

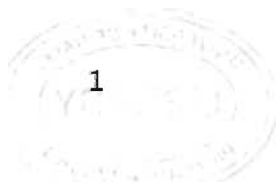
YEATS AND INDIVIDUATION: AN EXPLORATION OF ARCHETYPES IN THE WORK  
OF W.B. YEATS

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I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work, and  
has not been submitted for a degree in any other university.



## ABSTRACT

In this thesis I attempt to indicate the active importance of specific Jungian archetypes ('shadow', 'anima' and 'mandala') for Yeats, and to examine how these archetypes are uniquely elaborated by him in his poetry, drama and philosophical writings. To my mind these archetypes play a crucial role in the poet's quest for the psychological unity inherent in his conception of 'Unity of Being', or what Jung terms 'individuation'. Yeats once wrote, 'Our little memories are but part of some great Memory that renews the world and men's thought age after age' (1961b: 79). It is clear that Yeats was, in his quest for unity, committed to such renewal. If his poetry is seen to draw on key archetypes central to the individuation process, the significance of the renewal might be far greater than we would usually give credence to. Thus anima, shadow and mandala archetypes are located at the core of the poet's work. The thesis indicates how these archetypes help give substance to such central Yeatsian conceptions as conflict, the feminine principle, and cyclicity. But that these notions-- after being explicitly related to Jungian individuation-- can in turn be seen as informing a more fundamental and embracing concern with psychological unity, constitutes the central value of the present approach.

I offer an introduction to Jung and the archetypes, then go on to examine the archetypes mentioned above, as they manifest themselves in Yeats. Specifically, I examine the way Yeats

integrates the archetypes within his vision of life in his attempt to come to terms, on the basis of a creative engagement, with his own psychological impulses. Finally, I apply insights derived from the above investigations to important Yeatsian notions connected with unity: the linking of sexual love and beatific vision, the City of Art, and the eternal moment.

Before the mind's eye, whether in sleep or waking, came images that one was to discover presently in some book one had never read, and after looking in vain for explanation to the current theory of forgotten personal memory, I came to believe in a Great Memory passing on from generation to generation.

W.B.Yeats *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*

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Versions of Chapters Four, Five and Eight of this thesis have appeared in *The English Academy Review* and *Theoria*.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCING

The only abbreviations used in this thesis are CP for the standard Macmillan *Collected Poems* of 1950, and CPL for the *Collected Plays* of 1952.

I have used these volumes in the writing of this thesis despite the appearance of a growing number of new editions, because the *Collected Poems* and *Collected Plays* remain, at this point in time, the most generally accessible collections. A peculiarity of these two volumes, however, is that poems and plays are not given line numbers. To rectify the matter, and involve the reader in laborious line-counting, seems undesirable in editions with such a clear type-face, where, given page references, relevant passages are easily found. For this reason, but following, as well, a widely practised critical convention in Yeats scholarship, I only give page references to works quoted.

In documenting sources I have used the Harvard method. References in the body of the text to author, date and page number, all placed within brackets, correspond to more detailed information in the bibliography, where authors are presented in alphabetical sequence. If an author has written more than one work the sequence under his or her name is arranged according to date of publication. If two or more of an author's books were published in the same year, the titles are arranged alphabetically, and the date of publication is modified by an additional letter, also presented in alphabetical sequence, thus: 1978a; 1978b etc.

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## INTRODUCTION

Raman Selden, in the introduction to *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, explains his reluctance to deal with myth criticism as follows:

I have not tried to give a comprehensive picture of modern critical theory, but rather a guide to the most challenging and prominent trends. I have omitted, for example, myth criticism, which has a long and various history, and includes the work of such writers as Gilbert Murray, James Frazer, Maud Bodkin, Carl Jung, and Northrop Frye. It seemed to me that myth criticism has not entered the main stream of academic or popular culture, and has not challenged received ideas as vigorously as the theories we will examine. (1986: 4-5)

Selden's disclaimer aside, in the face of current political and economic pressures in South Africa it might seem evasive to engage in an apparently rarefied theory of archetypes, as this thesis attempts to do. But an archetypal emphasis (whatever our final verdict regarding the actual efficacy of Jung's analytic psychology) helps reaffirm the importance of an internalized, mythopoeic dimension in the creation and study of literature. It seems to me that the psychological imperatives in myth uncovered by Jung and others, are, in this regard, of great value. Jung's insights, for example, underline Yeats's fundamental belief in the rejuvenating powers of the 'great Memory', of which 'our little memories are but part' (1961b: 79), and give perhaps unexpected credence to such a belief in a still



sceptical age. For this reason, I make no apology for drawing on certain Jungian conceptions in this thesis.

Also, in terms of the general critical climate at present, I am not convinced that the notion of myth is as peripheral as Selden makes out. For example, a theory of psychology might be regarded as myth, if, along with Lilian Feder in *Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry*, we understand myth to be 'a form of expression which reveals a process of thought and feeling -- man's awareness of and response to the universe, his fellow men, and his separate being' (Feder, 1971: 28). Such a view is apparent in much of Harold Bloom's book, *Yeats*. Bloom refers, for instance, to the 'Freudian mythology of ego, superego, id, libido, imago' (1972: 213). Indeed, Jung himself terms aspects of his own work 'myth' (Jung, 1966: 17).

If Freudian 'myth' is clearly traceable in much of modern theory, from Foucault to Jameson, the presence of Jung should not be overlooked. For example, Andrew Samuels in *Jung and the Post-Jungians* shows how even a Freudian such as Jacques Lacan owes important debts to Jung (1985: 10). And, looking at the notion of archetypal patterns in general, do not the thirty-one functions of narrative discerned by the structuralist Vladimir Propp in Russian fairy-tales (Propp, 1979: 25ff.) provide a pattern as fundamental as Northrop Frye's phases of the solar cycle (Frye, 1963: 19-20)? (Fredric Jameson acknowledges the importance of Frye's contribution to narrative analysis, a field which draws on the archetypal phases (Jameson, 1981: 12). And Imre Salusinszky-- in contradistinction to Selden-- sees Frye's

*Anatomy of Criticism*, based on a study of archetypes, as 'one of the great forces behind the establishment of the field now called "critical theory"' (1987: 30.) What one is arguing here is the contemporary validity, after all, of aspects of work engaged in by such thinkers as Jung and Frye.

While Selden conveys a sense of the *general* insignificance of Jung and Frye, James Lovic Allen, in 'The Road to Byzantium: Archetypal Criticism and Yeats' (1973), feels that Jung and Frye have no *specific* value in relation to Yeats. Briefly, he argues that because there is no exact correlation among Jung, Frye and Yeats's models, to apply Jung and Frye to Yeats is to bring confusion to a reading of Yeats (1973: 54). Allen is only right if one insists on adopting a very rigid approach to the subject, not using Jung, for example, as a guideline, but as an absolute frame of reference from which no deviations can be made. Heeding the psychologist's own warnings, I do not utilize Jung in this rigid manner. According to Laurens van der Post in *Jung and the Story of our Time*, the psychologist declared: "'I do not want anybody to be a Jungian...I want people above all to be themselves"' (1978: x). Jung's ideas, then, are employed simply as a framework upon which I can build perceptions developed from a reading of Yeats. Yeats, after all, has his own specific relationships with the Jungian archetypes central to this thesis, which I hope to elucidate.

The last mentioned point takes into account an observation made by Philip Wheelwright in *The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism*:

When it comes to inquiring just how a given archetype is to be interpreted...in relation to the rooted meanings and values of human life, I fear that either Freud's or Jung's insistence upon the priority of a single method and a single theory and upon judging the archetypes on the basis of discoveries made or claimed to be made in modern clinics, tends to increase the obscurities of the problem instead of lessening them. No method is foolproof, but the most promising methods are likely to be, other things equal, the least prejudiced; and this involves the gathering of archetypal evidences on a broad base...and seeking to understand such evidences on their own terms as far as possible instead of imposing extrinsically oriented interpretations upon them. (1982: 55)

Although Wheelwright misrepresents the spirit of Jung's attitude (apparent in the previous paragraph above), he does well to caution against a too glib adoption of any one particular view. Frye, in the 'Polemical Introduction' to the *Anatomy of Criticism*, raises a related problem connected with critical 'determinisms': such determinisms (Marxist, Thomist, liberal-humanist, neo-Classical, Freudian, Jungian, or existentialist) substitute 'a critical attitude for criticism', and propose 'not to find a conceptual framework for criticism within literature, but to attach criticism to one of a miscellany of frameworks outside it' (1957: 6). Noting the above views, I have attempted to draw upon as 'broad' a 'base' of Yeats's writings as possible in my study of his engagement with archetypes. But doing so has

led to specific observations regarding the question of 'imposing extrinsically oriented interpretations'. There is, on the one hand, a congruence between Jungian and Yeatsian conceptions which cannot be denied; on the other hand, as indicated above, Yeats's explorations develop basic archetypal materials in a unique way. The problem, then, in a study of this nature, is to acknowledge both of these perspectives without undermining either. I have endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to accommodate both perspectives.

Archetypal readings of poetry and drama have been well established, especially in the first half of this century. An interest in myth and archetypes amongst both poets and scholars certainly stems in part from the pioneering psychological studies of Freud and Jung, but also from the ethos made famous by Sir James Frazer, which includes work predating *The Golden Bough* itself (volume one of which was first published in 1890). I think of Thomas Inman's *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism*, Godfrey Higgins's *Anacalypsis*, I.P.Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, E.Pococke's *India in Greece*, and E.Rhys's *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom*, to name a few of the many works available (Blavatsky, 1988, vol.II: bibliographical index; Vickery, 1976: 181). In this context, Sir William Wilde published *Irish Popular Superstitions* in 1852, wherein we find the following anticipation of an attribute of Jung's collective unconscious: "there are certain types of superstitions common to almost all countries in similar states of progress or civilization, and others which abound in nearly every

condition of Society..." (in Putzel, 1980: 116). Less orthodox than most of the work which emerges from this era, but nevertheless entirely compatible with a reading of Jung and Yeats, is H.P.Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* (first published in 1877), an encyclopaedic survey of ancient myth and religion, which claims as a central tenet the continuing validity of such myth: 'there is a logos in every mythos' (1988, vol.I: 162).

In this century, Maud Bodkin, in her pioneering work *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1934), adopts a general approach based, to an extent, on a reading of Jung; but while she considers in a detailed manner various archetypes, she is content to assert their widespread nature, rather than to examine how they have been developed by specific writers. And Frye, in the *Anatomy of Criticism*, while defining an archetypal approach to literature, also utilizes a general focus: criticism should stand back far enough from its object to ascertain the archetypal patterns within, and the archetypal connections between, works of literature; such patterns tell of a vast interconnected 'literary universe'; the poet, in participating in this universe, does not imitate from nature, he draws from the reservoir of archetypes; the critic should not be concerned with value judgements regarding literature, he should be attempting to describe the literary universe (1957: *passim*).

More recently, Lilian Feder's *Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry* (1971) relates myth to the unconscious as presented by Freud and Jung; she too, however, tends to regard myth in general terms, she is not that concerned with specific archetypes. Her preface

makes this clear:

The aim of this book is twofold: to develop a definition of myth as a continuous and evolving mode of expression, and to indicate how classical myth functions in modern English and American poetry as an aesthetic device which reaches into the deepest layers of personal, religious, social, and political life. I believe that such an approach elucidates the nature of myth as a key to unconscious mental processes and, at the same time, reveals some of the essential themes, symbols, and techniques of twentieth-century poetry. (1971: vii)

Her second chapter, 'Freud and Jung on Myth: The Psychoanalytic Background', concludes: 'Psychoanalytic approaches to myth are reflected in contemporary poetry in countless ways; however direct, submerged, combined, or distorted, they have been chiefly responsible for the reincarnation of myth as a new and potent symbolic language' (1971: 59). In the light of this statement, she does, occasionally, examine Yeats and Jung together, perceiving, for example, illuminating similarities; but her references are brief ones, made in passing, as it were:

[Yeats's] Daimon, the unconscious, contains in its vast and troubled memory archetypes which express man's will, his conception of what he ought to be, his thought processes, and his external involvements, all struggling together, like the anima, shadow, mask, and other archetypes of the Jungian scheme, participating in the buried life of each individual as well as in the collective unconscious of the species. (1971:

But the above passage marks the full extent of Feder's consideration of the significance of the Jungian archetypes in Yeats's thought.

More recently still, James Olney has devoted an entire book to, specifically, Yeats and Jung, entitled *The Rhizome and the Flower: The Perennial Philosophy -- Yeats and Jung* (1980). He, however, like Allen, cautions against 'reading Yeats through Jungian spectacles', claiming that Yeats 'had no great love for psychology' (1980: 8). While Yeats's disregard for psychology is indisputable, it is nevertheless possible to examine in greater detail a fruitful correspondence between the myths presented by Yeats and Jung, as Feder implies in a passage quoted above. But in his study Olney rather sets himself the task of examining the common ground which informs both Yeats and Jung's thinking:

Refusing the language of psychology or the language of literary criticism as our sole speech, what we must attempt is to find a *tertium* between the two conflicting opposites that would integrate them at a higher level and provide the grounds for a valid comparison between them if and because they both share, through the uniting third, in a similar underlying structural configuration. Moreover, this *tertium* must be a twofold 'higher third', comprehending both historical and psychical origins of an idea, an image, or an expression. (1980: 8)

Thus Olney devotes his energies to uncovering this 'uniting third' by examining the venerable tradition behind Yeats and Jung, the Platonic system, shaped out of the work of the great pre-Socratics, Empedocles, Parmenides, and Heraclitus, together with the thought of Pythagoras (1980: 9). Robertson Davies, in 'Jung, Yeats and the Inner Journey', implies that Olney limits himself to a study of Platonism in Jung and Yeats (1982: 472), but Olney is careful to point out that this is not so, that Platonism merely affords him a convenient and realistic historical point of departure (Olney, 1980: 10-11). At times Olney also ponders over what is 'behind' the historical tradition: 'What is it, not in history but in the human mind -- what creative forces, what inner impulses or structures or necessities -- what is it that impels these individual creations, all established, as it would appear, on the one essential ground plan?' (1980: 12) But again, in the above focus, Olney seeks to elaborate the common ground between Jung and Yeats, rather than apply Jung to Yeats.

Although I do apply Jung to Yeats in the face of Olney's warning, I do not, as indicated earlier, perceive myself as imposing Jung on the poet. Olney, like Allen, limits the the possibilities of interaction between Jung and Yeats by implying that the tenets of both psychology and modern poetry have to be appreciated at once by poet and psychologist if any valuable dialogue between them is to take place (1980: 8). Again, there is a remarkable correspondence between Jung and Yeats's basic perceptions (v.Olney, 1980: 6-7), making the imposition of



one on the other, in the area dealt with by this thesis, highly unlikely.

On the whole, what marks the present study as different from previous related studies (which have established within broad parameters the presence of archetypes and archetypal patterns in literature), is that it attempts to indicate both the active importance and unique development of specific Jungian archetypes in the work of an individual poet.

Chapter One of the thesis provides a general introduction to Jung and the archetypes--shadow, anima and mandala-- which clearly relate to central Yeatsian preoccupations, especially the quest for Unity of Being. In Chapter Two we will consider the significance of tragic vision in this quest. It is tragic vision, I feel, which informs the figures of shadow and anima; tragic vision also informs the distinction, so necessary in the quest, between the Vision of Evil and Unity. Chapter Three will concern itself specifically with the archetype of the shadow in its different manifestations, as being connected to political violence, hatred, old age, and inherent lower aspects of human nature.

In Chapter Four the anima will be examined. I propose two types of anima figure, unintegrated and integrative, and attempt to indicate how the integrative type is to become central in Yeats's theorizing. I draw on both lyrical and narrative verse, a number of Yeats's plays, and the essay, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, in order to illustrate my points. In Chapter Five I trace the development of the mandala in certain of Yeats's stories and

poems, and conclude by returning to *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, a work that was considerably to influence *A Vision*.

Chapter six is devoted to a fairly detailed study of *A Vision*, from the point of view of the way it integrates archetypes previously examined. Of particular interest in this chapter is the development of the anima figure into the daimon, which is, in a sense, the prime mover in *A Vision*. Also of importance in *A Vision* is a distinction made between Unity of Being, which is a temporal state, and an atemporal transcendent unity. Apart from the abstract mandala shapes of *A Vision*, another important mandala image comes to light in this chapter, a paradise image which I term, with Blake's Golgonooza in mind, the City of Art. This image is to be elaborated in such works as 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'Byzantium', and the following chapter, Chapter Seven, deals extensively with the City of Art as it is presented in these and other poems.

In Chapter Eight the quest for unity is considered from a more personal level, that of sexual love. But sexual love is invariably linked to higher patterns in Yeats, thus Chapter Eight deals with sexual love in its relation to beatific vision. Chapter Nine, which concludes the thesis, is an exploration of transcendent unity, as opposed to temporal Unity of Being. There is no doubt that Yeats is committed to temporal existence, but at certain rare moments in his work he becomes very aware of the 'eternal moment'. An attempt is made to determine the significance of this moment both in relation to the body of Yeats's work, and the quest for ultimate unity.

I

Jung's notion of the psyche accepts, as a normal human attribute, the dark, instinctual side of man's nature, an acceptance which can lead to a unification of the manifold aspects of the psyche (in Jungian terms, this unification results from the process of 'individuation'), and is thus curative, essentially humanistic in its concerns. I make this point in the face of a hostile critical response to Yeats's fascination with the dark pole. Harold Bloom, in particular, in *Yeats*, sees the poet's fascination as indicative of his anti-humanism. It is my contention that Yeats, even when he appears to be at his most dubious, struggles to be true to the demands of his psychology, in an attempt to arrive at as candid a vision of the human condition as possible. The principal quest of his life was for 'Unity of Being', or wholeness of psychology; the quest is not unrelated to Jung's notion of individuation. This state requires an acceptance of what Yeats calls the 'Vision of Evil', as well as the 'Vision of Good', reinforcing the sense of integration inherent in the Jungian parallel. Being aware of Jung, we might offer a more positive perception of the entire Yeatsian artistic enterprise, including those portions of the poet's work condemned by Bloom.

Bloom argues that Yeats's images and concerns were developed out of misreadings of Romantic precursors, who in turn creatively misinterpreted earlier precursors, such as, notably, Milton. The argument is a compelling one, and certainly holds true to an

extent, as I wish to make clear presently; but the ultimate source of the concerns and images remains undisclosed in such a reading, and locating this source in the psychology, if we follow Jung, leads to a better over-all understanding of Yeats than does a theory which attempts to plumb all the poet's mysteries by regarding him, in Bloomian fashion, as a misreader of various precursors.

In a study involving Jung, however, one must be alert to certain limitations noted by Jung himself: his science is in its infant stages, and is still subject to development; also, he has presented the problem of man's relation to his psychology in a specific way, just as Freud has presented the problem in his own way. Even taking into account as valid Jung's vigorous disclaimer of much at the heart of the Freudian project, there are conceivably yet *other* ways of presenting the problem. Indeed, to evaluate the archetypal images and patterns observed by Jung, one need not even subscribe to the central notion of the collective unconscious. Maud Bodkin, for example, in *Archetypal Patterns in Tragic Poetry*, makes the important point:

Jung believes himself to have evidence of the spontaneous production of ancient patterns in the dreams and fantasies of individuals who had no discoverable access to cultural material in which the patterns were embodied. This evidence is, however, hard to evaluate; especially in view of the way in which certain surprising reproductions, in trance states, of old material, have been subsequently traced to forgotten

impressions of sense in the lifetime of the individual. (1934:4)

Bodkin talks of 'predisposing factors' 'present in mind and brain' which might assimilate forms from the environment, say, and transform them into the 'ancient patterns' (1934: 4-5). Nevertheless, from a mythopoeic point of view, if not from a scientific one, Jung's theory, as well as his images and patterns, proves extremely useful. Lilian Feder implies that myth is that which reveals to man his own nature:

Myth is a story involving human limitation and superhuman strivings and accomplishments which suggests through action -- usually of a ritual, ceremonial, or compulsive nature -- man's attempt to express and thus control his own anxiety about those features of his physiological and psychological make-up and his external environment which he cannot comprehend, accept, or master. (1971: 11)

Is it, then, not reasonable to regard Jung's theory of individuation (with its figures which represent 'human limitation and superhuman striving' and its patterns and processes, or 'action') as a type of 'myth' (cf. Jung, 1966:17) that corroborates and illuminates much of the similarly-minded, but less familiar, Yeatsian myth?

I should make it clear that I do not propose a specifically psychological reading of Yeats (Jung himself warns against reducing art to mere psychological symptoms (Jung, 1966: 67-9)), but Jung is always in the background of this work, just as Freud is always in the background of Bloom's book on Yeats. Jung

provides an initial insight, the viability of the individuation process in terms of traditional figures and patterns clearly relating to Yeats.

## II

Jung's myth of the human psyche is, in general terms, straightforward enough. He desynonymizes the words 'ego' and 'self' in order to set up a distinction between the conscious mind and the unconscious. The ego is the centre of the 'empirical personality', 'the subject of all personal acts of consciousness' (Jung, 1968: 3). Because a subject must relate to an object in order to define itself, when it comes up against an unknown object or content it can no longer be effective. The ego's attempt to function adequately as subject, therefore, is severely curtailed by two unknown groups of objects, those outside us and those within us. The unknown within us is what Jung calls the 'unconscious' (1968: 3). The unknown is 'not related to the ego as the centre of the field of consciousness' (1968: 3), yet the unknown, in the case of the unconscious, is a part of us. The total personality, then, that aspect known to the ego, and that aspect unknown to the ego, is called by Jung the 'self' (1968: 5). The very notion of a 'self' comprising known and unknown elements, anticipates the need for integration central to Jung's theory of individuation.

The unconscious is divided by Jung into two, personal and impersonal or 'collective': 'A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal....But this personal

unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the *collective unconscious*. I have chosen the term "collective" because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals' (1969: 3-4). These 'contents' are known by Jung as 'archetypes' (1968: 8).

One of the most common of the archetypes is the shadow. The shadow is made up of the dark, instinctual characteristics of the personality, which have an emotional nature, 'uncontrolled or scarcely controlled' (1968: 9). Another common archetype is the anima, found in the male psyche (its counterpart in the feminine psyche is the animus); it is a feminine image, compounded of mother, daughter, sister, beloved, goddess and whore (1968: 12-13). Although the persona, or mask, the archetype which enables one to play a character not necessarily one's own, might seem important in a Yeatsian context, this is not so. For Jung, the persona is the conformity archetype, usually imposed by society (Hall, 1973: 44). The Yeatsian mask is the exact opposite of this, created by a combination of individual will and daimonic revelation, and is assumed in the face of all expediency; it is better sought in the anima and shadow archetypes, as we will see. It should be pointed out that the archetypes can be projected onto actual people, experienced in dreams and visions, or 'made conscious through active imagination' (Jung, 1968: 19). 'Active

imagination' involves exercises of free expression, where one writes or draws, as far as possible, with no conscious intention.

Jung distinguishes between the above archetypes, which might appear as 'active personalities in dreams and fantasies' when not projected onto actual people, and the 'archetypes of transformation', which 'are not personalities, but are typical situations, places, ways and means, that symbolize the kind of transformation in question' (1969: 38). According to Jung, the development of such archetypes 'usually shows an enantiodromian structure [involving a play of opposites]...and so presents a rhythm of negative and positive, loss and gain, dark and light' (1969: 38).

The mandala (Sanskrit for 'circle') is a special type of archetype; it is a 'totality image' produced in the course of an individuation process, or while integration of the personality is taking place (1968: 40). It represents, as it were, the goal of 'transformation'. For Jung, it is the 'psychological expression of the totality of the self' (1969: 304):

[The mandala's] basic motif is the premonition of a centre of personality, a kind of central point within the psyche, to which everything is related, by which everything is arranged, and which is itself a source of energy. The energy of the central point is manifested in the almost irresistible compulsion and urge to *become what one is*, just as every organism is driven to assume the form that is characteristic



of its nature, no matter what the circumstances. This centre is not felt or thought of as the ego but, if one may so express it, as the *self*. Although the centre is represented by an innermost point, it is surrounded by a periphery containing everything that belongs to the self -- the paired opposites that make up the total personality. This totality comprises consciousness first of all, then the personal unconscious, and finally an indefinitely large segment of the collective unconscious whose archetypes are common to all mankind.... The self, though on the one hand simple, is on the other hand an extremely composite thing, a 'conglomerate soul', to use the Indian expression. (1969: 357)

In other words, the mandala might represent one's entire psychological being in a state of balance, and might also represent the desire to find the ordering centre and energy source of the personality.

Although mandala means 'circle', there are 'innumerable variants', as Jung points out (1969: 357). A number of the 'formal elements of mandala symbolism' are listed by Jung:

1. *Circular, spherical, or egg-shaped* formation.
2. The circle is elaborated into a *flower* (rose, lotus) or a *wheel*.
3. A centre expressed by a *sun, star, or cross*, usually with four, eight, or twelve rays.
4. The circles, spheres, and cruciform figures are often represented in *rotation* (swastika).

5. The circle is represented by a *snake* coiled about a centre, either ring-shaped (uroboros) or spiral (Orphic egg).
6. *Squaring of the circle*, taking the form of a circle in a square or vice versa.
7. *Castle, city, and courtyard (temenos)* motifs, quadratic or circular. (1969: 361)

A key concept regarding the archetypes, of course, is 'individuation', or the attempt to 'integrate the unconscious into consciousness' (1969: 40). The need for individuation occurs when there is dissociation between unconscious and conscious elements, most notably in insanity and neurosis, but not only in these extreme cases. The 'natural course of life' is subject to multiple dissociations, and therefore individuation becomes a general ideal of the psyche (1969: 40). The theory of individuation is complicated by an elaboration of processes. Jung introduces the notion of the 'transcendent function', which, as it were, clinches unification after the initial stage of individuation has been completed (Hall, 1973: 84). But in general terms the transcendent function goes hand in hand with individuation, making any separate reference to it redundant for the purposes of this study.

In terms of the archetypes, what does Jungian individuation involve? It is difficult to be specific on this issue, as Jung found it impossible to rely on formulae when dealing with anything as complex as the psyche (1969: 289). But it is clear that through the individuation process the contents of the unconscious are integrated with the conscious mind (1969: 288).

The archetypes, the shadow and the anima, say, are recognized, confronted, and, if all goes well, integrated into the personality.

Individuation is a transformation process that fits into Jung's conception of 'rebirth', which he takes to be a psychological reality: 'The mere fact that people talk about rebirth, and that there is such a concept at all, means that a store of psychic experiences designated by that term must actually exist' (1969: 116). The transformation recorded in the individuation process is an integration of personality, or an experience of wholeness that often seems like a rebirth into an improved state of existence. The experience is sometimes accompanied by the unconscious development of the mandala.

Regarding such 'unconscious development of the mandala', an important point Jung raises concerning the value of mandalas is that a distinction exists between those produced spontaneously by individuals and those produced consciously according to a tradition. Spontaneous production implies, to an extent, a bypassing of the conscious mind and a tapping of the unconscious. Jung discusses the therapeutic effect of the spontaneously produced mandalas: 'The fact that images of this kind have under certain circumstances a considerable therapeutic effect on their authors is empirically proved and also readily understandable, in that they often represent very bold attempts to see and put together apparently irreconcilable opposites and bridge over apparently hopeless splits. Even the mere attempt in this direction usually has a healing effect, but only when it is done

spontaneously. Nothing can be expected from an artificial repetition or a deliberate imitation of such images' (1969: 389-90).

But the question of assigning value to images on the basis of the notion of spontaneity is not straightforward. Thus, in distinguishing between art-work linked primarily to the conscious mind and art-work which reflects spontaneously an unconscious content, Jung acknowledges that even in the case of the former, there might be elements of an unconscious nature present: for instance, the poet might not be aware of all the connotations of his imagery (1966: 74). It is necessary, then, to be alert to the unconscious connotations of *any* work of art.

### III

It is through an awareness of the distinction between the conscious and unconscious minds, that we come closer to the central problem attending Bloom's theory of precursors. If Yeats's conscious mind has simply absorbed and transformed the ideas of his precursors, and Bloom illustrates that to an extent this is surely so, can we then lay claim to an individuation process in Yeats specifically linked to archetypes from the collective unconscious of man? The matter of influence is further complicated when we consider Yeats's esoteric precursors, and the fact that his Romantic precursors consulted esoteric writers also drawn upon by Yeats. I think, for example, of Boehme, who enjoyed a wide currency in the Romantic era. Jung even finds a

fine example of a mandala in one of Boehme's works (1969: 297); indeed, its antinomic structure is very Yeatsian in conception.

But what of James Olney's perception in *The Rhizome and the Flower*, that we need to get 'behind the tradition' of precursors (which he traces as far back as the Pre-Socratics); in order to examine what it is in the human mind 'that impels these individual creations' (1980: 12)? And even if consciously aware of the tradition, why does the new poet so frequently relate to certain images above all others (Jung, 1966: 74)? Within such a framework the Freudian perception of 'anxiety of influence' explored by Bloom loses in importance. If a subjective response to *images* as well as precursors is at issue, then the absolute status of the father/child conflict at the heart of Bloom's theory must be questioned.

Nevertheless, Bloom's book offers a convincing account of the development of the Yeatsian quester from a line of precursors. A brief examination of this account will help to remind us of the traditions from which Yeats's thought emerges, before we begin to look behind these traditions.

The tradition of Romantic quest, the goal of the quest, and Yeats's position in this regard are synthesized in Bloom's observation: 'Unity of Being, which Yeats never ceased to seek, was the goal...perhaps of all questing in the Romantic tradition' (1972: 51). He sees the quest pattern as following a clear line from Milton's 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso'. Milton's 'wandering solitary' figure was the model for Wordsworth's Solitary in 'The Excursion', according to Bloom (1972: 10). In

this context, an important point about 'The Excursion' is the dialectic it sets up between the Solitary and the Wanderer, as both figures conform to a Yeatsian opposition to be fully developed in *A Vision*. The Solitary represents 'antithetical' man, to use a Yeatsian term, the subjective individual, while the Wanderer is his opposite, 'primary' or objective man. Wordsworth's Solitary, in turn, had a profound influence on Shelley's poet-quester of 'Alastor'. The antithetical quester's solitude is centred on imagination, a type of solipsism regarded with mixed feelings by Shelley in this early work. But this ambivalence is not apparent in 'Prince Athanase', a poem which affirms the validity of the Solitary's stance, drawing on imagery -- I think especially of the 'tower' -- that was greatly to influence Yeats:

His soul had wedded Wisdom, and her dower  
Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate  
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,  
Pitying the tumult of their dark estate. (Shelley, 1968 :  
159)

Bloom writes of the above lines, 'Few passages in poetry can have meant more to the young Yeats than this, in which the division between heart and mind, or Yeats's self and soul, is set forth to perfection' (1972: 16). Regarding Shelley's influence, Yeats himself admitted: 'When in middle life I looked back I found that he and not Blake, whom I studied more and with more approval, had shaped my life....' (Yeats, 1961b: 425).

Nevertheless, Blake, of course, exerted a profound influence on Yeats.

Considering the evidence, Bloom is surely justified in detecting seeds of Yeats's thought from *A Vision* in the edition of Blake edited by Edwin Ellis and Yeats, published in 1893 (Bloom, 1972: 72). The first volume of the three volume edition is called 'The System'; as we know, decades later Yeats was to write his own 'system'. In general, Bloom indicates how Yeats reads into Blake his own perceptions and interests, especially occult interests. It is not necessary to recapitulate all such instances, but certain ones seem peculiarly relevant. For example, consider the following passage from the Yeats-Ellis Blake:

'The mind or imagination or consciousness of man may be said to have two poles, the personal and impersonal, or, as Blake preferred to call them, the limit of contraction and the unlimited expansion. When we act from the personal we tend to bind our consciousness down to a fiery centre. When, on the other hand, we allow our imagination to expand away from the egoistic mood, we become vehicles for the universal thought and merge in the universal mood. Thus a reaction of God against man and man against God...goes on continually'. (in Bloom, 1972: 73)

Of the above (remarkably Jungian) passage, Bloom observes, 'Quite suddenly, Yeats arrives at the embryo of his vision of gyres, and his late struggle of man against God, in another

swerve away from Blake' (1972: 72). Bloom seems unaware of a much older substratum in the above passage, the two contrary principles from Plato's *The Statesman* (Plato, 1961: 1036), which, in putting Yeats's adaptation of Blake into the wider context of Platonism and Neoplatonism, suggests we must take into account a much longer line of precursors than Bloom provides.

To look at another example from Bloom before turning to this longer line, Yeats's exposition of Blake's *Covering Cherub* comes startlingly close to a description of the overall mechanics of *A Vision*:

'The Cherub is divided into twenty-seven heavens or churches, that is to say, into twenty-seven passive states through which man travels, and these heavens or churches are typified by twenty-seven great personages from Adam to Luther...one era closes, another commences....In these twenty-seven...Blake found...the whole story of man's life....'.

(in Bloom, 1972: 78)

The twenty-eighth state is the apocalyptic one (Bloom, 1972: 78), bringing Blake's configuration very close to Yeats's conception of the phases of the moon, years before Yeats formulated it. Again, however, other traditions are in evidence in this particular case. Among Yeatsian precursors other than poetic ones, we find, because of the poet's link with Madame Blavatsky and theosophy, the Brahmin Mohini Chatterjee, through whom he gained a vivid impression of reincarnation and the never-ending cycle of life, as the poem 'Mohini Chaterjee', written nearly



forty years after the encounter between the two men (so powerful was the impression), testifies:

I asked if I should pray,  
But the Brahmin said,  
'Pray for nothing, say  
Every night in bed,  
"I have been a king,  
I have been a slave,  
Nor is there anything,  
Fool, rascal, knave,  
That I have not been..."' ( CP 279)

Thus, in late 1885 or early 1886 (Tuohy, 1976: 34), four or five years before he began work on the Blake volumes, Yeats had been exposed to a theory as important to *A Vision* as the twenty-eight phases (including the apocalyptic one) of the Covering Cherub.

Plato and the Neoplatonists were to confirm his belief in the imaginative viability of such a theory. Plato's *Meno* and *Phaedo* deal with the immortality of the soul, while Plotinus and Porphyry draw from Plato this belief and combine it with Eastern mysticism and even Judaism (Malins, 1974: 49). Berkeley, in *Siris*, examined this rich mixture, and was in turn examined by more recent precursors, Blake, Coleridge and Shelley, as well as by Yeats himself. In other words, Yeats and his precursors were all attracted by similar conceptions coming from a common pool. This common pool is discussed by F.A.C. Wilson in *W.B. Yeats and Tradition*:

Yeats knew this [Neoplatonic] system of symbolism from several sources: from Madame Blavatsky, in his formative years; then from Taylor's translation of the commentators on Plato, and especially from Porphyry's essay on 'The Cave of the Nymphs'....He took it over into his verse in the confidence that it would prevent his own symbolism from being arbitrary or unintelligible; it was traditional, for it had persisted throughout the middle ages, where it influenced among others, Dante, and, later, Spenser....In using it, again, he had precedent in the work of two English poets he particularly admired: Blake...and...Shelley. (1958: 199)

All the above precursors are highly significant in Yeats's thought. But in order to explicate a simplifying system which would make plain underlying, internalized issues in Yeats's mythologizing, it is, again, as Bloom does not appreciate, yet necessary to get behind the tradition of precursors.

I make this observation not only in response to Bloom's theory of precursors and the anxiety of influence, but also in response to his apparent ignorance regarding the value of certain Jungian notions. The archetype of the shadow, for instance -- an aspect of Yeats's 'Vision of Evil'-- is, it seems to me, misunderstood by Bloom, who feels that in itself (and not its individuating function) it registers Yeats's approval. In a Freudian manner, as Bloom sees it, psychic equilibrium is conditioned by controlled balance, rather than confrontation and subsequent integration. Bloom claims, for example, that Freud

'understood that poetry might be a discipline roughly parallel to psychoanalysis, one in which the poet and his reader, like the analyst and his patient, would find not cure but a balance of opposites....' (1972: 215). In other words, according to Bloom's theory, there is no good reason for Yeats to confront and assimilate the 'Vision of Evil'. Jung, of course, proposed an integrative healing of the psyche, rather than separation of its components, and I believe that Yeats generally sought such a 'cure'. Indeed, he specifically benefitted from it, as recorded, for example, in a poem such as 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul', where the evil aspects of life (in a sense) are confronted and accepted, with the resulting experience of deep integration mirrored in the Self's sense of well-being in its relation to the external world:

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;

....

When such as I cast out remorse  
So great a sweetness flows into the breast  
We must laugh and we must sing,  
We are blest by everything,  
Everything we look upon is blest. (CP 267)

The following chapter will consider what I believe to be the psychological attitude, connected to Yeats's tragic vision, which

initially informs the poet's engagement with certain Jungian archetypes. Thereafter we will examine Yeats's relation to specific archetypes in more detail.

## CHAPTER TWO: YEATS AND THE TRAGIC UNIVERSE

Yeats wrote in that portion of his autobiography first published in 1922: 'We begin to live when we have conceived life as tragedy' (1961a: 189). The perception of life 'conceived as tragedy' is fundamental in understanding Yeats's involvement with archetypes. That is, principal archetypes, the shadow and the anima, are connected to an attitude in Yeats, which, I believe, is largely tragic. B.L.Reid's *William Butler Yeats: The Lyric of Tragedy*, helps clarify this notion by defining in broad terms the word 'tragedy' as it pertains to Yeats:

Yeats thought about tragedy in two main ways. Occasionally and briefly, he thought about it formally, as a kind of 'official' or 'academic' literary and theatrical category. It is in this sense that tragedy has been discussed by many of the most brilliant critical and scholarly intelligences in the long line that begins with Aristotle. Much more often, Yeats thought about tragedy informally, in ways which might not even involve the word itself, and which certainly envisioned no dramatic vestment -- our 'normal', vulgar, quotidian sense of the term as describing the melancholy, mysterious, and fatal logic or illogic of existence. (1961: 4)

Regarding 'informal' tragedy, Yeats, in his early years, seems to have a particularly 'melancholy' sense of the nature of existence, and it is this, I argue, which forms the basis of his engagement with the shadow and the anima.

In an analysis of Kierkegaard's dissolution of the Hegelian sense of absolute 'ethical substance' or metaphysical unity (an equivalent for the inherent unity of the classical Greek world), Murray Krieger in *The Tragic Vision* reveals that in the absence of the assurance of such an absolute unity man must assume 'tragic vision', or what Kierkegaard characterizes as 'despair' (Krieger, 1960: 7-11). On the evidence of *Autobiographies*, I would suggest that Yeatsian melancholy is a manifestation of a type of despair:

A conviction that the world was now but a bundle of fragments possessed me without ceasing....I had been put into a rage by the followers of Huxley, Tyndall, Carolus Duran, and Bastien-Lepage, who not only asserted the unimportance of subject whether in art or literature, but the independence of the arts from one another. (Yeats, 1961a: 189-90)

In a more private mood, Yeats also writes the following:

For some months now I have lived with my own youth and childhood, not always writing indeed but thinking of it almost every day, and I am sorrowful and disturbed. It is not that I have accomplished too few of my plans, for I am not ambitious; but when I think of all the books I have read, and of the wise words I have heard spoken, and of the anxiety I have given to parents and grandparents, and of the hopes that I have had, all life weighed in the scales of my own life seems to me a preparation for something that never happens. (1961a: 106)

While considering the distinction between Nietzsche's dark and light Dionysian and Apollonian forces, Krieger defines, it seems to me, the source of Yeats's sense of fragmentation and despair as expressed in the above quotations:

But picture a world into which Dionysus cannot be reabsorbed by way of the Apollonian with its final assertion of Greek 'cheerfulness' and aesthetic form, a world in which the Apollonian and Dionysian -- long since torn asunder -- must live in a lasting separation that causes each to pervert its nature, the Apollonian becoming the superficial worship of happiness and the Dionysian the abandoned worship of demonism. Our modern tragic vision is the Dionysian vision still, except that the visionary is now utterly lost, since there is no cosmic order to allow a return to the world for him who has dared stray beyond. (1960: 10-11)

But according to Kierkegaard, this wretched state of despair is also a hopeful stage, as it leads one from the complacency of both the submoral aesthetic hedonist and the easily satisfied ethic man (Krieger, 1960: 11). The Kierkegaardian tragic hero, shocked out of his complacency, accepts in a courageous manner the 'implacable demands of ethical absoluteness' (Krieger, 1960: 11; Kierkegaard, 1963: 106). This, however, is not Yeats's position as tragic visionary. His vision, as Maeve Good in *Yeats and the Creation of a Tragic Universe* seems to imply (1987: 6-7), is closer to the 'classic vision' postulated by Krieger:

[Classic vision is] a vision that is of the world without

being crass, that is universal and conducive to order without optimistically thinning moral reality as the superficially ethical man would. This vision is the all-embracing one of an older world and an older order....It is as if the security of the older order wanted to test the profundity of its assurances, its capacity to account to the whole of human experience, and thus bred within itself the tragic vision as its *agent provocateur*. And by having the rebellion incarnate in the tragic visionary finally succumb to a higher order which absorbs but never denies the 'destructive element',...tragedy is asserting the argument a fortiori for the affirmation of its humanistic and yet superhumanistic values. (1960: 17)

Thus Yeats quests for the 'order' of Unity in the face of the fragmentation and despair of tragic vision, plumbing the 'profundity' of the 'assurances' of an 'older world and an older order':

...I delighted in every age where poet and artist confined themselves gladly to some inherited subject-matter known to the whole people, for I thought that in man and race alike there is something called 'Unity of Being', using the term as Dante used it when he compared beauty in the *Convito* to a perfectly proportioned human body. (Yeats, 1961a: 190)

His quest, then, is for 'order', ultimately the 'higher order which absorbs but never denies the "destructive element"'. This



resolution of Dionysian and Apollonian marks Yeats's achievement in *A Vision*. The resolution, as I hope to show, might also be viewed as the integration of specific key archetypes.

