

*THE APPLICATION OF JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES TO THE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER IN
THREE EARLY PLAYS BY W. B. YEATS*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following study is to explore and examine three early plays authored by the iconic late-19th and 20th-century Irish poet-playwright W. B. Yeats (1865-1939) through the identification and conscious consideration of archetypes, or collective, archaic patterns present in the deepest levels of the human psyche. Although the concept of archetypes dates back to classical antiquity, it was in the pioneering work of the Swiss analytical psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) that the idea of archetypes and archetypal image projection in myth and literature were first deeply and categorically surveyed. Although subsequent literary analysts and cultural anthropologists have expanded upon Jung's conception of archetypes, the work of these scholars remains firmly established upon a foundation first laid by Jung in his exploration of archetypes and archetypal content. Therefore, this essay limits itself to Jung's propositions regarding archetypal material.

This work asserts that, while archetypal images are present in all works of art and literature (including those of the theatre), comprehension of their influence is of particular significance to the critical examination of drama written by Symbolist playwrights such as W. B. Yeats. Chapter I of this essay is devoted to a general exploration of Jung's theorem of archetypes and to a discussion of those recurrent, primordial images which Jung believed to be of greatest importance with regard to human phenomenology. Chapter II examines the presence of archetypal images in Yeats's first published drama, *The Countess Cathleen*, specifically with regard to that work's representation of the Maiden, the Mother, the Anima, and the Trickster. Chapter III centers upon the first of Yeats's dramas to be professionally produced, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, and focuses on the significance that images of the Maiden, the Wise Old Man, the Child, and the Trickster hold in that work. Chapter IV revolves around two versions of Yeats's play *The Hour-Glass*, and upon the manner in which two archetypal images of the Wise Old Man underpin the dramatic action and character presented within that drama.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined the following thesis, entitled "The Application of Jungian Archetypes to the Analysis of Character in Three Early Plays by W. B. Yeats", presented by Benjamin E. Fleeer, candidate for the Master of Arts degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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INTRODUCTION

The foundations of all art rest upon two cornerstones: ideas and emotion. Logos and Eros, thought and feeling, mind and soul; the labels one applies to the respective poles of the spectrum are a matter of semantics. The fact that all of mankind's creative endeavors should arise out of these two conceptions should come as little surprise, for ideas and emotions are the two most potent, forceful aspects of human consciousness. There is never a time when an individual is not, at least to some degree, under the overarching influence of ideas or emotional feeling. Although thought and emotion have traditionally been viewed as mutually exclusive from each other throughout human history, the argument that logic and feeling have no common connector underpinning them can no longer go unquestioned in the modern day.

Placed under close enough scrutiny, all dichotomies are eventually shown to be false --at least to the extent that they are not absolute, and exceptions to them can always be discovered. Furthermore, given enough time, it generally comes to be acknowledged that most things fall somewhere between the two poles of a given dichotomy, and do not restrict themselves solely to extremes. Today it has become apparent that, somewhere along the line between the two, thought flows freely into emotion and emotion readily begets thought. Although thought and emotion are discrete concepts with qualities each distinctly their own, they are ultimately two aspects of the same greater whole. This singular phenomenon is what is referred to when the term "psyche" is employed, and it is through their interaction with the human psyche that visual, literary, and performance art have the capacity to impact human experience.

Few individuals did more during early, pioneering years of medical psychology to attempt to further the study, understanding, and codification of the complex motivations which underlie human behavior and experience than the Swiss analytical psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Although the household name from the period that has sustained itself into posterity has been that of Sigmund Freud, Jung's doctoral advisor and mentor during the initial years of his medical practice, Jung's own impact on the nascent field of medical psychology was arguably just as profound. Though numerous concepts associated with Freud and Jung--most notably, dream interpretation and memory repression--have been discredited by modern scientific findings, few can argue with the assertion that their psychoanalytical work laid the foundation from which much of modern psychological thought has developed, even if many of their opinions about the human psyche might strike as rudimentary today. Because Jung worked in a period before the advent of modern psychological research methodology, basing his theories upon anecdotal, personal observations as a practicing doctor, and not on controlled studies carried out in a laboratory, few of his opinions about the nature of the human psyche meet the standards which modern medical or research psychologists are expected to adhere to. However, this does not mean Jung's work has been wholly invalidated. Though various psychological models brought about by the development of neurobiology and medical psychopharmacology have certainly superseded some of Jung's work, many of the ideas which have their roots in Jung's theorems and research, such as complex development, collective unconsciousness, or the individuation process, remain not so much disproven as simply *unprovable*, be it either in the affirmative or the negative, through standardized empirical verification. Most fascinating among these theorems is Jung's proposition that there exists numerous unconscious, primordial images

housed deep within the psyche, and his beliefs regarding the manner by which these images influence the whole of human experience. Because it does not meet modern empirical standards, this proposition has, quite rightfully, been placed for the most part outside of the realm of modern medical and research psychology. Dramatic analysis, however, indeed, all literary and aesthetic analysis, need not be confined to the laboratory, nor restrict itself to the demands of the scientific method. Ideas which are not necessarily verifiable via empirical observation and scientific repetition are not immediately nullified. To the dramatic critic, Jung's beliefs regarding human consciousness are just as valid a set of tools as the ideas of any philosopher or prestigious thinker throughout history.

The purpose of this study is not to explore every element involved in Jung's conception of the psyche, nor is it to examine the whole of the dramaturgy of W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), the brilliant poet-playwright who stood at the very forefront of the Irish Literary Revival in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as either task alone would--and has, as evidenced by the careers of many scholars--quickly expand beyond the realm of a graduate thesis into that of a doctoral dissertation, and then a book, and beyond that, into an entire print series. Both Jung and Yeats are massive historical figures whose influences still loom large into the present day. The shadows cast by both are long, and to employ too broad a brush when analyzing the work of either one can quickly lead down a rabbit hole with no apparent end in sight. This is perhaps even more true in the case of Yeats, whose collected work amounts to one of the great pillars upon which rests all of twentieth-century Western literature, and whose literary and theatrical accomplishments could provide sufficient material to support a lifetime of academic scholarship.

Instead, the goal of this study is to focus very specifically on a single element of Jung's system of analytical psychology, the proposed existence and influence of collective archetypes, and on its value as a tool in the analysis of dramatic character in three of Yeats's earliest plays. This objective may strike one as a focus too limited or shallow in its scope, but considering the monumental stature of both of the individuals chiefly explored in this study, as well as the prodigious size and sheer complexity of both men's total bodies of work, this essay is of limited focus out of necessity.

In addition, the emphasis of this study is not to analyze every single component of the plays surveyed within it, nor is it to review every reasonable or potentially justifiable avenue of thought with regard to their textual interpretations. Plays are frequently written about many things, and often for more than one reason. This fact has little relevance as to whether or not they contain archetypal material, however. The unconscious nature of archetypes means that they need not be consciously considered by an artist when he or she creates a work of art in order to be channeled through it. Indeed, the practical reasons for which a playwright crafts a character--say, to create a vehicle for an actor, or to serve as an homage to someone important to them--may differ from the archetypal inspirations which, consciously or unconsciously, lead to that same character's creation. It has become axiomatic in lieu of the presence of numerous, equally-valid methods of modern of literary criticism which coexist today that multiple interpretations of the same dramatic text do not necessarily negate one another. Dramatic interpretation, like all literary interpretation, merits recognition and consideration in good faith so long as it is supported by reasonable textual evidence, and the validation of one interpretation does not necessarily invalidate all others if they too are rooted in a play's text. As Northrop Frye aptly notes in his landmark book, *Anatomy of Criticism*:

The principle of manifold or "polysemous" meaning, as Dante calls it, is not a theory any more, still less an exploded superstition, but an established fact. The thing that has established it is the simultaneous development of several different schools of modern criticism, each making a distinctive choice of symbols in its analysis. The modern student of critical theory is faced with a body of rhetoricians who speak of texture and frontal assaults, with students of history who deal with traditions and sources, with critics using material from psychology and anthropology, with Aristotelians, Coleridgians, Thomists, Freudians, Jungians, Marxists, with students of myths, rituals, archetypes, metaphors, ambiguities, and significant forms. The student must either admit the principle of polysemous meaning, or choose one of these groups and then try to prove that all the others are less legitimate. The former is the way of scholarship, and leads to the advancement of learning; the latter is the way of pedantry, and gives us a wide choice of goals... (Frye, 72).

Because the intention of this study is to focus on analyzing three of Yeats's early plays, specifically their characters, through the lens of Jungian archetypal thought, priority will, obviously, be given toward a Jungian interpretation of them here. However, it must, of course, be acknowledged that *The Countess Cathleen*, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, *The Hour-Glass*, and indeed, all of Yeats's plays and poems contain elements of political, historical, sociological, and philosophical relevance which will not be explicitly discussed in the following study. One reason for this is that there is little need to reinvent the wheel; a prodigious body of exceptional scholarship already exists which analyzes these three plays and the entire corpus of Yeats's life's work from nationalist, economic, theological, biographical, and countless other justifiable perspectives, and the reader of this study is encouraged to refer to its bibliography in order to peruse such insightful and astute critical works him or herself. The interpretations found in this study are not meant to discredit or otherwise refute any other interpretations of the three plays examined within it, but are rather intended to highlight the manner in which a cohesive understanding of archetypal contents and their representations can serve as an aid in the comprehension of Symbolist drama by allotting critical readers with an additional method of analysis to utilize when other, more traditional methods prove less than fruitful. To explore all of material that can be identified as meaningful in *The Countess Cathleen*, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, and *The Hour-Glass* within the confines of a single analysis would, quite simply, be impossible, and so the

examinations of these plays presented here intentionally limited themselves to the analysis of archetypal material.

The question of why W. B. Yeats's dramas should be selected to serve as the example texts utilized in this study can be answered with the three justifications. First, Yeats can be identified as one of the (if not *the*) most influential English-language dramatists of the Symbolist period in the Western theatre. Although his plays are often not allotted the same attention as the works of other European poet-dramatists from that period such as the Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck or the Russian playwright Alexander Blok, Yeats's Irish dramas feature some of the most intuitive and profound symbolic imagery to be found in any play whose composition dates from the turn of the twentieth century. Because Symbolism places paramount emphasis on the pervasive use of potent associative images, and the transcendental and ineffable content, those plays which can be identified as belonging to the movement serve as ideal models for dramaturgical archetypal analysis. Second, Yeats's personal predilection toward utilizing universal imagery, and his emphasis on exploring themes of spiritual deliberation and cyclical experience in his poems and plays makes him an exemplary subject for archetypal analysis, even amongst other Symbolist writers. Yeats and Jung both committed much of themselves and their respective careers toward the recognition that historical, cultural, and spiritual institutions in the Western world have largely failed to provide the direction and metaphysical sustenance required by modern mankind, and toward investigating the potential of symbolic imagery in art, myth, and story to provide healing and guidance to modern mankind. Third and finally, Yeats's plays have, for too long, served as a punching bag, both in the literary and the theatrical world, unjustifiably labeled as irrelevant, ineffectual, or unstageable by those who have either failed to grasp, or else failed to

appreciate the theatrical value to be found in his dramas. It is true that, in many regards, Yeats's dramatic work does not match the sublime nature of his poetry. Dramaturgical infelicities within his plays can reasonably be argued to exist, and, for the most part, his dramas do fail to reach the same heights as his poems. Yeats struggled throughout the whole of his theatrical career to find a methodology that fit what he wanted out of his work as a dramatic artist. However, despite this, his plays retain substantial dramatic power and do have the capacity to produce both inspirational and intellectually-riveting theatre. Contrary to David Mamet's assertion that Yeats, "...couldn't write a play to save his soul" (Mamet, 19), the lauded Irish poet *was* a capable playwright, and the opportunity to explore his plays using archetypal analysis also presents an opportunity to highlight Yeats's profound skill at utilizing symbolic imagery in drama, and his subsequent value as a playwright--ignorance of which has become far too widespread in the world of the modern theatre.

Some of the distain for Yeats's playwriting that has arisen over the course of the last century is undoubtedly based in his constant tendency to revise his work during his lifetime. Yeats's frequent, heavy-handed revision of his plays has resulted in circumstances which can make the study, critical analysis, or production of the works difficult. For example, Yeats's original version of *The Countess Cathleen* differs substantially in some regards from the finalized version of the play explored in this study. Thus production groups wishing to present the play must not only select it out of the whole of Yeats's dramatic canon, but then must additionally decide upon which version of the play they wish to present and why. Textual changes between alternate version of the same play can often be frustrating, and so the easiest approach to Yeats's drama seems to have become, for the most part, to avoid producing his plays and to label their author as a successful poet, but inferior playwright. The

most egregious assertions brought about by this ignorance, such as those made by William L. Sharp in the essay "W. B. Yeats: A Poet Not in the Theatre," are those which declare Yeats as an incapable writer of dramatic character. Again, while it is true that other Irish dramatists during Yeats's lifetime had a larger artistic and socio-historic influence on playwriting than did Yeats, his dramas were not total failures, and they are populated by a number of interesting and insightful personages. The brilliance of the characters presented in Yeats's plays derive in large part from their universality, and to make the argument that, simply because Yeats chose to write plays featuring characters founded in universals, as opposed to composing dramatic characters whose action revolves entirely around the neurotic aspects of day-to-day lower or middle-class life, this means he was a lazy or incapable creator of dramatic character is puerile and obtuse. Furthermore, the assertion that, simply because Yeats was not *the* greatest Irish playwright of his lifetime in the same manner that he was his nation's finest poet, he should automatically be regarded as *bad* playwright is the product of either disingenuousness, or of ignorance in his capabilities as a dramatist.

That Yeats's early dramas should be selected as the examples used in this essay is based upon the fact that, with the exception of plays such as *At the Hawks Well* and *Purgatory*, it is Yeats's early plays which have widely been anthologized, are most likely to be encountered in the present day, and are most likely to be revived. Therefore, it stands to reason that by analyzing these three dramas, and the archetypal content within them, this study will be of the most practical use. For any individual familiar with the chronology of Yeats's early plays, it should be mentioned that an exploration of *Cathleen ni Houlihan* has been left absent from this work so as to limit the playwrights studied within it to one, as an in-depth examination of that play would necessitate the placing of additional biographical

emphasis on Augusta, Lady Gregory--Yeats's co-author on that play--and, once again, limitations on time and space deny the page length necessary to do so. That being said, Lady Gregory's substantial editorial and supportive influence over all of Yeats's work, including the three plays surveyed here, should and must be rightfully acknowledged.

Archetypes, by their definition, are universally pervasive images, and so they can be identified in all works of art and in all plays regardless of genre or classification. But it is in those plays which most strongly defy comprehension that archetypal analysis can be of greatest use, for the study of archetypal content always takes things to the most fundamental metaphysical level, asking the essential question: "What is really going on at this moment?" Symbolist dramas, by virtue of their ineffable content, will always defy total, exhaustive analysis, and the fact that they so often leave readers or audiences baffled seems to have resulted, unfortunately, in the wide-spread belief that Symbolist drama is devoid of substantial meaning. This could not be further from the truth, however. Although the foundations of Absurdist drama do trace their lineage through the drama of the Symbolists, the two do not share the quality of deconstructionist meaninglessness. The symbols found within Symbolist plays, and indeed, almost all plays save those of the Absurdist genre, may be open to personal interpretation, but always do they retain some degree of inherent meaning. This meaning can be determined based upon each symbol's universally associative content and on its shared relevance to all people. Therein lies the beauty of Symbolist drama: its ability to present images evocative of universal truths, or of experiences to which all human beings can in some manner relate. However, when one fails to learn how to decipher these symbols, or else loses the ability to naturally comprehend them on an innate level, the value of Symbolist drama vanishes like water evaporating out of a sun-baked fountain.

Comprehension and appreciation for the archetypes, and for their influence over human thought and emotion through symbolic representation, can very often provide the key to uncover (or else rediscover) the meaningful content that waits behind the veil of Symbolist drama. Through the use of archetypal analysis, the wisdom, humanity, and beauty of the Symbolist plays such as those written by Yeats, plays too often relegated to the position of being overlooked or deemed irrelevant, can suddenly become lucid, readily apparent, and palpable.

CHAPTER I: JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

What are the archetypes? And how can recognizing and understanding their influence help one to better comprehend the meaning behind any story, dramatic or otherwise? As Jungian scholar Elie Humbert has quite fittingly noted, the concept of the archetype is an esoteric and complex one, and: "The idea of the "archetype" has been the source of much misunderstanding among Jung's followers as well as among his critics" (Humbert, 95). Despite the word's frequent use, the term "archetype" is often employed by different people for different reasons, and the meanings which are associated with the word are not always synonymous with one another. Like a great deal of the terminology which Jung employs throughout his prodigious canon of essays, lectures, and other writings--such as "psyche," "complex," "disassociation," "synchronicity," "projection," or "unconsciousness"--the word "archetype" was not a neologism of Jung's personal design as much as it was a pre-existing term which he adopted, and then imbued with a specific connotation in relation to his approach toward understanding human behavior. A detailed understanding of this specific connotation is therefore an obvious prerequisite before the concept of the archetype can be employed in any meaningful form of aesthetic analysis, as a common, shared understanding of what the word signifies must exist before any critical material based upon archetypal content can possess any practical value.

Jung utilized a number of synonyms when discussing the archetypes: "archaic remnants," "pre-existing forms," "primordial images," "representation collectives." All of these terms, however, reference the same essential proposition: that within the human psyche there exists a number of formless "structures" that serve as unconscious psychological analogues to the corporeal entities that comprise the human body—Jung compared the

archetypes of the psyche to the organ system of the physical body—which, in turn, motivates and influences all conscious thought and experience. Indeed, the entire human psyche, in Jung's approximation rests upon the foundation of the archetypes. Jung's conception of archetypes is closely tied into his theory of the collective unconscious, an overarching "second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals" (Jung, *The Concept of the Collective*, 43).

It has become a common misconception in the modern day that the idea of the unconscious mind originated with the work Sigmund Freud; however, Freud's conception of the unconscious mind was actually only another step forward in a progression of pre-existing philosophical ideas concerning the dichotomy of thought versus "non-thought" which had been taking place in minds of Western intellectuals for some time. Jung himself cites Carl Gustav Carus and Eduard von Hartmann as the two chief promoters of "the philosophical idea of the unconscious" whose intellectual examinations into the possible existence of an underlying domain of latent psychological content predated any medical attempts to do the same (Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective*, 3). While Freud has received due credit as the first influential medical examiner to attempt to explore the depths of the unconscious mind in order to better comprehend the extent, and the manner by which, latent unconscious material might influence conscious human behavior, his work limited itself to an examination of the unconscious mind as an individual entity, one which he famously-- or rather infamously-- determined to be an animalistic domain of repressed and lost psychological content dominated by base and primitive impulses. But Freud never attempted to explore deeper than personal unconsciousness. "Medical psychology," wrote Jung in the 1930s, "growing as it did out of professional practice, insists on the *personal* nature of the psyche. By this I mean the

views of Freud and Adler. It is a *psychology of the person*, and its aetiological or causal factors are regarded almost wholly as personal in nature" (Jung, *The Concept of the Collective*, 43). It was this position of Freud's, that unconscious content extends only to the depth of the individual, personal psyche, which eventually prompted Jung to drastically break away from his former mentor in his own endeavor to better understand the fundamental nature of the human psyche. As Vincent Brome outlines, "Jung's general approach to the unconscious differed from Freud's in three ways. First, the unconscious, in his view, followed an autonomous course of development; second, it was the source archetypes or universal primordial images, and, third, it was complementary to and not conflicting with consciousness" (Brome, 221). Jung proposed a three-tiered model of human conscious and unconsciousness, one in which an individual's conscious mind is indeed situated above a personal unconscious that is distinctively its own, but in which this personal unconscious itself resides above another, deeper layer of unconsciousness which is shared among all human beings. "A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal," writes Jung:

I call it the *personal unconscious*. 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 behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us. (Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective*, 3-4).

