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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISUAL ARTS IN THE ESTHETIC OF W. B. YEATS

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GRADUATE COLLEGE

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A DISSERTATION

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

LYNN LUNDGAARD

Norman, Oklahoma

1980

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISUAL ARTS

IN THE ESTHETIC OF W. B. YEATS

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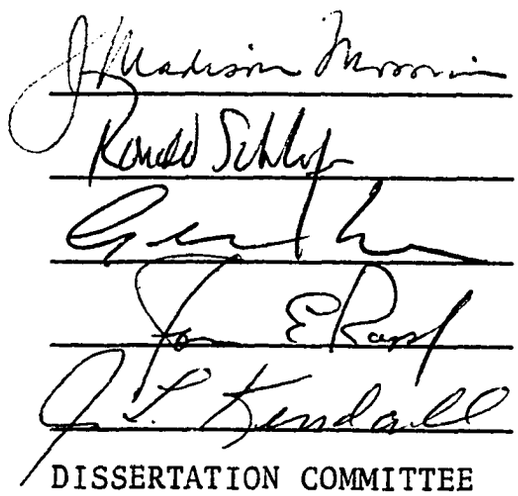

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VISUAL ARTS IN THE ESTHETIC OF W. B. YEATS

CHAPTER I

"AN ARTIST AND A POET"

The rioting over The Playboy of the Western World began in 1907. W. B. Yeats watched the wildly indignant audience verbally and physically attacking the work of his friend, the author John Synge, and was reminded of the work of another friend, the painter Charles Ricketts. Almost two years later on March 8, 1909, he wrote to Lady Gregory: "I wrote a note a couple of days ago in which I compared Griffiths and his like to the Eunuchs in Ricketts' picture watching Don Juan riding through Hell."[1] That comparison he then put into verse in a poem:

> Once when midnight smote the air,
> Eunuchs ran through Hell and met
> On every crowded street to stare
> Upon great Juan riding by:
> Even like these to rail and sweat
> Staring upon his sinewy thigh.[2]

The poem was originally published under the title "On Those Who Dislike the 'Playboy'" in the Irish Review, Dec., 1911;

then in The Green Helmet And Other Poems, 1921; and as "The Attack on 'The Playboy of the Western World,' 1907," in Responsibilities, May 25, 1914.[3] Finally it was published in Collected Poems, 1933, with the title, "On Those Who Hated 'The Playboy of the Western World', 1907."[4] The verse does not mention the painting, nor do any of the titles, nor do Yeats's notes to the Collected Poems: the poem is, in fact, totally independent of the painting--a reader who had not read Yeats's letters or happened to see the painting would never suspect a relationship. Yet without that particular painting, this particular poem would not exist: the scene which Yeats translates into verse is the creation of Charles Ricketts.

This is the most striking example of the centrality of works of plastic art to the literary art of W. B. Yeats. Painters and sculptors--yes, and art critics as well--were of primary importance in the development of Yeats's esthetic and in the actual creation of his poetry. Evidence of this importance can be found in Yeats's biography, as well as in his works of art criticism, his plays, and his poems.

Not all Yeats's poems, of course, conceal their reference as does the "Playboy" poem. There are a few which do acknowledge, by title or by direct reference within the poem, their genesis in some other work of art not literary but plastic. In the case of one such poem, we even have an account of the creative process involved, as observed

by Mrs. Yeats and the artist Cecil Salkell. Mrs. Yeats attests that her husband had been much impressed by a painting by Edmund Dulac, and that he was meditating a poem which would take its inspiration from that work. But the lines did not come easily, and Yeats was still experiencing a difficult gestation when Salkell arrived for a visit:

> Madame Gonne MacBride smiled at me and said: "Willie is booming and buzzing like a bumble bee . . . that means he is writing something. . . ." To my great surprise, Yeats, who appeared shortly, obviously preoccupied and absent minded, asked me if I would walk up the glen with him. We walked . . . in silence. By that I mean no word was spoken; but, all the while, Yeats kept up a persistent murmur--under his breath, as it were. Suddenly he pulled up short . . . and said: "Do you realize that eternity is not a long time but a short time?" I just said, I didn't quite understand. "Eternity," said Yeats, "Eternity is the glitter on the beetle's wing . . . it is something infinitely short. . . ." I said that I could well conceive "Infinity" as being excessively small as well as being excessively large. "Yes," he said apparently irrelevantly, "I was thinking of those Ephesian topers."

Yeats showed Salkell a draft, so rough as to be unintelligible, of the poem:

> I only saw one phrase which I knew was obsessing him at the time--for Yeats was at all times a man dominated--sometimes for weeks on end--by a single phrase: this one was "mummy wheat"--a phrase destined to appear in a much later poem--a phrase he never forgot.

That night Salkell painted a water color of a "weird centaur at the edge of a dark wood; in the foreground, in the shade of the wood, lay the seven Ephesian 'topers' in a drunken

stupor, while far behind on a sunny distant plain, elephants and the glory of a great army passed away into the distance." When he showed this picture to Yeats,

> he looked at it so critically that I suddenly remembered he had been an art student. He peered at me over the top of his glasses. "Who is your teacher?" he asked, "Has he told you about values?" What are values, I asked. Yeats laughed his deep ferocious chuckle; "Do you really tell me you don't know what values are?" I said "No," and waited for instruction. "Well, I'm certainly not going to tell you! . . . 'Values' were the bane of my youth."

After this Yeats spoke no more of painting, says Salkell, but instead discussed his concept of the "Daimon," and his difficulties in composing The Player Queen. But the incident was far from concluded:

> Later that night, W. B. came down to supper with a perfectly clear countenance; it was plain the poem was finished. He did not speak throughout the meal, yet I felt he would say something before night was through. When the ladies had withdrawn, he produced a pigskin covered brandy flask and a small beautifully written manuscript: "Your picture made the thing clear," he said, "I am going to dedicate the poem to you. I shall call it "The Black Centaur" . . . I was impressed and gratified. But when printed in 1928 in The Tower, the poem was altered; it was corrected and it was entitled: "On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac."[5]

Many Yeats scholars have attempted to describe the poet's "creative method," noting the long period--sometimes years--which elapsed between the original conception of a poem and its actual composition, the many revisions, and the vocal method of composition.[6] Not many, however,

have remarked that Yeats's idea often passed through the alembic of another work of art before emerging as a finished poem: "Your picture made the thing clear." The two accounts I have quoted are the only documentary evidence which attests to this process, but Yeats's notes to the poems sometimes explain difficult lines by a reference to a painting or statute. He notes in The Winding Stair, for instance:

> In "The Mother of God," the words, "a fallen flare through the hollow of an ear," are, I am told, obscure. I had in my memory Byzantine mosaic pictures of the Annunciation, which show a line drawn from a star to the ear of the Virgin. She conceived the word, and therefore through the ear a star fell and was born.[7]

There is also an occasional evidence of a concealed reference to a painting or statue in what Yeats says about his poems in his letters. In 1930, when T. S. Moore was working on the cover design for The Winding Stair, he wanted to illustrate an idea from "Byzantium," and wrote to Yeats to ask, "Is your dolphin to be so large that the whole of Humanity can ride on its back?" Yeats replied, "One dolphin, one man. Do you know Raphael's statue of the dolphin carrying one of the Holy Innocents to Heaven?"[8] Here he doesn't say, of course, that the idea came from the statue, but he does obviously think that the resemblance is close.

These last references illustrate a critical problem. Certainly among the sources of these works were paintings and statues. But which painting or statue? Often Yeats's

notes or title confuse the issue: the Dulac painting has never really been identified, and may be one which features unicorns, not centaurs; Raphael apparently never made a statute of a dolphin carrying anything--it seems that Yeats must have confused his work with that of some other sculptor. In other cases, Yeats will give identification which is accurate, but quite general: "Greek statutes,"[9] or "Byzantine mosaic pictures," rather than specific works.

A glance at the table of contents of Yeats's collected poems will show, however, a number of poems which acknowledge that they are "about" a work of plastic art. One of the two earliest published poems has the title, "On Mr. Nettleship's Picture at the Royal Hibernian Academy," published in the Dublin University Review, in April, 1886, and republished in The Wanderings of Oisin, 1889.[10] This poem, seldom reprinted, certainly must be one of the earliest things Yeats wrote (if not one of the best). The only other poem which thus identifies a specific work is "On a Picture of a Black Centaur," 1928; but "A Bronze Head" and "The Municipal Gallery Revisited," both from Last Poems, refer to specific works by contemporary artists whom Yeats knew. "Lapis Lazuli" and "The Statues" refer to Greek and Oriental art more generally (Yeats owned a carving similar to the one he describes in "Lapis Lazuli"--a gift from Laurence Binyon--but it is never exactly identified in the poem). "The Mask" (1910) is based upon what was apparently an

imaginary artifact, as was--presumably--the "golden bird upon a golden bough" of "Sailing to Byzantium". In all these poems, the work of art serves as the central, unifying image. As Sidney Mendel says of "Lapis Lazuli," "In the last section, the two strands of the poem are woven together, for we are presented with a work of art--the carving in lapis lazuli--which depicts people who with detached enjoyment are contemplating the world as if it were a work of art."[11]

The frequency with which Yeats uses other works of art as a central image may be readily seen to be exceptional. But is the group of poems which has one of these works as sole subject actually so insignificant as its number would indicate? For purposes of comparison, one might note that Coleridge wrote only one poem addressed to an artist or work of art, as did Shelley. Keats, however, wrote three, and Wordsworth eleven (but Wordsworth wrote many times more poems than did Yeats: literally hundreds of poems). Closer to Yeats's own time, Wilde has one, but that a long one, "The Sphinx." William Morris has a carefully phrased introduction to the first volume of his collected words: "To my friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a Painter, I Dedicate These Poems," but includes no poems which have to do with works of art (except those which he surrounded with his own decorations). He does, however, have one poem entitled, "For the Bed at Kelmacott," which reminds one that perhaps Yeat's poem "The Tower" and the section of "Meditations

in Time of Civil War" that describes his room and his table should be included as taking their imagery from works of art, for Yeats was a disciple of Morris in his efforts to identify the artisan with the artist.

Rossetti himself, however, dedicates a good proportion of his poems to works of art: twenty-seven poems to be exact. Most of these are included in the "Sonnets for Pictures," which provide the closest analogy for the method Yeats used to create "On Those Who Hated the 'Playboy'," and, because of Yeats's early interest in Rossetti, seem likely to have been his inspiration for this form of verse. There is, however, a crucial difference: when Yeats published the poem, he did not include a subtitle such as Rossetti's "For a Painting." Perhaps the reason for this omission was that Yeats's poems do not take their actual inspiration from a painting--they are not, as were Rossetti's, celebrations of the other work of art in and of itself. Yeats's poems were often suggested to him by some of his experiences. Then he would search about--sometimes for years--for the phrases ("mummy wheat") and images (centaurs, "Ephesian topers") to embody the idea suggested by the experience in a poem. Every one knows that the phrases more often derived from Yeats's mystical studies; his poetical images frequently came from the pictoral imagery of the paintings he saw.

Rossetti, then, would seem to be the antecedent or inspiration of this type of poem in Yeats's work. The question of influence and inspiration cannot be answered, however, without a consideration of Yeats's many years of intellectually important correspondence with poet-painter T. Sturge Moore. The discussions which I will mention later on the "Leda" sonnet will serve as an example of the effect these two could have upon each other's work; indeed, it becomes difficult to say who originated which idea. So I cannot assign the term "source" to Moore's poems, as one might to Rossetti's, simply on the basis of Rossetti's chronological priority. The section of Moore's work which applies here was published in his Collected Poems, I, 1931, but the works themselves were of course written at earlier dates. They consist of six poems grouped under the title, "Reflected Visions: Affectionately Dedicated to John Copley." Surely the most cursory reader of Yeats must be struck by this title! The poems are "From 'Pygmalion' by Edward Burne-Jones," "From 'Pallas and the Centaur' by Sandro Botticelli," "From 'Bitten Apples': A Lithograph by Charles Hazelwood Shannon," "From 'Sappho's Death': Three Pictures by Gustave Moreau," "From Puvis de Chavannes Country," and "From Titian's 'Bacchanal' in the Prado at Madrid." These artists, with the exception of Shannon, whose works Yeats praised more mildly, are among Yeats's "great poetic painters" and "great-myth and mask-makers." Had he himself written exactly this

sort of poem, he would certainly have included these same painters. Besides these poems, there is also an elegy, "Selwyn Image--Died August 20, MCMXXX," which is reminiscent of "Major Robert Gregory" in its emphasis on the civilizing influence of the artist: "He lived in harmony that tuned us al . . ."[12]

Finally, in a discussion of antecedents of such poems as "Lapis Lazuli," as well as in so much of Yeats's thought, one must include the works of Walter Pater. Although his discussions and descriptions of works of visual art were written in prose, it was a highly lyric prose, and Yeats apparently considered it to be poetry. When he compiled the poetry to be included in The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, he began the volume by arranging and printing as verse Pater's prose description of Leonardo's Mona Lisa; thus Yeats indicated not only his estimate of Pater's prose, but also of Pater's importance to the "modern" school of poetry. It all began with Pater; including, of course Yeats's own work.

> She is older than the rocks among which she sits;
> Like the Vampire,
> She has been dead many times,
> And learned the secrets of the grave;
> And has been a diver in deep seas,
> And keeps their fallen day about her;
> And trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants;
> And, as Leda,
> Was the mother of Helen of Troy,
> And as St. Anne,
> Was the mother of Mary;
> And all this has been to her but as the sound of
> lyres and flutes,

And lives
Only in the delicacy
With which it has moulded the changing lineaments,
And tinged the eyelids and the hands.[13]

Although the identification of exact sources and influences on Yeats's "picture poems" is a challenging problem, an even more difficult one exists. Do other poems besides the ones which contain a direct reference to some other work of art in fact take their imagery from a painting or statue in just the way that "On Those Who Hated the 'Playboy'" does from Ricketts' painting? Several literary scholars have surveyed the poems and detected possible references to the plastic arts, but it is a task replete with difficulties.[14] The works of art involved are often difficult of access, to say the least, and the accuracy of the allusion, once found, impossible to verify. Each commentator seems fully convinced by the analogies which he himself has found but skeptical of those noted by someone else. The most factually informative writer on the subject is certainly T. R. Henn, whose book The Lonely Tower devotes an entire chapter to a discussion of specific paintings to which Yeats may have referred, and who has besides an essay in The Southern Review, I (1965), entitled "Yeats and the Picture Galleries," which attempts the question of what paintings Yeats is likely to have seen. This is a marvelously suggestive subject, but, as noted, not really verifiable--

such verification as is ever likely to be done, has been done by T. R. Henn.[15]

In spite of the difficulty of "proof," it seems likely that the same method Yeats used in the "Playboy" was also functioning in other poems for which there is no direct evidence in the form of notes, letters, or journal entries. About the same time as "On Mr. Nettleship's Picture," a poem entitled "The Two Titans" was published which includes no reference to any paintings. But when one sees Nettleship's Symbolic Figures, which date from the 1870's, one instantly recognizes the scene: indeterminate cloud, rock, and wave as a background for titanic figures engaged in vague but violently dramatic actions or struggling Laocoon-like in mysterious bonds. How many of Yeats's other poems similarly recall the typical scene of some artist: which artists did he admire and possibly imitate?[16]

Five of Yeats's volumes have dedications: three of these are to artists: Usheen (1889) to Edwin J. Ellis; A. E. (George Russell), Crossways (1889. The volume has an epigraph from Blake); and to Edmund Dulac, The Winding Stair (1933). But it is notable that all these are both artists and poets (with the exception of Dulac, who was an artist and musician), and each had associations with Yeats quite other than artistic: Ellis coedited the Blake volume; A. E. participated in the early mystical studies; Dulac worked with him in staging the Abbey plays. Throughout

his life, a good proportion of Yeats's friends were either practising artists, like Ricketts, or critics and historians of art, such as Binyon and Symons. In a letter to John Quinn written in 1915, Yeats notes that art and literature receive equal amounts of his leisure time: while he is in London, he says, every Monday evening is devoted to discussing "literature" with "poets" while "Friday evenings . . . I am very constantly at Charles Ricketts' to discuss painting."[17] A surprising number of his more peripheral acquaintances were either professional painters like Constance Markewicz or amateurs like Florence Farr, who liked to sketch the Egyptian sculptures in the British Museum as a hobby. It is, of course, common knowledge that Yeats himself studied art, and that his father and his brother Jack were both artists by profession; his sisters, Lilly and Lolly, designers of tapestries and bookcovers which they executed themselves at their Cuala Press. Yeats's relationship with his brothers and sisters was more distant, and sometimes less cordial, than that with his father, but he did always maintain an interest in their work, and the family ambience was always artistic. It remained so throughout his lifetime: he carefully notes in his letters the progress of his daughter Anne as an art student.

This interest in painting and design was by no means exclusive, however; Jack also wrote plays, and John Butler gained some reputation, at least in America, as an essayist

and orator. The tendency to create in more than one art form was, of course, in part the result of the esthetics of the Pre-Raphaelites; the people with whom Yeats associated throughout his life were not narrow artistic specialists, though they usually had a dominant interest (J. B. was only incidentally an essayist, and Jack primarily a painter) in one or another of the arts. They spent much time and thought on each other's work, as well as their own. Often a cross-fertilization took place among their creations: a painting might inspire a poem, or vice versa. In 1889, Yeats writes to Katherine Tynan that his "ballad about the fox-hunter" has been well received among his acquaintance: in fact, "a friend of Ellis' meditates a picture on the subject to be called 'The March Past.' Hounds and horses being led past their dying owner"[18] (here one sees the possibility of a further cross-pollination: "The March Past" into "Horseman, Pass By!").

That this ambience lasted far past the Pre-Raphaelite Period, howeever, may be attested to by the 1929 letter in which Yeats describes his visit, accompanied by James Joyce, to Jack to see his "new work," which Yeats describes as "very strange and beautiful in a wild way." Joyce was even more enthusiastic: he bought two of the paintings. Joyce remarked, Yeats notes, that he and Jack truly had "the same method."[19] Still later in Yeats's life, his friend Ezra Pound explained the "Canto's" structure as an adaptation

of "A Cosimo Tura decoration in three compartments, in the upper the Triumph of Love and the Triumph of Chastity, in the middle Zodiacal signs, and in the lower certain events in Cosimo Tura's day."[20] Yeats records that at one time he asked Pound to evaluate some of his own poems. "Putrid," said Pound, so Yeats then submitted the poems to another poet, "a friend of my own school," and "then I bought my work to two painters and a poet until I was like Panurge consulting oracles as to whether he should get married and rejecting all that did not confirm his own desire."[21] Apparently he considered the painters to be equally oracular with the poets!

The word "artist" itself in Yeats's lexicon usually means "poet or painter." Although he proclaims "the arts are but one Art . . .,"[22] in practice he mentions very few musicians--usually Wagner or Debussy--and very seldom includes painting, poetry and music in his description of the arts. Painting and poetry, on the other hand, are usually a pair. In 1906, Yeats gives his definition of the "cultivated man": "He is above all things well-bred, and whether he writes or paints, will not desire a technique that denies or obtrudes his long and noble descent."[23] The proportion of attention that he usually gives to each of the arts is well exemplified in these lines from "The Tragic Theatre," which describe his ideal audience: "one's own world of painters, of poets, of good talkers, of ladies who delight in Ricard's

portraits or Debussy's music, all those whose senses feel instantly every change in our mother the moon. . . ."[24] It is significant that the painter precedes the poet here, and that the actual musician is not in evidence at all.

I think it is significant also that the first sentence of A Vision is a description of Rapallo Bay, which ends by saying that the scene "brings to mind some Chinese painting."[25] Yeats's use of Pre-Raphaelite painting style did end early in his career, but his tendency to see and write in terms of a painterly style certainly did not. Throughout his life, he tended to see landscape as related to some style of art, or to a specific work. This is rather more specific than what is usually meant by the term "a visual imagination." Yeats certainly did have a visual imagination, but it was also that of a trained painter. In the Autobiography, discussing his experiences in art school, he says, "even today I constantly see people as a portrait painter, posing them in the mind's eye before such and such a background."[26] It seems that Yeats tended always to "see" his ideas first, then to describe them verbally. In the 1904 Samhain, he says, "When I wrote my Countess Cathleen, I thought, of course, chiefly of the actual picture that was forming before me, but there was a secondary meaning that came into my mind continually."[27] First the "picture", then the symbolism, lastly the words. Often at this point, Yeats would visualize the details of his scenes as like

some work of art that he had seen: in "Pages from a Diary," he says that when he was in his twenties, he saw a "drawing or an etching" by "some French artist" of an angel, which his father disapproved of because of its malproportion. "Generally a judgment from my father wuld put me off anything, but this time the image remained and I imitated it in the old angels at the end of The Countess Cathleen."[28] It is obvious that an artist's images must be taken from his visual experiences in life--he cannot describe what he has not seen; Yeats's imagery is unusual in that his life experiences included an unusual number of works of art, and that those works assumed an unusual importance within the whole of his experience.

A probable reason--other than his family background--for the importance of paintings in Yeats's life was his poor vision. It is likely that he could see clearly only those things which were fairly close by. Dorothy Wellesley records her impression that Yeats's physical vision was so poor as to preclude his observing any but the largest features of landscape.[29] It was her belief that this handicap (together with what she thought to be a national tendency of the Irish) accounted for the lack of descriptions of nature in his poetry (The impression of a lack of interest in landscape is also noted by the painter Rothenstein, who describes Yeats in the nineties in an essay entitled, "Yeats as a Painter saw Him"). Oliver John Gogarty, who claims an acquaintance with the poet antedating Wellesley's, however,

attributes the poor vision to Yeats's old age, saying, "I know he rarely remarked on scenery. His eyesight precluded that; but when he was a youth he took it all in."[30] Yeats, he says, used Sligo scenes in "The Stolen Child," and had always "an eye for color." Rothenstein, however, says flatly that Yeats "had no eye" and that he "was not in fact sensitive to form or to colour. He was too easily impressed by work which showed a superficial appearance of romance or mysticism."[31]

Thus it would seem that the degree of impairment of Yeats's vision, as well as its effect upon his verse, must remain a matter of debate. Mary M. Colum remarked that he "could always see when it suited him," despite his "well-publicized dimness of vision."[32] As for the absence of a lot of observed natural detail in his work, he himself had another possible explanation:

> Yesterday I went out to see the reddening apples in the garden, and they faded from my imagination sooner than they would have from the imagination of that old poet who made the song of the seasons for the Fianna, or out of Chaucer's, that celebrated so many trees. Theories, opinions, these opinions among the rest, flowed in on me and blotted them away.[33]

"Theories," he goes on, "hurried" him away from "life" as they did Shelley. In other words, his lack of emphasis on the concrete is part of the general intellectual self-consciousness to which he attributed so many of his actions, or failures to act. It is my belief that, for whatever

reason, Yeats did not usually base his poetic "scene", or "landscape", or "picture" upon nature, but rather upon some remembered painting or style of painting which by its mood suggested the proper symbolism. This is often quite apparent in the plays: the stage directions of Countess Cathleen call for a gilded background like that of a "missal painting",[34] but in the poems it is sometimes next to impossible to detect, as it is in "On Those Who Hated the 'Playboy'." In 1919, Yeats notes that

> When I close my eyes and pronounce the word "Christianity" I do not see Christ crucified, or the Good Shepherd from the catacombs, but a father and mother and their children, a picture by Leonardo da Vinci most often. While Europe had still Christianity for its chief preoccupation, men painted little but that scene.[35]

This harking back to a previous work of art was not, however, simply the result of Yeats's "visual imagination." It is a method that he developed through his life, simplifying and refining his scene so as to emphasize its symbolism.

In 1900, Yeats writes of Shelley's "Mont Blanc" that it is a poem "so overloaded with descriptions in parentheses that one loses sight of its logic,"[36]--a symbolic landscape rendered unsuccessful by naturalistic detail. The same essay states that the "suggestiveness" of "ancient symbols" whose meaning cannot be fully known is the only escape ("for the poet of essences and pure ideas") from the "barrenness and shallowness" of copying nature." In 1916, he describes

a kind of poetry in which ". . . there is no observation of life, because the poet would set before us all those things which we feel and imagine in silence."[37] It is this kind of poetry that he and his friends tried to produce. One of the things, he notes, that his "new generation" were in revolt against was what they considered the typically Victorian "irrelevant descriptions of nature."[38] Dorothy Wellesley also records that Yeats, after reading one of her poems, snapped, "Why can't you English poets keep flowers out of your poems?"[39]

Very frequently what Yeats described instead of "nature" was a painting or piece of sculpture, or, to be more precise, his memory of some painting or piece of sculpture. The difficulty, of course, is that to try to identify specific works, as T. H. Henn has done, becomes less possible with every passing year. But since, as Yeats said of his Virgin, what is operating is his "memory" of "Byzantine mosaic pictures" generally, I think it may be helpful to look through the chronology of Yeats's life and point out which artists he was talking with or looking at, at what periods. What was he writing, for instance, at the same time that he was considering publishing a book about Edward Calvert's woodcuts? To what artists might he have dedicated those volumes which he left without superscription? What basic qualities in literary or plastic art were esthetically pleasing to him throughout his life? The influence of

these people and concerns upon Yeats's thought can hardly be exaggerated.

Of the groups that were most influential in Yeats' art, the critic usually notes first the mystics: A. E. and his "Irish Mystical Order"; Madame Blavatsky and the Order of the Golden Dawn; Mohini Chatterjee and Rabinath Tagore. Secondly, he might mention the Irish Nationalists, whom Yeats himself credited with "all I have set my hand to since,"[40] including O'Leary, and, of course, Maud Gonne. To the list of this theoretical critic, I should like to add a third group; the painters, sculptors and art critics with whom Yeats was so closely associated throughout his life: first, his father and his artist friends; second, the London Group, much influenced by Pater, including Beardsley; third, the artists with whom he corresponded, and sometimes collaborated, in later life, Ricketts, T. S Moore, and the designers Dulac and Gordon Craig. The list is actually much more extensive, but any study must begin with J. B. Yeats.

On his seventieth birthday, Yeats wrote in a letter to an admirer of his poems:

> I thank you for your generous letter. Something of what you say I have tried to do, I mean tried to create standards, to do and say those things that accident made possible to me, the accident being I suppose in the main my father's studio.[41]

It is significant that Yeats did not cite his father's painting, but his studio, where "The Brotherhood" of painter friends of his father gathered, where there was that atmosphere of constant discussion of esthetics that Yeats always sought to recreate in his later life. There was much to discuss--J. B. Yeats was as intelligent as he was gregarious, and likely to be among the first to hear about and to practice the latest trends in artistic style. William, on the other hand, was conservative, even reactionary, always deploring his father's avant-garde tendencies, and wishing him to return to the style of Pre-Raphaelitism. Sometimes these differences caused verbal storms--sometimes even shoving matches that threatened to turn into actual fist fights.