But if key archetypes such as the shadow and anima are inhabitants of Yeats's 'tragic universe', what are the bounds of this universe? Maeve Good, in a work mentioned above, *W.B. Yeats and the Creation of a Tragic Universe*, suggests the following: 'Aristotle defines tragedy in terms of pity and fear; Yeats defines it in terms of terror and delight, what he calls the Vision of Evil and Unity of Being'. By way of example, she notes that in 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul' '...terror is compounded with horror in both the imaginative-spiritual and human-bestial world. But we also find delight and joy' (1987: 2). While we need to extend Good's definition of the Vision of Evil in the chapter which follows, her sense of the extremes involved in Yeatsian tragedy rings true:

The polarities are utterly dependent on each other. Yeats's vision springs partly from the Blakean concept, 'Pity would be no more/ If we did not make somebody Poor'. If a world existed in which all were strong, beautiful and brave, then the concepts of strength, beauty and valour would no longer have meaning. Tragedy arises from the recognition of an irremediable state of affairs. (Good, 1987: 3)

In a world of interdependent 'polarities' we might begin to accommodate the shadow alongside Unity of Being, thus the very nature of the tragic universe lends itself to the idea of

individuation based on the play of opposites. This 'play', of course, permeates Yeats's thought, and through it, indeed, shadow and anima begin to mingle, in the figure of the anti-self, or daimon, a figure central to *A Vision*, as we will see.

Good's perception of the tragic 'recognition of an irremediable state of affairs' (mirrored in literary art, for example, in Hamlet's dualism, 'What a piece of work is a man!... And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?' (II.ii.301-6)), seems to be informed by a conception such as Gilbert Murray's 'tragic pattern', in *The Classical Tradition in Poetry*. Tragic pattern is an archetypal pattern based on the 'birth' and 'death' of the sun every year and every morning (Murray, 1930: 60). In Murray's words, 'That is the essential tragic idea, however we translate it into modern language, climax followed by decline, or pride by judgement' (1930: 60). The archetypal nature of the 'essential tragic idea' (an 'idea' clearly apparent in Yeatsian cyclicity) helps suggest the connection I wish to make between the Yeatsian tragic universe and the archetypes, and serves, we might say, as a basis for the introduction of other archetypes.

Good too, in pointing out central problems connected with the tragic universe, helps establish the importance of archetypes in a context involving individuation:

Yeats's creation in his art of a tragic universe gives rise to several critical problems. For example, his rejection of Christianity and the salvation it offers -- in favour of a system of never-ending conflict -- forces us to look closely at Yeats's definition of such concepts as evil, good,

innocence and responsibility. (1987: 3)

Integration of the archetypes does not annul the necessary 'conflict' at the heart of life, but it does bring into a balance of 'contraries' (to use a Blakean notion) forces which might otherwise be 'negated' (through, for instance, implications attached to 'suppression' and 'sublimation'). Thus, the shadow is not suppressed or ignored, it is accepted. In such a view, 'evil' can lead to 'good', 'innocence' can be regained *because of* experience (again, in a Blakean manner), and 'responsibility' then loses none of its impact, despite the circumscriptive 'tragic pattern' of Yeats's cyclical system.

In summary, the emergence of certain Jungian archetypes in Yeats appears to be connected to the poet's early sense of existential despair, which is in turn connected to a branch of Kierkegaardian tragic vision. The archetypes, then, are inhabitants of the tragic universe, a realm which encompasses both Unity of Being and the Vision of Evil, or the light and dark poles of existence. If this is so, then we can expect to find archetypes which participate in both the light and dark poles; thus the mandala of redemption is as much a part of this universe as is the shadow.

Our examination of individual archetypes in Yeats will begin with a study of shadow elements as they most commonly appear in Yeats's poetry, and will take into special account his relation to political violence, the curse of old age, and his own instinctual nature.

I

According to Jung, the first archetype with which we need to deal in the individuation process is the shadow (1968:22). The shadow is the darker, instinctual side of human nature, intimately connected to the unconscious:

The unconscious is commonly regarded as a sort of incapsulated fragment of our most personal and intimate life -- something like what the Bible calls the 'heart' and considers the source of all evil thoughts. In the chambers of the heart dwell the wicked blood-spirits, swift in anger and sensual weakness. This is how the unconscious looks when seen from the conscious side....Hence it is generally believed that anyone who descends into the unconscious gets into a suffocating atmosphere of egocentric subjectivity, and in this blind alley is exposed to the attack of all the ferocious beasts which the caverns of the psychic underworld are supposed to harbour....But if we are able to see our own shadow and can bear knowing about it, then a small part of the problem has already been solved....The shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness. (1969: 20)

Although the shadow for Jung might be projected into an actual figure (1968: 10), he also calls it a 'moral problem' (1968: 8).

That is, the notion of the shadow could conceivably encompass historical process, or specific actions, as well as demonic figures or evil personages. This perception of a 'shadow', as Thomas Whitaker has pointed out, in *Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History*, is certainly evident in Yeats's relationship with history. Whitaker suggests:

...history was for Yeats a mysterious interlocutor, sometimes a bright reflection of the poet's self, sometimes a shadowy force opposed to that self. He conversed with it as with his double and anti-self. He could endow it with his own imaginative life, seeing it 'but as an image in a looking-glass'; but he could also expect it to disclose all that he sought, all that seemed contrary to his own conscious state, all that lurked in his own depths, unmeasured and undeclared.

(1964: 4)

That is, for Yeats, historical process seems to mirror at times his own darker nature. And one of the most problematic areas that 'lurk[s]' in the poet's 'depths' is his fascination with violence, often related to an historical and political framework. Interestingly, certain shadow figures themselves bear a relation to history. Apart from the 'rough beast' of 'The Second Coming', a fairly obvious example, I think of the demon merchants in *The Countess Cathleen* (CPl 3-50), and their connection to the destructive powers of English materialism (variations on this latter theme are found in Yeats's novel, *John Sherman* (Yeats, 1908 vol.7: 183-282), and 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' (CP 44).)

Political violence, more than anything in Yeats, is history as shadow. But if he accepts this shadow, he never embraces it, a point convincingly argued by Elizabeth Cullingford in *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism*. Of the philosophy of *A Vision* she writes:

Cyclical philosophy accepts the inevitability of decline: each individual, class, or civilization grows, flowers, and dies. From death comes a new birth and the process is repeated: 'All things fall and are built again'. Thus the gaiety of 'Lapis Lazuli' does not indicate callous indifference to the horrors of the impending blitz; nor does 'The Gyres' invite us to ignore the irrational streams of blood which accompany the end of a cycle. (1981: 123)

And Yeats's ultimately ironic regard for Fascism stands in sharp contrast to the image of those in the thrall of it, as painted by Jung:

There is no lunacy people under the domination of an archetype will not fall prey to. If thirty years ago anyone had dared to predict that our psychological development was tending towards a revival of the medieval persecutions of the Jews, that Europe would again tremble before the Roman fasces and the tramp of legions, that people would once more give the Roman salute, as two thousand years ago, and that instead of the Christian Cross an archaic swastika would lure onward millions of warriors ready for death -- why, that man would have been hooted at as a mystical fool. (1969: 48)

Yeats never allows the shadow to master him in a similar manner. By recognizing it and accepting it on his terms, he is not 'dominated' by it; the dark unconscious is integrated into the realm of conscious deliberation. Art and thought, indeed, are able to 'transfigur[e] all that dread' (CP 338).

The present chapter attempts to examine different types of Yeatsian shadow projections, for, apart from political violence, there are yet other manifestations of the shadow in Yeats's art. They appear both in the context of the poet's old age, and as images and forces connected explicitly to his darker, lower nature. The shadow in Yeats manifests itself in two ways: as situations (the Irish War of Independence, the poet in old age intensely aware of decay and death); or actual figures (demons, beasts and grotesque caricatures of the poet, such as the 'dying animal' in 'Sailing to Byzantium'). The following section traces the possible development of the shadow of political violence in, amongst other poems, 'September 1913', 'Easter 1916', and 'The Second Coming'. Section three then considers manifestations of the shadow connected to old age and death in poems such as 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'Death', and section four looks at poems which deal explicitly with the poet's own instinctual nature, such as 'Demon and Beast' and 'The Circus Animals' Desertion'.

## II

Attention has already been drawn to the fact that personified projections of the shadow often bear an historical significance

in Yeats's thought. Mention was made of the possible relation between the demon merchants in *The Countess Cathleen* and English materialist exploitation, a political link hinted at by Yeats himself in *Memoirs* when discussing Maud Gonne, the woman for whom he wrote the title role of the play:

I told her after meeting her in London I had come to understand the tale of a woman selling her soul to buy food for a starving people as a symbol of all souls who lose their peace, or their fineness, or any beauty of the spirit in political service.... (1988: 47)

English or not, the demons represent Yeats's increasing dissatisfaction with modern materialist values, which are seen as a profound threat to the integrity of the soul. In other words, historical and political circumstances take on a psychological significance, a fact emphasised by the metamorphosis of Maud and the circumstances surrounding her political involvement in Ireland into symbolic drama of an archetypal mould. For example, Jung conflates devil and shadow (1969: 322), giving psychological point to Yeats's demons. The relation between Cathleen herself and an anima projection will be considered in the following chapter.

If violent historical circumstance reveals the presence of the shadow, what might be a psychological source of the Yeatsian shadow is, as already noted, the pervasive mood of sorrow in the poet's early verse, linked to tragic vision. This mood in the early poetry is associated fundamentally with a Romantic



disjunction between desire and possible attainment, and is apparent in *The Wanderings of Oisín*, *Crossways*, *The Rose*, *The Wind Among the Reeds*, *In the Seven Woods*, and *The Green Helmet and Other Poems*. Unrequited love has its place in this mood (as we will see when examining the unattainable woman of the following chapter), and so too do existential despair and the poet's sense of contemporary fragmentation; but also of importance is the association of sorrow with a lost past, or with a mythical realm impossible to attain yet always desired.

*The Wanderings of Oisín* dramatizes this point. Oisín, although living in a mythical faery-land, can never find contentment, and is compelled to move on from one adventure to the next. The eventual outcome of his questing is a loss of all that has gone before, including that which has been most cherished. The conclusion of the poem voices a longing for what has been lost, through certain images and figures from the mythological past:

It were sad to gaze on the blessed and no man I loved  
of old there;  
I throw down the chain of small stones! when life in  
my body has ceased,  
I will go to Caoilte, and Conan, and Bran, Sceolan,  
Lomair,  
And dwell in the house of the Fenians, be they in  
flames or at feast. (CP 447)

The emphasis on the 'Fenians' (above, and at other points in the

poem) is vaguely nationalist in thrust, suggesting the existence of a political dimension in the poem, but the sorrow of things lost prevails, to the point where the attempted retrieval of the past in the above lines has no real effect.

With the volume *Responsibilities*, of 1914, the sorrow of things lost finds a more contemporary setting and a far more powerful voice, as tragic vision comes much closer to the political violence wherein the operation of the shadow is manifested in one of its most intense forms. I think of 'September 1913', a poem, though of a more general significance, surely not unrelated to the civil disturbances of August 1913, when a strike was provoked by William Murphy's refusal to accede to the wage demands of unionists. Yeats hotly defended the unionists, in some of the finest political rhetoric he ever wrote, a letter to *The Irish Worker*, appearing November 1, 1913 (Yeats, 1975: 406-7):

There had been tumults every night at every Dublin railway station, and I can only assume that the police authorities wished those tumults to continue. I want to know why the mob at North Wall and elsewhere were permitted to drag children from their parents' arms, and by what right one woman was compelled to open her box and show a marriage certificate; I want to know by what right the police have refused to accept charges against rioters; I want to know who has ordered the abrogation of the most elementary rights of the citizens, and why authorities who are bound to protect every man in doing that which he has a legal right to do...have permitted the

Ancient Order of Hibernians to besiege Dublin, taking possession of the railway stations like a foreign army....I demand that the coming Police Inquiry shall be so widened that we may get to the bottom of a conspiracy, whose like has not been seen in any English-speaking town during living memory. Intriguers have met together somewhere behind the scenes that they might turn the religion of Him who thought it hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven into an oppression of the poor.

The letter indicates in powerful terms Yeats's passionate interest in *current* affairs. But however pressing current affairs might be, the attitudes of employers and unionists alike, together with the nature of the strife, were hardly in the heroic mould of an earlier Ireland. Unionist leader Larkin, as much as Murphy, was, by comparison with the heroic past, 'fumbl[ing] in a greasy till'. Thus, in 'September 1913', the sense of things lost no longer simply encompasses the realm of myth, it incorporates an historical perspective as well, through its relation to Ireland's irrecoverable heroic past.

The balance Yeats achieves between the proximate nature of history and his own experience, and a continuing awareness of the 'romantic' in Ireland's historical past, is an indication of his newly acquired strength at handling his materials. For example, the poem exhibits a fallen present, which eclipses the sphere of memory, stronghold of the heroic past:

What need you, being come to sense,

But fumble in a greasy till  
And add the halfpence to the pence  
And prayer to shivering prayer, until  
You have dried the marrow from the bone?  
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,  
It's with O'Leary in the grave. (CP 120-1)

'The grave', however, might be synonymous with a redemptive internalization process; in 'Under Ben Bulbin' grave-diggers 'but thrust their buried men/ Back in the human mind again' (CP 398), an idea certainly familiar to Yeats as early as 1886, when he conversed with the Hindu sage Mohini Chatterjee on such matters, as noted in Chapter One. Implicit in the poem, then, is the idea that the heroic past, consigned to the grave, has yet become centred in the imagination. Thus, although he repudiates the possibility of the existence of the 'romantic' in contemporary Ireland, Yeats, to an extent, at the same time rescues it through the oblique intervention of the imagination, as Cairns Craig has pointed out, using different terms, in *Yeats, Eliot, Pound and the Politics of Poetry* (1982: 173). But the sorrow remains, albeit disguised in the garb of a sardonic taunting:

Yet could we turn the years again,  
And call those exiles as they were  
In all their loneliness and pain,  
You'd cry, 'Some woman's yellow hair  
Has maddened every mother's son':  
They weighed so lightly what they gave.

But let them be, they're dead and gone,  
They're with O'Leary in the grave.

It is as if Paudeen-ridden Ireland responds to the taunt through the historical events which follow the writing of this poem. As a result, 'September 1913' exists in antinomic union with 'Easter 1916'. In 'Easter 1916' the values of the past now inform the present: contemporary revolutionaries appear to have 'weighed so lightly what they gave'. The imagination begins to find adequate materials in daily experience. And the element of sorrow in 'Easter 1916' takes on a new maturity; no longer linked to an impossible longing, it now informs human responsibility. That is, Yeats's inherently tragic perception (never content, in Kierkegaardian fashion, with superficial resolution) now prevents him from celebrating the heroism of the moment without also deliberating the presence of other qualifying and sobering considerations which the situation brings with it. A 'delirium of the brave', in the face of actual experience, is no longer enough. Violence, so nonchalantly portrayed in the earlier poem, becomes, through proximity, a far more daunting force with which to deal. Pressurized by the present, the poet has virtually no recourse to the past, to the idealized Fitzgerald, Emmet and Tone; now history thrusts itself upon the poet, and he must confront it in terms of a man relating to his place in the world, not simply to his own mind.

But before he can relate in this way, another step must be taken; he must, as it were, empty his mind of past associations,

and it seems to me that 'Lines Written in Dejection' epitomizes this bridging step in a manner which also helps underline the new intensity and power of Yeats's verse (CP 163-4):

When have I last looked on  
The round green eyes and the long wavering bodies  
Of the dark leopards of the moon?  
All the wild witches, those most noble ladies,  
For all their broom-sticks and their tears,  
Their angry tears, are gone.  
The holy centaurs of the hills are vanished;  
I have nothing but the embittered sun;  
Banished heroic mother moon and vanished,  
And now that I have come to fifty years  
I must endure the timid sun.

Richard Ellmann suggests the poem was composed in 1915 (1965: 195), thus it seems to record a purifying process, so to speak, which predates 'Easter 1916'. Apart from (it is worthwhile noting) the sorrow generated by this fact, 'Lines Written in Dejection' leaves the poet with nothing. 'Easter 1916', however, might be seen to replace this 'nothing' with a new heroism, with fresh images to enrich the national memory. Regarding tragic sorrow, of interest in 'Lines Written in Dejection' is the poet's melancholy at the disappearance of anima figures connected to the unconscious, the 'wild witches'. It is almost as if he recognizes that the presence of the dark side, so to speak, which they embody, is necessary (a point explicit in *Per Amica Silentia*

*Lunae*, as will become clear). 'Easter 1916' is more ambiguous in its perception of the dark side.

Bloom is puzzled by the poem because it is, in his view, so uncharacteristic of Yeats (1972: 314). He feels that the poem 'excels in a sober coloring of accurate moral description, a quality normally lacking in Yeats', that it is 'a model of sanity and proportion'. There is, it seems to me, truth in his assertions. Perhaps more than anything in Yeats, the poem mirrors the sober responsibility of a wise and sympathetic observer. But here an interesting notion arises, ironically contrary to the general thrust of Bloom's argument against Yeats. Is the poem's sense of 'proportion' not in some respects due to the historical proximity of the shadow of violence, suggesting the humanising value of the shadow in Yeats's thought at this stage? Provoked by the violence of the rebellion, Yeats arrives, even though momentarily, at this sense of moral proportion, itself suggestive, to a degree, of the psychological completion of Jungian integration. Related to the overall sense of proportion is the poet's notion of the mentally clarifying effect of violence, implicit in Yeats as early as 1907 ('memory of danger' is linked to the 'exceptional moment[s]' which inform 'exceptional' 'activities of the mind' (Yeats, 1961b: 259)):

Poetical tragedy, and indeed all the more intense forms of literature, had lost their hold on the general mass of men in other countries as life grew safe, and the sense of comedy which is the social bond in times of peace as tragic feeling is in times of war, had become the inspiration of popular art.

I always knew this, but I believed that the memory of danger, and the reality of it seemed near enough sometimes, would last long enough to give Ireland her imaginative opportunity. I could not foresee that a new class, which had begun to rise into power under the shadow of Parnell, would change the nature of the Irish movement, which, needing no longer great sacrifices, nor bringing any great risk to individuals, could do without exceptional men, and those activities of the mind that are founded on the exceptional moment.

Completion and clarification are, certainly, the explicit consequences of a violent attitude in 'Under Ben Bulbin':

...when all words are said  
And a man is fighting mad,  
Something drops from eyes long blind,  
He completes his partial mind,  
For an instant stands at ease,  
Laughs aloud, his heart at peace. (CP 398)

The issue is, of course, problematic. To what extent must violence be perpetrated before the artist is satisfied? To attempt to answer this question leads to the awareness of a central distinction in Yeats's perception of violence. In my view, he is able, in a Nietzschean vein, nonchalantly to approve of the *idea* of violence when it is at a respectable distance, a memory of the past, as in 'September 1913', but he is far more deliberate in his considerations when actually confronted by



violent events. And regarding Yeats's attitude to violent events, Cullingford, for example, writes of the poet's 'horror' at reports of Bolshevik atrocities during the Russian revolution (1981: 115). This difference between Yeats's reception of, on the one hand, an idealized memory of violence and, on the other, contemporary political violence, is not given due acknowledgement by critics such as Bloom and Yvor Winters, who imply that Yeats revels in all violence (Bloom, 1972: 323).

I maintain, then, that Yeats's inherent attitude to actual violence is captured in 'Easter 1916' and 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen', rather than in his relatively dispassionately presented theorizing connected with memory of danger. But the horror of the violence, even in the first instance, cannot deflect from its necessity. Yeats's acceptance of violence, along with his subsequent engagement with it in his philosophy, stems from the poet's awareness of this necessity. His acceptance does not, again, represent a condonation of the violence. To present the matter in positive terms, his acceptance of the necessity of this shadow leads to the final psychological integration portrayed by the symbolism of *A Vision*.

The first section of 'Easter 1916' evokes the 'vivid faces' of mere fanatics, easily dismissed with reiterated 'polite meaningless words'. The scorn of 'September 1913' informs the poet's contemplated 'mocking tale' or 'gibe' aimed at the revolutionaries, reminding us of the location of his present sorrow. That is, the best values of the past have been lost, and, to take another step, as in 'Lines Written in Dejection', there

is nothing in the present with which to replace that which has been lost, apart from the meanest of responses:

I have met them at close of day  
Coming with vivid faces  
From counter or desk among grey  
Eighteenth-century houses.  
I have passed with a nod of the head  
Or polite meaningless words,  
Or have lingered awhile and said  
Polite meaningless words,  
And thought before I had done  
Of a mocking tale or a gibe  
To please a companion  
Around the fire at the club,  
Being certain that they and I  
But lived where motley is worn:  
All changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

By the end of the section, this perception has 'changed'. The poet's inverted world view appears to be recorded in the doubling of 'changed', a fact further intensified by the absolute conviction of 'utterly'. Interesting is the already noted perception of 'beauty' in the change, which suggests an aesthetic modality perhaps not unconnected to Craig's linking of aesthetics and violence, referred to earlier, a violence implicit, in the context of an uprising, in the word 'terrible'.

(Indeed, the formulation 'terrible beauty' might have been derived from Yeats's own *aesthetic* experience, so to speak, his reading of a deleted variant of Coleridge's 'The British Stripling's War-Song'. See T.P.Foley, 1984: 509.) If an aesthetic dimension is present, then violence in the poem has a significance beyond a political one.

For example, in the next section, transformations relating to 'beauty' are perceived in historical personages, but in a difficult sense which undermines their natural beauty. That is, their natural endowments wither in the face of their political commitment -- a 'terrible' enough fact, suggestive of the melancholy nature of existence and related to tragic vision -- though yet a change has taken place, which is itself seen as a type of beauty. In aesthetic terms, what is it that generates 'beauty' in the presence of 'terror'? Yeats gives us an indirect clue when he writes of the displacement of 'casual comedy'; the aesthetic arena which incorporates 'terror' and its concomitant the 'terrible', is, of course, traceable back to Aristotle's formulation regarding tragedy. Experience of the tragic melancholy of existence might be seen to lead to an area where 'beauty' and the 'terrible' exist in delicate balance, a state one would expect to encounter midway between Good's polar extremes of Unity of Being and the Vision of Evil, or the arena proper of the tragic universe. What is important about Aristotle's formulation, though, for present purposes, is its recognition in an aesthetic framework of the presence of what I have called 'the dark side' of man's nature, that which produces

'terror' in him.

Aristotle's exact meaning has been disputed (Else, 1963: 225ff.), but it seems that when he linked the experience of 'pity' and 'terror' with 'catharsis', he was referring to some sort of confrontation with a shadow embedded in the psyche, and, after the confrontation, a consequent sense of purgation or purification (Else, 1963: 230-1; 423ff.). Gerald Else's painstakingly argued contention, in *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument*, that the purification is connected with a principal social taboo of ancient Greece, the murder of kindred (1963: 424ff.), links catharsis to the worst kind of violence, or, if we like, the worst kind of societal shadow (projected onto the avengers of the crime, the demon-like Erinyes or Furies). But if the terror is an ever present condition (a point implied by the fact that tragedy is able generally to communicate its pity and terror), then we have a case for not merely relegating the shadow to the crime itself, but to something within every person. The violence is an expression, then, of that primitive darkness which is within us all. The aesthetic expression of the violence, however, has a purificatory impact, and it is from this point of view that 'beauty' and the 'terrible' might also be linked.

But, of course, such an impact is not accepted unquestioningly by Yeats. The following section of the poem filters the beauty out of the terror, or, in terms more appropriate to the section, presents a dichotomy between living nature and stone, the one beautiful, the other, at least in its implications, terrible:

Hearts with one purpose alone  
Through summer and winter seem  
Enchanted to a stone  
To trouble the living stream.

...

The long-legged moor-hens dive,  
And hens to moor-cocks call;  
Minute by minute they live;  
The stone's in the midst of all.

That is, deadening psychological and emotional effects attend the unwavering faith of the activist. What has ensued is the violence of the uprising. And yet Yeats must conclude by acknowledging the transformative nature of the current activism. Thus, his conclusion is characterised by the Aristotelian conjunction of 'beauty' and 'terror' which accompanies the type of transformation resulting from catharsis. As in the classical tragic arena, a communal purification takes place; confrontation with the shadow restructures communal psychology:

MacDonagh and MacBride  
And Connolly and Pearse  
Now and in time to be,  
Wherever green is worn,  
Are changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born.

Irish spirit has been transformed, along with the activists. The

activists have been subsumed within the communal mind, to become the focus of future national memories. (Indeed, in 'The Statues' they are linked with the hero archetype (Jung, 1969: 285), in the form of Cuchulain.) But with the ambiguous stone section (emblematic of Yeats's qualified regard) positioned in the midst of its verses, 'Easter 1916' suggests that that place has not been easily granted.

A similar caution attends 'A Prayer for My Daughter', where the poet warns against the attitudes engendering violence. Significantly, this poem is positioned immediately after 'The Second Coming' in the *Collected Poems*:

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,  
The sort of beauty that I have approved,  
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,  
Yet knows that to be choked with hate  
May well be of all evil chances chief.  
If there's no hatred in a mind  
Assault and battery of the wind  
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf. (CP 213)

But Bloom points out an equivocalness: 'Though it makes much of casting out hatred, social hatred is an undersong through much of the poem....[T]his celebratory prayer presents a version of family romance as fulfillment of [Yeats's] *daimonic* hatred of the contemporary world' (1972: 325). Let us deal first with Bloom's charge of 'social hatred'. It is true that Yeats views the 'future years' as being conditioned by 'frenzy' (ll.14-15), an

implicit criticism of what is likely to emerge from 'the contemporary world'. It is also true that he condemns certain types of people ('crazy salad' (l.31), 'an old bellows full of angry wind' (l.64)). Other than that, his principal opponent is 'arrogance and hatred' (l.75). In the light of the actual evidence then, Bloom's remark is exaggerated. But more importantly, Yeats's own hatred is clearly regretted by the poet himself:

My mind...

...

Yet knows that to be choked with hate

May well be of all evil chances chief.

He does not, it seems to me, exclude himself as auditor of the poem's message. And what is it that finally displaces hatred? 'Radical innocence' based on 'custom' and 'ceremony' (l.65ff.). Custom and ceremony are synonymous with societal wholeness. It is this wholeness which Yeats is finally advocating, and it is not a wholeness based on hatred (however much Yeats's sense of the worthlessness of the present might prompt the desire for it); quite explicitly the opposite, in fact: '...all hatred driven hence,/ The soul recovers radical innocence' (ll.65-6). Indeed, the poem itself is a 'prayer', and therefore, although aspects of it acknowledge weakness, at the same time it specifically attempts to overcome weakness. To extricate elements of the prayer as Bloom does, and not take into consideration its intention in the face of all weaknesses (including submerged

Freudian ones-- implicit in Bloom's perception of 'family romance' at work in the poem), seems to me wrong-headed.

Bloom's type of approach is even more problematic with 'The Second Coming'. To me this poem is perhaps Yeats's central shadow poem, where, if other poems in this section have been presenting the shadow as situations subject to violence, the shadow of an era is now actually projected onto a demonic beast.

Bloom questions the poem's 'power', which is, in his view, assumed, rather than earned (1972: 318-9). That is, the poem does not justify its biblical reverberations, being linked, rather, to images and conceptions in Blake and Shelley. For example, looking at the poem's conclusion, while 'Christian apocalypses do not visualize the Child born again at Bethlehem' (1972: 323), 'stony sleep' is, after all, a direct quotation from *The Book of Urizen* (1972: 319). But another more serious problem concerning power is based on the poet's attitude to the beast and the power it wields. Bloom claims to 'hear' 'exultation' 'on the speaker's part as he beholds his vision' (1972: 321), and endorses Yvor Winters's perception that '"Yeats approves of this kind of brutality"' (1972: 323).

Concerning the biblical reverberations, Bloom's problem seems to be a conceptual one. He rejects Jeffares's comments on the poem's opening regarding the parallel between 'falconer' and 'falcon' and Christ and man (Jeffares, 1962: 203). But not to acknowledge this parallel is seriously to reduce the impact of a key image related to the historical cyclicity pivotal to the poem. Cyclicity is reinforced by repeated references to



displacement (with one aspect or era of life giving way to another) throughout the poem. And what type of displacement occurs? One quality gives way to an opposite quality. Thus hearing is displaced by a not being able to hear, innocence is displaced by anarchy, and the good are displaced by the worst. An ironic type of second coming, which chimes with the vision of the Revelation, is consistent with such a pattern of displacement. Thus the very texture of the poem substantiates its biblical associations.

Looking at Yeats's attitude, Bloom never clearly indicates moments of 'exultation', despite his intention to conduct discussion 'more closely' on this matter (1972: 321). Rather than exultation, I detect abhorrence. And it seems to me that Yeats's abhorrence regarding the violence of the era is also apparent in his attitude towards the presiding god of the era. That is, the attitude present in the first stanza surely qualifies the poet's vision in the second stanza, where the beast itself '*Troubles my sight*' (italics mine); that is, the poet's own relation to it is a disturbed, 'troubled' one. This fact must surely condition our understanding of the attitude behind the vision.

Bloom's final concern regards our 'powerlessness' in the face of the vision (1972: 324). We are powerless in the context of the age; the age is a turbulent one. But even in the midst of the raging storm, we can 'pray' for opposite values, as in 'A Prayer for My Daughter'. Thus, to recall an observation made at the conclusion of the discussion on 'Easter 1916', while Yeats accepts the advent of this shadow in terms of historical

necessity (Cullingford, 1981: 123), he nevertheless finds it extremely disquieting. The element of acceptance is crucially important, however, as through it Yeats acknowledges the presence of the Vision of Evil.

George Bornstein, in *Yeats and Shelley*, offers the clearest perception of Yeats's Vision of Evil I have been able to trace, and it provides a necessary extension to what Maeve Good understands by the term:

Although [Yeats] does not define the phrase precisely, the closest approach to definition occurs in the lengthy discussion of Shelley...in *A Vision*. There Yeats uses 'lacked the Vision of Evil' synonymously with 'could not conceive of the world as a continual conflict'. The context makes clear that the 'continual conflict' is between good and evil. Following Yeats's own usage, we may here use the term Vision of Evil to signify a vision of good and evil in which the two maintain a continual and unresolved conflict....The difference between Yeats and Shelley on this point is that Shelley -- who was at least as aware as Yeats of the prevalence and reality of evil in the world -- thought it the poet's duty to celebrate the Vision of Good as an ideal for human aspiration, whereas Yeats -- who also upheld the good as an ideal-- thought that any vision of the triumph of the good, undertaken for any reason whatsoever, involved a misrepresentation of evil and consequent falsification of the good. (1970: 201-2)

This perception of wholeness based upon the necessity of a

synthesis of good and evil, is accommodated by the basic Jungian belief in the presence of both the unconscious (which often first manifests itself as shadow (Jung, 1969: 9)) and conscious mind. Again, acknowledging the shadow is the first step of the process of individuation. Jung's theory of the shadow, at one point, is extremely close in intention to Yeats's *Vision of Evil*. Jung states: 'The shadow, as we know, usually presents a fundamental contrast to the conscious personality. This contrast is the prerequisite for the difference of potential from which psychic energy arises. Without it, the necessary tension would be lacking' (Jung, 1970: 497).

Although Yeats affirms the presence of the shadow of political violence in both 'Easter 1916' and 'The Second Coming', he displays a number of responses to it, which, again, belie any simplistic notions regarding his unconditional attachment to violence: it is an aspect of historical necessity; it is wantonly destructive; it has, in certain situations, a clarifying influence on the mind; it is the expression of a blind fanaticism; it helps provide a measure of nationalist sacrifice and heroism. Most fundamentally though, the violence is a requisite adjunct of the *Vision of Evil*, offering a recognition of the warring opposites at the very heart of life.

Nevertheless, despite the way Yeats absorbs political violence and hatred into his conceptions of the workings of the mind and history (supremely evident in the idea of necessary conflict propounded in *A Vision*), a sense of that which is threatening is to manifest itself in other ways, in the guise of

old age and decay, for example, and Yeats will need to resort to other strategies to deal with it. What follows in this chapter is an exploration of that conception of the shadow which is only given substance in Yeats's art after the writing of *A Vision*. My approach here is different from the one I adopt in my treatment of the anima in Chapter Four, where I am more strictly constrained by pre-*Vision* chronology. I include post-*Vision* material in the present chapter for the sake of thematic cohesion, to an extent, but, more importantly, to underline the continuing nature of Yeats's struggle with the shadow, as compared with the degree of tranquility he obtained in his relationship with the anima during the period subsequent to the writing of *A Vision*.

### III

In 'Sailing to Byzantium' two basic modes of presenting the shadow are apparent: a shadow element is evident in the situation in which the poet finds himself (old and decrepit but languishing in the realm of 'sensual music'); while the grotesque 'dying animal' of the self constitutes a rather terrifying shadow figure. It seems, however, that the shadow is not accepted by the poet: instead, through art, reflective of spiritual process, he now seeks to transcend it:

O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,  
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,

And be the singing-masters of my soul.  
Consume my heart away; sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal  
It knows not what it is; and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

Prior to this point being reached, however, we find the scarecrow image, a potent shadow projection of the poet in old age, but yet notably inanimate, and distanced from us by this fact. The 'dying animal', in its proximity to 'Fish, flesh, or fowl', is more shocking, more inexorable in its claims upon the living man. Nevertheless, the scarecrow plays an important role in establishing the sense of horror: it is linked to the living birds of the first stanza in one direction (albeit in the poignant manner of only being able to scare them off) and the artificial bird in the concluding stanza in the other (a scarecrow is, in a sense, a debased artefact). Its place in the poem thus dramatizes the general ambivalence of the poet's position, which is perhaps at the core of his present terror. He at once desires life yet deeply needs to transcend its inherent decay. But in attempting to effect transcendence, the poet can only replace earthly substance with divine substance indistinguishable from the earthly (the solid enough golden bird). Indeed, suspended between these two poles of the earthly and the divine, the crude scarecrow offers an indirect parody of the golden bird, and so, from one point of view, subverts the very possibility of teaching the soul to sing and thus gain the perspective of the artifice of eternity. The transition in

imagery from scarecrow to more frightening and more emphatically situated (in terms of life and death) 'dying animal', reflects and underlines this existential helplessness. What can be said of scarecrow and dying animal, however, is that they prompt the need for transformation and redemption. The need, although not fulfilled, is related to the bird's perspective, from which it perceives the cyclical continuum of existence -- what is 'past', or 'passing', or 'to come'. (To do justice to the full significance of the shadow in 'Sailing to Byzantium', we will need to return to the poem in Chapter Seven, once a clearer understanding of other archetypes has been established.)

In *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*, printed in 1933, confrontation with shadow aspects allows the poet to turn aside from human incertitude and emphasise a doctrinal perspective most readily associated with *A Vision*. In 'Death', the preoccupation with old age and death is conflated with an image of violence, suggesting, as is to be expected at certain points in Yeats's *oeuvre*, an overlap of shadow types. But redemption here is located in the recognition that death has been fabricated by man. In a sense, then, man now confronts death-as-shadow, and, in a mood of heroic confidence, realizes that it is an illusion after all; and this confidence actually stems from a restorative archetypal process, that of rebirth (Jung, 1969: 113ff.), striven towards but never assumed in 'Sailing to Byzantium':

Nor dread nor hope attend  
A dying animal;

A man awaits his end  
Dreading and hoping all;  
Many times he died,  
Many times rose again.  
A great man in his pride  
Confronting murderous men  
Casts derision upon  
Supersession of breath;  
He knows death to the bone --  
Man has created death. (CP 264)

The threat of death is projected into both a 'dying animal' and an image of a 'confrontation' with 'murderous men', suggestive of political violence. (In historical terms, the lines refer to the assassination of Kevin O'Higgins (Yeats, 1933: vi).) But the menace of violence is deflated by the subsequent 'derision' which attends knowledge of the fabricated nature of death; man, in 'creat[ing] death', conceals the fact that there is no death, but rather, an endless cycle of death and rebirth. The poem's bravura is convincing to an extent, and certainly conveys a strong sense of affirmation, but the poem itself is *not* convincing regarding integration of the shadow. In place of the subtle dialectic of 'Easter 1916' we find emphatic statement, alienating in its single-mindedness. Perhaps the poem's subject matter can only be conveyed in terms of emphatic belief, but the shadow which Yeats faces here is too powerful and resilient to be overcome by mere statement of belief. For one thing, 'Sailing to Byzantium' constitutes a strong presence in the poem -- partly due to the

potent and memorable image of the 'dying animal' -- and the anxieties attending this earlier work cannot be so easily dismissed.

But with 'Lapis Lazuli' (CP 338), from *Last Poems*, a stronger case is presented, when Yeats buttresses belief with illustrations which encompass past history, aesthetic notions and experiential accounts of the spiritually enlightened state; in this extended context the nonchalant attitude with which we face old age and death is recognized as 'gaiety', which sustains man in the face of the cycles of death and rebirth (now themselves subject to Yeats's ever-powerful treatment of historical violence):

On their own feet they came, or on shipboard,  
Camel-back, horse-back, ass-back, mule-back,  
Old civilisations put to the sword.

Then they and their wisdom went to rack:

No handiwork of Callimachus,

Who handled marble as if it were bronze,

Made draperies that seemed to rise

When sea-wind swept the corner, stands;

His long lamp-chimney shaped like the stem

Of a slender palm, stood but a day;

All things fall and are built again,

And those that build them again are gay.

Even the realm of art, on one level so passionately striven towards in 'Sailing to Byzantium', is seen to be subject to ruin



here, an acknowledgement of the final powerlessness of substance; thus, as in 'Death', the shadow of our death is only adequately faced through our confronting it. Through the process of confrontation the shadow is absorbed into the archetype of rebirth, thus imbuing the consciousness engaged with the poem, whether the poet's or ours, with the stability and confidence associated with this archetype. That this archetype is in turn based on a circular construct (the cycles of life and death) is also notable, if we remember the redemptive power of the circular mandala shape (Jung, 1969: 10). Yeats's specific utilization of this shape will be discussed more fully in subsequent chapters.

By way of recapitulation: it would seem that Yeats's early sorrow, connected to a sense of a lost past, is repudiated by the heroism of contemporary political events, and yet the shadow of those events prompts caution on his part, connected in turn to the sorrow provoked by excessive and blind violence. This sorrow culminates in 'The Second Coming', with its symbolic deity mirroring the violence of the times. But inherent in this poem is the fact of cyclicity, though the redemptive value of the cyclicity is not yet evident. Shifting to another shadow area, old age and death, we come upon a desired escape from the shadow in 'Sailing to Byzantium', but it is not until Yeats actually confronts death with his belief in rebirth (in 'Death' and, more satisfactorily, in 'Lapis Lazuli', thus bringing his poetic utterances into line with his metaphysical speculations long since recorded in *A Vision*), that the redemptive value of cyclicity is better expressed.

#### IV

There are certain moments in Yeats's verse where the shadow is explicitly seen as the poet's dark, instinctual nature, and they occur, for example, in 'Demon and Beast' (CP 209), 'The Spur' (CP 359), and 'The Circus Animals' Desertion' (CP 391-2). 'Demon and Beast' is linked to 'Sailing to Byzantium', in the sense that in it the shadow is not confronted, but is momentarily eluded. The poem suggests the ethos of what Yeats is to call in *A Vision* the objective or primary man, the man who would lose his individuality in becoming one with God. F.A.C. Wilson, in *Yeats's Iconography*, quotes a source of the poem from Palladius's *Lausiac History*, a work about early Christian monasticism. Diocles the philosopher addresses the monks of Antinoe:

'He told us this..."Intelligence which is separated from the thought of God becomes either a demon or a brute beast". But since we were anxious to know his manner of speaking he explained thus: "intelligence separated from the thought of God inevitably falls into concupiscence or anger". And he said concupiscence was beast-like and anger demoniacal.' (in Wilson, 1960: 271)

Thus demon and beast are shadow figures connected to the primitive level of the 'blood-spirits' as Jung might say. In Yeats's poem sweetness stems from their absence:

For certain minutes at the least  
That crafty demon and that loud beast

That plague me day and night  
Ran out of my sight;  
Though I had long perned in the gyre,  
Between my hatred and desire,  
I saw my freedom won  
And all laugh in the sun.

Being free of the shadow he experiences a primary unity through  
his access to the thoughts of all:

Now that the loud beast ran  
There was no portrait in the Gallery  
But beckoned to sweet company,  
For all men's thoughts grew clear  
Being dear as mine are dear.

In this state even commonplaces seem filled with sweetness:

But soon a tear-drop started up,  
For aimless joy had made me stop  
Beside the little lake  
To watch a white gull take  
A bit of bread thrown up into the air;  
Now gyring down and perning there  
He splashed where an absurd  
Portly green-pated bird  
Shook off the water from his back;  
Being no more demoniac  
A stupid happy creature

Could rouse my whole nature.

In the face of this sweetness, Yeats yet realizes the necessity of the shadow:

Yet I am certain as can be  
That every natural victory  
Belongs to beast or demon,  
That never yet had freeman  
Right mastery of natural things,  
And that mere growing old, that brings  
Chilled blood, this sweetness brought;  
Yet have no dearer thought  
Than that I may find out a way  
To make it linger half a day.

The path to an ambiguous 'natural victory' is through 'beast or demon'; his present sense of sweetness is attributable to the 'Chilled blood' of old age which stills the Jungian 'blood-spirits'. The poet's final image, uncharacteristically in praise of 'body' 'bruised to pleasure soul' (CP 244), suggests to what extent Yeats appreciates the sweetness. He praises relinquishment of the body for the sake of this sweetness, and would thus even turn away from his ideal of acceptance, as voiced in 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul':

O what a sweetness strayed  
Through barren Thebaid,  
Or by the Mareotic sea

When that exultant Anthony  
And twice a thousand more  
Starved upon the shore  
And withered to a bag of bones!  
What had the Caesars but their thrones?

As Wilson says, however, 'Demon and Beast' is 'one of the most poignant of Yeats's minor poems, but we ought nevertheless to be thankful that he eventually replaced the image of St. Anthony with that of the subjective hermit Ribh, who knows that love, and not self-immolation, is the light of the world' (1960: 274).