Thus, to Jung the true sources of the unconscious factors which motivate human conscious experience were not to be found strictly within the limited realm of the personal unconscious, which serves to fulfill the role of intermediary between the conscious mind and the collective unconscious, but instead within the vast and near-infinite depths of the collective unconscious.

Therefore, while Freud and Jung are frequently spoken of within the same breath, the two ultimately did, in fact, advocate separate (though closely related) approaches toward the examination of the human psyche. Just as Sartre's philosophy of existentialism is not Camus's system of absurdism, just as the realistic style of Chekov is not the same as the naturalist style of Gorky, Freud's psycho-analysis and Jung's analytical psychology are not synonymous schools of thought, despite the commonalities shared between the two. This is not to suggest that Jung believed the role of the personal unconscious to be completely insignificant. Arguing in his writings that "...consciousness appears to be essentially an affair of the cerebrum, which sees everything separately and in isolation, and therefore sees the unconscious in this way too, regarding it outright as *my* unconscious," Jung viewed the role that the personal unconscious plays--that of the medium between individual consciousness and the collective unconscious--to be essential (Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective*, 20). Without it the contents of the collective unconscious would have no intermediary through which to bubble up into the realm of conscious experience, since the conscious mind, by its very nature, perceives the shallowest layers of the unconscious as belonging to it, and therefore places them under the label of "personal" material. Nevertheless, it is ultimately those universal contents, the archetypes, that are the true factors responsible for holding influence over the experiences of the conscious mind.

The idea of archetypes, like that of the unconscious mind, was hardly an original conception of Jung's, but rather something which he developed by drawing on a specific history of philosophical thought, a lineage which extended back to classical antiquity. Jung himself argued that the basic principles of the concept could be identified in the work of such traditional Western writers as Philo Judaeus, Irenaeus, St. Augustine, and Plato (Jung,

Archetypes of the Collective, 4). Campbell, in the prologue to his seminal book *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, outlines the additional influence that thinkers such as Nietzsche, Bastian, Boas, and Frazer, among various others, had on Jung's development of his theory of archetypes (Campbell, *The Hero*, 13). "In former times, despite some dissenting opinion and the influence of Aristotle, it was not too difficult to understand Plato's conception of the Idea as supraordinate and pre-existent to all phenomena," writes Jung, "'Archetype,' far from being a modern term, was already in use before the time of St. Augustine, and was synonymous with 'Idea' in the Platonic usage." (Jung, *Psychological Aspects of the Mother*, 75). It must be acknowledged, however, that though Jung's conception of archetypes was founded in the work of other thinkers, he imbued the word with his own meaning, one which holds a specific definition within his personal approach to understanding the human psyche. As Marilyn Nagy has pointed out: "...archetypes are not easily recognizable in the Platonic corpus in the way that Jung meant them" (Nagy, 157). Jung envisioned archetypes as active "patterns of instinctual behavior;" that is to say, he believed them to be powerful forces of the psyche which, together, comprise the collective unconscious of the entire human race, and which govern the life cycle and conscious experience of every single human being (Jung, *The Concept of the Collective*, 44). Thus, the word "archetype" carried far more meaning to him than just the simple denotation of an original idea or thought.

Jung believed all conscious thought and emotion to be inexorably tied to the influence of archetypes. They are the result of the totality of all human experience, from the inception of the species to the present day, and he believed them to be engraved into the collective psyche of the human race by virtue of endless repetition. Archetypes are inborn and innate, formless psychic structures which are inherited at birth and not acquired through individual

experience, and are identical in the psyche of every human being (Jung, *The Concept of the Collective*, 42-43). Because they are, in their unadulterated states, completely unconscious, by their very natures archetypes cannot be perceived by the conscious mind directly. As John W. Tigue explains, "Archetypes may be represented by mythic images, but are themselves formless. Archetypes store the memories of human ancestry, not of individual persons, but of the experiences of the species" (Tigue, 23). In order for an archetype to be experienced by an individual conscious mind, it must manifest itself through the form of a symbol. It is thus by this channeling of unconscious archetypal content, Jung argues, that all symbols are imbued with meaning or significance. Since they are inherently without form, archetypes necessitate symbolic content before they can affect human perception; to be experienced they must have an object or thing onto which they can be cast--or "projected"--like images thrown onto a screen. Although Jung was not the first person to employ the term "projection" with regard to human behavior, he did much to clarify its meaning, and he personally defined it as the "unconscious, automatic process whereby a content that is unconscious to the subject transfers itself to an object, so that it seems to belong to that object" (Jung, *Concerning the Archetypes*, 60). The concept of archetype vs. archetypal symbol or image can, understandably, be quite a confusing one. Perhaps the most successful of all of Jung's followers at elucidating the general concept of archetypes and archetypal imagery has been Humbert, who, referencing Jung's own attempts to metaphorically describe the nature of archetypal projection, describes how:

Jung's characterization of the archetype as organ is excellent because it reflects the archetype's constant activity and the role the archetype plays in the psychic apparatus. In addition, he compared the archetype to the eye, a comparison that precludes description of the archetype as model. Rather, archetypal images are as different from the archetype as optical images are different from the eye. Archetypal and optical images are formed by the relation that their respective organs have to the external object. At least twice in 1946, Jung resorted to another comparison that likens the archetype to the axial system which, while having no existence of its own, somehow directs ions and molecules as they form crystals.

In fact, Jung's thoughts began to hint at a concept that was not yet available in Jung's time: the concept of information. The role Jung attributed to archetypes is perfectly intelligible if one uses the concepts of information theory: (1) archetypes condition, orient, and support the formation of the individual psyche according to a plan that is inherent to them; (2) whenever the psyche is disturbed, archetypes

intervene by considering information received either from the psyche itself or from the environment; (3) archetypes ensure an exchange of information between the psyche and its surroundings. (Humbert, 100).

Frye refers to archetypes as "associative clusters," that is, as entities around which conscious ideas orbit and through which cognitive meaning forms by way of association (Frye, 102).

This phrase is particularly useful, because it helps to further demonstrate the disparity between archetype and archetypal image, and it helps to illustrate the archetypes's essential function as grouping entities for multiple thoughts and ideas, as opposed to limiting them to the representation of only individual ideas in and of themselves.

Because they cannot manifest themselves to the conscious mind directly, however, there is a problem inherent to the concept of archetypes in the wake of modern-day thought. Because archetypes can never be observed in their "original" state, this means they cannot be subjected to empirical analysis. And because they cannot be subjected to empirical analysis, as a result, they can never be categorically proven as true or false through the use of the scientific method. Jung's theories over the existence of archetypes and a collective unconscious are, quite simply as a matter of fact, utterly unfalsifiable by the scientific method. Frequent accusations of mysticism and Lamarckism concerning Jung and his work are common not only today, but during the psychologist's own lifetime as well, and it should fairly be acknowledged that at least some of these concerns are not wholly without some degree of justification. Jung frequently referred to religious or mythic concepts in his psychological writings, and his focus on concepts such as the human soul and dream interpretation clash with the cold, scientific face of modern psychology. What is most damning to Jung as a scientist is that he so often failed to justify his "findings" with actual scientific research, relying instead on his own experiences of the world in the manner traditional of a philosopher. His conception of the theory of archetypes was no exception to

this proclivity. Despite the controversy that Jung's theories concerning archetypal content and other phenomenon sparked both during and after his lifetime, Jung insisted throughout his life that he required empirical evidence in order to believe in anything, and he consistently argued that archetypes *should* be capable of verification as an empirical fact. Jung retained this belief throughout his life until the time of his death, and he argued that ample evidence to sustain his theory of archetypes could be found by exploring their influence on conscious human experience as well as their ubiquitous presence throughout the tribal lore, dreams, mythology, and folk tales of both primitive and modern mankind.

Regardless of Jung's personal hopes that the existence of archetypes and collective unconsciousness might be verified through the application of falsifiable scientific methodology, however, it quickly became recognized in his own lifetime, and is widely recognized as quite unarguable, that by their very nature archetypes and the unconscious mind defy direct observation, that this fact renders empirical analysis of them, and thus any subsequent scientific verification of such concepts is simply impossible. Like Freud's, Jung's influence over the burgeoning field of psychology was monumental during its nascence, but also like Freud, Jung failed to properly employ the scientific method in the development of his ideas, and his dependence instead upon personal, anecdotal observation to provide evidence for his ideas have left virtually all of his findings ripe for argument. The proposition of the existence of the collective unconscious and of the archetypes that comprise it, furthermore, has always been the most controversial of Jung's theories. By the time of Jung's death, the psychoanalytical approach to clinical psychology developed by both him and Freud had largely been replaced by the constructionist and behaviourist models of psychiatrists such as Jean Piaget and B. F. Skinner, which depict the brain as a blank-slate

learning mechanism that processes information in a fashion similar to a computer. In such psychological models, the contents of the unconscious mind are irrelevant; indeed, the very idea of the existence of an unconscious (be it personal or collective) is largely, if not wholly disregarded. Unlike the work of Freud and Jung, the work of psychologists such as Piaget and Skinner was supported by scientific data collected from repeatable, peer-reviewed, empirical experimentation. Furthermore, these latter models provided practicing psychiatrists and therapists with a much more efficient method of treating mental disease or distress clinically, especially when they came to be paired with the developing field of neuropsychopharmacology. Writing in *The British Journal of Psychiatry* in 1960, a year before Jung's death, Murray Jackson summed up the feelings of many psychiatrists and psychologists of the day: "Jung's output of original ideas has been prodigious, his writing is often obscure, apparently contradictory and difficult to relate to immediate problems of clinical practice, and the task of working out the clinical application of his ideas is still in its infancy" (Jackson, 1518). In his essay, Jackson expresses hope that Jung's theory of archetypes might successfully be integrated into clinical practice by psychiatrists, noting that while it is by no means a cure-all and can only be utilized in a limited number of cases, some mental disorders appear to be adequately treatable only through the in-depth analysis of the psyche. Still, he acknowledges that the amount of time that must be committed to such therapy by both patient and therapist is a significant drawback to its use in clinical practice, and is likely the primary reason that it is avoided by health care professionals.

While Jackson may have hoped in the early 1960s that practicing psychiatrists and therapists would come to better integrate Jung's theories concerning archetypes and the unconscious into clinical psychology over time, the reality was quite the opposite. Jung and

his work were already caught up with Freud's in a growing backlash that had already formed against psychoanalytical thought, but more importantly, the emergence modern, research-driven psychology resulted in the rendering of many of Jung's findings moot with regard to practical medical treatment. Because an analytical approach to psychology is not as nearly as timely or resource-efficient as a behaviourist/constructionist approach is when attempting to treat general mental illness in a clinical setting, analytical psychology fell to the wayside as the work of luminaries such as Piaget and Skinner paved the way toward modern psychiatric practice. Jung's ideas about human behavior and experience have either been disproven over time by modern science, proven unfalsifiable with regard to scientific methodology, or, as has occurred most frequently, been refined so as to fit within the parameters demanded by modern schools of psychological thought. For many years, among the most ostensibly damning of Jung's opinions about the human psyche was his belief that it was, "a great mistake to suppose that the psyche of a new-born child is a *tabula rasa* in the sense that there is absolutely nothing to it" (Jung, *Concerning the Archetypes*, 66). Because the archetypes are not acquired by individual experience and are inherited at birth, they are by definition *a priori* structures of the psyche. But the behaviourist and constructionist models specifically argued for a conception of the mind of a newborn child as a blank-slate completely devoid of any *a priori* material. "Jung," writes Erik Goodwyn, "held his views in the face of a great deal of opposition of the dominant behaviourist and constructionist positions of the era. At the time, behaviorist dogma asserted that the brain was a generic learning machine that operated via simple rules of association, and had no innate predispositions" (Goodwyn, 503). Once this *tabula rasa* view of the human mind became standard, Jung's archetypes, like the idea of the unconscious mind, became cryptids in the eyes of many psychologists. Modern

psychological findings have recently apparently called this one-time "fact" into question, however. As Goodwyn goes on to aptly summarize:

Since the early 1970s, however, a large body of knowledge has formed that has challenged this 'blank slate' position (Buss 2005; Stevens 2002; see also Pinker 1997; Simpson et al 2005, Tooby & Cosmides 2005). In fact recent independent research into affective and cognitive neuroscience, cultural anthropology, evolutionary psychology, psycholinguistics, and neurobiology have essentially refuted the idea of a blank slate completely (Pinker 2002), so much that anthropologist and pioneer in the subject of human universals Donald Brown went so far as to state that 'Behaviorism and the *tabula rasa* view of the mind are dead in the water' (Brown 1991, p.144). (Goodwyn, 503).

Although they differ from one another in many of their ultimate conclusions about how the mind operates, evolutionary psychologists stand together in their argument that the brain learns certain things more easily than others. This method of learning, known as domain-specific learning, occurs because there are evolutionary factors that make it easier for human beings to learn some things, such as speech, more easily than others, like differential calculus. The *tabula rasa* view posits that both things should be able to be learned by the brain equally, since it is imbued with any pre-existing material, yet modern-day findings would seem to argue that this is not the case. The result is that, at present moment at least, "Jung's nativist assumptions have, at first glance, not been falsified *at least on the assumption of innate content*" (Goodwyn, 505). Thus, Jung's theory regarding the possible inheritance of archetypes innately at birth has not, contrary to pervasive opinion, been categorically disproven. Many practicing psychiatrists and psychologists continue to apply Occam's Razor and simply do not deem a Jungian approach to analyzing the mind necessary in everyday medical practice, but that does not mean that every idea he maintained in his attempts to understand the mind has been thoroughly falsified. And even *if* Jung's ideas over archetypal content no longer readily offer aid to medical professionals attempting to tackle the challenge of treating patients suffering from mental illness, this had little bearing over whether or not they continue to offer a great deal to those working within the non-medical fields of

anthropology, philosophy, and—as is the specific focus of this essay—literary and other forms of aesthetic analysis.

How exactly do the archetypes and archetypal images affect the everyday lives of humans beings? And in what manner do they influence the perception of consciousness? The ultimate answer to both questions is that, together, the archetypes of the collective unconscious influence conscious human experience in every way conceivable. Jung believed virtually all thought, feeling, emotional significance, and intellectual meaning to be tied-up inexorably in unconscious archetypal influences. The power of an archetypal image when it manifests itself is severe; Jung metaphorically likened such an event to possession or a seizure. The notion of falling in love at first sight often serves as the classic example that displays the sudden power of such archetypal manifestation. The idea that one could actually stumble into true love at first sight is, of course, logically an absurdity. Any feelings of "love" that one might believe they have experienced in such a circumstance could be based only in the most superficial of characteristics, and no sudden infatuation with an individual to which one has no connection could ever be identified as actual love--a thing firmly rooted in close intimacy, shared codependence, and lasting, mutual affection. Yet the idea of falling in love at first sight remains an incredibly pervasive one, even today, simply due to the fact that it does appear to occur so very frequently. A man or a woman will suddenly be struck by some new, seemingly random object of desire that has suddenly appeared before them as if by magic, and they find the emotional pull which they feel toward this person to be utterly irresistible. Jung proposed that the emotional entanglement which is actually taking place in such a circumstance is, in actuality, a result of the psyche's recognition of the presence of an

archetype--in this circumstance the archetype of the Anima/Animus--being unconsciously projected onto another person. Writing about this archetype in particular, Jung observes that:

It is ready to spring out and project itself at the first opportunity, the moment a woman makes an impression that is out of the ordinary. We then have Goethe's experience with Frau von Stein, and its repercussions in the figures of Mignon and Gretchen, all over again. In the case of Gretchen, Goethe also showed us the whole underlying "metaphysic." The love life of a man reveals the psychology of this archetype in the form of either boundless fascination, overvaluation, and infatuation, or of misogyny in all its gradations and variants, none of which can be explained by the real nature of the "object" in question... (Jung, *Concerning the Archetypes*, 69).

This is why such sudden, intense feelings of passionate love are often fleeting affairs that do not last. The individual onto which an archetype has been projected cannot possibly live up to the standards now expected of them. It is only natural that such an individual should eventually fail to provide a proper screen onto which an archetype can be unconsciously projected, at which point any feelings of infatuation that are felt towards them will likely dissipate quickly. Of course, for a rare few, genuine love does indeed occur after the phenomenon of having fallen in love at first sight, the fortuitous result of a lasting archetypal connection having established itself.

The powerful, gripping reaction one feels when observing a beautiful work of art is based on precisely the same process. Beauty can, in fact, be considered to be the end result of the manner in which an archetype is projected onto an object. When an archetype manifests itself in its positive form the subsequent results are feelings of admiration and sublimity. When the negative aspect of an archetype manifests itself, the reaction the viewer experiences is one of grotesque disgust. But either way the response is one of awe and amazement. All art is shaped by the archetypes in the same manner as all human relationships. Their presence and the manner in which they are presented are the determining factors in any aesthetic experience. Consequently, recognizing their presence is of tremendous importance to the art critic. Thankfully, this is done unconsciously without

thought, and so art critics have been commenting on the archetypes for as long as there has been the field of art criticism.

It cannot be stressed enough that it is of paramount importance that one recognize the difference between an archetype *per se* and an archetypal image. The archetypes themselves are, as previously stated, without form. They represent the total and sublime manifestation of a given concept, and they exist only in the depths of collective unconsciousness. An archetypal image is a symbolic manifestation of an archetype that is recognized by an individual. Archetypal images can never reveal an archetype in its entirety; they are limited, conscious representations of unlimited, unconscious content. The archetypes have "boundaries" in the sense that one can be distinguished from another based on the effect which it produced via influence on a conscious mind, but each individual archetype is infinite in its encompassing of a primordial idea. Furthermore, archetypes interrelate with, and frequently flow subtly into one another. Jung believed that "There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life," and he held that the total number of archetypes which exist is so numerous that they can never be categorically classified (Jung, *The Concept of the Collective*, 48). Still, in his writings Jung referenced a number of what he considered to be the most prominent and influential of these primordial motifs, including the Anima/Animus, the Mother, the Child, the Maiden (or the Kore), the Wise Old Man, and the Trickster. Other archetypes given considerable emphasis by Jung and his successors, but which are not explored in this study in close detail, include, but are not limited to, the archetypes of the Self, the Shadow, the Divine Pair (or the Syzygy), and the World Redeemer.

The Anima represents the feminine aspect of a man's soul, or, in the case of a woman, the masculine aspect of her soul, in which case the archetype is referred to as the Animus.