This very volatile relationship called forth the younger Yeats's powers of analysis. He often thought and wrote about the progress of his life with his father. In 1910 he wrote to J. B. that his latest letter "has made me realize with some surprise how fully my philosophy of life has been inherited from you in all but its details and applications."[42] In On the Boiler, he recalls that in his teens, "I admired my father above all men," but at twenty-three or four, they "began to quarrel", and there was no "dominant opinion I could accept."[43] The break between them came, Yeats says in the Autobiography, with the inception of his interest in mysticism:

> It was only when I began to study psychical research and mystical philosophy that I broke away from my father's influence. He had been a follower of John Stuart Mill and so had never shared Rossetti's conviction that it mattered to nobody whether the sun went round the earth or the earth round the sun. But through this new research, this reaction from popular science, I had begun to feel that I had allies for my secret thought.[44]

Chief among these allies was the poet-painter A. E. who for a time represented for both Yeatses the opposing viewpoint to that held by J. B. It is easy to see, however, as one reads the Autobiography, that that break was in fact--at least on William's side--much earlier. It began when J. B. lost faith in Pre-Raphaelitism, when he began to value truth to "life" above the idealism William cherished; when, indeed "science" began to replace "poetry" in J. B.'s mind.

The underlying difference in philosophy was always there--William speaks of life at Howth, where "my father's influence was at its height." Certainly the attitudes expressed are those William later espoused--J. B. would read from poems at their "most passionate moment," never caring for "speculative interest," or "generalization or abstraction," but wishing to feel "some actual man" behind the lyric. But there was an essential difference even then; "He thought Keats a greater poet than Shelley, because less abstract, but did not read him, caring little, I think, for any of that most beautiful poetry which has come in modern times from the influence of painting."[45]

Although J. B. remained, says William, always a Pre-Raphaelite in literature, he became disillusioned with the Pre-Raphaelites in art. After visiting the home of a "well-known pre-Raphaelite painter" and meeting his mother and sisters who were all dressed alike in peacock blue, William was enchanted, but "my father, who had begun to be influenced by French art, muttered, 'Imagine dressing up your old mother like that'."[46] This "French influence"--Yeats often summarized it with the name of Bastien-Lepage--kept J. B. from painting, as William wished him to, "some theme from poetic tradition."[47]

In fact, William could find few sympathizers anywhere for his love of "literary" painting. The tide had turned, for one reason or another, to "realism", to "popular" paintings. One of his father's friends was a

> painter in whose hall hung a big picture painted in his student days of Ulysses sailing from the Phaecian court, an orange and a skin of wine at his side, blue mountains towering behind; but who lived by drawing domestic scenes and lover's meetings for a weekly magazine that had an immense circulation among the imperfectly educated.[48]

While at Kildare, Yeats would admire Turner's The Golden Bough, and wish despairingly that J. B. would "return to the style of his youth, and make pictures of certain drawings now lost, that one could still find in his portfolios."[49] These drawings were illustrations of stories--"fables"--upon one of which Yeats had based a youthful play.[50] But now J. B. was trying to be faithful to life. He would say

"I must paint what I see in front of me. Of course I shall really paint something different because my nature will come in unconsciously."[51]

This pernicious trend was not limited to J. B. alone--

> My father's friends were painters who had been influenced by the pre-Raphaelite movement but lost their confidence. Wilson, Page, Nettleship, and Potter are the names I remember . . . I often heard one and another say that Rossetti had never mastered his materials, and though Nettleship had already turned lion-painter, my father talked constantly of the designs of his youth, especially "God creating Evil" which Rossetti praised in a letter my father had seen "as the most sublime conception in ancient or modern art."[52]

The arguments then began, because, as Yeats says, "I had come to think the philosophy of his fellow artists and himself a misunderstanding created by Victorian Science, and science I had come to hate with a monkish hatred." Everything his father did now "displeased" him, even his "fine portraits" of Dubliners, and especially was he distressed when J. B. "made a large water colour, one of his finest pictures and now lost, of a consumptive beggar girl."[53] In fact, in an 1887 letter, William refers to this painting as "that grey thing."[54] It was at this time also that he was so "miserable" over the pictures of "cocottes" by "some follower of Manet." "In my heart I thought that only beautiful things could be painted, and that only ancient things and the stuff of dreams were beautiful." By contrast, then, William was "happy" when his father helped arrange an exhibit

of Whistler and "did not agree when my father said: 'Imagine making your old mother an arrangement in grey!'"[55]

Thus J. B. was invincibly realistic, whereas William wished, at least, to be equally idealistic; "I did not care for mere reality, and believed that creation should be deliberate, and yet I could only imitate my father."[56] The art school masters cared for nothing but "neatness and smoothness," and Yeats had no other model, "so for the most part I exaggerated all that my father did." He was becoming uncertain of himself, especially as an art student, and self conscious. One other student told William that he was at art school because there was no exam to be passed. In retrospect, William says, "It may be that I myself was there for no better reason."[57]

Around the turn of the century, a new "French influence" began to make itself felt--that of Impressionism. In 1900, William wrote to Lady Gregory: "My father has amazed us all by going to Paris to see the Louvre . . . I never knew him beforehand so anxious to see anything."[58] And this time the influence was, William felt, downright destructive:

> Instead of finishing a picture one square inch at a time, he kept all fluid, every detail dependent upon every other, and remained a poor man to the end of his life, because the more anxious he was to succeed, the more did his pictures sink through innumerable sittings into final confusion. Only when he was compelled to finish in eight or nine sittings were his pictures the work of a great painter.[59]

He tells the story of how J. B. set out to paint a picture of a pond near London:

> He began it in Spring and painted all through the year, the picture changing with the seasons, and gave it up unfinished when he had painted the snow upon the heath-covered banks. He is never satisfied and can never make himself say that any picture is finished.[60]

And he quotes the stranger who said, upon hearing his father's name, "Oh, that is the painter who scrapes out every day what he painted the day before."[61] Despite their differences, however, Yeats maintained a strong interest in his father's art. As late as 1937, in a letter to Jack, he remarks that he still has a painting by J. B. hanging in his study.[62] One effect was to give him a life-long interest in portraits, especially portraits of himself--and (as he said), a tendency to, see people as a portrait painter sees them--posing them in his mind before the appropriate background. It is a tendency that shows up occasionally in the poetry, especially of course in the "Municipal Gallery Revisited." Yeats wrote in 1889 to Katherine Tynan that J. B. and Walter Paget were painting portraits of him "in competition" and that his father's was "beyond all comparison the best."[63] This "competition" between portraitists he encouraged through his life, using the differing results as mirrors in which he could examine sides of his personality invisible to himself. Of his father's painting of him as King Goll, done when

he was twenty, he says much later that he looked "very desirable--alas no woman noticed it at the time--."[64] A serious argument developed with his editor Bullen when Yeats wanted to include a whole group of portraits in his collected edition. He tells Bullen that he doesn't want to use his father's portrait alone "because he has always sentimentalized me."[65] To Quinn he wrote his own plan:

> I am going to put the lot one after the other: my father's emaciated portrait that was the frontispiece for The Tables of The Law beside Mancini's brazen image, and Augustus John's tinker to pluck the nose of Shannon's idealist. Nobody will believe they are the same man. And I shall write an essay upon them and describe them as all the different personalities that I have dreamt of being but never had the time for. I will head it with what Wordsworth said about some marble bust of himself: "No, that is not Mr. Wordsworth the poet, that is Mr. Wordsworth, the Chancellor of the Exchequer."[66]

Much has been written about the debt Yeats owed to his father's philosophy--what I wish to emphasize is how much he owed stylistically to the tendency to react against whatever his father was doing in his art. This minor conflict was played out against the background of a much larger--even world wide--conflict of artistic styles which pitted Romanticism first against Neoclassicism, then against Realism (The Larousse Encyclopedia of Modern Art summarizes the artistic history of the 19th Century as "From Neoclassicism to Realism via Romanticism"). The first artist to depart from 18th Century Neoclassicism was one Yeats sometimes

mentions--David. The Larousse says "With him Neoclassicism stopped being bookish and became visual. It no longer needed deciphering; it gripped like the climax of a fine play."[67] No doubt it was this dramatic quality that excused David from being consigned by Yeats to the category of the "dreary," the "old formal classicisms" that made up, in his opinion, the mass of eighteenth-century art.[68] The tendency was further developed by David's pupil Ingres, whose Perseus was mentioned among the works of Yeats's list of "great myth and mask-makers."[69]

It was the Romantic Movement that Yeats truly espoused, however, calling it "The movement most characteristic of the literature and art and to some small extent of the thoughts, too, of our century."[70] It was a movement that fostered, so Yeats thought, not just the artistic freedom of the individual artist, but his spiritual expression as well:

> The Romantic movement, from the times of Blake and Shelley and Keats, when it took a new form, has been battling with the thoughts of the good citizen, as moss and ivy and grass battle with some old building, crumbling its dead stone and mortar into the living greenery of earth. The disorders of a Shelley or of a Heine in their art, and in their lives that mirror their art, are but a too impetuous ardour of battle, a too swift leaping of ivy or of grass to window ledge or gable end; and the intensity and strangeness of a picture by Rossetti or of an early picture by Watts are but a sudden falling of stones. Moss and ivy and grass gather against stone and mortar in unceasing enmity, for while the old is crumbling the new is building; and the Romantic movement will never have perfect victory unless, as mystics have thought, the golden age is to come again, and men's hearts and the weather to grow gentle as time fades into eternity. Blake

> said that all art was a labor to bring that golden age, and we call romantic art romantic because it has made that age's light dwell in the imaginations of a little company of studious persons.[71]

The Romantic movement expressed itself in several variations. A movement that proved to be of particular importance to Yeats was that of the German Nazarenes, who helped establish the validity of the standards of the English Pre-Raphaelites, but later in the century the Romantic spirit also produced Expressionism, a style that Yeats never mentions and that he probably disliked. The Larousse encyclopedia analyzes this latter group as expressing what might be called the dream-spirit of Romanticism: "the quest for an impossible absolute on a level of fantasy where vision and dreams disturb and distort the images of reality." This spirit was expressed in a way more sympathetic to Yeats by that odd painter, Arnold Böcklin of Basle, who favored mythological subjects like Pan and Triton, and the strange semi-surrealism of the Island of the Dead. Yeats does not acknowledge a debt to this artist (though I think that one exists), nor does he mention the leading arist of the visionary style, Fuseli. The effect of this branch of Romanticism nonetheless was great, through the works of Fuseli's admirer, Blake, and Blake's disciple, Samuel Palmer.

Landscape painting in early nineteenth century England became quickly a meeting ground for the blossoming styles of Realism and Visionary Fantasy. "Two strands

appeared at the beginning of landscape painting in England--that of poetic reality which reveals the poetry that dwells in the objective appearance of things, and that which turns the landscape, whether interpreted or imaginary, into a creature of emotive fantasy."[72] William Marlowe, John Crome, and Richard Wilson represent the first; Palmer, Thomas Gainsborough and J. M. W. Turner the second. Turner, whose painting The Golden Bough summarized for Yeats the art student what he aspired to create,[73] moved more and more toward the visionary as his career developed.

> Starting from a methodical observation of things, which earned him Ruskin's praise, Turner moved toward a purely visionary art, particularly in his later years. He began by painting invented landscapes, harmonious and majestic, which he liked to comment on in strange poems. But as form hindered his poetic inspiration, which he found increasingly demanding, he gave it less and less importance, and finally suppressed it altogether, and painted only the effects of light and water, and iridescenses seen through damp and mist.[74]

The contemporary antithesis of Turner was, of course, the naturalistic painter, Constable, whose work Yeats apparently ignored.

Other admirers of Turner included the Pre-Raphaelites, whose quite different style does not conceal their essential Romanticism:

> The yearning that one senses in the work of Daniel Gabriel Rossetti for that unattainable absolute, the melancholy sensuality of Burne-Jones, and in the pangs of human emotion apparent in all Watt's compositions.[75]

In spirit, as well, they were Romantics seeking to escape the industrial, pragmatic, conformist English society by living abroad and by portraying in their art scenes of the old and far away in time and legend. The quality for which Yeats primarily admired them, however, was one that sometimes produced criticism: ". . . their painting is always tinged with literature, and often it appears too literary. . . ."[76]

The Pre-Raphaelites were the first group of painters whose style Yeats used to exemplify what he thought the finest in art. Like him, they did not make a strict distinction between painting and poetry, and many of them, like Rossetti, were adept at both forms of art. Cecil points out in his book about Palmer and Burne-Jones that the current separation of literature and painting was not observed in the nineteenth century--"The nineteenth century was the century of the Romantic Movement and the poet-painter is a romantic phenomenon."[77] Then artists like Blake and Turner wrote poems, and painters like Palmer, Calvert, Rossetti, Millais, Burne-Jones and Beardsley portrayed scenes and themes from poems. To these people, "the difference between a poem and a picture was one of form only."[78] Poetry was a term which could be applied as Yeats applied it--to either verse or painting: Rossetti said, "Nowadays the man who has any poetry in him, ought to paint it: the next Keats ought to be a painter."[79] Yeats espoused this view of the nature of art for most of his life, though he temporarily

abandoned it while under the influence of the group he called the "Aesthetic poets." In the "Estrangement" section of the Autobiography, however, he writes:

> I now see that the literary element in painting, the moral element in poetry are the means whereby the two arts are accepted into the social order and become a part of life and not things of the study and the exhibition. Supreme art is a traditional statement of certain heroic and religious truths, passed on from age to age, modified by individual genius, but never abandoned.[80]

Until about mid-century the main struggle was between the conflicting areas of Classicism and Romanticism, the use of the past as versus the use of the imagination. But after 1850, Realism became an active force, striving to present the "real", the contemporary, and thus breaking with both classic tradition and romantic dream. The early "trinity" of the Realists was Daumier, Millet, and Courbet, but after 1860 "the academic phase" of Realism began--Bonvin, Bail, Phillipe Rousseau, Vallon, Rall, Cazin, Legros, Regamey, Simon, Coltet--the list runs on into the twentieth century.[81] Midway occur the names Yeats singled out to anathemize in his Autobiography: Jules Bastien-Lepage and E. A. Carolus Duran. These artists he refers to continuously as being part of a "rookery" that also included Huxley and Tyndall. He explains his dislike on this basis:

> I had been put into a rage by the followers of Huxley, Tyndall, Carolus Duran, and Bastien-Lepage, who not only asserted the unimportance of subject whether in art or literature, but the indepdence of the

> arts from one another. Upon the other hand, I delighted in every age where poet and artist confined themselves gladly to some inherited subject-matter known to the whole people, for I thought that in man and race alike there is something called "Unity of Being," using that term as Dante used it when he compared beauty in the Convito to a perfectly proportioned human body.[82]

The effect of this was that ". . . I was so angry with the indifference to the subject, which was the commonplace of all art criticism in a Bastien-Lepage, that I could at times see nothing else but subject."[83]

From Courbet's style also developed that of Manet and Monet, who also represented for Yeats a type of art that he could not accept. But to say that he disliked Realism is somewhat misleading: the Pre-Raphaelites were, after all, Realists in their own way. The essence of Realism was an emphasis on form--soon this came under attack from two directions: the Impressionists dissolved it in light, and the Symbolists, reacting to the enormously rapid spread of Impresionalism, attempted to destroy it by emphasizing line.

Quentin Bell dates "The Victorian Age" from the deaths of Constable and William IV in 1837 to the first Post-Impressionist Exhibit in 1910.[84] Although he characterizes the general tendencies of the art of this age as including the "co-existence of many different genres, often of a highly specialized nature, the relative indifference to mythology, the corresponding tone of landscape and seascape, the interest

in domestic scenes, in mild anectotal pleasantries, in still life, in very highly finished surfaces and very minute naturalism, the emphasis on people rather than on ideas, on psychological and moral problems rather than on theoretical programmes. . .", he points out that it was a time of "aesthetic formation." This condition is exemplified in the works of the only two artists of "unquestionable stature": Turner and Sickert. Yeats never mentions the name of Walter Sickert, although it is most unlikely that he could have avoided seeing that artist's work.[85]

The conflict between naturalistic realism and its unacknowledged offspring, Impressionism, is easy enough to see even at this distance in time from the Victorian Era. What is not so obvious is that there was an equally serious and often disabling struggle going on between individual artists and the Academies, grown again into the powers they had been early in the century. The Realists were acceptable to the Academies, and so found a marketplace; but the Symbolists were not, and often struggled in vain to keep their artistic integrity. The situation resulted, says Bell, in setting up a pattern of two kinds of career, that of the painter of "what seems like brilliant early promise sinking into mediocrity which to him represents success" because it means he has accommodated himself to the market and begun to sell, and that of the exceptional painter who, in spite of starvation, continues to express his individual style and eventually manages to "create a market by the

very force of his personality."[86] Bell offers Monet and Degas as examples of the latter course; Yeats's experience abounded with examples of the former--notably Nettleship and Watts. Thus Yeats, though a traditionalist in his father's terms, also came into conflict with the actual powers of traditionalism, and became a settled enemy of the Academies, which now represented to him both the stifling forces of commercialism and of his hated Realism. The English painters of the 70's were interested in "humanitarian" and "ennobling" Realism, but Realism nonetheless: the most admired painters were Millet, Corot--and Bastien-Lepage.

The Academies of course, were not able to impose uniformity upon all the artists. Bell says that "In a sense there is no one style at any one moment in the mid-nineteenth century", but rather "a great variety of revolutionary movements."[87] The emerging dominant style was of course Impressionism, but it was not until Whistler had established his own version of that style that it became primary. Whistler "carried English painting away with him into the pursuit of line and tonality, into a completely one-sided and idiosyncratic interpretation of Impressionism that was to characterize British Art for half a century."[88] Late in the Nineteenth Century the giants of painting were France and Britain, and the British style was "turning realism to a mystical and symbolic art."[89] Then in 1910, the French influence began to take over British painting as well, and such artists

as Gore, Gilman, Augustus John, Jacob Epstein, Wyndham Lewis, and Duncan Grant

> launched violently into Post-Impressionism. All the quiet, dingy, tasteful refinements of the late Victorian palette were hastily scraped away. Brilliant chromes, cadmiums and alizarins took their place. Violent complimentaries leapt between jagged thick lines of ultramarine drawing . . . The Victorian Age was gone. It ended with a bang.[90]

But more about Post-Impressionism later. Yeats did not entirely approve of it--he favored the style he called "Symbolism" to the end of his life, though the painting school called by that name did not last nearly so long. Because this group--or rather, groups--is not well known, and because those artists Yeats uses to exemplify it, Gyles and Horton, are obscure, some art history from the Larousse encyclopedia may be helpful. The section on Symbolism was written by Michel Florisoone. According to Florisoone the development of Symbolism can be traced from Impressionism through Puvis de Chavannes and his admirer Gauguin.

> Because of Gauguin Impressionism culminated in Symbolism and Naturalism was absorbed by ideology: whereas before artists painted because they saw something, they now painted because they thought something. Through the work of Gauguin the symbolism of 1860-70 became important. . . .[91]

The most important of these first Symbolists were Puvis de Chavannes, Odilon Redon, Eugene Carrière and Gustave Moreau; Yeats mentions Moreau and Chavannes as among the very greatest of "myth and mask-makers," and indeed their

contemporary influence was great. It was their influence combined with that of William Morris that afforded the new freedom from which the Art Nouveau style developed. "This Symbolism came just before Impressionism and then the two styles ran concurrently, as well as the style of Gauguin and that known as Cloisonnism."

> The Symbolists arrived to reestablish the mind and the idea, in place of mere representations of nature, but they should not be accused of repudiating nature. According to Symbolism theory, reality is not limited to physical matter, but includes thought. The mind continuously meditating, steadily unearths the significance underlying outward appearances. So Symbolism may be described as a search for the mysterious meanings hidden in physical things, with magic and religious nuances.[92]

Redon stated the basic law of symbolism as "Nothing can be created in art by the will alone. All art is the result of submission to the subconscious."[93] Puvis de Chavannes had a more important role in the development of 19th Century art than is generally recognized: "In an unexpected way he brought Impressionism out of its impasse by remarking to Gauguin, who had been until then a follower of Pisarro, the potentialities of Symbolism, the suggestive power of decorative paintings and the importance of the idea."[94] Gauguin was in turn associated with the Pont Aven group of Symbolists and their style of Cloissonism, inherited by Emile Bernard and Anquetin: "Cloissonism or Synthetism consisted of painting in flat areas of colour, as used in Japanese prints, and by enclosing these with intensely

coloured lines, in the manner of the lead supports of stained glass."[95] Gauguin developed and exploited this style, along with the French group of Paul Serussier, Henry Moret, C. S. Shuffenecker, Charles Laval and later Nobis, Bonnard, and Vuillard. Among the Symbolists in the rest of the world, Florisoone lists Böcklin, Jan Toorop, Jacob Smits, J. F. Willumser, Gustave Klimt and G. F. Watts. The French group were closely associated with the Symbolist poets: Gauguin met not only Moréas ("The high priest of Symbolist painting") but the poet Mallarmé, when he visited Paris.

In 1891, Albert Aurier wrote out the rules of Symbolist Painting in the Mercure de France:

> The work of art must be firstly, ideological, since the only aim is the expression of an idea; secondly, Symbolist, since the abstract idea must be expressed in visual forms; thirdly, synthetic, since these forms or signs must be stated in understandable manner; fourthly, subjective, since what is presented will be considered not only for what it is, but as an image of something perceived by the subject; and fifthly, decorative, this follows naturally, for decorative painting, such as that done by the Egyptians and presumably by the Greeks and the primitives, is essentially the manifestation of an art at once subjective, synthetic, Symbolist, and ideological. But all these attributes would only give the artist the means which without emotion would not produce art.[96]

The Larousse summarizes the effect of this new style:

> Symbolism, essentially a literary movement, reacted against fin-de-siècle realism. Artists rediscovered their intuitive powers, and an unexpected resurgence of romanticism was world-wide.[97]

The effect upon Yeats, the art reactionary, is to enable him to at last be part of the new wave--revolution has become reaction. It is at this period that Yeats begins to write and publish the art theories he had been formulating while in "my father's studio."

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] W. B. Yeats, The Letters of W. B. Yeats, ed. Allan Wade (New York: Mac.illan, 1955, p. 525.

[2] W. B. Yeats, The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (New York: Mac.illan, 1956), p. 109.

[3] Allan Wade, A Bibliography of W. B. Yeats (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), p. 115.

[4] Collected Poems, p. 109

[5] These passages from Salkell's Journal are quoted in A. Norman Jeffares, A Commentary on The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats (Stanford, 1968), pp. 218 - 99.

[6] This method seems to have been much the same throughout Yeats's life. His father recalls in his memoir (J. B. Yeats, Early Memories: Some Chapters of Autobiography by John Butler Yeats (Dublin: Cuala, 1923), pp. 63 - 64):

> At that time for the sake of a necessary thrift we are gathered every evening in one room round the single lamp, and my son would be quiet over his lesson. These finished, he betook himself to the study of verse, murmuring over to himself the lines as he made them, at first quietly so as to disturb no one--only his voice would grow louder and louder until at last it filled one room. Then his sisters would call out to him, "now Willie, stop composing!" And he would meekly lower his voice. Alas, the murmuring would again become a shout. My daughters would again object, the evening always ending with his finding another lamp and retiring with it into the kitchen where he would murmur verses in any voice he liked to his heart's content.

Edmund Dulac, writing after Yeats's death, recalls in Without the Twilight, pp. 141 - 42:

> His method of work had nothing about it of the unreal or the spectacular. He barely knew the ecstacy of the picture poet, who rattles off his lines in a frenzy of inspiration. A word, a phrase would find an echo somewhere in his thoughts. He would sit beating his knee with one hand, or walk about the room, his words measured to his pace, muttering them over and over again in a sort of incantation. And if the magic worked, if the word, the phrase awakened a particularly exciting train of fitting associations, he would set all this out in simple, ordinary prose. Elaboration in poem form came later.

Even after the "poem" form had been reached, however, there was much rewriting and revising still to be done. The most complete single study of Yeats's poetic method is A. Norman Jeffares' essay, "W. B. Yeats and His Method of Writing Verse," Twentieth Century, 89 (March, 1946), pp. 123 - 128.

Jeffares points out that the process described above was not Yeats's only poetic technique, however.

> Yeats had two main methods of writing verse, the one spontaneous, the other a laborious process involving much alteration and substitution. The poem "The Wheel" is an example of the "spontaneous" method, while "Byzantium," among many others, underwent the extended treatment. But in either case, Yeats "was concerned that his reader or hearer should feel that the verse was a spontaneous utterance of the past. He took pains to gain the directness and simplicity that is a sign of strength."

[7] W. B. Yeats, The Winding Stair and Other Poems (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 101.

[8] Ursula Bridge, ed., W. B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore: Their Correspondence, 1901 - 1937 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 164 - 65.

[9] W. B. Yeats, Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1940), p. 181.

[10] Wade, p. 298. The text of this poem is reprinted in A. N. Jeffares' W. B. Yeats: Man and Poet (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 56:

> Yonder the sickle of the moon sails on,
> But here the Lioness licks her soft cub
> Tender and fearless on her funeral pyre;
> The Lion, the world's great solitary, bends

Down low the head of his magnificance
And roars, mad with the touch of the unknown,
Not as he shakes the forest; but a cry
Low, long and musical. A dewdrop hung
Bright on a grass blade's underside, might hear,
Nor tremble to its fall. So ever moves
The flaming circle of the outer Law,
Nor heeds the old dim protest and the cry
The orb of the most living heart
Gives forth. He, the Eternal, works his will.

[11] Sidney Mendel, "Lapis Lazuli," The Explicator Cyclopedia, 1, ed. Charles C. Walcutt and J. Edwin Whitesell (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1966), p. 356.

[12] T. Sturge Moore, The Poems of T. Sturge Moore (London: MacMillan, 1932), I, p. 27.

[13] W. B. Yeats, Introduction to the Oxford Book of Modern Verse, 1892 - 1935, Chosen by W. B. Yeats (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936), p. 1.

[14] Although Henn and Melchiori are the premier critics on the subject, there have been several essays by other writers about Yeats and art or artists. Among the latter are Peter Faulkner's book, William Morris and W. B. Yeats (Dublin: Dolmen, 1962); Marilyn Gaddis Rose's essay, "The Kindred Vistas of W. B. and Jack Yeats" (Eire 5, i, 67-79); Ian Fletcher's essay, "Poet and Designer: W. B. Yeats and Althea Gyles" (Yeats Studies, I, 1971); and an unpublished dissertation by Alan Phil Pistorius, "D. G. Rossetti and Early Yeats" (Diss. Univ. of California 1965); and an essay by David R. Clark, "Poussin and Yeats: 'News for the Delphic Oracle',"; as well as two series of notes in the Times Literary Supplement (1962 and 1963) on the sources of "Leda and the Swan" and the identification of "Raphael's statute of a dolphin carrying a boy." There is also a fine essay by Margaret Stanley, "Yeats and French Painting" (Cahiers Irlandais, 2-3, 1974), which is the only available study of Yeats and a particular school of art, rather than individual artists or works of art. In addition, there are several sources of information about Yeats and the arts which are not specifically on that subject. Marion Witt's study of "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" ("The Making of an Elegy," Modern Philology, XLVIII, Nov., 1950) has information about Yeats's interest in Palmer and Calvert. There is also Margaret E. Nielsen's essay, "A Reading of W. B. Yeats's Poem 'On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac'" (Thoth, 4), and an unpublished dissertation by Murray Prosky, "Landscape in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats" (Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin 1966). Of the widely available books about Yeats, the most helpful are Henn;

Melchiori; D. J. Gordon, et al., W. B. Yeats: Images of a Poet (Manchester University Press, 1961) Dwight Eddins, Yeats: The Nineteenth Century Matrix (Univ. of Alabama Press, 1971); and Edward Engelberg, The Vast Design: Patterns in W. B. Yeats's Aesthetic (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1964).