In Yeats's final years, the 'beast' of desire and the 'demon' of anger are accepted by him as necessary to his art, an art which quests for a subjective unity that does not exclude any aspect of life:

You think it horrible that lust and rage  
Should dance attention upon my old age;  
They were not such a plague when I was young;  
What else have I to spur me into song? ('The Spur', CP 359)

In the face of old age's lust and rage, the chilled blood of the previous poem can no longer be considered adequate for the quelling of demon and beast. The poet must face up to them, and, indeed, attain a 'natural victory' over his own weaknesses in doing so (through his 'song', which is indicative of his creative power), rather than merely wait for demon and beast to run out of his sight as it pleases them.

A similar point is made in 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', a poem which concludes by acknowledging the importance of the level of the 'blood-spirits', the instinctual level of the 'heart'. Yeats even suggests that the dark side of the psyche is the basis of everything he has created:

Those masterful images because complete  
Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?  
A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,  
Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,  
Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut  
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,  
I must lie down where all the ladders start,  
In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart. (CP 392)

All the evidence suggests that Yeats experiences a bitter struggle with the shadow in its differing aspects. He only survives this struggle by integrating the shadow into his aesthetics and philosophy, a process analogous to Jung's psychological integration. Thus, in terms of the struggle, political violence is carefully qualified by Yeats in 'Easter 1916' and 'The Second Coming', indicating his opposition to it, even as he links it to 'beauty' and the 'gyres'. In 'Sailing to Byzantium' he desires escape from the fearsome shadow of old age, while in 'Death' and 'Lapis Lazuli' he undermines it, as it were, by confronting it, thus also absorbing old age and death into his philosophy, which is now explicitly presented in terms of cyclicity. In 'Demon and Beast' sweetness is only experienced

in the absence of internalized shadow elements in the poet's own nature. But in 'The Spur' and 'The Circus Animals' Desertion' these elements are recognized as being contributive to his art, and are also absorbed into his aesthetics, and finally accepted. His acceptance of the shadow cannot be regarded as a confirmation of his own inherent violence-loving nature, for instance, to present Bloom's opinion of Yeats in the broadest terms, it is to be regarded as a victory. Is the awareness of this acceptance and its consequences not apparent in the poet's following words from *Autobiographies*, which encompass the Vision of Evil and, indeed, the antinomic notions in much of Yeats's later thought?

...original virtue arises from the discovery of evil. If we [Irish] were, as I had dreaded, declamatory, loose, and bragging, we were but better fitted--that declared and measured--to create unyielding personality, manner at once cold and passionate, daring long-premeditated act; and if bitter beyond all the people of the world, we might yet lie--that too declared and measured--nearest the honeyed comb. (1961a: 207)

But if the shadow plays a key role in Yeats's ultimately redemptive conception of the wholeness of existence (which enables him to accept 'it all again' (CP 267)), another Jungian figure contributes to his tragic sorrow, and thereby leads, via *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, to the formulations underpinning *A Vision*. This figure is the anima, the subject of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE ANIMA

### I

A 1903 cartoon by Max Beerbohm shows Yeats, scrawny and gangling, introducing George Moore to a Tinkerbell-type creature, who radiates lines of Disneyesque effulgence from a little starred wand (Mac Liammoir, 1986: 65). The caption reads: 'Mr.W.B.Yeats, presenting Mr.George Moore to the Queen of the Fairies'. (Where Beerbohm spells it 'fairies', Yeats most often spells the word 'faeries'. The 'e' which displaces 'i' in Yeats's spelling helps create an acceptable space between Tinkerbell and the more serious creature of myth and folklore.) But if the faery queen is introduced with ease by Yeats in Beerbohm's cartoon, her true significance in the poet's thought is not so readily accessible. This chapter attempts to cast light on the poet's creative relationship with the faery queen and other female presences who appear in various guises, by drawing on Jung's theory of the anima.

The anima is the feminine element which exists in man, projected onto a female figure (Jung, 1968: 13). She might be experienced in dreams, visions, or real life relationships, and possesses both an Eros nature and a witch nature, and thus 'wears the features of Aphrodite, Helen..., Persephone, and Hecate' (Jung, 1968: 21). In a way that is relevant to Yeats, indeed, who often presents Maud Gonne as Helen of Troy, Jung sees Goethe's 'conjur[ing] up' of Helen in *Faust* as an anima projection (1969: 28). In fact, many of Jung's observations on the anima can be



transferred without difficulty to a Yeatsian context:

She is not a shallow creation, for the breath of eternity lies over everything that is really alive. The anima lives beyond all categories, and can therefore dispense with blame as well as with praise. Since the beginning of time man...has been engaged in combat with his soul and its daemonism. If the soul were uniformly dark it would be a simple matter. Unfortunately this is not so, for the anima can appear also as an angel of light, a psychopomp who points the way to the highest meaning, as we know from *Faust*. (1969: 29)

That she can 'dispense with blame' recalls the argument of 'No Second Troy' ('Why should I blame her that she filled my days/ With misery...' (CP 101)), while the anima as an 'angel of light' looks forward to the resolution engendered by the Yeatsian syzygy of self and anti-self (achieved in the wake of man's 'combat with his soul', as it were), and its relation to the poet's 'system'.

It is necessary, with Jung's above observations in mind, to distinguish between different types of anima manifestation in Yeats. I perceive two basic types, unintegrated and integrative (the latter is a term which deliberately emphasises process, for reasons that will become apparent presently). This fundamental distinction not only recognizes the Jungian one evident in the passage above, between light and dark, but also Erich Neumann's paradigmatic design of the archetypal feminine in *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*. Very briefly, Neumann at one point in his work presents the Great Mother as a sphere, with

positive and negative poles. The positive pole is connected to 'spiritual transformation', while the negative pole is connected to such qualities as 'fixating', 'ensnaring', 'diminution' and 'death' (Neumann, 1974: 82-3. See also Knapp, 1983: 131).

Experiences of the unintegrated anima type in Yeats are, in the most poetically powerful of instances, provoked by actual women, most notably Maud Gonne, and reflect on the state of the poet's relationships with these women. His association with this type usually illustrates the sorrow of love, or unsatisfied love relationships, as we will see. But, apart from the actual woman herself (portrayed free of mythical machinery or allusion), the female figures used stem from a variety of backgrounds, mythical and supernatural. In this way, the queen of the faeries and the women of the Sidhe, Fand and Niamh, as much as Maud Gonne (whether projected into a mythical role -- as is most usual -- or not), might equally reflect the disunity in Yeats's emotional life.

Turning to the second, integrative type, we find that the anima now manifests herself as a soul image, frequently redemptive in nature, and is also called by Yeats daimon and spirit. While the soul image forms part of the subject-matter of certain poems, often in contexts which suggest integration of the personality, its integrative function also consists in the fact that it becomes an *active* aspect of Yeats's creative processes, both in terms of individual creativity and universal creativity, and does not simply rest content as subject-matter (a fact I attempt to emphasise by using the term 'integrative' rather than

simply 'integrated'). Thus, the daimon is central regarding Yeats's own creativity, while the relationship of the spirit and daimon is of the utmost importance to Yeats's system, the mythology at the heart of his world vision. The advent of the theory of the daimon, in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, seems to bring to an end Yeats's disturbed relationship with the unintegrated anima type, as if, with his awareness of the daimon, he is able to integrate the anima into his own consciousness. Sexual fulfilment (he was married at about this time) would also seem to play a part in his newly acquired sense of integration. Consequently, to refer again to a future chapter, a 'real image' is to replace the 'imagined image' of the unintegrated anima type (CP 199). I think, in particular, of Crazy Jane, Yeats's most memorable female persona, who is especially vibrant in her sexuality, an aspect of 'real' relationship notably lacking in the unintegrated anima type. Sexual love, indeed, is to become an important element in Yeats's quest for Unity of Being, and even the soul will participate in the symbolism of sexual love.

An elaboration on the fundamental distinction of anima types, and connected with both, is the development of Yeats's appreciation of the feminine, and the incremental gain in strength of the feminine principle as value is transferred from the actual woman to artistic or philosophical process inspired by her. The daimon is the chief focus of this appreciation, although she manifests herself much earlier in the poet's thought as a faery queen in *The Celtic Twilight*. With the daimon Yeats

effectively bridges the gap between the two anima types; the unobtainable woman is transformed into a redemptive figure. In the following sections of this chapter we will examine in particular the unintegrated anima type (with special reference to Maud Gonne and certain faery figures); we will also examine the bridging which takes place between the two anima types, as suggested by such beings as the daimonic faery queen of *The Celtic Twilight*, and the actual daimon in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*.

## II

Yeats's early preoccupation with the unintegrated anima type can be traced back to his first collection of poetry, *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (the 'other poems' are later to be gathered under the title *Crossways*). 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', written towards the end of the poet's life, tells, somewhat wryly, of a faery anima projection in 'The Wanderings of Oisín' itself:

First that sea-rider Oisín led by the nose  
Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,  
Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,  
Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems,  
That might adorn old songs or courtly shows;  
But what cared I that set him on to ride,  
I, starved for the bosom of his faery bride? (CP 391)

The impossible nature of such a longing on Yeats's part aside,

Oisín's relationship with Niamh in the original poem is also finally subject to severance (CP 440):

'But weep for your Niamh, O Oisín, weep; for if only  
your shoe  
Brush lightly as haymoss earth's pebbles, you will  
come no more to my side.'

That is, Oisín, as much as Yeats, is a mortal, at odds with the realm of faery, one of the habitats of the anima, according to Jung (1969: 25).

Another type of disjunction is apparent in the opening lines of 'The Wanderings of Oisín', which dramatically contrast different perceptions of the world, and favour the 'older order' related to tragic vision (v. Krieger, 1960: 17). Where Saint Patrick, who questions Oisín in the poem, sees 'dalliance with a demon thing', Oisín sees a heroic past, imbued with the magic of the supernatural. He first tells of his own company, figures such as Caoilte, Conan and Finn, who have since become the personae of myth:

The swift innumerable spears,  
The horsemen with their floating hair (CP 409)

It is into this heroic ambience that the anima is projected. If Oisín's companions have a mythical, legendary status, she is from the realm of faery:

And like a sunset were her lips,  
A stormy sunset on doomed ships;

A citron colour gloomed in her hair,  
But down to her feet white vesture flowed,  
And with the glimmering crimson glowed  
Of many a figured embroidery....(CP 409-10)

But her faery nature only becomes truly apparent when she describes her homeland, evoking in the process an image of paradise. Paradise will eventually be a powerful emblem of the integrated psyche in Yeats's thought; at this point in his development it can only be a vague representation of 'heart's desire', blurred by references to repeated quantities of objects which can thus never properly settle into distinct images:

... I will give you a hundred hounds;  
No mightier creatures bay at the moon;  
And a hundred robes of murmuring silk,  
And a hundred calves and a hundred sheep  
Whose long wool whiter than sea-froth flows,  
And a hundred spears and a hundred bows,  
And oil and wine and honey and milk,  
And always never-anxious sleep (CP 412)

The carefreeness conveyed by 'never-anxious sleep' does not characterise Oisín's stay with the people of faery; this point is suggested by an incident which takes place soon after he arrives:

And once a lady by my side  
Gave me a harp, and bid me sing,  
And touch the laughing silver string;

But when I sang of human joy  
A sorrow wrapped each merry face,  
And, Patrick! by your beard, they wept.... (CP 416)

Alienated by his inherently human nature then, Oisín also suffers a sense of longing for mortality, for the 'sensual' realm of 'fish, flesh, or fowl' (CP 217), suggesting even at this early stage in Yeats's art a characteristic ambivalence towards the phenomenal world:

When one day by the tide I stood,  
I found in that forgetfulness  
Of dreamy foam a staff of wood  
From some dead warrior's broken lance:  
I turned it in my hands; the stains  
Of war were on it, and I wept (CP 421)

In the face of Oisín's emotion, the anima projection Niamh seems all but helpless, hardly the woman to lead him 'by the nose' (CP 391):

Thereon young Niamh softly came  
And caught my hands, but spake no word  
Save only many times my name,  
In murmurs, like a frightened bird. (CP 421)

His 'hundred years' with her in this realm (a number resonating with the reiterated figure when first he entered the land of faery -- 'a hundred robes', 'a hundred calves') becomes a type of

refrain which tells of accumulating time barely felt, or time rendered meaningless, and seems curiously lacking in substance. The shadow encounter with the demon which follows, in the 'Isle of Many Fears' (CP 423), indicates to me, then, that only conflict gives Oisín some sense of present purpose:

... We trampled up and down with blows  
Of sword and brazen battle-axe, while day  
Gave to high noon and noon to night gave way....  
Horror from horror grew; but when the west  
Had surged up in a plummy fire, I drave  
Through heart and spine; and cast him in the wave  
Lest Niamh shudder. (CP 428-9)

But even this conflict is finally rendered meaningless by being repeated over and over again for another hundred years.

The 'Isle of Forgetfulness' is perhaps emblematic of Oisín and Niamh's entire relationship; reduced to a state of perpetual sleep, they exist in a kind of oblivion:

... years after  
years 'gan flow;  
Square leaves of the ivy moved over us, binding us  
down to our rest. (CP 436)

It is not surprising, then, that when Oisín finally awakes, he desires to return to the world of the Fenians (CP 439). It is as if, having attained the realm of faery, the mortal imagination is confounded, and after a while must cease to function. Noticeable



is the fact that the anima, despite Oisín and Niamh's strange union, has not been integrated; Niamh is a spectral presence, who remains mysteriously remote from beginning to end. Finally, Oisín's desire for her is more substantial than the woman herself:

And lonely and longing for Niamh, I shivered and  
turned me about,  
The heart in me longing to leap like a grasshopper into  
her heart (CP 444)

The freshness of the imagery captures something of this desire, although to do so it must rely on the life of this world, however humble ('a grasshopper'); the other world, by comparison, seems little more than a mirage.

### III

In *Crossways* the unintegrated anima type is associated with what Yeats himself was to call in a subsequent poem, 'the sorrow of love', which is, again, it seems to me, an aspect of tragic vision, although it does not always reflect tragic vision in an adequate manner. This sorrow is prompted initially by an inability to sustain a love relationship, and thus indicates a disjunction between self and the object of desire. The fading of love seems as inevitable as the fading of the year in autumn, as is depicted in the poem 'The Falling of the Leaves' (CP 16):

The hour of the waning of love has beset us,

And weary and worn are our sad souls now;  
Let us part, ere the season of passion forget us,  
With a kiss and a tear on thy drooping brow.

But the theme of disjunction aside, what is less than candid about these lines is that the young poet has hardly experienced love at all, let alone consummation of 'passion'. However real the sorrow might be, the words seem inherited from past convention (v.Hynes, 1977: 572), or tell of a sorrow at odds with the poet's own analysis of his situation. (Of course, in criticizing Yeats's early poetry on the grounds of the distinction between personal experience and assumed convention, one needs to be aware of a conflict in the poet only resolved with the writing of 'Ego Dominus Tuus', where Yeats eventually favours that which is assumed, the mask. This matter will be more fully discussed in the following chapter.) The same disparity between actual sorrow and imagined experience is apparent in the poem which follows 'The Falling of the Leaves' in *Crossways*, 'Ephemera' (CP 16-17):

'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!'

The condescending nature of the formulation 'poor tired child'

suggests a false appraisal of 'passion' in the first place. The formulation, it therefore seems to me, deals inadequately with that which has not been experienced. With experience behind him Yeats was never to see passion as child-like, or as an expression of mere adolescence.

Thus, although the explicit message of the above poems concerns the sense of separation engendered by failed love, this message ironically conceals a deeper disjunction, which is the absence of truly fulfilling love. This absence is conducive to the type of anima idealizing that was to grip Yeats, and the poems might be seen from this point of view as precursor poems to the memorable lyrics which deal with Maud Gonne.

The same book of verse contains 'Down by the Salley Gardens' (CP 22), which also reflects a dissociation between poet and beloved. Love is again at issue in the poem, as the girl's words indicate, ('She bid me take love easy...'), but the poet finds it impossible to heed her advice, underlining the gap between his own experience and feminine understanding. The reverberations created by the gap are discernible in the following stanza, where 'life' itself is affected by the inability to bridge it:

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,  
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.  
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;  
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

Thus, apart from the absence of a satisfying love relationship, an

inner sense of assurance, perceived as essentially feminine, is now seen to be missing (despite the poet's explicitly indicating only lack of experience -- '...I was young and foolish'); and it is this quality that leads to the 'eas[e]' which we might see as being coterminous with an integrated personality. (For example, a related sense of 'unease' is found in Yeats's *Memoirs*, where the poet writes of Maud Gonne's 'completion' in comparison to his incompleteness (1988: 63).) To a degree, then, the above lines illustrate the beginning of the need that will result in the appearance of the integrative anima type in Yeats.

#### IV

It is in 1889, the year that *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* is published, that Yeats first becomes infatuated with Maud Gonne (Yeats, 1988: 40). But not until *The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics* ('Kathleen' is later changed to 'Cathleen'), published in 1892 (Yeats, 1908 vol.8: 202), does she appear in his poetry as an anima figure. (Gloria Kline, in *The Last Courtly Lover*, is also sensitive to the fact that Yeats invariably projects his anima onto Maud Gonne (Kline, 1983: 10).) As an illustration, if the anima is connected to numinous experience (Jung, 1969: 28), 'The Rose of the World' (CP 41) is not lacking in this regard. First, the poem evokes a tragic melancholy:

Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?  
For these red lips, with all their mournful pride,  
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,

Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,  
And Usna's children died.

The sorrow from the earlier poems remains, but now it is connected to the sense of a mythical past being lost, a past wherein such beauty should inhabit, as if it were not part of phenomenal experience but belonged to an idealized realm. This sorrow is cognate with the sorrow of the early shadow poems, telling of a disjunction between past and present. But this disjunction also communicates the present unobtainability of the woman, a fact not only reinforced by the numinous setting of the final stanza, but by the suggestion of an incomprehensible span of time:

Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode:  
Before you were, or any hearts to beat,  
Weary and kind one lingered by His seat;  
He made the world to be a grassy road  
Before her wandering feet.

Capturing Yeats's sense of courtly submission before the feminine, these lines also, however, equate a *personal* need to worship Maud with the beginnings of creation, and God's worship of the eternal female; a bathetic discrepancy (redolent of a severance not expressly dealt with in the poem) is the inevitable consequence of such an equation.

In *The Countess Cathleen* itself, a legendary anima figure is linked with the present through what can be seen as political

action. It is as if in this play Yeats acknowledges Maud Gonne's true passion, politics, but yet is plagued by the sense of loss it involves in terms of personal experience. I quote again a passage from *Memoirs* concerning the play:

I told [Miss Gonne] after meeting her in London I had come to understand the tale of a woman selling her soul to buy food for a starving people as a symbol of all souls who lose their peace, or their fineness, or any beauty of the spirit in political service.... (1988: 47)

Thus the play, like 'The Rose of the World', while celebrating Maud Gonne, emphasises the distance which exists between the poet and her. Indeed, even Maud's reception of the play underscores this distance, as Gloria Kline observes: 'In regard to the two plays [Yeats] wrote for [Maud] to act, *The Countess Cathleen* and *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Yeats receives especially short shrift [in Maud's autobiography]. His offer of the first play is treated as a temptation to the "detriment" of her revolutionary work' (Kline, 1983: 5).

In the play Cathleen is a beautiful, unobtainable woman, who in effect sacrifices all for the sake of her nation. She is also, in a sense--although the connection is far more explicit in *Cathleen ni Houlihan*--, a projection of the Sovereignty, the goddess who represents Ireland (O'Brien in Gallagher, 1983: 26). Thus, though she is attracted to Aleel, the poet, she could never devote her life to him. The peripheral nature of the love between man and woman is a constant refrain in the play, betokening the

separateness of the sexes. Aleel sings early in the play:

Were I but crazy for love's sake  
I know who'd measure out his length,  
I know the heads that I should break,  
For crazy men have double strength. (CPl 8)

The song is a threat, an attempt to keep the surly Shemus in his place, but is a true reflection of Aleel's state of mind; that he is, in fact, 'crazy for love's sake' is indicative of the unrequited nature of his passion. He also tells Cathleen of Maeve's lover, whose death provokes Maeve's tears, not because 'she loves truly' but 'because she has forgot his name' (CPl 17). And Cathleen herself repudiates earthly love for the sake of a political ideal:

Do not hold out to me beseeching hands.  
This heart shall never waken on earth. I have sworn,  
By her whose heart the seven sorrows have pierced,  
To pray before this altar until my heart  
Has grown to Heaven like a tree, and there  
Rustled its leaves, till Heaven has saved my people. (CPl 27)

Her attitude here firmly positions her as the unobtainable woman; but she is the unobtainable woman who mediates between man and 'Heaven', evoking not only orthodox Christian responses, but the Sephirothic Tree of the Kabbalah. If Aleel cannot woo the actual woman he must be content, at least, with the process of redemption she thus appears to embody. From this point of view

the play, although drawing on established subject matter, would seem to provide Yeats with a thinly concealed version of his own relationship with Maud, along with a means of rationalizing his position with her. Thus something very like sexual despair leads to Yeats's creation of Cathleen in her role of redemptive figure. The transference of value from a physical relationship to a redemptive, ultimately spiritual process in this play is to provide Yeats with a paradigm we will explore presently.

The spiritual dimension of the play is reinforced by the fact that souls are at issue in it. 'Anima', of course, originally signified 'soul' (Jung, 1969: 26), and the fact that Cathleen's soul should be of such central importance in the play seems notable to me. Again, it appears to me, the actual woman, because unobtainable, is subordinated to spiritual process. Her soul is sacrificed for the souls of her fellow men, and both Aleel and Oona would redeem her soul with theirs (CPl 40, 46). Indeed, the demon merchant's words to Aleel indicate that Aleel's allegiance to Cathleen is measured in terms of his soul:

We cannot take your soul, for it is hers. (CPl 40)

The emphasis on souls hints at the integrative function of the anima, where the feminine principle plays a crucial role, both as soul image and redeemer, but, again, the full extent of such integration is not yet realized by Yeats. For while Cathleen eventually attains a supreme numinous state, ascending to Heaven (CPl 50), Aleel must, at the same time, accept the fact of her unobtainability. The point is dramatized by his shattering the



mirror that can no longer reflect her beauty (CPl 48), as if with her death he must forever relinquish any suggestion (however oblique) of her image. And Yeats's final judgement on the play, years later in 'The Circus Animals' Desertion', emphasises the centrality of non-integrated projection in it, mere 'dream':

I thought my dear must her own soul destroy,  
So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,  
And this brought forth a dream and soon enough  
This dream itself had all my thought and love. (CP 392)

As we have seen, Maud Gonne was early perceived by Yeats in terms of the anima projection Helen of Troy. This image of her also finds expression in 'The Sorrow of Love'. Versions of the poem, various early ones and the latest, are still presented to the public gaze (v.Yeats, 1984a: 164-65). Affording an interesting diachronic slice of poetry, this poem in its different phases has received a fair amount of attention in recent years, with even Roman Jakobson engaging in a detailed linguistic study of it (1979: 97-125). Here is an early version:

The quarrel of the sparrows in the eaves,  
The full round moon and the star-laden sky,  
And the loud song of the ever-singing leaves  
Had hid away earth's old and weary cry.

And then you came with those red mournful lips,  
And with you came the whole of the world's tears,  
And all the sorrows of her labouring ships,

And all the burden of her myriad years.

And now the sparrows warring in the eaves,  
The crumbling moon, the white stars in the sky,  
And the loud chanting of the unquiet leaves,  
Are shaken with earth's old and weary cry. (Yeats, 1904:  
129)

In other words, the poem expresses, with the direct address in its second stanza, a personal involvement in an unsatisfactory relationship, which in turn expresses a pervasive melancholy, the timbre of the Yeatsian tragic universe. The inherent melancholy of existence, previously obscured by the elements of nature, is revealed on the appearance of the woman. In the above version it is not clear why she should serve this function, but the later rendering of the second stanza makes explicit what is implicit in the early one:

A girl arose that had red mournful lips  
And seemed the greatness of the world in tears,  
Doomed like Odysseus and the labouring ships  
And proud as Priam murdered with his peers; (CP 46)

That is, the tragic melancholy of existence is connected to the anima figure, Helen of Troy, who reflects the intrinsic world sorrow (she 'seemed the greatness of the world in tears'). And yet this sorrow has been present in Yeats from his earliest love lyrics. That he makes a special case for Maud Gonne ('And then you came.../ And with you came the whole of the world's tears')

would suggest that she now becomes the principal focus of his notion of the inevitable dissociation in love relationships. Thus, if in a rather backhanded way, Yeats reinforces the sense, already expressed in *The Countess Cathleen*, of her mythical resonance, which is to be developed fully by him in subsequent poems.

The realm of faery, portrayed, for example, in *The Land of Heart's Desire* (CP1 51) and 'The Song of Wandering Aengus' (CP 66), also emphasises the separateness of man and woman, in a way that is not explicitly linked to Maud Gonne, and yet Yeats's experience with her informs the following anima encounter from 'The Song...'. Aengus sings of a 'trout' that

...had become a glimmering girl  
With apple blossom in her hair  
Who called me by my name and ran  
And faded through the brightening air.

In *Memoirs* Yeats tells of how he associates blossoms with Maud (1988: 42), a fact also apparent in the poem 'The Arrow' (CP 85). Now, as in 'The Sorrow of Love', although in a more covert way, two perceptions of woman are superimposed at this point -- that of an actual woman, and that of an unobtainable figure who reflects on the poet's unsatisfactory relationship with the actual woman, but who also provides resounding subject matter for him. This dual perception is of particular interest in the development of Yeats's thought regarding the anima. As the actual woman herself remains forever unobtainable, she gains in strength

as the subject matter of poetry. One might say that the unobtainability of the actual woman nevertheless enables Yeats to realize the importance of the encounter with her in his internal, imaginative development, and certainly in his poetic development, as the taut power of 'The Arrow' testifies:

I thought of your beauty, and this arrow,  
Made out of a wild thought, is in my marrow.  
There's no man may look upon her, no man,  
As when newly grown to be a woman,  
Tall and noble but with face and bosom  
Delicate in colour as apple blossom.  
This beauty's kinder, yet for a reason  
I could weep that the old is out of season.

The predominating mode is still one which emphasises separateness, but now the poet --in the strength and candour of his lines-- values the modicum he has gained from the woman. Again, then, we notice a shift in Yeats's perceptions: value is transferred from an actual relationship to the creative process which records the poet's response to the relationship.

'Adam's Curse' would seem, in formal manner, to enact relinquishment of love, and so finally accept the disunity between the poet and the real woman (CP 88). If weariness is portrayed in the poem, as in 'Ephemera', it appears to be a more honest type of weariness than in the earlier poem. Here it is not connected to a supposed over-abundance of passionate love, but to the poet's striving after an ideal, and is thus fully in

keeping with Yeats's nerve-straining relationship with Maud  
Gonne. The book-learning of courtly love, evocative of  
Castiglione's Urbino (CP 89), is a poor substitute for actual  
experience of course. But in suggesting Castiglione's very  
Platonic conception of love, Yeats seems to be insisting on the  
presence of at least some sort of bond in the face of Maud  
Gonne's lack of interest in a physical relationship. The  
inability to follow the 'old high way of love' is then not so  
much a reflection on the present age with its lack of courtly  
ideals, as an indication of the lassitude resulting from love's  
not receiving its 'proper food' (CP 341). This fact is powerfully  
dramatized in the poem when love -- though comprising a type of  
exalted labour, like poetry and the maintenance of woman's beauty  
-- cannot survive the deep severalty implicit in the imagery of  
its penultimate stanza. Here, on a cosmic scale, no reciprocity  
is evident; time and space are opposed entities, the one wearing  
away the other:

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;  
We saw the last embers of daylight die,  
And in the trembling blue-green of the sky  
A moon, worn as if it had been a shell  
Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell  
About the stars and broke in days and years.

If time wears away space, it also wears away love, a point  
conjoining with the final image of weariness in the poem:

...yet we'd grown

As weary-hearted as that hollow moon.

Again, a new strength in Yeats's poetic technique is, significantly, noticeable in that very poem where he takes leave, as it were, of the actual woman (Ellmann, 1965: 154-5).

Thus, even as he relinquishes Maud, the poet can still celebrate her as the unobtainable woman, Helen of Troy, in such masterful lyrics as 'A Woman Homer Sung' and 'No Second Troy' (CP 100-1):

If any man drew near  
When I was young,  
I thought, 'He holds her dear,'  
And shook with hate and fear.  
But O! 'twas bitter wrong  
If he could pass her by  
With an indifferent eye.

Whereon I wrote and wrought,  
And now, being grey,  
I dream that I have brought  
To such a pitch my thought  
That coming time can say,  
'He shadowed in a glass  
What thing her body was.'

For she had fiery blood  
When I was young,  
And trod so sweetly proud

As 'twere upon a cloud,  
A woman Homer sung,  
That life and letters seem  
But an heroic dream.

Apart from the idealized, Homeric associations, she is now internalized as memory, at double remove, then, from the 'reality' of the present. In 'No Second Troy' she exhibits a 'terrible beauty' which also relegates her to the unobtainable 'heroic' realm:

Why should I blame her that she filled my days  
With misery, or that she would of late  
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,  
Or hurled the little streets upon the great,  
Had they but courage equal to desire?  
What could have made her peaceful with a mind  
That nobleness made simple as a fire,  
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind  
That is not natural in an age like this,  
Being high and solitary and most stern?  
Why, what could she have done, being what she is?  
Was there another Troy for her to burn?

The reference to current political violence here does not relate the living woman to the concerns of the phenomenal world, as much as it relates her to Yeats's great cyclic conflation of history and myth, to be epitomized in 'Leda and the Swan'. Thus, again, a

real woman becomes embedded in myth; as a corollary, the value attached to her is transferred from the actual world to the realm of myth, and to the creative process which constitutes the myth.

v

If the realm of faery in 'The Wanderings of Oisín' seems largely conditioned by mere 'dream', it is to be given far more substance in Yeats's later work, especially his drama, as, amongst other things, the poet becomes more and more skillful in his deployment of archetypal imagery. As F.A.C. Wilson demonstrates, *At the Hawk's Well* is a nexus of traditional patterns and images (1960, 27ff.), which gives a presence and authority to the aspects of faery portrayed in the play. The play is also given substance by its hard, spare imagery, and the uncompromising nature of its barren vision. Subscribing to the tragic universe, the play attains a definite strength; while 'The Wanderings of Oisín' also clearly demonstrates tragic vision, the effect is mitigated (as previously observed) by a certain diffusion of strength, suggested by the hundreds of years and numerous actions which, in their vain repetition, do not really matter.

The Japanese Noh pattern on which the play is based, contributes to the anima element in it. Wilson notes that according to Noh theory a play must include a supernatural happening, which will draw a goddess or other supernatural being into the world of time (1960: 29). In Yeats's play the female Guardian of the well is possessed by the Sidhe woman Fand, who, through her sexual guile, distracts Cuchulain from his quest



(CPl 217). Fand herself, though, is imaged by the Old Man (who, like Yeats, waits fifty years to drink from the well of a woman's love) as the anima in her terrible, witch aspect:

The Woman of the Sidhe herself,  
The mountain witch, the unappeasable shadow.  
She is always flitting upon this mountain-side,  
To allure or to destroy....

.... There falls a curse  
On all who have gazed in her unmoistened eyes;  
So get you gone while you have that proud step  
And confident voice, for not a man alive  
Has so much luck that he can play with it.  
Those that have long to live should fear her most,  
The old are cursed already. That curse may be  
Never to win a woman's love and keep it;  
Or always to mix hatred in the love (CPl 214-15)

Thus a sense of disjunction is very much in evidence in this portrayal of the anima, evoking the old Yeatsian theme of the sorrow of love, and even the fearful emotional responses related to the lower nature of man, the realm of the shadow. Bettina Knapp, indeed, in 'A Jungian Reading of Yeats's "At the Hawk's Well": An Unintegrated Anima Shapes a Hero's Destiny', highlights the terrible aspect of the anima in shadow terms (1983: 132). And Wilson detects an autobiographical element in the play, which suggests to me the bitter memory of Yeats's own personal anima projection in his relationship with Maud Gonne (Wilson, 1960:

30).

The Guardian of the well, in being possessed by Fand, also becomes an anima figure. Another interesting possibility in this case is to see the possession, in Yeatsian terms, as a conflation of self and anti-self. (The anti-self, as is made clear in the following section, is the daimonic opposite of the self, who possesses all the self most lacks.) Thus, although its purpose is far from redemptive, *At the Hawk's Well* builds on the earlier tendency in the poet's craft to transfer attention from a relationship with the actual woman to the imaginative empowerment her presence entails. That is, extending this basis, the play begins consciously to pursue notions reflective of the shift in emphasis from the unobtainable woman to integrative feminine value (for example, the linking of self and anti-self which informs Yeatsian theory in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*):

It was her mouth, and yet not she, that cried.

It was that shadow cried behind her mouth;

And now I know why she has been so stupid

All the day through, and had such heavy eyes.

Look at her shivering now, the terrible life

Is slipping through her veins. She is possessed. (CPl 215)

Maeve Good sees Fand, whom she classes, indeed, as an anti-self figure, as the dominating influence in the play: '...Yeats's real concern in the play is to place Cuchulain in conflict with the Sidhe. When the Guardian is possessed, she parallels the position of man in conflict with this other world. As the poet facing his

muse, or as the hero facing his doom, she stands in relation to her other self as hawk, dancer, and woman of the Sidhe' (1987: 44). Thus in a reflexive, self-conscious manner, where the conjunction is examined thematically (as opposed to the direct embodiment of the same process in the Maud Gonne poems), the real woman and the unobtainable woman of the Sidhe become linked, albeit in a context yet emphasising disjunction between masculine and feminine (Knapp, 1983: 136).

*On Baile's Strand* is also anima haunted, as the Fool indicates in his opening speech: '... I can go out and run races with the witches at the edge of the waves...' (CP1 248). He names certain of these figures: 'There are some that follow me. Boann herself out of the river and Fand out of the deep sea'. So Fand reappears as a sea-witch, thematically connected to one of the most important elements in the play, as Good points out: 'The sea dominates, is in fact one of the protagonists and is allied to the Shape-Changers, witches and deceiving sirens who haunt Cuchulain' (1987: 19-20). That the sea in Yeats is linked to the Anima Mundi (or collective unconscious) is specified by Barton Friedman, in *Adventures in the Deeps of the Mind*, who thus emphasises the archetypal nature of the witches (1977: 31). And if we recall Neumann's sphere of the Great Mother archetype, we understand that these witches are connected to the negative pole of this sphere. Their malignant quality is early underlined by the Fool:

Witches that steal the milk,  
Fomor that steal the children,

Hags that have heads like hares,  
Hares that have claws like witches,  
All riding a-cock-horse

[Spoken]

Out of the very bottom of the bitter black North. (CPl 251)

And, taking its tone from this malignant feminine presence, the play as a whole serves to emphasise dissociation and the sorrow of love. Even before tragically killing his son, Cuchulain views love in very dismal terms:

I have never known love but as a kiss  
In the mid-battle, and a difficult truce  
Of oil and water, candles and dark night,  
Hillside and hollow, the hot-footed sun  
And the cold, sliding, slippery-footed moon--  
A brief forgiveness between opposites  
That have been hatreds for three times the age  
Of this long-'stablished ground. (CPl 259)

Although applicable to his relationship with Aoife, the above lines are not really adequate in describing Cuchulain's relationship with his wife, Emer. Her selfless love is, for me, the most stirring quality in the play *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (CPl 281). The play is exemplary in its appreciation of the value of the feminine, and thus offsets the circumscriptive nature of its earlier companion pieces.

*The Only Jealousy of Emer* is permeated by a feminine

presence. The opening song of the play is in praise of woman's beauty, and uses, again, sea imagery, as if to rescue from this element the previously submerged positive qualities of the feminine:

A woman's beauty is like a white  
Frail bird, like a white sea-bird alone  
At daybreak after stormy night  
Between two furrows upon the ploughed land:  
A sudden storm, and it was thrown  
Between dark furrows upon the ploughed land.

The following lines deal with physical beauty in terms of spiritual toil, a concept we will need to explore more fully in a later chapter. The lines eulogise specifically feminine 'loveliness':

How many centuries spent  
The sedentary soul  
In toils of measurement  
Beyond eagle or mole,  
Beyond hearing or seeing,  
Or Archimedes' guess,  
To raise into being  
That loveliness? (CP1 281-2)

There are three female protagonists in the play, Emer, Fand and Cuchulain's latest lover, Eithne Inguba. Each has a claim on Cuchulain, who lies mortally ill, all but drowned after fighting

the waves, a madness he was driven to on hearing he had killed his own son. The present situation stems from the disunity inherent in love, linking it to the two previously discussed dramas. The situation was initially prompted by Aoife's hatred for her one time lover, Cuchulain, a fact which made her send their son (a young man unknown to Cuchulain) to kill him.

Emer, falsely dealt with by Cuchulain for most of their married life, yet longs for future contentment. She hopes that eventually Cuchulain will claim her above all others. Eithne Inguba, because his latest lover, is loved best by Cuchulain at present (CPl 285), yet even she declares:

He loves me best,  
Being his newest love, but in the end  
Will love the woman best who loved him first  
And loved him through the years when love seemed lost.

Emer responds:

I have that hope, the hope that some day somewhere  
We'll sit together at the hearth again.

But that persistent woman of the Sidhe, Fand, breaks into this *ménage à trois*, a fact which eventually leads to Emer's final renunciation of Cuchulain (CPl 294). She renounces him, though, in order to preserve his ghost from Fand, thus performing a supreme act of selfless love, and, like the countess Cathleen, becoming a redemptive feminine figure. Cuchulain is now claimed by Eithne Inguba; thus both Emer and Fand lose Cuchulain, a point

which curiously links these two women. Good, certainly, sees Fand as Emer's anti-self (1987: 52).

I would go further and suggest that there is also a connection between Fand and Eithne. Fand is emblematic of the unobtainable woman, the anima figure who leads to man's discontentment. Eithne Inguba is sought after and acquired precisely because of this discontentment, and is thus actually one who exerts a Fand-like influence in terms of this world, as it were. Such a reading of the play, then, intimates that the anima finally triumphs as an agent of disjunction. Nevertheless, the Ghost of Cuchulain seems to appreciate the value of Emer, the redemptive woman, and is loath to relinquish her:

O Emer, Emer, there we stand;  
Side by side and hand in hand  
Tread the threshold of the house  
As when our parents married us. (CPl 293)

Representing the level of the soul, the ghost, being preserved by Emer, recalls the type of struggle first portrayed by Yeats in *The Countess Cathleen*, as already suggested. The redemptive context thus established indicates a strong integrative presence, it seems to me. The way all three women are presented in a single triangle also suggests, from a thematic perspective, the bridging of anima types in Yeats. The unobtainable and temporary women in the play are seen as being inextricably linked with the redemptive woman. And, despite the outcome, the redemptive woman is valued above the unobtainable woman. Once more, building on

tendencies already established in Yeats's verse, emphasis thus passes from a hopeless infatuation with the feminine (with its bitter consequences) to a deep appreciation of woman's value. To estimate justly this change of emphasis in Yeats's thought we must begin to examine the notion of the Yeatsian anti-self more closely.

## VI

In *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* mention is made of a classic anima figure, Dante's Beatrice, 'the most pure lady poet ever sung' (1978b: 329), who is, in a way, the opposite (the daimon or anti-self) of the 'lust[ful]' Dante (1978b: 330). And ultimate redemption is imaged as 'a woman of incredible beauty shooting an arrow into the sky', beyond the orbit of binding cyclicity (1978b: 340). The above references appear in that section of *Per Amica* entitled 'Anima Hominis', or 'the soul of man', traditionally held as feminine; hence the Jungian 'anima' is even inscribed in the title. There are other indications of a strong feminine presence linked to the daimon in the same section. For example, Yeats writes:

... my imagination runs from Daimon to sweetheart, and I divine an analogy that evades the intellect. I remember that Greek antiquity has bid us look for the principal stars, that govern enemy and sweetheart alike, among those that are about to set, in the Seventh House as the astrologers say; and that it may be 'sexual love', which is 'founded upon spiritual



hate', is an image of the warfare of man and Daimon; and I even wonder if there may not be some secret communion, some whispering in the dark between Daimon and sweetheart. (Yeats, 1978b: 336)

The daimon is seen as a type of shadow of the self, explicitly linked to man through violence, or 'warfare'. In this respect it comes close to one of the standard shadow types in Yeats. But this shadow figure is also connected above to a feminine element, termed by Yeats 'sweetheart'. In *A Vision*, as we will see in Chapter Six, daimon and sweetheart become conflated in a sense, as the daimon assumes a specifically feminine nature. At present the mysterious connection between daimon and sweetheart suggests to me that a degree of feminine understanding, at least, is available to the anti-self.

The poem 'Ego Dominus Tuus' (prefacing *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* in *Mythologies*) presents the anti-self as an opposite, though a double of the self:

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;... (Yeats, 1978b: 324)

In other words, the anti-self, through daimonic revelation, complements the self. If the anti-self is in some way a

conflation of shadow and anima, its integrative function (in the way it will 'disclose' all that the poet 'seek[s]') is, from a Jungian point of view, correctly perceived by Yeats.

The two speakers of the poem are Hic and Ille, aspects of the poet's own nature. Hic, committed to self-expression, finds Ille, who awaits daimonic revelation, 'trac[ing]' 'magical shapes' in the sand. Ille explains:

By the help of an image

I call to my own opposite, summon all

That I have handled least, least looked upon. (1978b: 321)

The summoning of the anti-self, in being connected to a drawing in the sand, is indicative of a symbolic activity that is to become for Yeats, as Bloom notes, increasingly important:

Ille walks in the moonlight, to trace characters upon the sand, the image invented by Shelley to convey his 'subtler language'. In the 1925 *Vision* Robartes traced these characters on the sands of Arabia, and the 1923 poem, 'The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid', was printed in the first *A Vision* under the title of *Desert Geometry*. (1972: 200)

It is significant for our present purposes that this activity of drawing in the sand should have a possible source in Shelley's image of Cythna, dryly called by Bloom, the 'archetype of Maud Gonne' (1972: 200). The notion of the anti-self seems strangely related, even at this level of detail, to an anima projection.

