope of this book, I must pass them by.

The poems of The Tower (1928) and The Winding Stair (1933) are surely the rich blossoms and foliage of Yeats's great flowering period. If, since the time of The Green Helmet and Responsibilities volumes, words have obeyed his call, as though they were cleverly trained hawks or hounds, now they are surely integral parts of his organic being, now they are the burgeoning leaves and branches of the trees which grow out of the innermost reaches of his soul, watered by the suffering of his struggle. Without knowledge of the poet's life, we would still have evidence enough in the poetry of that see-saw struggle which has prevented his personality from hardening or withering in any premature way.

Yet there is no "peace and harmony" in the poems of The Tower. There is a great deal of longing for peace. Yeats asks the "sages standing in God's holy fire" to "consume" his "heart away" that he may be gathered "into the artifice of eternity" and become a golden bird--whose connection with the state outside the struggle of the opposites we have already noted--which will sit

> upon a golden bough to sing
> To lords and ladies of Byzantium
> Of what is past, or passing, or to come. (pp. 217-18)

The Land-Under-Wave, the home of the faeries, the wooded and moonlit scenes of his dreams, the land of the "Happy Townland," have now become the domed city of Byzantium. The "lords and ladies" we have also met before in Oisin's dream-world, in the queens and kings of "The Happy

Townland," in the horses who "bellowed and pranced" in the Round Tower, and in the swans who climbed the air, "lover by lover," in the park at Coole. They all represent the formal counterpointing of the psychic world, the tit-for-tat quality of word and movement which is characteristic of it. We have seen this idea--of sun-moon complementarity--consistently referred to throughout the poems and it continues to the end in pieces like The Herne's Egg, where the armies of the King of Connacht and the King of Tara always fight perfect battles, have the same number of losses, and have similar wounds but on opposite sides.

The domed city then is a new transformation of the Yeatsian heaven. We must also remember that this whole idea of heaven is connected with the abstract idea of the circle or sphere as the place of creation and transcendence. We have seen this idea imaged in many forms throughout the poetry: the charmed circle of the faeries dancing on the hills at twilight, the circular temple of "Anashuya and Vijaya," the circle of the swans' flight as they "fly round/ Coupled with golden chains" or as they "scatter wheeling in great broken rings," the horses galloping around the race-course in Galway and in the Round Tower, the "sacred grove" of Solomon and Sheba, and the cyclic pattern of the moon's phases in A Vision. Now in these later volumes, the idea is increasingly represented by the tower of Thoor Ballylee, the domes of Byzantium, the eggs of Zeus and Leda, and the Platonic man.

The heaven of "Sailing to Byzantium" is also a place of creation where "Grecian goldsmiths" make things out of "hammered gold and gold enamelling" and also where the artist, or the transformed artist, creates his music to keep the "Emperor awake." Yeats cannot envision himself as a member of one of the couples of "lords and ladies" in their

dance; he will be the golden bird, unmoved by the struggle, "cold and passionate as the dawn," in fact, he will be the mover, the dance-master, exalted and alone; he will be God.

Despite all the worldly successes which came to Yeats in the twenties, the honour of having degrees conferred upon him, his appointment to the Irish Senate, his award of the Nobel Prize, there is a great deal of bitterness and cynicism in his poems. He compares his age to a kettle tied to a dog's tail, he doubts whether greatness can exist without violence and bitterness, he sees men as nothing "but weasels fighting in a hole" (p. 233), and he doubts whether there is any solace at all in life:

> Man is in love and loves what vanishes,
> What more is there to say? (p. 234)

Richard Ellmann gives a number of reasons to explain this bitterness:

> His father's death in New York in 1922 probably had something to do with it. Then too, he was perhaps a little disappointed to find that the convergence of his life and work into a symbolism did not make themes for poetry easier to come by or composition less arduous. No static unity was possible for him; he had to submit every integration to 'the shock of new material,' destroying and then rebuilding.[1]

He also adds that there were the troubles of the Civil War, the worry for the safety of his family, and also his impatience with old age. These things were obviously all irritants, external irritants, to his peace. But surely his old difficulty, that of reconciling his inner with his outer personality, of not being able to successfully conclude the consolidation of his anima, was a major cause of his bitterness. The fact that he was still trying to do so was almost a

1 Richard Ellmann, The Man and The Masks, p. 240.

miracle, and this struggle of the spirit prevented any easy hardening of his personality into some state of "peace and harmony."

"The Tower," one of the many masterpieces of his volume by the same name, is a poem about which one ought to say: "Why dig at it? Why comment?" It is so beautiful and inevitable, its form and content are so harmonious, that we ought merely to read it or, still better, let it speak to us. Like most great poetry, it is not difficult: it is just magic. There is not even anything particularly new about the material in it; he has spoken of all its themes before: but never in such a way. I have chosen it, therefore, not for any novelty of theme but because it sums up so well the path Yeats has covered so far and because it may reveal a great deal about its continuation.

In the beginning, Yeats makes a terrible fuss about the old age of the body, its nuisance, its decay, its disgusting quality. Why such a disgust at the decay of the body? Could it be that, feeling himself god-like, he cannot support such a connection with anything as mortal as the body? Obviously, the "tower" of the body is no place to find harmony and the path of transcendence. Yet it is from this earthly tower, whose battlements he paces, that the path must begin. As he later says in "The Circus Animals' Desertion," the place "where all the ladders start" is "the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart." Nevertheless, at this time of "The Tower," he considers "me" as something different from the body:

> Never had I more
> Excited, passionate, fantastical
> Imagination, nor an ear and eye
> That more expected the impossible --. (p. 218)

So, he will choose philosophers for friends until his imagination and his senses "can be content with argument and deal/ In abstract things" (p. 219). Though his decayed body can no longer create, he can create, with such a vivid imagination and such an ear and eye that they even expect the impossible, "abstract things." Let us then, since Yeats is going to, expect the impossible.

In Section II, Yeats presents us with what we should recognize by now as his dream-world setting: the trees and the twilight. With a little imagination, we can supply the moon sailing forth and the faeries dancing in a ring. He himself, the poet, the conjuror, is drawing his own magic circle in preparation for creation. This drawing of the circle takes the form of walking around the battlements of the tower, for it is not only for the purpose of protection of the creative power but also for the purpose of activating his own being so that he can be intensely alive and perfectly whole. This state is a necessity before the artist can truly create, for creation only comes from a living unity. It is the activation of the "river of life" which is often represented as a circle surrounding the precinct of the unified personality in the ancient Eastern mandalas.

> I pace upon the battlements and stare
> On the foundations of a house, or where
> Tree, like a sooty finger, starts from the earth;
> And send imagination forth
> Under the day's declining beam, and call
> Images and memories
> From ruin or from ancient trees,
> For I would ask a question of them all. (p. 219)

Who is this but Merlin or one of Conchubar's great Druid wizards? He has prepared himself and created his circle. Notice how cleverly Yeats's handling of the syntax brings out the sorcerer's creative action.

He "stares" on a fixed point for mesmeric concentration. Then he shouts "Tree!"--calls it by its name, its personality, its soul--and Tree, "like a sooty finger," literally shoots out of the earth! This starting of the tree from earth also calls up the usual gesture of the magician at the point of creation: the jab forward with the wand, and---Presto!--it is! It also reminds us of Michael Angelo's Creation of Adam in which the forefinger of God points--and Adam is lying there. Next, he calls forth "images and memories," ghosts and fantasies, "from ruin or from ancient trees," for he wants to use them, make them serve him.

Preparatory to calling them, he describes each one and we see that they all have some things in common: they are all impulsive antithetical characters who have been bewitched or enslaved, either by a woman's beauty, by wine, or by a poet's song. Or else they are bankrupts, swaggering men-at-arms, noisy gamblers, or mythical creatures such as centaurs. Each has a kind of madness, and that madness is presented as being caused by the moon or else by someone or something which is representative or symbolic of the moon: the beautiful woman, the blind poet, the hare. Even the "bankrupt master of this house," Yeats's tower, was under her influence for he is compared to a dog, a moon-howler. It is not surprising that these should be the ones that he would call up; they are the disturbed spirits, the ones who died violently or through foolishness or mad impulse, the ones who are not at peace. They are like the conjuror himself. It is obviously a pagan ritual.

But why does he halt in the middle of his roll-call of phantoms? Why does he cry: "O may the moon and sunlight seem/ One inextricable

beam,/ For if I triumph I must make men mad" (p. 220)? We have seen both in "Sailing to Byzantium" and in this poem that he has been assuming god-like powers. Is he calling on the "one inextricable beam"--the state of perfect unity, the state in which one dissolves the world, the state in which one becomes the mover--in order to take on those powers himself, in order truly to conjure up these things? For if he really could do so, he would become immortal himself, become a "man" of the fifteenth phase, in which "thought and will are indistinguishable, effort and attainment are indistinguishable...."[1] If he truly had this power by which merely to think was to will, he surely "must make men mad."