None of these works is entirely satisfactory to the student: for one thing, none of them, although Engleberg called for such a study years ago, has attempted to collate what Yeats wrote about the plastic arts--to summarize his esthetic. But the major difficulty with this criticism has been that most writers on the subject have confined themselves to short notes or essays, dealing primarily with the identification of allusions. The arguments involve nothing fundamental: all tacitly agree with what Melchiori cites as the "main contribution" of his book on Yeats (The Whole Mystery of Art, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960): "the priority of visual over intellectual stimuli for Yeats" (p. 250). Yeats was not a copyist; he was not simply translating one work of art into another, but rather referring to other works for their emotional quality, in much the same way that he referred to Homer's stories of the Trojan war. The tendency to search for a single allusion is often an unncessary, even damaging, limitation of critical inquiry.

Melchiori's book deals with this larger question: how (and why) did Yeats employ the plastic arts, and not what specific works he referred to. The purpose of that book is to attempt to trace "the mental process" whereby the synthesis which is the poem came into being (p. 1). To this end, Melchiori discusses all the influences on Yeats's thought, not just the influence of the arts: he attempts to illustrate the "faculty of association" which enabled Yeats to "immediately catch unexpected correspondences between, for instance, the Symbolist doctrine and the Upanishads, or a painting by Moreau and an Irish legend" (p. 2). And he goes on to make a "tentative identification" of the "principle" or "mental pattern" which made the synthesis possible: it had, "in Yeats's case, a strong visual basis . . . approached a geometrical scheme" (pp. 2 - 3). Thus Melchiori tries to expand his subject beyond the identification of sources, and on into a very difficult area indeed. In the process of this expansion, Melchiori makes an assumptin which I must stop to argue with, as it is a general one, and I think may cause some confusion about my own subject. He says:

> In insisting on the linear or visual character of the pattern which is at the basis of Yeats's thought and poetry, I do not mean to imply that the poet had any pictorial tendency in spite of his early training as a painter and the presence of painters

> in his family and among his closest friends. We shall look in vain in Yeats's poems for the romantic Irish landscapes or detailed three-dimensional representations of human figures, which were by no means rare in the poetry of his time. "The Wild Swans at Coole," for example (to take a poem which seems to have a local habitation and a name), is no landscape with swans; the picture which it leaves in our mind is that of a vast flurry of wings and feathers. All that Yeats gives us in his poems, by way of pictorial representation, is a colour (the 'honey-pale' moon') or a vague tonality ('Under the October twilight the water/Mirrors a still sky'), a single feature, a striking detail ('a bird's round eye' or 'these red lips with all their mournful pride'). This induced even people who knew him well, like Dorothy Wellesley, to fail to realize how open he was to visual impressions. (pp. 8 - 9).

This curiously eighteenth-century definition of "pictorial" is not what I have in mind when I speak of the resemblance of Yeats's poetry to paintings. Dorothy Wellesley, in the passage that Melchiori quotes, does make the same observation, but draws a different conclusion. "Yeats did not himself draw much inspiration from Nature, certainly no details; only sometimes massed effects, such as a painter sees, influenced his verse" (p. 9). It is my belief that "seeing as a painter sees" is as much or more a "pictorial tendency" as an inclination to use a great many naturalistic details. It is true that Yeats's later poetry, like "Wild Swans," has lost its resemblance to the Pre-Raphaelite school, but this does not mean that it does not have a relationship to other schools of art. It is the style of the abstract expressionists that "Wild Swans" recalls: I do not imply influence, but a similar artistic direction. Yeats was simply moving along with, or slightly ahead of, the trends of his time, as he himself no doubt recognized when he compared the symbolism of A Vision with the work of Brancusi and Wyndham Lewis. As for influence, it is the method of Blake, and also much of the black--and white art--etchings, woodcuts, line drawings--which Yeats often admired more than works which featured color. Any of these drawings will show the use of a simple background against which the line "moves," and the absence of any but essential detail; the essence only of a scene is presented, but the presentation is nonetheless a "picture."

[15] Henn's chapter called "Painter and Poet," pp. 225-254, either identifies or suggests possibilities for the source of twenty-three references to works of art in Yeats's poetry. In addition, Henn summarizes the evidence for the

importance of visual symbolism to Yeats, with special reference as to his book covers; offers a brief biographical review of his association with artists, especially his father and brother; and gives a partial list of names of artists about whom Yeats wrote. The bulk of the essay consists of the identifications, however, of which he says "the value of this process will often remain in doubt; unless it can be shown that a picture either explains an otherwise obscure passage, or at least throws light on the origins of that symbol; or establishes some association with a definite artist or work or which the relationship to the poet is already known" (p. 15). In actuality, the essay does suggest more--"we are helped to perceive the unifying principles of Yeats's use of symbols. Their apparent arbitrariness and confusion vanishes, and they can be seen as clearly related to his six great periods of human myth and history and thought; the Babylonian Starlight; the Greeks at the time of Phidias, Byzantium, the Quattrocento, the Renaissance, Blake" (p. 250). As an appendix, Henn lists the lantern slides of William Blake and followers that Yeats had made for a projected lecture tour.

The material included in the essay "Yeats and the Picture Galleries" is probably impossible to duplicate now, for, Henn says "some years ago I found it possible to visit, in America, France, and Italy, most of the galleries, pictures, sculptures, and mosaics that Yeats saw or is likely to have seen" (p. 61). Henn records his "serial or total impression" from this tour of American and European galleries as the feeling of an "immensely strong collective character in the dominant symbols on which Yeats imagination seized," that character being a "preference" for pictures embodying the dramatic momemt" together with a "search for materials which would support the validity or enlarge the significance of symbols which he had already meditated." Henn suggests of these symbols that "their dispersion in time and history may have suggested an steady convergence towards his desired perception of unity in multiplicity" (p. 62).

Both of these studies are invaluable to the student who has an interest in Yeats's involvement with the visual arts for they contain much information that is either no longer available at all, or available only with the expenditure of much time and money.

[16] A term is needed for such borrowing, but it is hard to discover a really appropriate one. Yeats's word for the use by a newer writer of elements of the style, scene, characters, or plot of an older one is "imitation" (Essays, 352), and of Moore's use of older paintings, he

has used the term "copy." Rossetti's poems on pictures might be termed "translations"; he portrays the same scene, giving the people portrayed such words as he could imagine them saying. Moore's Reflected Visions suggests the word "reflections." Sometimes Yeats's references are brief enough to be called "allusions," but often they are much more extensive and important than the literary allusion. Thus I shall use his own term, "copy"--with the notation that I do not imply plagiarism, but conscious use of an influence. Yeats would have said he was "imitating" Homer; probably he would have described his use of Rickett's Don Juan in Hell as "copying."

[17] Letters, p. 130.

[18] Letters, p. 141.

[19] Letters, p. 764.

[20] W. B. Yeats, A Vision: A Reissue with the Author's Final Revisions (New York: Collier Books, 1966), p. 5.

[21] W. B. Yeats, Preface to The King of the Great Clock Tower: Commentaries and Poems (New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. vii.

[22] W. B. Yeats, Essays (New York: Macmillan, 1924), p. 205.

[23] Essays, p. 352.

[24] Essays, p. 294. This is not to say that Yeats had no musical friends (Dulac, for instance), but that it was of decidedly secondary interest to him. Some readers will no doubt object that he himself speaks of the "music" of poetry; I believe that, if these references are returned to context, the referent will usually prove to be the music of the human voice, and the voice speaking, not singing. The 1904 Samhain says of William Morris that he taught Yeats the "truth" that the "old writers" wrote "to be spoken or sung, and in a later stage to be read aloud" (Explorations, p. 222). And still later he states his intention of turning from a poetry that stresses "picture" to one that stresses "voice." I do not believe that this avowed intention altered the process I have been describing--it is the end result which differs. Yeats's sources of inspiration continue to include art works, and of course they continue to use "pictures" or images. The treatment of these images differs, however, in that they are not handled with the Pre-Raphaelite emphasis or naturalistic detail.

Although Yeats compared modern (1906) poetry to "elaborate music" (Essays, 330) and though he includes "Sound, colour, and form" in his analysis of the elements of art in "The Symbolism of Poetry," saying that these elements should be "in a musical relation, a beautiful relation" so that they become "as it were one sound, one colour, one form" (Essays, 194), it is likely that by "musical" he intends simply "harmonious." When it came to an actual attempt to employ musical structure in poetry, he was dubious. In the Introduction to the Oxford Book of Modern Verse, he questions that a poem can have a mathematical structure and yet be living. Of Pound's Cantos, he says, "Can impressions that are in part visual, in part metrical, he related like the notes of a symphony; has the author been carried beyond reason by a theoretical conception?" (OBMV, xxv). It is probable that Yeats distrusted music as an art form because he saw in it abstraction--"mathematical structure"--and impersonality. In "A Guitar Player," from The Cutting of an Agate, he compares the guitar to the piano: with the latter, "it is the piano, the mechanism, that is the important thing, and nothing of you means anything but your fingers and your intellect" (Essays, 333). As a matter of fact, it was the emphasis on music in poetry that brought out one of Yeats's finest exercises in vituperation, "The Musician and The Orator," from The Cutting of an Agate, in Essays, p. 331:

> Walter Pater says music is the type of all the Arts, but somebody else, I forget now who, that oratory is their type. You will side with the one or the other according to the nature of your energy, and I in my present mood am all for the man who, with an average audience before him, uses all means of persuasion--stories, laughter, tears, but only so much music as he can discover on the wings of words. I would even avoid the conversation of the lovers of music, who would draw us into the impersonal land of sound and color, and I would have no one write with a sonata in his memory. He may even speak a little evil of musicians, having admitted that they will see before we do that melodious crown. We may remind them that the housemaid does not respect the piano-tuner as she does the plumber, and of the enmity that they have aroused among all poets. Music is the most impersonal of things, and words the most personal, and that is why musicians do not like words. They masticate them for a long time, being afraid they would not be able to digest them, and when the words are so broken and softened and mixed with spittle that they are not words any longer, they swallow them.

[25] Vision, p. 1.

[26] W. B. Yeats, The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats (New York: Collier, 1965), p. 55.

[27] W. B. Yeats, Explorations: Selected by Mrs. W. B. Yeats (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 142.

[28] Explorations, p. 306.

[29] We simply do not know exactly what was wrong with Yeats's eyes. Comments such as these indicate myopia, however.

[30] Oliver St. John Gogarty, William Butler Yeats: A Memoir (Dublin: Dolmen, 1963), p. 25.

[31] Sir William Rothenstein, "Yeats as a Painter Saw Him," in William Butler Yeats: Essays in Tribute, ed. Stephen Gwynn (New York: Kennikot Press, 1965), p. 41.

[32] Mary M. Colum, in W. B. Yeats: Interviews and Recollections, ed. E. H. Mikhail (London: MacMillan, 1977), I, p. 249.

[33] Explorations, p. 150.

[34] W. B. Yeats, The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats (New York: MacMillan, 1953), p. 2.

[35] Explorations, p. 272.

[36] Essays, p. 104.

[37] W. B. Yeats, Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats, II, ed. John P. Frayne (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970), p. 286.

[38] OBMV, p. ix.

[39] Letters on Poetry, p. 190.

[40] Autobiography, p. 67.

[41] Yeats, quoted in Richard Ellman, Yeats, The Man and the Masks (New York: Dutton, 1948), p. 13 - 14.

[42] Letters, p. 549.

[43] Explorations, p. 417.

[44] Autobiography, p. 59.

[45] Autobiography, p. 42.

[46] Autobiography, p. 27.

[47] Autobiography, p. 76.

[48] Autobiography, p. 78.

[49] Autobiography, p. 50.

[50] Autobiography, p. 49.

[51] Autobiography, p. 54.

[52] Autobiography, p. 28.

[53] Autobiography, p. 54.

[54] Letters, p. 53.

[55] Autobiography, p. 54.

[56] Autobiography, p. 55.

[57] Autobiography, p. 52.

[58] Letters, p. 339.

[59] Autobiography, p. 292.

[60] Autobiography, p. 17.

[61] Autobiography, p. 19.

[62] Letters, p. 901.

[63] Letters, p. 121.

[64] Letters, p. 705.

[65] Letters, p. 504.

[66] Letters, p. 502.

[67] The Larousse Encyclopedia of Modern Art, from 1800 to the Present Day, ed. Rene Huyghe (New York: Prometheus, 1965), p. 37 - 38.

[68] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 183.

[69] Autobiography, p. 371.

[70] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 183.

[71] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 194.

[72] Larousse, p. 52.

[73] Autobiography, p. 53.

[74] Larousse, p. 57.

[75] Larousse, p. 57.

[76] Larousse, p. 57.

[77] David Cecil, Visionary and Dreamer: Two Poetic Painters: Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), p. 3.

[78] Cecil, p. 75.

[79] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, quoted in Cecil, p. 4.

[80] Autobiography, p. 332.

[81] Larousse, p. 146.

[82] Autobiography, p. 105.

[83] Autobiography, p. 128.

[84] Quentin Bell, Victorian Artists (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 1.

[85] One must beware of assuming that Yeats did not care for those artists whom he does not mention. Art Galleries in Victorian England were by no means eclectic in the artists they would exhibit. Yeats, like other citizens, had to observe what was presented for his observation. The following summary (from Francis Haskell, "The Ideal Director," a review of David Robertson's Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World, in the New York Review of Books, 25 [June 15, 1978], pp. 19 - 20) of late nineteenth century taste in painting which may help to explain some of Yeats's predilictions:

> The standards which Eastlake bequeathed to the National Gallery--and. . . . through the Gallery to educated England as a whole--became so much the norm by which art was judged that it is sometimes difficult to understand how restrictive they were, for the very

> word "restrictive" will seem ludicrous when applied to the great masters he particularly championed: those of the Italian and Northern Renaissance and (to a lesser extent) those of the Dutch and Flemish schools of the seventeenth centuries.

This preference caused "other great schools" to be ignored "by English private collectors and museum officials until it was too late to remedy the situation at all adequately. The National Gallery owns no Brouwer, no Fragonard, no David, and its holdings of Chardin, El Greco, and Goya, let alone of Gericault or Courbet, are painfully weak."

[86] Bell, p. 10.

[87] Bell, p. 11.

[88] Bell, p. 80.

[89] Bell, p. 75.

[90] Bell, p. 93.

[91] Larousse, p. 191.

[92] Larousse, p. 185.

[93] Larousse, p. 185.

[94] Larousse, p. 186.

[95] Larousse, p. 189.

[96] Albert Aurier, Mercure de France, 1891, quoted in Larousse, p. 190.

[97] Larousse, p. 196.

CHAPTER II

"THE DIFFICULT ART OF APPRECIATION": YEATS'S ESSAYS ON THE VISUAL ARTS

"I have spent my life with pictures and was a painter for three years and I really think I might be trusted in this matter," Yeats snapped at Bullen when that editor balked at following his wishes as to the portraits to be used in the collected edition.[1] Although Yeats's works of art criticism are few, the subject was of great importance to him. In A Vision he explains his difficulty with the historical chapters by saying, "I that know nothing but the arts, and of these little, cannot revise the series of dates."[2] Yeats's habitual modesty about his education only emphasizes the value he placed on his background in the arts. It was unusual for him to admit to even a "little" knowledge of any subject.

Ever since 1965, when Engelberg's The Vast Design was published,[3] the need for a study of Yeats's writings on the subject of the plastic arts has been apparent. In Engelberg's words,

> Yeats comments on art and artists . . . demand an ampler explanation than has so far been offered. They demand that evaluation because, in matters of art, what repelled him mystifies us less than what attracted him, partly because his prejudices, which were strong, are reducible to a common denominator, while what he favored seems often contradictory.[4]

Engelberg himself does not pursue the direct investigation of Yeats's theories of the plastic arts: thus these essays have remained as "confusing" as they were when Yeats wrote them. A case in point is Yeats's comment that his friend T. S. Moore's poem "Gazelles" "copied" Persian miniature paintings. One would like to use this term as a measure of Yeats's attitude toward such "copying"--but shall we assume "copy" to imply plagiarism or shall we instead suppose that Yeats means to copy as an art student might make a copy of a Greek statue?[5]

Yeats leaves even his most crucial terms undefined. "Vision," for example, is a central concept, yet Yeats's only definition of it occurs in a letter, not in any of his published writings. Similarly, such terms as "symbol" and "Symbolism" are left to the reader's interpretation. The discussion of "symbol" and "allegory" focuses upon the more readily comprehensible term, allegory, leaving the reader scarcely more enlightened about the difficult one. Yeats simply did not believe in definitions--one must remember that in his philosophy to systematize or formulate is to kill. Vitality in an idea, a verse, a human being, a nation, is dependent upon a clash of opposites, an unresolved

dialectical tension. On a more pragmatic level, Yeats was a disciple of Pater in his prose style. The point of a sentence is not that it shall be clear, but that it shall be beautiful--rhythmic, figurative, suggestive. One may also see in these essays a Paterian tendency to avoid absolutes. The "aesthetic critic" must approach every work as unique. The question to be answered is that of the essence of its individuality--what is it, in and of itself, rather than how does it relate to absolute standards of beauty? All these factors no doubt contribute to the effect of an unusual degree of ambiguity and obscurity in Yeats's prose. One must also bear in mind, however, that although Yeats's interest in the visual arts was life-long, it was never after 1886 his main concern. The essays on this subject are of secondary importance to his writings about poetry; only briefly during the Hugh Lane controversy did the visual arts become the focus of his actual activities. Thus he never produced a systematized esthetic of the visual arts. The reader must formulate for himself, if he demands formula. Yeats left primarily hints and suggestions, and even these sometimes contradict each other.

The "confusion" which seems to be bothering Engelberg, however, is not so much a matter of wording as of content. How, he asks in effect, could Yeats's judgment have been so puzzlingly bad? How could he have loved and studied Leonardo and Michelangelo, but still have been able to praise

the puerile work of such as W. T. Horton and Nora McGuiness? The fact is that to say Yeats was deeply interested in art does not necessarily imply that he was actually a very good judge of it. The contemporary reader can all too easily verify Rothenstein's evaluation: "Yeats was not in fact sensitive to form or to colour. He was too easily impressed by work which showed a superficial appearance of romance or mysticism."[6]

"Romance" and "mysticism" were, indeed, two desiderata of Yeats's ideal of fine art, the emphasis on romance in the early part of his life shifting toward mysticism as he aged, but never being entirely replaced, just as the romantic quality he favored had always some element of the mystic. Whether these predilections render Yeats a good or bad judge of the finest in the plastic arts, however, his own artistic stature must make his opinions of interest to his readers. If one follows the chronological order of the appropriate essays, a development can be seen in what Yeats called "the difficult art of appreciation" from a concern with "unnecessary beauty," toward that "more profound Pre-Raphaelism" which provided a sort of synthesis in his later life.[7] Certainly his opinions change strikingly at times, and the reader must keep the chronology constantly in mind, but these seeming contradictions actually constitute an expansion of what was at first a set of opinions rigid enough to deserve the term "prejudices."

It is the purpose of this chapter to gather the scattered comments to be found in the prose, and to concentrate on a summary of those essays which have most directly to do with the plastic arts. Those specifically dedicated to the subject alone are few, but comments upon art and artists occupy much space in essays ostensibly dedicated to other subjects, as well as in the letters, poetry, and plays. The word "artist" itself to Yeats meant poet or painter; thus it is often difficult to tell which art he is theorizing about. I have selected only those passages that contain a direct reference to the plastic arts, and omitted many that might be taken as applicable to both poetry and painting. Even with this criterion, there is quite a respectable body of comment available. The major essays are "An Exhibition at William Morris," "William Blake and His Illustrations to Dante's Divine Comedy," "A Symbolic Artist and the Coming of Symbolic Art," The Introduction to Horton's woodcuts ("Symbolism in Painting"), "Ireland and The Arts," "The Tragic Theatre," "Art and Ideas," "Certain Noble Plays of Japan," and "A Note of Appreciation" (of Major Robert Gregory). To these I have added a transcript of a lecture, "The Watts Pictures" ("The Ideal in Art"), a note entitled "To All Artists and Writers" (this was not signed by Yeats, but it is probable that he wrote it), and a letter written in 1921 by Yeats to Yone Noguchi, but not published until 1965 (by Oshima in W. B. Yeats and Japan). I have also

included appropriate passages from other prose works, especially A Vision, V, "Dove or Swan."

Several of these essays were written during the early period of Yeats's career. Although he began seriously composing verses in 1882, it was not until 1886 that he decided to give up his art studies to concentrate on being a poet. In the years up to 1890, he published Mosada, The Wanderings of Oisin, and Crossways and edited Fairy and Folk Tales. Important friends entered his life--A. E., Madame Blavatsky, Morris, Shaw, Henley, Wilde--and of course, Maud Gonne. In 1889, he published the essay "An Exhibition at William Morris'," and during these years he worked with Ellis on their edition of Blake. The significant characteristics of Yeats's style in this period reflect those prevailing interests: Oisin very Pre-Raphaelite; The Crossways with shepherd poems reflecting the pastoral emphasis of Blake and followers. Both these Yeats saw as Romantic: the stylistic conflict in the forefront of his consciousness at this point is still Romanticism versus Neoclassicism--the "eighteenth century" that to the young Yeats represented everything "dreary" and "formal."

The essay "An Exhibition at William Morris" is the earliest of this group of essays. It reviewed the third annual showing of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, an exhibit containing things from fireplaces to illuminated poetry books, cartoons for stained glass windows, and book

bindings. Yeats's comments are mostly, though not entirely, favorable, tending to approve the "Romantic" and "Medieval" and to condemn "formal classicism" and the "eighteenth century." He begins the essay with an encomium of Morris (whose work did not appear in the exhibit) as "leader" of the struggle of the "decorative arts" to participate in the Romantic Movement, characterizing Romanticism as the opposite of the "old formal classicisms" which it supplanted, and as offering to the "man of literature" "regained freedom of the spirit and imagination."[8] Literature, he says, had but led the way; "since then painting in its turn has flung aside the old conventions . . . the arts of decoration are now making the same struggle." Romanticism is "the movement most characteristic of the literature and art, and to some small extent of the thoughts, too, of our century."[9]

The century in question, of course, was still the nineteenth; toward its end, in the latter part of this early period, from 1890-99, Yeats begins to grow away from Pre-Raphaelitism toward Symbolism both in his esthetic theory and in his poetry. In 1890 he organized the Order of The Golden Dawn; in 1891, the Rhymer's Club and the Irish Literary Society. John Sherman, The Countess Kathleen, and The Celtic Twilight were published by 1893, and in that year The Works of William Blake was finished. Between 1894 and 1896 Yeats met Olivia Shakespeare, wrote The Land of Hearts' Desire, edited A Book of Irish Verse, and brought

out the first Collected Poems; met Lady Gregory and John Synge, and his move to Woburn Buildings brought a closer association with Arthur Symons. In 1897 he published The Secret Rose and the essays "William Blake's Illutrations to Dante's Divine Comedy" and first visited Coole Park. In the year 1898 he travelled, visiting Paris as well as England and Ireland, and published at this time his essays on Symbolism: "A Symbolic Artist and The Coming of Symbolic Art," and the introduction to Horton's woodcuts, "Symbolism in Painting." This period closes with the publication of The Wind Among the Reeds and the inception of The Irish Literary Theatre. By this year, Symbolism had come to dominate both theory and poetry--the cover for The Secret Rose was designed by Althea Gyles, Yeats's "Symbolic Artist." The essays written during this time about the artists Blake, Gyles, and Horton best display Yeats in his character as art critic, but his discussions are much controlled by his interest in Symbolism.

The essay "William Blake and His Illustrations to The Divine Comedy" begins significantly by saying, "Blake was the first writer of modern times to preach the indissoluble marriage of all great art with symbol" and goes on to describe Blake's struggle to free his art from all but symbolic expression. Blake believed, Yeats says, that the "great masters" are those "granted by divine favor a vision of the unfallen world" (earlier he has said that Blake uses

the word "vision" to refer to "the symbolic imagination"). These symbolic artists, Blake thought, were alone worthy of study--the student should avoid looking at works which copied "nature" rather than "vision."[10]

This essay, of course, has the difficulty of including both Yeats's own theories and those of Blake. Blake said, "True art is . . . symbolic." Yeats quotes this remark, but the exact degree to which he agrees with it is left to inference. That he did not always agree with Blake's opinions is evident from the discussion that follows. Since Blake admired only idealism and hated realism, he "praised the painters of Florence and their influence and cursed all that has come to Venice and Holland,"[11] including a painter whom Yeats himself much admired: Titian. At this point in the essay, Yeats stops simply paraphrasing Blake's theory and begins to comment upon it, calling Blake a "too-literal realist of the imagination," who praised line above all, even above colour and "light and dark." Yeats defends, but does not agree with, this "praise of a severe art":

> What matter if in his visionary realism, his enthusiasm for what is, after all, perhaps the greatest art, he refused to admit that he who wraps the vision in lights and shadows, in iridescent or glowing colour, until form be half lost in pattern, may, as did Titian in his Bacchus and Ariadne, create a talisman as powerfully charged with intellectual virtue as though it were a jewel-studded door of the city seen on Patmos?[12]

Blake's anathema of such artists as Reynolds, who to him represent the "masculine portion" of the deleterious effects of "nature," and who are characterized by their emphasis upon stifling conventions, Yeats summarizes without comment. And he quotes both Blake and his disciple Palmer on the virtues of "excess" (as opposed to moderation), citing a rather long passage from Palmer's diary which he often refers to in shorter form:

> Excess is the essential vivifying spirit, vital spark, embalming spice of the finest art. There are many mediums in the means--none, oh, not a jot, not a shadow of a jot, in the end of great art. In a picture whose merit is to be excessively brilliant, it can't be too brilliant, but individual tints may be too brilliant . . . We must not begin with medium, but think always on excess and only use medium to make excess more abundantly excessive.[13]

Finally, Yeats summarizes Blake's "three primary commands" to the artist: first, "To seek a determinate outline"; second, "to avoid a generalized treatment"; and third, "to desire always abundance and exuberance."[14]

With this as a general introduction, Yeats goes on to describe some of Blake's illustrations and to offer his own evaluation of them. He praises The Grave, Virgil, Milton, Job and the Divine Comedy drawings, but criticizes Night Thoughts. The latter he finds "wearisome because of their "great sprawling figures": the illustrations of the prophetic books have, he says, "an energy like that of the elements, but are rather rapid sketches taken while some phantasmic

procession swept over him, than elaborate compositions."[15] His praise of the other works focuses upon their "gravity and passion." They are powerful and moving," he says, because "they have the only excellence possible in any art, a mastery over artistic expression." In order to justify such a statement he goes on to write an apology for Blake's technical flaws. Blake, he says, fails more because he dares more.