The desire to gain knowledge of that 'least looked upon'

from a feminine figure can be traced back to a story from *The Celtic Twilight*, 'Regina, Regina Pigmeorum, Veni' (1978b: 54). The title is based on the evocation used by Lilly the astrologer in Windsor Forest, according to a note by Yeats (1978b: 54). The presence of Lilly in the title suggests something of those astrologically adept communicators of *A Vision*, skilled in the relation between man and the moon in all her phases. Lilly's presence aside, though, there are stronger links between this story and *A Vision*.

In this apparently factual account, the poet addresses a faery queen, with the aid of a young seeress, and attempts to gather information concerning the other world:

I...asked her whether it was true that she and her people carried away mortals, and if so, whether they put another soul in the place of the one they had taken. 'We change the bodies', was her answer. 'Are any of you ever born into mortal life?' 'Yes'. 'Do I know any who were among your people before birth?' 'You do'....I then asked whether she and her people were not 'dramatisations of our moods'? 'She does not understand', said my friend, 'but says that her people are much like human beings, and do most of the things human beings do'. (1978b: 56)

In the concluding words of the above quotation the conflation of this world and the other is striking. For all its otherness, faery life is very like human life; in terms of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' that which is opposite to us (being of spiritual substance)

actually resembles us. And in respect of Yeats's perception of the feminine, the unobtainable woman (always just out of reach) now anticipates future patterns in the poet's strivings, where the anima becomes a far more intimate inhabitant of his mythology. At first she seems merely the subject of a curious account which has no apparent bearing on Yeatsian thought; but then we realise that she in fact tells of realms and processes beyond the senses, of states bordering ours, of the mysterious transference of souls from one state of existence to another, so central to the mechanism of *A Vision*.

It is also interesting that Yeats should refer to a message on the sands in his encounter with the faery: 'At last she appeared to lose patience, for she wrote this message for me upon the sands -- the sands of vision -- "Be careful, and do not seek to know too much about us"'. Of course, Yeats is never to heed such advice concerning daimonic knowledge.

Bloom rightly draws attention to the importance of the years between 1915 and 1917, between the writing of 'Ego Dominus Tuus' and *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. It is in these years of his relinquishment of the unobtainable woman that Yeats begins fully to absorb the anima into his myth as a functioning agent. Indeed, of central importance is the existential significance the feminine principle now assumes. She becomes integrated within the poet's conception of life itself, and is no longer simply the object of his sense of loss or his desire. Faery and daimon thus offer Yeats redemptive knowledge, if we consider the seriousness with which he pursued the composition of *A Vision*:

Between the winter of 1915 and the spring of 1917...much had intervened -- the Easter Rising of 1916, and the poet's brief, strange quasi-love for Iseult Gonne....Between the Rising, and the flare of the relationship with Iseult Gonne, came the last, almost ritualistic proposal to Maud Gonne. After *Per Amica* came marriage, and the vision of *A Vision*. Future and still better-informed criticism of Yeats than we have had should focus itself upon the two years from late 1915 to late 1917, for these were the two most important in Yeats's imaginative life. (1972: 198)

It seems to me that the changed nature of the anima figure is a measure of this importance. In a sense, by 1917 she has been effectively integrated into the poet's psyche.

While it is true that the anima certainly appears as the subject of certain poems hereafter, she is not, after Yeats's marriage, so despair-laden. Though never altogether finally displaced, the sorrow of love in Yeats tends to make way for a sense of fulfilment in the relationship between man and woman, where the one sex complements the other:

Though pedantry denies,  
It's plain the Bible means  
That Solomon grew wise  
While talking with his queens,  
Yet never could, although  
They say he counted grass,

Count all the praises due

When Sheba was his lass.... (CP 165)

The images of Solomon and Sheba are central, it seems to me, in a redemptive context which cuts across the machinery of *A Vision* and emphasises the importance of human love. I leave a fuller discussion of this matter for Chapter Eight. Regarding Yeats's integration of the anima after the experience of his marriage and the writing of *A Vision*, Samuel Hynes, in 'All the Wild Witches: The Women in Yeats's Poems', makes the useful observation:

In 'A Woman Young and Old' Yeats had, you might say, become his own muse, by the extraordinary act of assuming a woman's private sexual identity as a poetic persona. Three years later he did it again, even more brilliantly, in 'Words for Music Perhaps', a sequence of twenty-five poems of which fifteen are uttered by that same persona, the sexual woman. (1977: 579-80)

In other words, by this time (the early 1930s), Yeats was so comfortable with the feminine aspect of his nature, he could, and from the fundamental level of 'private sexual identity', associate himself wholly with certain female personae, suggesting to me a successful integration of this feminine aspect, where, as Hynes points out, the muse (or daimon, or anima) is no longer external to the poet: the poet is, in the end, 'his own muse'.

Shadow and anima represent two important aspects of Yeats's developing system -- conflict and antithetical forces. They are subsumed within the symbolism of Yeats's most profound psychic

explorations, which culminate in the publication of *A Vision*. These explorations, ultimately seeking an image of the unity of existence, depend on the development of the archetype of wholeness, the mandala, and it is the task of the following two chapters to investigate this image.

I

In relating individuation to traditional Christian symbols, Jung notes:

The God-image in man was not destroyed by the Fall but was only damaged and corrupted...and can be restored through God's grace. The scope of the integration is suggested by the... descent of Christ's soul to hell, its work of redemption embracing even the dead. The psychological equivalent of this is the integration of the collective unconscious which forms an essential part of the individuation process....The God-image in man that was damaged by the first sin can be 'reformed'....The totality images which the unconscious produces in the course of an individuation process are similar 'reformations' of an *a priori* archetype (the mandala). (1968: 39-40)

Thus the integration of 'heaven' (Christ) and 'hell' (His descent, a confrontation with the shadow) is measured in terms of the mandala archetype, which symbolizes a restoration of the God-image in man. The God-image is the 'higher spiritual man': 'Like Adam before the Fall, Christ is an embodiment of the God-image, whose totality is specially emphasized by St. Augustine' (Jung, 1968: 39). According to Jung elsewhere, mandalas 'serve to produce an inner order....They express the idea of a safe refuge, of inner reconciliation and wholeness' (1969: 384).



It is also useful, at this point, to remember certain 'formal elements of mandala symbolism' mentioned in the first chapter:

1. *Circular, spherical, or egg-shaped* formation.
2. The circle is elaborated into a *flower* (rose, lotus) or a *wheel*.
3. A centre expressed by a *sun, star, or cross*, usually with four, eight, or twelve rays.
4. The circles, spheres, and cruciform figures are often represented in *rotation*....
5. The circle is represented by a *snake* coiled about a centre, either ring-shaped (uroboros) or spiral (Orphic egg).
6. *Squaring of the circle*, taking the form of a circle in a square or vice versa.
7. *Castle, city, and courtyard (temenos)* motifs, quadratic or circular. (1969: 361)

The combination of God-image and circle is peculiarly relevant to Yeats when he attempts to express the wholeness of existence. In this connection a passage from 'A General Introduction for My Work' (written in 1937) is exemplary. Here he links his notion of Unity of Being with *A Vision*, which contains, of course, perhaps the best known literary mandalas of all time, the illustrations of Yeats's 'system'. The circles, spheres, and spirals, reflecting the personalities and historical cycles of *A Vision*, explain a coherent system, itself an analogue for the totality of human life:

...my Christ...is that Unity of Being Dante compared to a perfectly proportioned human body, Blake's 'Imagination', what the Upanishads have named 'Self': nor is this unity distant and therefore intellectually understandable, but imminent, differing from man to man and age to age, taking upon itself pain and ugliness, 'eye of newt, and toe of frog'.

Subconscious preoccupation with this theme brought me *A Vision*, its harsh geometry an incomplete interpretation. (Yeats, 1961b: 518)

The 'incomplete' nature of *A Vision* will be examined in due course, but for the present we note the explicit link between Unity of Being (perceived as a God-image, Christ) and the formulation of Yeats's great system. We also note the element of 'pain and ugliness' present in it, a reference to a shadow aspect of life, which must be integrated into any image of wholeness. Further, Yeats indicates that the state of Unity of Being has a 'geometrical' analogue, based upon the circle, or mandala. But I would argue that although the mandalas of his system appear at a point of fulfilment in the poet's life -- due to his marriage, the extraordinary revelation of the system, and a new strength in his poetry --, his interest in the shape and his utilization of it prefigure the sense of integration he must have experienced at this point. Indeed, Yeats's 'subconscious preoccupation' with the theme of Unity of Being can be detected in the circle imagery of his early thought.

For example, long before the appearance of his system, Yeats

was deeply fascinated by another mandala image, the rose, which bears an explicit relation to Jungian symbolism, as indicated above (Jung, 1969: 361). This early Yeatsian mandala is clearly seen on the front and back covers of Yeats's *Poems*, of 1904, possibly drawn by Althea Gyles (v. Jeffares, 1988: end papers). The circle is combined in a classic mandala manner with a quaternity symbol, the cross. (For Jung, the quaternity is a symbol of wholeness, of balanced opposites (1969: 233). As is evident in the following chapter, Yeats is to develop his own quaternities in *A Vision*.) Thus on the front cover, rose is superimposed on cross. The rose itself is portrayed in a tetradic manner, the petals, indeed, forming a cross within the rose. On the back cover a tetradic rose appears within two larger circles. The rose emits sixteen rays, multiples of four. Both the rays and their number also have a Jungian significance (Jung, 1969: 361). Regarding the rose in general terms, Jung observes, '... a rose [is] the Western equivalent of the lotus. In India the lotus-flower (*padma*) is interpreted by the Tantrists as the womb. We know this symbol from the numerous pictures of the Buddha (and other Indian deities) in the lotus-flower. It corresponds to the "Golden Flower" of Chinese alchemy, the rose of the Rosicrucians, and the mystic rose in Dante's *Paradiso*. Rose and lotus are usually arranged in groups of four petals, indicating the squaring of the circle or the united opposites' (1969: 363). Jung's observations closely parallel Yeats's, as we will see.

If we are seriously to consider as evidence the symbols on the covers of Yeats's volumes, it is important to remember that,

judging from his relationship with Sturge Moore, Yeats worked in close cooperation with his cover artists (Jeffares, 1988: 203), and seems to have contributed in some measure to the cover designs for his volumes. But this consideration aside, relevant poems within the volumes, of course, determined the cover designs. They too, in the present instance, introduce (apart from the rose image itself) Jungian elements. Thus circle is combined with quaternity symbol in 'To the Rose Upon the Rood of Time' (Yeats, 1904: 111; CP 35). And reconciliation of opposites is indicated in 'The Rose of Peace' (Yeats, 1904: 122; CP 41; v. Jung, 1969: 389-90).

Yeats was very aware of the symbolic potency of the rose image. His studies with the Golden Dawn, for example, included detailed explanations of the significance of all the elements of the rose (Pearce, 1986: 198). And Yeats's own explanatory notes to his early poems tell of his wide acquaintance with this symbol:

The Rose has been for many centuries a symbol of spiritual love and supreme beauty. The lotus was in some Eastern countries imagined blossoming upon the Tree of Life, as the Flower of Life, and is thus represented in Assyrian bas-reliefs. Because the Rose, the flower sacred to the Virgin Mary, and the flower that Apuleius' adventurer ate, when he was changed out of the ass's shape and received into the fellowship of Isis, is the western Flower of Life, I have imagined it growing upon the Tree of Life. I once stood beside

a man in Ireland when he saw it growing there in a vision, that seemed to have rapt him out of his body. He saw the Garden of Eden walled about, and on top of a high mountain, as in certain mediaeval diagrams, and after passing the Tree of Knowledge, on which grew fruit full of troubled faces, and through whose branches flowed, he was told, sap that was human souls, he came to a tall, dark tree, with little bitter fruits, and was shown a kind of stair or ladder going up through the tree, and told to go up; and near the top of the tree, a beautiful woman, like the Goddess of Life, associated with the tree in Assyria, gave him a rose that seemed to have been growing upon the tree.

Further, the rose image bore some relation to Yeats's early literary nationalism. The following passage illustrates this, along with a sense, again, of the rose's Jungian archetypal significance:

One finds the Rose in the Irish poets, sometimes as a religious symbol, as in the phrase, 'the Rose of Friday', meaning the Rose of austerity, in a Gaelic poem in Dr. Hyde's 'Religious Songs of Connacht'; and, I think, as a symbol of woman's beauty in the Gaelic song, 'Roseen Dubh'; and a symbol of Ireland in Mangan's adaptation of 'Roseen Dubh', 'My Dark Rosaleen'.... I do not know any evidence to prove whether this symbol came to Ireland with mediaeval Christianity, or whether it has come down from older times....If the Rose was really a symbol of Ireland among the Gaelic poets...one may feel

pretty certain that the ancient Celts associated the Rose with Eire, or Fotla, or Banba --goddesses who gave their names to Ireland --or with some principal god or goddess, for such symbols are not suddenly adopted or invented, but come out of mythology. (Yeats, 1899: 74-7)

Numerous archetypal images appear in the above passages, including the anima. Regarding the Tree of Life, Gloria Kline, indeed, reproduces a mediaeval diagram of such a Tree, where a female figure, portraying the feminine principle, forms the basis of the tree itself (1983: 33). Colin McDowell and Timothy Materer, in 'Gyre and Vortex: W.B.Yeats and Ezra Pound', similarly observe a feminine principle within the Sephirothic Tree of Life from the Kabbalistic tradition, which is 'the central, organizing image of Yeats's order of the Golden Dawn' (1985: 349-51). But the most important image for me regarding present concerns is the walled paradise image, connected to 'Rose' and 'Tree of Life'. Kline also links this symbol with the feminine principle, anticipating an integration of imagery we will presently explore (1983: 42).

Clayton MacKenzie, in 'Paradise and Paradise Lost in Richard II', discusses the significance of the circular enclosure in relation to *Richard II* and traditional images of paradise:

John of Gaunt...in the course of his English panegyric, speaks of England as

This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,

Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands;

(II.i.46-49)

The sea as protective 'wall' is a useful complement to the mythology of England as an isolated Eden....In his book *The Lost Garden*, John Wilders...relates the 'gardens' of Shakespeare's history plays to Eden, and suggests that the 'old Persian word *pairideaza*, from which the English word "paradise" is derived, signified a walled garden...'. (1986: 328)

Like Shakespeare's walled paradise images, and Jung's walled mandalas, the present Yeatsian image also indicates a state of wholeness of existence. Indeed, rose and paradise are different expressions of the same wholeness. In the context of Yeats's note quoted above, in fact, the rose appears to be an emblem of paradise. The paradise image as a walled city is one to which we devote attention in Chapter Seven.

As is apparent, then, the rose is not an isolated circle image in Yeats's early thought, but is one of several, sometimes made to interact with the others, as above. Another instance of this interplay occurs in the story 'Rosa Alchemica', which describes a circular room with a mosaic rose on the ceiling. (In fact, in this instance, Yeats describes, to an extent, a Golden Dawn initiation room (v.Pearce, 1986: 198).) In the room a dance takes place, through the mechanism of which gods and men come into the momentary unity of a type of daimonic possession. A voice calls to the narrator: "Into the dance! there is none that

can be spared out of the dance; into the dance! into the dance!  
that the gods may make them bodies out of the substance of our  
hearts" (Yeats, 1978b: 289). The dance itself traces the pattern  
of a rose upon the floor.

The most telling conflation of circle images in Yeats's  
early prose occurs in the volume *Discoveries*, where the poet  
attempts to fuse the 'holy' and the 'common', using the quest  
motif, the circular image implicit in the conflation of an ending  
with a beginning, a paradise image, and a rose:

I am...certain that a man should find his Holy Land where he  
first crept upon the floor, and that familiar woods and rivers  
should fade into symbol with so gradual a change that he never  
discover, no, not even in ecstasy itself, that he is beyond  
space, and that time alone keeps him from Primum Mobile, the  
Supernal Eden, and the White Rose over all. (Yeats, 1908  
vol.8: 50; 'White Rose' is altered to 'Yellow Rose' in Yeats,  
1961b: 297)

If the sense of disparate locations is broken down by this  
experience of unity ('he is beyond space'), 'time' is yet an  
important factor. Once an initial sense of unity has been  
experienced, only time separates man from his ultimate  
consummation. That is, once linear time has been transcended, man  
achieves the wholeness of Being emblemized by the 'Supernal Eden'  
and, especially, the great mandala from Dante, the 'White Rose  
over all' (cf. Dante, 1971: 321-2). (Dante notes that the circle  
of light, which is the light of God's glory, is the yellow centre



of the white rose; the desire to emphasise this area of central intensity might illuminate the fact why Yeats changed 'white' to 'yellow' in the revised essay.) This point regarding time is important in relation to two different types of Yeatsian Unity, the one of relatively limited duration and temporal, and the other eternal and transcendental, to be considered in more detail in the following chapter.

Other circle images are referred to a number of times in Yeats's early prose. Thus, paradise images are found in 'The Adoration of the Magi' (1978b: 310), 'Magic' (1961b: 45), 'William Blake and His Illustrations to The Divine Comedy' (1961b: 132), and 'The Holy Places' (1961b: 297). The snake biting its tail, or the uroboros, appears twice in *Discoveries* (1961b: 287, 356), while references to cyclicity are made at least four times in the original volume, and three times in the later *Essays and Introductions* (1908 vol. 8: 38, 41, 50, 193; 1961b: 287, 290, 297). God as a circle is referred to twice (1961b: 282, 287). As Joan Dayan reveals, in 'The Love Poems of *The Wind Among the Reeds*: A Circle Drawn Around the Absolute', a more covert use of circular motion is apparent in certain of Yeats's creative processes in the late 19th century: '*The Wind Among the Reeds* [first published in 1899] remains, even to the contemporary reader, a web woven of language, spoken by a voice pure and ideal, who longed to create the supreme Work, a sphere of relations unconnected with outward reality. Preoccupied with mystic vision...Yeats strives to bring forth the divine essence....to express something that lies beyond the range of

expression....The pure work proposes a self-referent system in which energy circulates endlessly without outlet' (1979: 79). But this process is, as it were, simply the active equivalent of the circle imagery which, recurring over the ages in the 'self-referent system' of the Anima Mundi, so fascinated the poet.

## II

Apart from being manifest in early Yeatsian mandala imagery, the conception of Unity of Being begins to appear in the prose of Yeats's middle years. Thus *Autobiographies* refers (at different points) to Unity of Being in relation to Dante, Goethe and the Irish nation (1961a: 190, 354, 291). The Dante reference, incorporating a suggestive image from John Yeats, the poet's father, best defines the term as Yeats understood it:

I thought that in man and race alike there is something called 'Unity of Being', using that term as Dante used it when he compared beauty in the *Convito* to a perfectly proportioned human body. My father, from whom I had learned the term, preferred a comparison to a musical instrument so strung that if we touch a string all the strings murmur faintly.

The 'perfectly proportioned human body' in Dante, as noted near the commencement of this chapter, is Christ's, and thus, again, constitutes a God-image. And Yeats's father's image of Unity of Being probably inspired a passage in one of the poet's earliest published essays, where he considered the influence of 'great

poetry' on man:

Great poetry does not teach us anything-- it changes us. Man is like a musical instrument of many strings, of which only a few are sounded by the narrow interests of his daily life; and the others, for want of use, are continually becoming tuneless and forgotten. Heroic poetry is a phantom finger swept over all the strings, arousing from man's whole nature a song of answering harmony. (Yeats, 1970: 84)

That is, poetry is able to 'tune' all the 'strings' of our lives, 'harmonizing' our 'whole natures'. The state of Unity of Being would exist where, so great is the level of attunement, all strings are responsive to one. Also, Yeats is actually describing how poetry enlivens all aspects of a person's being, thus suggesting the poetically achieved basis of Unity of Being in man, a notion related to the significance of shadow and anima (and the need to integrate both) in Yeats's art.

### III

Indeed, if Unity of Being were originally equated with harmony (implicit in the circle), this harmony must not be perceived to exclude the shadow aspect. Integration of the shadow, along with integration of disparate selves, is a key concern explored in some detail in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. The cover design of the book is, significantly, 'the Rose, now a symbol of the mask, and thus a mark of deliberate continuity between the earlier and later Yeats' (Bloom, 1972: 178). We might also observe that the

rose-masked anti-self now becomes a consciously projected figure in a conception of overall unity. Thus, *Per Amica*, illuminated by the moon-mandala inscribed in its title, is prefaced (as we have seen) by Yeats's central poem about the anti-self, 'Ego Dominus Tuus', which is also set in moonlight. Based on a dialogue between Hic and Ille (briefly to recapitulate the central situation in the poem), 'Ego Dominus Tuus' reflects a conflict within the poet's own nature. We might remember Ille's words, as he explains his activity to an incredulous Hic:

By the help of an image  
I call to my own opposite, summon all  
That I have handled least, least looked upon. (1978b: 321)

Hic, self-expressive and believing in sincerity in art, is poorly represented in the poem, and Ille dominates the 'conversation'. Although Ille's domination appears blatantly didactic in intent, it is important to bear in mind an observation made by Herbert Levine, in 'Yeats at the Crossroads: The Debate of Self and Anti-Self in "Ego Dominus Tuus"'. Levine notes:

Both Hic and Ille are sides of Yeats, each wanting to denigrate the other in order to gain the upper hand in Yeats's poetic future. The standard reading of the poem has always been to identify Yeats with Ille, but unfortunately this is a reading from hindsight. Yeats's career bears out Ille as the rightful spokesman for his poetic future because Yeats deliberately reshaped himself as that masked figure....Yeats

became a full-fledged version of Ille only in taking up Ille's argument for the anti-self as a personal program for his own poetry. (1978: 133)

The poem reflects a 'battle of ideas' crucial to the poet's future development. Yeats himself had long vacillated between either adopting the mask of the anti-self in his poetry or an ideal of sincerity. In some of his earliest verse, although he does not then link the assumption of another self with poetic creation, he posits the need for such a self, and he does this in the midst of subscribing to the expressive theories of his Romantic precursors. Consider these lines written in 1886:

The child who chases lizards in the grass,  
The sage who deep in central nature delves,  
The preacher watching for the ill hour to pass--  
All these are souls who fly from their dread selves. (in  
Levine, 1978: 134)

Levine traces the oscillation in Yeats's thought between self-expressive sincerity and the assumption of a mask in some detail, conveying the difficulty of Yeats's position in making his choice between one or the other. Levine describes Yeats at one point as being 'in characteristic oscillation, fearing "absorption in outer things", yet resolutely opposing his inner needs to seek out an extroverted energy. When his theory is closest to Ille, he would make himself into Hic' (1978: 139). The poem 'Ego Dominus Tuus', then, is actually the record of the last stage in a long history of mental clarifying and positioning on Yeats's part. If

Ille dominates, Yeats has taken thirty years to decide the fact, not simply the span of one didactically oriented poem. And although the poem is a measure of the poet's resolution, he is yet aware of the need to temper Ille's confidence, by suggesting the distinction between one's own belief in certain knowledge and the sharing of that knowledge with others. Indeed, perhaps the concluding sense of fragility conveyed by 'Ego Dominus Tuus' attempts to suggest the extreme delicacy necessary in imparting such knowledge:

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. (Yeats, 1978b: 324)

But if 'Ego Dominus Tuus', despite Levine's interventions, does not quite succeed in convincing us that as art it contains its own justification, or that it bypasses the didacticism of the intellect, it provides the poet with a basis for profoundly important future theorizing.

In 'Anima Hominis', where Yeats first begins to theorize in earnest, the doctrine of opposites seems to take root in a quest

connected explicitly to the paradise mandala. That is, the goal of the quest which involves the 'heart's discovery of itself' is sometimes imaged as 'some fine landscape', which makes the poet think of Boehme, 'and of that country where we "eternally solace ourselves in the excellent beautiful flourishing of all manner of flowers and forms, both trees and plants, and all kinds of fruit"' (1978b: 325-6). But the mechanics of the quest, in this essay, are more important than the goal.

The quest is seen to incorporate two distinct selves, the confused self of every-day, and a more settled self not subject to the normal complexities which attend life. The first two paragraphs of 'Anima Hominis', for example, deal with these selves. The one self is full of shadow elements such as 'hostility' and 'fear', or its 'natural thoughts have been drowned by an undisciplined sympathy'; the other is characterized by thoughts full of 'ease and joy', and the poet is 'all virtue and confidence' (1978b: 325). It is the second self (linked to an anima-like 'marmorean Muse') that brings completion to the partial man (who is subject to the fragmenting influences of 'hostility' and 'fear'), by embodying all the partial man does not represent or has not come to terms with. Often a writer's work reveals the presence of an opposite self:

When I think of any great poetical writer of the past...I comprehend, if I know the lineaments of his life, that the work is the man's flight from his entire horoscope....(1978b: 328)

Coming to terms with disquieting aspects of the self and the environment (or confronting the shadow) is an important element of Yeats's project in 'Anima Hominis':

the Daimon comes not as like to like but seeking its own opposite, for man and Daimon feed the hunger in one another's hearts. Because the ghost is simple, the man heterogeneous and confused, they are but knit together when the man has found a mask whose lineaments permit the expression of all the man most lacks, and it may be dreads, and of that only. (1978b: 335)

Also, the essay begins to formulate Yeats's notion of the Vision of Evil, indicating the necessity to integrate dark and light in one's art: 'All happy art seems to me [a] hollow image, but when its lineaments express also the poverty or the exasperation that set its maker to the work, we call it tragic art' (1978b: 329). Dante, purveyor of Yeats's principal God-image of Unity of Being, is also, in Yeats's eyes, a poet plagued by shadow-like anger and lust who seeks redemption through the integrative anima type: '...I am always persuaded that [Dante] celebrated the most pure lady poet ever sung and the Divine Justice, not merely because death took that lady and Florence banished her singer, but because he had to struggle in his own heart with his unjust anger and his lust...' (1978b: 329-30). And in a sense, the *Divine Comedy* as a whole mirrors the integration of archetypes, the shadow aspect finding its perfect environment in Dante's Hell, while his vision of Heaven is nothing less than a paradise



mandala, as already suggested, whither he is led by the anima of redemption, Beatrice.

In another passage redolent of his later understanding of the Vision of Evil, Yeats also emphasises acceptance of the dark aspects of existence; the context underlines the strengthened position fostered by such acceptance:

We must not make a false faith by hiding from our thoughts the causes of doubt, for faith is the highest achievement of the human intellect, the only gift man can make to God, and therefore it must be offered in sincerity. Neither must we create, by hiding ugliness, a false beauty as our offering to the world. He only can create the greatest imaginable beauty who has endured all imaginable pangs, for only when we have seen and foreseen what we dread shall we be rewarded by that dazzling, unforeseen, wing-footed wanderer. We could not find him if he were not in some sense of our being, and yet of our being but as water with fire, a noise with silence. He is of all things not impossible the most difficult, for that only which comes easily can never be a portion of our being; 'soon got, soon gone', as the proverb says. (1978b: 332)

In a sense, the above passage argues the necessity of the shadow in terms of artistic creation ('He only can create the greatest imaginable beauty who has endured all imaginable pangs') and self-integration ('that which comes easily' -- unlike our shadowy opposite -- 'can never be a portion of our being').

Indeed, however much 'Anima Hominis' posits integration of

the personality as the goal of its examination of the daimon, it ends declaring the necessity of the shadow element, lest life become circumscribed by a type of complacency:

Surely, [the poet] may think, now that I have found vision and mask I need not suffer any longer. He will buy perhaps some small old house, where, like Ariosto, he can dig his garden, and think that in the return of birds and leaves, or moon and sun, and in the evening flight of the rooks he may discover rhythm and pattern like those in sleep and so never awake out of vision. Then he will remember Wordsworth withering into eighty years, honoured and empty-witted, and climb to some waste room and find, forgotten there by youth, some bitter crust. (1978b: 342)

(In 'Anima Mundi' Wordsworth is emblematic of one who grasps the notion of the Great Memory, Jung's collective unconscious: 'Our daily thought was certainly but the line of foam at the shallow edge of a vast luminous sea; Henry More's *Anima Mundi*, Wordsworth's "immortal sea which brought us hither", and near whose edge the children sport, and in that sea there were some who swam or sailed, explorers who perhaps knew all its shores' (1978b: 346). Yeats's image of Wordsworth as 'honoured and empty-witted' expresses, to an extent, his disappointment that one with such a clear perception of the 'immortal sea', and concomitant notions of integration and Unity should, in the end, apparently relinquish his vision. And as Herbert Levine notes in *Yeats's Daimonic Renewal*, 'Recognizing that the subjective tradition of

Romanticism initiated by Wordsworth had not provided any way of ensuring the permanence of the individual's fleeting experience, Yeats prefers the traditional sanction of a mask or pose that he can copy. If the poet ever lost touch with the intensity of his vision, as Wordsworth did in his later years, there would always be the energy of the assumed role as an antagonist to spur the tired self into creativity' (1983: 37). In criticizing Wordsworth, Yeats thus, by way of insurance for the future, as it were, clarifies his own position in relation to 'the subjective tradition of Romanticism'. Terence Diggory, in *Yeats and American Poetry: The Tradition of the Self*, sees this distinction between the given self of Wordsworth and the created self of Yeats, as being of central formative importance in subsequent American poetry, thereby indicating the pertinence of Yeats's position in relation to the modern era (1983: 3-10).

As we have already remarked in the previous chapter, the other self might also be revealed through a female figure, who in this way becomes conflated with the shadowy daimon (whose existence is defined in terms of conflict), suggesting the convergence of anima and shadow in this process:

...my imagination runs from Daimon to sweetheart, and I divine an analogy that evades the intellect....I even wonder if there may not be some secret communion, some whispering in the dark between Daimon and sweetheart. (1978b: 336)

At issue in the matter of the self and anti-self is self-knowledge. But such knowledge does not result in a simple

acceptance of the self. Yeats would *improve* the self. Thus it is that the limited self, or, as Jung would say, the 'ego', must be extended to include that which is unknown to it, the 'whispering in the dark' of the unconscious, which manifests itself as shadow and anima. The engagement with the anti-self represents, to a degree, the development of the ego into the Jungian 'self'. Thus, paradoxically, the unity of the self is actually determined by an inherent dichotomy, essential in the Yeatsian quest for Unity of Being. Notably, the dichotomy is viewed in terms of conflict and evil, relating the daimon at this point, again, to the shadow: '...evil is the strain one upon another of opposites' (1978b: 357). This polarity in the area of human personality bears some resemblance to the general Coleridgean polarity at the heart of all finite Being. For Coleridge two opposing forces provide the *tertium aliquid* necessary for finite generation and Being. Coleridge would contemplate 'intuitively'

this one power with its two inherent indestructible yet counteracting forces, and the results or generations to which their inter-penetration gives existence in the living principle and in the process of our own self-consciousness. (Coleridge, 1975: 163-4)

The two forces, which might be described as subjective and objective, certainly relate to the subjective 'self' and the objectively perceived other, the 'anti-self', especially considering the central interpenetration of subjective and objective in Coleridge (1975: 148). For Yeats this

interpenetration of nevertheless discrete forces is suggested by the fact that the anti-self is the 'double' of the self, even though 'most unlike' (1978b: 324). Also, the anti-self is 'of our being': 'We could not find him if he were not in some sense of our being, and yet of our being but as water with fire, a noise with silence' (1978b: 332). Thus, 'our being' is defined in terms of opposition, or polarity. This essential opposition is extended by Yeats into the system mobilized in *A Vision*, but we must bear in mind, again, that it also foresees the integration of the self, reflected as Boehme's paradise mandala in the third paragraph of 'Anima Hominis', observed above.

We should also not forget that Yeats presents a memorable image of freedom in 'Anima Hominis', by means of an anima figure who shoots an arrow into the sky, and thus symbolises the end of binding cyclicity, or a state of freedom to be linked by Yeats, in *A Vision*, to the thirteenth cone:

Many years ago I saw, between sleeping and waking, a woman of incredible beauty shooting an arrow into the sky....We seek reality with the slow toil of our weakness and are smitten from the boundless and the unforeseen. Only when we are saint or sage, and renounce experience itself, can we, in imagery of the Christian Cabbala, leave the sudden lightning and the path of the serpent and become the bowman who aims his arrow at the centre of the sun. (1978b: 340)

We will need to consider this state of 'renunciation' in more detail in the following chapter if we are better to understand

Unity of Being and its relation to psychological integration. But in the above image all striving is subsumed in the great mandala of the sun, the very ground of time, in a sense. The process of integration is not even at issue, it is simply bypassed.

Yeats perhaps attempts a description of this supreme state in 'Anima Mundi', the essay which follows 'Anima Hominis' in *Per Amica*:

When all sequence comes to an end, time comes to an end, and the soul puts on the rhythmic or spiritual body or luminous body and contemplates all the events of its memory and every possible impulse in an eternal possession of itself in one single moment. (1978b: 357)

We notice that the moment of redemption is accompanied by the transformation which occurs when the 'soul' (now the anima in its integrative function) exists in perfect unity with herself. At the basis of this particular image is a complex process of purification which takes place after death; the details are to be explored by Yeats in *A Vision*, as we will see. The process leads to the elevation of the daimon into a prime agent in Yeats's vision of life.

At the conclusion of 'Anima Mundi', we find a description of Yeats's own, albeit momentary, experience of the supreme state of integration:

At certain moments, always unforeseen, I become happy, most commonly when at hazard I have opened some book of

verse....Perhaps I am sitting in some crowded restaurant, the open book beside me, or closed, my excitement having overbrimmed the page. I look at the strangers near as if I had known them all my life....[E]verything fills me with affection, I have no longer any fears or any needs; I do not even remember that this happy mood must come to an end. It seems as if the vehicle had suddenly grown pure and far extended and so luminous that the images from *Anima Mundi*, embodied there and drunk with that sweetness, would, like a country drunkard who has thrown a wisp into his own thatch, burn up time. (1978b: 364-5)

Thus, by the time he has written *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, which is heralded by the mandalas-- moon and rose-mask-- of its title and cover, Yeats has a clearer conception of several features at the core of the integrative process: the necessity of the warring opposites and the need to face all we most dread (both represented by shadow archetypes); the centrality of the feminine principle (represented by the anima archetype); and momentary freedom from the restraints of our nature (which anticipates the integration of Unity of Being, and the transcendent unity of the Self, represented by the mandala). *Per Amica*, then, prepares us for the more fully developed notion of integration which will appear in *A Vision*.

I

In *A Vision* Yeats has constructed a model of Being, which accounts for all human and historical process. But of what use is such knowledge to us? Certainly it provided Yeats with a necessary core of belief and a coherent world view, allowing his poetry to gain 'in self-possession and power' (Yeats, 1962b: 8), but (a point argued often enough, indeed, by the critical establishment), his poetry loses nothing in the absence of our understanding of *A Vision*. And despite its value for him, Yeats himself at times complains of the inadequacy of the book in his quest for Unity of Being. We have already noted the reference from 'A General Introduction for My Work' where Yeats states, 'Subconscious preoccupation with this theme [Unity of Being] brought me *A Vision*, its harsh geometry an incomplete interpretation' (Yeats, 1961b: 518). An emphasis on incompleteness is also found in the closing pages of *A Vision* itself:

Day after day I have sat in my chair turning a symbol over in my mind, exploring all its details, defining and again defining its elements, testing my convictions and those of others by its unity, attempting to substitute particulars for an abstraction like that of algebra....

But nothing comes-- though this moment was to reward me for all my toil. Perhaps I am too old .... (1962b: 301)

His system cannot answer all the questions he would ask, then,



and it is at this point that he realizes the importance of the non-systematic, of that which is not subject to mathematical proportion and predictability:

Then I understand, I have already said all that can be said. The particulars are the work of the *Thirteenth Cone* or cycle which is in every man and called by every man his freedom.

The thirteenth cone is an important mandala image which we will examine presently. But even at this stage we might acknowledge with Yeats, that however coherent a system of Being is, there must always be elements for which it has no answers, 'particulars' and 'freedom', for example. These elements suggest the case of the individual, the idiosyncratic, the indeterminable. The final two chapters of this thesis will attempt to explore the area where these elements are to be found.

But before we can reach this stage, where the individual impulse and that which is indeterminable establish their freedom from the systematic, we can gain much (to answer the question posed on the first page of this chapter in the light of present concerns-- of what use is the knowledge contained in Yeats's system?) by attempting to understand Yeats's given model of unity. Further, we might gain a better appreciation of this model's value and limits in an archetypal context, which confers more importance on Yeats's harsh geometry than might usually be expected.

Yeats's model is based upon a complex interplay of circles and spirals, representing a comprehensive vision of Being. It is

fascinating that this model (which incorporates a sense of the limited redemption offered by Unity of Being, as well as man's ultimate redemption through the thirteenth cone, as we will see) should be so clearly related to the Jungian mandala. (Kathleen Raine, in *Yeats the Initiate*, also detects, specifically, mandala patterns in *A Vision*, which she links to Blake and the tradition of Western mysticism (1986: 110).) As is evident below, Yeats's model develops an aspect of the mandala, the quaternity, into an elaborate system of personality and what one might call extended ontogenetic process (in the case of the Faculties and Principles); the model also develops in an intricate manner the fundamental mandala circle shape. The strong presence of such mandala features indicates, it seems to me, Yeats's deep-seated need for unity. *A Vision* expresses this need, then, but mirrors as well the integration at the centre of the need. I argue that the sense of integration stems not only from Yeats's inclusive vision, but also from the assimilation of both shadow forces and anima within the general mandala images. From this point of view, in *A Vision* Yeats not only defines and discusses Unity of Being, but, at least in his own case, attempts to instil it.

Whatever the real genesis of *A Vision*, it utilizes the images of Yeats's own thought, as he acknowledges in this reference to *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*:

The unknown writer took his theme at first from my just published *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*. I had made a distinction between the perfection that is from a man's combat with himself and that which is from a combat with circumstance, and

upon this simple distinction he built up an elaborate classification of men according to their more or less complete expression of one type or the other. (1962b: 8-9)

The polarity at the heart of his previously discussed book thus plays a central role in his new studies. 'Self', 'circumstance' and 'combat' are principal conceptions in *A Vision*. Their elaboration seems a logical extension of earlier work, making the need to labour the presence of spirit communicators almost unnecessary. But the communicators were taken very seriously by Yeats, and he and George Yeats devoted a great deal of time and effort to the task of gaining material for *A Vision* through their sittings. George Mills Harper, in *The Making of A Vision*, indicates that the poet and his wife spent thirty months on the four hundred and fifty sittings which took up more than three thousand six hundred pages (1987: x). This figure does not take into account that a 'considerable part of their research was lost, misplaced or destroyed'. Yeats, in communicating with spirits, was expressing a personal need at least as old as *The Celtic Twilight* of 1893, where he converses with beings from the realm of faery, as in 'Regina, Regina Pigmeorum, Veni' (1978a: 54-6), a work already briefly examined by us. But however seriously Yeats pursues knowledge of Being from supernatural sources, we see from Harper's transcriptions of the sittings that the poet himself is a powerful intellectual presence in the obtaining of the information, repeatedly questioning in order to clarify the obscure pronouncements of the communicators (Harper,

1987: *passim*). He also appears to lead the sessions through extremely rough terrain. For example, in the following transcription Yeats is the questioner (the numbers refer to questions asked in the session):

1. What do you mean by quantative [sic] difference?

1. In quantitative the emotion or intellect is all diverted to one end -- in qualitative it is isolated but variable -- in the other communal but fixed

As Harper comments, 'Although this response seems impossibly esoteric, it prompted Yeats to make a point about his genius and George's in relation to the System'. Here is that 'point', and again we see Yeats leading the session, formulating a conception with which the communicator simply agrees:

4. Can one say genius is result of a conflict caused by Anti genius being primary excess

4. Yes (in Harper, 1987: 127)

But whatever our final verdict regarding the making of *A Vision*, certainly the spirit communicators add a colourful dimension to an often 'laborious' and 'mechanical' work (Yeats, 1962b: 7), and so provide memorable contexts for the transmission of important information: 'When I spoke of a Chinese poem in which some old official described his coming retirement to a village inhabited by old men devoted to the classics, the air filled suddenly with the smell of violets, and that night some communicator explained that in such a place a man could escape

those "knots" of passion that prevent Unity of Being and must be expiated between lives or in another life' (1962b: 15-16). Here, indeed, is a central theme of *A Vision*: Unity of Being is obstructed by 'knots' of 'passion', and the cyclical recurrence of life seems to exist to enable us to 'expiate' this passion. That is, the quest for Unity of Being is a cyclical quest (thus linked, significantly, it seems to me, to the mandala shape). The 'knot' of passion (that which originates at the instinctual level of the shadow) is obstructive in the quest. This conception of the purification of debilitating passion (related most strikingly to a shadow drama such as *Purgatory* (CPl 679)) is one to which we must return at a later stage, in a discussion of the Principles. The conception should, however, also register as an informing background matrix as we work our way through the book, as it gives point to the cyclical system in general; the conception also helps illuminate the shadow-confrontation connected to the quest for unity, by linking the level of the shadow with existential process.

Regarding overall presentation in *A Vision*, Yeats offers similar material using a number of different formats, autobiographical, fictional, philosophical, geometrical, mythological and historical. Each new format involves repetition (an implicit circular motion), but also a linear progression into a new area of expression. In abstract terms, circle combines with line, and in this way the entire book suggests a gyre motion. Is it fanciful to claim that in reading it, we become, in a sense, involved in such a motion, absorbing Yeats's conceptions in more

ways than we perhaps imagine?

The fictional component, 'Stories of Michael Robartes and His Friends: An Extract from a Record Made by His Pupils', is, at first, more puzzling than revealing in the way it introduces great mysteries in a banal setting, apparently undermining the serious intention of the stories. However, Yeats's strategy here, it seems, is rather involuted. Satirizing his own fascination with things mystical, he evokes the nonchalance of the man so comfortable with his beliefs he can afford to display them in a wierdly humorous way. James Olney, in 'W.B.Yeats's Daimonic Memory', also suggests:

the virtually impenetrable maze of humor and fiction that contains and obscures whatever statement is being made should reveal to us that these truths, though stated literally, are not literal but symbolic....Michael Robartes's story is wrapped in John Duddon's story, which is in turn wrapped in John Aherne's letter, and they are all like so many trial balloons sent up by Yeats -- and I mean sent up in a double sense -- so that if someone shoots them down neither Yeats nor his *Vision* will suffer. (1977: 598)

Thus, Yeats's irreverent humour, which 'sends up' his own creations, anticipates and so disarms, it is probably hoped, the scorn of his critics.