Finally he calls them and asks:

> Did all old men and women, rich and poor,
> Who trod upon these rocks or passed this door,
> Whether in public or in secret rage
> As I do now against old age? (p. 221)

It seems a trivial enough question after all the effort he has gone to. Yet, one who believes in the divinity of the self might well wish to know. However, he gets his answer by noticing that they are "impatient to be gone." Most of them, impatient and impulsive in their lives, have apparently not changed. The grand magus imperiously waves his wand once more:

> Go therefore; but leave Hanrahan,
> For I need all his mighty memories. (p. 222)

He seems to have more power over Hanrahan than the others, for Hanrahan is different in kind: he never lived but was only an imaginary creation of Yeats. Hanrahan was also a "magician" who turned playing cards into

1 W.B. Yeats, A Vision, p. 135.

a pack of hounds and a hare. What, however, seems silly about questioning Hanrahan is that, since Yeats created him, he must also have created his thoughts and experiences and therefore must already know them. The other alternative would be to believe, what I cannot, that Yeats thought him real. Talking about Hanrahan's experiences beyond the grave, independent of Yeats, would be like talking about Macbeth's children. But what we can do is to interpret Hanrahan's "revelations" as Yeats's own.

He asks Hanrahan: "Does the imagination dwell the most/ Upon a woman won or woman lost" (p. 222)? He answers with an hypothetical statement himself, saying that, if it dwells most on the lost, then he should admit that he missed an opportunity to explore a "great labyrinth" because of pride, cowardice, or "anything called conscience." He should also admit that, if he thinks of her again, "the sun's/ Under eclipse and the day blotted out" (p. 222). All we can gather from this is that, if Yeats once thinks of Maude Gonne, he is utterly powerless in the grip of his emotion. It comes to this: Yeats is not realizing the harmony that he seeks when he calls on the "one inextricable beam." He is as incapable of this as the phantoms that he conjured up; he is also moon-struck, in total eclipse. It is even likely that it was his anima, which he still internalizes as Maude Gonne or Helen of Troy, which made him call up those other moon-struck characters. He has not proved to be a very powerful sorcerer, for he is still at the mercy of that other sorceress.

In Section III, he falls back upon making his will. The legatees will be "men/ That climb the streams until/ The fountain leap," that is, men like John Synge or the Fisherman, proud antithetical men,

"cold and passionate as the dawn." He bequeaths to them his pride, and the pride of "people that were/ Bound neither to Cause nor to State" (pp. 222-23), that is, the pride of Irish heroes, the pride of the dawn, the pride displayed in the swan's death-song. He seems to have free access to an almost inexhaustible supply.

Next, he declares his faith. He rejects Plato and Plotinus--who posit a very distinct heaven separate from earth--and says that there is no death and life--in what sense I am not capable of judging--for man has made it all up. Yet, although there is no death--does he mean that "life," or whatever we normally call "life," is an endless series of transformations?--"we rise" from "being dead," "dream and so create/ Translunar Paradise" (p. 223). I am completely baffled, perhaps through ignorance of the philosophical concepts he is using. Does he mean that everything is "dream" and that our whole existence is in our imagination? And if so, is this exactly the same state as the dream from which we create our "Translunar Paradise"? If so, then everything is just one endless dream, or "dream," and this is getting dangerously close to the philosophy of the Dionysiac man. We need oppose no conscience to our impulses, no matter how vicious, because death is a fantasy, and we just dream again and create paradise. It is the same kind of thought Yeats has been propounding for many years.

Now, gradually, he brings us back to the external world that we left before we went into Yeats's personal unconscious and the Anima Mundi, before we went into the world of magic and dream. There is still a little light by which to see the daws "drop twigs," although it is mostly sounds we hear. The tower is still a place of creation: the birds build their nest and incubate their eggs. There is a

natural intuitive unity there, not broken by man's questing mind and imagination which set up terrible oppositions and create his suffering; the kind of suffering which the pagan despises because he cannot understand it. Whether or not Yeats means us to infer anything from this simple, natural scene, we are forced to do so because he put it there.

Finally, he comes back to the theme he started with: the absurdity of the decaying body. This time, instead of trying to do the impossible, he will make his soul by "compelling it to study/ In a learned school" until all the evils of life

> Seem but the clouds of the sky
> When the horizon fades;
> Or a bird's sleepy cry
> Among the deepening shades. (p. 225)

After assuming the role of wizard with god-like powers, after proclaiming endlessly his belief in Dionysiac pride, and after declaring that life and death, everything, is a dream, does Yeats recant and say that the soul requires discipline for a future life or does he merely waver off into a sort of quietism? I cannot see either as an adequate answer. Certainly, the discipline he would compel his soul to undergo is not likely what one would term "Christian." Certainly, also, he does not seem to propose a doctrine of non-resistance. The only other logical inference would be that he more or less is in favour of a type of pagan discipline: the discipline of heroism, which includes both pride in one's own natural prowess and a spirit which defies everything that impedes natural instinct. If I am justified in assuming this from "The Tower," then Yeats has not changed much in his basic beliefs from even his earliest poetry.

"Leda and the Swan" has often been praised and justly so. Obviously, it is the representation of the conception of the pagan antithetical historical cycle through the sex act of Zeus as a swan and Leda, and, in its conclusion, poses the problem of whether "knowledge" can be conceived in a unity with "power." I understand that this is the problem which has concerned men throughout the ages; that is, can man, by his own natural unaided reason, use his "power" in such a way that it is directed and controlled by his "knowledge," both deductive and intuitive. We can see that Yeats has been concerned more and more with this problem as the poems preceding the famous sonnet reveal. In "Sailing to Byzantium," we saw him assume god-like powers as the mover of the dance, but only in his "Translunar Paradise." In "The Tower," he attempted the "impossible" by trying to immortalize himself on earth and thus "make men mad." In "Meditations in Time of Civil War," he seems to assume that the "greatness" of the achievement of past pagan eras, what are frequently labelled as the "golden age" of Greece and the "silver age" of Rome, was only possible if "violence" and "bitterness" were concomitant with it (p. 226). Here, in the sonnet, he asks the question again.

In order to put this sonnet in better perspective, we should place it side by side with such other poems on the theme of cyclical inception. The most obvious one that comes to mind is "The Mother of God." Here, the representation is that of the conception of the Christian primary cycle. In both poems, there is represented the circle: "the great wings beating" above Leda and the "thighs caressed/ by the dark webs" (p. 241); and the "wings beating about the room" of the Virgin (p. 281). In both, the act of creation takes place within

the circle, producing, in the one case, among other things, immortal Helen, who "has all living hearts betrayed" (p. 220), and, in the other, Christ, who betrayed none but, in fact, was betrayed by all men in the person of Judas.

This contrast can also be followed through in connection with the deaths and after-life of Helen and Christ. Helen, through myth and tradition, is always conceived of as never having died. Immortal Helen, always young, forever betraying mankind, just sort of wafted herself up to Olympus to feast with the gods when she felt like it, and wafted herself down again at her own sweet will. She is either conceived of as still reigning in Sparta--perhaps someone ought to go and see--or as just peeking behind a cloud that shrouds Olympus. She is a will-o'-the-wisp, the personification of the wild impulse that hides in all men's hearts. Christ, on the other hand, died a very real and a very particular death, and he also told of a supernatural world which is very distinct from this world. This is also the world that Yeats rejects when he mocks "Plotinus' thought" and cries "in Plato's teeth," and it is Helen's world, the world where Zeus, the swan, rules, which he accepts as his "Translunar Paradise."

Both Leda and the Mother of God are terrified by the force and incomprehensibility of their supernatural visitants. Despite the fact that they are both ignorant of the consequences of this union, there is a difference in Yeats's approach to the understanding of their attitudes. He leaves Mary in a very uncomfortable position: her "heart's blood" is stopped up, her bones are struck with "a sudden chill," and her hair is standing on end. He does not, by any sort of device, give evidence that he sees anything at all meaning-

ful in her union with God. Mary is merely a human who is dissatisfied and uncomfortable because her content has been taken from her. On the contrary, in the sestet of the Leda sonnet, he shows clearly that he considers this union meaningful: it is the death of Troy, the birth of love and war, the beginning of the civilizations of Greek and Roman antiquity, the civilizations that he worships because they embody the pagan ideal. He even finds it worthwhile to ask a question of this latter union, a question that, we have seen, concerns him vitally.

From these observations, I suggest that Yeats has now brought himself onto a new plane in the struggle of his anima transformations: he is now Zeus, the god of paganism, and Maude Gonne is now Leda.

"Among School Children," another of the great poems in The Tower, is built upon the same kind of pagan-Christian antithesis, and also continues on with the theme of unity of the opposites. The opening is casual and straightforward enough; there is a bright Christian Catholic schoolroom where the children sit in rows and the "kind old nun in a white hood" (p. 242) answers his questions about their studies. But, suddenly, before we know it, Yeats, "the sixty-year-old smiling public man" (p. 243), has become Yeats the magus and Yeats the thunder-bolt-hurler.

Once more, I will attempt to set up the scene for this change. Whether or not we care to interpret Yeats's walking through the schoolroom, perhaps even around the outer aisles of it, as the magus's drawing of the magic circle, it nevertheless is a frequent preparatory action of his to going into the state of dream or vision. Next, there is the customary magician's act of concentration on a fixed point, and

this is alluded to when he says that "the children's eyes" "stare upon" him. If they are staring at him, he is no doubt staring at them as well, and this is apparently the case from what follows, for he goes immediately into the state of vision:

> I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
> Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
> Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
> That changed some childish day to tragedy--
> Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
> Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
> Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
> Into the yolk and white of the one shell. (p. 243)

He has changed one of the young children into his anima figure, Maude Gonne, who is now "a Ledaean body." Again, as in the dreams or visions of the swans, kings and queens, sun and moon, it is a dream of union or attempted union which is symbolized now in the round Platonic man or the egg, which holds together the opposites of love and war. His imagination charges the vision with life: "And thereupon my heart is driven wild:/ She stands before me as a living child" (p. 243).