While every individual is of a single gender by virtue of human physiology, because the collective unconscious of the species consists of the sum totality of all human experience, Jung argues that it transcends the conscious dichotomy of gender, just as it must transcend all conscious dichotomies. Consequently, the unconscious of an individual person, tapping at its deepest levels into the collective unconscious, must contain aspects emblematic of both sexes. "Just as every individual derives from masculine and feminine genes, and the sex is determined by the predominance of the corresponding genes," Jung deduces in his writings, "So in the psyche it is only the conscious mind, in a man, that has the masculine sign, while the unconscious is by nature feminine. The reverse is true in the case of a woman" (Jung, *The Psychology of the Child*, 175). The Anima archetype is the harbinger of unconsciousness and is the soul's preferred messenger, and Anima symbols represent all the creative power--as well as potential for destruction--which unconscious forces have over man's conscious existence. Because such forces exist outside of the control of the conscious mind, symbols of the Anima are traditionally imbued with powers that place them outside of the control of men, and they often possess natures of supernatural allure and magical enchantment. Common symbols of the archetype include nymphs, sirens, muses, faeries, witches, and mermaids, with darker images of the archetype often seeking to ensnare men and lead them to their dooms. The Anima, like all archetypes, however, does not limit itself solely to positive or negative representations. In its true form, it transcends the dichotomy of morality just as much as it does that of gender. Both angel and succubus might thus be employed by the psyche as Anima figures. Animus symbols in the feminine psyche possess the same characteristics, but feature a shift in gender such that they take on male attributes--hence, the creation of supernatural figures such as the incubus. Whether or not Anima/Animus symbols

be of a wholly innocent, virginal nature, or be pernicious, wanton seducers, they always represents the transcendent knowledge, emotional inspiration, and creative power which flows from universal unconsciousness into the conscious mind of the individual. Jung noted during his medical practice that poets and artists frequently show strong connections to the Anima (Jung, *Concerning the Archetypes*, 71), and considered it to be amongst the most important of the archetypes of the unconscious, arguing a comprehension of its influence to be "...of paramount practical importance for the psychotherapist" (Jung, *Concerning the Archetypes*, 59).

The Mother is associated with compassion, mercy, forgiveness, love, and understanding, and, through the symbolic connection that exists between the capacity to create new life and the natural world, is also an image of fertility, rejuvenation, birth, and the mysteries of nature. The qualities which Jung associates in his writings with the Mother archetype include:

...maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate (Jung, *Psychological Aspects of the Mother*, 82).

All human beings have mothers, and--speaking in sweepingly broad, general terms--all human beings, traditionally, have a higher probability of spending extended time under the care of a mother figure than under any other single individual, and therefore with establishing a meaningful relationship with her. Thus, Jung believed that the Mother archetype was among the most influential in affecting day-to-day human experience, and he places its influence behind only the Anima/Animus in his writings. The most prevalent image of the Mother archetype in the Western world is undoubtedly that of the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ, but images of the Mother have likely dominated human belief systems since their

inception, and have included such figures as Ishtar, Isis, Hathor, Gaia, Demeter, Athena, Venus, Juno, Ceres, Frigg, and Anu--and this list consists only of deities originating from Western cultures, not of all the religious icons, mythological characters, or figures in art worldwide which have their basis in the Mother. Negative images of the Mother include figures such as witches, dragons, suffocating matriarchs, and wicked foster/step-mothers, mythological characters like Lilith, Medea, and Lamia, and non-personified entities such as graves and unfathomably deep water. Neutral images of the archetype, neither wholly benevolent nor destructive, include beings such as the Norse Norns or the Grecian Fates. In his writings, Jung identified the "three essential aspects" of the Mother archetype as "her cherishing and nourishing goodness, her orgiastic emotionality, and her Stygian depths" (Jung, *Psychological Aspects of the Mother*, 82).

A Father archetype is occasionally referenced by Jung in his writings, although he never outlined it in his essays or his lectures to the same degree as he did other archetypes. Subsequent scholars working in the field of archetypal symbolism, however, have referenced the Father as an autonomous archetype in its own right, with images typically associated with law, order, logic, control, politics, justice, and various other aspects of a world that is the result of mankind's conscious designs. In this sense, the Father archetype is a true companion to the Mother, as one represents the natural world into which mankind is born and the other the artificial world which it has created for itself. Furthermore, it shows that Jung's and his followers' conceptions of Mother and Father archetypes conform to the traditional dichotomy of gender found throughout Western culture: mother as Eros and father as the correlative Logos.

The Child always represents itself as a symbol of potentiality. "The child," Jung writes, "is potential future...Life is a flux, a flowing into the future, and not a stoppage or a backwash. It is therefore not surprising that that so many of the mythological saviours are child gods. This agrees exactly with our own experience of the psychology of the individual, which shows that the "child" paves the way for a future change of personality" (Jung, *The Psychology of the Child*, 164). Jung believed that images of the Child archetype typically manifest themselves in myth and story in one of two forms: That of the child god or the young hero. The primary difference between the two rests on the status of their divinity; "The god is by nature wholly supernatural," Jung writes, while, "The hero's nature is human but raised to the limit of the supernatural--he is "semi-divine" (Jung, *The Psychology of the Child*, 166). The most popular image of the Child archetype in Western culture, specifically of a manifestation of the child god, is that of the Christ child. For a manifestation of the archetype in the form of the young hero, one need look no further than to myths of the youthful adventures of the Grecian hero Theseus, or the legends of a young Arthur Pendragon. Negative representations of the Child represent the opposite of that which is found in positive representations of the archetype: The absence of hope and the denial of potential futurity. An image of the Child archetype, describes Jung:

...is a personification of vital forces quite outside the limited range of our conscious mind; of ways and possibilities of which our one-sided conscious mind knows nothing; a wholeness which embraces the very depths of Nature. It represents the strongest, most ineluctable urge in every being, namely the urge to realize itself. It is, as it were, an incarnation of *the inability to do otherwise*, equipped with all the powers of nature and instinct, whereas the conscious mind is always getting caught up in its supposed ability to do otherwise (Jung, *The Psychology of the Child*, 170).

Because of the role that the archetype plays in the individuation process, that of showing the possibility of a future further down the road to self-realization, the archetype of the Child is extremely important with regard to process of the human life cycle, and is particularly

pervasive in the mind of individuals undergoing periods of psychological or physical development.

The Maiden--referred to Jung as "the Kore" in classical allusion to the goddess Persephone--represents an amalgamation of some attributes that are typically attributed to the Mother and some attributes typically associated with the Child, while also featuring aspects which are individually the archetype's own. The Maiden represents purity, innocence, beauty, curiosity, solicitude, and love, but it can also be associated with less positive traits such as helplessness, naiveté, and frivolity. The archetype typically manifests itself differently to men, who for biological reasons associate it with the Anima, than it does to women, who self-associate with images of the archetype and thus view them as representational of what Jung referred to as a "type of supraordinate personality" (Jung, *The Psychological Aspects of the Kore*, 183). Like those of the Child, positive images of the Maiden often take the form of characters or images that symbolize the hopeful potential of a brighter future, while negative images of the archetype can represent the corruption or the denial such futurity. Figures of the Maiden often carry an air of mystery about them as well, a quality shared with the Mother archetype, something Jung noted in his medical practice. "As a matter of practical observation," he writes, "the Kore often appears in woman as an *unknown young girl*, not infrequently as Gretchen or the unmarried mother" (Jung, *The Psychological Aspects of the Kore*, 184). Although Mother archetype and Maiden archetype are not mutually exclusive with regard to symbolic imagery (certain important literary and mythological figures possess aspects characteristic of both), images of the two usually manifest themselves separately; their symbolic relationship to the human life cycle often necessitates the depiction of the transition from one stage of life, maidenhood, to a more mature stage, motherhood (be it

literal or metaphorical), in characters. Characters who are representations of both Mother and Maiden archetype tend to shift toward one or the other based on the depth of their psychological maturity at a given point in the plot of a story. Protagonists rooted in the Maiden archetype are often forced to come face-to-face with the struggles and sacrifices that are necessary part of life in order to determine whether or not they are capable of progressing farther along in their personal development and continuing their growth as a human being.

The Wise Old Man is a guide for the soul, a force which exists to help spur the individual forward upon the path to reaching self-actualization and enlightenment. Despite the archetype's name, its representations neither must necessarily be old, nor must they be by requirement male. Humanity's myths and stories are full of sagacious, elderly crones and wise, prophetic individuals in the prime of their lives who ultimately serve to fulfill the same etiological purpose as traditional grey-beards such as Tiresias, Elijah, or Merlin. The Wise Old Man represents the uplifting potential and transcendental knowledge of the spirit, often existing in opposition to matter, and symbols of the archetype typically manifest themselves in stories as guide figures who suddenly appear out of thin air to offer aid to others, particularly the tale's protagonist, along the path toward individuation. "Often," writes Jung, "the old man in fairytales asks questions like who? why? whence? and whither? for the purpose of inducing self-reflection and mobilizing the moral forces, and more often still he gives the necessary magical talisman, the unexpected and the improbable power to succeed, which is one of the peculiarities of the unified personality in good or bad alike" (Jung, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, 220). Thus, negative images of the archetype still serve the purpose of guiding others towards self-realization. Their negativity becomes apparent only in the fact that, whilst guiding others forward, they also seek to push them astray from the

proper path. Goethe's Mephistopheles and Madách's Lucifer are both literary images of the Wise Old Man, for example, in that both attempt to push their respective protégés toward self-realization and awareness--they merely plan that, through doing so, they can also lead the charges into oblivion (as opposed to salvation). Whether positive or negative in its incarnation, an image of the Wise Old Man "knows what roads lead to the goal and points them out to the hero" and advises others "of dangers to come and supplies the means of meeting them effectively" (Jung, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, 221).

The Trickster is a deceptive prankster whose representations are sometimes benign, sometimes malevolent, and sometimes a combination of both, but who always carries with them the power to shatter the boundaries of everyday experience and to bring into reality a greater cosmological existence. Both positive and negative incarnations of the Trickster serve this purpose, with positive representations bring a greater or more beneficial universal order into recognition, and negative aspects intentionally bringing a darker reality into being. Jung identifies the most important motifs of the Trickster archetype in his writings as residing in "his fondness for sly jokes and malicious pranks, his powers as a shape-shifter, his dual nature, half animal, half divine, his exposure to all kinds of torture, and--last but not least--his approximation to the figure of a saviour" (Jung, *On The Psychology of the Trickster*, 255). Trickster figures are, next to those based around the roles which make up the family unit, perhaps the most widespread of all archetypal characters in world myth and literature. Popular mythological trickster figures include Hermes, Dionysus, Loki, Gwydion, Lucifer, Eshu, Anansi, Coyote, Raven, Iktomi, Nanabush, and Sun Wukong (Monkey), while folk representations of the archetype include Young Jack, Tom Thumb, Reynard the Fox, Br'er Rabbit, and Boots, and literary characters rooted in the Trickster include Puck/Robin

Goodfellow, Don Juan, and Clopin Trouillefou. Of crucial importance to the Trickster is the ability to change form, for this power is a definitive representation of the archetype's nature as a transcender of boundaries and accepted norms, to say nothing of its value to Trickster characters in their attempted schemes and pranks. Tricksters often even possess the power to shift gender or even species, and many possess some form of animal shape. Jung believed the Trickster archetype to be a "psychologem," that is, a primitive remnant of human consciousness left over from the period in which human thought first emerged from animal consciousness (Jung, *On the Psychology of the Trickster*, 260). It is for this reason that images of the archetype are often half-animal, or possess the ability to take animal form, although it is by no means a strict requirement. However, if the Trickster is a remnant of mankind's primordial psychic past, the concepts which the archetype governs are still obviously quite relevant to modern man--elsewise the species would not continue to create new representations of the images of the archetype so frequently. "The so-called civilized man has forgotten the trickster," writes Jung, "He remembers him only figuratively and metaphorically, when, irritated by his own ineptitude, he speaks of fate playing tricks on him or of things being bewitched" (Jung, *On the Psychology of the Trickster*, 267). Thus, the Trickster remains as influential a force over the daily life of modern humankind as it ever, even if most fail to recognize the impact of the archetype of their daily conscious experiences.

Immediately these archetypes should be recognizable to any individual as the symbolic motifs which have always dominated mankind's mythology and art, the result of the contents of man's unconscious psyche bubbling up to its conscious level. Man's fascination with these images is no coincidence, then, but is instead the result of a part of his eternal self

taking on an external reality before his very eyes. The power of art to motivate, devastate, rebuild, destroy, capture, or emancipate rests in the manner in which facilitates the projection of one or more of archetypes. They are the manner in which the soul sings through art and through story, and they represent the reason why the existence of art is of such tremendous importance to the spiritual and mental health of the human being. For as Jung observed, "Were it not for the leaping and twinkling of the soul, man would rot away in his greatest passion, idleness" (Jung, *Archetypes of the Collective*, 27).

The goal of applying Jung's concept of collective archetypes in the practice of artistic or literary analysis is to determine how these universal psychic contents have manifested themselves within a specific piece or body of aesthetic work. Once an individual has opened up to the possibility that the sublime profundity which they behold in a work of art is the result of the archetypes of their own soul, indeed, of every human soul, being reflected back at them, the seemingly indecipherable symbols that litter the world of aesthetics are no longer confusing monstrosities. They take on a much greater depth, whether it be in the visual world of a painting, the plot of a story, or the action of a theatre performance. One need not specifically seek out the archetypes, be it in the whole of the external world or within the boundaries of a single work of art. They are ubiquitous and always present to the psyche. "So far as we have any information about man," Jung wrote, "we know that he has always and everywhere been under the influence of dominating ideas" (Jung, *Concerning the Archetypes*, 62). The archetypes will take an influence over human life whether they are acknowledged or not. By their very nature as unconscious contents they do not need to be thought about or considered to have an impact. But by better understanding them, to the degree that they can be consciously understood, works of art that have previously defied apprehension can

suddenly be seen in an illuminating light. The mysterious and seemingly indecipherable symbols at the core of such works no longer serve as frustrating stymies which defy recognition and only serve draw the reader or viewer into the dregs of utter confusion, but instead transform into supportive guides which help to usher one along on the path to comprehension of the work, and to subsequent personal growth.

CHAPTER II: THE MIRACLE PLAY OF SAINT CATHLEEN;
ARCHETYPAL IMAGES IN *THE COUNTESS CATHLEEN*

Although not presented on the stage until 1899, Yeats's first published play, *The Countess Cathleen*, was completed by the playwright a full decade earlier, in 1889, as an homage to his most famous muse, Maud Gonne, the English political activist to whom the work would eventually be formally dedicated (Alldritt, 81-82). First published in 1892 under the title *The Countess Kathleen*, the play underwent numerous textual changes before its premiere as the inaugural production of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899. The original 1892 version of the play bears a number of significant discrepancies from the "finalized" version of the text examined in this study, including the complete absence of the character of Aleel and a setting that presents the character of Shemus Rua as keeper of a tavern named "The Lady's Head" (Yeats, *Countess Kathleen*, 13). The play's final, seminal form was not established until it was revived, yet again with alterations, at the Abbey Theatre in 1911 and republished in 1912 (Clark and Clark, 824). Written in the traditional mode of a medieval miracle play, the *Countess Cathleen* centers on a county of Ireland beset by spiritual peril, whose inhabitants are saved from damnation at the drama's conclusion through the *deus ex machina* intervention of its saint character. Yeats based the play upon an article he read in an Irish newspaper which claimed to contain a collection of Irish folktales, though later attempts made by the playwright to verify the story's authenticity as definitively Irish in origin actually led him to a French source text instead, *Les Matinées de Timothée Trim* (Clark and Clark, 728).

In the hands of Yeats, the folk tale became an avenue by which the young poet was able to elevate the object of his affections, Gonne, to the idealistic, unrealistic sublimity of a

saint figure. *The Countess Cathleen*, therefore, shares a quality frequently found in the first works of many playwrights, in that it contains numerous elements which are quite explicitly autobiographical in content. Both the plot of *The Countess Cathleen*, as well as its author's angelic portrayal of the drama's titular protagonist, serve as clear expressions of Yeats's own impassioned love and now-infamous over-idealization of Gonne. Despite the variety of different approaches toward playwriting that Yeats attempted during his career as a dramatist, two essential qualities which remain present in almost all of his plays can be readily identified in *The Countess Cathleen*. First is a recurrent theme of modernist anxiety. Yeats's dramas frequently acknowledge a growing feeling of metaphysical angst and sense of loss in a world deprived of spiritual sustenance. Second is a strong predilection toward symbolism, with a tendency toward mystery, ineffability, and, of course, metaphorical imagery. Yeats's vision of Gonne, the character of the divine Cathleen, serves as a symbolic representation of the forces which he felt offer spiritual sustenance and healing to a beleaguered denizen of the modern world. For although *The Countess Cathleen* is set in Ireland's distant past, its symbolist plot largely concerns the modernist struggles of Yeats's own day, which continue to persevere into the twenty-first century.

The story of the play revolves around the machinations of two demons as they scheme to buy the immortal souls of the inhabitants of a small county ruled by the titular Countess Cathleen, a beautiful and devout heiress who has recently returned to the woodlands of her youth, and with the Countess's attempts to put an end to their system of Hellish Capitalism. Opening in a simple cottage, the play begins with two peasant characters: a pious woman named Mary, and her sacrilegious son, Teigue. When Teigue informs his mother that he believes he has seen a pair of horned owls outside their cottage with human

faces--a traditional folk sign of malicious spirits--a terror-stricken Mary calls on the Mother of God to protect them. Teigue rudely questions his mother's faith, however, while unknowingly channeling the maxim of a despairing modernist, announcing, "What is the good of praying? father says./ God and the Mother of God have dropped asleep./ What do they care, he says, though the whole land/ Squeal like a rabbit under a weasel's tooth?" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 28). The two are soon joined by Teigue's father, Shemus Rua, a crass and boorish trapper who is even more irreligious than his son. Shemus bitterly complains to his family about the famine that has been plaguing the region and how it has reduced him to beggary. He informs them that even begging has failed to garner him enough coin to buy food; When he sat down on the road to join others in begging, the other panhandlers chased him away because they did not want to share the wee charity of others with him. Thus, Yeats symbolizes the spiritual famine of modern man's existence through the depiction of a plague of literal starvation in the plot of *The Countess Cathleen*.

When the titular Countess arrives at the Ruas' cottage seeking directions, she is alarmed to discover that the famine plaguing her county has left its inhabitants so utterly destitute. Accompanied by her lifelong nursemaid, Oona, and a singing poet named Aleel who has captured her fancy, Cathleen insists on giving the Rua family all of the money which she has on her person. When pressed by Teigue for more coin even after she has given the family all that she has on her, the Countess bequeaths him her silver-clasped purse as well in the hopes that he can pawn it for more gold. Despite her assurances that the family may seek her out in the future for more money if they need it, Shemus and Teigue display nothing but ingratitude at Cathleen's charity, much to Mary's consternation, and disrespect for the Countess after the noblewoman and her companions leave their house. Out of cruel

distain for his wife, and a vicious sense of satisfaction which he derives from mocking her religious faith, Shemus loudly invites devils from Hell to enter the family home to rest at leisure if they should like. "Whatever you are that walk the woods at/ night,/So be it that you have not shouldered up/Out of a grave--for I'll have nothing human--And have free hands, a friendly trick of speech," yells the blaspheming trapper to the woodlands outside his cottage door, "I welcome you./ Come, sit beside the fire" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 34). Shemus is briefly alarmed when two exotically-dressed men immediately appear from the darkness outside his home following his outburst, but he soon accepts the rational explanation which they provide--that they are travelling merchants from a foreign land--and he welcomes the pair inside. The two wanderers willingly hint at their true natures to the family, that they are actually devils sent from Hell to tempt the souls of mortal men, but because of Shemus's skepticism, and the pair's clever equivocations, the trapper does fully not grasp that the two men are actually fiends. Informing the Ruas that they "travel for the Master of all merchants," the two offer the family a deal (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 35). For her own part, Mary shows no interest in anything the two strange visitors have to offer. She recognizes the two merchants as potential shapeshifters and believes them to be "not of those who cast a shadow," a fact the First Merchant finds quite amusing (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 36). "It's strange that she should think we cast no/ shadow," the devil declares to Shemus Rua, "For there is nothing on the ridge of the world/That's more substantial than the merchants are/That buy and sell you" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 36). Ignoring Mary, the two merchants make their proposal to the men of the Rua family: They will buy their immortal souls in exchange for gold, and in addition, they will offer the same bargain to any individual in the county who is brought before them. Teigue and Shemus, who jointly agree that, because the immortal

soul is likely nonexistent, they stand more to gain by accepting the offer than by refusing it, gleefully agree to sell, much to Mary's horror. At first, the two merchants refuse to pay Shemus and Teigue until the two round up more peasants willing to sell their souls for them, but when the father and son show a fervent willingness to do so without being plied, they are given a large sack of money to aid them in their advertisement. After Shemus and his son depart the cottage in order to round up more potential soul-sellers for the merchants, Mary attempts to invoke the name of God in order to thwart the two merchants, but the devils mock her faith to the point that they cause the helpless woman to faint before taking up residence inside her home.