Also, the queer little stories told by Michael Robartes and his friends and pupils do relate to the principal components of the book, and do make important connections with earlier Yeatsian

mandala imagery. For example, the following detail bears a direct link with both the patterned dancing in the early story 'Rosa Alchemica', and the image of writing in the sand, connected with daimon and anima:

'He [an old Arab] belonged to a tribe of Arabs who called themselves Judwalis or Diagrammatists because their children are taught dances which leave upon the sand traces full of symbolical meaning....' (1962b: 41)

This Arab introduces and explains, to an extent, the gyre pattern:

'He said that he had been sent, stood where the *Speculum* lay open at the wheel marked with the phases of the moon, described it as the doctrine of his tribe, drew two whorls working one against the other, the narrow end of one in the broad end of the other, showed that my single wheel and his two whorls had the same meaning.' (1962b: 41)

And because it contains personae from earlier works such as 'Rosa Alchemica', 'Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends' suggests a link with past and present. It is as if a circle in the poet's thought has been completed, silently reflecting one of the principal images of his concerns in *A Vision*.

Regarding polarity, 'Stories of Michael Robartes' also draws on Kant's 'antinomies', which according to the poet stem from the tradition which includes Heraclitus, Empedocles and Plotinus (Wilson, 1958: 224). Robartes declares:

'I found myself upon the third antinomy of Immanuel Kant, thesis: freedom; antithesis: necessity; but I restate it. Every action of man declares the soul's ultimate, particular freedom, and the soul's disappearance in God; declares that reality is a congeries of beings and a single being; nor is this antinomy an appearance imposed upon us by the form of thought but life itself which turns, now here, now there, a whirling and a bitterness.' (1962b: 52)

Robartes also suggests the solution to the antinomy, a notion to which we will return in Chapter Eight:

'The marriage bed is the symbol of the solved antinomy, and were more than symbol could a man there lose and keep his identity, but he falls asleep. That sleep is the same as the sleep of death.' (1962b: 52)

At once to 'lose and keep' 'identity' suggests the simultaneous disappearance of the soul in God and the soul's realization of its ultimate, particular freedom. This, in turn, reflects the merging of Choice and Chance as expressed in 'Solomon and the Witch', or the simultaneous loss of individual identity and acquirement of universal identity through sexual union, as will become clear at a later stage. First, however, we need to explore all the facets of the antinomy itself.

In the sequential reading of *A Vision* which follows, several strands, I hope, should be apparent. I explore not only the development of the highly complex Yeatsian mandala, but the



related development of anima and shadow as well. Rather than deal exclusively with one archetype at a time as in previous chapters (although I do attempt to follow some sense of pattern), I have tended to deal with them as they arise in Yeats's sequence, an approach which gives emphasis to one of my own themes, indeed, that of the integration of the archetypes. Another very important strand in my reading is the development of Yeatsian ideas of unity. Too often do critics unthinkingly accept Unity of Being as a blanket term, where Yeats in *A Vision* clearly distinguishes between different types of unity. These distinctions are important if we wish to gain a better understanding of Yeatsian individuation.

## II

A detailed, geometrical account of Yeats's symbolism begins with 'Book 1' of 'The Phases of the Moon', most notably with a classic mandala pattern on page 66. Even more apparent than in the early rose mandala from the 1904 volume, *Poems*, we find a squared circle, that is, a circle within a square, with, in turn, a square within that circle, representing the standard quaternity-circle combination of the Jungian mandala. While both squares mark sets of polar opposites -- opposite gyre patterns in the outer square, the tarot-like symbols of opposite forces in the inner square (v.Raine, 1972: plates 15-19) -- the circle too is marked by polar opposites at four equally spaced stations. These last-named opposites are intimately connected to the circle, in that they are presented as the four principal phases of the moon

in the lunar month, new, full, and two halves, as she goes through her ever-recurring cycle. Thus the circle, so emphatically squared, seems to be created by the tugging of opposites.

Of course, Yeats's text is soon to explain this very point. Yeats's reference to Empedocles, while establishing the importance of pre-Socratic thought in the poet's system (as pointed out by Olney in *The Rhizome and the Flower*), also brings to our attention the possible archetypal basis of Empedoclean symbolism:

'When Discord', writes Empedocles, 'has fallen into the lowest depths of the vortex' --the extreme bound, not the centre, Burnet points out-- 'Concord has reached the centre, into it do all things come together so as to be only one, not all at once but gradually from different quarters, and as they come Discord retires to the extreme boundary...in proportion as it runs out Concord in a soft immortal boundless stream runs in.' (1962b: 67)

For Jung the Orphic egg, comprising a serpent twined in a spiral shape around an egg, is a fairly common mandala image reflective of the process of coming-to-be (Jung, 1985: 291). Amongst other things, the emblem might also signify the interplay of latent and kinetic energy, a dual configuration of basic forces not unlike Empedocles's one. Incidentally, the Empedoclean opposition (Concord and Discord, or Love and War) fuels that section of Yeats's mythological thought which is also based on egg imagery:

'...I recall that Love and War came from the eggs of Leda' (1962b: 67). Leda is to represent the divine focus that is the mythological beginning of an historical era, as we will observe, and it is fitting that she should bear, in symbolical terms, the inherent forces of Love and War necessary for the development of her age and the beginning of the next.

The following page elaborates the image of the vortex as a spiral, 'formed by circles diminishing until they are nothing'. This winding-down motion cannot be viewed in isolation as it is always half of a paired motion of opposites. The resulting image of interpenetrating vortices is viewed by Yeats as 'the fundamental symbol of my instructors'. Yeats calls the vortices gyres, of course, and describes their balanced interpenetrating motion thus:

...I see that the gyre of 'Concord' diminishes as that of 'Discord' increases, and can imagine after that the gyre of 'Concord' increasing while that of 'Discord' diminishes, and so on, one gyre within the other always. (1962b: 68)

Here is the nave of both the symbolism and philosophy of *A Vision*, all else is but an elaboration of it.

Further examination of the spiral archetype reveals the symbolical potency of the Yeatsian gyre. The ascent and descent implicit in the interpenetrating gyres evokes the image of the stair, a widely current image long since intimate to various mystical initiatory rites. Jung mentions the Stairway of the Seven Planets (known to Apuleius, and a familiar device in the

initiations of late classical syncretism), the visions of Zosimos, and the alchemical ladder. A most impressive representation of the device is Blake's watercolour of the spiralling ladder in Jacob's dream (Jung, 1985: 129). We might also remember the stair in the vision of paradise familiar to Yeats, recorded in the previous chapter. Yeats's gyres do herald a type of initiation, in that they indicate the secret heart of process, while the numinous quality attributable to the visions of Zosimos and Jacob's ladder is reflected in the spiral of Yeats's thirteenth cone, which is the 'ladder' that delivers us from temporal process.

Indeed, if *A Vision* is at all to be considered in a qualitative light, it excels in its usage of symbolism. Thus Yeats demonstrates the admirable economy and precision inherent in the components of the gyre image:

A line is a movement without extension, and so symbolical of time-- subjectivity...-- and a plane cutting it at right angles is symbolical of space or objectivity. Line and plane are combined in a gyre which must expand or contract according to whether mind grows in objectivity or subjectivity. (1962b: 70)

To highlight the nature of Yeats's achievement, it is instructive to compare his description with the spiral model of Being which eventually satisfied Coleridge:

...this is one proof of the essential vitality of nature, that she does not ascend as links in a suspended chain, but as

the steps in a ladder; or rather she at one and the same time *ascends* as by a climax, and expands as the concentric circles on the lake from the point to which the stone in its fall had given the first impulse. (Coleridge, 1951: 572-3)

The Yeatsian 'development' of the spiral is significant. Where the Coleridgean spiral still incorporates (despite its repudiation of the mechanics involved) the notion of a Chain of Being linked in hierarchical fashion, the gyres acknowledge a circle of Being, where descent is as inevitable as ascent, and is not necessarily indicative of moral or spiritual backsliding. While it is true that for Yeats man can be saved from the circle of Being, this can take place at any point along the circle, at any point on the gyre (which can also be seen as a circle), and not necessarily at any supreme moment of ascent.

In further considering the significance of time and space in Yeats's system, we note that the interplay of time, or subjectivity, and space, or objectivity, in the creation, as Yeats sees it, of the gyre symbol, is of crucial importance regarding mandala imagery and Unity of Being. Symbolically, linear time becomes involved in circular motion because of the reaction between subjectivity and objectivity. Subjectivity and objectivity must each dominate within a particular time span, setting up a pattern of cyclical recurrence which incorporates past, present and future. Thus the entire wheel of incarnations is in some sense a fusion of time dimensions. The wheel, then, is complete, and as such is an image of a type of Unity of Being.

But, we might object, individual process is incarcerated in this wheel, with the opposite of the liberating effect which should be attributable to Unity of Being (a state which we will have to examine in more detail presently). In other words, Yeats has created a circle image which is, apparently, ultimately opposed to human liberation. This is a point of particular concern for Bloom, who, drawing on Martin Buber, sees such a conception as a surrendering to the processes of an oppressive fate:

Yeats, like Jung, and like Lawrence, found himself prophesying a hidden divinity, not the hidden God of the Christians, but what Martin Buber grimly calls the 'composite god' of the historicists and Gnostics, the god of process, a dehumanizing divinity. (1972: 220)

But this apparently negative circling process also forms the basis of liberation. Unity of Being, though bound to temporal process (as we will see), anticipates the complete, transcendental liberation of the thirteenth cone, where time circles in on itself in an instant, in a true fusion of the time dimensions. Also, the thirteenth cone is a refined version of the standard gyre, the temporal, process-bound circlings of which are then symbolically significant as pointers to the attainment of total liberation. More simply (a point implicit in Yeats's symbolism), by accepting process, we put ourselves in a position to transcend process.

To clarify the above discussion, we should at this point

stress that *A Vision* clearly distinguishes between the two different types of unity first mentioned in the previous chapter, a transcendent unity beyond the cycles of life and death, and a temporal unity, achieved within the bounds of life. Attainment of Unity of Being would seem to be a temporary condition, a form of the latter type of unity, achieved in a life-time, but perhaps lost in another life. The intertwining gyres, then, still condition the realm of Unity of Being. Indeed, we remember that for Maeve Good Unity of Being is one of the poles of the tragic universe, and thus, of necessity, is linked to the realm of conflict. She emphasises that Unity of Being is a momentary state, entirely compatible with experience in a tragic universe: '... it must be stressed that the light, the moment of joy, lasts but "for its moment" and, caught between two poles, we are allowed only a glimpse of delight' (1987: 84).

The intertwining gyres combine conflict and circle imagery, linking the Vision of Evil with the mandala, or, if we like, the shadow with the possibility of redemption. Where conflict had once been externalized, so to speak, as the subject-matter of certain poems, it is now seen to be an inherent active process central to life itself, undergoing a change in function in Yeats's thought similar to that undergone by the anima.

The principal conflict in *A Vision* is between subjectivity and objectivity; in their perpetual struggle for dominance, attainment of it and loss of it, subjectivity and objectivity create a binding circle of process. The conflict exists in two major spheres, both of which reflect the Jungian quaternity: that

of the Four Faculties, 'what man has made in a past or present life', and that of the Principles, 'what makes man' between lives (1962b: 71). Yeats first deals in detail with the Faculties, or aspects of psychic existence important in our present lives: Will and Mask (will and its object), and Creative Mind and Body of Fate (thought and its object) (1962b: 73). Although the Faculties are presented in terms of a fundamental opposition between subjectivity and objectivity, this opposition is relative, as the active subjective Faculties in one instance can become passive and objective in the next (1962b: 73).

Even in this area of primary oppositions then, Yeats makes it clear that his system is flexible, not as mechanically predictable as we might at first have imagined. A certain 'force' in one case could become its opposite in the next. Colin McDowell observes in 'The "Opening of the Tinctures" in Yeats's *A Vision*', that such complications 'make it difficult to agree with those critics who have asserted that Yeats was a simple determinist' (McDowell, 1985: 75).

If a shadow element is apparent in the instances of conflict in Yeats's system examined above, the anima should also not be overlooked. The 1925 version of *A Vision* describes the Faculties in more imaginative terms than are found in the 1937 version, emphasising the importance of the Mask in Yeats's system, and underlining the connection between Mask and daimon:

One can describe *antithetical* man by comparing him to the *Commedia del Arte* or improvised drama of Italy. The stage manager having chosen his actor, the *Will*, chooses for this



actor, that he may display him the better, a scenario, *Body of Fate*, which offers to his *Creative Mind* the greatest possible difficulty that it can face without despair, and in which he must play a role and wear a *Mask* as unlike as possible to his natural character (or *Will*) and leaves him to improvise, through *Creative Mind*, the dialogue and the details of the plot. He must discover a being which only exists with extreme effort, when his muscles are as it were all taut and all his energies active, and for that reason the Mask is described as 'a form created by passion to unite us to ourselves'. (1978b: 17-18)

It is instructive to juxtapose the above with the following famous passage from *Per Amica*:

...the Daimon comes not as like to like but seeking its own opposite, for man and Daimon feed the hunger in one another's hearts. Because the ghost is simple, the man heterogeneous and confused, they are but knit together when the man has found a mask whose lineaments permit the expression of all the man most lacks, and it may be dreads, and of that only. (1978a: 335)

In both passages a mask represents the opposite of the natural state -- it is 'as unlike as possible' and expresses 'all the man most lacks'. There is a definite connection between Mask and daimon, then. The daimon, indeed, is central to the Faculties as a whole (1962b: 83). This fact gains in importance when we

consider the daimon's corresponding centrality in the case of the Principles. Thus, the daimon appears to be a key figure in *A Vision*, a position which represents, in a sense, the apotheosis of the anima.

While the possible feminine nature of the daimon is hinted at in *Per Amica* (1978a: 336), as we have seen, the 1925 *Vision* is explicit in this regard, bringing our conception of the daimon that much closer to an anima figure, located within man's own psychology:

Man's *Daimon* has therefore her energy and bias, in man's *Mask*, and her constructive power in man's fate, and man and *Daimon* face each other in a perpetual conflict or embrace. This relation (the *Daimon* being of the opposite sex to that of man) may create a passion like that of sexual love. The relation of man and woman, in so far as it is passionate, reproduces the relation of man and *Daimon*, and becomes an element where man and *Daimon* sport, pursue one another, and do one another good or evil....The *Daimon* carries on her conflict, or friendship with a man, not only through the events of life, but in the mind itself, for she is in possession of the entire dark of the mind. (1978b: 27)

If the anima personifies the unconscious (Jung, 1985: 157), so does the daimon, being 'in possession of the entire dark of the mind'. Jung also indicates the connection between the anima archetype and actual relationships between the sexes which are reflective of psychic process, thus paralleling Yeats's

'passionate' 'relation of man and woman' (Jung, *ibid.*). The assimilation of an opposite 'energy and bias' inherent in the contrasexual Mask is fundamental in Jung's myth of individuation (Jung, 1989: 21), as is the perception of the daimon's 'constructive' intrication in man's 'fate' (Jung, 1985: 132).

We will now examine the Yeatsian mandala in more detail, incorporating notions of unity and the integration of the archetypes in the process. The particular positions of the Faculties along the peripheries of the intersecting gyres, are numbered according to the twenty-eight phases of the moon, four of which have been displayed in the mandala already examined, which commences this section of *A Vision*. We must superimpose, then, the image of the circle of the phases of the moon upon our image of the two intertwining spirals. While the choice of the twenty-eight days of the lunar month as a numbering system might seem somewhat arbitrary, it is, being neatly divisible by four, consistent with a Jungian squaring of the circle typical of mandala symbolism, and thus with our conception of equal and balanced opposite forces. Although the figure also ties in with Yeats's mythological-historical explorations, based on the great Platonic year and its sub-components, one must be aware that he adjusted certain figures to suit his own time scale (Yeats, 1978b: 202).

Barring two positions of the twenty-eight, Phase 1 and Phase 15, all the different types of human personality (as Yeats sees it) are inherent in the lunar circle. At Phases 1 and 15, where the gyre motion is suspended prior to a reversal of tendencies,

no human life is possible as no strife based on imbalance between opposing forces exists at these points. Strife, or conflict, is, as always in Yeats, a necessary precondition of human life.

Phases 8 to 21 represent in varying degrees man's conflict with himself, the antithetical dominance of subjectivity, where Will asserts itself over Creative Mind. The remaining phases might be seen to represent man's conflict with circumstance, the primary dominance of objectivity, where Creative Mind now asserts itself over Will. Thus the circle falls into two main opposing areas, antithetical and primary. In the antithetical phases man quests for self-realization, attains it as far as possible, and then seeks immersion in God through the primary phases (1962b: 81), before moving back into the antithetical phases.

Unity of the temporal variety is sought in both antithetical and primary phases, then. But a different type of temporal unity is found in the primary phases, a moral unity, which, one imagines, is determined by one's relation to a force outside the self, God, rather than by the self (1962b: 82).

In the following pages of *A Vision* (1962b: 88-89) the density of circle imagery involved, along with the many new possibilities present in each further elaboration, should again counter any notion we might have of a too simplistic mechanism (of the type which so oppresses Bloom) at work in Yeats's model. More complexities become apparent in subsequent pages, where Yeats introduces the notion of False Masks and True Masks, for example, found at every phase through which man must pass (1962b: 90). Thus every phase offers its own choices, despite an overall

predetermination which governs the sequence of phases, and the types of choice open to one at each phase. In the terminology of 'Solomon and the Witch', Chance and Choice both operate at every phase. The secret in the quest for unity (a secret which constitutes a mystery that cannot be deliberately plumbed, however) is to align the two. Regarding the increasing complexity apparent in these symbols of individuation, it is interesting to note, as Hall and Nordby point out, that for Jung such symbols 'express themselves in more subtle and intricate ways as they become individuated. When Jung asserts that man is constantly searching for better symbols he means that increasing individuation demands more elaborate and refined outlets' (Hall, 1973: 82). Yeats's growing subtleties then, might be seen as being reflective of developing individuation.

The poet's conception of the Vision of Evil provides a fitting location for the shadow. Thus, to once more link Unity of Being and the Vision of Evil, if the individual of Phase 17 (the Phase where Unity of Being is most readily attained) realizes masterful 'intensity' through the image of a rose -- closely related to traditional conceptions of Unity of Being, a fact investigated in Chapter Five -- he or she must also acknowledge and *accept* the conflict inherent in a conception of Unity of Being, expressed through the Vision of Evil. Consider Yeats's distinction between Dante and Shelley:

...Dante, having attained, as poet, to Unity of Being, as poet saw all things set in order, had an intellect that served the *Mask* alone, that compelled even those things that opposed it

to serve, and was content to see both good and evil. Shelley, upon the other hand, in whom even as poet unity was but in part attained, found compensation for his "loss"...in his hopes for the future of mankind. He lacked the Vision of Evil, could not conceive of the world as a continual conflict, so, though great poet he certainly was, he was not of the greatest kind. (1962b: 144)

Without the Vision of Evil, which seems to stimulate the development of true opposites, the poet's work lacks in the simple intensity characteristic of the 'greatest' poets: 'Dante suffering injustice and the loss of Beatrice, found divine justice and the heavenly Beatrice, but the justice of *Prometheus Unbound* is a vague propagandist emotion and the women that await its coming are but clouds'. But Yeats's emphasis on the effort necessary to attain Unity of Being, helps underline the distinction between this unity and unity of the thirteenth cone. Unity of Being, a temporal state, is of necessity conditioned by strife and effort. Unity of the thirteenth cone is not. If, through strife, Yeats at times achieves Unity of Being, his experience of anything like the other unity is limited indeed. While a conception of strife is to condition Yeats's outlook for most of the remainder of his life-- a fact apparent in the subsequent two chapters of this thesis-- the other unity (examined in the final chapter), though on precious few occasions, offers him brief respite.

Although Bloom is wrong in stating that 'only' the man of

Phase 17 'can hope to attain Unity of Being' (1972: 243), the maintenance of unity is a precarious business. Even by Phase 18 the Will 'can only preserve its unity by a deliberate balancing of experiences', and at its next phase 'will have fallen asunder' (1962b: 146). Unity is also possible at Phase 20, although it is not imposed 'convictions' that now unify, but the 'creative act' (1962b: 151). Likened to Unity of Being by Yeats, this new unity is thus also subject to temporal limitations. Nowhere are the details of this state fully examined by Yeats, but for our purposes it can be regarded as a type of Unity of Being.

Two final Phases that are of interest to me are Phases 14 and 16, as they evoke anima images which shed light on Yeats's conception of woman, so necessary in his quest for individuation. Of Phase 14 Yeats writes:

Here are born those women who are most touching in their beauty. Helen was of the phase; and she comes before the mind's eye elaborating a delicate personal discipline, as though she would make her whole life an image of a unified *antithetical* energy. While seeming an image of softness and of quiet, she draws perpetually upon glass with a diamond. (1962b: 132)

In Phase 16 too

...are beautiful women...and in these there is a radiant intensity....They walk like queens, and seem to carry upon their backs a quiver of arrows.... (1962b: 139)

Apart from the fact that Helen is a standard anima figure, Yeats's fascination with Phases 14 and 16 also indicates the hold the anima yet has on his speculating mind. Bloom is right to see the above passage as the 'entrance to a...complex matter in Yeats, and one of his greatest strengths, the quest for the meaning of a woman's beauty' (1972: 249-50). According to Bloom, the quest is possibly at the heart of the Yeatsian system itself, since, in Yeats's view, perfection of the body is dependent on the striving or toil of the soul (a view Yeats takes from Castiglione (Castiglione, 1984: 332)), and the soul is immortal, it needs to impress itself on matter through many lifetimes. In this way, as Bloom sees it, a theory of reincarnation is developed (Bloom, 1972: 253). The quest for the meaning of woman's beauty becomes indicative, then, of existential process in general. An apprehension within man himself (which, in its ideal nature, is very like an anima image) turns the wheel of reincarnation.

Bloom's perceptions regarding the beauties of Phases 14 and 16 help reveal aspects of the anima previously undetected, and anticipate the resolution engendered by Yeats's relationship with women yet to be explored by us:

The clue to the contrast between this impossible but truly *daimonic* Muse [of Phase 16], and the gentler, less ideal Muse of Phase 14 is their relative positions with regard to supernatural perfection [to be found at Phase 15]. Maud Gonne, the *daimonic* Muse, comes *after* Phase 15 and is thus in the first phase of those who do rather than suffer violence.



'Diana Vernon' [Olivia Shakespear] and the other Muses of Phase 14 suffer violence.... (1972: 252)

Of interest to me is the fact that George Yeats, the poet's wife, is not among the Muses, but is to be found at Phase 18, what Bloom calls a 'domesticated phase'. Thus, with his wife, Yeats is neither victim nor victimiser, but exists in 'domestic' harmony. The fact has a bearing on Yeats's new found sense of sexual maturity, recorded in 'Solomon and the Witch'. If his previous relationships with women have been marked by disjunction, this is not true of his relationship with his wife, and perhaps the positioning of the anima figures on the great mandala of Incarnations helps to indicate this.

### III

Book II of *A Vision*, 'The Completed Symbol', adds to our knowledge of the Principles. We learn that they are the 'innate ground' of the Faculties, are also four in number, and are called Husk, Passionate Body, Spirit and Celestial Body (1962b: 187). In layman's terms, Spirit and Celestial Body represent mind and its object, Husk and Passionate Body sense and the objects of sense. To give proper emphasis to his notions, Yeats, at the beginning of this book, explicitly evokes Coleridge. Coleridge's conception of Reason relates to Yeats's conception of 'mind' or Spirit (1962b: 187). The relationship underlines the importance of the anima presence in this part of *A Vision*, as the Spirit is closely linked to the daimon. And for Coleridge, Reason is the single

most important constituent of human life:

...God, the Soul, eternal Truth, &c. are the objects of Reason; but they are themselves *reason*. We name God the Supreme Reason; and Milton says, 'Whence the Soul Reason receives, and Reason is her Being'. (Coleridge, 1969a: 156)

This reference helps establish the present importance of the Coleridgean distinction between Reason and Understanding, derived from Kant. The distinction is linked to the famous one between Imagination and Fancy; the Imagination points in the direction of Reason, Fancy in the direction of the Understanding. The terms Imagination and Fancy can be traced back to 'imaginatio' and 'phantasia', concepts connected to the mediaeval alchemical notion of the 'lapis', the philosophical stone synonymous with the individuated self, and which, in a context containing the feminine image of the 'vas bene clausum', or well-sealed vessel (an anima reference), enact a drama indicative of spiritual ascent. The 'imaginatio' is, specifically, the higher power which can lead to the goal, while the 'phantasia' is limited to the realm of insubstantial conceits (Jung, 1985: 241). Furthermore, the Neoplatonic encapsulation of the distinction is to be found in an important Yeatsian source, Castiglione, as translated by the Elizabethan Thomas Hoby. Confusingly, though, the Neoplatonic term 'Understanding' is to be equated with Coleridgean 'Reason'. This Neoplatonic quality of Understanding is particularly significant in the case of the anima, as it defines the spiritually enlightening function of

Beauty. That is, the perception of feminine beauty can lead man from the realm of Sense to that of Understanding, or spiritual attunement (Castiglione in Kermode, 1973: 584ff; see also Castiglione, 1984: 324ff.).

The prominence of Spirit or 'mind' in the Yeatsian play of opposites is apparent in the following passage:

At death consciousness passes from *Husk* to *Spirit*; *Husk* and *Passionate Body* are said to *disappear*...and *Spirit* turns from *Passionate Body* and clings to *Celestial Body* until they are one and there is only *Spirit*; pure mind, containing within itself pure truth, that which depends only upon itself.... (Yeats, 1962b: 188-9)

As with Coleridgean Reason, Spirit would seem to be at the apex of all polar strivings: finally, the opposites are transcended and Spirit prevails.

Apart from the anima, we also detect the mandala, for the Principles have their wheel and cones too. The wheel of the Principles, though, has an even greater span than that of the Faculties, which deal with the period between birth and death, because it includes periods between lives (1962b: 188). The wheel of the Principles, it should also be noted, is divided into the months of the year, rather than the days of the month.

With the advent of the Principles the play of mandala imagery in Yeats's system becomes even more intricate (1962b: 196-201). The Principles require different gyre motions and patterns from the Faculties, creating, for example, in the case

of Spirit, an ace of diamonds shape. And Principles, with their different arrangements, have now to interact with Faculties. Thus the Faculties take their place upon half of the cone of Husk and Passionate Body, which adds its influence, as it were, to the Faculties. Further, after the Faculties have passed through a single incarnation, the Principles take over, 'defining the state between death and birth' (1962b: 201). Symbolically the conception is satisfying, as the completed gyre movement of the Faculties is thus set against the half-completed movement of the Principles, leaving another half-gyre movement to account for life after death.

The same Book, 'The Completed Symbol', begins to discuss aspects of the 'Great Year', which lead to an important historical and mythological application of mandala imagery. The notion of a Great Year spanning the millennia suggests that all of time is subject to the circle pattern, a 'year' being a more or less predictable cycle. For example, Yeats outlines the divisions of this great 'annual' pattern:

A Great Wheel of twenty-eight incarnations is considered to take, if no failure compels repetition of a phase, some two thousand odd years, and twelve such wheels or gyres constitute a single great cone or year of some twenty-six thousand years. (1962b: 202)

This pattern is subject to the same pull of polar forces as the other circles in Yeats's system, but now historical eras--combined with opposing geographical locations -- replace aspects

of personality (1962b: 203).

The Great Wheel applied to history allows Yeats to speculate on the characteristics of certain periods (1962b: 205). But while all civilisation, religion and history might be seen to follow the Yeatsian cycle, an important attribute of the cycle, realised by the gyre motion inherent in it, is, as already remarked, the always present possibility of freedom from the cycle, through the thirteenth cone. The thirteenth cone

is that cycle which may deliver us from the twelve cycles of time and space. The cone which intersects ours is a cone in so far as we think of it as the antithesis to our thesis, but if the time has come for our deliverance it is the phaseless sphere, sometimes called the Thirteenth Sphere, for every lesser cycle contains within itself a sphere that is, as it were, the reflection or messenger of the final deliverance. (1962b: 210)

Gyres and spheres are symbols of that which binds us to existence, but, as already noted, and as Yeats now makes explicit, might also symbolize that which frees us from existence. In this detail, once more, Yeats's system is able to subvert itself through the very images which formed it. The point bears an interesting relation to the notion of how exactly freedom is established. Again, it is not so much moral endeavour which seems to be at issue, as a conjunction of certain elements at an auspicious time, such as is described in 'Solomon and the Witch'. The conjunction, I believe, leads to an instant of unity,

which anticipates man's ultimate freedom, and 'Solomon and the Witch' indicates the importance of the love act in this respect. The love act, an intense celebration of temporal physicality (cf. Jantzen, 1990: 26), is thus emblematic of transcendental freedom, mirroring the relation between the temporal cones and the thirteenth cone. Thus freedom might be seen as stemming from an intensification of embodied existence, by means of which 'Heaven blaz[es] into the head' (CP 338).

Sexual love is a facet of unity not fully explored in *A Vision*. It is true that Yeats does mention the symbolic importance of the union between man and woman:

Pope Pius XI said in an Encyclical that the natural union of man and woman has a kind of sacredness. He thought doubtless of the marriage of Christ and the Church, whereas I see in it a symbol of that eternal instant where the antinomy is resolved. It is not the resolution itself. (1962b: 214)

But yet the union remains symbol, apart from the fact that it is 'not the resolution itself' (a notion elaborated, it will be remembered, by Robartes in the first Book of *A Vision*), and is no more immediate in its impact on us than the idea of the thirteenth cone. 'Solomon and the Witch' develops, at least, the facet of immediacy, despite the failure of the love act to which it refers, despite its inability to 'resolve' the 'antinomy'.

The daimons are as fundamental to the Principles as they are to the Faculties, partaking in the concerns of both sense and mind, or 'Imagination' (1962b: 189). Bloom complains, 'This... is

not human knowledge', but adds the important qualification, 'except insofar as our knowledge is revelation or *daimonic* thought, the thought of the poet of Phase 17 when he approaches most closely to Unity of Being' (1972: 266). Central to the quest for Unity of Being from the point of view of both Faculties and Principles, then, the daimons might also be seen to participate in an archetypal struggle (related to Blake's 'The Mental Traveller'), the goal of which is the final victory of Spirit:

The *Spirit* cannot know the *Daimons* in their unity until it has first perceived them as the objects of sense....In the symbolism the *Celestial Body* is said to age as the *Passionate Body* grows young, sometimes the *Celestial Body* is a prisoner in a tower rescued by the *Spirit*. Sometimes, grown old, it becomes the personification of evil. It pursues, persecutes and imprisons the *Daimons*. (1962b: 189)

That is, daimons seem to attend all the Spirit's strivings. Also of interest is the archetypal play inherent in the strange shadow-like manifestation of Celestial Body perceived as 'the personification of evil' which pursues the daimons. The components of the entire play, mirroring the components of the phenomenal drama of individuation, thus effectively indicate continuity between states of existence. Yeats takes this matter seriously, and believes in the state after death which he describes. This is not to belie the allegorical or metaphorical value of his vision. As Bloom's commentary on the above passage shows, Yeats might be seen as referring to the 'wars of love and

jealousy fought between poetic consciousness and the Muse', an anima confrontation of significance in the phenomenal world:

Because poet and Muse are fated to meet only in opposition, the human and the *daimonic* alternately persecute one another....Translated, Yeats's passage reads: the poetic mind cannot know the ultimate forms of poetic thought until it perceives these first as sensuous forms, which exist so as to provide a bridge or ladder between poet and archetypes. (1972: 266-7)

If Bloom is right to 'translate' Yeats in this way, and I believe he is to an extent, the anima as daimon (for example, a princess held prisoner in a tower is a fairly common anima image (Jung, 1969: 231)) also plays a key role in the poet's present imaging of his processes of poetic creation, enlivening an otherwise concealed operation with its *animated* drama.

#### IV

The following Book of *A Vision* is 'The Soul in Judgement', and it deals in detail with the circle imagery of the Principles attached to the after-life. Although obscure, and often irritating in its obscurity, the Book is important in establishing the consistency of Yeatsian myth. Again, continuity after death is a conception crucial to the entire system, and must be accounted for in adequate symbolic terms. We remember that the Spirit is a central figure in an enquiry into the Principles, as its eventual dominance represents the goal of all



striving. It is beautifully described by Yeats as light engaged in a circling motion:

The *Spirit* is not those changing images...but the light, and at last draws backward into itself, into its own changeless purity, all it has felt or known. (1962b: 220-1)

Now the entire process of the soul in judgement depends upon the Spirit's drawing back into itself all its experience. Thus the mechanics of the after-life are dependent upon a circular motion triggered by Spirit. This circular motion is marked by definite stages, indicating a being's emergence from a state of impurity to a state of purity. The conception has a traditional resonance and is easily enough accommodated in a mythological world-view, but a puzzling point about it is that although one achieves different degrees of purity, no ultimate heaven or nirvanah is attained through the process. One simply progresses to another life, to another point on the Great Wheel, unless the thirteenth cone intervenes. The element of acceptance is important here, as expressed in 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul'. But, again, to approach from a different angle a problem already expressed, cyclicity seems oddly contradictory to the notion of freedom so intimately connected, surely, to a quest for unity. Thus, for Yeats, one's striving might amount to no more than a return to a phase experienced many life-times before. But in accepting such a philosophy, where we must rest content with what we have now, we might begin to live life more fully, rather than devalue the present through contemplation on a perfect future, or nirvanah.

The present Book also underlines the distinction between temporal unity and transcendental unity. The principal Yeatsian emphasis is on the attainment of only a momentary completion or enlightenment as long as one is bound to the circle of birth and rebirth:

...no state between death and birth should be considered as a reward or paradise. Neither between death and birth nor between birth and death can the soul find more than momentary happiness....

Ultimate freedom for the soul lies beyond the confines of the circle:

...its object is to pass rapidly round its circle and find freedom from that circle. (1962b: 236)

If this freedom is the final object of all individual questing, it lies beyond the realm of Being as we know it, beyond any circle of process, and cannot be more fully dealt with by Yeats. Unity of Being (or momentary enlightenment, 'momentary happiness') would seem to be a lesser form of this final freedom, as already suggested.

The Book concludes with a passage on the thirteenth cone, underlining the importance, nevertheless, of the circle as a *symbol* of freedom. Despite the complexities attached to the circle form because of the intricate nature of Yeats's system, the ultimate reality is symbolized by him as a simple mandala shape, the sphere, the inclusiveness of which is also elaborated

by Yeats:

The *Thirteenth Cone* is a sphere because sufficient to itself; but as seen by man it is a cone....I only speak of the *Thirteenth Cone* as a sphere and yet I might say that the gyre or cone of the *Principles* is in reality a sphere, though to man, bound to birth and death, it can never seem so, and that it is the antinomies that force us to find it a cone. Only one symbol exists, though the reflecting mirrors make many appear and all different. (1962b: 240)

Polarity, complexity, diversity, all come to rest in this perfect shape.

V

The next Book of *A Vision* is entitled 'The Great Year of the Ancients', and it attempts to justify Yeats's system from an historical point of view. The justification is of little concern to me, yet certain images used by Yeats are memorable. For example, commenting on Proclus's conception of the 'Perfect Number', Yeats uses clocks as symbolic circles. In doing so, he brings to mind Jung's world clock, a particularly remarkable mandala image in the psychologist's view, because of the deep and lasting impression it made on one of his patients (Jung, 1985: 277-88). Jung also links it with the time symbolism of traditional horoscopes, to which Yeats's image of the phases of the moon is clearly related:

It is as though innumerable dials, some that recorded minutes alone, some months alone, some years alone, were all to complete their circles when Big Ben struck twelve upon the last night of the century. (Yeats, 1962b: 248)

The image vividly portrays the intricate mechanism of all the interdependent mandalas of Yeats's system, mobilizing also an overriding sense of temporality entirely commensurate with his concerns.

The Book introduces the idea -- to be fully examined in the subsequent Book, 'Dove or Swan' -- that history itself is subject to a giant mandala pattern. More specifically, it helps clarify a sense of historical development within the system, despite the general cyclic determinism of the system at large. Yeats defends the extended time scale embodied in his myth of the Great Year, by pointing out the need for such development in a cyclic model:

An historical symbolism which covers too great a period of time for imagination to grasp or experience to explain may seem too theoretical, too arbitrary, to serve any practical purpose; it is, however, necessary to the myth if we are not to suggest, as Vico did, civilisation perpetually returning to the same point. (1962b: 255)

But if a return to 'the same point' represents too simplistic an understanding of a theory of cyclicity, Yeats does not deny the fundamental importance of Viconian cyclicity in recent historical thought and even sets up an opposition between this

thought and the journalistic triteness he so much hates:

...I discovered for myself Spengler's main source in Vico, and that half the revolutionary thoughts of Europe are a perversion of Vico's philosophy. Marx and Sorel have taken from Vico's cycle, writes Croce, 'his idea of the struggle of classes and the regeneration of society by a return to a primitive state of mind and a new barbarism'. Certainly my instructors have chosen a theme that has deeply stirred men's minds though the newspapers are silent about it; the newspapers have the happy counter-myth of progress.... (1962b: 261-2)

The 'happy counter-myth of progress' is an expression which conveys the general Yeatsian tone regarding utopian vision, which is for the poet the political counter-part of spiritual nirvanah. Cullingford, in *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism*, points out the parallel between Yeats's dialectical system ('every age opposes its predecessor') and Marxist beliefs, but also notes the poet's rejection of the Hegelian 'synthesis' central to the political optimism of Marxism: after thesis and antithesis (which is one way of viewing the dialectic), comes synthesis (Cullingford, 1981: 122). As Cullingford further notes:

Rejection of progress may sound reactionary, but Yeats had humane reasons for disapproving of Hegel's system. Hegel described each age not as the contrary but as the 'negation' of its predecessor. Since things were always improving it was justifiable to view the past as having been 'refuted' by the

present. Yeats believed that contempt for the past and belief in a perfect future had become in communist hands a reason for murder. (1981: 122)

Cullingford's comment is related to the previous one made above concerning man's desire for nirvanah: always contemplating a perfect spiritual state in the future, we might thereby devalue the present. Utopian vision (based upon a belief in progress), with its attendant disrespect for the past, might similarly devalue present life, but with brutal consequences. The poet's implicit humanism in the above instances conveys an aspect of Yeatsian cyclicity which has apparently escaped Bloom's notice.

## VI

In the final Book of *A Vision*, 'Dove or Swan', the giant mandala of history attains a mythical status, giving it a symbolic weight which is not at odds with the vast scope of *A Vision*. Thus, although I would agree with Frye that Yeats's system applies best to his own poetry (Frye, 1976: 264), I am impressed by the general stature the system attains, especially in this last Book. The Book commences with a transcription of 'Leda and the Swan', and seems to absorb and magnify the mythical significance and aura originally generated by this poem. Thus Aphrodite, Helen, and Christ, for example, become quite likely companions in a mythical view of history. As Bloom fittingly declares:

We have to judge 'Dove or Swan' not by its coherence and

insight as serious philosophy of history (as such, it is merely maddening) but as a reverie upon such a philosophy, a reverie beautifully proportioned and eloquently adjusted to many of our deepest imaginative needs. (1972: 280)

By commencing with the Leda myth, and concluding with speculations about contemporary historical issues, Yeats does not force history and myth to co-exist under the same umbrella; he seems, rather, to suggest the development of history out of myth. History, of course, is only perceptible within the limits of recorded time; but the ultimate causes of historical events must be perceived to exist beyond these limits, prior to the recording of the events. It is feasible, then, from an imaginative point of view, to assign ultimate causes to the atemporal mythical dimension. But while the content of myth might be purely imaginative, Yeats suggests that history and myth share a common form, the Great Wheel, bringing myth that much closer to history than might ordinarily be allowed. Yeats thus buttresses history with a continuity and sense of integration which transforms it into the temporal acme of all his strivings for unity. Further, he is able to provide a poetic commentary on the formal relation between history and myth with 'Leda and the Swan':

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still  
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed  
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,  
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push  
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs,  
And how can body, laid in that white rush,  
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there  
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower  
And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,  
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,  
Did she put on his knowledge with his power  
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

That is, historical process issues from a mythical framework. Even though the process is clothed in the imagery of myth, a temporal sequence is portrayed which is related to all ensuing history. In the context of Book V, it is 'knowledge' of cyclicity which seems to be at issue at the conclusion of the poem, a knowledge implicit in the fact that what is 'engender[ed] there' is, apparently, already known to the god. That is, the end of the process is, circle-like, inherent in its beginning. In as much as the final question is unanswerable, poetic device is needed adequately to portray the human predicament. What actually is the use of such 'knowledge'? Such knowledge, couched in shadow images of violence and incorporating the anima presence Helen of Troy, holds the key to Being, but perhaps can only be approached obliquely, through poetry. That is, poetry touches the living human directly, as opposed to theory, which replaces direct



experience with a model. As Heidegger would have it, poetry is the language through which we are most likely to approach Being (Heidegger, 1978: 185).