Then he goes on to describe her again, as usual, in the proud swan imagery he is so fond of. But the association of memories is broken off by thinking of his loss, and he interjects: " -- enough of that,"

> Better to smile on all that smile, and show
> There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow. (p. 243)

That vision, the vision of the pagan Leda-and-the-Swan world, where Yeats is in heaven, is ended and we come back to the bright light of the Christian schoolroom.

But that light does not hold him long. He is off again, musing upon a "youthful mother," and whether she "would think her son," if

she had foresight, "a compensation for the pang of his birth,/ Or the uncertainty of his setting forth" (p. 244). The "setting forth," apart from its obvious meaning, frequently means as well "into the past." He goes into the world of ancient Greek philosophy. We know he is not in agreement with Plato's philosophy, and we may assume the same of Aristotle's, for, although Aristotle postulated a primum mobile as a logical necessity of his system, his philosophy is notably "objective." It seems, however, that he closely identifies himself with Pythagoras, for Pythagoras's belief was metempsychosis, a doctrine closer to Yeats's own.

Yeats then draws in an image or two, "nuns and mothers," from the outside world once more, but only as a departure to a long last vision. The "images" that "nuns and mothers worship" are only heart-breakers, and more, they are "self-born mockers of man's enterprise" (p. 244); that is, they are created by men because men cannot help creating them, and yet, once created, merely mock man's enterprise. This of course would also be true of a poet's images.

This treading upon images is his way of climbing into the pagan world of the beautiful last stanza where there is no separation of earth and heaven, reason and intuition, where "body is not bruised to pleasure soul," no asceticism nor penance, where "beauty" is not born out of its own despair," that is, where a poet can create without suffering. The last two famous images are the essence of pagan worship. Here is the faery ring dancing around the tree, the revellers around the may-pole, the Druids around "Tree," that "like a sooty finger, starts from the earth" (p. 219). However, they may also be connected with the "elemental creatures" that go "to and fro" about

his table and give him no rest, and the tree may also be the "blasted oak" under which Crazy Jane meets Jack's ghost in order to call down curses on the Bishop's head. It is a marvellous hymn to paganism and a great work of art; but there is a final irony: Yeats was not among school children most of that time.

"A Man Young and Old" is a poem of defiant paganism, paganism in its darkest mood, and is a foreshadowing of the Crazy Jane series, not only in its mood but also in its type of ballad metre. Crazy Jane is probably one of its characters, along with many others. It is similar to "The Tower" in that all its characters are moon-struck or dominated by their unconscious, usually to a crippling degree. The moon and its symbols are everywhere and in the aspect of Hecate. Truly, here, "the sun's/ Under eclipse and the day blotted out" (p. 222).

Section I, First Love, is Yeats's story, which we have heard many times. He thought the girl he met had "a heart of flesh and blood" but he found "a heart of stone." He has not been able to do anything since, though he has "attempted many things." This is not quite true but, nevertheless, it is true that a great percentage of his poems have been dominated by her. He captures this condition beautifully in the last image, where he says she has left him

> Maundering here, and maundering there,
> Emptier of thought
> Than the heavenly circuit of its stars
> When the moon sails out. (p. 249)

Section II, Human Dignity, is a continuation of Section I. Her "kindness" is like the moon, it has "no comprehension in't," and also like that of Helen of Troy which "is the same for all"

(p. 250). So he lies "like a bit of stone" "under a broken tree" and will not shriek his "heart's agony" because he is dumb "from human dignity" (p. 250). This is also not true--to be taken tongue-in-cheek, of course--for he has been shrieking it out since 1904. We should note, as well, that the tree is broken--the dark-side of the world tree, the "blasted oak" of Crazy Jane--not the tree as the centre of creation around which the worshippers would dance.

Section III, The Mermaid, is the neat capsuling of the Oisin legend: the mermaid takes the swimming lad down into the sea and he drowns.

Section IV, The Death of the Hare, calls up Red Hanrahan, the "lecher with a love on every wind" (p. 222), who had conjured a pack of cards into a pack of hounds and a hare. Hanrahan is always happy when a woman returns his love gaze, but he is diverted from the usual chase whenever he remembers the woman that was lost to him, "the death of the hare" in the wood.

Section V, The Empty Cup, introduces another moon symbol, the "shining cup full of dreams" which belongs to the "fool of Faery."[1] The speaker found the cup "October last"--the barren season--but it was empty or barren, and so he is "crazed."

Section VI, His Memories, is the view of an older man. Men who are so broken from love, he says, should not be open to view but should be buried like Hector--who died because of Helen. He compares his love to "the first of all the tribe" and remembers when she lay in what are now his arms "like the twisted thorn." The sex union referred to here is compared to the epoch-making one which produced Troy and its consequences, yet there is some abnormality. If it was

1 W.B.Yeats, "The Symbolism of Poetry," Essays and Introductions, p. 162.

the conception of a new historical cycle, the revelatory cry would be its signal, but the woman wishes to be silenced if she shrieks.

Section VII, The Friends of His Youth, is concerned with two mad characters or perhaps three. Old Madge is definitely mad because she carries a stone in her cloak thinking it a baby. Peter is also clearly mad because he sits on a stone and says he is "King of the Peacocks." This seems something like a reference to a feeble Zeus, for he is the husband of Hera whose bird is the peacock. Yeats is probably connected with Peter. However, the spectator of these two is likely mad, for laughing at other humans--all are moon-struck beggars--has put a crack in his voice. He is also another aspect of Yeats.

Section VIII, Summer and Spring, seems to follow on from the last piece. The couple sit "under an old thorn tree"--a sign that they are moon-struck--and talk of their growing up which makes them realize they were soul-mates. But Peter had also been her soul-mate and is therefore jealous. Obviously, with two soul-mates, there is difficulty. But that difficulty is mild, for after that

> O what a bursting out there was,
> And what a blossoming,
> When we had all the summer-time
> And she had all the spring! (p. 253)

It is clear that there is something unorthodox about this final arrangement. The bursting out and blossoming must be of some very strange and twisted plants.

Section IX, The Secrets of the Old, is from the old woman's point of view, perhaps Crazy Jane's. It is old witch's talk of former love affairs. This is apparently all that they do: tell

"stories of the bed of straw/ Or the bed of down" (p. 254).

Section X, His Wildness, is even wilder than the others if that is possible. It is a mish-mash of references to the moon, the old filthy-minded gossipers, Helen, the mad cry of a peacock which--by its parallel function with the broken tree--introduces a perverted aspect to sex and creation, and to old Madge who carries a stone for a baby. He says:

> Were I but there and none to hear
> I'd have a peacock cry,
> For that is natural to a man
> That lives in memory.... (p. 254)

As we have noted, the "peacock cry" would symbolize some sort of strange or perverted creation. But he, in his wildness, sees that as "natural" to a man who lives only in his subconscious. Of course, it is "natural" for someone in an unnatural state of mind to desire something perverted.

The final section, From 'Oedipus at Colonus', is the old man's view of things. Here is Oedipus, helpless and blind, bitter and enraged against his sons, staggering into Theseus' territory at Colonus. There is no more of the simple, simply hilarious kind of insanity. It is apparently sane advice he gives: "Endure what God gives," "Delight becomes death-longing," and all mankind's troubles stem from the delight that "memory treasures so." A description of a marriage night follows, followed in turn by the famous lines of pagan advice:

> Never to have lived is best, ancient writers say;
> Never to have drawn the breath of life, never to have
> looked into the eye of day;
> The second best's a gay goodnight and quickly turn
> away. (p. 255)

## Chapter III

## The Myth and the Poetry of Yeats

### Part IV: From The Winding Stair to Last Poems

The poems of The Winding Stair (1933) represent Yeats's greater concern with the problems of death, the soul, and immortality. He had been near death a few years previous to the publication of this volume, and he was close to seventy, so that this concern is understandable. What however is less understandable is the continuing variety and vitality of the poetry in his last years. He refuses to commit himself to any particular afterlife or condition beyond the grave; he still writes about his Byzantine heaven, "Byzantium," Plotinus' Island of the Blessed, "News for the Delphic Oracle," and also his Irish mythical heaven of Land-Under-Wave, "Under Ben Bulben." Of course, as many critics have also noted, he has told us why he cannot be committed to a definite resting-place for the soul. In "Choice," he says:

> The intellect of man is forced to choose
> Perfection of the life, or of the work,
> And if it take the second must refuse
> A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark. (p. 278)

Obviously, Yeats has chosen the second, and this is why, in "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz" and in "Death," the first two poems of the volume, he can speak so nonchalantly of time--"Bid me strike a match and blow" (p. 264)--and death--"Man has created death" (p. 264). He had already told us the same thing in "The Tower." He is not worried about time or "supersession of

breath": pagan antithetical men and women, who are not interested in "perfection of the life," do not die. It is a parallel to the old song: "Old soldiers never die,/ They only fade away." They are like Greek gods, heroes and heroines, who merely float away, are no longer there. No one questions the fact of their having been real persons, but no one ever sees them die. What happened to Helen of Troy, to the Irish airman in the clouds, to the swan drifting "upon a darkening flood"? Perhaps, they do die, but usually in such a lonely and mysterious way that one cannot be sure that their deaths had the same meaning as the deaths of people who "marry in churches" or who are buried in churchyards. After all, Yeats has compared himself to or thought of himself as Zeus, Aengus, Oisin, the swan, the hawk, and many other heroes and mythical people, and he has also tried to "immortalize" himself in his role as grand magus. These are people who follow and embody the pagan ideal of complete faith in the self unaided by the divine; they create their own divinity, their own immortality, and therefore never really die but are merely transformed into a new being in the next cradle of the moon.