The second scene of the play begins with the Countess Cathleen in the act of exploring the childhood woods of her youth. When the Countess and her companions come across the house in which she grew up, Cathleen fails to recognize it despite Oona's multiple attempts to point it out, so rapt is the young aristocrat in her bard's storytelling. While Aleel entertains her with a tale about a mortal man who died of love for the Fairy Queen Maeve, Oona shows disapproval with the familiarity with which the poet treats the highborn Cathleen. The old nurse and Aleel soon take to bickering with each other in front of the Countess, with Oona declaring the singer an "empty rattle-pate" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 40). Aleel, for his part, accuses the graven Oona of overburdening Cathleen with too many concerns and stealing away the young woman's peace of mind. They are soon interrupted by the steward of Cathleen's estate, who explains to the arriving company that robbers have stolen onto the manor lands in order to steal food. Cathleen pardons the thieves, however, on the grounds: "That starving men may take what's necessary,/ And yet be sinless." (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 42). It is at this time that Shemus and Teigue excitedly happen upon the

scene, joyfully going about their appointed task of announcing the offer made by the two merchants. Speaking with the two, Cathleen is utterly appalled when she learns that they have sold away their immortal souls for coin. She immediately insists that the two peasants take her money in order to buy their souls back, even at the cost of many times the sum which they were paid for them, but the two peasants rudely rebuke her generosity. When a shocked Cathleen attempts to remind them that "there's a world to come" in which they will have need of their souls, Shemus responds that he would prefer to place himself "into the hands/ That can pay money down than to the hands/ That have but shaken famine from the bag" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 43). The Ruas then brazenly leave a horror-struck Cathleen in order to continue their business of demonic advertisement. The Countess sends Aleel after the two in the hopes that he will be able to stop them and convince them to change their minds. Then, fearing that the famine gripping her lands will lead her people to barter away their eternal selves out of sheer necessity, she then orders her steward to sell off all of her lands and possessions, saving her only house, and to combine the money gained with her entire fortune in order to import foodstuffs into the county and bring an end to the famine. As her grateful steward departs to carry out Cathleen commands, Aleel returns to inform the Countess that Shemus and Teigue drew a knife on him when he attempted to stop them by force, and that the two will not cease in their promotion of the merchants' offer to buy souls. Cathleen responds to this news by declaring that she will open up her castle as a free place of refuge to all of her beleaguered subjects, and promises that she will give up all personal concerns and possessions in order to better tend to their troubles. Taking Aleel's aside in order to bandage his arm from a wound given to him by Shemus and Teigue, Oona sadly remarks to the poet that, with Cathleen's commitment to a cause greater than herself already

causing her to begin forsaking all personal attachment, the two are now "of no more account" to her "Than flies upon a window-pane in winter." (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 44).

Converting her home into an open sanctuary for all of her malnourished people, the Countess is approached alone while deep in prayer by Aleel, who brings to her offers of his love and a plan to escape into the wilds of the Irish hillside. The minstrel informs Cathleen about a vivid dream he has had foretelling of the demise that will surely come to her if she is to remain at her home. Though she appears to reciprocate Aleel's love to some degree and seems tempted by his suggestion, Cathleen refuses his offer. She informs Aleel that the spirit which sent him his dream was "...not angelical, but of the old gods,/ Who wander about the world to waken the heart--/The passionate, proud heart--" and that his vision is an attempt to lead her away from her destiny of self-sacrifice (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 46). She determines instead to remain with her destitute subjects, and, tacitly fearing that the romantic attraction between them may weaken her spiritual conviction, she asks Aleel to leave her castle. The crushed poet quietly departs with all of the misery expected of a refused and banished lover, and Cathleen, worn by sadness and fatigue, enters a small chapel. The moment she is out of sight, the two demonic merchants suddenly appear within the halls, vexed that they have been caught breaking into the manor despite using magic which should have put its guards to sleep. They never-the-less succeed in stealing all of the gold housed in Cathleen's treasury, but instead of escaping as per the Second Merchant's wishes, the more powerful First Merchant elects to attempt to claim Cathleen's soul as well. Noticing that she has fallen asleep in her chapel, he once again takes on the guise of a mortal merchant and wakes her. A startled Cathleen exits her oratory and welcomes the two merchants to her

home, not recognizing them as the same ones who have been buying away the souls of all her subjects.

The First Merchant attempts to lure Cathleen into a state of despair so that her soul will be easier for him to capture, first by lying to her, and telling her that the food which she has bought in order to break the famine has failed to make the journey to the region, and then by describing to her the manner in which the buying and selling of souls is taking place in her county unimpeded. Unable to comprehend why anyone would sell something so precious as their immortal soul for simple coin, the First Merchant details the rationale of such people to her: "Some sell because the money gleams,/ And some because they are in terror of the grave,/ And some because their neighbours sold before,/ And some because there is a kind of joy/ In casting hope away, in losing joy,/ In ceasing all resistance, in at last/ Opening one's arms to the eternal flames,/ In casting all sails out upon the wind" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 49). Yeats thus depicts the peasants in *The Countess Cathleen* as selling their souls for much the same reason that people sell themselves in the modern world. Despite his attempts to deceive Cathleen, much like Mary in the first scene of the play, Cathleen's spirituality allows her to eventually see through the First Merchant's disguise and sense his malicious intent. Unable to win her soul, the two devils escape the manor just as Cathleen's subjects rush in looking for intruders. They are devastated when they discover that all of Cathleen's gold had been stolen, but when one declares that God has forsaken the lot of them, Cathleen assures him that this cannot be so. "Old man, old man," she tells the peasant, "He never closed a door/ Unless one opened. I am desolate/ Because of a strange thought that's in my heart;/ But I have still my faith; therefore be silent;/ For surely He does not forsake the world,/ But stands before it modelling the clay/And moulding there His image" (Yeats, *Countess*

Cathleen, 51). Because she has no means, however, of knowing that the First Merchant's words concerning the loss of the food which she has purchased are lies, and because she knows that once word gets out that her gold has been stolen more peasants may feel compelled to accept the merchants' offer than ever, Cathleen determines that she must make a drastic sacrifice in order to prevent her subjects from selling away all of their souls.

The remainder of the play's action takes place where it begins, inside the cottage of Shemus and Mary, save for a short fourth scene during which a small group of peasants relish with one another over the supposed virtue of money. Walking along the same wooden road as Cathleen and her company in Scene Two, the men delight one another over the glory of gold, likening it to the sun. "But doesn't a gold piece glitter like the sun?", says one man to his fellows, "That's what my father, who'd seen better days,/ Told me when I was but a little boy--/So high--so high, its shining like the sun,/ Round and shining, that is what he said" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 52). Just as the sun was worshiped as a deity in ancient times, money in the modern world, Yeats aptly points out in this short scene of *the Countess Cathleen*, has taken on the status of a god in the hearts and minds of mankind. Just as the modern individual loses oneself in a world of materiality and financial-accumulation, unaware of what he or she is sacrificing, so too do the peasants in the play go about the sale of their eternal souls, incognizant of what they are giving up in return for money. As the group of peasants leave the stage, the First and Second Merchants quietly follow behind them like shadows, while a despondent Aleel appears to sing a song of "sorrowful love" which "can never be told" as the scene comes to an end (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 52).

The play's fifth and final scene begins with the two devilish merchants discussing the fact that they have three days remaining before the aid the Countess has sent for arrives in the

region to end the famine. A number of peasants enter the home to bargain with the two while the corpse of Mary Rua--who refused to sell her soul to the merchants, or to eat anything bought with their money, and thus starved to death--lies surrounded by candles in the cottage's corner. Shemus cruelly mocks his dead wife's memory, and instead of mourning her, acts as a huckster for the two devils. "There's nobody could put into her head/ That death is the worst thing can happen us," Shemus nonchalantly remarks about his deceased wife, "Though that sounds simple, for her tongue grew rank/ With all the lies that she heard in chapel" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 53). With Shemus urging them on, a number of peasants begin to deal with the two merchants, who take turns assigning each person's respective soul a price based upon the weight of its owner's sins. When a miserable Aleel appears and attempts to give the merchants his soul free of charge, however, the two are compelled to refuse to accept it from him. "No, but you must," the poet insists to the devils, "Seeing it cannot help her/ I have grown tired of it" (Yeats, *Cathleen Cathleen*, 55-56). But the devils remain obdurate in their refusal. The soul cannot be simply given up, it would seem, but rather must be sold--that is, given a material price and made tawdry--before it can be lost to an individual. Furthermore, because Aleel's love for Cathleen has bound his soul up into something other than himself, he is not at rights, the demons pithily explain, to sell it. "We cannot take your soul," the First Merchant concedes to him, "For it is hers" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 55). Fearing that the peasants will soon notice the lack of power they have over Aleel and the poet's soul, the two merchants order that he be dragged out of the cottage and the bard is dragged into the thronging crowd.

After one of the peasants selling her soul thanks the two devils in the name of God, she is suddenly wracked with sharp pain. Informed by the First Merchant that God's name "is

like a fire to all damned souls," the peasants begin to panic over what they have done, but when they request the opportunity to buy their souls back, the Second Merchant simply mocks them (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 57). As those few peasants who have not already sold their souls turn to flee the cottage in fear, Cathleen arrives to propose her own bargain to the two devils. She offers to sell them her soul, but they must trade her a fortune's worth of money for it so that she can ensure her subjects have sufficient money not to be tempted into selling theirs. In addition, all of the souls of her people that the merchants have bought previously must be returned to their original owners. The peasants beg Cathleen to retract her offer, but she ignores their pleas. Ecstatic at the prospect of claiming such a pure soul as Cathleen's, far more valuable to them than even the combined souls of all her subjects, the two devils ardently agree to her terms. "Five hundred thousand crowns; we give the price," announces the First Merchant, "The gold is here; the souls even while you speak/ Have slipped out of our bond, because your face/ Has shed a light on them and filled their hearts./ But you must sign, for we omit no form/ In buying a soul like yours" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 58). Aleel breaks free from the crowd to plead with the Countess to reconsider, ripping the pen from her grasp before she can sign the contract, but she ignores his appeal, and when he is yet again dragged into the crowd she picks up the pen and signs herself to the devils' pact.

Taking her newly-traded fortune, the Countess leads her subject out of the cottage in order to dispense the gold to them. Gleeful at the prospect of delivering Cathleen's soul to eternal damnation, the two merchants soon follow behind the crowd. Aware that Cathleen will soon die from grief, the First Merchant happily informs his lesser cohort that the two "need but hover over her head in the air,/ For she has only minutes. When she signed/Her

heart began to break. Hush, Hush, I hear the brazen door of Hell move on its hinges,/ And the eternal revelry float hither/ To hearten us" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 59). The two depart to take the shape of owls once again and hover around Cathleen like vultures, and when they have gone, a miserable Aleel and Oona are left alone to discuss the loss of their mistress. But the soon peasants return to the cottage, carrying with them the body of the dying Cathleen. With her final breaths, the Countess gives orders that the money given to her by the two merchants be divided up amongst the people, then she bids goodbye to her beloved nurse and poet. A grief-stricken Aleel begins to bitterly rail against the injustice of the universe, but as he curses the cruelty of fate, his diatribe is interrupted by a jarring thunderstorm. The walls of the cottage suddenly transform, falling first into darkness, then shattering away to reveal a vision of a glorious mountainside populated by a heavenly host of armored angels. Amazed at the divine vision, the peasants throw themselves on their knees, while an awe-struck Aleel, seeking an explanation from one of the spirits, is informed that, despite her contract with the demons, Cathleen's soul is already at peace in heaven. The nobility of her sacrifice has nullified the terms of her bargain, the angel claims, declaring that, "The light beats down; the gates of pearl are wide;/ And she is passing to the floor of peace,/And Mary of the seven times wounded heart/ Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair/ Has fallen on her face; The Light of Lights/ Looks always on the motive, not the deed,/ The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 63). The play concludes as Aleel falls to his knees before the angelic company alongside the rest of the peasants, and Oona mourns the passing of Cathleen while the divine vision of the angels recedes into darkness.

Four archetypes make their influence abundantly clear in the primary characters of *The Countess Cathleen*. Aleel's love and his idealization of Cathleen is clearly the result of

her status as Anima figure to the poet, a thinly-veiled, symbolic parallel to Yeats' own feelings of awe and affection for Maud Gonne. In the two fiendish merchants of the play are found traditionally negative representations of the Trickster archetype, with their schemes, disguises, and deception. However, it is the character of Cathleen herself who, unsurprisingly, channels what is probably the most interesting archetypal content in the play--unsurprising in that, she is, after all, the drama's protagonist. Cathleen's character arc is archetypically significant in that it follows her development from image of the Maiden archetype to potent symbol of the Mother. While Cathleen does not go through the physical act that typically accompanies this psychological development--that is, actually giving birth and raising children of her own body--the spiritual adoption of her subjects which she undertakes nevertheless forces her to shed the virginal garment of Persephone and ascend to a position of higher responsibility, authority, and nurturing--to the place of an Athena, an Isis, or a Mother Mary. It is through this process that Cathleen is endowed with the sagacity and holiness of a saint, and it provides the foundation of character which in turn supports the plot of Yeats's modernist miracle play. Without Cathleen's shift from maiden figure to mother figure, the character would not possess the inner fortitude requisite to carry out her sacrificial act at the end of the play, and thus the text's plot could not come to fruition. Indeed, without the influence of all three of the archetypes outlined above, the play (in its final version, at least) would not exist at all.

Although one must always be cautious when identifying a character within a given playwright's work as directly representative of the playwright himself, it would seem in *The Countess Cathleen* that, for once, this caution is unwarranted. Any individual familiar who is familiar with William Butler Yeats's turbulent relationship with Maud Gonne will instantly

recognize him in the character of Aleel, and in the singer's unreciprocated, but nevertheless devoted love for Cathleen. And certainly, any person who has ever experienced the frustration or pain of unrequited love can relate to the Aleel's verse: "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" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 32). The bard's feelings for Cathleen are hinted at quite early in the play, and like the image of Gonne to Yeats, Cathleen fills Aleel with poetic sentiment and emotional energy. Just as the Anima serves as the force of inspiration in the psyche of the artist, so does Cathleen serve as muse to Aleel, inspiring in him potent dreams and rhyming verses, and receiving melodic songs and faerie legends from him in return. Aleel's projection of his Anima onto Cathleen could not find a more pristine target for a positive representation of the archetype to manifest itself, for she is by no means dangerous, seductive, mischievous, or enervating, but she completely and totally enchants like a nixie or a wood nymph the musician all the same. "The anima is a factor of the utmost importance in the psychology of a man wherever emotions and affects are at work," Jung writes, "She intensifies, exaggerates, falsifies, and mythologizes all emotional relations with his work and with other people of both sexes" (Jung, *Concerning the Archetypes*, 70). All of Aleel's action in the play revolve around his affection for Cathleen. However, it is not until the third scene of the drama, when the bard seeks to persuade Cathleen to abandon her people and flee with him into the hills, that the true depth of his affection for the Countess becomes apparent, and the character's symbolic representation of Yeats's own love for Gonne becomes indisputable. Aleel's desperate, failed attempts to persuade Cathleen to abandon her cause and to live out a life of simple pleasure with him perfectly mirror Yeats's own failed proposals to Gonne in real life, prompting the playwright to speak through his own poet

character with such lines as: "When one so great has spoken of love to one/ So little as I, though to deny him love,/ What can he but hold out beseeching hands,/ Then let them fall beside him, knowing how greatly/ They have overdared?" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 46). Although Aleel attempts to respect Cathleen's wishes for him to depart from her presence-- "Impetuous heart, be still, be still," he tells himself in the scene after she rejects him (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 52)--his attachment to Cathleen as his soul-mate, and as the living representation of his Anima, causes him such misery that he is willing attempts to give his soul away to the play's demonic merchants. Again, anyone who has experienced unrequited romantic love can appreciate how such a misguided, but understandable desire for relief through nihilism can be expressed in the heart of a rejected lover. And anyone who has ever experienced the trauma of losing the love of one's life, the symbolic manifestation of one's own Anima or Animus--can most assuredly relate to Aleel's tempestuous rage following Cathleen death, "And I who weep/ Call curses on you, Time and Fate and Change,/ And have no excellent hope but the great hour/ When you shall plunge headlong through bottomless space" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 62). Yet it must be recognized that the capacity for love that causes Aleel such misery and despair is the same love that keeps him out of the power of demonic forces. It even gives him the power to seize an angel at the play's conclusion, an reverberation perhaps of the biblical story of Jacob. As source of both joy and torment for Aleel, emotional angst and spiritual salvation, the character of Cathleen serves as a potent representation of the Anima's power to inspire and captivate the psyche.

Because devils and demons are among the most frequently employed symbols used to represent the negative aspects of the Trickster archetype, it should come as no surprise that a number of characteristics of the archetype are identifiable in the villains of *The Countess*

Cathleen--though it must be noted that they patently lack one categorical quality, in that they are neither clown-like or stupid. The first and most obvious is the fact that both the First and Second Merchant, quite literally, engage in the business of deception for a living. The purpose of their existence is to win mortal souls through manipulation and guile by counseling ignorant humans with specious reasoning that seem innocuous at first, but which actually bears dire ramifications. For example, the two never directly acknowledge to the villagers of the county that they know souls to be real while brokering with them, despite the fact that, as supernatural spirits from Hell, they are acutely aware that the existence of the soul is a definitive certainty. Instead, they speak of the soul while feigning the ignorance of their prospective human sellers, flippantly calling it, "...a vaporous thing--that may be nothing, but that's the buyer's risk--a second self, they call immortal for a story's sake" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 36-37). The fact that the two devils act as reverse-mountebanks is quite fitting, as Jung noted in his anthropological observations that "There is something of the trickster in the character of the shaman and medicine-man, for he, too, often plays malicious jokes on people, only to fall victim in his turn to the vengeance of those whom he has injured" (Jung, *Psychology of the Trickster-Figure*, 256). Although the First and Second Merchant deceive others, they fall victim to deception as well; Cathleen alone possesses the faith in the play to trust in God's salvation, and thus, it stands to reason that she knew that her signature on the devil's contract would be nullified if God were to admit her to Heaven. Yet still the Countess manages to trick the ignorant Tricksters into giving her a fortune in gold and freeing all of their previously-bought thralls before they become aware of this fact, causing them to lose everything they have gained by the play's conclusion. Another aspect the characters share with many incarnations of the Trickster who appear throughout

mankind's art and mythology is the fact that the First Merchant and Second Merchant are both shapeshifters, willfully able to move between human and beast form as best befits their intentions. Jung believed Trickster images to often take on the forms of "...God, man, and animal at once," and noted that, as is the case with the villains in *The Countess Cathleen*, such characters are often "...both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and diving being" in nature (Jung, *On the Psychology of the Trickster*, 263). The two devilish merchants in the play prefer the form of owls that have the faces of men, shapes which they are referenced as taking multiple times throughout play, for example, when the First Merchant recounts to the Second his tale of turning himself, "Into the image of the man-headed owl," in order to spy on the ships of grain sailing to the county (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 53). The power that images of this archetype often possess to change their physical forms represents a symbolic manifestation of the Trickster's inherent capriciousness: The archetype is always in flux as it attempts to transcend boundaries. While this capriciousness does not extend to the motivations of the two villains in this play--the First and Second Merchant are quite firmly fixed with regard to their evil intentions-- the ultimate goal of the two remains the same goal as that shared by all trickster characters, that is, to shatter the banality of the common world and introduce the possibility of a newer, greater reality. Yet, because they are negative representations of the Trickster, the two merchants offer not freedom or enlightenment as a result of their actions, and they are not petty jokesters playing harmless pranks. Instead, they are monsters who seek to deliver total slavery to the peasants in *The Countess Cathleen* by forcing them to the existence of a greater supernatural reality. While their presence still tears down the boundaries of everyday life, what they seek to deliver is not hope for a new and limitless future, but rather the total absence of hope in the form of spiritual damnation. And

while the two eventually fail in their schemes due to the intervention of the Countess, the fact that they serve as the impetus that leads to Cathleen's eventual death and ascension, and the subsequent heavenly revelation that accompanies it, means that it is ultimately due to the First and Second Merchant machinations that the play's other characters are guided toward a greater, more profound cosmological existence. In this regard, they remain true to the essential nature of the Trickster archetype.