> Living in a time when technique and imagination are continually perfect and complete, because they no longer strive to bring fire from heaven, we forget how imperfect and incomplete they were in even the greatest masters, in Botticelli, in Orcagna, and in Giotto.[16]

Among the other illustrators of Dante, Yeats dismisses Dore as "noisy and demagogic"; Genelli as "spiritually ridiculous" and "vulgar," although "very able in the 'formal' 'generalised' way which Blake hated"; and Stradanus as having "so many of the more material and unessential powers of art, and . . . so undistinguished in conception, that one supposed him to have touched in the sixteenth century the same public Dore has touched in the nineteenth."[17] Slightly better, but still unsatisfactory, are the works of Flaxman, Signorelli, and Sturler. Flaxman, he says, seems to have been actually uninspired by Dante, and to have fallen back upon a "formal" manner.[18] Signorelli is not much more "interesting," except for one drawing ("The Angel"), which is "full of innocence and energy." Sturler, while

"very pathetic and powerful in invention and full of the most interesting Pre-Raphaelite detail," his figures "admirable and moving", is "very poor in drawing," and worse yet, the designs have

> the langour of a mind that does its work by a succession of laborious critical perceptions rather than the decision and energy of true creation, and are more a curious contribution to artistic methods than an imaginative force.[19]

Only Botticelli and Clovio offer Blake competition, "and these contrast rather than compete," because both excell in the Paradiso, which Blake never finished--in fact, scarcely began. "The imaginations of Botticelli and Clovio were overshadowed by the cloister, and it was only when they passed beyond the world or into some noble peace, which is not the world's peace, that they won perfect freedom." Blake, on the other hand, would "sympathize with the persons, and delight in the scenery of the Inferno and Purgatorio," which he filled "with a mysterious and spiritual significance born perhaps of mystical pantheism." To be sure, Blake had "no such mastery over figure and drapery as had Botticelli" but "the flames of Botticelli give one on emotion," and his scenes are sometimes "pictured with a merely technical inspiration." As for Clovio, "the illuminator of missals," he has

> tried to create with that too-easy hand of his a Paradise of serene air reflected in a little mirror,

> a heaven of sociability and humility and prettiness, a heaven of women and of monks; but one cannot imagine him deeply moved by the symbolism of bird and beast, of tree and mountain, of flame and darkness.[20]

And though Blake had "a profound understanding of all creatures and things, a profound sympathy with passionate and lost souls, made possible in their extreme intensity by his revolt against corporeal law, and corporeal reason" that suited him to illustrate Purgatorio and Inferno, he would, thought Yeats, have done less well with Paradiso.

> In the serene and rapturous emptiness of Dante's Paradise he would find no symbols but a few abstract emblems, and he had no love for the abstract, while with the drapery and the gestures of Beatrice and Virgil, he would have prospered less than Botticelli or even Clovio.[21]

The slightly later essay, "A Symbolic Artist and The Coming of Symbolic Art,"[22] expresses Yeats's own esthetic theories (as distinguished from those of Blake). This first important essay on art also brings in the new century, and Yeats's major discussions of Symbolism. He saw this movement as developing from Romanticism, rather than supplanting it, as Romanticism had supplanted Neoclassicism; nonetheless this was the "new wave" that was to be typical of the twentieth century as Romanticism had been of the nineteenth. His first essays on the subject of Symbolism were about painting: "A Symbolic Artist" was followed in the same year by the introduction to a collection of woodcuts

by W. T. Horton, which Yeats later rewrote and published under the title, "Symbolism in Painting." It was not until two years later, in 1900, that he published a similar essay on literature: "The Symbolism of Poetry." The progression in his life experience from painting to poetry is one he repeated in his essays, and presumably in the development of his esthetic theories, as well as in the generation of many of his poems.

The artist of this essay's title is Yeats's protege, Althea Gyles. But Yeats does not begin the essay with a discussion of her work. Instead, he describes how "a company of Irish mystics" led by A. E. had changed "many ordinary ecstatics and visionaries" into artists by teaching "a religious philosophy" characterized by a symbolism "now a little Christian, now very Indian, now altogether Celtic and mythological." Gyles, whose work he admires because he sees in it "so visionary a beauty" has been a member of this "order":

> She will not think I am taking from her originality when I say that the beautiful lithe figures of her art, quivering with a life half mortal tragedy, half immortal ecstasy, owe something of their inspiration to this little company.[23]

But Gyles' work has a larger significance than its relationship to A. E.'s mysticism; it reflects the development of Symbolism as an artistic movement: "I indeed believe that I see in them [Gyles and other Symbolists] a beginning of

what may become a new manner in the arts of the modern world: for there are tides in the imagination of the world, and a motion in one or two minds may show a change in tide."[24]

There follows an analysis of recent artists as they reflect this trend--strongly, or more weakly, according to the attractive power of "vision" (as opposed to "human life") for each one:

> Pattern and rhythm are the road to open symbolism, and the arts have already become full of pattern and rhythm. Subject pictures no longer interest us, while pictures with patterns and rhythms of color, like Mr. Whistler's, and drawings with patterns and rhythms of line, like Mr. Beardsley's in his middle period, interest us extremely. Mr. Whistler and Mr. Beardsley have sometimes thought so greatly of these patterns and rhythms that the images of human life have faded almost perfectly; and yet we have not lost our interest. Men like Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Mr. Ricketts have been too full of the emotion and the pathos of life to let its images fade out of their work, but they have so little interest in the common thoughts and emotions of life that their images of life have delicate and languid limbs that could lift no burdens, and souls vaguer than a sigh; while men like Mr. Degas, who are still interested in life, and life at its most vivid and vigorous, picture it with a cynicism that reminds one what ecclesiastics have written in old Latin about women and the world.[25]

Sometimes in the struggle between the images of vision and of reality, those of vision have lost because of the weakness of the artist's character rather than because of his attachment to the real world: an occasional artist has been "touched by a visionary energy amid his weariness and bitterness, but it has passed away." Beardsley is the epitome of this type. His lack of energy produced "the satirical

grotesques of his later period.[26] Yeats is uncertain, and therefore ambiguous, as to sources of the symbolic style, and even less eager to offer an exact description of that style. But he does offer several examples of "this visionary beauty": The "work of some of the younger French artists, for I have a dim memory of a little statuette in ebony and ivory"; the writings of Villiers de l'Isle Adam ("I cannot separate art and literature in this, for they have gone through the same change, though in different forms"); the poetry of "a young Irish Catholic who was meant for the priesthood"; plays by "a new Irish writer"; A. E.'s poems; "some stories of Miss Macleod's"; and Gyles' drawings. "In all of these a passion for symbol has taken the place of the old interest in life." Their work, though of varying quality, is characterized by energy--it is "always the opposite of what is called 'decadent.' One feels that they have not only left the smoke of human hearths and come to the Dry Tree, but that they have drunk from the Well at the World's End." Gyles' work is focused upon as representative of "visionary beauty":

> Miss Gyles's images are so full of abundant and passionate life that they remind one of William Blake's cry, "Exuberance is beauty," and Samuel Palmer's command to the artist, "Always seek to make excess more abundantly excessive." One finds in them what a friend, whose work has no other passion, calls "the passion for the impossible beauty," for the beauty which cannot be seen with the bodily eyes or pictured otherwise than by symbols.[27]

Yeats's commentary on individual drawings consists of explication of the symbols--much as one might explicate a poem. He remarks upon the pictorial qualities of only one, Lillith, which he describes from memory, saying "I remember thinking that the serpent was a little confused, and that the composition was a little lacking in rhythm, and upon the whole caring less for it than for others, but it has an energy and a beauty of its own." This is also the only one of the pictures that he criticizes adversely. In conclusion, Yeats says that he believes

> that the best of these drawings will live [he has explicated and praised "The Rose of God," Noah's Raven, and "The Knight Upon the Grave of His Lady"--so these are presumably the "best" that he refers to here], and that if Miss Gyles were to draw nothing better she still would have won a place among the few artists in black and white whose work is of the highest intensity. I believe, too, that her inspiration is a wave of a hidden tide that is flowing through many minds in many places, creating a new religious art and poetry.[28]

Since Yeats described A. E. as "the most subtle and spiritual poet of his generation," a "visionary" equal to Swendenborg and Blake, one might wonder why he does not go on to discuss A. E.'s paintings, as well as those of Gyles; but as a matter of fact Yeats did not admire A. E. as a painter. It was in his "vision" and his poetry that he excelled, to Yeats's mind. Later in 1898, in an essay that reviewed the poetry, Yeats did offer some comment upon A. E.'s art.[29] He had recently seen the new murals done

by A. E. for the Dublin Lodge of the Theosophical Society, and begins his essay by describing them. They are, he says, "very fantastic," "picture everywhere melting into picture," like the one that portrays "a man huddled up in darkness while his soul rushes out and grasps a star." Yeats does not approve of the effect:

> They are the work of a hand too bewildered by the multitudinous shapes and colours of vision to narrow its method to convention, and, without a convention, there is, perhaps, no perfect spiritual art. A. E. has sought unavailingly, despite much talent, to make of unmoving and silent paint a mirror for the wandering, exultant processions that haunt those margins of spiritual ecstasy, where colours are sounds, and sounds are shapes, and shapes are fragrances.[30]

Synesthesia is an effect more proper to poetry: A. E.'s poems are "a more perfect mirror, because poetry changes with the changing of the dream."[31]

Yeats's Introduction to Horton's work and the essay "Symbolism in Painting," (1898, Essays, 180-187) are identical throughout sections I and II, but the latter essay ends with II, while the Horton introduction goes on into a third section. Both begin by making a distinction between symbol and allegory, because "In England, which has made great Symbolic Art, most people dislike an art if they are told it is symbolic, for they confuse symbol and allegory." It is only a very modern dictionary, says Yeats, that calls symbol, "The sign or representation of any moral thing by the images or properties of natural things" (A

definition that he compares to "the things below are as the things above' of the Emerald Tablet of Hermes"). The first to make the distinction was William Blake ("The Chanticleer of the New Dawn"), whose definition Yeats compares to that of "a German Symbolist Painter"[32] in Paris (who had lately been working on a portrait of Yeats) though the painter had never read Blake. "Blake has written, 'vision or imagination,' meaning symbolism by these words--'is a representation of what actually exists, really or unchangeably. Fable or Allegory is formed by the daughters of Memory.'" The German said

> that Symbolism said things which could not be said so perfectly any other way, and needed but a right instinct for its understanding; while Allegory said things which could be said as well, or better in another way, and needed a right knowledge for its understanding. The one gave dumb things voices, and bodiless things bodies; while the other read a meaning--which had never lacked its voice or its body--into something heard or seen, and loved less for the meaning than for its own sake.[33]

The painter goes on to carry this to an extreme, saying that

> The only symbols he cared for were the shapes and motions of the body; ears hidden by the hair, to make one think of a mind busy with inner voices; and a head so bent that back and neck made the one curve as in Blake's Vision of Bloodthirstiness, to call up an emotion of bodily strength; and he would not put even a lily, or a rose, or a poppy into a picture to express purity, or love, or sleep, because he thought such emblems were allegorical, and had their meaning by a traditional and not by a natural right.[34]

This was going too far for Yeats, who objected that the flowers mentioned were

> So married, by their colour, and their odour, and their use, to love and purity and sleep, or to other symbols of love and purity and sleep, and had been so long a part of the imagination of the world, that a symbolist might use them to help out his meaning without becoming an allegorist.[35]

He cites Rossetti's use of the lily in Annunciation and in Childhood of Mary Virgin. These serve to unify the artist's individuality with artistic tradition: making "the more important symbols--the women's bodies, and the angel's bodies, and the clear morning light, take their place, in the great procession of Christian symbols, where they can alone have all their meaning and all their beauty."[36]

Yeats goes on to say that the dividing line between allegory and symbolism is not distinct: they "melt" into one another. As an example of symbolism, he mentions "the horns of Michelangelo's Moses"; and of allegory, Tintoretto's Origin of the Milky Way. The Tintoretto, he says, is "Allegory without any Symbolism," and "apart from its fine painting, but a moment's amusement for our fancy."[37] In the Moses, allegory and symbolism coexist, and "one need not doubt that its symbolism has helped to awaken the modern imagination." That symbolism is complex: "A hundred generations might write out what seemed the meaning . . . and they would write different meanings, for no symbol tells all its meaning to any generation"; whereas the allegory of Tintoretto

can be briefly explained, and that explanation alone can tell its meaning, quite apart from its artistic embodiment--"the fine painting, which has added so much unnecessary beauty, has not told it better." On the basis of this comparison, Yeats goes on to a more sweeping statement: "All art that is not mere story-telling or mere portraiture, is symbolic. . . ." He compares the symbolic work of art to a "medieval magician's" "symbolic talisman," which is composed of "Complex colours and forms," because symbolic art "entangles in complex colours and forms, a part of the Divine Essence."

> A person or a landscape that is part of a story or a portrait, evokes but so much emotion as the story or the portrait can permit without loosening the bonds that make it a story or portrait; but if you liberate a person or landscape from the bonds of motives and their actions, causes and their effects, and from all bonds but the bonds of your love, it will change under your eyes, and become a symbol of an infinite emotion, a perfected emotion, a part of the Divine Essence; for we love nothing but the perfect, and our dreams make all things perfect that we may love them.[38]

The artist, however, is not the only person who experiences this "perfection," "for religious and visionary thought is thought about perfection, and the way to perfection; and symbols are the only things free enough from all bonds to speak of perfection." But the artist is not limited to religious symbolism:

> Wagner's dramas, Keats's odes, Blake's pictures and poems, Calvert's pictures, Rossetti's pictures,

> Villiers de Lisle Adams' plays, and the black and white art of M. Herrmann, Mr. Beardsley, Mr. Ricketts, and Mr. Horton, the lithographs of Mr. Shannon, the pictures of Mr. Whistler, the plays of M. Maeterlinck, and the poetry of Verlaine, in our own day but differ from the religious art of Giotto and his disciples in having accepted all symbolisms, the symbolism of the ancient shepherds and stargazers, that symbolism of bodily beauty which seemed a wicked thing to Fra Angelico, the symbolism of day and night, and winter and summer, spring and autumn, once so great a part of an older religion that Christianity; and in having accepted all the Divine Intellect, its anger and its pity, its waking and its sleep, its love and its lust, for the substance of their art.[39]

Neither (to offer a translation of Yeats's meaning) is the symbolic artist limited to symbols which are part of a myth of any sort:

> A Keats or a Calvert is as much a symbolist as a Blake or a Wagner; But he is a fragmentary symbolist, for while he evokes in his persons and his landscapes an infinite emotion, a perfected emotion, a part of the Divine Essence, he does not set his symbols in the great procession as Blake would have him, "in a certain order, suited to his imaginative energy."[40]

This distinction he elaborates by citing Rossetti. "If you paint a beautiful woman and fill her face, as Rossetti filled so many faces, with an infinite love, a perfected love, 'one's eyes meet no mortal thing when they meet the light of her peaceful eyes,' as Michelangelo said of Vittoria Colonna." The addition of iconographic detail has a different effect: "If you paint the same face, and set a winged rose or a rose of gold somewhere about her, one's thoughts are of her mother, Ancestral Beauty, and of her high kinsmen,

the Holy Orders, whose swords make a continual music before her face." This ambiguity--or fragmentation--of the reference is essential. Without it, allegory becomes possible. The great artist is never a "systematic mystic," Yeats says, in a particularly ambiguous passage:

> The systematic mystic is not the greatest of artists because his imagination is too great to be bounded by a picture or song, and because only imperfection in a mirror of perfection, or perfection in a mirror of imperfection, delight our frailty. There is indeed a systematic mystic in every poet or painter who, like Rossetti, delights in a personal symbolism; and such men often fall into trances, or have waking dreams. Their thought wanders from the woman who is Love herself, to her sisters and her forebears, and to all the great procession; and so august a beauty moves before the mind, that they forget the things which move before the eyes.[41]

Here the "Symbolism in Painting" essay ends,[42] but in his introduction to the Horton book, Yeats goes on to discuss Horton's art. He is, says Yeats, "a disciple" of a mystic group devoted to "waking dreams": dreams Horton "copies . . . in his drawings as if they were models posed for him by some unearthly master." Yeats praises the pictures for their medievalism and "humorous piety," calling them "always interesting." After describing some of the pictures, Yeats says

> Mr. Horton has told me that he has made them spectral, to make himself feel all things but a waking dream; and whenever spiritual purpose mixes with artistic purpose, and not to its injury, it gives a new sincerity, a new simplicity.[43]

Horton, however, like Blake, demands some apology on technical grounds, Yeats thinks. Horton had first tried to "copy" his "visions" in color, and "very literally," but abandoned the attempt because he "soon found that you could only represent a world where nothing is still for a moment, and where colours have odours and odours musical notes, by formal and conventional images, midway between the scenery and persons of common life, and the geometrical emblems on medieval talismans." He also uses very few images, repeating his "major symbols". These symbols form a myth: "The principal symbols of his faith, the woman of Rosa Mystica and Ascending into Heaven, who is Divine Womanhood, the man-at-arms of St. George and Be Strong, who is Divine Manhood, [but] he is at his best picturing the Magi, who are the wisdom of the world, lifting their thuribles before the Christ who is the union of The Divine Manhood and the Divine Womanhood."[44] Horton says that "all the pictures are part of the history of a soul."[45] Yeats defends Horton's paucity of images, as necessary to his symbolic style:

> . . . for he who is content to copy common life need never repeat an image, because his eyes show him changing scenes, and none that cannot be copied; but there must always be a certain monotony in the work of the symbolist, who can only make symbols out of the things he loves.[46]

Yeats instances the persons and situations of Botticelli, Maeterlinck, and Rossetti, as well as of Horton's pictures.

Also, Horton is not always a good draftsman, but, says Yeats, he is improving! At first he used to try to reproduce his dreams "without considering what your scheme of colour and line, or your shape and kind of paper can best say: but his later drawings . . . . show that he is beginning to see his waking dreams over again in the magical mirror of his art." As for draftsmanship, "the more visionary Symbolists, . . . have never . . . drawn as accurately as men who are interested in things and not in the meaning of things." Horton's art, he concludes, though "immature" is ". . . more interesting than the mature art of the magazines, for it is the reverie of a lonely and profound temperament."[47]

The change from Pre-Raphaelitism to Symbolism is primarily one of style. Yeats maintains now that intellectual suggestiveness, "literary" quality, or "symbolism" outweigh purely artistic considerations such as draftsmanship and composition. The Pre-Raphaelites, while certainly having a literary quality, had been extremely careful draftsmen and colorists, much involved in "naturalistic detail." The artists Yeats now admires produce work that is much less "beautiful," if only in the absence of color. "Vision" is of overwhelming importance--"realism" is regarded as its contradictory quality.

During the middle of Yeats's life--the years of 1900-1920--this emphasis was to change again, however, under

the impact of events upon his political theories. The dominant theme of the first part of the period was Ireland; in 1901 he collaborated with George Moore to write Diarmuid and Grania, and published the essay "Ireland and the Arts." In 1909 he met Ezra Pound, and the acknowledged effect of the Oriental became evident in his thought and work, together with the unacknowledged impact of "modern" art (Wyndham Lewis was an associate of Pound's in the "Vorticism" movement). In 1913 he published "Art and Ideas," in which he surveyed his life in terms of esthetic theory and tried to establish a direction for the future. Hugh Lane and Robert Gregory died during this period--the controversy over the Lane pictures caused Yeats to note their effect on his esthetic--"modern" art was beginning to seem less foreign to him, especially as it had been interpreted by Robert Gregory, and as he had observed it in Lane's collection. Following 1915, due to Pound's interest in Noh drama, the Oriental influence grows stronger--and in 1915 Yeats published At the Hawk's Well, with masks by Edmund Dulac. By 1920, Yeats was at work on A Vision--and, of course, a solution to the turmoil of his mid-life. As his essays on art show, he had been re-thinking his earlier artistic preconceptions, trying to reconcile all these new and disparate elements into a synthesis: "our more profound Pre-Raphaelitism."[48]

Yeats's growing involvement with Irish nationalism began to cause him to reconsider some previous esthetic

assumptions--now he must find some room for his previously despised "realism" and "provincialism," because Irish art must be recognizably Irish. The Irish should be like the Greeks, who wrote of their own land, and to whose scenery and mythology that of Ireland compares.

> I would have our writers and craftsmen of many kinds master this history and these legends, and fix upon their memory the appearance of mountains and rivers and make it all visible again in their arts, so that Irishmen, even though they had gone some thousands of miles away, would still be in their own country.

The use of Irish historical subjects would inevitably call for the use of the "other world" as well, since Irish history is so bound with legend. In this too, the Irish are like the Greeks and should try to exaggerate this likeness:

> In other words, I would have Ireland recreate the ancient arts, the arts as they were understood in Judea, in India, in Scandanavia, in Greece and Rome, in every ancient land; as they were understood when they moved a whole people and not a few people who have grown up in a leisured class, and made this understanding their business.[49]

Thus another change in Yeats's thought begins--Greek Classicism gradually supplants Romantic Medievalism as Yeats's "Golden Age."

"Ireland and The Arts" begins with the statement: "The arts have failed." People are less interested in them: too absorbed in "the mere business of living" to be "capable of the difficult art of appreciation."[50] The loss of

connections with religion is one cause of this "failure": "The Arts have grown, as I think, too proud, too anxious to live alone with the perfect."[51] Yeats advocates the use of religious subjects by "the devout writer," saying that this would insure popular acceptance of the work. But lest he be thought to be calling for commercialism in art, he goes on to warn that "no writer, no artist" should "try to make his work popular." Once the subject has been chosen, the artist must "think of nothing but giving it such an expression as will please himself."[52]

> He must make his work a part of his own journey towards beauty and truth. He must picture saint or hero, or hillside, as he sees them, not as he is expected to see them, remembering that no two men are alike, and that there is no excellent beauty without strangeness.[53]

In this quest the artist must be "without humility," and must "doubt the reality of his vision" if men do not "quarrel" about it, "for there is only one perfection and one search for perfection."[54] The major cause of this contemporary alienation, however, is "a mysterious tendency in things which will have its end someday." Some men, nonetheless, like Morris in England, try to overcome the separation of men's "passions" from the "perfect"--in the case of Morris and his group, to "unite the arts once more to life by uniting them to use."[55] Yeats, too, has a solution--a surprising one, considering his previous condemnations of "realism" in any form--he believes that the use of Irish

scenery and subjects by Irish authors could accomplish that unification. His own style, says Yeats, has been "shaped by the subjects I have worked on" to the extent that he can no longer write on any subject but that of Ireland, and has accomplished his desired result: "now my style is myself." An attempt to portray their own country truthfully might produce similar results for other artists: like Robert Gregory, "they, too, might find themselves." The Irish artists and the Irishman in general would acquire a quality

> that set him apart from other men. He himself would understand that more was expected of him than others because he had greater possessions. The Irish race would have become a chosen race, one of the pillars that upheld the world.[56]

On January 25, 1906, Yeats gave a lecture titled "The Ideal in Art," before the Royal Hibernian Society, a group which had been organized by High Lane in memory of G. F. Watts. The reporter notes that Yeats began his lecture by saying that, although his title was "The Ideal in Art," he felt that artists were actually concerned with reality above all other men, for art itself was "simply the pursuit of the one central reality of them all--the discovery of themselves and the representation in poetry, in poem, and in music of themselves." The subject of the first part of the lecture was a comparison of poetry with painting:

> Yeats then proceeded to analyze the character of the poet. Poets, he said, were men who expressed

> the finer sensations they received from the world, and were divided into two classes, the aesthetic poets, who express those sensations in poetry, and the popular poets, who mingle them with the ideas and morals of the ordinary man. These categories also applied to painters: "aesthetic poetry" being comparable to "emotional painting", and "popular poetry" to "subject painting".

Watts's life offers an example of the conflict between these two kinds of art. Having been born in "over-moral and over-zealous" Victorian England, and surrounded by such contemporaries as Ruskin, Eliot, and "not only Morris the poet, but Morris the Socialist agitator," Watts felt compelled to be popular: he "was troubled by the idea that he would fail in his duty if he did not succeed in being one of that outer priesthood to appeal to the people." But this attempt to act upon the practice of great popular artists of the past had a disastrous effect on Watts's art, for there were no longer any "myths" or "religious symbols" which were "common" to both his mind and that of "the people." "Only one thing remained, namely, moral zeal, which all men had in some degree, even the worst. So Watts took moral legends and maxims for his pictures--things that could be explained to a child or an imbecile." Thus Watts may have seen himself as like ancient or medieval artists and estimated his own works, not for their beauty, but for their "morality"--"those moral allegories which were consciously done that he might become the master of the people" (these "were very different from the old myths and the legends and the old

symbols in this, that they were consciously made," says Yeats). But Yeats had a different evaluation:

> When Watts was not thinking that he was a preacher or a prophet, but painted from the images that he was moved by simply because he was a man of culture and because he belonged to a certain imaginative and poetic tradition which overshadowed the minds of all cultured people--when he was not painting out of a conscious moral effort, then they seemed to have the mark of his best genius and his best art upon them. In his (Mr. Yeats's) opinion, one could not in art do anything deliberately, consciously. Nature was the mother of the artist, and nature was very zealous. She demanded that the artist should permit her to do all. She gave nothing to self-control; everything to self-surrender.

He goes on to refer to "nature" as "the great temptress" who had inspired "poetry, painting, sculpture . . . the glory of the world." Finally, Yeats recommended this national material--"this great tradition that they call a nation--that great mass of thoughts, or hereditary feelings, of hereditary hopes, of hereditary legends, beliefs, and so on"--to other artists. "They need not be afraid of raising old controversies. A work of art silences discussion; it does not awaken it."[57]

Yeats's 1910 essay, "The Tragic Theatre,"[58] is significant in Yeats's esthetic development because it marks another stage in the breaking down of the solipsistic "art is dream" theory to allow for some inclusion of reality, and even contemporary reality. The focus is "French" art, with which, as we have seen, Yeats had been quarreling throughout his life. The despair he felt over the lack of

idealism in the "cocottes" of Post-Impressionism had been gradually changing under the impulse to see and learn, to change and incorporate opposing ideas, that was a driving force in his mind.

> A big picture of Cocottes sitting at little tables outside a cafe, by some follower of Manet's, was exhibited at The Royal Hibernian Academcy while I was a student at a life class there, and I was miserable for days. I found no desirable place, no man I could have wished to be, no woman I could have loved, no Golden Age, no lure for secret hope, no adventure with myself for theme .out of that endless tale I told myself all day long.