This pagan belief of Yeats is also supported by his doctrine of "present immortality." F.A.C. Wilson, in referring to a quotation about lunar phases in Wheels and Butterflies, says: "Yeats implies that man's mind changes as mechanically as the moon does, the full moon, as always in his system, symbolizing a subjective era and the dark of the moon an objective phase: the distinction he makes is between the Christian absorption in an external Saviour-God and the non-Christian tendency to see deity in the Self.[1] Kenneth Burke, it

1 F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, p. 96

seems to me, is perfectly right in suggesting "that, in A Vision, the key word for that One [i.e., ultimate reality, or the one symbol of ultimate reality] would be 'lunar'."[1] In discussing Yeats's promise to bring us a "new divinity," Burke says that Yeats does not seem to have done so, because there is no sign that he relied upon the supernatural for solace but, rather, proclaims his paganism even more forcefully. "The vision was after all," he says "'towards Nature' rather than 'towards God'."[2]

There is little doubt then that Yeats intends not to climb completely up the winding stair or seek to reach unity and transcendence. He will not swim with Plotinus across the Mareotic Sea to the Island of the Blessed, nor climb to the top of Mount Meru with the hermits, nor follow the advice of Von Hugel. He has absolutely no desire to be swallowed in the sun at the dark of the moon into complete "objectivity"; he is a "lunar" man and intends to keep making the round of the cradles forever. Either way, it is immortality--"man has created death"--but the "lunar" type of immortality means that one will forever be returning to earth in good pagan tradition. He wants no part of the "heavenly mansion," the "sun," or of Plotinus' heaven, where one is eternally at peace and bored to boot.

There is little doubt either that Yeats had his doubts. However, the tension which this pagan-Christian antithesis built up in him was certainly the cause of "the abounding glittering jet" which

1 Kenneth Burke, "On Motivation in Yeats," The Permanence of Yeats, p. 227.
2 Ibid., p. 232.

kept flowing until the time of his death.

In "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," Yeats presents one of the clearest expositions of this tension. Soul says:

> I summon to the winding ancient stair;
> Set all your mind upon the steep ascent,
> Upon the broken, crumbling battlement,
> Upon the breathless starlit air,
> Upon the star that marks the hidden pole;
> Fix every wandering thought upon
> That quarter where all thought is done:
> Who can distinguish darkness from the soul? (p. 265)

In "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," Yeats had remarked that "Some moralist or mythological poet/ Compares the solitary soul to a swan" (p. 234). It is likely that the "mythological poet" was Yeats himself. In "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931," he compares the generated soul with water. Both of these poems are notably in praise of the pagan antithetical ideal. Here, we have a decided change in the meaning of the symbol; the soul is compared to darkness. But then, for Yeats, this is the ideal of the "objective" man, the state of Phase 1, where the light goes out. Hence, Soul is taking that part of his personality which he most hates and rejects.

Typically, in Self's reply, Yeats is seen holding the Japanese sword which Sato had given him along with its silken embroidered cover. As we have seen earlier, it is another of Yeats's moon symbols: "In Sato's house,/ Curved like new moon, moon-luminous,/ It lay five hundred years" (p. 228). Hence, the holding of the sword in itself, without any words, signifies Self's rejection of Soul's summons.

Soul then asks:

Why should the imagination of a man
Long past his prime remember things that are
Emblematical of love and war? (p. 265)

The silk embroidery and the sword now take on another, but very obvious, meaning: love and war. We are also reminded of the egg of Zeus-Leda (Yeats-Maude Gonne), which also hatched love and war. Soul continues: "Think of ancestral night that can,/ ...Deliver from the crime of death and birth" (p. 265). Yeats insists on putting the character embodying the primary ideal in the worst light: death and birth are "crimes."

In answer to this, Self gives a new meaning to the cloth and sword and to the tower, and makes them antipathetic to one another:

and all these I set
For emblems of the day against the tower
Emblematical of the night,
And claim as by a soldier's right
A charter to commit the crime once more. (p. 266)

The cloth and sword are now symbolic of day, meaning, I presume, earth, time, nature, as opposed to the tower which is now a symbol of night, and hence, by association with Soul's soul, heaven, non-temporality, divine. The silk-sword pair has changed its meaning three times in three stanzas: from feminine-masculine or moon-covering-moon to love-war, to the struggle of day, of time and nature. We also begin to see the significance of the soldier figure as he connects with the tower, and we must connect this poem with "The Tower" where: "Rough men-at-arms, cross-gartered to the knees/ Or shod in iron, climbed the narrow stairs" (p. 221), and with "The Black Tower" in the last poems. The soldiers represent criminals, in the Christian sense at least, and Yeats more or less tells us that he is aware that the pagan man is a criminal when he identifies himself with

the soldier; but he does it quite honestly, he is proud of it.

Soul's reply is again made to sound self-righteous and presumptuous as he talks very academically in either scholastic or modern intellectual terminology. He says that one who climbs the stair "no longer knows"

> Is from the Ought, or Knower from the Known--
> That is to say, ascends to Heaven;
> Only the dead can be forgiven;
> But when I think of that my tongue's a stone. (p. 266)

But Self, the rough, iron-shod soldier, does not care for these philosophical niceties, nor want to go to Heaven, nor give a bent penny for forgiveness.

> I am content to live it all again
> And yet again, if it be life to pitch
> Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
> A blind man battering blind men;
> Or into that most fecund ditch of all,
> The folly that man does
> Or must suffer, if he woos
> A proud woman not kindred of his soul. (p. 267)

Again, he represents himself as the complete pagan man. Of course, it is a very one-sided argument: he makes the pagan look like a man at least, and the "primary" Soul like a near-sighted, quibbling sissy. But obviously also, the Self is a murderous, blood-lusting bully with the customary boundless store of pride: he will "measure the lot; forgive" himself [italics mine] "the lot"! Further, no matter how unprincipled his action, everything he looks upon will be "blest."

"Blood and the Moon" seems to me to carry on in much the same arrogant way the praise of pagan antithetical man. It needs to be read with "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" as context, and perhaps other poems on the tower theme. If we were correct in assuming

that, in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," the tower was connected with night and, because night delivers "from the crime of death and birth" and is therefore symbolic of unity and transcendence, that it was also connected with transcendence, then we are suddenly confronted, in this poem, with a complete change. The tower, here, seems to be either the rising up of something monstrous and terrifying or else the origin of the rising of this monstrous thing. And yet Yeats begins:

> Blessed be this place,
> More blessed still this tower;
> A bloody, arrogant power
> Rose out of the race
> Uttering, mastering it,
> Rose like these walls from these
> Storm-beaten cottages—
> In mockery I have set
> A powerful emblem up,
> And sing it rhyme upon rhyme
> In mockery of a time
> Half dead at the top. (p. 267)

We must remember that, traditionally, the tower is a masculine symbol. Jolande Jacobi tells us also that, in connection with the interpretation of dreams, "the animus may appear as an eagle, a bull, a lion, a lance, a tower, or as some kind of phallic shape."[1] We have seen Yeats himself using it as a symbol of the place of creation. It is also connected with the tree as creative mother, as Yggdrasil, around which the pagan worshippers dance. But, like the tree, all these symbols, including the tower, have a malign as well as a benign aspect. I suggest that it is this malign bloody tower, the "blasted oak" of Crazy Jane used as a place of malediction, the tower "half dead at the top," that Yeats has set

[1] Jolande Jacobi, The Psychology of C.G. Jung, p. 112.

up. We cannot help associating it with viciousness and malignity anyway , because Yeats describes this power which rose up as "A bloody, arrogant power" which "rose out of the race/ Uttering, mastering it"! It reminds one of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, personifying the collective evil of mankind. It is like the personification of Confusion which Victor Hugo calls up above the wavering armies of the French at the Battle of Waterloo and which utterly demoralizes and scatters them. The setting at the start of this poem is very much that of the setting in Section II of "The Tower."

Why then is he "blessing" it? It can certainly be no Christian blessing. It must be the kind of pagan blessing which comes merely from an impulsive "sweetness" which "flows into the breast," the feeling of satisfaction one gets from watching a panther pounce on a gazelle, from watching a boy torture a fledgeling. It is the kind of blessing by which one casts "out remorse," forgives oneself for a bloody or arrogant action.

In Section II, he goes on to say that his Anglo-Irish heroes "have travelled there" (p. 268). Whether they were frenzied and haughty pagans or not, he describes them all as such: Swift with his "blood-sodden breast," "haughtier-headed Burke," and "God-appointed Berkeley." They were all lone proud men, and Yeats finds something in each that is much to his liking. Swift is like Cuchulain madly fighting with the sea, Goldsmith is the exquisite subjective artist, Burke is a tree-worshipper, and Berkeley backs up Yeats's long-held belief that this "preposterous pig of a world" is nothing but a dream.

> Saeva Indignatio and the labourer's hire,
> The strength that gives our blood and state
> magnanimity of its own desire;
> Everything that is not God consumed with intellectual
> fire. (p. 269)

This "strength" is uninhibited force and passion of the pagan ideal.