The association of the character of Cathleen with motherhood occurs almost as soon as the character first enters the play, but for the first half of the drama she also radiates qualities typically associated with the archetype of the Maiden, and much of her personal journey in the play involves the exchange of the pleasures and frivolity of youth, and of personal romantic affection, for the mantle of divine motherhood and universal love. Cathleen is, after all, both young, beautiful, and even more telling, has no husband. Mary remarks in the play's first scene that Cathleen's fathers have ruled the lands the play takes place in for "Longer than books can tell" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 31), and though it is never directly stated that Cathleen is a virgin, the tacit implication that she is an unwed heiress is unavoidable. Furthermore, while a tendency to give succor to the weary is undeniably one of the most prominent aspects of Mother archetype, such generosity, mercy, and kindness are all qualities which are often attributed to the Maiden as well. Finally, despite the famine that is devastating the region, Cathleen herself is healthy, spiritually-secure, and when entertained by her friends, merry. In her, Yeats paints the perfect embodiment of the Maiden's green freshness and youthful potential. However, Cathleen is constantly distracted from this world of maiden's fancy because her empathy for others turns her carefree thoughts to concern. In order to take on the burdens that she must endure to

eventually save her people, the Countess is forced to turn away from maidenhood and instead embrace the motherly aspects of her soul, which leads to her eventual death and rebirth as an eternal mother in the guise of a female saint-figure. The feminine spectrum upon which the character of Cathleen is rooted is one that has existed since female consciousness first arose, and as Jung describes, "Demeter and Kore, mother and daughter, extend the feminine consciousness both upwards and downwards. They add an "older and younger," "stronger and weaker" dimension to it and widen out the narrowly limited conscious mind bound in space and time, giving it intimations of a greater and more comprehensive personality which has a share in the eternal course of things" (Jung, *The Psychological Aspects of the Kore*, 188). Thus Cathleen's journey in the play is symbolic of the eternal course of the female psyche's maturation, but it is pushed to an extreme by Yeats, whose female protagonist in the play goes past the point of personal development and takes on the role of a martyr for a host of other human beings.

Although Cathleen never has her children of her own body in the play, by adopting the concerns, welfare, and happiness of her people as her own, and sacrificing all that she has of herself for them, the character becomes an iconic depiction of divine motherhood by the play's conclusion. Just because this is the character's etiological destiny, however, does not mean that she is not tempted at the prospect of Aleel's offer of an idyllic life in the wild hillside during the play's third scene, or of the images sent to him by an otherworldly power through his dream. Her temptation lasts only for a brief moment, however, before Cathleen is forced to nobly thrust it aside. "He bids me go/ Where none of mortal creatures but the swan/ Dabbles," she says to the poet, "and there you would pluck the harp, when the trees/ Had made a heavy shadow about our door,/ And talk among the rustling of the reeds,/ When night

hunted the foolish sun away/ With stillness and pale tapers. No--no--no!" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 45-46). Even after she informs Aleel that the two may never become paramours because of her plan to live in constant prayer, the bard remains desperate that he might change Cathleen's mind. But when he beseeches her hand to kiss, and she still treats her as a maiden and an unattached woman, Cathleen instead replies to him with the blessing of a motherly saint: "I kiss your forehead" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 47). While Cathleen's conviction is momentarily weakened by refusing Aleel's romantic affection and sending the poet away from her, it is forged anew even stronger than before when the turmoil of her people draws her attention back away from herself to the suffering of others. This point in the play marks the culmination of her transformation from symbol of the Maiden to symbol of the Mother, and having left the potential for a fruitful, but selfishly-rooted earthly life behind, Cathleen completes her journey in the play's fifth scene by taking on the position of World-redeemer and ensuring the physical and spiritual salvation of her people. But even as the inhabitants of the county begin their lament over the loss of their beloved saviour--"She was the great white lily of the world," cries one peasant, whilst another calls out, "She was more beautiful than the pale stars" (Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*, 62)--they are overtaken with the heavenly vision of her ascension. Like the peasants of the play, though devastated at the death of such a pure symbol of young womanhood, the audience is delivered from despair by the knowledge that Cathleen's death was not in vain. Having saved the souls of both the innocent and the guilty among her subjects, and having delivered redemption to them through a healing balm of tenderness and sacrifice, Cathleen ends the play by representing all the eternal majesty of motherhood, in spite of her virginal nature. In this sense, she can be

connected to any number of the female saints whose stories are told in the medieval miracle dramas which helped serve to inspire Yeats in his creation of *The Countess Cathleen*.

CHAPTER III: THE STOLEN CHILD;

ARCHETYPAL IMAGES IN *THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE*

The earliest of Yeats's plays to achieve a public staging, *The Land of Heart's Desire* was published and first produced in 1894. The text of the drama was revised substantially in 1912, and yet again in 1923 (Clark and Clark, 830). Part of Yeats's impetus in writing the play was to create a vehicle for the stage debut of a niece of Florence Farr, the leading late-19th and early-20th-century English actress with whom Yeats was both a professional collaborator and close personal friend. As he does in *The Countess Cathleen*, Yeats sets *The Land of Heart's Desire* during an unspecified period in Ireland's medieval past, as dictated by the stage directions of the text, which state that the action of the play takes place "at a remote time" (Yeats, *The Land*, 65). It should be recognized that these words are the result of Yeats's 1912 revisions to the play, however, and that in his original version of the play the chronological setting is not specifically established as the Middle Ages (Clark and Clark, 831). The whole of the drama occurs within the main room of a modest cottage inhabited by four members of the Bruin family: patriarch Maurteen, his wife Bridget, their newlywed son Shawn, and Shawn's bride, Mary. The only image of any sort of external environment in the play is the sight of a wooded forest which is faintly visible through the cottage's open doorway.

As the story begins, the Bruins are in the process of hosting their local parish priest--a kind, elderly clergyman named Father Hart--to a meal within the home on the night of May Eve (Walpurgis Night in the Germanic tradition). While Maurteen, Bridget, Shawn, and Father Hart all sit next to one another to enjoy their meal, Mary alone stands apart from the group as she reads from a leather-bound book next to the cottage door. It is clear from the

first moments of *The Land of Heart's Desire* that Bridget does not approve of her son's new wife, as evidenced by her sour manner and bitter criticism of her daughter-in-law's homemaking habits. While Bridget would prefer that Mary wholly devote herself to a life of domestic labor, the younger woman instead prefers to escape to a world of daydream and fantasy. "Because I bid her clean the pots for supper," complains Bridget in the play's opening lines, "She took that old book down out of the thatch;/ She has been doubled over it ever since" (Yeats, *The Land*, 65). None of the three men in the house gives Bridget's scorn much heed, however. Shawn is simply of the opinion of that his mother is overly-demanding, while Maurteen and Father Hart agree together that Mary is a good-natured girl whose flighty temperament will eventually abate. "Do not blame her greatly;" Maurteen asks the old priest, referring to his son's new bride, "she will grow/ As quiet as a puff-ball in a tree/ When but the moons of marriage dawn and die/ For half a score of times." (Yeats, *The Land*, 66). Father Hart agrees with him by noting that, in his experience, many young brides feel precisely the same restlessness as Mary until the births of their first children. He mentions to Maurteen that he has never witnessed Mary read a book before during all the years he has known her, and seeing the young wife so engulfed in one now has raised his curiosity as to its contents. The elder Bruin informs the priest that the book was bound and written by his grandfather (Shawn's great-grandfather), a prodigal man who opened the family cottage up to visits from travelling bards and other vagabonds. A far more pragmatic fellow than his sire, Maurteen's father held no interest in either the reading or writing of books, and dedicated himself instead towards hard work and the accumulation of money, a proclivity which Maurteen inherited in turn. Pressed by Father Hart to describe what she is reading, Mary tells the priest that the book is full of vivid songs and fairy tales, such as one detailing: "How a

Princess Edain,/ A daughter of a King of Ireland, heard/ A voice singing on a May Eve like
this,/ And followed, half awake and half asleep,/ Until she came into the Land of Faery,/
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave, Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,/
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue./ And she is still there, busied with a dance/ Deep
in the dewy shadow of a wood,/ (Or where stars walk upon a mountain-top.)" (Yeats, *The
Land*, 67). While Maurteen would prefer that his daughter-in-law avoid such stories for
practical reasons (he does not want her to turn into a gullible idler like his grandfather),
Father Hart instructs Mary to take the fairy tale as a religious lesson. He tells Mary that the
spirits which lead the Princess Edain into the realm of faeries were actually fallen angels, and
that such creatures still prowl the world attempting to ensnare mortal souls in order to lead
them away from God. Though he empathizes with her feelings of restlessness, Father Hart
attempts to persuade the young woman that, although it is a natural part of life to feel a
yearning for adventure during one's youth, it is just as natural of a part of life to allow such
longing to gradually fade away as one enters adulthood. When old age arrives, he tells her,
the same yearning for adventure returns again in full force, and so she does not need to fear
losing it forever, but simply has to set it aside for a while. Maurteen agrees with Father Hart's
sagacity, though he aptly points out that Mary herself is far too young to grasp the truth of
the priest's words. Bridget, for her part, simply maintains that Mary is old enough to know
that she should be working all day, and not daydreaming, and this is all that is of importance.

In an crafty attempt to ameliorate the situation by steering conversation onto a new
topic, Maurteen makes remarks about the old wives' tales concerning the holiday, specifically
one claiming that Fey beings stalk the earth to "...steal new-married brides/ After the fall of
twilight on May Eve" (Yeats, *The Land*, 68). He encourages Mary to hang a bough of Rowan

wood on the cottage door in an attempt to ward off such dark spirits, advice Father Hart seconds. But no sooner does Mary hang up the piece of wood and turn back to the rest of the company than "A girl child strangely dressed, perhaps in faery green, comes out of the wood and takes it away" (Yeats, *The Land*, 68). Mary alone spies the odd little girl, but when she wondrously tells the others of what she has seen, Father Hart once again warns her that the beings which travel about on May Eve are malevolent and dangerous creatures. As the group sets back into their meal, Mary is called back to the door by the rap of a mysterious knocking. This time it is a little old woman cloaked in green Mary claims to see just beyond the door's threshold. She takes a porringer of milk from the family table to give to the begging crone, but as soon as she returns to inform the others what she has done, Bridget sets upon her with fiercely renewed scorn. Fairies beg for milk and other amenities on the night of May Eve in order to take power over a house, the old woman bemoans, and therefore Mary has condemned the family home to suffer under their wickedness for the rest of the year. Maurteen sternly rebukes his wife's harsh diatribe, specifically her assertion that Mary intentionally committed the mistake out of malice. The elder Bruin once again tries to improve the mood in the cottage, this time by calling the family back to the dinner table to revel in the comforts which he claims that old age and hard work have won: good food, a peaceful home, and fond company. But during his speech Mary is once again drawn back to the cottage's doorway. When Shawn comes to her side to tenderly ask what has yet again drawn her away from the table, she informs her husband that yet another visitor has called upon their house. This time "a little queer old man" was the one who came calling, requesting a stick from the hearth to light his pipe (Yeats, *The Land*, 71). When Bridget overhears the conversation, she launches into her most bitter diatribe against Mary yet. Shrieking that

giving fire from a house's hearth away to a stranger on May Eve is just as dangerous as giving out milk from its table, Bridget renews her claims that Mary has delivered the cottage into the hands of wicked creatures. While Shawn, Maurteen, and Father Hart all attempt to stem the tide of Bridget's cruel denouncement before her accusations against Mary go too far, she nevertheless persists in declaring that her daughter-in-law has always been a fickle and stupid girl, and that the young woman is not worthy to be Shawn's wife. Driven beyond the point of self-restraint, Mary finally responds to Bridget's acrid condemnation with harsh words of her own. Instead of cursing her spiteful mother-in-law, however, she calls upon the same supernatural powers that the old woman so deeply dreams to come and steal her away from her mortal life, crying out:

"Come, faeries, take me out of this dull house!/ Let me have all the freedom I have lost;/ Work when I will and idle when I will!/ Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,/ For I would ride with you upon the wind,/ (Run on the top of the disheveled tide,)/ And dance upon the mountains like a flame" (Yeats, *The Land*, 71-72). A grave Father Hart warns Mary that she cannot possibly grasp the severity of the words which her frustration has caused her to utter. The young woman remains defiant, however, and angrily responds to him that she has grown weary not only of Bridget's voice, but of hearing the voices of all four of the inhabitants of the cottage.

Shawn Bruin is clearly hurt by his wife's outburst, but he deeply loves her, and so he still manages to muster up tender words of affection in an attempt to cheer her spirits.

Despite Mary's claim that she has grown "right weary" of Shawn's "kind tongue too full of drowsy love" she falls captive to her husband's dotting words quite quickly (Yeats, *The Land*, 72). The two newlyweds share a moment of sweet endearment, and Mary begins to show

regret for her sudden emotional outburst, specifically for her claim that she wants to escape from Shawn. Shawn's love for Mary is clearly reciprocated, and the two soon fall into playful lovers banter with each other. They are soon interrupted by Maurteen, however, who claims to hear the singing voice of a child emanating into the cottage from the woods outside. "The wind blows out of the gates of the day," the tiny voice sings:

The wind blows on the lonely heart./ And the lonely heart is withered away./ While the faeries dance in a place apart./ Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring./ Tossing their milk-white arms in the air./ For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing/ Of a land where even the old are fair./ And even the wise are merry of tongue;/ But I heard a reed of Coolaney say/ 'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung/ The lonely heart is withered away!' (Yeats, *Land*, 73).

Maurteen briefly departs from the cottage, and returns with a small, finely-dressed girl in tow. Although soaking wet and chilled, The Child is unharmed, and Maurteen takes the little girl for lost. For the first time in the play Bridget appears to be actually pleased with something, and both she and her husband quickly set about showering The Child with affection. Because of her refined looks and poetic manner of speech, the elderly couple deduce that the young girl must be the daughter of a local aristocrat. Like two doting grandparents, the old couple quickly and happily set about drying The Child's red hair, warming her little feet, and feeding her treats from their dinner table. All appears well until The Child spies the image of a crucifix hanging from the cottage wall and erupts into a sudden fit of panic and wild distress. The elder Bruins and Father Hart attempt to explain to the girl that she is committing a terrible sin by scorning the image of Christ, but because she is so young, and because her fit is so severe, Father Hart consents to take down the crucifix and place it within the cottage's inner room in the hopes that doing so will calm her down. As soon as he removes the cross, The Child begins to dance about the cottage with renewed glee. As Maurteen and Bridget watch her, a frightened Mary confesses to Shawn that she has begun to hear strange footsteps and music all around the house.

Shawn assures his wife that he has not heard anything odd, yet Mary remains disturbed. When Maurteen offers the little girl a gift of ribbons he had intended to give as a present to Mary, The Child begins to ask each member of the company if they love her. Maurteen warmly replies that he does, but Father Hart is more cautious in giving a response. When the little girl turns her attention next to Mary, the young bride does not know how to answer her. The provokes a bizarre response from The Child. "You love that young man there," pouts the little girl to Mary, "Yet I could make you ride upon the winds,/ (Run on the top of the disheveled tide,)/ And dance upon the mountains like a flame" (Yeats, *The Land*, 77). Alarmed that The Child has quoted her desperate words from earlier verbatim, it suddenly dawns on Mary that The Child is the same small girl she witnessed remove the Rowan branch from the cottage doorway. Father Hart attempts to alleviate Mary's anxiety by insisting that The Child does not understand what she is saying, and he asks the little girl how old she is to prove she is human. Her response is different from what he expects, however. Instead of giving him a mortal age, The Child freely admits that she is actually a powerful spirit of the faery people, and that she has come to answer Mary's summons and steal her away forever.

Although all the inhabitants of the cottage are terrified by the revelation of The Child's true nature, both Shawn and Father Hart resolve to defend Mary by driving the creature out the house. Neither one meets with any success in their attempts, however. The Child easily paralyzes Shawn with a magical spell, and when Father Hart attempts to use his faith in God to turn the faerie girl away, his words prove as impotent as Shawn's physical strength. "Because you took away the crucifix," The Child giddily informs the priest, "I am so mighty that there's none can pass,/ Unless I will it, where my feet have danced/ Or where

I've whirled my finger-tips" (Yeats, *The Land*, 78). She suddenly begins to clutch onto Mary like a frightened babe, and begins to use alluring words to persuade the young woman to forsake the cottage and the mortal world forever: "You shall go with me, newly-married bride,/ And gaze upon a merrier multitude./ (White-armed Nuala, Aengus of the Birds,/ Feacra of the hurtling foam, and him/ Who is the ruler of the Western Host,/ Finvaragh, and their Land of Heart's Desire,/ Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,/ But joy is wisdom, time an endless song" (Yeats, *The Land*, 78). Mary is clearly tempted by The Child's promises, and determining that only Mary has the power to save herself, Father Hart attempts to convince her that The Child is a malevolent fraud whose only goal is to beguile her in order to lead her soul to spiritual ruin. Lamenting that, because he removed the crucifix into the interior room of the cottage, he lacks the power to fight the faerie's magic, Father Hart attempts to leave in order to retrieve it, but is stopped by a terrified Maurteen and Bridget, who fear being left in the spirit's presence without a priest. Finally, Mary announces her choice to the others: She has decided to go with The Child willingly. In a last-ditch effort to save his wife, Shawn begs her with all his heart not to leave him, and the love Mary holds for him begins to cause her resolution to waver. Torn between her desire to journey with The Child into the realm of the fantastical, and her wish to stay behind so that she can remain with her beloved husband, Mary oscillates back and forth between the two worlds until--at the crescendo of the struggle--her body suddenly falls lifeless to the floor. As The Child leaves abruptly the cottage in apparent triumph, an anguished Shawn cries out with grief that his wife has died. While Bridget does what she can to comfort her devastated son, Father Hart laments to himself over the power of darkness to destroy young lives that are full of promise: "Thus do the spirits of evil snatch their prey/ Almost out of the very hand of God;/

And day by day their power is more and more,/ And men and women leave old paths, for pride/ Comes knocking with thin knuckles on the heart" (Yeats, *The Land*, 80). The play concludes as of a number of shadowy figures suddenly rise up outside the cottage, all of which begin to dance, as a chorus of disembodied voices takes up the same song which first enchanted Maurteen into bringing the deadly Fey spirit into the safety of his home.