This change in attitude probably began in 1904, when Yeats joined in the controversy over the Lane Exhibit of Modern French paintings, and later over the bequest of Lane's collection.[60] In this essay on the theatre, his comments derive from a discussion of the nature of tragedy and comedy, which he illustrates , more often than not, by reference to paintings. There is, he says, an "antagonism between all the old art and our new art of comedy." A liking for one makes it difficult to appreciate the other: "I hated at nineteen years Thackeray's novels and the new French painting." This hatred was based upon what seemed to the youthful Yeats to be the relentless realism of the "new" art, exemplified by the school of Manet. It was only by dint of perserverance that he, in later life, began to understand a little of the attraction of this style of art:

> Years after I saw the Olympia of Manet at the Luxenbourg and watched it without hostility indeed, but as I might some incomparable talker whose precision of gesture gave me pleasure, though I did not understand his language. I returned to it again and again at intervals of years, saying to myself, "some day I will understand": and yet, it was not until Sir Hugh Lane brought the Eva Gonzales to Dublin, and I had said to myself, "How perfectly that woman is realized as distinct from all other women that have lived or shall live" that I understood I was carrying on in my own mind that quarrel between a tragedian and a comedian which the Devil on Two Sticks in Le Sage showed to the young man who had climbed through the window.[61]

Thus this essay shows a significant stage in Yeats's progress in the "difficult art of appreciation." It marks a change in his own esthetic preferences, as well, and enables him to begin to draw away (to the extent that he ever did) from his obsession with "a superficial appearance of romance or mysticism." It is a truism of Yeats criticism that he struggled for years to break away from his early style, usually described as "Pre-Raphaelite," toward a more powerful form of expression, but the effect of painting upon this change has not usually been noted. From the evidence of his own writings, it seems to have been easier for Yeats to learn new styles from painting than from poetry. Not that he ever became a disciple of Realism in any form! In this essay, he goes on to discuss the nature of tragedy, his own preference not having changed, but rather having been more clearly defined, by his increasing understanding of Realism (and therefore of comedy, according to his own theories, since he equates tragedy with "poetic" art, and comedy with the "real").

The last part of the original 1910 version goes on to discuss scenery and staging. Some of this discussion is relevant to Yeats's thought about the relationship between the arts. His point of view is expressed more clearly here than in any other of his writings:

> In no art can we do well unless we keep to those effects that are peculiar to it or that it can show better than the other arts. We no longer paint wood with a grain that is not its own, but are content that it should display itself or be covered with paint that pretends to be but paint, and if we paint a design on a vase or plate, we are careful not to attempt something that can be better done in easel painting. But in the art of the theatre we imitate easel painting, even though we ignore or mar for its sake the elements we should have worked in, the characteristics of the stage, light and shadow, speech, the movement of players.[62]

Yeats goes on to set forth his ideas of what a stage set should be: the avoidance of realism unless an exact copy (of an interior, say) is possible. This lack of an attempt at doing in a stage set the same thing one might in an easel painting is, he says, "in obedience to a logic that has been displayed in the historical development of all the other arts."[63] If the attempt at realism is abandoned, the producer of a play "will be as free as a modern painter, as Signor Mancini, let us say, to give himself up to an elliptical imagination."[64]

The 1913 essay "Art and Ideas" gives Yeats's account of his changing tastes in painting, and their relationship to his writing and his politics. He begins the essay by

remarking that a recent visit to the Tate exhibition of Millais' early works had reminded him of his youthful enjoyment of the Pre-Raphaelite painters. This renewed enjoyment puzzles Yeats: he asks himself whether it is caused by the tendency of age to return to the values of youth or just "some change in the weather," a passing mood.[65] In his youth, Yeats remembers, he had admired these painters above all others, and had thought when reading Schopenhauer that he would even be content to have led their lives. But as he grew older, and determined to become a writer rather than a painter, his ideas changed. He espoused the principles of Arthur Hallam in his essay on Tennyson: the "school of Keats and Shelley." Beginning with this "aestheticism," Yeats says,

> I developed these principles to the rejection of all detailed description, that I might not steal the painter's business, and indeed I was always discovering some art or science that I might be rid of: and I found encouragement by noticing all around me painters who were ridding their pictures, and indeed their minds, of literature.[66]

Yeats the poet, however, soon became dissatisfied with this esthetic puritanism, which seemed to him not at all the method of other poets whom he admired, "those careless old writers one imagines squabbling over a mistress, or riding on a journey, or drinking around a tavern fire, brisk and active men."[67]

And although the "new formula" (strict estheticism) was useful in freeing the poet from the "politics, theology, science," "zeal and eloquence" of the Late Victorian writers, this separation of the arts is something that Yeats no longer agrees with because he feels it is against the nature of art itself; it was no fundamental change, but rather a stage in the historical development of the arts,

> Painting had to free itself from a Classicalism that denied the senses, a domesticity that denied the passions, and poetry from a demogogic system of morals which destroyed the humility, the daily dying of the imagination in the presence of beauty."[68]

Being unable to accept the popular education, but unable to "refute" it, Yeats and his friends had turned away from all ideas. "Yet works of art are always begotten by previous works of art, and every masterpiece becomes the Abraham of a chosen people." The interrelationship of works of art has its basis in archetypal human moods: "The old images, the old emotions, awakened again to overwhelming life, like the Gods Heine tells of, by the belief and passion of some new soul are the only masterpieces." Separation of art from tradition or of art from art is a mistaken extension of "that individualism of the Renaissance which had done its work when it gave us personal freedom."[69]

This essay ends with Yeats's statement of what he feels to be the current tendency of the arts to return to tradition and "subject," a statement which also summarizes his own position:

> Shall we be rid of the pride of intellect, of sedentary meditation, of emotion that leaves us when the book is closed or the picture seen no more; and live amid the thoughts that can go with us by steam-boat and railway as once upon horseback, or camel-back, rediscovering, by our re-integration of the mind, our more profound Pre-Raphaelitism, the old abounding, nonchalant reverie?[70]

The essay points up the centrality to Yeats's esthetic of the concept of the identity of the arts, and the importance of emphasizing that identity, rather than seeking to impose a false "purity" through separating them. The key to Yeats's mind was always integration, the drawing together of disparate elements into a conflict with the ultimate goal of unity, however momentary. The finest art is to be achieved through synthesis, not separation.

But though this essay ends with the call for a more "profound Pre-Raphaelitism," how was that profundity to be achieved? The answer, Yeats thought, might possibly be found through the study of Asian art. In the 1916 essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan," Yeats considered the question of style. He contrasts the art he calls "unimaginative," or realistic, with "the arts that interest me." This latter group, "while seeming to separate from the world and us a group of figures, images, symbols, enables us to pass for a few moments into a deep of the mind that had hitherto been too subtle for habitation."[71] This "deep of the mind" can only be approached through what is "most human, most delicate." The style that can achieve this effect is exemplified

by Asian art, to which the artist turns for means, "for the distance from life in European art has come from little but difficulty with material."[72] The Asiatic (including, in this case, Greece and Egypt, it seems) offers a contrast, choosing "the style according to the subject." The changes of style in European art have created an "illusion of change and progress." Only our lyric poetry has "kept its Asiatic habit and renewed itself at its own youth, putting off perpetually what has been called its progress in a series of violent revolutions."[73]

But it was not only the Orient that provided Yeats with examples of the style he now felt to be greatest. Robert Gregory's tragic death in 1918 cut short a career that would, Yeats thought, have produced just the sort of art he sought. The multi-talented Gregory would, he said, for him "always remain a great painter in the immaturity of his youth." Yeats says he first noticed Robert's genius when the boy designed stage sets that, while "obtaining their effect from the fewest possible lines and colours, had always the grave distinction of his own imagination." This sparseness turned out to be characteristic; indeed, Robert's first paintings "perplexed" Yeats by what "seemed to me neglect of detail." But eventually he concluded that he cared for the work of Gregory and his friend Robert Innes "more than for any contemporary landscape painting." Their appeal to "the man of letters" is like that of

> old Chinese painting, the woodcuts and etchings of Calvert and Palmer, Blake's woodcuts to Thornton's Virgil, the landscape background of Mr. Rickett's "Wise and Foolish Virgins," based upon their sharing certain moods with great lyric poetry, or having themselves moods that are part of the traditional expression of the soul.

Of Gregory, Yeats says,

> One always understood by something in his selection of line and colour that he had read his Homer and his Virgil and his Dante: that they, while giving something of themselves, had freed him from easy tragedy and trivial comedy.

Gregory's many gifts sometimes scattered his attention, but says Yeats, he never "lost intensity" "he was never the amateur."[74]

During the last period of his career, from 1921 to his death in January of 1939, Yeats wrote no published works of art criticism in his own name. In 1924 the essay "To All Artists and Writers" appeared, and in 1921 he had written a letter about art to Yone Nognchi in Japan. During this time, however, he was working on A Vision, Section V, which is a survey of art history. This section is dated 1925, so that it is evident that the subject of visual arts was never far from his mind, for A Vision was completely revised in 1937. The great works of art of this period drew, of course, upon all his previous life-experience, with an increased emphasis on the Greek, the Byzantine, and The Old Masters, no doubt as the effect of his European travels and his Vision-inspired review of the "cycles" of art history.[75]

The note on Gregory is Yeats's last publication which has primarily to do with the plastic arts. But in 1921 he wrote a letter to Yone Noguchi, a Japanese poet, who had sent him a book of Hiroshige. Yeats says

> I take more and more pleasure from oriental art, find more and more that it accords with what I aim at in my own work. European painting of the last two or three hundred years, grows strange to me as I grow older, begins to speak as with a foreign tongue. When a Japanese, or Mogul, or Chinese painter seems to say "Have I not drawn a beautiful scene?" one agrees at once, but when a modern European painter says so one does not agree so quickly, if at all. All your painters are simple, like the writers of Scottish ballads or the inventors of Irish stories, but one feels that Orpen and John have relations in the patent office who are conscious of being at the forefront of time . . . I would be simple myself but I do not know how. I am always turning over pages like those you have sent me, hoping that in old age I may discover how . . . A form of beauty scarcely lasts a generation with us, but it lasts with you for centuries. You no more want to change it than a pious man wants to change the Lord's prayer or the Crucifix on the wall--at least not unless we have infected you with our egotism.
>
> I wish I had found my way to your country a year or so ago and were still there, for my own remains uncomfortable as I dreaded that it would.[76]

Finally, in August of 1924, an article entitled, "To All Artists and Writers" was published over the signatures Stuart and Salkell. It has, however, been attributed to Yeats by Richard Ellman, an attribution confirmed by Mrs. Yeats.

> We are Catholics, but of the school of Pope Julius the Second and of the Medician Popes, who ordered Michaelangelo and Raphael to paint upon the walls of the Vatican, and upon the ceiling of the Sistine

> Chapel, the doctrine of the Platonic Academy of Florence, the reconciliation of Galilee and Parnassus. We proclaim Michaelangelo the most orthodox of men, because he set upon the tomb of the Medici "Dawn" and "Night," vast forms shadowing the strength of anti-deluvian (sic) Patriarchs and the lust of the goat, the whole handiwork of God, even the abounding horn.
>
> We proclaim that we can forgive the sinner, but abhor the atheist, and that we count amoung atheists bad writers and Bishops of all denominations.
>
> . . . We condemn the art and literature of modern Europe. No man can create, as did Shakespeare, Homer, Sophocles, who does not believe, with all his blood and nerve, that man's soul is immortal, for the evidence lies plain to all men that where belief has declined, men have turned from creation to photography. We condemn, though not without sympathy, those who would escape from banal mechanism through technical investigation and experiment. We proclaim that these bring no escape, for new form comes from new subject matter, and new subject matter must flow from the human soul restored to all its courage, to all its audacity.[77]

Although it is not ostensibly a work of art criticism, I am including A Vision, Section V in my survey. "Dove or Swan" because it represents Yeats's final statement of his attempt to analyze historical changes in the arts--the basis of "that mysterious tendency in things which will have its end someday"--and perhaps to predict those changes. To that end, Yeats applies the phases of his great wheel to the history of art, beginning with Greece. In that civilization, he sees the "struggle to keep self-control"[78] as played between the opposites of the Ionic (Eastern) and Doric (Western) styles, with Phidias representing the mid-phase of their equilibrium, Callimachus the archaic reaction at its end. "Each age unwinds the thread another age has wound,"[79]

says Yeats, recounting events of both history and philosophy, but always illustrating with examples from the arts. The "Antithetical" or "Subjective" Greek Nation was followed by the "Primary" or "Objective" civilization of Rome, then by Yeats's true Golden Age, Byzantium. His summary of the contrasts of these societies is a description of the varying treatment of the eyes in their statues:

> When I think of Rome I see always those heads with their world-considering eyes, and those bodies as conventional as the metaphors in a leading article, and compare in my imagination vague Grecian eyes gazing at nothing, Byzantine eyes of drilled ivory staring upon a vision, and those eyelids of China and of India, those veiled or half-veiled eyes weary of the world and vision alike.[80]

Yeats's admiration for Byzantium turns upon his belief that the civilization expressed the true antithetical, but more specifically that it possessed the cultural unity his own age lacked. Watts's career and perhaps Yeats's own would have been quite different in the age of Justinian.

> I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic, and practical life were one, that architects and artificers--though not, it may be, poets, for language had been the instrument of controversy and must have grown abstract--spoke to the multitude and the few alike. The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books, were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject-matter, and that the vision of a whole people.[81]

Yeats goes on to trace a similar pattern of development between Eastern and Western influences in Byzantine art to that he had noted in the Ionic and Doric in Greece. On the one hand the "antithetical"--"Graeco-Roman" and "Graeco-Egyptian" with "character delineation exaggerated as in much work of our time"--and on the other "primary"--"that decoration which seems to undermine our self-control, and is, it seems, of a Persian origin."[82] Byzantium has now entirely replaced the Medieval Age as the ideal past for Yeats. He refers to Gothic architecture as "all that dark geometry that makes Byzantium seem a sunlit cloud."[83]

Beginning in 1300, the art of painting begins to dom-dominate the previously more important sculpture, architecture and mosaic, and Yeats speculates on the effect of a change in medium on the character of the art produced--"is it just that one Image itself, encouraged by the new technical method, the flexible brush-stroke instead of the unchanging cube of glass, and wearied of its part in a crowded ghostly dance, longs for a solitary human body?"[84] This interest in the body begins with Giotto and Fra Angelico, says Yeats, and is fully expressed by the "naturalism that begins to weary us a little" of Masaccio. In sculpture, the pupil of the eye changes again, becoming blurred and shallower, so that the statute must "look upward with an eye that seems dim and abashed as though to recognize duties to Heaven."[85]

Yeats's wheel is now approaching "phase 15 of the Italian Renaissance," with Jacopo della Quercia, and then Raphael, "Ionic and Asiatic" in style; and Donatello, then Michelangelo, forecasting with their "hardness and astringency" (Doric, by implication) the age following the renaissance. More typical of the phase itself are Botticelli, Crivelli, Mantegna and Leonardo, who "make Masaccio and his school seem heavy and common by something we may call intellectual beauty or compare perhaps to that kind of bodily beauty which Castiglione called "the spoil or monument of the victory of the soul." Yeats reminds his reader that the 15th Phase is always supernatural, and thus can never find direct human expression. The result of this is that the art that expresses this phase will be characterized by "an element of strain and artifice, a desire to combine elements which may be incompatible, or which suggest by their combination something supernatural." In these artists one sees, he says, "an emotion of mystery which is new to painting." At the end of this phase--Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian--"the forms, as in Titian, awaken sexual desire--we had not desired to touch the forms of Botticelli or even of da Vinci--or they threaten us like those of Michelangelo, and the painter himself handles his brush with a conscious facility or exultation."[86] In these artists, to whom Yeats adds Rabelais, Aretino and Shakespeare, and especially in Michelangelo and Shakespeare, "human personality, hitherto restrained by its

dependence upon Christendom or by its own need for self-control, burst like a shell."[87] As the Renaissance ends, Milton makes "an attempted return to the synthesis of the Camera della Segnatura and the Sistine Chapel," but it is too late, and the synthesis remains artificial. In art, "what had been a beauty like the burning sun fades out in Van Dyke's noble ineffectual faces" and the "picturesque" of the Low Countries.[88]

The following phases (19, 20, and 21) begin with 1650 and last until about 1875, bringing in the longing to be "cured of desire" that expresses itself in "the arbitrary and accidental--the grotesque, the repulsive and the terrible."[89] Religion expresses itself in many sects that disturb ritual and produce "all that has its very image and idol in Bernini's big Altar in St. Peter's with its figures contorted and convulsed by religion as though by the devil."[90] The art of this time that is not simple realism is a fading echo of the Renaissance. But at last a new theme begins:

> A mysterious contact is perceptible first in painting and then in poetry and last in prose. . . . I do not find it in Watteau, but there is a preparation for it, a sense of exhaustion of old interests--"they do not believe even in their own happiness," Verlaine said--and then suddenly it is present in the faces of Gainsborough's women as it has been in no face since the Egyptian sculptor buried in a tomb that image of a princess carved in wood.[91]

Reynolds does not show it, but in the other artists of the time, "the Soul awakes . . . and looks out upon us wise and foolish like the dawn."[92] This spirit finds its best expression in poetry, "for it is a quality of the emotional nature." It "creates all that is most beautiful in Modern English poetry from Blake to Arnold"[93]--and, he says, also the Symbolist writers.

In painting, says Yeats, this modern spiritual impulse shows in work that is "archaistic": what the "popular writers" call "decadent".

> I think of the French painter Ricard, to whom it was more a vision of the mind that a research, for he would say to his sitter, "You are so fortunate as to resemble your picture," and of Charles Ricketts, my education in so many things. How often his imagination moves stiffly as though in fancy dress, and then there is something--Spinx, Danaides--that makes me remember Callimachus' return to Ionic elaboration and shudder as though I stared into an abyss full of eagles.[94]

This "vision, or rather this contact" coexists with the major thrust of the contemporary (1875-1925) toward "abstraction." The works it produces contrast with those that portray

> synthesis for its own sake, organizations where there is no masterful director, books where the author has disappeared, painting where some accomplished brush paints with equal pleasure or with a bored impartiality, the human form or an old bottle, dirty weather and clean sunshine.[95]

Because abstraction has carried science to its limits, says Yeats, men are again, "for the first time since the

seventeenth century," able to "see the world as an object of contemplation, not as something to be remade."[96]

The range in Yeats's life covered by these essays make them difficult to summarize. Changes in emphasis, of course, occur often, and as often later reverse themselves. Throughout his career, however, Yeats's esthetic theorizing tended to emphasize the artistic process--he was interested in how a work of art came to be, rather than in attempting to define its nature. When they do occur, his remarks in definition usually emphasize the emotive power of the work of art. In a 1913 letter to his father, he said, "All our art is but the putting of our faith and evidence of our faith into words or forms, and our faith is in ecstasy."[97] An extreme example is the proclamation, "All art is a dream. . . . . in the end all is in the wine cup, all is in the drunken fantasy. . . ."[98] "Emotion is the basis of what he calls "life" in the arts: "Art, in its highest moments, is not a deliberate creation, but the creation of intense feeling, of pure life."[99] This theorizing does not distinguish between poetry, painting, and music--"All the arts . . . are alike in this, that they are a moment of intense life. . . ."[100]

In fact, there is a vital cycle involved; the work of art portrays an emotion, and also evokes one in the viewer. "Poetry and sculpture exist to keep our passions alive."[102] In 1900, "The Symbolism of Poetry" had tried to describe the relationship between physical phenomena and man's feelings, saying that

> All sense experiences call down among us certain disembodied powers whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions, and when sound and colour and form are in a musical relation, a beautiful relation to one another, they become as it were one sound, one colour, one form, and evoke an emotion that is made out of their distinct evocations and yet is one emotion. This is the interaction that forms the work of art, and the more perfect it is, the more varied and numerous the elements that have flowed into its perfection, the more powerful will be the emotion, the power, the god it calls among us.[103]

We must then, according to Yeats, acknowledge some other power to be active in the creation of art beyond the will of the individual artist. Yeats begins his discussion of the character of the artist in "The Two Kinds of Asceticism" by stating,

> It is not possible to separate an emotion or a spiritual state from the image that calls it up and gives it expression. Michaelangelo's "Moses," Velasquez' "Phillip The Second," the colour purple, a crucifix, call into life an emotion or state that vanishes with them because they are its only possible expression, and that is why no mind is more valuable than the images it contains.[104]

Yeats, like Blake, thought that a symbol was something that existed "really and unchangeably." An entry in The Journal speculates

> If symbolic vision is then but thought completing itself, and if, as we must now think, its seat is but the physical nature, and if thought has indeed been photographed, is symbolic thought, as all thought, a reality in itself going ints appointed course when impulses are given in heaven or earth, moving when we do, a mid-world between the two realities, a region of correspondences, the activities of the daimons?[105]

The answer to this typically Yeatsian question is pretty clearly "yes." As he has previously said, "An emotion produces a symbol--sensual emotion dreams of water, for instance--just as a symbol produces emotion. The symbol is, however, perhaps more powerful than an emotion without symbol."[106] Yeats's experiments with hermetic symbols further convinced him that "it was the symbol that produced the effect."[107] Dream images, too, are of the same nature: they reflect what he calls "elementary" moods--"fear, grief, and desire"--moods that are modified, however, by the individual mind. He notes that the effect of illness is to transfer the invalid's discomfort to the images, so that "when we are ill, we often see deformed images."[108] Thus symbols can be altered, but not fundamentally changed: one recalls that Yeats attributed the distortion and obscenity of Beardsley's later work to the effect of tuberculosis. Besides these "elementary moods" and the inhibitory effects of illness or circumstance upon their expression. Yeats also distinguishes moods that have a relationship to cultural tradition. He praises Gregory and other artists whom he calls "poetical" because they "share certain moods with lyric poetry" or have "moods, unlike those of men with more objective curiosity, [that] are part of the traditional expression of the soul." It is the use of this "traditional" emotion that distinguishes the art Yeats most admires, and which he refers to as "poetical" or "tragic"--about which

he has said that it causes "that strange sensation as though the hair of one's head stood up."[109]

> There is an art of the flood, the art of Titian when his "Ariosto," and his Bacchus and Ariadne, give new images to the dreams of youth, and of Shakespeare when he shows us Hamlet broken away from life by the passionate hesitations of his reverie. And we call this art poetical, because we must bring more to it than our daily mood if we would take our pleasure; and because it takes delight in the moment of exaltation, of excitement, of dreaming (or in the capacity for it, as in that still face of Ariosto's that is like some vessel soon to be full of wine). And there is an art that we call real, because character can only express itself perfectly in a real world, being that world's creature, and because we understand it best through a delicate discrimination of the senses which is but entire wakefulness, the daily mood grown clear and cyrstalline.[110]

In order to produce this sort of art, the artist consciously modifies his images with

> devices to exclude or lessen character, and diminish the power of that daily mood, to cheat or blind its too-clear perception . . . if we are painters we shall express personal through ideal form, a symbolism handled by generations, a mask from whose eyes the disembodied looks, a style that remembers many masters that it may escape contemporary suggestion; or we shall leave out some element of reality as in Byzantine painting where there is no mass, nothing in relief. . . .[111]

But it is always a misunderstanding of Yeats to emphasize the importance of the artist's conscious intention. As he has said in "The Symbolism of Poetry," art always involves a degree of trance:

> In the making and in the understanding of a work of art . . . we are lulled to the threshold of sleep, and it may be far beyond it, without knowing . . . .[112]

The degree of involvement in "vision" is the determinant of the artists' style, and so Yeats seems to imply, of his "greatness."[113] His contrast of Whistler, Beardsley, and Gyles with Burne-Jones, Ricketts, and Degas in "A Symbolic Artist" turns upon the emphasis of "vision" in the first three and "reality" in the last three. In the 1897 essay he first quotes Blake's pronouncement that the great masters have been "granted by divine favor a 'vision of the unfallen world,'" and then goes on to summarize in his own words Blake's distinction between "True" and "False" art on the basis of whether it is "symbolic" or "Mimetic."[114] As we have seen, Yeats made a similar dichotomy between "poetical" art, which emphasized "dreaming," and "real" which portrayed "wakefulness." The "aesthetic" poet, he said in the Watts lecture, was like a priest expressing, not himself, but the ritual of his religion.

It would also be a misunderstanding of Yeats's intention, however, to assume that he did not consider the question of the truth to human experience of a work of art. In 1927, he wrote to Moore, saying, "As you know all my art theories depend upon just this--rooting of mythology in the earth."[115] What Yeats objected to was not reality, but realism: the sort of versimilitude which emphasized the

purely local and contemporary. In Discoveries, 1906, he says,

> The end of art is the ecstasy awakened by the presence before an ever-changing mind of what is permanent in the world, or by the arousing of that mind itself into the very delicate and fastidious mood habitual with it when it is seeking those permanent and recurring things.[116]

Nor does his emphasis on the importance of symbolism imply a lack of interest in artistic technique. Indeed, he criticizes his protégé Horton for attempting to reproduce his "visions" without proper attention to composition, and calls Blake "a too-literal realist of the imagination" because he does not admit the importance of coloring. Bad draftsmanship always annoyed him--he even returned Moore's first design for a book-plate for Anne because he thought the figure "out of drawing." Yeats was not truly blind to the faults of his protégés--only myopic.

To Yeats, the work of art was the product of several forces, none of which was either totally dominant or entirely expendable. These forces were four in number, like the "Faculties" of A Vision, though he himself does not make the comparison. Primary among them is the "vision," which seeks to express an unembodied emotion in physical form; but also of importance are the "logical energies of art", which help to control the exact shape of that form; the "cultural tradition" which influences the artist's choice of a subject (the correspondent among the world's images of

the emotion--to borrow Eliot's term, its "objective correlative") and the style he chooses for its portrayal; and finally the personality of the artist, which is important largely in the degree to which it will allow the other forces to work through it, but paradoxically the determinant of the actual work produced. At times Yeats seems to regard the work of art as autonomous, saying, in Discoveries, for instance, that "We can deliberately refashion our characters, but not our painting or our poetry." "If our characters also were not unconsciously refashioned so completely by the unfolding of the logical energies of art, that even simple things have in the end a new aspect in our eyes, the Arts would not be among those things that return forever."[117] He also implies that the development of a work of art is in obedience to "the logical energies of art," and that it has more effect upon the artist than the artist has upon it; nonetheless the quality of the work produced has much to do with the character of the artist. In the 1905 Samhain, Yeats says,

> All art is founded upon personal vision, and the greater the art the more surprising the vision; and all bad art is founded upon impersonal types and images, accepted by the average men and women out of imaginative poverty and timidity, or the exhaustion that comes from labor.[118]

He also relates an anecdote from his own experience as an art student.

> I remember when I was an art student at the Metropolitan School of Art a good many years ago, saying to Mr. Hughes the sculptor, as we looked at the work of our fellow students, "Every student here that is doing better work than another is doing it because he has a more intrepid imagination; one has only to look at the line of a drawing to see that"; and he said that was his own thought also.[119]

Years later, in the preface to Letters to a New Island, Yeats repeats the story: "I remember saying as a boy to some fellow student in the Dublin art schools, 'the difference between a good draftsman and a bad is one of courage."[120] But he is also likely to state quite an opposite view, as he does in the Blake essay:

> Dante treads his eternal pilgrimage, as if any poet or painter or musician could be other than an enchanter calling with a persuasive or compelling ritual, creatures noble or ignoble, divine or daemonic, covered with scales or in shining rainment, that he never imagined, out of the bottomless deeps of imagination he never foresaw; as if the noblest achievement of art was not when the artist enfolds himself in darkness, while he casts over his readers a light as of a dark and terrible dawn.[121]

The contrast--or, one should more properly say, conflict--is very clearly evident in the essay on Watts, which declares on the one hand that

> The greatest joy that ever came to the artist--the highest element in his creative joy--was to contemplate his own personality, enlarging itself, completing itself with the mirror of his writings and of his paintings.[122]

And on the other hand that "nature" must be permitted to "do all"; the artist must practice not "self-control" but

"self-surrender." The essay does, however, imply a judgment. Yeats feels that it would have been better had the world continued to produce viable myths and symbols, so that the artist would not be forced to rely solely upon his own invention; failing that, there is a consolation--"Individuality stood out in stronger relief, and painters as well as poets had all learned to sing the song of themselves--the song of their own souls, more gladly, more confidently than ever before."[123] But it is a consolation only, for something more important that has been lost.