An implication stemming from the conjunction of myth, history and poetry, is that the theory of cyclicity receives into itself the many constructs of the human mind, whereby we might perceive an inherent tendency of our own nature, important in itself. Just as Coleridge recognises that the truth for his own mind is conveyed by the images he creates (Jackson, 1986: 852), so does Yeats, with his inclusive view, suggest the personal significance of his own images. To turn to recent theory, Yeats does not, I think, create a metafictional text in the historiographic mode (Hutcheon, 1984: xiv). That is, the *pot-pourri* which he presents to us is not meant deliberately to conflate myth, poetry and history in order to undermine the fictive nature of the text; or to point out the discursive nature of all human linguistic endeavour through deliberately self-conscious revelation of creative process. In linking a variety of discourses, Yeats actually highlights the underlying archetype of unity, the mandala. And ultimately this Book, along with *A Vision* as a whole, demonstrates the supreme capability of the mind to unify. It is this ability of Yeats that Hough notes in the later poetry:

...the later poetry [is] able to encompass so much of the varied and the contingent, while at the same time transmuting it into the perennial and the archetypal. This is an achievement not possible for the pure lyric poet without, to

use Yeats's words, a system of thought that would make all part of one history. (Hough, 1984: 87)

But though Hough's praise can be extended to include much of the material in *A Vision*, finally, with the aid of Yeats himself indeed, he voices his discontent with what has been left unsaid. He uses the following passage from the first version of *A Vision* as a springboard: 'I have not even dealt with the whole of my subject, perhaps not even with what is most important, writing nothing about the Beatific Vision, little of sexual love' (Yeats, 1925b:xii). Hough makes the important observation:

[Yeats's] aim was to redeem passion, not to transcend it, and a beatitude that had passed beyond the bounds of earthly love could not be his ideal goal. It is not an accident that in the lines just quoted Yeats speaks of the Beatific vision and sexual love in the same breath. There are many indications that he saw the two not as opposed but as ultimately destined to become one. (Hough, 1984: 119)

The relation between Beatitude and sexual love is precisely that area I wish to explore in Chapter Eight. It brings into a more personal focus the link between the realm of human conflict (emblemized by sexual love), and the transcendent.

A final mandala image of great consequence suggested by *A Vision*, is that related to the Blakean 'City of Art' (Bloom, 1972: 284). Byzantium is, for a while, Yeats's supreme City of Art, becoming important for him 'the moment when Byzantium became

Byzantine and substituted for formal Roman magnificence, with its glorifications of physical power, an architecture that suggests the Sacred City in the Apocalypse of St. John' (1962b: 279). That is, it becomes a paradise image in traditional terms, and also in its relation to one of the Jungian mandala types, the walled city. More than this, it is related directly by Yeats to an image of Unity of Being, exhibiting the art of 'some philosophical worker in mosaic' able to demonstrate 'a lovely flexible presence like that of a perfect human body', or Yeats's Dantean image of Christ. Also, Yeats's Byzantium inhabits one of his historical full moons, a time of Unity of Being. The following chapter will develop the notion of the City of Art as a mandala image.

*A Vision* closes in a speculative manner, never drawing any fixed conclusions, a fact which elicits Bloom's admiration for once:

...in 'The End of the Cycle' we hear a personality meditating, as we did in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, and this personality is rich and somber enough to doubt all speculation, its own included. The Thirteenth Cone or God is in every man and is his freedom, and it keeps the secret of futurity, as its ancestor Demogorgon did: 'The deep truth is imageless'. So self-admonished, the Blakean and Shelleyan imagination asserts itself in Yeats and ends *A Vision* with the greatest and most humanistic of his insights, more definitively expressed for being an open question addressed to the poet's own vacillation.... (1972: 290-1)

Bloom turns to the following passage, which Yeats derives from Plotinus and Homer:

Shall we follow the image of Heracles that walks through the darkness bow in hand, or mount to that other Heracles, man, not image, he that has for his bride Hebe, 'the daughter of Zeus, the mighty, and Hera, shod with gold'? (Yeats, 1962b: 302. See also, Plotinus, 1956: 29)

But finally, Bloom is suspicious of the Yeatsian enterprise as a whole in *A Vision*, and focuses wryly on the mandala image with which we have yet to deal, the City of Art: "'Man, not image" is a Blakean and Shelleyan motto, but hardly an inscription on the gate to Byzantium' (1972: 291). For the time being we might respond to Bloom's remark with the brief observation that 'man', in fact, even in 'Byzantium', is central in the formation of Yeatsian 'images'.

*A Vision* actually concludes with the poem 'All Soul's Night', returning to the spirit ethos evoked in the introductory prose, and thus carefully tying the circle of the book as a whole. The dead friends Yeats calls forth in the poem were all occultists, each significant then in terms of the esoteric matters propounded in *A Vision*. Bloom sees them as characterized by a *sprezzatura* lacking in Yeats, a point acknowledged by the poet in his act of substituting for their experience a book (1972: 370). Nevertheless, in the present context, as individuals they are not important for the poet -- the fact that they are ghosts is, for it is perhaps only refined spirits who can

appreciate the knowledge contained in *A Vision*. There is a sadness in Yeats's cognisance of this fact, as if he anticipates the type of criticism which is to follow the publishing of this book, and must simply be content with the solitude to which he is condemned in this sphere of his thought:

But names are nothing. What matter who it be,  
So that his elements have grown so fine  
The fume of muscatel  
Can give his sharpened palate ecstasy  
No living man can drink from the whole wine.  
I have mummy truths to tell  
Whereat the living mock,  
Though not for sober ear,  
For maybe all that hear  
Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock.

And yet, despite this intellectual isolation, he affirms his belief in his system, evoking imagery from his *City of Art*, as it is presented in the poem 'Byzantium'; he would penetrate the mysteries of Being, immerse himself in the 'mummy-cloth' which tells of experience both in this world and the other:

Such thought -- such thought have I that hold it tight  
Till meditation master all its parts,  
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;

Such thought, that in it bound  
I need no other thing,  
Wound in mind's wandering  
As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound.

Thus, *A Vision* concludes in a rather hermetically sealed way, satisfied with its own being, needing 'no other thing'. And yet the work has proved of great importance in our study of the integration of archetypes, suggesting the deeply assimilative value of the mandala at levels which incorporate shadow and anima, and, indeed, absorb them into areas of fundamental existential process. But if *A Vision* is hermetic (in more senses than one!), Yeats's poetry has always had willing enough readers; and it is in the poetry that we find perhaps the most telling exemplars of archetypal integration, as Yeats's poetic images are inevitably more compelling than the images linked to his abstract thought. However, the extent of the exploration conducted in *A Vision* has certainly enabled the poet to express an intricacy of archetypal investigation imaginatively conclusive and satisfying in its range and detail. In a sense, the poetry itself is thus freed of this task. Consequently, while the poetic images and concerns --the mandala of aesthetic striving (or the City of Art), sexuality, and beatitude, all central in Yeats's final integrative vision -- indeed gain 'in self-possession and power' thanks to *A Vision*, they do so silently, as it were, without the clamour of doctrine. That is, in the end, because of work conducted in *A Vision*, Yeats achieves the ideal imputed by his

father to Blake: 'When he wrote his poems [his mysticism] dropped into the background, and it did not matter whether you believed it or not, so apart from all creeds was his poetry' (in Ellmann, 1965: 204).

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE DOMAIN OF THE SELF: THE ISLAND AND THE CITY OF ART

I

The City of Art is a mandala image suggested not only by the concluding Book of *A Vision*, but by the description of Phase 3 in the Incarnations, which mentions Castiglione's Urbino, another City of Art, and also a paradise image, considering the pastoral context in which we find it:

...the man of this phase becomes an Image where simplicity and intensity are united, he seems to move among yellowing corn or under overhanging grapes. He gave to Landor his shepherds and hamadryads, to Morris his *Water of the Wondrous Isles*, to Shelley his wandering lovers and sages, and to Theocritus all his flocks and pastures; and of what else did Bembo think when he cried, 'Would that I were a shepherd that I might look daily down upon Urbino'? (1962b: 109)

For Yeats, Urbino is a 'city' intimately connected to the anima and considerations of physical beauty. We recall the implicit presence of Castiglione and Urbino in 'Adam's Curse', a poem dealing with, amongst other things, woman's beauty (CP 89). Regarding the link between Urbino and the anima, Yeats is explicit in a passage from his *Memoirs*, possibly dating from 1909, five years after 'Adam's Curse' was first published: 'Perhaps we may find in the spectacle of some beautiful woman our Ferrara, our Urbino' (1988: 156). And again, in relation to



Urbino, he cites Castiglione's conception already considered by us in the previous chapter: 'In what toils, in what life, in what war of the Amazons did women, whose beauty is more than the promise of physical pleasure and easy path to it, win their beauty? For Castiglione says, speaking the high Urbino thought, that all such beauty "is the spoil and monument of the victory of the soul"' (1988: 157). In general terms, Yeats's observations above are exemplary regarding the City of Art, which, in the course of his work, will incorporate both anima elements and the wars of body and soul connected to the shadow.

Like anima and shadow, the City of Art as it first appears in Yeats's work is centred in his tragic vision, specifically the melancholy insecurity connected to this vision. But as we will see, out of early variations (the island mandalas, which are qualified by the fragility and dreaminess of the poet's Celtic Twilight period) develop the far more substantial city mandalas, the storeholds, as it were, of Yeats's entire imaginative experience. The following sections of this chapter examine a range of related poems, beginning with the early island ones, moving on to the Byzantium poems, and concluding with relevant works closely connected to the Grecian ethos --that full moon in the history of civilization so admired by the later Yeats -- especially 'News for the Delphic Oracle', which marks the poet's triumphant return to the island motif.

## II

The mandala as a 'safe refuge' (Jung, 1969: 384), of which the

City of Art is a type, as we will see, can be traced back to some of the earliest of Yeats's writings. An island encircled by water is an obvious mandala shape signifying refuge (being related to the temenos and the walled city (Jung, 1977: 223; 1969: 361)), and it is linked with an anima figure (in her guise as the ephemeral, unobtainable maiden) in 'To an Isle in the Water', published in 1889:

Shy one, shy one,  
Shy one of my heart,  
She moves in the firelight  
Pensively apart.

She carries in the dishes,  
And lays them in a row.  
To an isle in the water  
With her would I go. (CP 22)

A slight lyric, it nevertheless conveys the keen sense of a need for refuge. The feminine presence seems a necessary adjunct to this refuge, in that it is feminine shyness closely linked to self ('Shy one of my heart') which appears to confirm the need for protection.

The need is expressed again some years later in 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', published in 1893, though now the poet would lead a Thoreau-like existence alone. But at issue in the poem is an emotional response, conveying a sensitivity not unconnected to the shy anima of 'To an Isle in the Water', and most certainly

indicative of an aesthetic sensibility shocked by the drabness of contemporary materialism:

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core. (CP 44)

The personal paradise the poet would establish on his island helps define his averseness to this materialism, while the implied comparison between such details as the 'pavements grey' and the 'lake water lapping' indicates, to an extent, an aesthetically based distinction. Also, the fact that Yeats draws on Thoreau shows that part of his idea of a refuge, at least, stems from the poet's imaginative response to his own reading, as much as to nature. Indeed, further literary elements accrue in this matter, linked to shadow and anima, if we turn to a related passage from *Autobiographies*:

There was a story in the county history of a tree that had once grown upon that island [Innisfree] guarded by some terrible monster and borne the food of the gods. A young girl pined for the fruit and told her lover to kill the monster and carry the fruit away....I do not remember whether I chose the island because of its beauty or for the story's sake, but I was twenty-two or three before I gave up the dream.(1961a: 72)

I am suggesting that we might find in the poet's early island mandala the seeds for his City of Art. The island is linked both

to the shy, indwelling aspect of the anima in 'To an Isle in the Water', and, although somewhat obliquely, to the notion of a locus rich in imaginative association in 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'.

Another early mandala of refuge is the paradise image portrayed in 'The Happy Townland', published in 1904, which presents us with a world of the imagination, now located in the paradise of Irish tradition, Tir-nan-Oge, the Country of the Young (Yeats, 1978b: 229; Yeats, 1984a: 406):

Boughs have their fruit and blossom  
At all times of the year;  
Rivers are running over  
With red beer and brown beer.  
An old man plays the bagpipes  
In a golden and silver wood;  
Queens, their eyes blue like the ice,  
Are dancing in a crowd. (CP 94)

A variation of the first stanza is to be found in *Stories of Red Hanrahan*, in *Mythologies*. It begins

O Death's old bony finger  
Will never find us there  
In the high hollow townland  
Where love's to give and to spare (1978b: 229)

That is, the theme of refuge is evoked as a protection against death and decay, an idea related to 'Sailing to Byzantium'. The

queens, with their eyes 'blue like the ice' (a formulation underlining their daimonic otherness), are anima figures of the type well-represented in *The Celtic Twilight* and the other Books of *Mythologies*. Indeed, the townland itself is the epitome of the other world, striven after by Yeats in such early works as *The Wanderings of Oisín*, and reflecting the supernatural focus of his early image-making concerns. Again, to project these early concerns into a future context, 'Sailing to Byzantium' comes to mind, with its images or 'monuments' of the soul's 'magnificence', the art of the other world, so to speak. And like Byzantium, the townland is beyond the realm of 'sensual' limitation:

But all that are killed in battle  
Awaken to life again.

Here, however, Yeats seems to acknowledge the danger inherent in this immortal perspective, in marked contrast to the attitude expressed in the Byzantium poems:

It is lucky that their story  
Is not known among men,  
For O, the strong farmers  
That would let the spade lie,  
Their hearts would be like a cup  
That somebody had drunk dry.

The Byzantium poems, of course, have the support of Yeats's system behind them, and are thus able to replace his early

imaginative longing with a new sense of conviction. But despite the conviction of his later years, he himself never succumbs to the danger, never lets the 'spade lie'; Tir-nan-Oge or Byzantium are always hard fought for, are never accepted as the inevitable reward for all striving. If the City of Art offers refuge, that refuge has to be earned. This fact is clearly apparent as we turn, indeed, to Yeats's Byzantium itself.

### III

In 'Sailing to Byzantium' the soul, appropriately, takes on an integrative anima function. In its quest for refuge, it strives after an aesthetic perfection which mirrors the perfection of Spirit in *A Vision*, beyond the conflicts of the Faculties and the purgation processes of the Principles. The poem thus recalls the concerns and imagery of 'To an Isle in the Water' and 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'. Giorgio Melchiori links 'Sailing to Byzantium' with the alchemical quest of another early work by Yeats intimately connected with mandala symbolism, as we have observed, *Rosa Alchemica* (Melchiori, 1960: 218-25). Indeed, the mandala of the alchemical rose offers redemption through art. The narrator of *Rosa Alchemica*, anticipating observations later made by Jung (1985: 152), claims:

I had discovered, early in my researches, that their [the alchemists'] doctrine was no merely chemical fantasy, but a philosophy they applied to the world, to the elements and to man himself; and that they sought to fashion gold out of common metals merely as part of a universal transmutation of

all things into some divine and imperishable substance; and this enabled me to make my little book a fanciful reverie over the transmutation of life into art, and a cry of measureless desire for a world made wholly of essences. (1978b: 267)

But the tone of the Paterian aesthete, evident above, disappears in 'Sailing to Byzantium', which is not the product of rarefied contemplation, but, apparently, dire need. The notion of 'refuge' is a very strong one in the poem, adding an emotional emphasis Bloom chooses to ignore, although he does indicate important elements of the poem:

...the speaker...may be taken as Yeats himself, a Yeats seeking his *daimon* at the center of Unity of Being, a city where the spiritual life and the creation of art merge as one. (1972: 345)

Byzantium is a centre of Unity of Being, not only because of its position on Yeats's calendar, but also because of the integration which it represents. Disparate soul and animal, or anima and shadow, would find resolution in the image of the golden bird. Thus the 'creation of art' becomes central in the completion of the 'spiritual life'. And Yeats specifically seeks perfection through daimonic intervention. Nevertheless, the need for refuge is overriding, other elements are subsumed within it.

Bloom links Byzantium to Blake's Golgonooza (1972: 345), but Ellmann notes, 'Byzantium is more effective for symbolic purposes than Golgonooza, for Yeats needs only to divert it from the

traditional meaning it already has and is not required to explain it from the beginning' (1965: 257). While Ellmann is right to point out, in effect, the greater accessibility of Yeats's Byzantium, it is interesting to follow F.A.C. Wilson's argument regarding the more involuted aspects of the history of this City of Art:

As the point of fusion of two cultures, a theocratic community where the orient and the occident merged into one, Byzantium was a very apt symbol for the Platonic heaven, pure intellect, where the opposites are reconciled; and it is important to recognise that it does now [in 'Byzantium'] represent 'the artifice of eternity' upon which man enters when 'out of nature'. In making it so, Yeats merely reverted to his original intention, as this is reflected by the form 'Sailing to Byzantium' took in the first drafts:

Here all is young; the chapel walls display  
A sleeping infant on his mother's knee.  
Weary with toil Teigue sleeps till break of day....

Byzantium, then, is Elysium, the 'country of the young'; the land to which Teigue, the visionary fool of *The Hourglass*, goes nightly in his dreams. (1958: 231-2)

That is, in Yeats's mind, Tir-nan-Oge and Byzantium are one, a point justifying our earlier perceptions regarding 'The Happy Townland'. But *The Hourglass* is an interesting source too, bringing into question the matter of belief, and its relation to



the state of the soul. The play draws on the conceptions and imagery of the other world, making Tir-nan-Oge the goal of the soul's quest once it has been alerted by a type of shadow encounter. To be precise, as in 'The Happy Townland', refuge is sought from death. The Wise Man, once an unbeliever, experiences in the presence of an angel the disruption of his entire system of belief, a 'death' of the intellect underlined by the necessity of his own physical death, unless he can preserve the soul element, which proves, so to speak, notoriously shy and unobtainable, in true anima fashion. He expresses the crisis point in his life, it seems to me, in terms of a shadow experience, which is related to the unveiling of Being:

Only when all our hold on life is troubled,  
Only in spiritual terror can the Truth  
Come through the broken mind -- as the pease burst  
Out of a broken pease-cod. (CPl 318)

It was suggested in Chapter Three that Yeats's 'dying animal' in 'Sailing to Byzantium' might also be viewed as a shadow figure, which prompts too the necessary 'spiritual terror' to sail to Byzantium. The Wise Man's soul, as a 'white butterfly', is carried in a 'golden box' to paradise (CPl 323), being less 'out of nature' than a golden bird, perhaps, although the box or casket conveys something of the artifice of eternity. In terms of mood, the Wise Man's spiritual terror is close to the *angst* of the ageing poet in 'Sailing to Byzantium'.

If Byzantium is the City of Art, Ellmann indicates that it

is a rich focal point of Yeats's own art, thus representing a culmination, in a sense, of his previous strivings, an embodiment in miniature of his entire artistic experience:

'Sailing to Byzantium' is full of echoes of Yeats's other works, of his reading, and of his experiences. In a sense he had been writing it all his life. The image of the soul clapping its hands he remembered from his reading of Blake in his 'twenties; Blake had seen the soul of his dead brother rising to heaven, 'clapping his hands for joy'. His imagination had been taken by the Byzantine mosaics which he had first seen at Ravenna with Lady Gregory in 1907, and later in Sicily with his wife in 1924. The phrase 'perne in a gyre', he had used in 'Demon and Beast' (written in 1918); the 'tattered coat upon a stick' was reminiscent of the scarecrow imagery he had used a few months before in 'Among School Children'. The juxtaposition of fire and music in the third stanza may be traced back to his statement in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* that 'In the condition of fire is all music and all rest'. The phrase, 'gather me/ Into the artifice of eternity', goes back to 'The Tables of the Law' (1895), where he had written of 'that supreme art which is to win us from life and gather us into eternity like doves into their dove-cots'. As a boy in London, Yeats had stared for hours at Turner's picture of 'The Golden Bough' in the National Gallery. (1965: 258-9)

Yeats's need for refuge too, was, as Ellmann puts it (and as we

have already to an extent indicated in our examination of earlier work), 'part of his habitual thought'. By way of example Ellmann quotes the 'sketch of a poem' which was a prerequisite for Yeats's entry into the highest order of the Golden Dawn:

We are weighed down by the blood & the heavy weight of the  
bones  
We are bound by flowers, & our feet are entangled in the green  
And there is deceit in the singing of birds.  
It is time to be done with it all  
The stars call & all the planets  
And the purging fire of the moon  
And yonder is the cold silence of cleansing night  
May the dawn break, & gates of day be set wide open. (1965:  
259)

But as in the commencement of 'Sailing to Byzantium', the above lines also express the paradoxical attraction Yeats feels towards nature, and we remember that in the early poetry (especially 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', despite its literary resonances) Yeats actually sought a refuge in nature. Of course, he transforms this nature through his art, implicitly in the early poetry, and explicitly in 'Sailing to Byzantium'. Early and late works, then, suggest a similar way of dealing with the same need: the early aesthetic appropriation of nature becomes the creation of the City of Art.

Bloom, however, in elaborating on early drafts of 'Sailing to Byzantium', plays down the sense that a response to nature is the principal cause of the poem. Reconstructing the poet's

nostalgia for a mythological Irish past, he claims it is also the absence of this lost past which drives the poet to Byzantium:

In the drafts of the opening stanza....the contrast presented is between the Christ child, smiling upon his mother's knee, and the old gods in the Irish hills, with whom the poet identifies. He is Oisín again, finding no place in the Ireland of St. Patrick, and so he sails to Byzantium.

The flight then is not so much from nature as from a new dispensation of the young. The old poet of the old faith is doubly alienated, and this complex estrangement is the double root of the poem. As a poet, Yeats voyages to find a new faith; as a man, his quest is away -- not from the body so much as the decrepitude of the body. (1972: 348)

Bloom's perception of a 'double alienation' proves useful shortly; also pertinent is his observation regarding the 'decrepitude of the body', or self become *memento mori*, self become shadow, as suggested in Chapter Three. If decrepitude of the body is linked to a loss of faith, the shadow becomes all the more frightening.

The title of the poem expresses a contradiction, for within the poem itself Yeats has already 'sailed' to Byzantium. But perhaps the title reflects the truth of his condition: although with his poem he has created, in a sense, Byzantium as the City of Art, he still aspires towards Byzantium as a state of being, he has not yet attained it. This distinction indicates both the established presence of Byzantium as an imaginative locus, and

the desire to become what that locus represents. It is in the second instance that the present continuous tense of 'sailing' applies. In the first case a refuge has been realized, the art work itself. In the second case, though, this type of refuge is not enough; loss of belief (Bloom's enumeration of the root causes of the poem is useful here) must be replaced by a new faith, and the poem, with its strong sense of longing which suggests both the unobtained and the unobtainable, cannot guarantee this.

But by simplifying his distress, and converting the double cause of it into a single one in the copy of the poem as we have it, the poet achieves a sharper dramatic focus, and embodies a consuming anxiety especially evident in his thought of this period -- fear of old-age. A type of 'simplification through intensity' then (Yeats, 1962b: 140 ), the poem confronts the shadow of old-age even as it seeks to escape from it, as suggested in Chapter Three. It is now important to establish the relation of this shadow to other central archetypes examined since Chapter Three.

The shadow is only hinted at in the first stanza, but its destructive potential is clearly evident in the rhetorical progression of the sixth line:

That is no country for old men. The young  
In one another's arms, birds in the trees  
-- Those dying generations -- at their song,  
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,  
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long

Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.

Caught in that sensual music all neglect

Monuments of unageing intellect.

But the danger inherent in process (and, by extension, the shadow of old-age) is first presented in terms of the importance of the City of Art, 'Caught in that sensual music all neglect/ Monuments of unageing intellect'. Faith is in question here; monuments of the inner life are neglected, belief in them cannot be sustained. In the absence of widespread faith ('all neglect'), 'monuments' are nevertheless present -- being, as it were, concrete manifestations of the faith. The 'unageing intellect' is subsumed in Yeats's system under Spirit, the state intimately connected with the daimons. But this is made clear by stanza two, which speaks of monuments of the 'soul's' 'magnificence', thus conflating 'intellect' and 'soul' (or anima in her integrative role).

The active, daimon-like function of the soul is also suggested by stanza two, where the monuments serve an instructive purpose, but only provided that the soul becomes a quester. We arrive at this point through a realization of the inadequacy of the body, extending a suggestion first made in line 6 of the previous stanza, which unites the question of faith with that of bodily decrepitude. In the process an actual shadow is constructed, the physical self as a scarecrow, or a type of bogey-man, at odds both with this world (it repulses the birds of the first stanza, purveyors of 'sensual music') and the other

world (it remains 'paltry' 'unless' soul 'sing'):

An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress,  
Nor is there singing school but studying  
Monuments of its own magnificence;  
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.

The final two lines of the stanza indicate at once the poet's desire to find the mandala of refuge, and his setting out on a daimonic quest. For what he hopes to attain is the opposite of what his body now represents. In a sense, then, he seeks an anti-self which exists in inverse ratio to his self, meeting every 'tatter' with a louder degree of song:

[Soul must] louder sing

For every tatter in its mortal dress

And within the City of Art, faith finds expression in prayer, conveying a desire for the purification process associated with Spirit. The prayer, though nominally directed to the sages, is, in fact, to the City of Art itself, which the sages embody:

O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,  
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,  
And be the singing-masters of my soul.

Consume my heart away; sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal  
It knows not what it is; and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

Again, faith and bodily decrepitude are, at the same time, in question, and are linked to, in turn, both a learning function ('...be the singing-masters of my soul') and a purification process ('Consume my heart away'). The learning function evokes the active daimon which transforms the soul, as such transformation takes place in the Faculties, and the purification process evokes the daimonic purification of the Spirit, as this takes place in the Principles. The double transformation would result, fittingly, in that climactic moment when the soul is gathered 'Into the artifice of eternity'.

It is notable that in this purification process an attempt is made to dispense with the shadow, in its guise as 'dying animal'. The dying animal signifies, it seems to me, existential conflict at the heart of the Vision of Evil, being the battered remains of a life subjected to such conflict. It is clear that the poet seeks an end to this conflict, and would thus transcend the shadowy drama of the Vision of Evil. The poet's strategy, however, is to present the desire for transcendence from the point of view of the tragic universe we inevitably inhabit. Thus, in the poem as a whole, his desire is embodied, paradoxically, in terms of conflict, indicating the proximity of the Vision of Evil. Again, one stresses the importance of the active 'sailing'



in the title. The poet is caught up in process. Establishing this qualifies the irony of the final stanza, where the transcendent is expressed in terms of the temporal. But, apart from the golden bird itself, the way the poet clings to time, singing of 'what is past, or passing, or to come', suggests the continuing importance of the temporal as a mirror of the eternal:

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Thus, although the City of Art offers refuge from the effects of time, Yeats cannot forsake a temporal vista, a fact which finally inverts the inherent Platonism of his vision, privileging the phenomenal in the face of the transcendental. The tension generated in this instance serves a useful dramatic purpose, however, which offers a powerful reflection of the poet's conflict of desires. For Yeats's implicit humanistic stance is in contrast to the poem's explicit transcendental one, and this unresolved dualism perpetuates Yeatsian conflict, even at the very edges of eternity.

Writing of 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'Byzantium', Bloom notes:

The first Byzantium is that praised in *A Vision*, the city of Justinian, about A.D. 550, while the city of the second poem is as it was 'towards the end of the first Christian millennium'. The cities are both of the mind, but they are not quite the same city, the second being at a still further remove from nature than the first. (1972: 344)

In the light of my closing remarks about 'Sailing to Byzantium', Bloom's final assertion above is problematic, although he clearly expresses what Yeats would desire to convey, a transcendentalism of which the art-work is only an image. Bloom is opposed to this transcendental perspective, and seems to pose Shelley and Blake as correctives, or as poets offering the true vision, which Yeats will, in an inevitable manner, 'creatively misinterpret':

Shelley's intellect is too skeptical for him to assert transcendence, and Blake defies nature in a complexly dialectical way only, one in which the natural is not transcended but is superseded by 'an improvement of sensual enjoyment'. (1972: 388)

Creatively misinterpreting Shelley and Blake, Yeats conflates their relevant work with a vision of life after death, a vision which informs 'Byzantium', giving to it its characteristic ambiguity. That is, it is at once 'a place only of images, and

the place of life after death' (Bloom, 1972: 389). But as in 'Sailing to Byzantium', the presences of Blake and Shelley are not necessary to evoke this ambiguity. The problem (a recurring one, as is surely apparent by now) is that Yeats must convey the spiritual through concrete images. In doing so he also conveys, again, his attachment to the sensuous realm. The emphasis on images indicates to us that we are no less in the City of Art in this poem than we are in 'Sailing to Byzantium', despite the fact that the two Byzantiums are located at different points in time and 'reality'.

What is different about the present poem, is that the City of Art is no longer a desired refuge, it is an established location. It is linked to redemption through the suggestions of purification and renewal which it carries. The prose draft of the poem makes this clear:

Describe Byzantium as it is in the system towards the end of the first Christian millennium. A walking mummy. Flames at the street corners where the soul is purified, birds of hammered gold singing in the golden trees, in the harbour [dolphins] offering their backs to the waiting dead that they may carry them to paradise.... (in Jeffares, 1971: 44)

And despite Yeats's ambiguity of presentation, where Byzantium is 'at once a place only of images, and the place of the life after death', it is a notable feature of the poem that he privileges the word 'image', again emphasising the aesthetic dimension. Thus, I see the poem as a description of an achieved state of

being, presented as a walled city, a mandala, with the original intention of offering reassurance regarding the soul's immortality.

The original intention is not a dramatic force in this poem, however, which must therefore gather impetus in other ways. A clue as to how the poem does this can be gleaned from Yvor Winters's antithetical criticism. He sees the poem as failing because Yeats had 'only a vague idea of what he was talking about' (1960: 12). The imagery in the poem is anything but 'vague', as F.A.C. Wilson indicates in *Yeats and Tradition* (Wilson, 1958: 231-43), and neither are the processes to which it is connected. To me, Yeats succeeds through the quality of his imagery (apart from through other elements such as rhythm and diction) to convey the force of his belief. In these terms, the City of Art itself is the justification of its own existence. In other words, the poem is a self-contained artefact, linked only indirectly to the mandala of refuge in the way it gives assurance of a life after death. But nothing in the poem prompts the need for this assurance. Remote in this sense it indeed approaches an other-worldly condition, closely linked to the realm of 'artifice'.

Thus, although the first stanza describes in 'historical' terms an actual city, it also emphasises the currency of both art and the other world through its reference to 'images'. The initial distancing effect achieved by this emphasis helps seal the poem off from the perturbations of the phenomenal world. But even while man's emotional struggle with the shadow is not the

direct concern of the poem, the shadow ('The fury and the mire of human veins') probes the outskirts of this City of Art:

The unpurged images of day recede;  
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;  
Night resonance recedes, night-walkers' song  
After great cathedral gong;  
A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains  
All that man is,  
All mere complexities,  
The fury and the mire of human veins.

Natural images merge with symbolic ones as 'night-walkers' song' 'recedes' into the sound of the 'gong', located in the great 'dome' of Yeats's system. 'Starlit' or 'moonlit' it thus encompasses the entire range of the phases of the moon, from Phase 1 to Phase 15, back to Phase 1. In the vision of cyclicity which this mandala offers, it 'disdains' the temporal limitations attached to individual human life, although the passion by means of which such life is presented belies, to an extent, the disdain, suggesting, as already indicated, the probing presence of the shadow, the dark 'fury and mire of human veins'. (This shadow image of mud or mire has its ultimate source in Plato's *Phaedo* (Plato, 1961: 52), which informed a passage from the eighth Tractate of Plotinus's first Ennead (Plotinus, 1956: 76), a work certainly familiar to Yeats, and remarkable, in this connection, for its mention of the 'vision of Evil' which is connate with our immersion in the 'mud' of 'Matter' (ibid.)) And

as natural image and symbol merge, we are drawn into the other world entirely, where, interestingly, we encounter another shadow image. But this grotesque form, a mummy 'bound in mummy-cloth', although in certain respects an extension of the 'dying animal' of 'Sailing to Byzantium', would not shock us, but is here to guide us, much as the daimon would. A conflation of shadow and integrative anima then, the mummy is in some sense the anti-self of the living self, the opposite of man, and the one that would show to us 'all that [we] seek':

Before me floats an image, man or shade,  
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;  
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth  
May unwind the winding path;  
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.

And yet this 'mummy' is an 'image', a denizen of the City of Art. We recall that in 'Ego Dominus Tuus' Ille declares:

By the help of an image  
I call to my own opposite, summon all  
That I have handled least, least looked upon. (CP 180)

If the present 'image' is the poet's 'opposite' to an extent, a link between anti-self and image is maintained, paralleling, in my mind, the daimonic relationship (where daimon or soul is

linked to monument or image) in 'Sailing to Byzantium'. In 'Sailing to Byzantium' the soul seeks perfection through the image; in the present instance, the image offers knowledge of the other world, much as the daimon does in *A Vision*.

Although a mummy transcends process, it was once, as a living human being, part of process, and thus implies the transmutation of the Vision of Evil, or the 'world conceived as continual conflict' (Yeats, 1962b: 144), into the timeless sphere of the City of Art. The sense of such transmutation would seem to inform much of the remainder of the poem:

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,  
More miracle than bird or handiwork,  
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,  
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,  
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud  
In glory of changeless metal  
Common bird or petal  
And all complexities of mire or blood.

The polar opposites of Unity of Being and the Vision of Evil which quicken the tragic universe are not the only ones presented in this stanza. The Primary ('star-lit') and Antithetical ('by the moon embittered') poles of Yeats's system are again evoked, themselves emblems of continuous cyclical conflict. However, they are isolated in this stanza, representing the transcendental Phases, 1 and 15. Thus, the cycle of incarnations is still very much in evidence, for, again, Phases 1 and 15 are temporary

states within the great mandala of incarnations. From this point of view the tragic universe is a continuing force in the poem, as the reiterated word 'complexities' in itself perhaps suggests. This is, it may be, another way of saying that the shadow lurks on the outskirts of the City of Art. But even as it is purged it helps define, again, the nature of the City, as in the following stanza. Without the 'complexities of fury' the passage would lose substantially in rhetorical impact. The physical realm with its 'complexities' diminishes to a discrete 'agony' (implied by the self-reflective nature of 'trance'). In this state the soul appears to *suffer* a solitary communion with itself, possibly a reference to the 'Dreaming Back' of passionate events experienced in the physical realm, as described in *A Vision* (1962b: 226-27). The transformation of the physical into something other is suggested most hauntingly by the flame that is simply an image of a flame, however much it might refer back to a previous existence through its connection with 'agony':

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit  
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,  
Nor 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.

That the 'flames begotten of flame' are both spiritual substance



and image underlines the aesthetic nature of the other world suggested by the final stanza. Thus, even although Winters may be right to question the sequence of the poem's stanzas ('...the fourth stanza deals with the purification of the entering spirits, and the fifth with their struggle to enter: as far as the mere logic of the discussion goes, these stanzas ought to be in reverse order'(1960: 12)), the fifth stanza represents a culminating vision of the poem's images, a sense that in the end the soul as image can only reflect the images of the world, it cannot negate them. In this regard, Robert Langbaum, in *The Mysteries of Identity*, tells of how 'Byzantium' traces 'the cycle from life to the sphere of images that in turn refer back to life' (Langbaum, 1977: 232).

The notion presented here is also related to a passage in J.Hillis Miller's *Poets of Reality*, where Miller sees Yeats as reacting against the nihilism of the late 19th century. If 'God is dead' (in accordance with the Nietzschean formulation (in Miller, 1966: 3)), Yeats attempts to reinstate a sense of the divine, but needs to do so bearing in mind certain qualifications stemming from the recent past:

There can be for many writers no return to the traditional conception of God as the highest existence, creator of all other existences, transcending his creation as well as dwelling within it. If there is to be a God in the new world it must be a presence within things and not beyond them. The new poets [Yeats, Eliot, Thomas, Stevens, and Williams] have at the farthest limit of their experience caught a glimpse of

a fugitive presence, something shared by all things in the fact that they are....Each [poet] begins with an experience of nihilism or its concomitants, and each in his own way enters the new reality: Yeats [does so] by his affirmation of the infinite richness of the finite moment.... (1966: 10-11)

It seems to me that the 'infinite richness of the finite moment' is expressed in the images of 'Byzantium', images which betoken presence, even after death. Further, this 'presence' is not static, it is always part of a process; images forever 'beget' images, suggesting an infinite succession of 'finite moment[s]'. The 'richness' of the moments is in turn suggested by the images themselves. Reflecting an eschatological vision, they are yet not circumscribed by dogma or philosophy, they are free to engage in a multiplicity of relationships with each other. As I will argue, this freedom does not always characterise the City of Art in Yeats's final years:

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.

More than 'emblems of the soul in transit' (Jeffares, 1971:

46), the dolphins are living creatures. In this case, the poem seems to be indicating the necessary relationship between this world and the other world. In terms of Yeats's system, the living do help the dead in the purgation process (Yeats, 1962b: 222), but not in the sense of a literal carrying, rather as carriers of the thoughts of the dead, or agents who bring the thoughts of the dead to completion. While 'spirit after spirit' '[a]straddle' on the 'dolphin' might, in a figurative manner, suggest this process, the image, in more general terms, indicates the poet's unwillingness to relinquish the phenomenal world, despite its shadow-like 'bitter furies'. In the end, though, as already suggested, only 'images' remain, as the image of Byzantium itself returns to a condition indicated in the first line: it is a realm of images. Thus, in the final stanza, given images produce new images ('Those images that yet/ Fresh images beget'). Even the 'dolphin's mire and blood' becomes an image from the City of Art in the final line. Historical image, physical image, spiritual image and artistic image are conjoined. The conjunction suggests nothing so much, again, as Yeats's entire system, where all the circles of life are absorbed in a single mandala pattern. It is fitting that the great dome of Byzantium, as an analogue of this pattern, should exert its influence, finally, over the realms of spirit, images and process, showing to the very last (as does 'Sailing to Byzantium') the tensions of existence: '...gong-tormented sea'.

Bloom is correct in pointing out:

Yeats critics have made more of Byzantium than Yeats himself did. The later Yeats tended to find only two full moons in the history of civilization, Greece and the Renaissance, and placed more stress upon Greece. (1972: 286)

A Grecian City of Art is implicit in 'The Statues' from *Last Poems* (CP 375), and ties in with the mandala of refuge in the way it offers, through perfection of form, protection from the formlessness of the era dominated by Asia, and the modern world. The emphasis on perfection of form links this poem to the Renaissance figure of Michael Angelo in 'Long-legged Fly', whose forms allow 'girls at puberty' to 'find' 'the first Adam in their thought' (CP 382), and consequently give birth to children who will grace the world with their beauty. If this conception brings to mind Yeats's speculations regarding eugenics (Hone, 1942: 468), it is no accident, as this theory occupied his thought fairly frequently in his last years. The theory, though distasteful to us, nevertheless reflects a psychological urge traceable to the earliest mandala of refuge poems: the need for a stable centre of being. And yet, as we have seen, this stable centre cannot be imposed in an absolute manner. Just as *A Vision* must show the play of antinomies, the same play suffuses the world of the Byzantium poems, despite their transcendentalism. Thus the full moon of the Renaissance in 'Long-legged Fly' is maintained only by the most delicate of balances. Drawing on

life, Michael Angelo must yet keep life at bay in order to create perfection of form. While creative silence informs his art, the silence seems easily disturbed. This antinomic tension is another expression, it seems to me, of the more characteristic Yeatsian play of opposites:

That girls at puberty may find  
The first Adam in their thought,  
Shut the door of the Pope's chapel,  
Keep those children out.  
There on that scaffolding reclines  
Michael Angelo.  
With no more sound than the mice make  
His hand moves to and fro.  
*Like a long-legged fly upon the stream*  
*His mind moves upon silence.*

But Michael Angelo does not simply draw on 'the stream' of temporal process, he draws on the 'monuments' of Classical tradition, the perfected form of ancient Greece, and if he would decorate a Renaissance dome or mandala, he owes allegiance to a City of Art already mentioned-- that found in 'The Statues'.

'The Statues' is a disturbing poem for me. While it is true that the poem offers a refuge from outside threat, this City of Art in which we find ourselves is not as imaginatively rich as that in the Byzantium poems, and thus seems to belie its own significance. Contented with form, Yeats neglects *informing* Spirit. For instance, the emphasis on 'plummet-measured' features

creates a sterility for me, a sense of constraining form:

Pythagoras planned it. Why did the people stare?  
His numbers, though they moved or seemed to move  
In marble or in bronze, lacked character.  
But boys and girls, pale from the imagined love  
Of solitary beds, knew what they were,  
That passion could bring character enough,  
And pressed at midnight in some public place  
Live lips upon a plummet-measured face.

The phenomenal and the imagistic complement each other, creating both 'passion' and 'character', or the necessary inner qualities which give a depth to perfection of form. In speaking for his personae, however, Yeats denies them 'passion' and 'character', and simply presents the formulations of his own 'opinionated mind'. My quarrel is not limited to 'The Statues', but to much in *Last Poems*, where Yeats's thought becomes, I feel, codified, void of the 'infinite richness of the finite moment'. While it is clear that Yeats is still a poet of presence, the potential richness of the presence is limited by such constraining codification. Thus while one finds in 'The Statues' elements that are present in previous City of Art poems, including antinomic conflict, these elements now lose their poetic force, or richness. In a sense, as in the first stanza, images 'beget' human images of beauty, but the process is now linked to the certainty of political or historical doctrine, there is no margin for exploration. Hillis Miller pertinently remarks in a recent

interview:

...what fascinates me is the way in which the act of reading...does have a margin or remainder or edge, which is not accounted for by all the presuppositions I bring to it, or by my institutional, political or social situation.... Unless literature has that margin, there's not much point to it. If you can fully account for a piece of literature, or for my act of reading, by social/historical determinants, then it melts into historical forces which you might as well study by studying history. (Miller in Salusinszky, 1987: 214)

It is my fear that Yeats attempts 'fully [to] account for' his own 'piece of literature' in 'The Statues', and at other points in *Last Poems*. Thus, in 'The Statues', even spiritual presence is accounted for or determined in the final stanza; the stanza's questions are rhetorical, in themselves determining presence:

When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side,  
What stalked through the Post Office? What intellect,  
What calculation, number, measurement, replied?  
We Irish, born into that ancient sect  
But thrown upon this filthy modern tide  
And by its formless spawning fury wrecked,  
Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace  
The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.

Spirit of race attains perfection through the presence of perfected spiritual form, the archetype of the hero, related in

Jung to the Christ-image, or, in Yeats, to Unity of Being. The perfected form of this Unity of Being is pitted against the 'formless[ness]' of the 'filthy modern tide', which, as an antinomic opposite of Unity, might be seen as a necessary component of the Vision of Evil. But if this is so, it is being deliberately repudiated here (recalling the segregational attitude of 'Demon and Beast'), not absorbed, as in truly integrative works.