The most significant archetypal motifs identifiable in the characters of *The Land of Heart's Desire* revolve around the Maiden, the Mother, the Wise Old Man, and the Trickster. The refusal of the play's protagonist to shed various essential qualities of the Maiden in favor of those attributed to the Mother is ultimately what lies at the core of the character's self-conflict, and her inability to resolve this dilemma is ultimately what leads to her demise. Father Hart presents a rather traditional incarnation of the Wise Old Man, although the elderly priest is unsuccessful in his attempts to properly guide or protect Mary in her journey towards self-actualization. The character of The Child would quite naturally seem, at first glance, to represent an incarnation of the Child archetype, but there is a significant problem with this association alone. The Child archetype is always represents a force which serves to bring about the realization of potential futurity, yet the goal of the faery child in the play is precisely the opposite. Indeed, what she seeks (and eventually succeeds in attaining) is the total derailment of Mary's life journey and the destruction of any potential the young woman has for a future of any kind. Clearly, and fittingly, the character is not what she appears to be at first glance. She shows a number of traits which much more closely approximate those associated with the Trickster, and can more properly be classified as an amalgamation of that archetype and with a negative representation of the archetype of the Child.

The battle raging inside of Mary's heart between her desire to escape the banal dreariness of everyday life, and her desire to remain within the dregs of it so that she can be with the man she loves, serves as the primary source of dramatic conflict in the play. Consequently, the whole of the plot of *The Land of Heart's Desire* revolves around Mary's struggle. It is quite obvious from the text that Mary loves Shawn. Only when she is with her husband does the young woman show any joy at the prospect of a simple life as a farmer's wife. When Shawn shows genuine regret over his inability to provide his new bride with the wide, wondrous world which he knows she so desperately longs for, Mary responds by telling him that she would gladly trade all of it away only to see him happy. "I would take the world/ And break it into pieces in my hands," she lovingly tells him, "To see you smile watching it crumble away" (Yeats, *The Land*, 72). Yet Mary's fear that a life of motherhood and domesticity will eventually turn her bitter, old, and grave, causes her to want to flee the cottage of her husband's family like a bird trapped in a cage. Indeed, Bridget serves as a rather potent negative representation of the Mother archetype, at least with regard to her relationship with Mary. Instead of providing the young woman with nourishing affection and helping her to make the transition into the next stage of her life, Bridget holds Mary back with debilitating contempt and a total absence of motherly warmth. Even without the frightening prospect of turning into Bridget, Mary is still a young, freshly-married woman, new to both adulthood and wifehood, and the responsibilities inherent in both are terrifying to all young people standing at the threshold of such life-altering changes. The essential struggle of Mary's character is founded upon the fact that she is caught between childhood and adulthood, and much of her anxiety derives from the fact that those around her have begun to demand that she take on aspects of the Mother archetype when the young woman is

very much still an image of the Maiden. Pure, imaginative, beautiful, emotional, and openhearted, but also flighty and burdened with an air of helplessness, Mary is perfectly comfortable with love--albeit still a bit shy about it. The prospect of becoming an adult and a mother, however, is understandably intimidating to her. As a side note, Mary's ease at love, yet anxiety over children, mirrors Yeats's own feelings dating from the time in his life when he wrote *The Land of Heart's Desire*. Years after it was first composed, Yeats admitted that he wrote the play whilst "in some discomfort when the child was theme, for I knew nothing of children, but with an abundant mind when Mary Bruin was, for I knew an Irish woman whose unrest troubled me" (Clark and Clark, 830).

Both Mary's priest and her father-in-law show confidence that she will be able to make this development on her own in time, but her mother-in-law's constant sniping and fault-finding only exacerbate her feelings of anxiety, which in turn force her to retreat farther and farther away from taking a crucial step forward in her self-development. So instead of attempting to move forward in her life, Mary seeks to escape it, to run far, far away from it to a place, "Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,/ Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,/ Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue" (Yeats, *The Land*, 67). This is the vulnerability that the malicious faery child, seeking to capture a susceptible mortal soul, takes advantage of. Assuming a form that might give it power over any woman anxious at the prospect of motherhood--that of a small child--the faerie uses her power to convince Mary that she will gladly take the young wife away to a magical land free of all her burdens. In truth, the creature's objective is nothing more than Mary's physical and spiritual annihilation, but the offer of a wonderland of pure freedom is too tempting for the desperate young woman to refuse. Even with Father Hart's constant warnings that The Child is not what she appears

to be, Mary is so enamored with the possibility that her pleas have been answered that his messages fall on deaf ears. When Father Hart realizes that he does not have the power to counter the magic of the Faery Child, he remarks to Shawn that Mary still has the ability to fight off the monster's charm's on her own. However, in order to do so she must resolve to put an end to the conflict raging in her soul, and must find the strength to do so in herself. "She must both look and listen," he solemnly tells the frightened Shawn, "For only the soul's choice can save her now./ Come over to me daughter; stand beside me;/ Think of this house and of your duties in it" (Yeats, *The Land*, 78). Father Hart's calls go unanswered, but for a time, Shawn's love appears as if it might be successful in convincing Mary to reject the offer of The Child. Ultimately, however, Mary's inability to shed the garments of the Maiden archetype for those of the Mother condemns her to destruction. Though her final words in the play intimate a desire to reverse her previous decision and remain behind with Shawn, Mary is never able to fully renounce The Child's proposal before her abrupt death. Given this situation, and the appearance of the singing, dancing chorus of Fey creatures who invade the Bruins' cottage at the end of the play, it is strongly implied that the forces of darkness find victory in *The Land of Heart's Desire*. Mary's death signifies the loss a truly promising life, one with the potential, in due time, to fill itself with love and genuine contentment. But because Mary is unwilling, or else unable, to leave her childhood behind her and enter into the next phase of her life, she is condemned to suffer a cruel demise at the hands of malevolent, deceitful spirits, and is lost to the world forever.

Father Hart's failure to save Mary does not come about because he lacks wisdom or knowledge, but rather because he lacks power. The aging priest certainly does not want for insight or soundness of judgment; He does little in the play *but* offer prudent advice, and his

literal occupation as the spiritual guide for the parish in which the Bruins live is an obvious allusion to his archetypal nature. "The old man knows what roads lead to the goal and points them out to the hero," writes Jung, "He warns of dangers to come and supplies the means of meeting them effectively" (Jung, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 221). Father Hart is fully aware of the source of Mary's restlessness, but he is also cognizant of her potential to grow out of it and meet the challenges that come alongside marriage and adulthood successfully. Furthermore, he shows a comprehension of his own limitations, and has a healthy vigilance for the traps and snares that can catch one and throw them off the path of their soul's journey. The old priest knows that there are dangerous forces that exist in world, and he knows that Mary is particularly defenseless to them. Thus, like any good councilor, he does what he can to use this knowledge to protect her. "We do not know the limits of those powers/ God has permitted to the evil spirits/ For some mysterious end," he solemnly warns the whole of the Bruin family in the play (Yeats, *The Land*, 68). In addition to its practical value, Father Hart's wisdom carries with it a certain protective quality as well. For example, though he is as fooled as Maurteen by the outward appearance of the disguised faery child, he is not nearly as enthralled by her charms as are the play's other characters. When asked by The Child if she loves him, Maurteen readily proclaims that he does, but Father Hart retains enough caution to give a more prudent answer. "When the Almighty puts so great a share/ Of His own ageless youth into a creature," he replies to The Child, "To look is but to love" (Yeats, *The Land*, 69). In declaring that it is actually the image of God's eternal youth which he sees reflected in The Child that is the true object of his adoration, and not The Child herself, Father Hart astutely denies the wicked spirit the veneration which she so obviously craves, and subsequently, any power which she might have hoped to claim over him. In addition, the

faery child does not seem capable of paralyzing or otherwise disabling Father Hart through magic in the same manner that she does Shawn, although this may simply be because it is not necessary in order to achieve her goals. Indeed, for all of his sagacity, care, and caution, Father Hart is utterly powerless to stop the creature from ensnaring Mary's soul. The question is a nagging one: If Father Hart is such an apparently wise incarnation of the Wise Old Man, then why does he fail at his purpose as an image of the archetype? The possibility of a symbolic suggestion on the part of Yeats concerning the failure of mankind's traditional spiritual and religious structures to sustain it in the wake of the modern world is a tempting one for any person analyzing the play through the lens of modernist thought, and is something to be said of this interpretation. However, there remains a much simpler and more practical answer to the question. One of the essential duties of the Wise Old Man is to bestow talismans of protection upon the hero of a story or legend--be it an enchanted scabbard, potion of youth, or magic set of beans--not take such wondrous items away. Yet this is precisely the blunder Father Hart makes. He himself admits that it is specifically because he removed the image of Christ from the cottage's main room that he cannot fight off the faery child or break its magical influence over Mary. "It is because I put away the crucifix/ That I am nothing," laments the priest, "and my power is nothing" (Yeats, *The Land*, 79). The removal of the crucifix is only the smallest misstep, but this one miscalculation on the part of Father Hart is all that is necessary for him to eventually fail at his appointed task. Without the holy symbol, Father Hart's words to Mary during his confrontation with The Child seem to carry no influence, and he is incapable of meeting the sprite's magic with any potent supernatural power of his own. By stripping the hero of her magical talisman of protection (albeit unintentionally), the old priest actually plays a greater role in the condemnation of

Mary's soul than he does in saving it, despite his good intentions. Had he retained the crucifix, or given it to Mary, Father Hart may have possessed enough power to drive the faerie and her fellow spirits out of the house, or, at the very least, used it to aid Shawn in his attempts convince Mary to stay. Instead, the Wise Old Man of the play can do little more than watch in horror as one of his charges loses her life before his very eyes, and grieve over his inability to do anything in order to prevent it afterward.

Not only is the character of The Child a cunning and accomplished liar with the power to take on a multitude of shapes, but her essential goal remains much the same as that found in all incarnations of the Trickster. The Child of *The Land of Heart's Desire* seeks to shatter the boundaries of everyday reality through her traps and tricks, bringing into realization the awareness of a larger, greater world in the process. Unfortunately for Mary and the other human characters of the play, the faerie child is a dark trickster, similar to the devilish merchants found in *The Countess Cathleen*, and the greater world which she comes to offer is not the blissful experience which she claims it to be. Certainly, the character makes it sound as if she will take Mary to a magical and wondrous place, but far from opening up the doors to a more meaningful cosmological existence, the world which The Child delivers unto Mary comes at the cost of both the young woman's physical and spiritual obliteration. Certainly, the Fey creature knows that Mary will die if she accepts her offer, for she brazenly tells her so: "But clinging mortal hope must/ fall from you,/ For we who ride the winds, run on the waves,/ And dance upon the mountains are more light/Than dewdrops on the banner of the dawn" (Yeats, *The Land*, 79). Bringing about Mary's death and spiritual destruction is the whole point behind the Faery Child's presence in the play. No practical motivation for The Child's wickedness is explicitly stated in the play, except for Father Hart's assertion that the

creature is a fiend who attempts to draw mortal souls away from God simply because it is in her nature to do so, one of many "wrecked angels" who exists to "set snares,/And bait" humans using "light hopes and heavy dreams" (Yeats, *The Land*, 67). But a practical motivation for her maliciousness is not required. The play is, after all, about Mary, and the conflict that exists inside the young woman's heart, and so reasons for why the faerie child seeks her destruction are not nearly so relevant as the reasons why Mary herself is seduced into accepting the wicked spirit's offer. The fact that The Child's objective in the play explicitly results in the ruination of Mary's future means that the character represents a sign of lost potential. The Child archetype represents, in the words of Jung, "potential future" and is "...a symbol which unites the opposites" (Jung, *The Psychology of the Child*, 164). This means that the symbolic significance of the character of The Child is in polar opposition to that which is typically associated with the Child archetype. In other words, the character of the Child in the play is, in many ways, a negative representation of the Child archetype. As a negative representation of the Child archetype, it should come as no surprise that the faerie child seeks Mary's death; the Child is a symbol of potent futurity, so a negative image of the archetype represents the reverse. It is of interest that Yeats made the choice, be it consciously or unconsciously, to have the evil sprite take on the form of a child, i.e., the very thing which the creature's machinations ensure that Mary will never have. In this regard, the physical appearance that the character utilizes in the play is just another cruel and twisted mockery. Obviously, the disguise holds a practical purpose as well, in that it allows The Child to catch the Bruins unaware and manipulate them into falling into her power, but it also serves as a constant, stinging reminder of what Mary and Shawn will never share together. The juxtaposition of the image of the tiny child clinging to Mary's skirts at one point in the play,

with the image of the dead young woman lifeless in the weeping husband's arms from the story's conclusion, serves as a bitter and ascetic illustration of what is lost in the drama. Yet Mary must die in order for the moral of Yeats's play to hit home: One cannot run away from one's personal development, nor can one turn one's back on the struggles of life without running the danger of suffering dire ramifications. Furthermore, attempting such an escape leaves one incredibly vulnerable to any number of dangers which can lead to annihilation. In order to craft the plot of *The Land of Heart's Desire*, it was necessary for Yeats to create an physical embodiment of these dangers, a symbolic manifestation of what awaits in the dark corners of the world, ready to pounce out and throw one off the path to self-actualization. By drawing on aspects of the Trickster archetype and presenting then alongside a negative representation of the Child archetype, Yeats was able to craft the character of the faery child to meet this need.

CHAPTER IV: WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS;
ARCHETYPAL IMAGES IN *THE HOUR-GLASS*

The Hour-Glass, subtitled by its author as a morality play in allusion to the medieval dramatic form, was first published and produced in 1903, with the premiere production taking place at Molesworth Hall, Dublin, on March 14th of that year (Clark and Clark, 837). Its later revival at the Abbey Theatre in 1911 featured a number of revisions, and served as one of the first professional uses of English designer Edward Gordon's Craig's now infamous "screen technology" (the same method which spelled disaster for the Moscow Art Theatre's 1910-1911 production of *Hamlet*). The two had first met several years earlier after Yeats attended Craig's production of *Dido and Aeneas* at the Coronet Theatre in London in 1901 (Alldritt, 183). Yeats's association with Craig, and his approval of Craig's methods as a theatrical designer, led to his commissioning of the Abbey to revive all three of the dramas examined in this study, *The Countess Cathleen*, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, and *The Hour-Glass*, in the early 1910s (Clark and Clark, 730). This revised version of the *Hour-Glass*, which will be explored in this essay following an analysis of the original 1903 prose text of the play, was subsequently republished in 1914.

Yeats's first edition of *The Hour-Glass* opens with the play's protagonist, the Wise Man, sitting at his desk in a classroom as he contemplates a short passage from an old book that is to serve as the focal point of his day's lesson. Apparently written by an anonymous beggar upon the walls of Babylon in ancient times, the text of the passage reads: "There are two living countries, the one visible and the one invisible; and when it is winter with us it is summer in that country, and when the November winds are up among us it is lambing-time there" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 95). Slightly vexed with his pupils for having selected

this particular passage as the subject of their lesson, the Wise Man acknowledges to himself privately that the meaning behind the words is not immediately clear to him. In fact, the whole passage strikes him as utter rubbish. He remains certain that the words must carry *some* significance, however; otherwise, he reasons, the book's author would not have taken the time to include the passage on a page embossed with fine illuminations. As the Wise Man pours over his book, he remains oblivious to the sudden arrival of a visitor to the classroom. A humble tramp--though Yeats provides no description of the character's appearance in this version of the play, the Fool's occupation as a homeless beggar strongly implies poverty--appears within the doorway, hat in one hand and a long pair of shears in the other, to beg the Wise Man for a penny. The scholar remains absorbed in his book, however, ignoring the Fool. He notes another passage, remarking to himself with an air of self-superiority about how he has already taught his students that it is nonsense. The meaning behind the first passage continues to elude him though, and it is only when pressed by the Fool for coin a second time that the Wise Man first acknowledges the tramp's entrance.

Annoyed at the appearance of the Fool, the Wise Man initially refuses to give him any money. When he instead demands to hear what the Fool knows about the nature of wisdom, the beggar excitedly replies that he knows wisdom from what he has seen. Pressed by the Wise Man to describe what these things are, the Fool details them:

When I went by Kilcluan, where the bells used to be ringing at the break of every day, I could hear nothing but the people snoring in their houses. When I went by Tubber-vanach, where the young man used to be climbing the hill to the blessed well, they were sitting at the cross-roads playing cards. When I went by Carrigoras where the friars used to be fasting and serving the poor, I saw them drinking wine and obeying their wives. And when I asked what misfortune had brought all these changes, they said it was no misfortune, but it was the wisdom they had learned from your teaching (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 96).

Perhaps slightly proud of the Fool's response--it is he, after all, who has taught the inhabitants of the area to abandon all faith in religion or the supernatural--the Wise Man instructs the tramp to seek out his wife, who will give him something to eat. However, the

Fool refuses, declaring the Wise Man's suggestion that he beg for food to be "foolish advice for a wise man to give" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 96). It is pennies he needs, the Fool maintains, so that he may buy food and drink of his own, as well traps and other equipment to hunt and cook with. Even dreamers, Yeats would seem to imply, require some form of material sustenance. They cannot simply live on the leavings of others alone. The Fool insists to the Wise Man that there is a special benefit to giving pennies, however: He is preternaturally lucky, and anyone who gives him pennies is sure to have some of that luck rub off onto them. After all, the Fool contends, if he were not a bastion of good fortune, before long he would most certainly starve to death, being, as he is, a wandering fool.

In the end, it is not the Fool's insistence that giving him money will bless the donor with luck, but rather the Wise Man's curiosity which leads him to give the tramp his coin. When he asks the Fool for the reason why he holds a pair of shears, the beggar vehemently refuses to answer, mysteriously insisting that the Wise Man would "drive them away" if he did (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 97). Only when the Wise Man raises his price all the way to four pennies, and gives his word that he will not drive they--who or whatever "they" are--away, does the Fool give his reason for carrying the shears:

FOOL. Let me come close to you where nobody will hear me. But first you must promise you will not drive them away. [*Wise Man nods.*] Every day men go out dressed in black and spread great black nets over the hills, great black nets.
WISE MAN. Why do they do that?
FOOL. That they may catch the feet of the angels. But every morning, just before the dawn, I go out and cut the nets with my shears, and the angels fly away (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 97).

The Wise Man listens to the story of the Fool, whose name is Teigue, with mock interest, but it is clear he thinks the beggar's talk of angels to be nothing more than what it appears: the ramblings of a lunatic. The Fool goes on to proclaim that angels walk all about them, but compares them to blades of grass, explaining that, despite their ubiquity, nobody ever take the time to stop and notice the presence of these angels. When the Wise Man derisively asks

Teigue if it has been very long if he has seen an angel, the Fool happily responds that it has not. In fact, he exclaims, he only just saw one, though he notes that it was not laughing like the angels which he usually sees. After the Wise Man pays him the Fool the agreed-upon sum of four pennies and sends the happy vagrant on his way, the teacher, now alone, begins to arrogantly congratulate himself for the change which he has wrought over the people of the surrounding countryside. Before he began teaching the inhabitants of the region, he recalls, their minds and hearts were full of spirituality and superstition. However, by utilizing a talent for rhetoric, his mastery of the liberal arts, and the razor of pure empiricism, the Wise Man has successfully managed to purge the area's inhabitants of any belief in the supernatural world. The Wise Man is so wrapped up in the business of praising his own accomplishments, and in his rumination over the mysterious book passage mentioned in the play's opening moments, that he fails to notice the entrance of yet another visitor into his study. This time it is not the poorly-clad Fool who has come to visit him, but rather a haloed angel in a flowing dress the color of fiery cinders.