These opposing views approach reconciliation in passages in Per Amica Silentia Lunae, 1917. The universal creative force (which Yeats has described in the foregoing essays as "nature" or "vision" expresses itself in a "symbol" ("Mask") that the poet discovers and converts into a work of art ("Mask"). The process is basically the same for Yeats's three types of men--the hero, the saint, and the poet (or artist, by the usual extension)--but their attitudes toward the integrity of the Mask differ:

> I thought the hero found hanging upon some oak of Dodona, an ancient mask, where perhaps there lingered something of Egypt, and he changed it to his fancy, touching it a little here and there, gilding the eyebrows or putting a gilt line where the cheekboke comes; that when at last he looked out of its eyes he knew another's breath came and went within his breath upon the carven lips, and that his eyes were upon the instant fixed upon a visionary world. How else could the god have come to us in the forest?[124]

Here I think the "oak of Dodona" may be seen as referring to human ritual tradition, as in The Golden Bough, and it is obvious from Yeats's other writing that "Egypt" refers to the physical world.[125] When the hero retouches the design of the mask, he is suiting it to his age, as Napoleon might imitate Alexander. Here the poet and the hero contrast with the saint, who will assume the mask as it is, subjugating his whole self to the other ("the imitation of Christ").

The hero and the poet, on the other hand, are creative ("so teeming their fancy") and attempt to alter their masks. The saint is said to have 'found" his; in the poet and the hero, the mask is both "found" and "made." The mask as it is represents the man's opposite: "Because the ghost is simple, the man heterogenous and confused, they are but knit together when the man has found a mask whose lineaments permit the expression of all the man most lacks, and it may be dreads, and of that only."[126] For the poet or artist, the temptation to alter the mask (to seek "originality" rather than to express "nature") is a dangerous one:

> It is not permitted to a man, who takes up pen or chisel, to seek originality, for passion is his only business, and he cannot but mould or sing after a new fashion because no disaster is like another . . . If when we have found a mask we fancy it will not match our mood till we have touched with gold the cheek, we do it furtively, and only where the oaks of Dodona cast their deepest shadow, for could he see our handiwork the Daemon would fling himself out, being our enemy.[127]

The "daemon" is the man's "enemy" because it is his opposite: eternal, whereas he is mortal.

Perhaps we may take as a final word on the character of the artist a passage from Pages from a Diary Written in 1937. Yeats, contemplating Augustus John's latest portrait of him, noting there the marks of age and of "faults I have long dreaded," consoles himself: ". . . but then my character is so little myself that all my life it has thwarted me. It has affected my poems, my true self, no more than the character of a dancer affects the movement of the dance."[128]

All creation is from conflict, says A Vision, but there is still another force involved in the conflict that generates the work of art, beyond that of the artist himself and of his "daemon," dream, or symbolic vision. Yeats also saw the subject of a work as having control over its own presentation--as being, in fact, the primary determinant of the style used to present it. Thus Yeats always insisted upon the importance of the freedom of the artist to choose his subject. Intrinsically, no subject has an advantage over any other, for "the subject of all art is passion, and a passion can only be contemplated when separated by itself, purified of all but itself, and aroused to a perfect intensity by opposition with some other passion. . . ."[129] The artist must be guided by his passions in the selection of a subject, and by nothing else. He must use "instinct," not "intelligence"; find the subject that "moves" him, and ignore "reason."

> We must not ask is the world interested in this or that, for nothing is in question but our own interest, and we can understand no other.[130]

Yeats's analysis of his travail of forces always tends to discout or lessen the importance of subject, however. In fact, an emphasis upon subject is to some degree opposed to his favored "Symbolic" style. In 1898, in "A Symbolic Artist," he had written "subject pictures no longer interest us, while pictures with patterns and rhythms of colour, like Mr. Whistler's, and drawings with patterns and rhythms of line, like Mr. Beardsley's in his middle period, interest us extremely." Nonetheless, subject cannot be overlooked. Its major importance, according to Yeats, is stylistic. The writer must choose the new (to him) and meaningful in order to get the full effect of escape from "conventional expression." In "To all Artists and Writers," 1924, Yeats condemns "those who would escape from banal mechanism through technical investigation and experiment," for "new form comes from new subject matter, and new subject matter must flow from the human soul restored to all its courage, to all its audacity."[131] Of his own work, he says, "my style has been shaped by the subjects I have worked on. . . ."[132] In "Ireland and the Arts," he had observed, "Even the landscape painter, who paints a place that he souls, and that no other man has painted, soon discovers that no style learned in the studios is wholly fitted to his purpose."[133]

The other shaping forces in the development of an artist's style are the cultural tradition of his society and the "logical energies of art." The latter term Yeats never discusses at length, but it seems to be involved both in his distinctions between the arts and his idea of the historical cycles in style. The extreme of a type of expression having been reached, an oscillation takes place so that its opposite comes into fashion, and the periods can be historically observed, as in the Doric and Ionic styles in Greece. The individual human mind moves in the same manner, as Yeats has said in his comments on modern art, producing variations in the style of the same artist. Because "one mind can never do the same thing twice over" and, "having exhausted simply meaning and beauty, it passes to the strange and hidden, and at last must find its delight . . . having outrun its harmonies, . . . in the emphatic and discordant,"[134] modern art has assumed its character. But he also sees, as he has pointed out in "The Tragic Theatre," a "logic" within each art, which requires that the subject and style be suitable to the individual medium--poetry, for instance, conveys changing emotions more readily than does painting.

For although Yeats may have proclaimed, "the arts are one," he did note differences between them. In 1898, he criticized A. E.'s attempt to portray the synesthetic nature of vision in painting. Poetry would have been a

better medium, he says, because "poetry changes with the changing of the dream." All the arts have the same basic nature, but they differ in what they can portray best, due to their difference in emphasis on one sense above the other. In the 1904 Samhain, Yeats observed that all the arts are "a moment of intense life," but that "the dramatist must picture life in action. . . . as the musician pictures it in sound and the sculptor in form."[135]

When Yeats says that all the arts are "fundamentally one art," and that "what was true of one art was, if properly understood, true of them all,"[136] he seems to be speaking of the genesis and growth in the artist's mind of the work of art, not of standards of evaluation of the art work, or of methods of the different media, except in so far as all are "mirrors" of the artist's self. When he says he will try to "apply to painting certain fundamental principles which he had found true of poetry,"[137] he is discussing the difference between "popular" and "aesthetic" poetry, which he likens to "subject" and "emotional" painting. This likeness in general style is the same sort of thing that Yeats refers to in "A Symbolic Artist," when he says that the "new manner" can be seen in all the arts, "for they have gone through the same change, though in different forms."[138]

Here there is certainly a judgment implied, as there is in his distinction between "real" and "tragic" art ("The Tragic Theatre"), but "greatness" reamains a matter of style,

not genre. The artist must appreciate the peculiar capabilities of his particular medium, and exploit them to the fullest. In "The Tragic Theatre," Yeats explains why a stage set should avoid "realism", and should concentrate instead upon effects of light and shadow, "in obedience to a logic which has been displayed in the historical development of all the other arts. . . ." The "elements" to which Yeats refers in that essay are in part what might be referred to as "medium"--tragic drama must be carved out of speech as a statue is out of stone"--but, more than that, to the portion it portrays of a narrative situation"--in "old tragic paintings," the faces reflect "sadness and gravity, a certain emptiness even, as of a mind that waited the supreme crisis (and indeed it seems at times as if the graphic art, unlike poetry which sings the crisis itself, were the celebration of waiting)." The different arts may tell the same story, or convey a similar mood, and those which do so have special appeal for the "man of letters."[139]

The "cultural tradition" establishes a preference for certain subjects. The subjects affect the style of the art, and thus the exact nature of the opposites. As an effect of both these forces, the life of an artistic convention is cyclical: "Our love letters wear out our love; no school of painting outlasts the impulse, pre-Raphaelitism had some twenty years; Impressionism Thirty perhaps." The idea is expressed succinctly in On the Boiler:

> No man can do the same thing twice if he has to put much mind into it, as every painter knows. Just when one school of painting has become popular, reproductions in every printshop window, millionnaires outbidding one another, everybody's affection stirred, painters wear out their nerves establishing something else, and this something else must be the other side of the penny, for Heraclitus was in the right. Opposites are everywhere face to face, dying each other's life, living each other's death.
>
> Our present civilization began about the first Crusade, reached its mid-point in the Italian Renaissance . . . Titian was painting great figures of the old, simple generations, a little later can Vandyke and his sensitive fashionable faces where the impulses of life was fading.[140]

The particular time-phase at which it was written is likely to be one chief determinant of the style of an individual work of art, but Yeats thinks that the artist should try to control and modify that dominance. In 1916 he wrote approvingly that ". . . the painting of Japan, not having our European Moon to churn its wits, has understood that no styles that ever delighted noble imaginations have lost their importance and chooses the style according to the subject."[141]

Style, in fact, is the most important element of a work of art: "All our art is but the putting of our faith . . . into words and pictures."[142] In a well-known exchange of letters, Yeats and his father discussed the importance of "imitation" in art. Yeats contended that art does not imitate, but "often uses the outer world as a symbolism to express subjective moods. The greater the subjectivity, the less the imitation." The way to emphasize the subjective

is through style: "the element of pattern in every art is, I think, the part that is not imitative, for in the last analysis there will always be somewhere an intensity of patterns that we have never seen with our eyes."[143] Or, as he says in "The Tragic Theatre," great art excludes some elements of reality, and introduces in their places

> rhythm, balance, pattern, images that remind us of vast passions, the vagueness of past times, all the chimaeras that haunt the edge of trance; and if we are painters, we shall express personal though ideal form, a symbolism handled by generations, a mask from whom eyes the disembodied looks, a style that remembers many masters that it may escape contemporary suggestion.[144]

The effect is to produce that "strange sensation as though the hair of one's head stood up" whereby, says Yeats, we may recognize truly great art. Because his interest in the visual arts was indeed life-long, and because he attempted to develop his own art by the creation-through-conflict theory set forth in A Vision, Yeats's esthetic theories change a great deal in the course of his career, as we have seen. The influence upon those changes of the artists and critics he admired will be the subject of the following chapters. Their works were the subject of his speculation, and their thought often its inspiration as well. I have followed Yeats's own analysis of his career as he discusses it in "Art and Ideas": the early period of his writing was dominated by the Pre-Raphaelites, the middle by the Aesthetes, and the final years by the group he thought of as

latter-day Pre-Raphaelites. There is a corresponding change in the frequency of reference to the visual arts in his writing, with the verses of the middle period using far fewer than do either the early or late poems.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1] Letters, p. 504.

[2] Vision, p. 279.

[3] Edward Engelberg, The Vast Design: Patterns in W. B. Yeats's Aesthetic (University of Toronto Press, 1964).

[4] Engelberg, p. xxii.

[5] It is helpful to note that Yeats said of Horton that he "copies" his visions "in his drawings as if they were models posed for him by some unearthly master" (Horton Intro., p. 14).

[6] Rothenstein, p. 40.

[7] Essays, p. 250.

[8] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 182.

[9] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 183.

[10] Essays, p. 145.

[11] Essays, p. 146.

[12] Essays, p. 149.

[13] Samuel Palmer, quoted in Essays, p. 151.

[14] Essays, p. 152.

[15] Essays, p. 153.

[16] Essays, p. 156 - 57.

[17] Essays, p. 174 - 75.

[18] Yeats was either unaware of, or chose to ïgnore, Blake's debt to Flaxman's illustrations for Dante.

[19] Essays, p. 20.

[20] Essays, p. 177.

[21] Essays, p. 178.

[22] This essay was first published in The Dome, December, 1898, and is reproduced in Memoirs, Appendix B, pp. 283 - 286.

[23] Memoirs, p. 283.

[24] Memoirs, p. 284.

[25] Memoirs, p. 285.

[26] Memoirs, p. 284.

[27] Memoirs, p. 284.

[28] Memoirs, p. 286.

[29] A review of The Earth Breath and Other Poems, which originally appeared in The Sketch (April 6, 1898.

[30] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 30.

[31] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 30.

[32] Probably this painter is Herrmann, but Yeats does not name him.

[33] W. B. Yeats, "Introduction," A Book of Images, Drawn by W. T. Horton, Introduced by W. B. Yeats, and Published at the Unicorn Press, London, 1898, p. 7.

[34] Introduction to Horton, p. 8.

[35] Introduction to Horton, p. 9.

[36] Introduction to Horton, p. 9.

[37] Introduction to Horton, p. 9.

[38] Introduction to Horton, p. 10. Here Yeats is trying to defend what is probably an indefensible point. He wants "symbol" to be "traditional" without being "allegorical."

[39] Introduction to Horton, p. 11.

[40] Introduction to Horton, p. 12.

[41] Introduction to Horton , p. 12.

[42] No doubt it was this essay that initiated some of the ideas Yeats developed in the "Symbolism of Poetry"; in the meantime, however, Arthur Symon's The Symbolist Movement in Literature had been published with a dedication to Yeats. Like this book, Yeats's essay deals primarily with literature. The example he uses are literary ones, but some of the theories might well apply to art as well. His remarks about the nature of symbolism can be illuminating, as when he refers to "the element of evocation, of suggestion, upon what we call the symbolism of great writers," (Essays, 191) and "the continuous indefinable symbolism which is the substance of all style" (191). It is also helpful to note that the elements of a symbolic line of poetry bear "a relationship too subtle for the intellect," but "when all are together . . . they evoke an emotion which cannot be evoked by any other arrangement of colours and sounds and forms" (191).

> All sounds, all colours, all forms, either because of their pre-ordained energies or because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet precise emotions; and when sound, and colour, and form are in a musical relation, a beautiful relation to one another, they become as it were one sound, one colour, one form, and evoke an emotion that is made out of three distinct evocations and yet is one emotion. (Essays, 191 - 3)

Yeats describes the thing evoked--"the emotion, the power, the god"--as itself a creative principle

> Because an emotion does not exist, or does not become perceptible and active among us, till it has found its expression in colour or in sound or in forms, or in all three of these, as because no two modulations of these evoke the same emotion, poets and painters and musicians, and to a less degree because their effects are momentary, day and night and cloud and shadow, are continually making and unmaking mankind. (Essays, 193)

This principle, in fact, is one of the guiding forces of worldly events. "All forces in human history would have been a little different if some mind long ago had not given itself to some emotion, as a woman gives herself to her lover, and shaped sounds or colours or forms, or all of these, into a musical relation, that their emotion might live in other minds." (Essays, 194) It is in this essay,

also that Yeats identifies the aesthetic condition as trance: "I think that in the making and in the understanding of a work of art, and the more easily if it is full of patterns and symbols and music, we are lured to the threshold of sleep, and it may be far beyond it, without knowing that we have ever set our feet upon the steps of horn or ivory." (Essays, 197) He says that "rhythm" "liberates" the mind from the "pressure of will," so that it can "unfold in symbols"--its natural speech. (199) Symbols are of two kinds: "intellectual" and "emotional". The latter evoke emotions alone, or ideas mingled with emotions," and are the only kind recognized as symbols outside of the traditions of "mysticism" and "certain modern poets." (197) The example Yeats uses is colour names: These "evoke emotions so exclusively that I cannot say why they move me; but if I bring them into the same sentence with such obvious intellectual symbols as a cross or a crown of thorns, I think of purity and sovereignty." (Essays, 196)

In an interview quoted in W. B. Yeats: Interviews and Recollections (ed. E. H. Mikhail, London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 9, Yeats said "There is symbolism in every work of art. A work of art moves us because it expresses or symbolizes something in ourselves or in the surrounding life of man."

[43] Introduction to Horton, p. 13.

[44] Introduction to Horton, p. 14.

[45] Introduction to Horton, p. 16.

[46] Introduction to Horton, p. 15.

[47] Introduction to Horton, p. 16.

[48] These years 1900-1929--cover his loss of Maud Gonne, his proposal to her step-daughter Iseult, his marriage to Georgia Hyde-Lees, and the birth of his daughter, Anne. During this time he made several American tours and visits to Paris, and in 1919 regretfully turned down an invitation to tour Japan. The founding of the Irish National Theatre brought A. E. back into close association, as one of the directors--the Dun Emer Press was begun and The Abbey Theatre opened. By 1906 Yeats had published Cathleen Houlihan, In the Seven Woods, Ideas of Good and Evil, and had rewritten The Shadowy Waters for production at the Abbey. In 1906, he published Poems: 1899-1905, and delivered the lecture on Watts, "The Ideal in Art." In 1907 the Playboy riots began, Yeats toured Italy with Lady Gregory and her artist son, Robert, and his father sailed for America. In 1908

the eight-volume Collected Edition came out, for which Yeats revised the corpus of his work. In 1910, Yeats published The Green Helmet and Other Poems, and the essay "The Tragic Theatre," in 1911, Plays for an Irish Theatre; in 1912, The Cutting of an Agate; and in 1913, Poems Written in Discouragement. It was obviously a period of great upheaval for him; also in 1913 Mabel Beardsley died, and, perhaps Yeats felt, along with her his youth. In 1914 he published Responsibilities. In 1916 the Easter Rising occurred, and Yeats bought Ballylee. In 1917 he married, and wrote The Wild Swans at Coole. In 1918, The Only Jealousy of Emer and "A Note of Appreciation" of Major Robert Gregory were published. In 1920 Michael Roberts and The Dancer came out.

[49] Essays, p. 250.

[50] Essays, p. 251

[51] Essays, p. 254 - 55.

[52] Essays, p. 255.

[53] Essays, p. 255.

[54] Essays, p. 252.

[55] Essays, p. 256.

[56] Essays, p. 258 - 59.

[57] This speech was reported in the Dublin Daily Express, and has been reprinted as "The Watts Pictures," in Uncollected Prose, II, pp. 341 - 45. I have found no record of Yeats's having objected to this report, so I am assuming that it is an accurate reflection of what he said.

[58] In October, 1910, Yeats's essay "The Tragic Theatre" was published in The Mask. This version has been reprinted in Uncollected Prose, II, 385 - 389, and I am referring to it rather than to the version in Plays for an Irish Theatre (1911) and The Cutting of an Agate (1912), because these latter do not include the section about stage scenery.

[59] Uncollected Prose, p. 378.

[60] Although Yeats took an active part in the controversy over the Lane Collection, most of his remarks have to do with the disposition of those paintings, rather than with their artistic merit. A letter to The Daily Express (December 6, 1904), however, calls the Lane Exhibit "the finest collection of modern French painting which has been

seen out of Paris." and protests the short time allowed for the exhibition. This letter ends:

> I myself am for the first time beginning to feel that I understand French art a little. I go almost every day to the Exhibition, and I know of others who will think the closing of the great exhibition a personal misfortune. (reprinted in Yeats, Uncollected Prose, II, 330 - 31).

It was at this exhibition that Yeats saw the Eva Gonzalez, which he credits with having provided his first real insight into modern art.

[61] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 378.

[62] Uncollected Prose, p. 391.

[63] Uncollected Prose, p. 391.

[64] Uncollected Prose, p. 392.

[65] Essays, p. 430.

[66] Essays, p. 432.

[67] Essays, p. 432.

[68] Essays, p. 435.

[69] Essays, p. 437.

[70] Essays, p. 440 - 41.

[71] Essays, p. 272.

[72] Essays, p. 278.

[73] Essays, p. 279.

[74] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 429 - 430. These essays constitute the body of Yeats's writing about art, but there are scattered sections of other works which apply. Of the Essays, both "Bishop Berkeley" and "The Cutting of an Agate" contain passages that discuss painting. In Discoveries, there are several sections: "The Subject Matter of Drama," "The Two Kinds of Asceticism," and "His Mistress Eyebrows." Finally, Section VI of "Other Matter" in On the Boiler discusses the work of artist Diana Murphy.

[75] He had published The Trembling of the Veil, Macmillan's Collected Edition, The Bounty of Sweden, and A

Vision by 1925, and had visited Sicily, Capri, Rome, Milan, Switzerland, and of course, Sweden. From 1926 to 1935 were published Oedipus The King, Oedipus at Colannus, The Tower, Fighting the Waves, The Words Upon the Windowpane, The King of the Great Clock Tower, The Winding Stair, Wheels and Butterflies, The Oxford Book of Modern Verse, A Full Moon in March, and The Herme's Egg. In 1935 the Broadside publications began. In 1937 he published the revised Vision and Essays 1931 - 36. In 1938, the wrote On the Boiler, Purgatory, and The Death of Cuchulain. The period witnessed the deaths of J. B. Yeats and Olivia Shakespeare. Yeats took his last American tour, and moved away from Ballylee to Rapallo, then to Southern France, where he died.

[76] W. B. Yeats, "A Letter to Yone Noguchi," quoted in Shotaro Oshima, W. B. Yeats and Japan (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1965), p. 156.

[77] Uncollected Prose, II, pp. 438 - 39.

[78] A Vision, p. 268.

[79] A Vision, p. 270.

[80] A Vision, p. 277.

[81] A Vision, p. 280.

[82] A Vision, p. 281.

[83] A Vision, p. 287 - 88.

[84] A Vision, p. 289.

[85] A Vision, p. 290.

[86] A Vision, p. 292 - 93.

[87] A Vision, p. 294.

[88] A Vision, p. 295.

[89] A Vision, p. 295.

[90] A Vision, p. 296.

[91] A Vision, p. 297.

[92] A Vision, p. 297 - 98.

[93] A Vision, p. 298.

[94] A Vision, p. 298.

[95] A Vision, p. 300.

[96] A Vision, p. 300.

[97] Letters, p. 700.

[98] Uncollected Prose, p. 353 - 4.

[99] Explorations, p. 152.

[100] Explorations, p. 153 - 4.

[101] Essays, p. 193.

[102] Autobiography, p. 87.

[103] Essays, p. 193.

[104] Essays, p. 354.

[105] W. B. Yeats, Memoirs: Autobiography--First Draft; Journal, Denis Donoghue, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 268.

[106] Memoirs, p. 177.

[107] Autobiography, p. 173.

[108] Memoirs, p. 266.

[109] Uncollected Prose, p. 388.

[110] Uncollected Prose, p. 387 - 88.

[111] Uncollected Prose, p. 388.

[112] Essays, p. 197.

[113] Yeats explanations of "vision" usually involve a degree of mysticism. But in a letter to his father written in 1913, he defines "vision" as "The intense realization of a state of ecstatic emotion symbolized in a definite imagined region." (Letters, p. 700).

[114] Essays, p. 144.

[115] Bridge, p. 114.

[116] Essays, p. 355.

[117] Essays, p. 359.

[118] Explorations, p. 194.

[119] Explorations, p. 193.

[120] Letters to a New Island, p. xiii.

[121] Essays, p. 174.

[122] Uncollected Prose, p. 344.

[123] Uncollected Prose, p. 344 - 5.

[124] Essays, p. 501.

[125] Essays, p. 597.

[126] Essays, p. 501.

[127] Essays, p. 498.

[128] Essays, p. 502.

[129] Essays, p. 503.

[130] Explorations, p. 307.

[131] Explorations, p. 155.

[132] Essays, p. 358.

[133] Essays, p. 257.

[134] Essays, p. 358.

[135] Explorations, p. 153 - 4.

[136] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 343.

[137] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 393.

[138] Memoirs, p. 284.

[139] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 389 - 90.

[140] Memoirs, p. 283.

[141] Essays, p. 357.

[142] Autobiography, p. 210.

[143] Letters, p. 607.

[144] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 388.

CHAPTER III

INFLUENCES UPON THE EARLY VERSE: "BLAKE AND THE PRE-RAPHAELITES"

To the young Yeats, the most important painters other than his father were undoubtedly, in his phrase, "Blake and the Pre-Raphaelites."[1] Actually, however, it was the Pre-Raphaelites who came first and had the most obvious effect on the early poems. In the first draft of his autobiography, Yeats describes himself as one "to whom the studio and the study had been the world."[2] Small wonder, then, that the very early poems are artificial and derivative, borrowing their scenes and content from the young bookworm's experience of books and paintings. He repeats characters and symbols again and again, as if convinced of their importance but unable to please himself with his treatment of them. An instance of this is the shell that appears repeatedly in the Crossways poems, and that was probably inspired by Wordsworth's Prelude, Book V. Most of the other images derive pretty clearly from Pre-Raphaelitism and Art Nouveau, however, as do the scenes, the characters, and in some sense, the

form. Although it is Rossetti whose style dominates these poems, Blake and his "followers" were more influential in the stylistic break between early and mid-career for Yeats. Blake's visual imagery was very important to the young Yeats; nonetheless, it was overshadowed by his importance as an esthetician. Blake's work can be truly characterized as fundamental to Yeats's theory and practice of art; that of Palmer and Calvert, on the other hand, was important in the development of his style and of certain symbols. Taken together with the symbolism he was learning from his hermetic studies, these two groups constitute the background of Yeats's visual imagery in the first poems.

In "Art and Ideas" (1913), Yeats recalls how seeing the Tate Exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite paintings had brought back childhood memories:

> I forgot the art criticism of friends and saw wonderful, sad, happy people moving through the scenery of my dreams. The painting of the hair, the way it was smoothed from its central parting, something in the oval of the peaceful faces, called up memories of sketches of my father's on the margins of the first Shelley I had read, while the strong colours made me half remember studio conversations, words of Wilson, or of Potter, perhaps, praise of the primary colours, heard, it may be, as I sat over my toys or a child's storybook. . . . I had learned to think in the midst of the last phase of Pre-Raphaelitism, and now I come to Pre-Raphaelitism again and rediscovered my earliest thought.[5]

Although Yeats, like most people, refers to the "Pre-Raphaelites" as if to a homogeneous group, the movement had two

quite distinct phases, the latter of which was most important to Yeats's art. Upon its inception, according to Quentin Bell, the theory involved two rather incompatible elements: the Romantic, expressing itself in "a taste for feverishly emphatic gestures and expressions, a rather disquieting oddity of attitude, an angular, overcrowded composition, something which can hardly be called archaistic but which does, I think, originate in archaistic sources"; and the Realistic, deriving from the idea that "art should have something of the exactitude of science."[4] The latter interest was shortlived and never the real direction of the movement, even in its early, or "Hard-edge" phase.