In Sections III and IV, the bloody tower, the place of destruction, is connected with "the unclouded moon," Yeats's supreme symbol, the emblem of soldiers, assassins, executioners, with whom, we also remember, Yeats has just associated himself. "The blood of innocence," the blood sacrifices of pagan rites, "has left no stain," and one can virtually see Yeats's nostrils flare like a hound's as he bays:

> Odour of blood on the ancestral stair!
> And we that have shed none must gather there
> And clamour in drunken frenzy for the moon. (p. 269)

Finally, he sees "every modern nation," as he had seen the "time," as "half dead at the top." He would like them, no doubt, to be like Hitler and his storm-troopers. Finally, he philosophizes:

> For wisdom is the property of the dead,
> A something incompatible with life; and power,
> Like everything that has the stain of blood,
> A property of the living. (p. 269)

There is truth in what he says, but also much untruth, considering the emphasis he places upon "power" and the way he disparages "wisdom." From this statement, one would suppose that we should not use our minds at all, for "wisdom is the property of the dead" and, therefore, the living should not concern themselves with it. Here is the old problem of "Leda and the Swan", but, this time, touted and glorified as a doctrine to live by. "The Crazed Moon" is merely another rendition of the previous poem.

The interpretation of a poem like "Byzantium," it seems to me, requires not only an understanding of single poems like "Sailing to Byzantium," and "All Souls' Night," but also an awareness of the developing trend in Yeats's poetry to worship ungovernable pride, blood-lust, power, and to practise the adoration of the self. If it is disputed that this is what Yeats is doing, my only answer would be to refer the disputant to the great poems of The Tower and The Winding Stair. If he can put any other interpretation upon these poems, I will be more than happy to listen. I would like, however, before going on with "Byzantium," to draw attention to certain aspects of that equally "mysterious" poem, "All Souls' Night," with which it has, apart from mystery, other affinities.

We noticed in "Among School Children" the pleasure Yeats took in invoking the images of a great pagan vision of the world, ironically enough, inside, or on top of, a Christian schoolroom. Here, once more, in "All Souls' Night," we have a similar pattern. The "great Christ Church Bell" has just tolled midnight. We are at Oxford, a university with a long Christian tradition. This time, Yeats does not conjure up a vision of the faeries dancing around the Tree-God, a vision in keeping with the simplicity of the minds of young school children. We are now in the sanctum of the intellectual and the sophisticate, and so Yeats uses a form of conjuring more in keeping with this taste. The seance, we must remember, is only different in degree from the sorcerer's spell and not different in kind. This tendency of Yeats to set up pagan rites in the heart of Christian institutions is so reminiscent of Marlowe, especially in Dr. Faustus,

that I think a study of the connections between the two might prove profitable.

We are then sitting around the seance table--another form of the inner sanctum, the protected circle--upon which bubble two glasses of muscatel. He tells us that "a ghost may come" whose "element is so fine" that he may drink "from the wine breath," whereas human beings must "drink from the whole wine" (p. 256). What is the purpose of the wine and why are the ghosts going to drink from the "wine-breath"? Surely this is not <u>just</u> a <u>buddy-buddy</u> reunion with an old "companionable ghost" in order to reminisce, in old-school fashion, about former times and escapades. Surely the "wine-breath" drinking is a clever mockery of Holy Communion. The "damned" who "have howled away their hearts" drink only from a part--and a very tenuous or almost non-existent part--of the wine, whereas the Christian faithful drink from the "whole wine." Their communion then is not to partake of a God who is real and substantial but to partake of one who is shifting and formless, a god who might either "seem but the clouds of the sky/ When the horizon fades" (p. 225), or a god who might suddenly and terrifyingly change into "a bloody, arrogant power" who rises "out of the race/ Uttering, mastering it" (p. 267). We understand then by what god the ghosts are invoked.

Next, Yeats, the medium--the magus in his mesmerized state, the golden bird, "moon-embittered"--calls forth certain ghosts to come into his body:

> I need some mind that, if the cannon sound
> From every quarter of the world, can stay

> Wound in mind's pondering
> As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound.... (p. 256)

And who are the ghosts? As usual, people who have gone mad or insane, people who have unnaturally drawn into themselves for some wild reason, people who are literally bewitched. Horton has made a divinity out of his lady, so that she "seemed a gold-fish swimming in a bowl" (p. 257), to such an extent that he only wishes death. Florence Emery, for the superficial reason that her body's beauty is diminished, hides herself away in some remote part of the world pondering on the "figurative speech" of "some learned Indian" about the intricacies of the soul's journey. MacGregor, an adept himself, went crazy from loneliness and drew further and further away from human intercourse.

"But names are nothing" (p. 259). Names, according to both pagan and Christian tradition, on the contrary, are very much things. They are held as symbols of the sacredness of the individuality of the personality, and this is why primitive peoples go to such lengths to protect them and why Christian tradition keeps the naming of new-born children as part of an elaborate and important ritual. Yeats's "mummy truths" are his visions of his Translunar Paradise:

> Nothing can stay my glance
> Until that glance run in the world's despite
> To where the damned have howled away their hearts,
> And where the blessed dance.... (p. 259)

Like his wild Irish heroes and like Helen of Troy, the ghosts or disturbed spirits that he calls up have not died, at least in the Christian sense of death, but are still able to float back and forth, at someone's beck and call, between earth and "heaven."

It still remains to be seen just who are the "damned" and who are the "blessed."

In coming to "Byzantium," I have attempted, by referring to a line of development in previous poems and by referring generally, where I was able [illegible], to tradition, to put the poem in greater perspective. The validity of my interpretation, then, will, to a large extent, rest upon the validity of the interpretations of many previous poems and the validity of the references to tradition that I have made. If I am mistaken in my interpretation here, then I am likely to be mistaken in my interpretation of many other poems, and vice versa.

The opening of "Byzantium," then, as I see it, is Yeats's typical setting for the calling up of the spirit world and, as one would expect, that setting is, perversely enough, one with traditional Christian associations. Byzantium was for centuries a citadel held against the increasingly powerful invasions of the Turks. The time is also the usual time of the spirit visitations: in the first stanza, we go from sunset, when the "unpurged images of day recede," to some time later, when the "dome" is either "starlit" or "moonlit." The "Emperor's drunken soldiery"--the carnal common man as a collective whole who is lost in his senses and hence can have nothing to do with the spiritual--"are abed," and all is clear for the adept, the sorcerer, the one who takes on god-like powers, the "night-walker,"[1] to walk out his magic circle about the image of unity and perfection, the "moonlit dome" which

1 I am aware that "night-walker" has the more fundamental meaning of "harlot" or "prostitute," but I do not think, considering the pattern that has been set up in previous poems, that I am unduly taxing the word by giving it this extended meaning.

"disdains/ All that man is" (p. 280), and to "sing" his invocation. Before this, the resonance of the "great cathedral gong" has receded, something like the dying out of the sound of the "great Christ Church Bell" in "All Souls' Night."

In stanza II, the images "float" up, and they are immediately connected with the pagan world of the dead because they are bound in "mummy-cloth" and spoken of as coming from Hades. We are now to get the "mummy truths" which he promised in "All Souls' Night." He even explains his power over the "shade" or "image":

> A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
> Breathless mouths may summon;
> I hail the superhuman;
> I call it death-in-life and life-in-death. (p. 280)

The sorcerer, or medium, in his trance, <u>is</u> "breathless," and this "breathless" mouth may summon the ghosts or shades which have "no moisture and no breath." Then, he hails the image or ghost, "the superhuman," talks to it. He calls it "death-in-life and life-in-death." Here, he is referring, no doubt, to the Heraclitean doctrine of flux as the basis of reality.

He refers to this doctrine, in <u>A Vision</u>, in connection with his discussion of lunar and solar periods as a "double vortex":

> A solar period is a day from sunrise to sunrise, or a year from March to March, a month from full moon to full moon. On the other hand a lunar period is a day from sunset to sunset, a year from September to September, a month from moonless night to moonless night. In other words every month or phase when we take it as a whole is a double vortex moving from Phase 1 to Phase 28, or two periods, one solar and one lunar, which in the words of Heraclitus 'live each other's death, die each other's life.'[1]

1 W.B. Yeats, <u>A Vision</u>, p. 197.

Obviously, this doctrine fits in quite easily with pagan assumptions that the dead flit back and forth between the world of the living, the daylight world of consciousness, and the shadowy world of the dead, the night or faery world of spells and incantations. Therefore, life and death "were not/ Till man made up the whole,/ Made lock, stock and barrel/ Out of his bitter soul" (p. 223). It is all a dream, there is no distinction between life and death; after all, "God-appointed Berkeley" has told us so, the Pre-Socratic philosophers have supported the idea, pagan tradition affirms it, and Yeats's own artistic facility for dreaming has completely removed it from the realm of doubt.

In his god-like trance, in which he can summon, talk to, and manipulate, the shades or disturbed spirits, he has now become the golden bird. This golden bird "can like the cocks of Hades crow," that is, it can sing the tune by which the shades do their frenzied dance, or, "by the moon embittered,"—moon-struck, crazed by the moon, a state in which Yeats has frequently said he was, and a state in which all the characters he calls up definitely are—"scorn aloud/ In glory of changeless metal/ Common bird or petal/ And all complexities of mire or blood" (p. 281). In "Sailing to Byzantium," also as the golden bird, he had called the tune to the dance of the "lords and ladies of Byzantium" who were connected with the kings and queens, the suns and moons, of his dreams and occult studies. Now, we are to connect these kings and queens, pairs of prancing horses, swans sailing "lover by lover," with the mad spirits in Hades. And Yeats himself, what has he become? Nothing but the blood-lusting, power-hungry, soulless and bitter master of

the revels, of the dance of death.