This fact is symptomatic of the closed-system which the poem would appear to desire: there is to be no latitude beyond what the poet prescribes. A static unity proceeds from a system which has deliberately precluded the type of conflict inherent in Yeats's notion of the Vision of Evil. Or perhaps we could say that the notion of the One, the realm of unity, the City of Art, which Yeats would present in this poem, needs to suggest its own freedom from conflict. If the poet so palpably interferes with the process as Yeats does, he restricts true unity, or at least the conditions for attaining true unity, which are, it may be, the most a poem can hope to convey. And perhaps it is this point which in some way informs all unfavourable readings of the poem. For once, then, I am in agreement with Bloom's adverse judgement:

A poet of enormous gifts can meditate endlessly upon a vital matter, and still compose less than a great poem, if his own prejudices, fashionable and unfashionable, prevent his full humanity from entering into the meditation. (1972: 441)

The final stanza of 'The Statues' portrays a daimonic quest



on a national scale; Ireland seeks her own mask in the closing line of the poem. But this mask or 'plummet-measured face' is stone-cold, despite the assertion of the opening stanza, that human desire brings 'passion' and 'character' to perfected form. Lacking a lively daimon, Ireland must be content with an idealized form, which, indeed, it needs to integrate into its nature in order to attain unity. Nevertheless, in its marmoreal exclusion of liveliness, the statue image in the final line (mask or daimon) reinforces the disturbing notion that national unity can be prescribed, as in a political tract.

## VI

Yeats's Grecian ethos, however, finds its high-point in the very next poem in *Last Poems*, 'News for the Delphic Oracle' (CP 376), which, in its island setting, also draws on both Yeats's own phantasmagoria and traditional 'images' from ancient Greece. Indeed, one of these traditional images marks certain important points in Yeats's career. I think of the 'satyr', a close relative of both the 'faun' from the opening poem of *Collected Poems*, 'The Song of the Happy Shepherd' (CP 8), and the 'centaur' which signals the end of an important stage in Yeats's creative life in 'Lines Written in Dejection' (CP 164). This one image alone suggests the resonant nature of the present poem in terms of the poet's own creative productions. A City of Art poem, it is also, through its island location, related to 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' and 'To an Isle in the Water'. F.A.C. Wilson

establishes this setting as the Isles of the Blessed (1958: 219), thereby, in a fitting manner, blending paradise image and mandala. Wilson also suggests the poem's genesis in the 'verse-oracle delivered to Amelius after the death of Plotinus', preserved in Porphyry's *Life* (Wilson, 1958: 213; v. Plotinus, 1956: 16-17). This verse-oracle directly inspired Yeats's 'The Delphic Oracle Upon Plotinus' (CP 306), which tells of Plotinus' passage to the Isles of the Blessed. The present poem, in outdoing the Delphic Oracle (being able to supply *it* with 'news'), presumably offers a sharper perception of the other world. The title, then, albeit a disrespectful one, conveys at the same time a sense of authority; indeed, the disrespectful humour, with its suggestion of easy familiarity, contributes to the authority.

An important aspect of the poem is, of course, this humour. The humour is also linked to the poem's heterogeneous mix of characters. As Wilson notes, 'News for the Delphic Oracle' seems to be emulating the Anglo-Irish poem 'The Groves of Blarney' (1958: 218), a humorous connection, to be sure, but one which also emphasises the serious value of heterogeneous vision:

There's statues gracing  
This noble place in --  
All heathen gods  
And nymphs so fair,  
Bold Neptune, Plutarch  
And Nicodemus,  
All standing naked

In the open air.

The above work might be viewed as informing with parodic intention 'The Statues'. If Yeats is deliberately drawing on it in the present instance, he is surely undermining his realm of perfected form, or, more positively, removing the 'plummet-measured' restrictions from the closed system presented in 'The Statues'. Perhaps it is not so curious, then, that the poet's present heterogeneous vision should better convey unity than 'The Statues' is able to. As Wilson remarks:

Certainly a part of the amusement of 'News for the Delphic Oracle' is that [Yeats] mixes his mythologies. He also mixes his symbols, drawing on Kabbalism and the tradition of alchemy as well as on Platonism, but all the component parts are triumphantly blended, and we are left with a sense of unity in a poem where the unities are mischievously flouted, which is perhaps a mark of his success. (1958: 218)

Even Bloom is lavish in his praise of the poem, indicating something of a triumph on Yeats's part: "'News for the Delphic Oracle" is a genuinely playful poem, wonderfully modulated in tone and rhythm' (1972: 446-7). More than merely a successful poem, though, 'News for the Delphic Oracle' successfully conveys the liveliness of true unity along with the sense of reconciliation attendant on Unity of Being. Significantly, both the reconciliation and an aspect of the liveliness are viewed in terms of sexuality, a point which brings us closer to the linking

of sexuality and beatific vision to be explored in the following chapter.

The density of the poem's imagery is pointed out by Wilson, who indicates the many and varied sources of Yeats's thought in it. For example, Wilson glosses the opening four lines of the poem as follows:

The 'golden codgers' are of course the golden race of the immortals, but in the gold-silver antithesis which the image is made to introduce, Yeats uses a favourite symbol from alchemy: fused gold and silver, the solar and lunar principles indissolubly knit, is an alchemical emblem of perfection he had often turned to effect in his early poetry....A parallel device is provided in the water-wind antithesis which follows. Yeats's 'great water' is the sea of life, now becalmed as it laps round the Isles of the Blessed; but water and wind are also Kabbalistic symbols for the masculine and feminine principles, which are here presented as being in perfect harmony, their opposition resolved. (1958: 219)

The density of the imagery (with its reverberations and associations) compounds with its heterogeneity, reinforcing the impression of unity in diversity, or of the attainment of a fine focus, despite the breadth of the lense being used.

Here are gathered the giants of Yeats's thought and myth, but though they have at long last reached Paradise, they suffer from ennui, and seem, like Yeats at the end of his life, to yet long for the sexual embrace: they 'sigh for love'. Thus,

regarding the 'sigh[ing]' in the opening stanza, I would disagree with Wilson, who claims that it is connected to fulfilment rather than lack of it:

...Plotinus yawns and stretches before he accommodates himself to the ecstatic happiness of the blessed, and since stretching and yawning is Yeats's consistent euphemism for the lassitude after the sexual act (as in *The Player Queen* and 'Three Things'), I take it that the beatitude of the soul in heaven is being compared to the peace after love. (1958: 220)

The disjunction between man and anima, represented by Oisín and Niamh, is still apparent, however, despite the attainment of Paradise:

There all the golden codgers lay,  
There the silver dew,  
And the great water sighed for love,  
And the wind sighed too.  
Man-picker Niamh leant and sighed  
By Oisín on the grass;  
There sighed amid his choir of love  
Tall Pythagoras.  
Plotinus came and looked about,  
The salt-flakes on his breast,  
And having stretched and yawned awhile  
Lay sighing like the rest.

A vision of unity is subject to circumscriptive conformity, as

we've seen in our examination of 'The Statues'. But, as Wilson's argument indicates, the exaggerated sighing in the present poem tells of other possible points of view. That is, the humour implicit in the exaggeration might indicate many other responses, ranging from simple pleasure to, say, convoluted irony. Yeats's hatred in 'The Statues', on the other hand, appears to bind him to a single perspective. The point is not so much that humour is necessarily more flexible in its uses than hatred, as that in 'News for the Delphic Oracle' the humour is not used to exclude other possibilities, while in 'The Statues' hatred does appear to be used for this purpose.

Unrestricted, then, Yeats modulates between tones, replacing humour in the second stanza with a mood and images reminiscent of those found in 'Byzantium':

Straddling each a dolphin's back  
And steadied by a fin,  
Those Innocents re-live their death,  
Their wounds open again.  
The ecstatic waters laugh because  
Their cries are sweet and strange,  
Through their ancestral patterns dance,  
And the brute dolphins plunge  
Until, in some cliff-sheltered bay  
Where wades the choir of love  
Proffering its sacred laurel crowns,  
They pitch their burdens off.

As in 'Byzantium', we deal once more with the traditional images connected to the soul in transit. The purgation process of 'Dreaming Back' is also suggested, but the interaction of elements moves us away from the rigidity of a single system. For example, the waters of generation respond to the cries of the Innocents, even though 'wounds open again', because they in their ecstasy know that a unifying purification is taking place, or, in other terms, the shadow is being assimilated for the ultimate benefit of Spirit: 'The ecstatic waters laugh because/ Their cries are sweet and strange'. In Yeats's formalized system neither the waters of generation nor their ecstasy are necessary or predictable components of the purification process. The poem is free to draw on other sources.

The dolphins carry the Innocents to that part of the Isles of the Blessed, 'Where wades the choir of love', bringing them into the realm of unity and fulfilment, imaged as the fulfilment obtained through sexual love. The final stanza of the poem pictures aspects of sexual love, ranging from the 'delicate' to the 'brutal', where both extremes are accepted and celebrated. Thetis, a Nereid (and thus linked to Yeats's earlier faery anima figures), although won over by the rarefied love of Peleus, who even sheds tears so inwardly responsive is he to her beauty, is yet physically attracted (her 'belly listens') to the 'brutal' copulation 'in the foam' (or the waters of generation seen in their fecund aspect). She represents the final connection Yeats is to make between a woman's beauty and paradise:

Slim adolescence that a nymph has stripped,

Peleus on Thetis stares.  
Her limbs are delicate as an eyelid,  
Love has blinded him with tears;  
But Thetis' belly listens.  
Down the mountain walls  
From where Pan's cavern is  
Intolerable music falls.  
Foul goat-head, brutal arm appear,  
Belly, shoulder, bum,  
Flash fishlike; nymphs and satyrs  
Copulate in the foam.

In a tableau incorporating, so Yeats believed, Poussin's 'Marriage of Peleus and Thetis' (Henn, 1965: 235-6) (since reidentified as 'Acis and Galatea' (Raine, 1986: 290)), as well as images from ancient Greece and his own verse, Yeats's paradise is clearly, in the end, a City of Art. What is finally conveyed by this image? As in 'To an Isle in the Water' and 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', we find a refuge from the sense of disunity generated by temporal existence. The supernatural world, apparent in 'The Happy Townland', is also seen to provide a locus of reconciliation *beyond* temporal disunity. Supernatural and aesthetic dimensions are combined in 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'Byzantium', and both, again, offer refuge from the phenomenal world. Both also offer unity in the face of temporal fragmentation. While 'The Statues' attempts to provide a similar vision, it is circumscribed by its dogmatism, which subverts the



unity it strives to communicate. 'News for the Delphic Oracle', however, seeks to sabotage the notion of transcendent unity by reimmersing us in the temporal realm suggested by the strife resulting from the sexual union of Peleus and Thetis (Thetis is to give birth to Achilles, a principal agent of discord in the era commencing with Leda). Nevertheless, the poem adds a dimension of play which vitalizes the notion of unity, gives it a living, joyful air, not apparent in the Byzantium poems. But if the City of Art is the culminating design representative of Unity of Being in Yeats's poetry, and if sexual love finally plays an important role in conveying this, we yet need to examine, in the following chapter, the place of the individual sexual relationship in Yeats's conception of the great quest.

## I

A link between sexual love and beatific vision is implicit in the dedication to the first version of *A Vision*, where Yeats laments the fact that he has said 'little of sexual love' and 'nothing about the Beatific Vision' (1925: xii). Although Hough (as we have seen in the chapter on *A Vision*) and George Mills Harper feel that the revised version of *A Vision* also failed to deal with these subjects (Harper, 1987: 409), Joseph Hassett in *Yeats and the Poetics of Hate* suggests that from a symbolic point of view *A Vision* is about nothing else (1986: 90). According to Hassett:

First, all [*A Vision's*] dichotomies represented the split of sexuality into male and female....Second, sexual love, the yearning for sexual reunion, is a longing for a return to primal unity, the divine One, the Beatific Vision. That is why, as Yeats said in the final version of *A Vision*, 'the natural union of man and woman' is 'a symbol of that eternal instant where the antinomy is resolved'. (Ibid.)

The present chapter attempts, in a number of ways, to explore the link between sexual love and the attainment of unity (an experience of beatific vision) in Yeats. An early Yeatsian distinction, between saint and poet, is examined in the light of 'Solomon and the Witch', and this poem's relationship to beatitude and sexual love. A more general survey then locates

the linking of beatitude and sexual love in various poems, after which certain of the poems are examined in greater detail. An analysis of the poem 'Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient', for example, suggests that the problematic concept of hatred is connected to sexual love, and might indeed be a means for arriving at beatific vision.

## II

Yeats once wrote (with St. Augustine's words in mind), ' If it be true that God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, the saint goes to the centre, the poet...to the ring where everything comes round again' (Yeats, 1961b: 287). The pair, saint and poet, bear a relation to beatitude and sexual love (the saint experiencing the unity of the 'centre', the poet being connected to the never-ending 'ring' of generation). Although the one is at the centre of the circle, thus escaping cyclicity, while the other must tangle with the ring, there is a rare meeting ground of the two perspectives--saint and poet's-- both in Yeats's theory and in his poetry. If the distinction between saint and poet is defined by means of circle imagery, their conflation is defined by means of an image linked to Unity of Being. Four pages after the quotation which opens this section, we find the following:

The other day I was walking towards Urbino...and had come to a level place on the mountain-top near the journey's end....Away south upon another mountain a mediaeval tower...rose into the clouds. I saw suddenly in the mind's eye an old man, erect and

a little gaunt, standing in the door of the tower....He was the poet who had at last, because he had done so much for the world's sake, come to share in the dignity of the saint....Certainly as he stood there he knew how from behind that laborious mood, that pose, that genius, no flower of himself but all himself, looked out as from behind a mask that other Who alone of all men, the countrypeople say, is not a hair's breadth more nor less than six feet high. (Yeats, 1961b: 290-1)

The passage calls forth the whole Dantean ethos of Unity of Being, along with the City of Art and the doctrine of the anti-self, and culminates in the image of the 'perfectly proportioned human body'. In such a context the conjunction of saint and poet might be seen as an expression of the unified self.

J.Hillis Miller is dubious about the value of this conjunction; he argues that it indicates a too easily attained vision of unity, and relates to a vague early idealism on Yeats's part, which later gave way to the stringent sense of conflict at the heart of *A Vision*:

Now Yeats can see why his early art has led to vagueness and unreality, and why his search for self-fulfillment has turned into a chase after will-o'-the-wisps. His personal mistake has been to assume that he is destined to be a saint....He has believed that the life of the saint and the life of the poet can be reconciled and, through his attempt to combine them, has discovered their incompatibility....

Now he knows that the universe is divided against itself, riven and fractured. The world is split into irreconcilable antinomies...[including saint and poet]. (Miller, 1966: 82, 84)

But Northrop Frye, in *Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth, and Society*, suggests that something akin to the conflation of saint and poet is even present in the antinomic world of *A Vision*, and his argument is convincing (Frye, 1976: 245ff.). For example, Frye interprets in a lucid manner the vision of redemption obscured by the complexities of Yeats's mythological universe:

...we have to set aside the body of *A Vision* with its conception of unity and individuality as opposed and impossible ideals which only superhuman beings can reach, and look for another construct in which they are at the same point, and that point accessible to human life. (Frye, 1976: 270-1)

We recall that in Yeats's philosophy, 'unity' and 'individuality' are opposite and transcendental ends of a scale that otherwise includes all life; Frye's desire to make the transcendental, the area at the centre of the 'circle', which is familiar to the saint, 'accessible to human life', suggests his awareness of the need to link this area with the poet's. Why should this need exist?

Frye quotes Yeats: "I think that much of the confusion of

modern philosophy...comes from our renouncing the ancient hierarchy of beings from man up to the One" (in Frye, 1976: 272). The 'hierarchy', according to Frye, is drawn from certain archetypal realities as perceived through great poetry. The practising poet is automatically taken up into this hierarchy which consists of 'states of being greater than himself' (Frye, 1976: 271). At the apex of the hierarchy we find the thirteenth cone, Yeats's mysterious image of redemption, which represents liberation from the wheel of birth and death, or the ultimate goal of the saint's transcendentalism. We are returned to Frye's awareness of the need to allow 'unity and individuality' to meet at the 'same point'. Frye expands:

The process of entering into a life greater than our ordinary one, which every poet knows, is a process of entering into this hierarchy, and of beginning to ascend the stair of life. The Thirteenth Cone, therefore, is a symbol of the way in which man emancipates himself by becoming part of Man, through a series of greater human forms. Here we move towards an existence in which Phases 1 and 15, unity and individuality, are the same point. It is therefore impossible that the 'One' could be anything but Man, or something identical or identifiable with Man.... (Frye, 1976: 272-3)

Frye's logic uncovers the humanistic basis of 'the One', man's greatest form, making it a form fit for the poet: if the thirteenth cone offers the perspective where Phases 1 and 15 'are the same point', then the One must be associated with man as it

will then incorporate both poles of a transcendental substratum common to all human life. Although Frye is imposing, to an extent, his own perceptions on Yeats, seeing a linear progression where Yeats provides a circular process, and not distinguishing between the two transcendental states bound to the wheel of life (the 'unity' and 'individuality' of Phases 1 and 15) and the one transcendental state which is not (the thirteenth cone), his point about the essentially humanistic basis of *A Vision* is surely valid.

Frye's final emphasis firmly joins the realms of saint and poet, when he considers two poems in which 'imaginations and images, the true subjects and the true objects', merge into 'a timeless unity'. If we identify with 'Man', however, the subject comes to the foreground and the object, the image, recedes:

['Byzantium'] is mainly about images, which are...generated in water and borne across water by dolphins into the simplifying and purgatorial world of fire. ['News for the Delphic Oracle'] applies the same movement to human souls, and makes it clear that nothing of the physical or concrete world is lost, or even sublimated, by the kind of redemption here described.

These two poems, then, deal with the consolidation of imaginations and images, the true subjects and the true objects, into a timeless unity. But of course the image is a product of the imagination: in the imaginative world the relation of subject and object is that of creator and creature. In this perspective the whole cycle of nature, of life and death and rebirth which man has dreamed, becomes a

single gigantic image, and the process of redemption is to be finally understood as an identification with Man and a detachment from the cyclical image he has created. (Frye, 1976: 273-4)

A balance between saint and poet results from our understanding this 'process of redemption': the 'identification with Man' seems related to the world of the poet, while the 'detachment from the cyclical image he has created' seems related to the renunciatory world of the saint.

To put Frye's reading of Yeatsian redemption briefly, then: man ascends the stair of life and encounters at each step a greater form or archetype with which he identifies, until he reaches the top of the stair and identifies with the prime form, the One. (This process parallels Jungian individuation, where integration of the archetypes eventually results in attainment of the prime form, the mandala of liberation.) At this stage man becomes Man and the object world recedes-- poet and saint meet. In terms of the working poet this is all very well; he comes into contact with archetypal forms through the very nature of his work, as we have seen. But what of the poet as man in the world? What for him can truly prompt the 'identification with Man'? Judging from Yeats's poetry one answer seems to be 'sexual love'. Certainly the sense of completion which he experienced in his own life after his marriage must have suggested the fact to him (Hone, 1942: 307).

But if sexual love is 'a symbol of that eternal instant



where the antinomy is resolved', for the man in the world the antinomy must, in the end, remain unresolved. This lack of resolution is linked to the primal division of the sexes; the sexual act is an attempt to restore unity, doomed to fail. A passage from Dryden's translation of Lucretius, referred to by Yeats in *A Vision* (1962b: 214), illustrates the fact:

Nor when the Youthful pair more clossely joyn,  
When hands in hands they lock, and thighs in thighs they  
Just in the raging foam of full desire, twine  
When both press on, both murmur, both expire,  
They gripe, they squeeze, their humid tongues they dart,  
As each wou'd force their way to t'others heart:  
In vain; they only cruze about the coast,  
For bodies cannot pierce, nor be in bodies lost: (in  
Hassett, 1986: 93)

As Yeats put the matter to John Sparrow:

Sexual intercourse is an attempt to solve the eternal antinomy, doomed to failure because it takes place only on one side of the gulf. The gulf is that which separates the one and the many, or if you like, God and man. (in Jeffares, 1962: 267)

Nevertheless, the poet as man in the world is compelled to seek unity through the sexual act, and in terms of beatific experience the quest need not be fruitless. 'Solomon and the Witch' observes certain consequences of sexual union. One major

consequence, as we shall see, is 'not unrelated to Frye's 'identification with Man', which results in a conjunction of 'individuality' and 'unity'. But at the same time 'Solomon and the Witch' bypasses the familiar realm of Yeatsian paradox inherent in Frye's perception: for Frye the transcendental area of the saint loses 'nothing of the concrete or physical world' of the poet. 'Solomon and the Witch', while evoking a transcendental realm, poses it as something to be striven towards, and finally emphasises the process involved, not the goal. However, for a brief period in it the perspectives of saint and poet meet in the context of ordinary life. It is as if sexual love can confer a type of beatitude, and the moment of beatitude inherent in sexual love can evoke man and woman's final freedom.

The mythical, archetypal significance of Solomon and Sheba themselves is fairly obvious. As F.A.C.Wilson notes, the two are the 'types of "perfect love"' (Wilson, 1960: 27). And being a 'witch', Sheba also carries some of the mystique of an anima figure. Further, the union of Solomon and Sheba is situated within a context of archetypal circle imagery, related to cyclicity and the paradise mandala. In Frye's four-part scheme of archetypes (as presented in *Fables of Identity*) Solomon and Sheba would most probably belong to the second phase, the 'zenith, summer and marriage or triumph phase', which is concerned with 'Myths of apotheosis, of the sacred marriage, and of entering into Paradise' (Frye, 1963: 16). In 'Solomon and the Witch', the lovers' consummation might be seen as a sacred marriage resulting in a type of apotheosis which evokes a vision

of paradise. Indeed, the setting of the poem is paradisiacal.

Other of the phases enumerated by Frye appear in the poem. For example, it seems concerned with aspects of phase one, 'resurrection' of a perfect state; also, phases three and four find a place in it when a type of 'death' and 'dissolution' is sought after in its concern to "'end"' the "'world"'. This 'ending' of the 'world' involves a distancing of the objective, and a corresponding heightening of the subjective, necessary for the identification with Man.

Regarding specific precursors, the rich sensual luxuriance and sense of longing in Yeats's poem are clearly paralleled by certain elements in the Song of Solomon; but the full significance of the lovers to Yeats only becomes truly apparent when we turn to Arthur Symons's play, *The Lover of the Queen of Sheba* (Wilson, 1960: 276). Symons, like Yeats, deals with 'the timeless moment as it presents itself to lovers':

When thou art I, and I am thou

Time is no more.... (in Wilson, 1960: 278)

In other words, Symons's play probably suggested to Yeats Solomon and Sheba's connection with a transcendental love experience.

In 'Solomon and the Witch' Sheba first introduces a night-time scene presided over by a "'wild moon"'. Apart from its relation to *A Vision*, the moon is a symbol of rich potentiality in Yeats. Also, the "'wild moon"' conveys creative energy, especially if compared with the antithetical 'timid' sun from 'Lines Written in Dejection' (CP:164). The pervasive ethos of the

poem then is the poet's-- one of rich creative potential. Into it comes Sheba's "'cry"' uttered "'in a strange tongue"'. (One thinks of the automatic writing of *A Vision*, where Yeats, like Solomon, must decipher his companion's 'cries' (Hone, 1942: 309)). Solomon, by tradition versed in the language of all animals (Wilson, 1960: 279), interprets the cry, and the mood of the poem becomes light-hearted, suggesting Solomon's rather urbane casualness, but also the confident joy which accompanies an especially pleasurable love union:

Who understood

Whatever has been said, sighed, sung,  
Howled, miau'd, barked, brayed, belled, yelled, cried,  
                  crowed,  
Thereon replied: 'A cockerel  
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.'

Man's coming is almost connate with the departure of eternity ("Three hundred years before the Fall"), but man might, ironically, bring eternity "in again". A pre-condition for the coming of eternity is "Chance [becoming]...one with Choice",

which suggests to me a point of harmonious perfection where personal 'choices' are not contrary to the impersonal, 'chance' operations of the universe. Personal and impersonal will, embodied respectively by the terms Choice and Chance, seem to become one through a supreme act of love (the poet's perspective) which necessarily ends the restrictive external world (characterized by the boundaries which must arise when Choice is blocked by Chance), and allows eternity (the saint's perspective) to flow "in again". Otherwise Chance and Choice are as opposite, to return to Frye's concerns, as 'individuality' and 'unity'. 'Individual' will is governed by Choice, reflecting the individualizing power of 'antithetical' man. The pole of 'unity' is governed by Chance, a consequence of the submergence of individual will in universal will, or undifferentiating 'primary' experience. A conjunction of Choice and Chance therefore implies a conjunction of individuality and unity: the One is attained and saint and poet meet, but in a transcendental context.

There is further evidence in the section of the poem just looked at to support the above conclusion. Man acts on choice, which is only blocked by the chances of circumstance. Implicit in the union now broached is an absence of such blockage. As an outcome, objects recede in significance, and subjects, the lovers, come to the foreground. "All that the brigand apple brought/ And this foul world" is the realm of objects; "were dead at last", indicates its possible recession. Thus the possible outcome of Solomon and Sheba's union approximates Frye's vision of Yeatsian redemption: 'an identification with Man and a

detachment from the cyclical image he has created'.

But here the poem provides a down-to-earth check in the form of an identification with man (in low case) all too caught up in the realm of 'images':

'...love has a spider's eye  
To find out some appropriate pain--  
Aye, though all passion's in the glance--  
For every nerve, and tests a lover  
With cruelties of Choice and Chance;  
And when at last that murder's over  
Maybe the bride-bed brings despair,  
For each an imagined image brings  
And finds a real image there.'

Love is seen to search with a cruel and calculating "spider's eye" for "some appropriate pain" "For every nerve", a perverse activity, horribly described as a "murder"; non-unified Choice and Chance are conditioned by the "cruelties" of man's own creating; the 'chosen' "bride-bed" might offer, not consummation, but rather, by 'chance', "despair"; there is a chilling disparity between "imagined" and "real" images. Paralleling situations in Yeats's earlier poetry, the unintegrated anima (the 'imagined image') might come between lovers, bringing 'despair'. Also, a shadow presence is apparent in the reference to the 'cruel' 'spider's eye' of man's darker nature. In the realm of sexual love, these archetypes would appear to be principal stumbling blocks in the quest for unity.

We find amongst Solomon's final words, which are again expressed in a light-hearted way, an important observation. Sheba notes "'Yet the world stays'", and Solomon replies:

'If that be so,  
Your cockerel found us in the wrong,  
Although he thought it worth a crow.'

He indicates at least the possibility of supreme human elevation in the face of everyday disunity and pain. Thus, although for a short space of time, the identification with 'Man' is placed within feasible parameters, not preclusive of 'man': saint and poet meet in the context of everyday life in the world.

The conclusion of the poem displays a practical emphasis on process, through which the perspective of the poet is retained; but the poet now strives for union with the saint. Sheba's final speech evokes an intense, internalized excitement with its utter silence, "'...not a sound... Unless a petal hit the ground"'; its thrilling escalation of creative potential, "'the moon is wilder every minute"'; and its self-absorbing focus of 'individual' will, "'O! Solomon! let us try again.'" In this vibrant silence the two lovers' power might be gathered to enable them to aim once more for the 'One'. Although Solomon humorously thinks their love-making "'worth a crow"' from eternity, conceding in his urbane way the value of their experience, his tone does not detract from the regenerative force of Sheba's final centring--rather, it dryly complements it, as she desires intensely to strive again for the "'end"':

'The night has fallen; not a sound  
In the forbidden sacred grove  
Unless a petal hit the ground,  
Nor any human sight within it  
But the crushed grass where we have lain;  
And the moon is wilder every minute.  
O! Solomon! let us try again.'

The poem ends under a moon which grows "wilder every minute", thus the early suggestion of rich potentiality which the present wildness picks up (symptomatic of the world of the poet), is buttressed by Sheba's final urge, ironically, for a transcendental, world-ending experience. This urge might be emblematic of all human striving for something beyond the confines of what has already been attained or established in life. In this more general picture the saint's conception of transcendence would represent the ultimate attainment in life, and, therefore, the prime goal of all the poet's strivings. The poet's world, man's world, is then, as it were, set into motion by its attraction to the saint's world. Thus, in terms of our engagement with life, the distance between saint and poet seems more important than their meeting. And yet it is the pleasure derived from some form of apprehension of the brief meeting of the two-- suggested by Sheba's desire to "try again"-- which gives impetus to the engagement with life.



### III

As Miller indicates, Yeats believed that the archetypes, the forms of eternity, need to express themselves through the temporal world (Miller, 1966: 88-9). And eternity in Yeats characteristically descends into the temporal world through the sexual embrace. Tom the lunatic claims:

The stallion Eternity  
Mounted the mare of Time,  
'Gat the foal of the world. (CP 264)

Zeus couples with Leda, to look at another sexual union, in order to generate a new temporal cycle. In 'Rihh Considers Christian Love Insufficient' the soul is God's 'bride', involved in intimate union with Him:

What can she know until He bid her know!  
How can she live till in her blood He live! (CP 285)

For Crazy Jane, the beatitude of 'soleness' and 'wholeness' is arrived at through a telling conjunction of 'fair' and 'foul' centred in the sexual organs:

'... Love has pitched his mansion in  
The place of excrement;  
For nothing can be sole or whole  
That has not been rent.' (CP 255)

'Love' as an eternal force finds its 'mansion', its most glorious

abode, in the lowliest parts of the body.

Thus, not only does eternity beget the world upon time, it is represented in time through sexual union. This union of opposites is clearly apparent in the conjunction of man and daimon as explored in *Mythologies*. The daimon, being our opposite, is the contrary gyre, as it were, of our personal life, and, if a sweetheart, gives emphasis to the sexual nature of the gyring motion. Man seeking daimon is a reflection of the drive towards completion endemic to the temporal world. And the temporal world is set into motion, according to Yeats, through the pull of opposites. This point is illustrated in his poetry in 'Politics', for example, where a number of opposites come into play-- age and youth, intellect and emotion, and, most importantly, male and female:

And maybe what they say is true  
Of war and war's alarms,  
But O that I were young again  
And held her in my arms. (CP 337)

This poem was originally positioned at the conclusion of Yeats's last volume of verse, thus indicating at the end of his life a desire to return to the beginning, to circle back into that realm of temporal process, where the 'young' are 'in one another's arms'. Although temporal process is conditioned by the play of opposites, life is generated by a union of opposites, a sexual union. It is as if two halves of a circle meet in the love between a man and woman, and, as in 'Solomon and the Witch', the

perfect sphere is glimpsed. Again, the sexual drive is analogous to the play of universal forces, and sexual union is analogous to a state of completion, a mandala free of opposing tensions. A favourite Platonic image of Yeats comes to mind, Aristophanes' conception in *The Symposium* that man and woman were once single beings, but have now been divided, as eggs are divided with a hair (Plato, 1961: 543). Sexual union momentarily restores this particular mandala shape.

Miller argues that 'no human lovers can reach such [transcendental] unity, and, as a result, sex is not a means of liberation from the whirling of time' (Miller, 1966: 95). This fact cannot be denied, but neither can the importance of the sexual act in relation to beatitude be denied, as already pointed out in the discussion of 'Solomon and the Witch'. The glimpse we are afforded of the sphere of completion is crucially important in itself. But there is a qualification to even this partial completion, as Miller notes:

Lovers catch a glimpse in their ecstasy of the bliss of heaven, but in their attempt to make this joy eternal they exhaust it, and fall back into 'the common round of day'. This failure of love is a constant refrain of Yeats's thought....  
(Miller, 1966: 95)

This too is so, and yet the 'glimpse' instils in Sheba, for example, the urge to "'try again'", while the poet in 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul' who, once he affirms that he will 'try again', attains a glimpse of a 'remorse'-free state linked to an

experience of momentary beatitude.

#### IV

If 'Solomon and the Witch' is able to indicate the darker side of love through its image of the 'spider's eye', the type of union portrayed in 'Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient' also touches on a shadow aspect of love, suggesting the possible value of the darker side of human nature in the search for beatitude. Acceptance of the dark pole, as Ribh points out, is commensurate with acceptance of one's own humanity:

Why should I seek for love or study it?  
It is of God and passes human wit.  
I study hatred with great diligence,  
For that's a passion in my own control,  
A sort of besom that can clear the soul  
Of everything that is not mind or sense. (CP 330)

Offering a bleak view of human nature, perhaps, the poem yet suggests the value inherent in human nature. Ribh, in equating 'love' with the unitary perspective of God, and 'hatred' with the perspective of the human individual, resurrects Frye's distinction, but also brings to mind the 'One' underlying the distinction. Ribh's hatred is reflective of his individual 'choice' ('...that's a passion in my own control'); he will not place himself at the mercy of the unpredictable power of love, which is subject to 'chance'. The opposition between love and hatred is not divisionary in intention, however, but, rather,

implies a curative focus. Even in this first stanza it is clear that Ribh would use hatred as a purifying agent ('A sort of besom...'). His object is the purification of the 'soul'; he seeks to 'clear the soul/ Of everything that is not mind or sense'. As soul and anima are related, his task, to restore the soul to a pristine state, might be viewed as a type of integration of the anima. Indeed, the feminine quality of the soul is soon to be emphasised. Linked to hatred, her restoration is also suggestive of a shadow encounter. But because of Ribh's ultimate goal, unity with God, the overall impression conveyed by the poem is that these archetypes are integrated within a pattern of unity. What is interesting about this present state of redemption is that, even though it participates in patterns previously encountered in 'Sailing to Byzantium', 'Byzantium' and 'News for the Delphic Oracle', the beginning of the purification process is now perceived to be in this life, not an after life. Its temporal nature in this regard, then, links it to 'Solomon and the Witch', although it functions on the more abstract level of soul and God, as opposed to man and woman.

But the purification process which Ribh undergoes is centred in a particularly concrete conception of hatred. That is, this hatred is first directed at 'man', 'woman' and 'event', bringers, apparently, of 'terror' and 'deception'. The extremity of this view suggests an intense preoccupation with the shadow, but Ribh's willingness to laud it as a redemptive 'light' shows not weakness, but a potential for mastery, especially as the shadow become 'light' is most constructive in the integration of

the anima:

Why do I hate man, woman or event?  
That is a light my jealous soul has sent.  
From terror and deception freed it can  
Discover impurities, can show at last  
How soul may walk when all such things are past,  
How soul could walk before such things began.

The purificatory nature of hatred is again emphasised, a notion which directly contradicts the view expressed in 'A Prayer for My Daughter' (CP 213):

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,  
The soul recovers radical innocence

If a similar end for the soul is desired in both poems, the poems would appear to employ opposite means. Of course, Ribh is not Yeats, who is clearly the narrator of 'A Prayer for My Daughter', but both Ribh and Yeats desire, in effect, to master hatred. 'A Prayer for My Daughter' tends to skirt the issue of how to do this; 'Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient' does not, and for this reason might, of the two poems, be considered a more successful attempt to accommodate, and finally master, the shadow.

Once freed of 'impurities' the 'delivered soul' can focus on thoughts of God, and, in a process mirroring its own purification, purify these thoughts:

Then my delivered soul herself shall learn

A darker knowledge and in hatred turn  
From every thought of God mankind has had.  
Thought is a garment and the soul's a bride  
That cannot in that trash and tinsel hide:  
Hatred of God may bring the soul to God.

Thus the concluding line of this stanza is qualified by the preceding lines; 'Hatred of God' is really hatred of thoughts of God, which have become barriers to God's presence. If thoughts are 'garment[s]' made of 'trash and tinsel', they are also garments which hinder the sexual embrace. The soul perceived as God's 'bride', despite orthodox conventual associations, becomes in Yeats an image which explicitly links beatific experience and sexual love, again, in the tradition of 'Solomon and the Witch'.

Hassett's book *Yeats and the Poetics of Hate* provides a detailed study of Yeatsian hatred, and it is apposite to reintroduce it at this point, in an examination of Ribh's hatred. Hassett actually sees hate in Yeats as having a sexual basis: '...the relations between men and women in Yeats's poetry are fated to illustrate the workings of that other antinomic pair, love and hate'. The very fact that there is a distinction between the sexes is emblematic of hate: 'Yeats often used the division of the sexes as an illustration of the fragmentation of primal unity that introduced hate into the world' (1986: 90). If this is so, 'unmixed beatitude is possible when, in a return to primal unity, hate is re-submerged in love' (1986: 106). Is this re-submergence not precisely what is imaged in the final stanza of

'Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient'?

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!

The process of purification must be complete by 'stroke of midnight', the moment of death, the period between antithetical states of the soul, as it were, depicted in 'Byzantium' and 'The Four Ages of Man' (CP 332). Purified, freed of 'bodily and mental furniture', and therefore the hatred attached to both as imaged in the previous stanzas, soul can become one with God, Who is the giver of 'love' (stanza one). The soul that hates God becomes submerged in God, or, in Hassett's terms, 'hate is re-submerged in love'.

V

Crazy Jane, in 'Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop' (CP 294), while firmly attached to this world and her own sexuality, has also glimpsed the beatific, as we have noted. The bishop (although hypocritically, judging from the penultimate line of 'Crazy Jane and the Bishop' -- 'But should *that other* come, I spit'(CP 291; my italics)) favours only the beatific:

I met the Bishop on the road

And much said he and I.



'Those breasts are flat and fallen now,  
Those veins must soon be dry;  
Live in a heavenly mansion,  
Not in some foul sty.'

Curiously though, he is sexually alert, "'Those breasts are flat and fallen now"'. His logic, in fact, ironically privileges sexuality: only because Jane's breasts are flat and fallen, can she now turn to the 'heavenly'. Of course, the case could be put forward that he anticipates Jane's point of view, and appeals to *her* sense of priority (as he sees it). And whatever his past sexual record, he now seems committed to a dualistic vision which undermines physicality: the opposition he sets up between 'heavenly mansion' and 'foul sty' conveys his revulsion for this world; if wordly imagery must be used, 'mansion', at least, guarantees a fitting elevation above the common round. The mansion, however, is not that far removed, it may be argued, from the City of Art, offering a similar refuge based on a *wordly* analogue. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine nymphs and satyrs copulating in the Bishop's 'heavenly mansion'. And presently Jane is to appropriate the Bishop's term, and apply it to what he had called a 'foul sty', thereby undermining his distinction: '...Love has pitched his mansion in/ The place of excrement'.

Jane's immediate response repudiates the Bishop's dualism. If she also challenges Yeats's dualism (as presented in 'Sailing to Byzantium', for instance), this fact might help indicate her

daimonic function in relation to the poet. She is an anti-self, a mask, the whore aspect of the anima to an extent ('Though like a road/ That men pass over/ My body makes no moan'(CP 294)), although she also expresses Yeats's ultimate regard for sexuality, as depicted in 'News for the Delphic Oracle', 'Solomon and the Witch', or 'Ribh Denounces Patrick', where the 'heavenly' and the 'foul' mirror each other:

Natural and supernatural with the self-same ring are wed.  
As man, as beast, as an ephemeral fly begets, Godhead  
    begets Godhead,  
For things below are copies, the Great Smaragdine Tablet  
    said. (CP 328-9)

Jane grants that sexually she is no longer attractive, and that because of her age she has outlived certain of her lovers. But the "truth" of her perception is yet apparent to her and indeed seems reinforced by the conjunction of fair and foul aspects in her own nature, "bodily lowliness" and "the heart's pride", which enabled her to arrive at this truth:

'Fair and foul are near of kin,  
And fair needs foul,' I cried.  
'My friends are gone, but that's a truth  
Nor grave nor bed denied,  
Learned in bodily lowliness  
And in the heart's pride.

Her unifying vision represents a type of individuation; she

accepts both dark and light aspects of her nature, integrating "heart's pride" and "bodily lowliness". Her final image, indeed, might be seen as an attempt to heal the primal division as portrayed by Blake in *Jerusalem*. The Spectre of Urthona, what Bloom calls the 'element of nervous fear within the creative mind' (1972: 402), speaks:

The Man who respects Woman shall be despised by Woman,  
And deadly cunning & mean abjectness only shall enjoy them.  
For I will make their places of joy & love excrementitious,  
Continually building, continually destroying in Family  
feuds. (Blake, 1972: 734)

The 'places of joy & love' are 'excrementitious' in the world of primary divisions. If, as Hasset indicates, Freud is rather disturbed by this fact ('the excremental is all too intimately and inseparably bound up with the sexual' (Freud, 1981: 189)), Jane appears positively to exult in it:

'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.'

Thus the "heart's pride" is linked to the "place of excrement", a link which evokes for Freud man's animal nature (ibid.), or in Jungian terms the intuitive, emotional realm of

the shadow (1969: 20). Again, in this context, Jane's proud declaration might indeed be indicative of individuation. She too implies her awareness of the existence of a pre-existing wholeness, an egg prior to its being divided with a hair, as Hassett points out (1986: 92). More explicitly, though, she indicates an individuation process based on primary fragmentation. Unity can only be attained through initial disunity: "...nothing can be sole or whole/ That has not been rent."

Another point of interest about this stanza, is the primacy which the shadow attains in it: "...Love has pitched his mansion in/ The place of excrement". Bloom holds Yeats's Gnosticism to blame for this primacy: 'There is a Gnostic assumption here that the place is "of excrement", while Love has the audacity to pitch its mansion where it lacks priority' (1972: 403). Bloom's dismay is a bit puzzling, as the 'priority' of the animal nature linked to bodily functions is as much Freudian as Gnostic in terms of the sub-strata of the psyche. 'Love', capitalized, is associated with man's higher nature, and belongs in a sense to a later stage of development in his psyche. And clearly, Jane's emphasis is on the balance of fair and foul, not the priority of the one over the other. If there is an initial priority it loses pertinence in the face of Jane's beatific illumination gained through her sexual experience.