This first group, calling itself "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood," was led by John Millais, Holman Hunt, and Ford Madox Brown, and flourished during the years 1848-1854. Soon the original group attracted a rather troublesome disciple, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who with Ruskin, Burne-Jones, and Morris, quite transformed the movement. These men were only very loosely "Pre-Raphaelite" in subject and style, and not at all "Hard-edge" or Realist in technique. Nonetheless, they <u>were</u> the Pre-Raphaelites to their contemporaries. In the words of Alan Pistorius, who has written a dissertation on Yeats's debt to Rossetti, ". . . the identity of the Pre-Raphaelite tradition as the nineties saw it: Madox Brown, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Watts."[5] They were of the "visionary-symbolic-decorative school,"

rather than the "didactic-minetic school."[6] They placed the emphasis upon pattern, especially the composition-within-a-composition ("the tendency to look through holes"), trying for a "decorative or liturgical" effect (with detail that "seemed to be made deliberately alien to the main design of the picture"), and always "haunted by a female figure."[7]

Yeats's own division of the group was the year 1870; after that, he says, no great Pre-Raphaelite picture was painted. To his mind, the latter work of Rossetti and Burne-Jones began the down-hill slide toward "The Decadence." The later, or Decadent, groups were a development from the Pre-Raphaelites, but different from them in having carried their style to its logical conclusion. The final exponent of the movement appears in Beardsley, "the last and most wayward of Burne-Jones' disciples," in whom, says Bell, "the Art Noveau curve finds its ultimate extension, the Mannerist figure its greatest attitude, the latent sexuality its final audacious expression, the voluptuous religiosity its proper end."[8] Beardsley and his contemporary Conder belong to a "continenal movement" that uses the "international style" that derived from Rossetti ("Art Nouveau"). The basic line was the curve or spiral---the late nineteenth century shows "a preoccupation with curves which break away away from all closed and regular forms" to such an extent that "the term 'curves of beauty' was part of the current

jargon of art."[9] The Art Noveau style used many decorative elements taken from vegetation--flowers, leaves, vines--and certain forms of animal life--exotic birds, undersea creatures, and animals such as panthers and gazelles--as well as the everpresent female with flowing hair and robe.

The Decadence, to Yeats, began with Rossetti himself--the paintings after 1870, when he began to change from "dramatic" to "lyric" painting, from figures from cultural tradition to those which represent instead "forms of beauty." And the next step towards decadence develops in Burne-Jones: Yeats says he was "surprised" to be able to find beauty "even" in the "late" work of Burne-Jones, King Cophetua. Burne-Jones' early work was, in Yeats's words, "indistinguishable from Rossetti," but the later style becomes "decorative." Alan Pistorius, who has written a dissertation on Yeats and Rossetti, says, "In The Golden Stair we see decorative design become the point of a figure painting; this is a step beyond Rossetti. . . ." The unidentified figures have not only no names, but no action or apparent history: "hence the picture's meanings are entirely aesthetic, without moral or emotional significance." A step beyond Burne-Jones, and you have Beardsley, "who will turn a figure into a decorative design."[10] Burne-Jones was certainly the greatest influence upon Beardsley's style, but the perversity which is only mildly disturbing in the earlier artist becomes the essential element of style: "If perversity is a keynote

of the Decandents, Beardsley is the foremost decadent artist."[11] Yeats reacted against this trend, searched for contemporary artists he could admire, and found them in Charles Ricketts, whose work, he said, "prolonged the inspiration of Rossetti,"[12] and in the Symbolists, especially Gyles and Horton, who like the Decadents have connections with Blake, but not such remote ones, and differently developed.

But although he constantly tempered the admiration expressed in his comments, Yeats apparently found some attraction in the works of Burne-Jones throughout his life, for in a 1936 letter, he describes one of the pictures upon his walls as a Burne-Jones charcoal study. It is, he says, "of sirens luring a ship to its doom, the sirens tall, unvoluptuous, faint, vague forms flitting here and there," and contrasts its ascetic quality with the "voluptuous pleasure" of a nearby painting by Shannon.[13] And in 1937, he reports the gift by Ricketts of a "Burne-Jones Window."[14] One of the works he reviewed in the 1890 essay was a design for a Burne-Jones window, saying that although "full of medieval symbolism difficult for modern ignorance to remember and understand," the figures are nonetheless characterized by "that peculiar kind of subtle expression and pensive grace that runs through all Burne-Jones's work." Here too he offers an analysis of the development of Burne-Jones' style from an identity with Rossetti, to his decorative style, which lacks "the intensity and feeling of the earlier work,"

but is "much less crabbed in drawing and crowded in composition."[15] In "Art and Ideas" he uses this later work as an extreme example of the kind of painting he had for years been unable to admire "without shame."[16] Burne-Jones, together with Ricketts, characterizes for Yeats the artist who is unable to achieve real greatness. His discussion of them in "A Symbolic Artist" says that they have been unwilling to let an interest in "symbol" entirely replace that in "life," with the result of the langor and effeminacy, if not the obscenity, of decadence: they "have been too full of the emotion and pathos of life to let its images fade out of their work, but they have so little interest in the common thoughts and emotions of life that their images of life have delicate and languid limbs that could lift no burdens, and souls vaguer than a sigh. . . ."[17] And in the Autobiography he groups the "knights and ladies of Burne-Jones" with the "faint persons" of Morris' romances.[18]

With the group of the "Pre-Raphaelites" he did wholeheartedly admire, Yeats included J. M. W. Turner, whose work symbolized for the young Yeats his artistic conflicts with his contemporaries. Of his experience at the art school on Kildare Street, he says

> I do not believe that I worked well, for I wrote a great deal and that tired me, and the work I was set to tired me. When alone and uninfluenced I longed for pattern, for Pre-Raphaelitism, for an art allied to poetry, and returned again and again to our National Gallery to gaze at Turner's

> Golden Bough. Yet I was too timid, had I known how, to break away from my father's style and the style of those about me.[19]

A less important figure, though of much interest to Yeats, was the artist G. F. Watts, who was, according to Bell, "the most tragic failure of them all,"[20] an artist of great philosophical depth who never found a style suited to express his ideas. Although capable of painting great landscapes, Watts was not content with simple beauty, but wanted to produce paintings of greater emotion impact. So he began to create "vast machines" such as Evolution, Love and Death, Hope, Industry and Greed. Only at the end of his career, says Bell, in The Sower of the Systems, does he approach his ideal: "He matches the vagueness of his imaginings with a vagueness of form in which the figurative element seems almost to disappear--his work becomes almost abstract. . . ."[21] Yeats, however, lists "Watts when least a moralist" among his "great myth and mask-makers" and compares his "early pictures" to Rossetti in their "intensity and strangeness."[22] His portrait of Morris Yeats thinks comparable to Titian.[23]

The last leader of the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris, was the one with whom Yeats had an actual personal friendship.[24] But although Morris was a powerful influence in many ways, his graphic art would seem to have been the least of them. Peter Faulkner has written a study entitled William Morris and W. B. Yeats, in which he analyzes Morris' influence

upon Yeats as three-fold: first, "the impact of his courageous personality"; second, "the vigorous social critic"; and third, "the poet and romance writer." Even this latter, he says, Yeats "outgrew,"[26] and it was perhaps not as great as is generally supposed. Morris' influence as a poet could not have begun early enough for Oisin, but "He [Yeats] was also deeply interested in the visual arts at that time, and again it was to Rossetti and Blake that he refers explicitly."[27]

Although his work as a graphic artist does not so much show up in Yeats's poetry, Morris had other connections with art in Yeats's mind. He was among those artists of whom Yeats made symbols: in Morris' case, the thing symbolized is the joy of creativity, its essential sanity. Yeats's essay on Morris is entitled "The Happiest of Poets," and Yeats contrasts him with Rossetti in that he loved nature, "whose delight is in profusion, but never intensity." Yeats goes on to describe what he thinks is the particular quality of Morris' art:

> His art was not more essentially religious than Rossetti's art, but it was different, for Rossetti, drunken with natural beauty, the impossible beauty, in his frenzy, while he being less intense and more tranquil would show us a beauty that would wither if it did not set us at peace with natural things . . . .[28]

Yeats's picture of Morris as the ideal Medieval man is related to this understanding of natural life, as well as to his

own use of Medieval motifs in his art.

> A reproduction of his [Morris's] portraint by Watts hangs over my mantelpiece with Henley's and those of other friends. Its grave wide-open eyes, like the eyes of some dreaming beast, remind me of the open eyes of Titian's Ariosto, while the broad and vigorous body suggests a mind that has no need of the intellect to remain sane, though it gives itself to every fantasy: the dreamer of the middle ages.[29]

In A Vision, Morris is likened to Landor, who is of Phase 17 ("The Daimonic Man"): "A Landor, or a Morris, however violent, however much of a child he seems, is always a remarkable man."[30] He used Morris (in the Autobiography) as an example of a man who art portrays the opposite of his own nature. Himself "irascible" and "joyous," he "created new forms of melancholy and faint persons, like the knights and ladies of Burne-Jones, who are never, no not once in forty volumes, put out of temper."[31] These characters, Yeats says, he himself always sees "to my mind in the likeness of Artemisia and her man,"[32] a sculpture that he uses in the Autobiography to exemplify perfect physical beauty. Although to some extent a "wild old man" like Blake, Morris is less visionary, and his art correspondingly (in Yeats's view), less powerful. Probably his greatest effect upon the early Yeats was in the formation of his esthetic: the dislike of the eighteenth century expressed in "An Exhibition at William Morris'." In later years, Yeats recalled his first visit to Coole House (1898):

> Wondering at myself, I remember that when I first saw that house I was so full of the medievalism of William Morris that I did not like the gold frames, some deep and full of ornament, round the pictures in the drawing room; years were to pass before I came to understand the earlier nineteenth and later eighteenth century, and to love that house more than all other houses.[33]

In retrospect, he could describe himself as having been "of the school of Morris,"[34] and twice refers to him as "my chief of men."[35]

But however important these other painters may have been to Yeats, it was Rossetti he most admired. The early Pre-Raphaelites were not among his favorites. He contrasts Rossetti as "the imaginative painter" with Millais as "one whose art is founded upon the current arm of his time," maintaining scornfully that "a Rossetti will always draw worse than a Millais."[36] Most of his writing about Rossetti dates from the late 1890's, but it was in 1913 he saw the Pre-Raphaelite exhibit that helped focus his discontent with "aestheticism." In 1920 he carried on a debate with Moore and Ricketts over which should write a life of Rossetti (he wrote to Moore, "I wish you would write it or put the doing of it into some picturesque head"[37]). And, in 1935, T. S. Moore made him a gift of a Rossetti drawing.

Yeats describes the period of Rossetti's greatest influence in the Autobiography. He had been disappointed, he said, in Bedford Park when the family settled there for the second time,

> yet I was in all things Pre-Raphaelite. When I was a schoolboy of fifteen or sixteen, my father had told me about Rossetti and Blake and given me their poetry to read; and once at Liverpool on my way to Sligo I had seen Dante's Dream in the gallery there, a picture painted when Rossetti had lost his dramatic power and today not very pleasing to me; and its colour, its people, its romantic architecture had blotted all other pictures away.[38]

The grouping of Blake and Rossetti apparently remained in Yeats's mind, for he speaks of having tried to discuss them with the disciples of Bastien-Lepage at the art school--they could see nothing in either painter but the "bad drawing."[39] Like Blake and Horton, Rossetti's technical flaws are made up for by his originality, in Yeats's opinion--"A poet, or painter, or actor who is trying to make his art afresh is always more imperfect than one whose art is founded upon the current art of his time."[40] The seeming weaknesses of his style are actually stylistic innovations:

> It is the same in painting as in literature, for when a new painter arises, men cry out, even when he is a painter of the beautiful like Rossetti, that he has chosen the exaggerated or the ugly or the unhealthy, forgetting that it is the business of art and of letters to change the values and mint the coinage. Without this outcry there is no movement of life in the arts. . . .[41]

Like Blake, Rossetti is the type of the innovator. Specifically, his rebellion was against Victorianism:

> The period of philanthropy and reform that created the pedantic composure of Wordsworth, the rhetoric of Swinburne, the passionless sentiment of Tennyson . . .[42]

Rossetti, by contrast, personifies instead that "commandment"--"make excess ever more abundantly excessive." The "intensity and strangeness" of his pictures are the result, says Yeats, of this struggle of the spirit of Romanticism to overcome the "good citizen."[43]

Above all else, however, Rossetti typifies the "poetical painter." Yeats pairs his name twice with that of Botticelli in the Autobiography, explaining that these "poetical painters" are those who create "one type of face," as opposed to the interest in "character" of such as Augustus John.[44]

Even in Rossetti, the 1870 date, to Yeats's mind, was the beginning of the "decadence" of Pre-Raphaelitism. One point on which this change turned was the attitude of the artist toward external nature. Unlike Blake, Rossetti had not seen art and nature as antithetical--he thought that "The imaginative vision should be founded on the natural order."[45] In the following development of the English art pour l'art, that attitude changed diametrically. It was one of the rather few ways in which Yeats could sympathize with a trend of which he saw primarily the lack of "energy" and tendency towards the perverse. His most admired period was the first of Rossetti's career, when he was still painting what Pistorius describes as "literary genre" works. At this time, Giotto was the painter Rossetti most admired, and upon whom he had based many elements of his style. Giotto had used decorative backgrounds, with geometrical

motifs; Rossetti took up the decorative background, but made the decorations organic, so that he could use a natural background. Giotto had been limited by the geometric to the use of decoration in interiors only; his landscape backgrounds are quite bare of detail. The change he instituted made Rossetti able to use decoration and design to convey symbolism. Particularly there is a "repeated use of bird, tree, and rose."[46] The use of flat planes with as little perspective as possible produced a technique that "reminds us that we are looking at an art-work"; Rossetti never "paints nature naturalistically, and he often paints art itself as a background."[47] The key to meaning in both Giotto and Rossetti is always the composition, especially that of the figures; Rossetti especially displays a "primitive indifference to facial expression."[48] Pistorius compares this to Byzantine painting--it is no doubt part of the attraction of Rossetti for Yeats, perhaps one of the sources of his later use of the mask in drama and his belief that "tragic" personalities lack "character." In Rossetti, this "mysterious blankness" of face which "asks to be invested with many emotions"[49] may be the result, Pistorius thinks, of the "literary genre" type, with its use of "traditional, mythic, and familiar" figures:

> Rossetti, like Giotto, can afford to be less realistic in technique precisely because the 'reality' of his characters and events is already established; they exist not only as names and places in particular texts, but as emotional histories in the viewer's

> imagination. Freed from the restrictions of representationalism, he can then create, through symbolic use of color, decoration, and composition, those formal (or 'artificial' and as such unavailable to the painter of modern genre), ideas which again formulate rather than express the emotional meaning of the work, which is dependent upon the viewer for completion.[50]

Pistorius summarizes the trend thus: "A whole way of art is suggested here, from Yeats through Rossetti back to Giotto, through Giotto to the Byzantine work he knew in Florence and Ravenna, and finally back to Egyptian wall painting."

Yeats's list of "great myth and mask-makers" includes "Rossetti before 1870." The mask in question here was, of course, a female face. For Yeats, it was a romantic ideal. These faces, except in the case of "The Bride," says Yeats, did not reflect "the abundance of earth" but instead "the half-hidden light of his star." Rossetti was a symbolist by nature:

> Rossetti in one of his letters mentions his favorite colours in the order of his favour, and throughout his work one feels that he loved form and colour for themselves, and apart from what they represent. One feels sometimes that he desired a world of essences, of unmixed powers, of impossible priorities. It is as though the Last Judgment had already begun in his mind . . . If he painted a flame or a blue distance, he painted as though he had seen the flame out of whose heart all flames had been taken, or the blue of the abyss that was before all life; and if he painted a woman's face, he painted it in some moment of intensity when the ecstasy of the lover and of the saint are alike, and desire becomes wisdom without ceasing to be desire.[51]

In this he is like Shelley, following "the Star of the Magi, the Morning and Evening star, the mother of impossible hope."[52]

Yeats records that the Cheshire Cheese group maintained the Rossetti ideal of woman (in spite of the fact that the actual individual woman was an "ignoramus" who couldn't appreciate art)--"romantic and mysterious, still the priestess of her shrine, our emotions remembering the Lilith and the Sybilla Palmifera of Rossetti"--even down to contemporary life--"for as yet that sense of comedy, which was soon to mould the very fashion plates, and in the eyes of men of any generation, to destroy at last the sense of beauty itself, had scarce begun to show here and there in slight subordinate touches among the designs of great painters and craftsmen."[53]

Both Burne-Jones and Rossetti represented for the youthful Yeats the artist-as-lover, and his ideals of women were theirs. He describes in Memoirs his "romantic" head, "full of the mysterious women of Rossetti and those hesitating faces in the art of Burne-Jones which seemed always anxious for some Alastor at the end of a long journey."[54] "The Pre-Raphaelite woman" was not of a single type (although certainly there were characteristics in common) and Yeats recognized the distinction. In A Vision, he describes Phase 13: "One thinks too of the women of Burne-Jones, but not of Botticelli's women, who have too much curiosity, nor Rossetti's women, who have too much passion; . . . those pure faces gathered about the "Sleep of Arthur," or crowded upon the "golden stair". . . ."[55]

The relationship of a lover and his mistress, a man and his soul, and an artist and his creation are all portrayed in Rossetti's tale, "Hand and Soul," and the point is that they are exact parallels. It is an idea which was as important in Yeats's work as in Rossetti's own, and Rossetti's portrayal of it no doubt accounts for Yeats's often-repeated scene of the lover wrapped in his mistress' hair.

"Hand and Soul" tells how the artist Chiaro dell' Erma, a fictitious contemporary of Ciambue, is granted a vision of his soul that saves him from the artistic lethagy into which he has fallen. His career had first aimed to express the "worship of beauty," then "the presentiment of some moral greatness that should influence the beholder, and to this end, he multiplied abstractions and forgot the beauty and passion of the world. On the occasion of a religious feast, Chiaro is rendered idle by the truancy of his model, so he observes from his window a great battle of the two feuding noble families of Pisa. The strife is so violent that it throws blood even upon Chiaro's paintings. He is horrified, saying, "Fame failed me: faith failed me: and now this also--the hope that I had nourished in this my generation of men. . . ." He goes on expressing his discouragement, saying at last that he has caused men to "reject the light. May one be a devil and not know it?" When he raises his head, he finds that

> a woman was present in his room, clad to the hands and feet with a green and grey raiment, fashioned to that time. It seemed that the first thoughts he had ever known were given to him as if at first from her eyes, and he knew her hair to be the golden veil through which he beheld his dreams. Though her hands were joined, her face was not lifted, but set forward; and though the gaze was austere, yet her mouth was supreme in gentleness.

She does not speak aloud, but communicates to Chiaro: "I am an image, Chiaro, of Thine own soûl within Thee." Even though his faith and fame have failed, he has not devoted his life to "riches," and so she has been allowed to appear to him. She advises him to seek, not Fame, but his "heart's conscience," fighting off discouragement with hope for the future. Chiaro weeps when he looks into her eyes, "And she came to him and cast her hair over him, and took her hands about his forehead. . . ." She speaks to him of his loss of faith, saying he is considering too closely, for "Either thou hadst it not, or thou hast it." Chiaro weeps into her hair, and "the fair woman, that was his soul," reproves him for his attempts at moralizing:

> How is it that thou, a man, would say coldly to the mind what God has said to the heart warmly? . . . Give to God no more than He asketh of thee; but to men also, that which is man's. In all that thou doest, work from thine own heart, simply; for his heart is as thine, when thine is wise and humble; and he shall have understanding of thee . . . Know that there is but this means whereby thou mayst serve God with man; set thine hand and thy soul to serve man with God.

Then the woman resumed her former pose, and said,

> Chiaro, Servant of God, take now thine Art unto thee, and paint me thus, as I am, to know me: weak, as I am, and in the weeds of this time; only with eyes which seek out labor, and with a faith, not learned, yet jealous of prayer. Do this; so shall thy soul stand before thee always, and perplex thee no more.

When the painting is finished, Chiaro at once falls asleep, and "the beautiful woman came to him, and sat at his head gazing, and quieted his sleep with her voice." The strife is finally over in the city and the dead are being buried.

Here Rossetti breaks off the story of Chiaro and resumes in the first person, telling of his visit in 1847 to the Pitti Gallery in Florence, where by chance he sees Chiaro's painting. It is inscribed Manus Animam pinxit, and dated 1239. Rossetti describes the woman's pose and dress, then says

> . . . the most absorbing wonder of it was its literality. You knew that figure, when painted, had been seen; yet it was not a thing to be seen of men. This language will appear ridiculous to such as have never looked upon the work; and it may be even to some among those who have.

Among those also viewing the painting is another Englishman, some Italians, and a Frenchman. The Italians joke about the Englishmen's liking for obscurity in art being based upon the prevalence of fog in their home climate, but the Frenchman adds Rossetti's final irony. When asked his opinion of the painting, he replies, "I hold that when one can't understand a thing, it is because it means nothing."[56]

The effect of Rossetti upon Yeats was not limited to visual imagery, then, for details from this story appear in the poems also, as does its theme. But there is yet another way in which the influence may be seen.

I have mentioned previously that the poem based upon a painting was a rather popular form around the turn of the century. Preeminent among its practitioners was Rossetti, whose poems probably were the inspiration of Yeats's early work, "On Mr. Nettleship's Picture at the Royal Hibernian Academy." This likelihood is reinforced by the fact that Nettleship was closely connected in Yeats's mind with Rossetti, whom he quotes as praising "God Creating Evil" as "'the most sublime conception in ancient or modern art."[57] For Yeats Nettleship was an important figure in his own right, of course. Early in the nineties, Yeats wrote a review of his work (never published) that he describes as "my first art criticism."[58] So closely associated is Rossetti with this type of verse that Eddins, in The Victorian Matrix, refers to it as "the Rossettian genre of 'Sonnets on Pictures.'" He describes the form as one in which the "paintings are described as unfolding action, usually in the present tense, while abstract emotional qualities and explanations of symbolic significance are interpolated among the visualized physical details."[59] The poems move from literal description into "the suggestion of blinding cosmic significance."[60] These qualities are, of course, obvious

in Yeats's poem on Nettleship, but are also the less obvious underlying principle in such later poems as "Lapis Lazuli," and "On Those Who Hated the 'Playboy.'" Probably no one will ever know just how many of Yeats's poems are of this type, though unacknowledged--perhaps all of them. There is a further possible way in which Rossetti may have influenced Yeats's use of this type of poem, however. In his essay "William Blake," Yeats refers to "Rossetti's edition" of Blake, in which "Sampson" is "printed as a kind of irregular blank verse, to show how the cadence of verse clung to Blake's mind even in prose."[61] This is, of course, exactly what Yeats did to the passage of Pater's prose to open his collection of modern poetry in The Oxford Book of Modern Verse--and the passage he selected was the famous description of da Vinci's Mona Lisa.

A more widely recognized effect of the Pre-Raphaelites in general and Rossetti in Particular upon Yeats's early poems is the "copying" of their scenes and characters, especially the female figure. The effect upon color schemes is obvious also: "the soft greens and golds",[62] the peacock-blues and bronzes. The coloring of the costumes emphasizes the likeness. Forgael and Dectora--pale, haunted, and grieved, notably "unvoluptuous" lovers--are also Burne-Jones figures, but their pose at the end of the play, Dectora bending over Forgael, who is wrapped in her hair, is that of Chiaro and the soul-woman in Rossetti's story. Again and again, as

if in obedience to the vision's command to Chiaro, the young Yeats portrays his soul in his art as a woman. She is always the same woman: "white,"[63] long-haired, red-lipped but unsmiling. Among all the Pre-Raphaelite women, one will not find even so much smile as that of the Mona Lisa--they are pensive at best, at worst brooding, or even threatening. They are "fatale," the quality that Yeats was undoubtedly trying to show in Niamh by describing her lips as "like a stormy sunset on doomed ships," and even more ludicrously, by saying that a "citron colour" "gloomed" in her hair.[64] The type appears much less obviously--and more effectively--in the "pensive," "shy" girl of "To An Isle in the Water," and the sweetheart of "Down by the Salley Gardens." The "snow-white feet" are very reminiscent of Burne-Jones, whose draped female figures usually have bare feet, noticeably white and uncomfortably chilly-looking. Here too is the self-conscious Pre-Raphaelite pose: "And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand."[65]

In many cases, these poems ring false, though one speculates that at the time they were written, to readers who were also accustomed to the Pre-Raphaelite version of "romance," the effect may have been quite different. In "When You Are Old,"[66] however, Yeats achieves a triumph in this mode. The tone of melancholy is tempered--the memories are only "a little sad"--the woman's beauty is recollected--the "soft", "shadowed" eyes, the "sorrows" of the

face. As an old lady, she bends down over the book before the rectangle of the fireplace, in a typical Pre-Raphaelite composition, and summons up the marvellous picture of the figure of "Love" among the mountain-tops and stars.

It is not only in the major figures that these early poems recall Rossetti and Burne-Jones, however. The scenic elements are strikingly Pre-Raphaelite, both in detail and composition. Surely any reader must be struck by the impression that these poems are extremely leafy! The backgrounds are often crowded with leaves, and usually with leaves carefully identified as beech, hazel, etc. Although Yeats once scornfully described Rossetti's later work as "female heads with floral adjuncts," he has adopted the tapestry-of-leaves background in many of these poems (alternatively, there is the long Art-Nouveau sweep of deserted beach and flowing waves--probably from Burne-Jones). Among these leaves are typical flowers: "daffodil and lily,"[67] "lily" and "poppies."[68] All these were favorites of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Art Nouveau style, because they are flexible enough to bend and droop into the curving, spiralling line that was favored (the rose appears not so much as the flower itself, but as the rose-vine, for instance in Burne-Jones "Briar Rose" series). The line appears also in the motif of "whirling" or "swirling": in the "whirling fire" of King Goll's madness,[69] in the tossing hair of the supernatural beings, and especially in "The Two Trees":

There the loves a circle go,
The flaming circle of our days,
Gyring, spiring to and fro
In those great ignorant leafy ways;[70]

As to composition, we have mentioned the "looking through holes" arrangement, which gives a vignette effect. The long, low rectangle in the center is a typical Rossetti arrangement; sometimes, as in Dante's Dream, the viewer feels that he must bend down a little and look under the frame. In another of Yeats's favorites, Ecce Ancilla Domine, the narrow upright rectangle of the canvas is made even more confining by an oversizing of the figures and exaggeration of perspective that makes Mary and the angel seem compressed within the frame. The effect is one that appears often in Yeats's early poetry. "The Indian to His Love"[71] provides an example of all the components of the Pre-Raphaelite scene: the setting is exotic, isolated: an "island" apparently in the Indian Ocean. The "dawn" light provides for both glowing color and depth of shadow. The composition closes in: first there are the "great boughs" drooping across the top of the frame in the near foreground; then the line of the sea at the bottom, with its exotic detail of dancing pea-fowl and the parrot complete with reflection; finally the lovers moving away from boat and shore, back into the central bower of leaves.

Early and recent Yeats criticism amply proves that it is possible to disagree as to the esthetic value of the

Pre-Raphaelite style in Yeats's early verse. But the fact that the style is actually evident there is unquestionable: the visual elements in these early poems are Pre-Raphaelite. In order to evaluate them properly, it may help to consider the first "Rose" poem, "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time."[72] The rose as such--the flower as distinct from the vine--was not one much used by the Pre-Raphaelites. The image probably comes from the Rosicrucian society, and so lacks the "pre-visualization" that was provided by Yeats by his use of imagery from the plastic arts. Thus the only parts of the poem that can be clearly "seen" are the descriptions that return to that tradition: the rose itself is left unvisualized. The unfortunate result is that the reader images a stupendous flower advancing upon the fainting poet like a monster out of science-fiction. By contrast, the following poem, "The Rose of the World,"[73] in which Yeats visualizes his rose as the Pre-Raphaelite woman (complete with "mournful" "red lips"), while not perhaps to every reader's taste, is at least much easier to "see."