The fourth stanza is a perfect picture of the traditional rendering of this dance. Anyone who has seen Walt Disney's pictorial representation of Moussorgsky's A Night on Bald Mountain in his motion picture Fantasia will understand what I mean. Ironically, it also takes place, more or less, right in the back of the Christian village on the mountain. These, then, are not the spirits who are being cleansed in purgatory on their way to heaven, for we remember that there is no such distinction of heaven and hell in Yeats's spiritual geography. They are the spirits of the damned forced to float back and forth from the earth, the grave, Hades, to the upper air whenever their master can call them. It is also a picture of the psychic dance of the madman, in which no

> storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
> Where blood-begotten spirits come
> And all complexities of fury leave,
> Dying into a dance,
> An agony of trance,
> An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.
>
> Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,
> Spirit after spirit! The smithies break the flood,
> The golden smithies of the Emperor!
> Marbles of the dancing floor
> Break bitter furies of complexity,
> Those images that yet
> Fresh images beget,
> That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea. (p. 281)

Where else do we find "agonies of trance," "agonies of flame," "bitter furies of complexity," and "gong-tormented seas," except in Hell. Once again, Yeats has placed his Hell in one of the centres of the Christian faith.

I do not intend to treat the last volumes of Yeats's poems separately, but merely to draw from them what, it seems to me, is the final

phase of the path he had marked out and followed from the beginning. As we have seen, his themes do not change but rather follow transformation after transformation. The pagan ideas of the divinity of the self, tree worship, and flux, and the concomitant pagan virtues of heroism, generosity, and honesty, together with the pagan vices of boundless pride, cruelty, and uninhibited impulse, are continuously embodied in the poems. They merely take on different colourings depending on the state of Yeats's psychic condition. Most of the last poems, artistically fine as they are, repeat over and over these pagan themes together with the reverse theme of defiance of Christian orthodoxy.

We are immediately confronted once more with this antithesis in the series of Crazy Jane poems. In "Crazy Jane and the Bishop" Jane begins:

> Bring me to the blasted oak
> That I, midnight upon the stroke,
> (All find safety in the tomb.)
> May call down curses on his head
> Because of my dear Jack that's dead. (p. 290)

Crazy Jane is the new transformation of Yeats's anima, certainly a retrogressive one from that of Leda. She is the black sorceress which pairs up with the black sorcerer of "Blood and the Moon" and "Byzantium." As usual, Yeats makes the Bishop, the primary Christian figure, a physical and moral monstrosity, while her "Jack" was straight as a "birch-tree." "Jack," she says,

> had my virginity,
> And bids me to the oak, for he
> (All find safety in the tomb.)
> Wanders out into the night
> And there is shelter under it,
> But should that other come, I spit.... (p. 290-91)

Here, once more, is the tree-worship, the ungovernable pride, the adoration of the body and the obsession with sex display, and the belief in the flux world of the spirits. In "Crazy Jane on God,"

God is identified with nature. In "Crazy Jane Talks With the Bishop," we read the wonderful lines:

> 'A woman can be proud and stiff
> When on love intent;
> But Love has pitched his mansion in
> The place of excrement;
> For nothing can be sole or whole
> That has not been rent.' (p. 295)

This stanza embodies a beautiful truth expressed in beautiful words. But look who says it. There is nothing womanly about Crazy Jane, nothing human even. She is bitter, blasphemous, and utterly depraved. She is as soulless and rigid as the zombie characters with which Yeats has been comparing himself: the bird of "changeless metal," "a tattered coat upon a stick," and "a comfortable kind of old scarecrow." Here is the woman who has become completely "lunar" or moon-embittered, that is, her unconscious, masculine in her case, has dominated her to the point where not one scrap of her intuitive woman's conscious remains: she is the ideal animus-dominated woman. In her case, there is no possibility of a continuing path of transcendence; the conscious, the sun, has been eclipsed and destroyed and no further development is possible. To have a "woman" of this sort talk about love, humanity, God, or anything, is a howlingly funny mockery: a total perversion of what ever truth the words would normally have had. I find it utterly disgusting.

In "Three Things," which is in a series of poems repeating the theme of physical love, a "wave-whitened" bone sings upon the shore. It wants three things: bodily food, bodily touch, and copulation. One supposes at night a white ghost hovering from out of the bone.

There are quite a number of poems also in which we see Yeats

picturing himself as a lonely withdrawn disgusted old man. Take, for example, the short "After Long Silence."

> Speech after long silence; it is right,
> All other lovers being estranged or dead,
> Unfriendly lamplight hid under its shade,
> The curtains drawn upon unfriendly night,
> That we descant and yet again descant
> Upon the supreme theme of Art and Song:
> Bodily decrepitude is wisdom; young
> We loved each other and were ignorant. (p. 301)

The lamplight is "unfriendly," the night is "unfriendly," and "bodily decrepitude is wisdom." It is a gloomy picture and expresses a certain amount of nonsense. Decay of the body has not any necessary connection with wisdom. Even the phrase, "bodily decrepitude," is tiresome; we have heard it too often. Yeats is merely writing too many poems with nothing to say in them but what he has already said a number of times before. "Mad As The Mist And Snow" is another of this same kind.

In "Those Dancing Days Are Gone," Yeats returns to the symbols of sun and moon in a way he has not done since the early part of The Wild Swans at Coole. Since that time, his poetry has become moon-struck, moon-embittered, and the moon, with very few exceptions, has utterly dominated the poetry at the expense of the absence of the sun. Now he brings them back together and we might think that he is coming around to a new balance. But when we look at the poem closely, I doubt if we can think this for long. The refrain

> I carry the sun in a golden cup,
> The moon in a silver bag (pp. 302-3),

reminds one of an old codger dragging out of the attic a couple of dried-up pea-shooters and a couple of dried-up peas and looking at them nostalgically and then deciding to use them again. They seem a little

young for him now, but he explains why he uses them: "A man may put pretence away/ Who leans upon a stick,/ May sing, and sing until he drop,/ Whether to maid or hag... " (p. 303). An old man, he says, may do what he likes. He may play with toys, maunder, sing dirty ballads that he remembers to old hags or to maids. This is still the attitude of the pagan man: no responsibility; nature made him that way, let nature take the blame. It is quite an admission, on Yeats's part, to make. He is certainly honest. Several further poems are on the lunatic theme.

In interpreting "Her Triumph," it is necessary to go back to the first poem of Michael Robartes and the Dancer. There, we saw the dragon as symbolizing the undifferentiated animus figure of the lady; in that undifferentiated state, it caused her to be overly masculine and argumentative, not allowing her intuitive feminine conscious its proper play. In this later poem, the lady admits that she "did the dragon's will" until her champion came, because she "fancied love a casual/ Improvisation, or a settled game... " (p. 310). She thought love was an intellectual affair. Her champion, either Saint George or the "pagan Perseus," came and broke "the dragon-rings," that is, helped her to differentiate her animus by making her aware of its true nature, and set her free. She is now her true self, either Saint George's lady or Andromeda, and her animus, no longer the dominating dragon, has assumed his proper human shape. The last two lines capture the moment of her new-found awareness: she stares in astonishment at the change that has come over her unconscious and listens to the "miraculous strange bird" of revelation which tells her what has taken place.

"Supernatural Songs" is another group of fine poems in which the old argument of Yeats is continued. Section I, Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn, casts the monk, Ribh, in the "primary" man's usual ridiculous role. He tells the story of the two pagan lovers who died. The two trees, apple and yew, above their graves are intertwined to represent their undying love. But the lovers were transformed into pure substance and their intercourse is represented as fire in which they both seem to be consumed. It is this fire of their intercourse by which the fasting and praying celibate is able to read his book in the dark. The light they cast is reflected as a "circle on the grass." The two pagan lovers are represented as having attained a perfect union without any unnatural effort, while the ninety-year-old monk, having spent a life-time searching for it, has, it seems, not come near it. However, simple as the monk is, he is not represented as vicious or hypocritical. He is merely represented as being an utter fool; that is, he sees, has his spiritual light, through the self-made divinity of a couple of amorous pagans. One could also think of the copulating lovers as a halo over the saintly Ribh's head: a pure mockery of centuries of Christian art and belief.

In Section II, Ribh Denounces Patrick, Yeats makes a slight, but not entirely uncharacteristic, switch in Ribh's temperament: Ribh is not only a fool but an insubordinate fool. We have already seen how Yeats handled Patrick in the Oisin legend as a prig and a bigot. Now, he is able to play off fool against bigot and make the fool win. Either way, Yeats wins. But it is infinitely better comedy to have the fool squash the bigot. Patrick, one assumes, upholds the traditional doctrine of the masculine Trinity, while Ribh calls it a

"Greek absurdity" which does not tally with anything in nature; that is, there ought to be a feminine element. He produces pagan and occult sources to show that natural things are copies of supernatural, and that, therefore, the masculine Trinity is absurd. His argument is too ridiculous to refute, but we need not introduce any extra element into Yeats's comedy: he is determined that orthodox Christianity shall be made to look ridiculous.

In Section III, Ribh in Ecstasy, we see that Ribh is not only a fool but a hypocrite; he is only a pagan in disguise. He says: "My soul had found/ All happiness in its own cause or ground" (p. 329). This is obviously a statement of the pagan belief in self-adoration. Further, the doctrine of flux or transmigration of souls is suggested in his final words here:

> Some shadow fell. My soul forgot
> Those amorous cries that out of quiet come
> And must the common round of day resume. (p. 329)

It sounds, even, as though he might be one of the shades or ghosts which Yeats keeps calling up. Maybe the night before he was dancing in the circle of Yeats's fire dance.