Quite understandably baffled at the sudden appearance of this otherworldly visitor, the Wise Man eventually manages to stammer out a demand for some sort of an explanation. Vaguely reminded of a recurrent image from his childhood dreams, the Wise Man is utterly astounded when the creature tells him directly that she is an angel sent as a messenger by God. Taking an hour-glass from the wall of his study, the Angel turns the device upside down and informs the Wise Man that he has precisely one hour remaining before the moment of his death. Bewildered, the Wise Man asks the Angel for the reason why his life must so suddenly end, and receives the following response from the Angel in turn. "You must die," she tells him, "because no souls have passed over the threshold of Heaven since you came

into this country. The threshold is grassy, and the gates are rusty, and the angels that keep watch there are lonely" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 99). Asking where it is that death will deliver him, the Wise Man is horrified to be told that he cannot be allowed to enter Heaven because he has previously denied its existence, nor can he be allowed to enter Purgatory for the same reason. The Wise Man attempts to argue that according to this logic he should not be sent to Hell either, since he also denied its existence, but the Angel merely replies that Hell is the destination which awaits all deniers, and that his previous lack of belief in damnation will not save him from it. Crushed, and confronted with undeniable evidence that everything which he has ever believed or taught about God and the supernatural has been wrong, the Wise Man falls on his knees to beg the Angel for forgiveness. Like a true intellectual, he cites the lack of reliable evidence regarding God's existence which is available in the world as the reason for his disbelief, and the many apparent reasons to believe that a higher power does *not* exist. The Wise Man feverishly swears that if he ever been shown even a hint of clear proof for the presence of a divine force, such as what now stands before him, then he would have accepted it and sought out repentance for his disbelief:

WISE MAN. Had I seen your face as I see it now, O! beautiful angel, I would have believed, I would have asked forgiveness. Maybe you do not know how easy it is to doubt. Storm, death, the grass rotting, many sicknesses, those are the messengers that came to me. O! why are you silent? You carry the pardon of the Most High; give it to me! I would kiss your hands if I were not afraid--no, no, the hem of your dress!

ANGEL. You let go undying hands too long ago to take hold of them now.

WISE MAN. You cannot understand. You live in a country that we can only dream about. Maybe it is as hard for you to understand why we disbelieve as it is for us to believe. O! what have I said? You know everything! Give me time to undo what I have done. Give me a year--a month--a day--an hour! Give me to this hour's end, that I may undo what I have done! (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 100).

Although he is told that he can never undo the damage he has already caused, the Angel informs the Wise Man that he still has a small inkling of hope left. If he can locate only a single person within the surrounding area who still believes in the existence of God, Heaven, the soul, or angels, then the Wise Man will be shown mercy. He will still die when the hour-glass runs out, but he will be granted entrance into Purgatory when he does, and eventually

allowed to ascend to a place in Heaven. Ecstatic at the news that he might yet save himself from Hell, the Wise Man passionately thanks the Angel for her generosity. However, the heavenly vision's only responds by grimly reminding him that the sands of the hour-glass will soon run out.

Determined to avoid a life of eternal suffering, the Wise Man desperately goes about the business of trying to find someone whom his previous diatribes have not swayed into disbelief. He first attempts to find a believer amongst his pupils. As the students enter the classroom they are followed closely by the Fool, still begging folk for pennies. Although the pupils give Teigue their spare change, they mock him mercilessly for his beliefs while they do so, snatching at his beggar's sack and belittling him for spending time alone in the wilderness. Angered at their cruel derision of the Fool--behavior which they have surely learned from his example--the Wise Man brusquely orders his students to be silent and take their places. He then earnestly asks if any amongst them retains belief in Heaven. Laughing, his students inform him that none of them is foolish enough to believe in a world beyond what they can see in front of them. When the Wise Man persists, the young men assume that their teacher is attempting to lure one of them into a debate over religion so that he can humiliate the volunteer. Having seen the Wise Man use his skill in logic and rhetoric to demolish every opponent who has ever attempted to argue against him regarding the supernatural, the pupils unanimously inform their master that not a single one of them still believes in Heaven, God, or angels. "Master," explains one young man, "till you came, no teacher in this land was able to get rid of foolishness and ignorance. But every one has listened to you, every one has learned the truth. You have had your last disputation" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 102). The Wise Man desperately attempts to persuade his students

that it has actually been he who has been ignorant, and that everything he has taught them regarding Heaven has been incorrect, his students merely assume that he is feigning despair. Taking his pleas as a lesson, they apply the same skepticism that the Wise Man has taught them to his own claims, and laugh at the manner in which he grows more and more angry with them when he fails to provide conclusive proof. Finally, unable to find a believer in his students, the Wise Man orders them out of his presence in a rage. Under the interpretation that their master wishes for them to find someone he can argue with for fun, the boys leave the classroom to seek out a believer.

Having failed to find any spiritual belief amongst his students, the Wise Man next turns to his wife. He summons her, and feverishly asks if she continues to say her prayers before bed, as was her custom when they married. This Wise Man's wife, whose name is Bridget, dutifully replies that she does not, assuming that she is giving her husband the answer that he wants to hear. When he persists, she informs him that she used to pray, but that she stopped because of his teachings. Besides, she points out, she often grows tired in the evenings, and not having to pray before bed means she can go right to sleep. Like the Wise Man's students, Bridget simply believes that her husband is out to find an argument and someone to rail against. When she comments on a crowd has begun to form outside, the Wise Man sends Bridget outside to see what the commotion is, hoping that his students have found a believer. "It's a hard thing to be married to a man of learning that must be always having arguments," a still-confused Bridget remarks as she leaves the classroom (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 104). The Wise Man is once again left alone to the torment of his own thoughts. When Bridget soon returns with the Fool in tow--he is begging her for pennies, of course-- she informs her husband that his students cannot find anybody in the entire region who still

believes in God. No one wishes to be harangued by the Wise Man, so they have all given up belief. The Wise Man suddenly recalls his children, who are still young enough, he hopes, that his lessons have not indoctrinated them against faith, and orders Bridget to send them to him. When the two small children come before their father, the Wise Man anxiously asks his babes whether they believe in Heaven, or Hell, or Purgatory. But even they have been converted to disbelief by the Wise Man's unyielding skepticism. "There is nothing we cannot see; there is nothing we cannot touch," declares one of the children, whilst the other adds to his father, "Foolish people used to think that there was, but you are very learned and you have taught us better" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 105). Now certain he has no hope of finding a believer in time to save himself from damnation, the Wise Man falls into utter despair. He sends his children away, and calls out to the many angels which he now knows exist around all him, but whom he cannot see, receiving no response but silence. Defeated, he throws a cloth over the hour-glass so that he does not have to watch as the final grains signaling his oblivion fall.

It is in this broken state that the Wise Man suddenly notices presence of the Fool, who has remained in the doorway of the classroom the entire time playing with flowers. When he asks what the Fool is doing, Teigue informs him that he is blowing on dandelions in order to determine what the time is. Judging that this means the Fool is aware of his impending doom, and has been watching all of his turmoil over the course of the last hour, the Wise Man angrily seizes Teigue in order to throw him out. Yet just as he takes hold of the Fool, it suddenly occurs to the Wise Man that Teigue is the one person within his reach who believes in angels. He frantically asks the Fool to declare out loud all the things he believes regarding Heaven, but the Fool evades answering. "I said, Teigue knows everything. Not

even the cats or the hares that milk the cows have Teigue's wisdom," the Fool proudly declares, before adding, "But Teigue will not speak; he says nothing" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 106). When the Wise Man fervently persists, Teigue tells him a seemingly nonsensical story about a *bodach* (a type of Scotch-Irish bogey, also used as derogatory slang for an elderly ne're-do-well) who tried to fool him with a riddle into letting the creature near his pennies. Certain that the Fool is his only chance at salvation, the Wise Man continues to madly beg Teigue to simply acknowledge his belief in Heaven out loud. Finally, the Fool mentions the word "angel", and anxiously asks the Wise Man to lean in close so that no one will overhear the words which pass between them. Then, suddenly, the Fool abruptly changes his mind. Remarking that without his tales he would surely starve, and that it is not possible for him to have seen an angel, Teigue capriciously leaves the classroom, and the Wise Man to his miserable fate.

Alone, without hope, and now certain of his damnation, the Wise Man suddenly comprehends the meaning of the ancient passage found in his old book at the beginning of the play. It refers to the fact that there exists both a physical reality and another, greater reality, a spiritual world of pure form which transcends physical existence. It has been in the Wise Man's negligence of this second, higher reality that he has stumbled into damnation. "My last hope is gone," he muses to himself, "and now that it is too late I can see it all. Those words about winter and summer, about our November being the lambing-time in that other country--all, all is plain now. We sink in on God, we find Him in becoming nothing--we perish into reality" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 107). No sooner have these words passed out from the Wise Man's lips than the Fool suddenly re-enters the classroom, declaring that a mysterious visitor outside has informed him that the Wise Man will pay a penny to hear all

the things that he knows. However, despite Teigue's offer, the scholar refuses. With understanding has come acceptance, and the Wise Man informs Teigue that he no longer wishes to be told anything. Rather, he announces that he is simply glad that the will of the universe shall be done, whatever that will should be, even at the cost of his own damnation. With his final words, he asks the Fool to call back his pupils, so that he may attempt to "make all plain to them, that they may wish His will be fulfilled though that be our damnation. There is no other truth" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 107). The Fool obliges him, but the Wise Man dies in peace before his pupils can shuffle back into the classroom. When one of the group moves to wake the Wise Man, he is shocked to discover that his teacher has died. As the students crowd around their master's corpse, the Fool announces that the Angel has returned to take the Wise Man's soul to heaven. "Look," he exclaims to the students, "look, what has come from his mouth...a little winged thing...a little shining thing...it has gone to the door...O, look, there in the door...[*The Angel appears at the door, she opens her hands and closes them again.*] The Angel has taken it in her hands" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 108). When one of the students asks the Fool what he is talking about, Teigue excitedly tells the young man that the Angel who holds the Wise Man's soul in her hands will soon take it with her to release in Heaven. The bewildered pupil only looks at the Fool with confusion, however, and replies that he does not see anybody standing in the doorway.

Compared to the 1903 text, Yeats's 1914 verse version of *The Hour-Glass* contains a number of revisions worthy of note. Because the difference in dialogue between prose and verse version of the play has resulted in a trend of both incarnations appearing in as separate entities when appearing in anthology--a trend not repeated with Yeats' other heavily-revised

plays, including *The Countess Cathleen* and *The Land of Heart's Desire*--a more thorough analysis of the play's revised plot action is merited in this study. No longer does the play open in its verse revision with the Wise Man sitting alone in his classroom, but instead begins with his pupils in an undefined space as they go about the business of selecting the subject of their master's lecture amongst one another. When one of the group of young men describes to his fellows a dream he has had in which a mysterious figure urged him to question his master's teachings over the assertion that there exists no God or human soul, his comrades derisively dismiss his vision as inane claptrap. When Fool enters the stage setting to beg for change, the gaggle use his appearance as an opportunity to harass the wastrel. Ignoring his words completely, they force him to bow down on his knees for them so that they may use his body for a bookstand for one of their master's heavy tomes. Reluctant to make a selection because they fear their teacher might blame them for their choice, the pupils ultimately decide to pull a passage from the book at random, so as to ensure that they hold no responsibility for the decision, and happen upon the ancient Babylonian passage concerning the existence two countries entirely by chance. Only once they have made their random selection do the students, prompted by the play's stage directions, pull open a set of stage curtains to reveal the Wise Man in his classroom. When the students ask their teacher to explain the meaning of the ancient passage, he instructs them to ask Teigue for an answer instead, reasoning that because the message was written by a beggar, it is a beggar who should be the one to elucidate its meaning instead. Only after the Fool provides an ostensibly nonsensical interpretation of the passage does the Wise Man haughtily provide his own educated explanation of the phrase's meaning. Interestingly, in this version of the text the Wise Man understands the meaning behind the words from the play's very beginning, he

merely disregards them as fatuous nonsense. "The beggar who wrote that on Babylon wall," explains the haughty scholar to his students, "meant that there is a spiritual kingdom that cannot be seen or known till the faculties, whereby we master the kingdom of this world, wither away like green things in winter. A monkish thought, the most mischievous thought that ever passed out of man's mouth" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 277). Upon hearing their master's disdain for the passage, his students immediately absorb his parochialism and soundly reject the phrase, with one going so far as to mockingly suggest that its original author must have been a deformed louse who wrote the words out of mere spite. The means by which the cruelty and close-mindedness of the teacher is easily transferred onto the student is thus even more acutely emphasized by Yeats in the verse rendition of *The Hour-Glass* than in its prose incarnation.

As the students filter out of the classroom, one of the young men observes that his teacher seems to have suddenly become distracted. Speaking to himself after his pupils depart, the Wise Man comments on how the passage has suddenly reminded him of a vivid dream which has shaken him twice in his life, a dream somehow relating to the selfsame passage selected by his students. Now unnerved for a third time, the Wise Man is shaken from his self-musings by the still-present Fool, enthusiastic to ask if the teacher has any pennies to spare. Much of their subsequent exchange remains the same as is found in the prose edition of the play, with the Fool explaining how he has borne witness to the effect the Wise Man's lessons on skepticism and disbelief have had on the people of the region, and proudly speaking of his habit as a liberator of angels. The appearance of the Angel occurs after a bout of physical comedy inserted into the revised play by Yeats, in which a silent Fool is ordered about like a puppet by the Wise Man in monologue. More significant than the

comical insert are Yeats's revised stage directions concerning the appearance of the Angel: "An Angel has come in. It may be played by a man if a man can be found with the right voice, and in that case 'she' should be changed to 'he' throughout, and may wear a little golden domino and a halo made of metal. Or the whole face may be a beautiful mask..." (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 281). This reimagining of the Angel's appearance is heavily indebted to Yeats's collaborative work with Craig, particularly the suggestion that a mask be used for the character in place of its actor's real face.

The Angel's mission is the same in the verse version of the play as it is in the original text. She (or he) delivers the Wise Man with the same ominous missive and the same small opportunity for spiritual reprieve. One of Yeats's more clarifying changes to the play's dialogue occurs during the Wise Man's description of how difficult is for mankind to fight off doubt. Whilst in the prose version of the play the Angel simply responds to the Wise Man with a single line, informing him that he has passed the point of simply being able to ask for forgiveness, in the verse text the celestial creature instead expounds on the triumphant nature of the human soul: "Only when all the world has testified,/ May soul confound it, crying out in joy,/ And laughing on its lonely precipice./ What's dearth and death and sickness to the soul,/ That knows no virtue but itself? Nor could it,/ So trembling with delight and mother-naked,/ Live unabashed if the arguing world stood by" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 283). The Wise Man soon hears the singing of his pupils--Yeats inserts a number of short songs into his revised text of *The Hour-Glass*--and promises the Angel that amongst them he will find one believer who can save him from damnation. The heavenly messenger departs just as his students and the Fool return to the classroom. Before he can address his students, however, the young men take up a mocking song and dance with Teigue, belittling the

unwitting beggar as stupid and insane, and leaving the Wise Man to watch his intolerant students

When the Wise Man finally prevails upon his students to cease their singing, he attempts to convince them that his previous lessons regarding spirituality have been wrong, just as in Yeats's earlier incarnation of the play. This time, however, much of the initial conversation between the pupils and their teacher takes place in Latin. The result of the attempted lesson is the same as in the original text: The students simply assume that their master is only trying to lull them into an argument they cannot hope to win by playing the devil's advocate, and they point out the Wise Man's inability to empirically verify any of what he claims to have experienced. The young men leave their classroom, but quickly return, pushing forward the member of their company who described his dreams to his fellow students during the opening moments of the play. Yet the young man, having been so mocked resolutely by his peers, refuses to acknowledge the dream to his teacher, even when pressed upon by the Wise Man to do so desperately. Though the boy is promised that he will not be punished for telling the truth and speaking his mind, the student remains unconvinced that he will not be ridiculed by the Wise Man the moment he does so, and so he lies instead. "Cease mocking at me, Master," the pupil, fully converted to non-belief, begs his anxious teacher, "For I am certain that there is no God/ Nor immortality, and they that said it/ Made a fantastic tale from a starved dream/ To plague our hearts. Will that content you, Master?" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 289). When the pupils leave to fetch a person who still believes in God for their master, the Wise Man calls upon his wife and children, again, as is the case in the text's earlier version. Their conversations remains mostly unchanged from those of the play's prose version as well: In neither Bridget nor their young children can the

Wise Man find a person whom he has not harangued into disbelief. Though the Wise Man's last frenzied conversation with the Fool is virtually identical to the 1903 prose text of the play, the details of the Wise Man's final moments and of his spiritual redemption following death are noticeably revised. No longer does the Wise Man show any concern toward the deliverance of a final lesson to his students, and the pupils do not return to the classroom at the end of the play. Only the character of the Fool is present to witness the Wise Man's dying monologue, an expansion on the final words presented by the character in the prose version of the play:

Be silent. May God's will prevail on the instant,/ Although His will be my eternal pain./ I have no question:/ It is enough, I know what fixed the station/ Of star and cloud./ And knowing all, I cry/ That whatso God has willed/ On the instant be fulfilled,/ Though that be my damnation./ The stream of the world has changed its course,/ And with the stream my thoughts have run/ Into some cloudy thunderous spring/ That is its mountain source--/ Aye, to some frenzy of the mind,/ For all that we have done's undone,/ Our speculation but as the wind. (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 294)

After the Wise Man lapses into eternal rest, the Fool attempts to wake him from death, showing no recognition that the scholar has died other than to remark that, now, like him, the Wise Man knows everything yet can say nothing. As the Angel enters the classroom to collect the Wise Man's soul and deliver it to Heaven, the solitary Fool witnesses a white butterfly--and not a glowing light, as in the 1903 text--flutter out of the mouth of the Wise Man's corpse and catches it in his hands. Recognizing the presence of the serene Angel, who carries an ornate casket of gold, the Fool carefully places the soul of the Wise Man into the Angel's gilded box. Yeats's stage directions then indicate that the Fool is to close the stage curtain on the Angel and the play's setting, whilst remaining outside of it to deliver one final song to the audience. "He is gone, he is gone, he is gone, but come in, everybody in the world, and look at me," sings the joyful Fool before he too spirits away, "I hear the wind a-blow,/I hear the grass a-grow,/ And all that I know, I know,/ But I will not speak, I will run away" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 294).

Wisdom is the central theme undergirding the action of *The Hour-Glass*, both in the play's prose and verse versions. Thematically, wisdom belongs to the realm of the archetype of the Wise Old Man. Yeats's literal use of irony in the naming of his play's two main characters is rather perspicacious: the eponymously-titled character of the Wise Man, despite all initial evidence to the contrary in his appearance and social position, actually plays the part of the fool in the drama, while the ostensibly senseless and patch-ragged character of Teigue the Fool is the only individual in the whole of the play with the wisdom to help the Wise Man in his quest for repentance. Seen from this point of view, the plot of *The Hour-Glass* rapidly reveals itself as one wrapped up in two separate images of the Wise Old Man archetype and the interaction which occurs between them. The character of the Wise Man is the drama's protagonist, as the action of the play centers on his journey towards self-actualization. Teigue the Fool could be identified (by the pedantic literary analyst) as serving, during brief moments in the plot's action, as an antagonist of sorts, but this interpretation of his character is flimsy at best, rooted in a reflexive need to find some personage in the play who can be declared, with emblazoned letters, as the drama's "antagonist." The true purpose of the Fool's character within the plot of the play is rather abundantly clear upon a detailed analysis of the two central characters and their juxtaposition with each other, and it has nothing to do with blocking the essential action of the Wise Man in the play. Labeling the Fool the drama's antagonist is ultimately groundless, as the entire purpose of the Fool's character in the drama is to spur the character of the Wise Man forward, and to actively help him in his quest toward finding spiritual salvation and cosmic reconciliation. The Fool is not a messenger character either; that role is fulfilled in the story by the heavenly Angel, although Teigue does deliver a number of precious tidbits of wisdom to the Wise Man

throughout the play--scatterbrained though they may be. No, Teigue is a guide, representing, at least within the boundaries of the plot's action, what the Wise Man himself actually *should* be.