But as the 'wild old wicked man' says, sexual experience is always "second-best" to the "stream" of beatific "lightning" from God (CP 358). Jane is certainly aware of the

limitations of sexual love, but like Sheba, she is not deterred. In 'A Last Confession' a female persona not unlike Jane distinguishes between 'bodily' love and love of the 'soul', the one giving 'pleasure' the other causing 'misery':

What lively lad most pleased me  
Of all that with me lay?  
I answer that I gave my soul  
And loved in misery,  
But had great pleasure with a lad  
That I loved bodily.

Flinging from his arms I laughed  
To think his passion such  
He fancied that I gave a soul  
Did but our bodies touch,  
And laughed upon his breast to think  
Beast gave beast as much.

Thus her experience is not integrated in the way Jane's is, although the poem concludes with an image of desired beatific union similar to that expressed by Ribh's soul, free of the distinctions and tensions experienced when in the body:

I gave what other women gave  
That stepped out of their clothes,  
But when this soul, its body off,  
Naked to naked goes,  
He it has found shall find therein

What none other knows.

And give his own and take his own  
And rule in his own right;  
And though it loved in misery  
Close and cling so tight,  
There's not a bird of day that dare  
Extinguish that delight.

As Hassett notes, 'the reunion of male and female restores the soul to that special state of beatitude for which Yeats reserved the word "delight"' (1986: 95). The state is a desired one, projected by the speaker's imagination, and is not experienced by her. Thus even though a degree of beatitude is so rapturously imagined, 'misery' is yet attendant, again emphasising the present speaker's lack of integration in comparison with Jane. While this persona is able to concede that body must be 'bruised to pleasure soul' (CP 244), Jane, in 'Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgement' is adamant that

'Love is all  
Unsatisfied  
That cannot take the whole  
Body and soul' (CP 291-2)

For Jane, beatific experience is only truly possible after death, but is nevertheless dependent on a satisfied sexual relationship; if she remains unsatisfied, union with God will not take place, her ghost will walk the earth, as in 'Crazy Jane and Jack the

Journeyman':

A lonely ghost the ghost is  
That to God shall come;  
I -- love's skein upon the ground,  
My body in the tomb --  
Shall leap into the light lost  
In my mother's womb.

But were I left to lie alone  
In an empty bed,  
The skein so bound us ghost to ghost  
When he turned his head  
Passing on the road that night,  
Mine must walk when dead. (CP 293)

Sexual love, then, can inspire a glimpse of the beatific, as in 'Solomon and the Witch'; it can be an analogue for beatific vision, as in 'Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient'; in 'Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop' it is seen as a precondition for beatific vision; while in 'A Last Confession' it suggests partial realization of the beatific. Finally, in 'Crazy Jane and Jack the Journeyman' true beatific experience is seen to take place only after death, upon condition that sexual love has been satisfied. The two then, beatific vision and sexual love, on the basis of these many perspectives, seem inextricably linked, underlining the importance of sexual love in the quest for the One, if not in the attainment of the One. However, in the following chapter (which concludes this work), we will examine

those rare instances in Yeats where the One is experienced unmediated by the aesthetic dimension of the City of Art or by sexual love. In these instances Yeats comes closest to expressing transcendent unity, or unity of the thirteenth cone.



## CHAPTER NINE: TRANSCENDENT UNITY

### I

Jung, seeking an image of ultimate psychological unity, turns to the notion of the *unus mundus*, to be found in alchemy (Jung, 1970: 533ff.), thus incorporating in his field of studies yet another Yeatsian interest, as expressed in *Rosa Alchemica*. The *unus mundus* is the potential world, existing, in Yeats's terms, 'Before the world was made' (CP 308). Looked at psychologically, alchemy appears, to Jung, to encompass both the process of individuation and experience of the transcendental state of the *unus mundus*. If a state of temporal unity linked to the process of individuation suggests Unity of Being, it is the *unus mundus* which suggests spiritual unity of the transcendent type, attributed by Yeats to the thirteenth cone. At the least, according to Jung, the experience of transcendent unity reflects a psychological reality, which he correlates with mystical experiences from all places and eras:

Not unnaturally, we are at a loss to see how a psychic experience of this kind...can be formulated as a rational concept. Undoubtedly it was meant as the essence of perfection and universality, and, as such, it characterized an experience of similar proportions. We could compare this only with the ineffable mystery of the *unio mystica*, or *tao*, or the content of *samadhi*, or the experience of *satori* in Zen, which would bring us to the realm of the ineffable and of extreme subjectivity where all the criteria of reason fail. Remarkably enough this experience is an empirical one in so far as there

are unanimous testimonies from the East and West alike, both from the present and from the distant past, which confirm its unsurpassable subjective significance. Our knowledge of physical nature gives us no *point d'appui* that would enable us to put the experience on any generally valid basis. It is and remains a secret of the world of psychic experience and can be understood only as a numinous event, whose actuality, nevertheless, cannot be doubted any more than the fact that light of a certain wave-length is perceived as 'red'--a fact which remains incomprehensible only to a man suffering from red-green blindness. (Jung, 1970: 539-40)

Jung attaches the greatest of importance to experience of the *unus mundus*, because of its psychologically synthesizing function. Telling of more than the attainment of individuation, the *conjunctio* of the *unus mundus* yet powerfully integrates conscious and unconscious processes in a way that is certainly connected with individuation. The *conjunctio* lies within the ineffable realm of mystic experience, or the equally mystical spheres of present day psychology and quantum physics. Physicists, for example, postulate their own *unus mundus*, one field in which the four basic forces of nature--electromagnetism, strong and weak interactions, and gravitation--are conjoined at the most fundamental time-distance scale in nature, the Planck scale (Hawking, 1977: 34-40). Jung points out:

The common background of microphysics and depth-psychology is as much physical as psychic and therefore neither, but rather

a third thing, a neutral nature which can at most be grasped in hints since in essence it is transcendental.

The background of our empirical world thus appears to be in fact a *unus mundus*. This is at least a probable hypothesis which satisfies the fundamental tenet of scientific theory: 'Explanatory principles are not to be multiplied beyond the necessary.' The transcendental psychophysical background corresponds to a 'potential world' in so far as all those conditions which determine the form of empirical phenomena are inherent in it. This obviously holds good as much for physics as for psychology, or, to be more precise, for macrophysics as much as for the psychology of consciousness. (Jung, 1970: 538-39)

A notion of transcendent unity as opposed to temporal Unity of Being is, as previously considered, apparent in *A Vision. Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, indeed, first describes the state which is later to be linked by Yeats to the thirteenth cone:

When all sequence comes to an end, time comes to an end, and the soul puts on the rhythmic or spiritual body or luminous body and contemplates all the events of its memory and every possible impulse in an eternal possession of itself in one single moment. (1978b: 357)

The thirteenth cone, we remember, is

...that cycle which may deliver us from the twelve cycles of time and space. The cone which intersects ours is a cone in so

far as we think of it as the antithesis to our thesis, but if the time has come for our deliverance it is the phaseless sphere, sometimes called the Thirteenth Sphere, for every lesser cycle contains within itself a sphere that is, as it were, the reflection or messenger of the final deliverance. (1962b: 210)

In a note intended for the revised *Vision* we find:

The point in the Zodiac where the whirl becomes a sphere once reached, we may escape from the restraint of our nature and from that of external things, entering upon a state where there is nothing but the state itself, nothing to constrain it or end it. (in Ellmann, 1964: 221)

Thus a mandala shape quite explicitly underpins the ultimate unity. While the cycles of existence which inform our lives imply ongoing process, the 'phaseless sphere', free of distinction, is an image of completion, of life 'in eternal possession of itself in one single moment'. This 'eternal moment' is supremely apparent in the converging circle imagery of the poem 'There':

There all the barrel-hoops are knit,  
There all the serpent-tails are bit,  
There all the gyres converge in one,  
There all the planets drop in the Sun. (CP 329)

The concrete, binding elements of existence, 'barrel-hoops', find a place alongside the arcane mandala image of the snake biting its tail, the uroboros (Jung, 1969: 361). The next image is also

arcane, but this time relates to Yeats's own system, specifically the convergence of gyres we recognize to be the 'phaseless sphere'. The poem's structure suggests a type of incremental development: the single uroboros gives way to the entire gyre process; and the humble physical elements of the first line give way to the universal elemental imagery in the final line. The planets in the final line are, with Yeats's interest in astrology in mind (Raine, 1986: 29), emblems of all the aspects of phenomenal existence; when they drop into the sun phenomenal existence sinks back into its eternal, transcendental source.

But Yeats's useage of somewhat remote cosmic and arcane imagery in 'There' to suggest the transcendent makes this poem unique in the poet's canon. Usually in Yeats, as Colin McDowell observes, in 'To "Beat Upon the Wall": Reading *A Vision*', 'Any intimations of the transcendent which we may experience must, of necessity, occur as part of the process of living, in the here and now' (1986: 226). Thus, in some twenty three poems, Yeats evokes transcendence in terms of his own experience (see Appendix I). But the 'process of living' is linked to Unity of Being, and indeed this state of temporal unity might very well be seen as offering 'intimations' of transcendent unity, as suggested in a previous chapter. It is here perhaps where the critics' confusion between Unity of Being and transcendent unity is most likely to occur. We must keep in mind, then, that Unity of Being always has a temporal focus, however much it seeks to transcend division, and that transcendent unity is atemporal in nature.

In a discussion of transcendent unity it is also necessary to observe in passing the poet's fascination with the Indian Vedanta, with what Brian Keeble, in "Myself Must I Remake:" W.B. Yeats and Unity of Being', calls 'that supreme doctrine of Unity' (1979: 160). But while Keeble sees Yeats as 'embracing' the doctrine of Vedanta, I would suggest a more cautious appraisal of the poet's interest in it. He was never finally to commit himself to any one philosophical or religious system. And although he helped translate the Upanishads with a keen interest (see Appendix II), the measure of his own mystical experience remains his poetry.

## II

If Unity of Being is, according to Yeats's system, an experience associated only with subjective or antithetical man, transcendent unity incorporates both subjective and objective poles:

I am always, in all I do, driven to a moment which is the realisation of myself as unique and free, or to a moment which is the surrender to God of all that I am...could these two impulses, one as much a part of truth as the other, be reconciled, or if one or the other could prevail, all life would cease...the ultimate reality must be all movement, all thought, all perception extinguished, two freedoms unthinkably, unimaginably absorbed in one another. (Yeats, 1962a: 305-7)

But again, notions of transcendent unity and temporal unity

are entangled in this quotation. 'If one or the other [of the impulses] could prevail', refers to either extreme objectivity or extreme subjectivity in Yeats's system, Phases 1 and 15, which are indeed beyond life but are yet inextricably bound to the cycles of life. They represent temporary positions on the mandala of Being. The two freedoms 'absorbed in one another' represent, it should be apparent (bearing in mind our reading of Frye in the previous chapter), another case entirely. If the poem 'There' expresses this case, it cannot do so in the humanistic terms used by Yeats above. 'Freedom', for example, is a notion centred in human consciousness. 'There' seems abstract and distant in its conceptions. But Yeats, in presenting the eternal moment (see Appendix III), is indeed able, at certain points in his poetry, to bring us much closer to an intuitive grasp of transcendent unity.

### III

'A Meditation in Time of War' (CP 214) describes an experience of unity which paradoxically transcends phenomenal existence, as is the fashion of the eternal moment. But though it tells of an experience, the poem cannot actually pin-point the contents of that experience. What, after all, is 'One'? Yeats hints at an ineffable unity:

For one throb of the artery,  
While on that old grey stone I sat  
Under the old wind-broken tree,

I knew that One is animate,  
Mankind inanimate fantasy.

What is noticeable is the lived quality of this albeit transcendental experience. It is measured by the 'throb of the artery', a formulation which combines the essence of individual existence (a throbbing artery), with an impersonal detachment, conveyed by the use of the definite article 'the', in place of a possessive pronoun. The phenomenal world is conspicuously present through the stark, elemental imagery of stone and tree. And causal process is implied in the reference to the 'wind-broken' appearance of the tree. This contrasts with the absence of process in the poet's perception of unity; the knowledge which comes to him is not the result of a process of logical deduction, it is intuitively felt, spontaneously perceived.

The final line of the poem is disturbing in the way it deliberately negates mankind. The point the poet attempts to make, though --that juxtaposed with such an experience, our daily lives are, by comparison, 'inanimate' --needs, I think, this dramatic emphasis. Nevertheless, there is in Yeats's language at present an undeniable element of scorn towards temporal existence.

'A Dialogue of Self and Soul' (CP 265), a poem which appears to be of recurring significance in this thesis, examines the dichotomy with which 'A Meditation' leaves us, and finally rescues the very real sense of human joy attached to the eternal moment. But the poem offers a far more complex scrutiny of the



moment than does the earlier one. It presents a systematic investigation of the different perspectives of the Soul and the Self, and arrives at the joy, seemingly, through conscious deliberation. However, it appears to me that what Yeats finally describes is a propitious conflation of choice and chance triggered by deliberation, but by no means dependent on it. In other words, the personal choice of casting out remorse, although linked to conscious deliberation, can only coincide with the full intensity of the gift of blessedness which follows through the operations of impersonal chance.

The Soul retains vestiges of the daimon and anima in the way she establishes a complementary opposition to the Self. She speaks first:

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?

The image of transcendence evoked here is curiously circumscribing; Yeats's old tower, Thoor Ballylee, is presented as a gyre winding away into the stifling, 'breathless' unity of Phase 1 ('starlit' as opposed to the moonlit nature of Phase 15). What is perceived in this context as a barren, stasis-inducing

exercise is now required, a fixing of thought upon the end of thought. There is a troubling ambiguity in the final line: 'Who can distinguish darkness from the soul?' The equation of the soul with darkness suggests a rich mystery from one point of view, but from another, an indiscriminate and gloomy unity.

The Self is drawn to different imagery, imagery of love and war, the dialectic of continual process:

The consecrated blade upon my knees  
Is Sato's ancient blade, still as it was,  
Still razor-keen, still like a looking-glass  
Unspotted by the centuries;  
That flowering, silken, old embroidery, torn  
From some court-lady's dress and round  
The wooden scabbard bound and wound,  
Can, tattered, still protect, faded adorn.

Self's message is the persistence and durability of temporal existence. The emblem of war, the blade, is unspotted and 'razor-keen', albeit centuries-old. The image of love, the embroidery, though 'tattered' and 'faded', still 'protects' and 'adorns'. The conjunction of blade and embroidery encompasses complementary extremes of the phenomenal world, affirming in a convincing manner the value of this world. If the stair-case gyre winds into darkness, the embroidered 'gyre' winding round the sword suggests an opposite direction.

The Soul is scornful of complementary opposites, seeking to affirm the value of a state beyond opposites, and reintroduces

the tone discernible in the final line of 'A Meditation':

Why should the imagination of a man  
Long past his prime remember things that are  
Emblematical of love and war?  
Think of ancestral night that can,  
If but imagination scorn the earth  
And intellect its wandering  
To this and that and t'other thing,  
Deliver from the crime of death and birth.

The Soul points out to the Self the value of transcendence, and, at the same time, disparages the Self's immersion in temporal existence. Thus the fact of 'death and birth' is referred to, bitinglly, as a 'crime', and the Self, 'Long past his prime', is made to seem ludicrous in contemplating process-bound emblems. By comparison, 'ancestral night', the 'darkness' of the first section of the poem, offers 'Deliver[ance]' from process. The deliverance is, however, conditioned by a 'scorn' of the temporal, linking it to 'A Meditation', and the 'scorn' apparent in 'Byzantium'. This attitude, ironically reflective of an evaluative and antinomic dualism, is not consonant with the deliberation-free workings of the transcendent as exemplified elsewhere in Yeats's thought. In *Per Amica*, Yeats is emphatic that the coming of the eternal moment is 'always unforeseen' (1978b: 364); and in *A Vision* the thirteenth cone is equated with 'freedom' (1962b: 301). The Soul remains unwittingly engaged, then, in the conflict-ridden world of process.

The Self is intent on immersing itself in process:

Montashigi, third of his family, fashioned it  
Five hundred years ago, about it lie  
Flowers from I know not what embroidery--  
Heart's purple--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.

Insisting on the validity of its emblems, the Self attempts to displace the nocturnal imagery of the Soul with its own 'emblems of the day'. Further, by powerfully affirming the notion of a soldier's 'charter', it unashamedly appropriates and so imbues with a more positive sense the Plotinian idea that an attachment to the realm of process is a 'crime' (Raine, 1986: 279).

It is at this moment of affirmation that a change comes over the Soul, who no longer preaches a scornful dualism, but now acknowledges with some wonderment the fullness of the moment. 'Unforeseen', when least expected, the eternal moment comes, and man, subject to transcendence, cannot offer any experiential accounts:

Such fullness in that quarter overflows  
And falls into the basin of the mind  
That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,  
For intellect 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.

The Soul tells of a 'fullness' of experience which transcends itself; man 'is stricken deaf and dumb and blind' in its presence. In *A Vision*, Will and Mask are will and its object, or the *Is* and the *Ought*, and Creative Mind and Body of Fate are thought and its object, or the *Knower* and the *Known* (1962b: 73). The fact that the Four Faculties are perceived as being indistinguishable here suggests a unity which is beyond the distinctions fundamental to generation. In other words, at such a point the world of generation has been transcended, and even the loquacious Soul, though familiar with a transcendent state ('That quarter where all thought is done'), cannot find words to convey the state ('my tongue's a stone').

In Part II of the poem, the Self alone remains to give voice to the processes leading up to this moment of freedom as it is experienced, not in 'Heaven', but in the 'impure' 'ditches' of this life. We see that Self's attitude is conditioned by acceptance; as already noted in a previous chapter he accepts what might be termed the shadow aspects of existence, integrating such moments in a holistic manner within his being:

A living man is blind and drinks his drop.  
What matter if the ditches are impure?  
What matter if I live it all once more?

Endure that toil of growing up;  
The ignominy of boyhood; the distress  
Of boyhood changing into man;  
The unfinished man and his pain  
Brought face to face with his own clumsiness;

The blindness here contrasts with the blindness of the previous section of the poem, where man, in the presence of fullness, is 'stricken deaf and dumb and blind'; the present blindness is not connected with the influx of eternity, but rather with the limiting nature of human life, where every stage of temporal existence is conditioned by 'distress': 'toil'; 'ignominy'; 'pain'; 'clumsiness'. Nevertheless, it is by accepting this blindness that one prepares the way for the consuming blindness of 'fullness', and already Self has begun to accept: 'What matter if the ditches are impure?/ What matter if I live it all once more?' And yet the distress relentlessly pushes in upon him in the second and third stanzas, underlining, it seems to me, the enormity of his choice:

How in the name of Heaven can he escape  
That defiling and disfigured shape  
The mirror of malicious eyes  
Casts upon his eyes until at last  
He thinks that shape must be his shape?  
And what's the good of an escape  
If honour find him in the wintry blast?

At times man is blind to himself, and so can only reflect the 'shapes' others project on him. That is, man is not left simply to contend with his own Is and Ought and Knower and Known, he also has to contend with the often very powerful and baleful prejudices of others. And although these years of conflict might end in 'honour' for the Self, by now Self is exposed to the 'wintry blast' of old age.

But if an intense form of blindness results in the reduction of the Self into a shadow figure, which is imposed by inherent limitations, enemies, and old-age, perhaps the worst blindness of all is that attached to an anima infatuation:

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.

And yet even aware of this blindness, Self can affirm and reaffirm acceptance: 'I am content to live it all again/ And yet again'.

In the concluding stanza the sum of the Self's distress is encapsulated in a generalized formulation of forgiveness which heralds the influx of the eternal moment, and a corresponding sense of the blessedness of the temporal, in sharp contrast with

earlier views presented by both Soul and Self, in fact:

I am content to follow to its source  
Every event in action or in thought;  
Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!  
When such as I cast out remorse  
So great a sweetness flows into the breast  
We must laugh and we must sing,  
We are blest by everything,  
Everything we look upon is blest.

Every aspect of engagement with the temporal has been accounted for; there is little possibility of self-delusion, then, in this moment of acceptance. Also, the circumscriptions of life are all too evident. The formulation 'When such as I' would further limit the possibilities of delusion by suggesting the poet's clear understanding of his own shortcomings. As indicated earlier, although very deliberately 'cast[ing] out remorse', Self yet evokes the eternal moment, which only comes when one is free of deliberation. The paradox is resolved by recalling the desired moment in 'Solomon and the Witch' when Choice becomes one with Chance and eternity floods in. In the present case, Self indeed experiences choice (registered as deliberate action) becoming one with chance (occurrence free of deliberation), and the resultant ingress of joy constitutes an experience of the same supreme moment.

Yeats's poetic account of the type of eternal moment originally described in *Per Amica* (1978b: 364-65) is a compelling



one. Appearing as poem number IV in the midst of the eight-part sequence 'Vacillation', it forms a 'still point' at the heart of 'those antinomies/ Of day and night' expressed in this sequence (CP 282). The sequence offers an extended affirmation of the belief in process and cyclicity established in 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul'. Thus, in the first poem, 'death'(which comes to destroy antinomies) is equated with 'joy', not extinction. The play of opposites, viewed as an antinomic Sephirothic tree 'half all glittering flame and half all green', is apparent in the second poem. The third celebrates extremities of ambition and idleness by approving of both; it also celebrates death (which must be 'prepared' for), and death is beyond the confines of the 'Lethan foliage' of the extremities. Death is also the means whereby one can test the potency of one's own work; can this work satisfy 'such men as come/ Proud, open-eyed and laughing to the tomb'? 'Such men', being 'open-eyed', are also aware that death is not extinction, hence their laughter, which is related to the 'joy' of the first poem.

Poem V presents the self-absorption associated with a sense of responsibility. Transcending antinomies through this state (he disregards both 'summer sunlight' and 'wintry moonlight' because of it), the poet is yet very much bound to the world of process, to 'Things said or done' which seem to 'weigh' him down, of so substantial import are they. The sixth poem, with its refrain, "Let all things pass away", would undermine this sense of importance attached to temporal process, but must acknowledge the presence of the antinomies:

From man's blood-sodden heart are sprung  
Those branches of the night and day  
Where the gaudy moon is hung.

Vacillating, the seventh poem attempts to rescue 'all things' from the gulf which encompasses them in the previous poem. The Soul implies that 'reality' is other than 'all things', which merely 'seem'. The Heart, like the Self, is committed to 'all things', however illusory they may be in the end, being a 'singer' in need of a 'theme'. According to the Soul, purgatorial fire, which cleanses us of the stains we suffer from 'things that seem', leads to the culmination of human experience, 'salvation'. But the Heart stubbornly insists on its relation to 'original sin'.

The final poem of the sequence, drawing similarities and contrasts between Von Hugel's Christian perceptions (Jeffares, 1962: 273) and the poet's (now free of vacillation), insists on the stance adopted in poem VII, and commits the poet to periodicity, to 'pre-destined' cyclicity, the fruit of 'original sin'.

At this stage, having obtained a general perspective of the sequence, we might examine poem IV (which transcends the sequence, as it were) more closely:

My fiftieth year had come and gone,  
I sat, a solitary man,  
In a crowded London shop,  
An open book and empty cup

On the marble table-top.

While on the shop and street I gazed  
My body of a sudden blazed;  
And twenty minutes more or less  
It seemed, so great my happiness,  
That I was blessed and could bless.

Speaking of such experiences, Michael Paffard, in his book, *The Unattended Moment*, notes:

Certainly the moment or experience is out of all proportion to the stimulus...which therefore seems trivial--that is part of the puzzling and paradoxical character of the moment--but what is significant, I suggest, is the subjective mood or exact state of balance of mind and body of the person who has the experience. The unattended moment may come when we are travelling in a train, ill in bed, reading or washing the dishes; in the most humdrum surroundings we may be 'surprised by joy'....(1973: 10-11)

Paffard's observations surely apply to the poet's description of this unattended moment in 'Vacillation'. The setting is 'a crowded London shop', which, apart from epitomizing the 'humdrum' world with its 'empty cup' and 'marble table-top', is the very opposite of the Yeatsian ideal of paradise expressed in 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', a poem condemning the London scene. In this unpropitious environment the moment, true to form, suddenly and without warning, descends.

The poet distinguishes between himself as a 'solitary' individual, and the 'crowded' shop. The 'open book' intensifies this solitariness by suggesting the isolated absorption of a reader. After the moment descends in the second stanza, however, distinction seems to fall away in 'the simplicity of fire', as his body 'blaze[s]'. 'Surprised by joy' the previously solitary individual is now immersed in a circle of reciprocity conditioned by 'blessed[ness]'.

As we have seen, Jung relates the God-image in man to the mandala: 'The God-image in man that was damaged by the first sin can be "reformed"....The totality images which the unconscious produces in the course of an individuation process are similar "reformations" of an *a priori* archetype (the mandala)' (1968: 40). But Yeats's Christ-image of Unity of Being, as we have also seen, is, like the process of Jungian individuation, temporal in nature. In 'Vacillation IV' a circle or mandala of reciprocity is covertly suggested, which reflects not hidden process but eternity itself, mirrored in the intensity of the joy and love inherent in blessedness. In discussing Emily Dickinson, Northrop Frye notes that paradise for her is already given in experience, and is not simply relegated to a biblically inspired after-life. Frye also observes, with some pertinence to the present Yeatsian eternal moment: 'But the Bible also speaks of regaining this Paradise and living in it eternally after death. If so, then the experience of Paradise in life is identical with the experience of eternity' (Frye, 1963: 211). I am finally emphasising that at certain points (literally so, in the context of the entire

Yeatsian canon!) total liberation is not merely anticipated but is actually experienced by Yeats.

#### IV

However committed Yeats is to the images and processes which constitute the tragic universe, at times certain of his central imagery, shadow, anima and mandala imagery, is reflective of the urge for individuation, which in turn anticipates final liberation. By extension (as a dramatic consummation of such mirroring), the imagery of the Jungian myth in certain instances folds in upon itself, deconstructing the very hierarchy (formed from the archetypes themselves as corner-stones of individuation) which privileges images. Thus Jung provides a model in which individual archetypes become absorbed within subtle existential processes (portrayed by the 'archetypes of transformation'), which culminate in the experience of the *unus mundus*. In a similar way-- as in 'There', the conclusion of 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul', and 'Vacillation IV'-- the Yeatsian archetypes become involved in a process which spans that paradoxical gulf between the transcendental and temporal so evident in Yeats's work, and provide a fittingly distanced means of hinting at the transcendental, the *unus mundus*. By way of a final observation, the tendency mentioned here might clearly inform both poles of the tragic universe. The process is apparent in the pervasive strife of 'Two Songs from a Play':

Everything that man esteems

Endures a moment or a day.  
Love's pleasure drives his love away,  
The painter's brush consumes his dreams;  
The herald's cry, the soldier's tread  
Exhaust his glory and his might:  
Whatever flames upon the night  
Man's own resinous heart has fed. (CP 240)

It is also apparent in the fragile paradise of 'Under Ben  
Bulben', at the other extreme of the tragic universe:

Quattrocento put in paint  
On backgrounds for a God or Saint  
Gardens where a soul's at ease;  
Where everything that meets the eye,  
Flowers and grass and cloudless sky,  
Resemble forms that are or seem  
When sleepers wake and yet still dream,  
And when it's vanished still declare,  
With only bed and bedstead there,  
That heavens had opened. (CP 399)

The components of the tragic universe in the above instances--the shadow-like conflict and the mandala of a glimpsed paradise--are in the end, as these poems explicitly affirm, fugitive presences which efface themselves, but not without suggesting the other, the transcendental background. In terms of the realm of presences which we usually inhabit, this background is nothing, but the poet has always been aware of the plenitude brimming in this

absence. Indeed, Yeats titled an early story, 'Where There Is Nothing There Is God' (1908 vol.7: 69), and the thoughts of his last years do not contradict the implications inherent in this paradoxical title. Thus death itself (in the context of tragic drama, where it is presented as the uncompromising closure of process, or the ultimate Nothing) might yet reflect the blessedness of the eternal moment, as in Lady Gregory's words, appropriated by Yeats as an essential part of his own credo:

'Tragedy must be a joy to the man who dies.' (Yeats, 1961b: 523)

## CONCLUSION

Archetypal imagery reflective of the Jungian individuation process is surely of value in an appraisal of Yeats. By applying an archetypal framework to Yeats's thought it is possible to collocate (within the scope of each specific archetype) mutually enriching groups of poems otherwise not usually connected, and also to establish (within the scope of the archetypes as a whole) important general categories. Thus, analyzed according to an archetypal framework, the shadow poems reveal Yeats's responses to a number of anxiety areas in his life, which have certainly been apparent to other critics before, but not in the present interlinked fashion. The benefit of this interlinking (apart from the freshness of vision one naturally derives from new groupings of, and new ways of looking at, familiar materials) is that it helps emphasise the essential unity of the poet's stance, despite the patent diversity of his subject matter. From the perspective of this unity Yeats's response to shadow pressures is seen to be consistent: not condoning *any* of the shadow forces (to offer a final rejoinder to Harold Bloom), he yet integrates them all into his work. This integration enables the poet to turn adversity into creative process, a manoeuvre which has a clear psychological counterpart in the Jungian myth. Indeed, an understanding of Yeats's artistic processes and his philosophy of existence both benefit from an appreciation of the Jungian shadow.

Jungian integration is also evident in Yeats's dealings with the anima. His poetic relationships with such figures as Maud



Gonne, Niamh, and the daimon all contribute to his final assimilation of the feminine into his notions of phenomenal process. The success of this assimilation is measured by the creation of Crazy Jane, the poet's most fully realized female figure, who plays such an important part in the linking of sexuality and beatific vision.

If the mandala is central to Yeats's system, our awareness of this fact helps underline, on the level of deep psychological need, the Yeatsian preoccupation with unity. The resolution of this need, manifest in Yeats's successful construction of a system at once simple, intricate, and profound, eventuated in a mastery of existential vision that had not been seen in English literature since the time of Blake. A mindfulness of Jung aids us in suggesting an explanation for the impetus Yeats gained from constructing this system. Knowledge of the mandala also helps explain the significance of the assimilation of the other archetypes into Yeats's vision of life and, indeed, indicates a congruence of synthesizing factors totally in keeping with the Yeatsian theme of unity.

Anima, shadow and mandala archetypes are located at the core of Yeats's thought, and give substance to such pivotal conceptions as conflict, the feminine principle, and cyclicity. But, again, that these notions, after they are explicitly related to Jungian individuation, can in turn be seen as informing a larger concern with unity, in fact constitutes the principal value of the present approach. Yeats once expressed wonder at the fact that he had said the same thing in so many different ways in

his poetry (in Pearce, 1986: 195). Knowledge of the archetypes casts light on this Yeatsian unity in diversity. For despite the fact that each archetype participates in minor themes specific to itself, all the archetypes participate in the major theme of the quest for unity. It is no wonder, then, that the unifying tendency in Yeats, being established on such a fundamental basis, developed its particular strength and profundity. Following from this point, it is also no wonder that Yeatsian unity was esteemed by one as antithetical to the poet's work as Virginia Woolf; she was astonished by the integrality of the poet's aesthetic and philosophical vision, as compared with her own vision and that of the remainder of her contemporaries (Hough, 1984: 87-9).

Finally, the archetypes also point the way to total liberation; and if they invest the process of liberation with the sense of paradox associated with notions of transcendental form, at the same time they help establish -- in the way they bridge concrete image, existential process, and overarching desire for redemptive integration -- the keen presence of the type of epiphany reflective of this liberation.

## APPENDIX I: TRANSCENDENCE IN YEATS

In the very first poem in the *Collected Poems*, 'The Song of the Happy Shepherd' (CP 7), Yeats, conflating, in deconstruction fashion, word and world, suggests an all-engulfing universal meditation, a 'reverie' which transcends all temporal limitations:

The wandering earth herself may be  
Only a sudden flaming word,  
In clanging space a moment heard,  
Troubling the endless reverie.

In a sense, at the beginning of his poetic explorations he perceives the end. Word and world alike are reabsorbed into the primal unity.

'The Song of Wandering Aengus' (CP 66) refers, in passing, to the end of time ('...till time and times are done'), as does 'He Tells of Perfect Beauty' (CP 74) ('...until God burn time'). But the most striking instance of the ending of time in Yeats's early verse occurs in 'The Secret Rose' (CP 77):

I, too, await  
The hour of thy great wind of love and hate.  
When shall the stars be blown about the sky,  
Like the sparks blown out of a smithy, and die?  
Surely thine hour has come, thy great wind blows,  
Far-off, most secret, and inviolate Rose?

Here transcendence is desired in very concrete terms readily equated with apocalypse. Of interest in the consuming 'great

wind' is the fusion of opposites, 'love and hate'.

In 'Running to Paradise' (CP 129), the wind seems to point to the freedom associated with transcendence, and, as in the previous poem, it is an agent on the path to attainment. The goal in this poem is the unity affiliated with paradise, an image which evokes the mandala of refuge rather than the 'awe-full' experience of apocalypse:

The wind is old and still at play  
While I must hurry upon my way  
For I am running to Paradise;  
Yet never have I lit on a friend  
To take my fancy like the wind  
That nobody can buy or bind

The end of time is also considered in 'Solomon and the Witch' (CP 199), but now in relation to the congruence of fate and free will, a combination of universal and individual perspectives. A cockerel thinks

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.

And another type of bird entirely, the golden bird of 'Sailing to Byzantium', sings 'To lords and ladies of Byzantium/ Of what is past, or passing, or to come' (CP 218). This bird, then, is also

acquainted with the reaches of eternity, although, unlike the cockerel, it seems content to comment on temporal existence, and does not wish to sever the link between the eternal and the temporal.

'That the Night Come' (CP 140) and 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' (CP 148) image the end of time in terms of violence, war in the first case and fire in the second. In 'That the Night Come', a proud woman's soul

But lived as 'twere 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.

And of Robert Gregory Yeats writes:

Some burn damp faggots, others may consume  
The entire combustible world in one small room  
As though dried straw, and if we turn about  
The bare chimney is gone black out  
Because the work had finished in that flare.

Time consigned to flames is also apparent in 'In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz' (CP 263):

The innocent and the beautiful

Have no enemy but time;  
Arise and bid me strike a match  
And strike another till time catch

But the violence of the apocalyptic flames might yet instil  
Yeatsian gaiety, as in 'Vacillation' (CP 282):

A brand, or flaming breath,  
Comes to destroy  
All those antinomies  
Of day and night;  
The body calls it death,  
The heart remorse.  
But if these be right  
What is joy?

Indeed, fire is to be associated in the same poem with an  
intimate experience of transcendence, the eternal moment:

While on the shop and street I gazed  
My body of a sudden blazed;  
And twenty minutes more or less  
It seemed, so great my happiness,  
That I was blessed and could bless. (CP 284)

'A Meditation in Time of War' deals with the same type of  
eternal moment (CP 214). The above lines were written in 1932.  
After this date there are relatively few references to  
transcendence in Yeats's poetry. But it is at this time that the  
poet devotes his energies to imbibing the Indian Vedanta, and

possibly the ancient texts of Vedanta, which in many instances corroborate his own perceptions of transcendence (see Appendix II), obviate the need for further poetic explorations on his part.

## APPENDIX II: YEATS AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Transcendental detachment, based on the sense of certainty generated by cyclicity, is evident in 'Mohini Chatterjee' (CP 279):

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

This poem records Yeats's first experience of Indian philosophy. As Tuohy observes, 'Yeats responded with enthusiasm': "It was my first meeting with a philosophy that confirmed my vague speculations and seemed at once logical and boundless" (Tuohy, 1976: 35). But however much the appeal of 'boundlessness' might have stirred the young Yeats's imagination, he was for many years to concern himself with the limitations, rather, of this world. Rabindranath Tagore suggested to him the fusion of the boundless and the limited, in a way that must have confirmed insights derived from Yeats's early studies of Blake:

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight....

No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight.



Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love. (Tagore, 1913: 68)

Yeats's 1912 introduction to *Gitanjali* emphasises Tagore's commitment to the realm of the poet, as opposed to that of the saint, despite the Indian's saintly nature. Yeats quotes one of the poet's admirer's: "He is the first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of Life itself...." (Tagore, 1913: ix) In the same introduction Yeats writes:

Since the Renaissance the writing of European saints-- however familiar their metaphor and the general structure of their thought-- has ceased to hold our attention. We know that we must at last forsake the world, and we are accustomed in moments of weariness or exaltation to consider a voluntary forsaking; but how can we, who have read so much poetry, seen so many paintings, listened to so much music, where the cry of the flesh and the cry of the soul seem one, forsake it harshly and rudely? What have we in common with St. Bernard covering his eyes that they may not dwell upon the beauty of the lakes of Switzerland, or with the violent rhetoric of the Book of Revelation? (Tagore, 1913: xvii-xviii)

And yet *Gitanjali* also introduces to Yeats the notion of the inner Self, so central to both the Upanishads and, under a different nomenclature, Yeatsian philosophy:

He it is, the innermost one, who awakens my being with his

deep hidden touches. (Tagore, 1913: 67)

Yeats's appropriation of the East is clearly apparent in his introduction to the Upanishads, translated by Shree Purohit Swami and the poet himself. Yeats writes of George Russell:

He expressed in his ceaseless vague preoccupation with the East a need and curiosity of our time. Psychical research, which must some day deeply concern religious philosophy, for its evidences surround the pilgrim and the devotee though they never take the centre of the stage, has already proved the existence of faculties that would, combined into one man, make of that man a miracle-working Yogi. More and more too does it seem to approach a main thought of the Upanishads. Continental investigators, who reject the spiritism of Lodge and Crookes, but accept their phenomena, postulate an individual self possessed of such power and knowledge that they seem at every moment about to identify it with that Self without limitation and sorrow, containing and contained by all, and to seek there not only the living but the dead. (Upanishads, 1937: 9)

Yeats and the Swami's translation defines the transcendental nature of the Self:

'Who knows the Self, bodiless among the embodied, unchanging among the changing, prevalent everywhere, goes beyond sorrow.

'The Self is not known through discourse, splitting of hairs, learning however great; He comes to the man He loves; takes that man's body for His own. (Upanishads, 1937: 31)

The Self is also quite explicitly related to the eternal moment:

'That which is here, is hereafter; hereafter is here. He who thinks otherwise wanders from death to death.

'Tell the mind that there is but One; he who divides the One, wanders from death to death.

'When that Person in the heart, no bigger than a thumb, is known as maker of past and future, what more is there to fear? That is Self.' (Upanishads, 1937: 34)

That is, 'here', 'hereafter', 'past', and 'future', in brief, the elements of 'eternity', exist in concert through the agency of Self, which, when experienced, thus embraces eternity in a moment.

### APPENDIX III: THE ETERNAL MOMENT

The experience of the eternal moment seems to be an experience intensely human and loving, touching on the aspect of 'joy' recounted in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*:

At certain moments, always unforeseen, I become happy, most commonly when at hazard I have opened some book of verse. Sometimes it is my own verse when, instead of discovering new technical flaws, I read with all the excitement of the first writing. Perhaps I am sitting in some crowded restaurant, the open book beside me, or closed, my excitement having overbrimmed the page. I look at the strangers near as if I had known them all my life, and it seems strange that I cannot speak to them: everything fills me with affection, I have no longer any fears or any needs; I do not even remember that this happy mood must come to an end. It seems as if the vehicle had suddenly grown pure and far extended and so luminous that the images from *Anima Mundi*, embodied there and drunk with that sweetness, would, like a country drunkard who has thrown a wisp into his own thatch, burn up time. (1978b: 364-5)

We notice that the joy linked to the eternal moment is connected to the idea of the foreclosure of time, and the apocalyptic fire imagery of the other poems of transcendence.

Michael Paffard, in his book *The Unattended Moment*, provides an alternative name for the eternal moment. He suggests that we

call certain moments 'unattended' because 'they do not seem to fit into our ordinary pattern of experience and are therefore difficult to come to terms with, to think about or to communicate' (1973: 8). Yeats's ability to actually communicate such moments is unusual, in general terms, although others, such as Wordsworth, Tennyson, T.S. Eliot, Llewelyn Powys and Andrew Young, have certainly given voice to it (Paffard, 1973: 16-26). Paffard calls these moments 'brief flashes of experience...so out of the ordinary as to seem to belong to a dimension other than the quotidian, to be epiphanies of another order of reality'. These moments have a definite human value, related to the experience of individuation. They appear to be transformative, giving those who experience them enhanced feelings of love for fellow men, and feelings of the 'mystery and meaningfulness of life' (Paffard, 1973: 10), along with a sense of deep unity with the phenomenal world. Leslie Weatherhead describes an experience similar to the one recounted by Yeats in 'Vacillation'. Weatherhead was travelling in a train at the time: 'For a few seconds only, I suppose, the whole compartment was filled with light. This is the only way I know in which to describe the moment, for there was nothing to see at all. I felt caught up into some tremendous purpose. I never felt more humble. I never felt more exalted. A most curious, but overwhelming sense possessed me and filled me with ecstasy.' (in Paffard, 1973: 53)

Jung describes similar personal experiences of his own suggestive of the *coniunctio* of the *unus mundus*. The experiences took place during an illness that was prelude to a period of

especially fruitful work: 'Towards evening I would fall asleep, and my sleep would last until about midnight. Then I would come to myself and lie awake for about an hour, but in an utterly transformed state. It was as if I were in an ecstasy. I felt as though I were floating in space, as though I were safe in the womb of the universe--in a tremendous void, but filled with the highest possible feeling of happiness.' (Jung, 1977: 324)

It is clear from *Memoirs* that Yeats had a number of such experiences:

I was crossing one afternoon a little stream, and as I leaped I felt an emotion very strange to me--for all my thoughts were pagan--a sense of utter dependence on the divine will. It was over in an instant, and I said to myself, 'That is the way Christians feel.' That night I seemed to wake in my bed to hear a voice saying, 'The love of God for every soul is infinite, for every soul is unique; no other soul can satisfy the same need in God.'

Here is another example:

...I thought I was taken out of my body and into a world of light, and while in this light, which was also complete happiness, I was told I would now be shown the passage of the soul at its incarnation. I saw the mystic elements gather about my soul in a certain order, a whole elaborate process, but the details vanished as I awoke. (1988: 126-8)

The importance of these experiences is emphasised by Yeats, who

claimed that much of his subsequent thought was founded upon 'certain sentences that came in this way' (1988: 126).

*I WILL ARISE AND GO NOW TO THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE..*

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