Section IV, There, merely gives four pictures or symbols of the state of psychic or spiritual unity. They are related to the Eastern mandalas which have long been subjects for Eastern art or symbols for contemplation. They are also found in the literature of Christian mysticism. However, the point is that they are merely symbols representing a state, perhaps only relative, of psychic unity. They are universal symbols and are not exclusive to either nature worshippers or Christians.

The fifth section, Ribh considers Christian Love insufficient, is a mere rehashing of Yeats's pagan doctrines of the soul with a generous addition of black magic. Why, he says, should he seek for love or study it? "It is of God and passes human wit" (p. 330). In other words, there is no element in the human psyche which is spiritual, which is a man's individual share of God. Besides, "it passes human wit," that is, it cannot be understood with the conscious intellect. But this is no argument at all. If God is not in a man then, of course, the human intellect cannot understand it. But, if there is an element of God in a man, it will be, by definition, not understandable by the intellect, because it is God. This is the typical statement of the pagan who believes in the supremacy of the individual intellect: I cannot understand it, therefore it does not exist.

In stanza two, Yeats says that the soul, freed of deception and impurities--apparently by hate--can show how the soul may walk in the future and how it was able to walk in the past. He is extremely vague here, but it appears that somehow the soul, by being jealous and hateful, will clear itself. Either from the view of tradition or of analytical psychology, this is nonsense.

Then, in the third stanza, the "delivered soul," he says, "herself shall learn/ A darker knowledge and in hatred turn/ From every thought of God mankind has had" (p. 330). This is further nonsense. The soul can hardly purify itself or deliver itself until it is aware of itself and its elements. Until it becomes aware of its instinctual, contrasexual, and spiritual nature and until it confronts its awareness to the unknown, it can not do these things. It must at

least do these things on some level or other.

Finally he returns to his doctrine of ghosts or shades or ghouls which he has represented in "All Souls' Night" and "Byzantium":

> At stroke of midnight soul cannot endure
> A bodily or mental furniture.
> What can she take until her Master give!
> Where can she look until He make the show!
> What can she know until He bid her know!
> How can she live till in her blood He live! (p. 330)

At midnight, the soul must come out of its grave or out of its mummy-cloth. But this is only talk about "the damned" who "have howled away their hearts" (p. 259). These are the Hortons, the Florence Emerys, the MacGregors, the Red Hanrahans, who wanted to die, who went crazy or queer, who sank themselves utterly into sensuality. These are the zombies, the metallic men, the "moon-embittered" birds. Since these people do not believe in Christ, and are at the beck and call of mediums or magicians, it is obvious that "her Master" and "He" can only refer to such a practitioner. Yeats is one himself. It is the doctrine of complete passivity to the nature god, the confusion, the collective evil of mankind.

The sixth section, He and She, is merely the repetition of the doctrine of the self; pure subjection to the moon, the unconscious; it should be entitled merely She. Section VII is just another statement of the adoration of the nature-goddess. Section VIII is another restatement of the inevitable cycles. Section IX, The Four Ages of Man, expresses four of men's struggles: the struggle to walk, to conquer the emotions, to conquer the mind, and to conquer the spirit. It seems innocent enough, but, when we remember Yeats's idea of God, it becomes sheer madness.

Sections X and XI are oblique or esoteric references to his doctrine of souls and historical cycles. Section XII, Meru, would seem, on the face of it, to be the resolution of the struggle, in which the hermits find self-realization on top of the sacred mountain. But man, he says, "cannot cease/ Ravening through century after century... that he may come/ Into the desolation of reality" (p. 333). Then he says a farewell to Egypt, Greece, and Rome. But I take it that all he means here is that the pagan empires pass away like any other empires. It is merely the historical level of the flux. He sums up by saying that the hermits upon the mountain know

> That day brings round the night, that before dawn
> His glory and his monuments are gone. (p. 334)

In other words, all men pass away. However, what this means in relation to his empire of ghouls is not evident.

Many of the last poems repeat and repeat his favourite themes: the historical cycles, physical love, frenzy with age, the bravery of the antithetical man, legendary Ireland, and so forth. I do not, of course, mean to imply that amongst the last poems there are not a great many fine works of art. Yeats maintained his great craftsmanship, and also the integrity of his vision, to the end. I wish, however, to leave these various statements of his beliefs, of which I think we have a fair idea, and come to his second last poem, "The Black Tower," which, together with "Under Ben Bulben," it seems to me, sums up his final stand.

"The Black Tower," I believe, is one of Yeats's greatest artistic achievements. It is a moment captured out of the early Middle Ages and, in this respect, reminds one of Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci."

But it is much more than this as we shall see. The bare simplicity of the images, the forthright brevity of the statement, and the absolute sureness of the syntax, are magical in bringing out the masculine quality of these rough and desperate defenders of a "lost cause," the nature of which we shall try to uncover.

F.A.C. Wilson has given us an exegesis of this poem in his W.B. Yeats and Tradition.[1] I do not particularly wish to argue with his account of the meaning of the tower symbol here, but rather to bring into focus more of the related material from the other poems so that we can get a much less blurred view of the poem. Obviously, we have met all its symbols, the tower, the soldiers, the tomb, the wind, the bones, and the king, many times before.

Speaking of the defending soldiers, Wilson says: "They remain faithful to their 'old black tower' [as though it were alma mater], which is of course Plotinus' 'old watchtower beaten by storms', the intellective soul, by which man perceives the infinite."[2] There is no doubt that the tower symbol has been used in this way (we shall, however, have to qualify the word "infinite" when we see what Yeats's perception is), solely so in such poems as "Ego Dominus Tuus," and "The Phases of the Moon." It has also been used in this sense, with the added idea of a place of refuge from storm, in "A Prayer for my Daughter," "Meditation in Time of Civil War," and others. Once more, it has been used in this sense, again with the added idea, because it is a place of refuge, of a place of creation and invocation to a god, in such poems as "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," "The Tower,"

1 pp. 223-230.
2 Ibid., p. 227.

and "Blood and the Moon," and others. Similarly, it is sometimes used with the added idea of being a place within which the struggle of the opposition goes on. In "The Round Tower," the "golden king and silver lady" are seen to reach the top, that is, transcend the struggle of the opposites. This is the dream of Billy Byrne who would "lie lapped up in linen" and who slept on top of a tombstone, that is, the dream of a "dead" man or of a pagan who does not mind sleeping on tombstones. In "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," Soul beckons Self to the ascent, but Self, who is antithetical, a moon-worshipper, refuses to ascend at the dark of the moon, the "primary" ideal, but claims "as by a soldier's right/ A charter to commit the crime once more" (p. 266), that is, to go again through the antithetical cradles of impulse, blood, and heroism. In the second book of "The Wanderings of Oisin," Oisin, who is completely submerged in the unconscious, compares the decay of his soul to a "dark tower" which is worn away by the sea, the sea which is completely moon-driven. But he seems to see this--with that typical pagan acceptance--as inevitable, for he says:

> 'But till the moon has taken all, I wage
> War on the mightiest men under the skies,
> And they have fallen or fled, age after age.
> Light is man's love, and lighter is man's rage;
> His purpose drifts and dies.' (pp. 430-31)

When we come, therefore, to "The Black Tower," apart from the idea of Plotinus' "intellective soul" perceiving the infinite, I think we must keep in mind the ideas of refuge from storm, place of creation and invocation to a god, and place of struggle of the opposites. I think we must remember also that the tower without a light, or at the dark of the moon, is "emblematical of the night" (p. 266), that is emblematical of the "primary" Christian ideal, that the tower at the

full moon is emblematical of the "antithetical" pagan ideal, and that the tower with a waning moon means the waning of the antithetical pagan cycle.

Frequently, we have seen the tower connected with its loud and roistering soldiers. In "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," we have just seen that Yeats identified himself as one, and that they are antithetical men, dedicated to the moon-ideal. Yeats calls up another soldier, Robert Gregory, in his poem in memory of that man. In "The Tower," after commenting upon the "ancient bankrupt master of this house," (even the founder is one of these underdog desperadoes), he says:

> Before that ruin came, for centuries,
> Rough men-at-arms, cross-gartered to the knees
> Or shod in iron, climbed the narrow stairs,
> And certain men-at-arms there were
> Whose images, in the Great Memory stored,
> Come with loud cry and panting breast
> To break upon a sleeper's rest
> While their great wooden dice beat on the board. (p. 221)

So here we have a new incidence of the ruin of the tower, the ruin of the bastion of the antithetical man, probably much later than the ruin of "Manannan's dark tower" (pp. 430-31) in the Oisin legend. These soldiers, with their "loud cry and panting breast," and their "great wooden dice" which "beat on the board," remind one faintly of the gamblers who threw for Christ's cloak at the foot of the Cross. Their tower might have crumbled about that time.