The result of the Wise Man's guidance over the people of his village is shown in the drama to be spiritual ignorance, a predilection against individual thought, and an aura of cruel cynicism, despite the fact that the Wise Man's skepticism and insistence on religious and supernatural disbelief appears to be rooted in a genuine conviction against the existence of such things, and a desire to teach others about the dangerous power they hold to manipulate and suppress thought. The result of the Fool's guidance in the play is the salvation of the Wise Man's soul. In contrast to the result of the Wise Man's lessons, no one is harmed or left any worse off for the actions of the Fool. Furthermore, it is only with Teigue's help that the Wise Man comes to recognize the entire point behind the Angel's divine task: That he himself was always the individual whom he was sent to find. Only by accepting the existence of something greater than himself and his own conscious intellect, and by coming to terms with his place in the universe in which he resides does the Wise Man eventually succeed in finding an individual who believes in Heaven and the spirit. By acknowledging the existence of his own soul, the character is able to find the spiritual salvation promised to him by the Angel, and he manages to ascend to Heaven at the end of the play. Thus, *The Hour-Glass* is very much a story about two images of the Wise Old Man, one an ostensibly-fitting, but ultimately flawed representation of the archetype that unknowingly leads others astray into danger, and the other a seemingly inane loon who actually possesses a startling degree of insight and an ability to help others on the journey towards self-realization, and how one of the two manages to help the other find deliverance from spiritual oblivion.

Whether or not Yeats had the 14th Psalm readily in his mind when he first composed *The Hour-Glass* is uncertain, but the character of the Wise Man certainly conforms to the traditional biblical assertion that, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (King James Version, 14:1). His obvious pride and egotistic sense of self-satisfaction aside, the Wise Man is not a particularly malevolent character, only a greatly ignorant one, and this is worthy of note when analyzing his character. The Wise Man does not intentionally lead others astray, nor does he willingly direct them into harm's way in the manner one might expect from a strictly-negative incarnation of the Wise Old Man archetype--from a Mephistopheles, for example--but rather, the character does so quite unknowingly. Nevertheless, the ramifications of his teachings are quite clearly devastating, at least within the cosmological universe of the play: He is directly told that countless souls have failed to enter Heaven, effectively lost forever, specifically because of his lessons. Because of this the Wise Man should be identified not as a negative image of the Wise Old Man, but rather as a *flawed* image of the archetype, and one deliberately fashioned in such a manner by the playwright in order to better define the archetype's essential qualities when juxtaposed against the character of the Fool. The Wise Man shows one what a broken and ineffectual, even dangerous image of the Wise Old Man looks like, and serves as an example of how one should *not* strive to be. In terms of the plot of the play, this is obviously secondary to the character's essential role as the protagonist of *The Hour-Glass*, for without the Wise Man's journey there would be no play. Yet it must be equally acknowledged that without the flaws inherent in the Wise Man's character, there would be no moral lesson for him to learn, and thus no journey for the character to follow through in the morality play.

In his essays and other writings, Jung outlines the collective attributes shared by images of the Wise Old Man as: "...represent[ing] knowledge, reflection, insight, wisdom, cleverness, and intuition on the one hand, and on the other, moral qualities such as goodwill and readiness to help, which make his "spiritual" character sufficiently plain." (Jung, *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, 222). In *The Hour-Glass*, the character of the Wise Man's entire quest, upon which the whole of the action of the play depends, is rooted in the fact that he lacks key knowledge, is devoid of spiritual character, and most importantly of all, that he has spread ill will amongst those around him by leading them into spiritual desolation. This above all is paramount: It is the spiritual damnation which the Wise Man's incessant convictions have thrust upon other people that has placed his soul in peril, not his empirical skepticism or his insistence upon common sense. His true crime is not personal disbelief or skepticism. His personal disbelief always could be, and indeed is in the action of the play, confronted and rectified in the moments that immediately precede his death. But his failure to serve as a proper guide to those with whom he shares the world is nearly unforgivable. It is because he is a poor teacher, a defective representation of what is expected of the Wise Old Man, that the Angel informs the Wise Man he must face an eternity of doom in Hell. Because the Wise Man has prevented other human beings in the world of the play from acknowledging a crucial aspect of themselves and the universe they inhabit, and because he has otherwise led others into general ignorance and discourteousness through his teachings, the Wise Man serves as a clear example of an individual, who despite his intelligence, is only ostensibly wise, and who, in truth, is oblivious when it comes to the realm of true wisdom.

The characteristics which the Wise Man shares with traditional medieval priest or magician characters--long, flowing robes, acuteness of intellect, worldly knowledge and experience, a following of eager-to-please apprentices--only serve to emphasize the fact that he fails to possess one singular quality that is almost universally present in such personages: Some degree of magical and/or supernatural prowess that enables him to effectively protect and lead others on their respective journeys. In fact, in virtually all regards, and against all initial appearances, the Wise Man fails to live up to the essential standards of a positive image of the Wise Old Man archetype. He does not lead others effectively, he bestows no magical protection, nor does he provide others with items of supernatural significance, he has no association with the concept of spirit (indeed, he stands in opposition to it), and he lacks the insight and outward perception necessary to grasp either his place in his own life's journey or in the cosmic order of the universe he inhabits at large.

Anthony Stevens defines images of the Wise Man archetype as being, "...concerned with meanings and ideas rather than the actions and personalities of people. He is a scholar, teacher, sage, and philosopher" (Stevens, 180). In this description of the archetype, something of the character of the Wise Man from *The Hour-Glass* can be gleaned, for initially, he does seem more committed to discussing ideas than actually paying attention to the station of the world in which he exists, or the quality of the people in it, and his social role as a teacher is made clear in both versions of the play. The Wise Man's lack of supernatural knowledge, however, makes him a flawed guide for young minds embarking on their own lives' journey, and the fact that he has failed to recognize the negative ramifications of his lessons on the world around him is what much of the play is based upon. In order to complete his quest in the play, the Wise Man requires a teacher figure of his own, one who

does possess an awareness of or familiarity with things magical and heavenly. Of course, the guidance which the Wise Man so desperately seeks comes only in the form of that which is most fitting poetically; after all, what does an intellectual typically despise and deride more than a fool?

At first glance, Teigue the Fool may be the last person anyone sane would deem an appropriate teacher or guide. Few people would advocate following the advice of a rambling, threadbare beggar who sleeps in the wilds, after all. But in the world of *The Hour-Glass*, where spiritual wisdom has been relegated to such an inferior position in the hearts and minds of men because of the Wise Man's teachings, the only individual who could possibly retain any cosmic insight of value is a vagrant disregarded by society. In this regard, the Fool is also a strong symbolic representation of the modern artist. Who knows more in the modern world about a life of begging for scraps from the ridiculing, unappreciative masses, whilst still striving to awaken their mockers to the infinite potential of the human soul, than the poet, the actor, the painter, or the musician? The fact that the Fool carries with him a some sort of protective, supernatural power which he can extend to others--what he calls "luck" in the play--is established quite early in the work, another quality emblematic of guide figures. While much of the character's dialogue in the play does seem to be inane prattle, an undercurrent of good sense reveals itself in the Fool's words when they are closely ruminated upon. In this regard as well, the Fool is not so dissimilar from other incarnations of the Wise Old Man throughout literature. Mankind's myths and stories are full of rambling prophets and poets who speak in tongues, or otherwise in verses of ostensible nonsense which actually hold deep meaning and insight. The Fool certainly shows a greater awareness of the current state of the world in which he exists than the Wise Man does, despite the former's apparent

madness and the latter's reputedly keen intellect. One might expect Yeats's Fool to follow in the tradition of other dramatic clown characters, personages like Shakespeare's Feste or the commedia stock-role Arlecchino, and serve as a representation of the Trickster archetype, but this is not the case in *The Hour-Glass*. Teigue plays no tricks and pulls no pranks, he does not change his shape or form, or disguise himself behind the mask of another personage, his actions bring about no cosmic change (only a recognition of the cosmic state of the universe as it already exists), and, most fundamentally, he does not attempt to manipulate, deceive, hoodwink, or lead others awry in any fashion. Indeed, his function in the play is precisely the opposite: He points out the proper path. The Fool is the one individual in *The Hour-Glass* who helps the Wise Man get closer to what he is searching for, and, despite his clownish nature, Teigue does not do this in the typical fashion of a Trickster, via bumbling accident or hapless mistake, but rather because he shows a genuine understanding of the foundations of the universe.

The majority of the Fool's dialogue in the play appears, like the dialogue of countless other fool characters throughout literature, to be little more than random, meaningless nonsense, and the question rapidly materializes: Why is the guide character in the play, if his function is to lead, so ill-equipped to convey the knowledge that he possesses to other people? Teigue appears to be quite content with his existence, despite the ire with which others treat him and the low position he holds in society. He doesn't seem to mind that others disregard his words, and unlike the Wise Man, he holds no place in society that allots him any respect, so others are disinclined to listen to a thing he has to say anyway. This is not to even touch on the fact that he appears, and may indeed be, quite mad. But as the action of the play shows--particularly the prose incarnation, whose ending shows that the drama's

audience has shared the Fool's power of "angel sight" throughout the entire play--Teigue has a better grasp of things than he lets on. Yet the rambling babble that he speaks prevents any of what he does know from being efficiently communicated to anyone else. There are multiple times in the play when the Fool's powers of perception are hinted at. For example, he possesses the insight to recognize that the anti-religious effect of the Wise Man's teachings has brought "misfortune" to the surrounding community, even before the Angel appears to inform the Wise Man of the souls his lessons have damned, despite the fact that everybody else in the area considers it to be "wisdom" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 96). Teigue is able to successfully raise the amount of money that the Wise Man pays him through the use, of all things, logic, and the Fool knows when to appear and when to disappear throughout the play at the most opportune times, even though it appears that he makes these entrances and exits quite at random. So why can the Fool not speak his mind directly? Why can the poet not? There is wisdom in ineffability, and beauty in it as well. It holds a connection to the human spirit, the soul, an element of which will always be mysterious and defy scrutiny. Spirit, rooted in immateriality, will always maintain an air of ineffability by virtue of its nature; subsequently, so will all art and poetry, which springs forth from, and channels the contents of, the human soul. The Fool holds the wisdom of the collective unconscious, something which can never be conceived by the conscious mind directly. This is why, despite the fact that "Not even the cats or the hares that milk the cows have Teigue's wisdom," and that the Fool possesses great transient knowledge, he is unable to relate it to anyone else (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Prose*, 106).

Many prophets throughout the course of human myth and drama have spoken in tongues, and lived on visions, much in the manner that Teigue does, with his fiery angels as

plentiful as blades of grass. The Fool knows that he can show the Wise Man the proper path, to employ a modern metaphor, but knows that the scholar must tread it of his own volition. Hence, despite the fact that he need only vocally admit to the Wise Man after the scholar is visited by the Angel what he was more than willing to prattle on about before, that he has seen an Angel and knows they exist, the up-to-this-point sweet and helpful Teigue refuses to do so, choosing instead to abruptly leave the Wise Man alone at his most dire hour. The only way for the Wise Man to save his own soul is to acknowledge it himself, and it is not by Teigue's belief that he can do this, but only through his own. It is only when the Fool denies him at his most dire hour that the Wise Man launches into his deeply ruminative state over the order of the universe, acknowledging the existence of a worldsoul and a godhead, and coming to terms with his fate in it. From this comes the redemption that leads to the salvation of the Wise Man's soul at the end of the play. Yeats clarifies this aspect of *The Hour-Glass* in his verse revision of the play, adding the Wise Man's dialogue about how the nature of the spiritual kingdom can only be known when one has reached the moment of death, i.e., when "...the faculties, whereby we master the kingdom of this world, wither away like green things in winter" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 277). The Fool knows all of this, and it is for this reason that he immediately reappears--perfectly willing to tell the Wise Man what the teacher previously wanted to hear so desperately--at the precise moment *after* which the Wise Man come to his epiphany.

Once the Wise Man realizes that he never needed the Fool's testimony in the first place, the Fool reappears, willing to give it to him. And it is most fitting that the Fool, one who already has a knowledge of the spiritual world, knowledge for which he has been forced to pay rather dearly (madness, ridicule, et cetera), is the only witness to the Wise Man's final

speech over true nature of the universe. Yeats again clarifies this moment in his verse incarnation of *The Hour-Glass* by adding the Fool's final lines to the Wise Man--now a corpse: "You and I, we are the two fools, we know everything, but we will not speak" (Yeats, *The Hour-Glass Verse*, 294). The Wise Man knows all but can say nothing because he is no more, his soul is destined to fade back into the immortal godhead, to return to the depths of collective unconsciousness. The Fool knows all but can say nothing because he is a spiritual guide, blessed with cosmic knowledge but also burdened with apparent lunacy, yet another "mad prophet" symbol to add the annals of world literature. Thus, it is fitting that both versions of *The Hour-Glass* end in a fashion that shows the Fool, in one final way, for the spiritual guide that he truly is. At the ending of both prose and verse incarnations of the play, the Fool--and the Fool alone--takes on the responsibility of watching over the Wise Man's flickering soul until it can be safely taken into the possession of the heavenly Angel. In the verse version of the play, this care of the Wise Man's soul extends to the point that Teigue carefully holds the Wise Man's spirit in his hands as a gentle child might hold a firefly, until it can be safely placed into the Angel's golden casket. Thus, from his first interaction with the Wise Man until his last, the Fool attempts to direct and guide the scholar away from the unknown foolishness of that character's spiritual skepticism, and to protect the Wise Man's soul so that it can return to its heavenly source after death. Teigue the Fool, rambling and babbling spouter of nonsense that he is, is far more than a common vagrant. Certainly, he is a mad beggar, that is not to be contested, but the Fool's madness carries with it vast spiritual knowledge and understanding, and despite his foolish nature, he is by virtue of his function in the play, as well as numerous aspects of his character, an effective and laudably-crafted image of the Wise Old Man archetype.

CONCLUSION

The collected plays of W. B. Yeats are bastions of vivid symbolic imagery, and every one of those symbols bases its meaning upon archetypal foundations. That archetypal character analyses for such brilliant works as *At the Hawk's Well* or *A Full Moon in March* are not included in this study is due to the fact that the plays surveyed herein are strictly limited to Yeats's early, turn-of-the-century work. Even the examinations of the three plays presented in this work are not completely exhaustive with regard to their exploration of archetypal meaning. For example, all three of the protagonists found in each respective drama can reasonably be inferred as representations of the archetype of Self, symbolic of the individual who moves along the path of personal development. That this fact has not been pointed out until now is because it is self-evident; the protagonist of every drama, myth, or literary story—reasonable exceptions such as those found in deconstructionist literature aside—represents the Self on a journey toward actualization. The character of the Fool presented in both versions of *The Hour-Glass* is representational of the ever-present, thin line that exists separating madness from genius, a road dangerously walked by every artist and poet in existence, and this character is echoed over and over again in many of Yeats's other dramas, such as the Fool presented in *On Baile's Strand* or The Swineherd seen in *A Full Moon in March*. Or, to provide yet another example, the children of the Wise Man found in both versions of *The Hour-Glass* are terrible to behold, not because they are wicked or particularly monstrous creatures, but because their blind commitment to their father's spiritual nihilism means that they stand in symbolic opposition to the qualities typically associated with the Child archetype, namely innocence of uncontaminated spirit, which causes one to immediately associate them with wicked or ghostly anti-child figures

found in other myth and literature. This study could continue for some time, and at some length, and still the world of archetypes would continue to supply fruitful material for analysis and retrospection which could fill countless more pages. Thus, an ending to this work must eventually be imposed at some juncture.

Therein lies the most pressing danger that comes with archetypal literary analysis. Because Jung's archetypes represent the building blocks of the psyche, organizing and otherwise influencing the mind's conception of reality through symbolic content, as soon as one opens oneself up to the recognition and potential exploration of the unconscious mind's ability to project archetypal content into conscious reality, one risks seeing it everywhere and in everything. Suddenly the world becomes a maddening bombardment of symbolic content, and associations which are the result of a single individual's perceptions are claimed to be universal, when they are truly nothing more than the products of each analyst's individual mind. This has not escaped the notice of past scholars who advocated archetypal literary analysis during their careers, such as Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye, and indeed it did not go unrecognized by Jung in his medical treatment of the human psyche. All three warn in their respective writings of the danger that awaits one who goes too far in archetypal analysis alone, without applying any other methodology of analysis. Every individual perceives symbols in his or her own fashion, and, as has been already discussed at great length in this essay, even without this individual bias, symbolic interpretation can take on a myriad of forms (positive, negative, neutral) based upon the manner in which it manifests itself. Any work of archetypal analysis in art or literature risks becoming nothing more than the rambling of one individual's random mental associations unless it follows the paramount rule of strictly limiting itself to the study of universal imagery.

This is the entire purpose of archetypal study in the first place: to explore the presence of universal associative motifs and other symbols found in mankind's collective art, myth, and legend. This is sometimes a task easier said than done, however. Although each of the characters presented in the three plays explored within this work frequently channel only one or two archetypes symbolically (it is for this reason that they make such ready subjects for an introductory work in archetypal character recognition), complex dramatic characters, such as Faust or Hamlet, can be reasonably argued to represent a number of them. This is why other forms of literary and character analysis remain of great importance, and why archetypal study does not automatically displace or supersede them. However, when there is a fundamental need to explore what is truly going on in the action of a moment in a play, or in the psyche of a dramatic character, archetypes are the torches that can light the royal road to comprehension, be it for the scholar, the director, the writer, the actor, or the designer. In order to do this, however, all archetypal literary analysis must root its interpretations in the exploration of universally associative symbolic content, and universal content only, or else it will be of no practical relevance to anyone but the individual critic.

This risk taken into account, it can be avoided with the exercise of caution on the part of the critic, and the practical value of archetypal analysis in all dramatic and other literary work, but especially in Symbolist drama, is profound. Because Symbolist plays depend, more than the works of any other dramatic movement, on the presence of universal images, and because archetypes *are* those universal images at the most fundamental level, learning about the presence and influence of archetypes virtually amounts to gaining literacy in a new language when it comes to the task of examining Symbolist drama. Previously incomprehensible or ineffectual plays—labels which have both been applied to Yeats's

dramatic works—suddenly light up from a previously unrecognized perspective, and the insightful and spiritually revitalizing works that they are becomes clearly apparent. The ineffable and philosophical content found in Symbolist plays perhaps means that they will never maintain the stage presence of other forms of drama. But they *do* possess profound theatrical power and an ability to influence the human mind and soul when properly understood and well performed. The comprehension of archetypal content allows the producing body of a symbolist play to understand at the most fundamental level the material they are presenting to an audience, and it can be a boon of significant benefit to those theatrical artists who recognize the beauty and wonder available in Symbolist drama, but who struggle with concerns over how to communicate these qualities to an audience, and therefore--regrettably--opt to avoid the production of Symbolist plays entirely. Jung's conception of archetypes provides the means to better understand any story, but of all dramatic literature, they are most readily applicable to the analysis of character as it is found in Symbolist drama, and they are the perfect tools to enable one to decipher the brilliance and the sublimity that are hidden in the content all great Symbolist plays, such as those plays written by W. B. Yeats, and to relate it to those others who remains puzzled, unsatisfied, or intimidated by such works.

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VITA

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