Again, in Section II of "Meditations in Time of Civil War," we have Yeats identifying himself with the beleaguered soldier:

> Two men have founded here. A man-at-arms
> Gathered a score of horse and spent his days
> In this tumultuous spot,

Where through long wars and sudden night alarms
His dwindling score and he seemed castaways
Forgetting and forgot;
And I, that after me
My bodily heirs may find,
To exalt a lonely mind,
Befitting emblems of adversity. (p. 227)

Here is another ruin of the tower with its grim dwindling defenders. In this poem, as well as in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," we see the tower as the repository of the moon-sword of Sato and its embroidered covering. In Section VII, I see Phantoms of Hatred and of the Heart's Fullness and of the Coming Emptiness (p. 231), Yeats climbs to the tower-top and sees the moon, "that seems unchangeable,/ A glittering sword out of the east." Sato, of course, was a member of the Samurai or warrior-class, and so his sword, in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," is said to be emblematical of war, while the sheath-covering, from a court-woman's dress, is emblematical of love. This means that the tower, in which they rest, has been turned into a pagan temple, for the egg of Zeus and Leda, containing love and war, is also hung in a Greek temple.[1]

When we come to "Blood and the Moon," we see that the tower is such by his opening invocation, and we also see the part the soldiers play in this ritual to Hecate:

The purity of the unclouded moon
Has flung its arrowy shaft upon the floor.
Seven centuries have passed and it is pure,
The blood of innocence has left no stain.
There, on blood-stained ground, have stood
Soldier, assassin, executioner,
Whether for daily pittance or in blind fear
Or out of abstract hatred, and shed blood,
But could not cast a single jet thereon.
Odour of blood on the ancestral stair! (p. 269)

1 W.B. Yeats, A Vision, p. 268.

"Seven centuries have passed...." Seven centuries before Yeats, who is now looking through "the dusty, glittering windows"? That would make it approximately the end of the twelfth century: a time which is likely for the scene of "The Black Tower." This makes sense also, for, at that time, the moon was just fading out and the dark of the moon coming on, the "primary" Christian cycle, and this is the time for the destruction of the tower, the pagan temple, the place of the blood-covered altar.

The tower is also connected with the present time, the end of what he thought was the Christian "primary" cycle--"In mockery of a time half dead at the top" (p. 267)--and with modern nations: "Is every modern nation like the tower,/ Half dead at the top" (p. 269)? So now, the tower is perfectly integrated with the moon, the antithetical cycle, paganism, as a symbol of the rise and fall of antithetical historical periods. Correspondingly, the soldiers and men-at-arms are besieged and desperate in a period of the rise of the "objective" principle, and blood-thirsty and arrogant in a period of the opposite "subjective" principle. They kill the innocent in their period of power, so that they can call upon the aid of their damned souls in their period of decline. They are in league with the dead, the ghouls, who flit back and forth at the bidding of the moon-goddess or of her devotees, the "moon-embittered," who have been granted the power. We have seen Yeats do this in quite a number of poems.

There is a further reference to the connection of these perverse-willed "soldiers" with the ghosts of the dead in the third song of "Three Songs to the Same Tune" (p. 323):

> The soldier takes pride in saluting his Captain,
> The devotee proffers a knee to his Lord,

Some back a mare thrown from a thoroughbred,
Troy backed its Helen; Troy died and adored;
Great nations blossom above;
A slave bows down to a slave.

And the refrain:

'Who'd care to dig 'em,' said the old, old man,
'Those six feet marked in chalk?
Much I talk, more I walk;
Time I were buried,' said the old, old man.

Once more, as in "The Round Tower," "The Black Tower," and many other "tower" poems, it is the pagan man, the beggar who lies on tombstones, the defiant assassin, the medium, the sorcerer in black magic, the "night-walker," the Trojans who backed Helen and defended "the topless towers of Ilium," all the underdogs of the earth, who commune with and invoke the aid of the "dead," the ghosts of the damned.

I think now that we may proceed with the explanation of "The Black Tower," as it follows out the pattern of many of the other poems.

Obviously, the "men of the old black tower" are a dying and desperate band. They are starving, "feed as the goatherd feeds" (p. 396), and they are withering up because "their wine"--which can also be taken to read "blood"--has "gone sour." Yet, in their defiance--the defiance of devotees of the moon-goddess--they say that they

Lack nothing that a soldier needs,
That all are oath-bound men:
Those banners come not in. (p. 396)

Who are they oath-bound to? The answer is, of course, to their absent "king." But what is the nature of their king? Why is he not in his tower? He always has been before, either calling up ghosts with his

rites, or butchering on the altar at the full of the moon. But the "king" is not coming and the soldiers know it; the cook is a "lying hound." The "king" is dead.

Wilson thinks that the "banners" are symbolic of communism. He says: "I feel sure that what Yeats has in mind here is the insidious spiritual propaganda of communism, with its insistence on the weakness of the individual personality and its passion for reform and change."[1] I cannot agree, of course, with this, for it does not fit in with the pattern that Yeats has been following throughout his poetic career. The only logical enemies of the pagans are the "primary" Christians. It is these whom the soldiers defy. There is little doubt, either, that the oath, being sworn to the dead king, is also sworn to the pagan ghouls in their tombs. As we have seen, these people, following the old pagan customs, are in league with the dead; they helped add to the number of the dead through their sacrifices when in their power, and so the dead will help them now, by coming alive and aiding them.

As usual, Yeats puts the worst possible light on the attempts of the Christians to save their souls because they are nearing death. I am sure that Yeats would have interpreted any attempt of this nature on his own behalf in this way. Since they have lived as pagans, worshipping blood and death, they will not be "bribed" or "threatened" by Christians into giving up their allegiance, or be told they are "fools" for caring "what king sets up his rule." He then arrogantly challenges those Christian "banners":

> If he died long ago
> Why do you dread us so? (p. 397)

1 F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, p. 227.

If our "king," who is really Yeats himself, died long ago why do you fear us so? Just as we were immediately told the answer to whom they were oath-bound in the first stanza by the refrain, so, in the second, the answer why the Christians dread them is given by the second refrain: there is still "faint moonlight" and, I suppose, they suspect that the moon-king is still alive or, at least, has some power still.

I wish to make several further notes about "The Black Tower," in reference to Wilson's exegesis. In discussing the cook, I think Wilson is generally right in saying that the image of the cook is medieval.[1] There is, however, another source for the cook, which he does not mention, in "The Wanderings of Oisin." In Book III, amongst the host of ghouls that flit by Oisin and Niamh, there is one "Cook Barach, the traitor" (p. 437), who cannot shut off his spittle. It is from him that our "lying hound" of a cook from "The Black Tower" comes.

There is also the matter of the "king." Wilson suggest that his return is awaited eagerly and that he is "a Platonic symbol representing the principle of pure subjectivity soon to be reborn by a new annunciation into the world; he is not dead, as the tower's godless enemies have suggested, for true religion can never be superannuated."[2] I think perhaps that this statement of Wilson's is due to the fact that he believes the enemies are communists. The King is no doubt the high-priest of the moon-goddess and is to be identified with Yeats. No doubt also, his "great horn" will be heard again when the new moon,

1 F.A.C. Wilson, W.B. Yeats and Tradition, p. 229.
2 Ibid.

the hunter's moon, appears after the dark period is over, but I would say he was dead during the dark of the moon.

The whole difficulty with an exegesis of this nature is that Yeats, as he has done countless times before, makes the pagan virtues seem absolutely irreproachable. These men are brave, forthright, vigilant, and so very "loyal." The Christians are so dishonest, they "bribe" and "threaten," they are cowards to boot. My defence of this position must be that, in the context of the whole of Yeats's poems, this has been his sole and undeniable stand on the question of Christianity. He has mocked it from beginning to end. He ridicules the saints, the sacred doctrines, makes a mockery of Christian worship and education, profanes their art and institutions, and defames their ideal, Christ.

In an earlier chapter, I quoted Jolande Jacobi frequently in endeavoring to outline the spiritual path of the individual as it is understood both by tradition and by the analytical psychology of Carl Jung. I then tried to trace this path in Yeats's poetry through the sun and moon symbols because these symbols are traditionally used to represent the masculine and feminine elements of the human psyche. What has happened in Yeats's case is that, instead of going past the stage which involves the harmonious consolidation and union with the anima, or contrasexual element, he has been dominated and imprisoned by it. Instead of accomplishing this and going on to the consolidation of the spiritual element of his psyche, he began to worship his anima and turned that part of himself into a goddess. We see this development setting in after the poems of The Tower. Hardly after that, are the sun and moon symbols seen in balance at all in his

poetry.

I am not denying that he was a great artist, a great "shaper," a great master of form. That cannot be denied as far as I am able to judge. But nevertheless there is a certain perverseness, a certain superhuman arrogance, a certain cruelty and coarseness in all his work, and, with it, a certain infantile delight in trickery, mockery, and inflexibility. I know that there is another strain in his poetry other than the one I have pointed out. There are his fine poems to his son and daughter, and those to Lady Gregory. Nevertheless, the bitterness and cruelty is there and in large doses. I feel that I did not begin an exegesis of his poems with the idea of defaming him or of lessening his status as a poet. I do not think I could do that even if I wanted to do so. I went to his work with the idea of examining the development of a famous poet and of enriching our knowledge of his work. I found what I did in the course of that work.

As much as I admire his great artistry, I would be dishonest if I did not say that I dislike the content of his work and the ideals it expresses. It would be silly on my part, and even dishonest, if I had said anything else. Perhaps, I have misunderstood the trend of his thought. As I said earlier, my interpretations of the poems will have to be taken as a whole or rejected as a whole. Perhaps, also, I will be criticized for having analyzed the poems strictly from a viewpoint of understanding and not from a viewpoint of appreciation of their beauty. However, the whole point of my analysis was understanding for the simple reason that I did not have that understanding and do not completely even now. I was already aware of their beauty and craft. I leave it at that. Perhaps I will be accused of arrogance

in these final words, but I will take that chance:

> The Cross upon the mountain, that's what the Scripture said.
>
> So get you gone, old pagan, though with blessings on your head.

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