Pistorius' dissertation concludes that

> The "Pre-Raphaelitism" of the early poems, such as it is, pointed back to the visual art of that tradition rather than to the poetry; it was in Pre-Raphaelite painting and tapestry that Yeats found the mystery of the symbol in combination with pattern and color.[74]

In truth, one of the young Yeats's poetic deficiencies seems to have been in the imaging power. At first, he would not

use the pictures presented to him by the world of nature and man that he actually saw; instead, when he did not use the imaginary world of Pre-Raphaelite painting, he would summon up that of Blake. Yeats pictures heaven in Blakean imagery:

> 'Mong the feet of angels seven
> What a dancer glimmering!
> All the heavens blow down to Heaven,
> Flame to flame and wing to wing.[75]

Although it is Rossetti's style that dominates the early poems, Blake was the painter whose work most looked forward to that of the Symbolists. The list of "great myth and mask-makers" that Yeats includes in "The Bounty of Sweden" begins with Blake, and his name, unlike many of the others, is unqualified. Yeats contrasts these "men of aristocratic mind," who "seem to copy everything but in reality copy nothing; create no universal language" with the Impressionists, who "gave at a moment when all seemed sunk in convention, a method as adaptable as that box of Renaissance architectural bricks." Thus Impressionism "at first glance . . . seems everywhere the same," whereas the "mask makers" are all very different: "not one of them can be mistaken for another."[76]

It is this quality of extreme individualism that Blake represented to Yeats's mind; he was the type of the subjective, creative man. In A Vision, he represents Phase 16, "The Positive Man," who, if he use his intellect

productively, can create "the soul's most radiant expression and surround itself with some fairy land, some mythology of wisdom and laughter."[77] Phase 16 is the phase just past full subjectivity (15), which with 14 is the closest a human being can come to being totally subjective. Often Yeats's picture of the subjective man is one immersed in tragedy, but Blake illustrates that this need not always be so. He is associated with joy and acceptance of life, a man who "for all his protest was glad to be alive, and ever spoke of his gladness."[78] In this quality, Yeats compares Blake to Morris, who also "held nothing that gave joy unworthy."[79]

Blake also represents the "literary" painter: he is included with Gregory, Innes, Calvert, Palmer, and Ricketts as having special appeal for the "man of letters" because of their use of "poetic" and "traditional" moods. But above all, Blake was "the Chanticleer of the new dawn": "perhaps the first modern to insist upon a difference between symbol and allegory." He is the mystic as artist, expressing vision in forms at once traditional and unique.[80]

Yeats often used references to Blake's paintings or prose to illustrate his or other's thoughts, although he seldom quotes the poetry. Of the paintings, he mentions "Vision of Bloodthirstiness," the drawings from The Grave of the body and soul embracing, and the unpublished illustrations to "Night Thoughts," as well as the drawings he discusses in the Blake essays. John Sherman likens Howard's

lovesick perceptions of the colours of Mary's room to "the strange and chaotic colours the mystic Blake imagined upon the Scaled Serpent of Eden."[81] And of course Robartes of "Rosa Alchemica" owns "a complete set of facsimilies of the prophetical writings of William Blake."[82] It is particularly interesting that, when Moore was having trouble finding a design for the cover of The Winding Stair, Yeats suggested that it should be "a mere gyre--Blake's design of Jacob's ladder--with figures, little figures."[83] The gyre, of course, was at that time the central symbol of Yeats's mythology. It is a testimony to the strength of Blake's influence that he chose this picture to exemplify that symbol. Time and again he explains his own philosophy by reference to the symbols that Blake used to portray his.

Yeats's interest in Blake was life-long, not just an early phase. In The Trembling of The Veil, he speaks of his father's gift of Blake's and Rossetti's poetry, his admiration for Rossetti's painting, and how he was "in all things Pre-Raphaelite."

> I was not an industrious student and knew only what I had found by accident, and I found nothing I cared for after Titian, and Titian I knew from an imitation of his Supper at Emmaus in Dublin, until Blake and the Pre-Raphaelites; and among my father's friends were no Pre-Raphaelites.[84]

While he was in art school, he says, he would try to discuss Blake with the students who admired Bastien-Lepage, but they saw only the "bad drawing." And next, there was

of course, the edition of Blake that he wrote with Ellis. The book included drawings; Yeats says specifically that the second volume was to contain "reproductions of the 'prophetic books' with their illustrations."[85] His interest, in fact, in the drawings (as well as the poetry) of Blake often caused some degree of conflict with the stricter Victorian elements; when he brought the edition of Blake to a National Literary Society meeting, the moderator apologized to the group for the reproductions of "many nude figures."[86] And the Savoy ran into trouble with the censors when he illustrated an essay with Blake's drawing of Antaeus. In 1922, Grierson sent him a gift copy of Blake's designs for Gray's poems (to which he often afterwards refers); he was pleased to have them, comparing them to the "Night Thoughts" drawings and to the early illustrations of "The Cat and the Goldfish."[87] The following year he acquired a copy of The Drawings and Engravings of William Blake, edited by Laurence Binyon, 1922.[88] In 1926, he writes to Grierson, "I have the Blake illustration to Gray open on a little table which makes a kind of lectern between the two book shelves. My large picture books take their turn there and yours has been there for the last month. The pictures grow in beauty with familiarity."[89] Among these "picture books" was also the complete Dante designs; in a 1927 letter to Olivia Shakespeare , he mentions having been sent by "the spirit" to look at "84 or 48," but having had to look them

up to find that they were respectively Entering the Holy Fire and Vanni Fucci and the Serpent.[90] It was in 1930 that he wrote to Moore about the Jacob's Ladder design, including in the letter a sketch of the Ladder and of Ballylee stairs. In the Autobiography he mentions having visited the Linnells--descendants of Blake's friend the painter John Linnell--and of their "present of Blake's Dante engravings," which at the time of writing he still has "upon my dining-room walls."[91] And in 1936, he wrote to Ethel Mannin, "Of course I don't hate the people of England, considering all I owe to Shakespeare, Blake, Morris--they are the one people I cannot hate."[92]

Thus it seems apparent that Yeats had, throughout his life, not only Blake's poetry in his head, but Blake's drawings before his eyes. Certain of Blake's phrases became commonplace in Yeats's vocabulary, and his ideas basic to Yeats' philosophy. Among these was the idea he quotes in the Horton introduction: "The world of imagination is the world of Eternity." "There exist in that eternal world the eternal realities of everything which we see reflected in the vegetable glass of nature."[93] And in "William Blake," "Everything is atheism which assumes the reality of the natural and unspiritual world."[94] The centrality of the imagination and its artistic creations in the scheme of the universe was one of Yeats's most basic assumptions: ". . . the beautiful states of being which the artist in

life or thought perceives by his imagination and tries to call up in himself and others are the real and eternal world of which this vegetable universe is but a faint shadow." He illustrates this with quotations from Blake: "'the whole business of man is the arts'"--"'Christianity is art.'" The poet as priest or prophet is a corollary: "The proud and lonely spirt of Blake was possessed and upheld by this doctrine, and enabled to face the world with the consciousness of a divine mission, for were not the poet and the artist more men of imagination than any others, and therefore more prophets of God?"[95]

The emphasis in Yeats's esthetic upon the sensuous and particular, as contrasted with the "abstract" or general, is an idea he had in common with Blake. He says, "I had learned from Blake to hate all abstraction . . .",[96] and he often quotes the phrase, "'Naked beauty displayed.'"[97] He calls the "impulse towards the definite and sensuous" the "foundation" of Blake's thought, and showed its effect on his taste in painting. "Blake was put into a rage by all painting where detail is generalized away, and complained that Englishmen after the French Revolution became as like one another as the dots and lozenges in the mechanical engraving of his time."[98] Another term is "precision" but the Blakean term that appealed most to Yeats was "Exuberance is beauty,"[99] a phrase that he often used in connection with Palmer's "excess."[100] The "precision" and the liking

for a "severe" art became in Yeats an emphasis on the "definite and sensuous," an impatience with "confusion," a liking for the "austere", while "excess" becomes "intensity" or "passion," and probably results in a liking for a strictly unified composition.

The writings of Blake about art that Yeats cites specifically are the Descriptive Catalogue, the Address to the Public, the notes on Reynolds in the Book of Moonlight, and "detached passages" in the M. S. Book. The similarities between the views expressed in these writings and those of Yeats's own essays are not limited to the ones he cites in "William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy." For instance, the artists whom he often names for admiration or for contempt agree very much with those Blake names in the "Preface to the Descriptive Catalogue": "Till we get rid of Titian and Corregio, Reubens and Rembrandt, we never shall equal Rafael and Albert Durer, Michaelangelo, and Julio Romano."[101] "Hogarth," too, is among Blake's list of engravers he admired--along with "Albert Durer, Lucas, Hirshen, Aldegrove."[102] Yeats often adopted the artists who were admired by his friends or mentors: this, I think accounts for some of the more puzzling names on his list of favorites. Durer is, by all accounts, not an artist Yeats should have particularly admired, even though he did work in black and white. Yet Yeats does refer to his work with admiration. Of Blake's list here, in fact,

the only disagreement is over Titian, although Yeats did not especially admire Raphael. Yeats wholeheartedly adopted Blake's scorn for chiaroscuro, especially as identified with "Venetian and Flemish demons,"[103] and with Rembrandt: "precision" of execution was to him almost as much as it was to Blake.

Although Yeats does not cite the "Annotations to The Works of Joshua Reynolds," he almost surely had read it, so much of its material is near to his own views. The "Annotations" begins by anathematizing Reynolds: "This man was hired to depress art," and shortly follows up with this quatrain:

> Degrade first the arts if you'd mankind degrade.
> Hire idiots to paint with cold light and hot shade;
> Give high price for the worst, leave the best in disgrace,
> And with labours of ignorance fill every place.[104]

The basic point of conflict between Reynolds and Blake is between "colouring" and "drawing," respectively. But composition enters as well. Reynolds criticizes Poussin for unconventional composition: "This (Poussin's Perseus and Medusa's Head) is undoubtedly a subject of great bustle and tumult, and that the first effect of the picture may correspond to the subject, every principle of composition is violated . . . I remember turning from it with disgust . . . ."[105] Blake scoffs: "Reynold's eye could not bear characteristic colouring or light and shade." Reynolds

continues, "This conduct of Poussin I hold to be entirely improper to imitate. A picture should please at first sight, and appear to invite the spectator's attention. . . ." Blake replies, "Please whom? Some men cannot see a picture except in a dark corner." What is at issue here is, of course, the suitability of style to subject--certainly a "literary" quality.

Blake's use of Poussin to epitomize his ideal--in the same way as Michaelangelo though to a lesser degree--as opposed to the Rubens/Rembrandt style is interesting in view of Yeats's apparent use of Poussin in "News for the Delphic Oracle." However much Poussin and Titian may figure in Blake's prose, the major figures are Michaelangelo and Rembrandt, a dichotomy he repeats often in the "Epigrams and Verses Concerning Sir Joshua Reynolds." For him, Michaelangelo was The Artist--the epitomization of man as creator--the very symbol of art itself--a position that artist occupies in Yeats's work as well. Rembrandt, Rubens, and Reynolds are the opposite--"There is not, because there cannot be, any difference of effect in the pictures of Rubens and Rembrandt; when you have seen one of their pictures, you have seen all. It is not so with Rafael, Julio Romano, Alb. d[urer], Mic. Ang. Every picture of theirs has a different and appropriate effect."[106]

The difference lies in subject--Blake sees Reynolds as "doing an injury and injustice to his country while he

studies and imitates the effects of nature. England will never rival Italy while we servilely copy what the wise Italians, Rafael and Michaelangelo scorned, nay abhored, as Vasari tells us."[107] Blake's word is "copy": "No man of sense ever supposes that copying from nature is the art of painting; if art is no more than this, it is no better than any other manual labour; anybody can do it and the fool will often do it best as it is a work of no mind."[108] Art must copy vision, not nature: ". . . and shall Painting be confined to the sordid drugery of facsimile representations of merely mortal and perishing substances, and not be as poetry and music are, elevated into its own proper sphere of invention and visionary conception? No, it shall not be so! Painting, as well as poetry and music, exists and exults in immortal thoughts."[109] Mimesis is not actually possible:

> Men think they can copy Nature as correctly as I copy Imagination; this they will find Impossible, and all the copiers or pretended copiers of Nature from Rembrandt to Reynolds prove that Nature becomes to its Victim nothing but blots and blurs. Why are copiers of Nature incorrect, while copiers of Imagination are correct? This is manifest to all."[110]

This is part of his criticism of chiaroscuro: "The unorganized blots and blurs of Rubens and Titian are not art, nor can their method ever express ideas or imaginations any more than Pope's metaphysical jargon of rhyming."[111]

Blake's remarks on "clarity of colour" and the dulling effects of oil may help to account for Yeats's comparative indifference to oil paintings. Blake says ". . . the art of fresco painting being lost, oil became a fetter to genius, and a dungeon to art."[112] His identification of the time of the change from fresco to oil is "after Vandyke's time": a period which correlates quite exactly with the painters Yeats admired; "after Vandyke," Yeats singles out primarily etchings or woodcuts for admiration. "The latter schools of Italy and Flanders,"[113] "Raphael, Michaelangelo, and the Antique"[114] are as much his ideals as they are Blake's. Blake considered all art to be "drawing," as opposed to the Reynold's school of emphasis on coloring. "Painting is drawing on canvas, and engraving is drawing on copper, and nothing else. Drawing is execution, and nothing else, and he who draws best must be the best artist; to this I subscribe my name as a public duty." Yeats might even have agreed with Blake's summary: "Let a man who has made a drawing go on and on and he will produce a picture or painting, but if he chooses to leave it before he has spoil'd it, he will do a better thing."[115]

Whereas the influence of Blake the artist on Yeats seems to have been primarily in art theory, that of followers Samuel Palmer and Edward Calvert was in style and symbolism. Of the two, it is likely that Calvert was the most interesting to Yeats: we know that he planned a book on Calvert which was, however,

never published. But the scholar is forced to concentrate his attention upon Palmer instead, because information about Calvert is not at all easily accessible. The best source available is Raymond Lister's biography, which gives the reader a notion of Calvert's career, if not of his esthetic. He had come to painting rather late, having been a sailor in early life. He joined Palmer's group at Shoreham and for a time became somewhat Christian, but in later life developed a fascination with classic culture that led him to think of himself as Pagan. He analyzed and theorized both about pagan mythology and the relationship of poetry and music. These speculations were not of interest to Lister, and consequently not available to the student in any detail.

It is easy to guess that Calvert's personality must have been intriguing to Yeats, combining as it did the active and contemplative in a near-schizophrenic mixture: in Lister's words, "On the one hand, sea-fever, physical, pagan and robust; on the other a dreamlike mysticism, spiritual and introspective."[116] The tendency to systematize his mystic insights must also have appealed to Yeats: Calvert was a builder of metaphysical and artistic systems as much as was he himself. It is the nature of the systems about which we lack information.[117] In his essay on fellow-artist F. O. Finch, Calvert refers to Classical mythyology as a "Mythic system," and speculates as to whether Finch saw "an ordered system in the Psychic theology of Greece and Italy."[118] That he

himself did is explained by Laurence Binyon in The Followers of William Blake:

> Calvert was one of those rare spirits for whom the Greek myths meant something more than beautiful forms animating beautiful stories; they were recreated in his imagination and became mysteries devoutly to be pondered on. Blake was driven to invent a Myth of his own, embodying his conception of the world; Calvert was content to discover in the old beliefs of Hellas his own reading of the human soul's relation to the universe. The theme of his art was always 'the life we love'; and this life he conceived in four phases, rising each out of the other. First there is the Elemental Phase, associated with the god Pan; 'a conceived beginning of the human state in a conceived beauty of the antique world, and elemental wildness and wonder of man, finding himself in the midst of a beautiful order of things . . . full of suggestiveness to his imagination of vital power contained therein.' Next comes the Simple Phase, arising from man's necessity of shelter, food, and clothing; the phase of pastoral life, associated with Dionysus; and as a pastoral people cherish their legends, which grow and become associated with living beauties of wood and fountain, and these find not only credence but 'full persuasion of a present likelihood'. The third, or Mythic Phase, associated with Hermes, rises out of this, when 'their hamlets are charmed with another life, and their forests and mountain-paths peopled by their visionary minds with rustic apparitions to their expectancy.' And, lastly, comes the consciousness of moral powers, of gods still higher, of Divine attributes, all impersonated; and man enters on the Votive Phase, associated with Phoebus. Calvert grouped all his designs under these four headings.[119]

Even such a brief account piques the curiosity: comparisons to the "Phases" of a Vision naturally come to mind.

Even if better documentation of Calvert's writings were available,[120] however, there would remain a problem in determining influence, for Yeats does not refer by name to any of Calvert's prose, nor does he quote from it. What

he does mention is the woodcuts, and these are relatively readily available for study. They are, by all accounts, much the best of Calvert's work. In later life, he began to paint in oil instead, and the resulting paintings fully justify Blake's remarks on the subject! It is the woodcuts, too, that Blake's influence as an artist is evident: they are the product of Calvert's admiration of Blake's woodcuts to Thornton's Virgil. These engravings, together with two paintings, "The Return Home," and "A Primitive City," constitute the body of Calvert's visionary work. Lister says

> . . . they nearly all extol the delights, and the sweetness, even the occasional sadness of an ideal pastoral existence, such as these young artists enjoyed at Shoreham. As Calvert's son wrote, they are a "constant realization of Heaven on earth--of earth and Heaven happily blending their essentials." They are visions, seen in earthly imagery, of what Calvert himself called "That serene kingdom, teeming with the good and the true and the Beautiful!"[121]

Only during the middle period of his life (1827-1831) does Calvert refer specifically to Christianity: the "Ten Spiritual Designs" originally had Scriptural inscriptions, but Calvert later cut them away. Some of these designs employ traditional Christian symbolism, and some do not. The one which has received the most critical acclaim is "The Chamber Idyll," which depicts a young man and woman in their bedchamber, the house cut away so that the surrounding landscape can also be seen. Calvert was characteristically more sensual, "pagan" than either Blake or Palmer--this may account for

Yeats's particular attraction to his work. Palmer had the Puritan Christian uneasiness about the pleasures of the flesh, especially sex (he owned a copy of "The Chamber Idyll," but kept it shut up in an envelope), and Blake's distrust of "nature" kept him from even using landscape in most of his drawings. Only in the Virgil series can landscape be said to be a feature, or is the "pastoral" an obvious theme. Binyon remarks that Calvert was not so thoroughly a disciple of Blake as was Palmer, because Calvert could not sympathize with Blake's "dislike of natural religion." It was, indeed, "just in the intimate companionship of primitive man with mothering earth that Calvert's art finds its happiest and deepest inspiration."[122] He sees the fundamental difference in the work of the two as in the emphasis on detail and composition. Calvert, he says is detailed in landscape, subtle in composition, whereas Blake "summarized forms: where these were to express movement and elemental passion or ecstasy, he did this in a splendid way; where he was not interested, there was a relapse on formula hardened into mannerism. His design, too, was of a passionate simplicity . . . Blake was content with a hasty rudiment of background."[123]

There is a final way in which Calvert seems likely to have had an effect distinct from either Blake or Palmer upon Yeats' thought. He also thought of painting and verse as "poetic": in a letter to his son, he says, "A good poem, whether painted or written, whether large or small, should

represent the simplicity of a beautiful life . . . I will not complicate the requirements of painted poesy by speaking of the music of colour with which it should be clothed; black and white were enough--the very attempt to express the confusions of love were fulfillment sufficient."[124] And in his essay "On the Late Francis Oliver Finch as a Painter," he says

> It is as a poet that men will regard him, as a poet revealing himself through the medium of painting. But because this medium, when in the service of poetic thought, becomes a part of the poesy itself; it could not have been passed by without some adversion to it . . . (Poesy is) an attachment to that which is equable in things . . . a repugnance for any sort of turbulence.[125]

Yeats grouped Calvert with Gregory, etc., as typical of artists whose work shared "moods" with "lyric poetry," and he associated him, along with Blake and Palmer, with Claude and the "Swedenborgian Heaven." He quotes Calvert only once (in contrasting the attitudes of educated Ireland with peasant Ireland): "I go inward to God, outward to the gods."[126] But it is likely that he always considered Calvert and pastoral as identical: in 1932 he writes to Olivia Shakespeare that he was at first unhappy in his new house, "but now that the pictures are up I feel more at home. This little creeper-covered farm house might be in a Calvert woodcut, and what could be more suitable for one's last decade?"[127]

On the other hand, Yeats often quotes Samuel Palmer, but he usually repeats the same passage: the one extolling

"Excess" which I have previously cited. This passage occurs in Yeats's prose twice in 1897 ("William Blake," and "The Celtic Element"), in "A Symbolic Artist" in 1898, and again in "Art and Ideas" in 1913. In the latter essay, he uses the quotation in connection with Rossetti, and his identification of it with the "Celtic" temperament is interesting. He is commenting upon Matthew Arnold's question as to how much the "ideal man of genius" is a "Celt":

> Certainly a thirst for unbounded emotion and wild melancholy are troublesome things in the world, and do not make its life more easy or orderly, but it may be the arts are founded on the life beyond the world, and that they must cry in the ears of our penury until the world has been consumed and become a vision. Certainly, as Samuel Palmer wrote, "Excess is the vivifying spirit of the finest art, and we must always seek to make excess more abundantly excessive!"[128]

In the Blake essays, Yeats refers to Palmer's analysis of Blake's works as well as to his reminiscences of Blake himself, seeming to admire Palmer's artistic judgment, rather than just using his writings as a source of information about Blake's personality. Palmer's views of what painting should be must have suited Yeats. He observes in exasperation that Wells Cathedral "shows what Christian art might have become in this country, had no abuses brought it down with a crash, and left us, after three centuries, with a national preference for domesticated beasts and their portraits, before all other kinds of art whatsoever."[129]

Of course, Palmer and Calvert usually form a pair, and often appear in connection with Blake. The 1914 Swedenborg essay refers to all three, as well as Claude Lorraine, and in 1918, Yeats writes to Lady Gregory of his reading at the Bodelian library: ". . . one can leave one's book on one's table and read there at odd moments. My table there is covered with such things as the etchings and woodcuts of Palmer and Calvert."[130] In the same year, of course, appeared his essay on Gregory, with its list of poetic painters. Unlike Calvert, however, Palmer appears in the poetry as well as the prose. The poem, "The Phases of the Moon," which was published in 1938 edition of A Vision refers to Palmer's etching "The Lonely Tower" and the scene is based on that work. And there is also, of course, the reference to "Palmer's phase" in "Uncle Ben Bulben."[131]

Lister has suggested that Yeats was attracted to Calvert because he was the man of action that the young Yeats wished in vain to be. If this was the case then Yeats may well have seen in Calvert and Palmer a sort of Robertes/Ahern pair, with Palmer as the figure closer to Yeats's self. Certainly they had many traits in common. One cannot imagine the young Yeats reading A. H. Palmer's description of his father as a child without feeling a sympathy approaching empathy. Samuel Palmer, A. H. says, was "physically unlike the average English boy--small of limb, soft handed, and lacking in activity," going on to remark with asperity that

Samuel had a "sensitiveness which he would have been better without."[132] Palmer was from an early age bookish to a degree, and something of a visionary as well. Although he never saw God put his forehead to the widow, as Blake did, he described with great feeling a scene involving his young nurse and himself:

> When less than four years old, as I was standing with her, watching the shadows on the wall from the branches of an elm behind which the moon had risen, she transferred and fixed the fleeting image in my memory by repeating the couplet:
>
> Vain man, the vision of a moment made,
> Dream of a dream and shadow of a shade.
> (Edward Young, Paraphrase of Job)
>
> I never forgot those shadows, and am often trying to paint them.[133]

It would not, in fact, be a terrific exaggeration to say he never painted anything else: the light falling through the leaves became his image of "vision": the communication of the divine with man.[134] His pictures feature moonlight and shadow; even those done with full sun emphasize the shadowed dell in the midst of radiance.

Palmer as a young man achieved what Yeats must have seen as pretty much an ideal existence at a town called Shoreham, where he and a like-minded group of friends settled temporarily to devote themselves to art. They called themselves "The Ancients," because of their admiration for ancient over contemporary art, and Calvert described the group thus: "We were brothers in art, brothers in love, and brothers in that for which love and art subsist--the Ideal--the Kingdom

within."[135] David Cecil describes the group's tastes: "They loved Purcell's music and Milton's poetry and Michelangelo's pictures as the bringers of a message from God."[136] Palmer described the Shoreham area as "the valley of vision,"[137] and devoted himself to his painting with a single-mindedness which can only be described as amazing. He sketched all day, painted most of the night by lamplight, and filled notebooks with lists of reminders to himself of what he must aim for in his next day's work. No one can ever have lived more exclusively for art's sake. And his friends were nearly as devoted: they roamed the countryside by day and night dressed in quaint attire occasioned by poverty and the necessity for many pockets in which to carry pencils and paints, mysterious figures to the country people, who called them "The Extollagers." All this could not have but appealed to Yeats: it shows not only in such poems as "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" but in his later attempts to find like groups: The Rhymers, the Order of the Golden Dawn.

As for Palmer's pictures, the evidence indicates that Yeats most admired the etchings: he doesn't mention the paintings, and it is possible that he may not have seen them, or have seen only poor reproductions like those in Binyon's Followers of William Blake. Although Palmer's paintings had been hung in various galleries in England, they were "avowedly" placed "out of the way,"[138] so that it is possible that Yeats may have missed them.

A. H. divides his father's career into periods, or "eras," in each of which he fell under a peculiar influence which seemed to him almost supernatural. Of the earliest of these, Palmer remarked, ". . . it pleased God to send Mr. Linnell as a good angel from heaven to pluck me from the pit of modern art. . . ."[139] The period of the paintings is that of the influence of Blake (1805-26) and the stay at Shoreham (1826-33). Prior to that era he had spent much time in copying the "Great Masters" and drawing cathedrals and doing engravings after the Campo Santo frescoes (like the Pre-Raphaelites thirty-five years later). But before Blake the real focus of his admiration had been Turner. In 1819, he saw and was "at once deeply impressed by" Turner's Orange Merchantman.[140] The influence here may be seen in Palmer's watercolors, but it was what he considered a "naturalistic" painting style, from which he was turned by the advent of Linnell, and through him, Blake. This influence became the dominant one in his work, but the actual paintings and drawings thus produced do not resemble Blake's work to anything like the degree that Calvert's do. In fact, Palmer's art is remarkable for belonging to no school; its pictorial genealogy cannot easily be traced through any other artist. In his early work, one may certainly see Blake, Linnell, and "one or two of the Old Masters," but even this contains "much that is thoroughly original in conception, sentiment, and execution."[141]

Of the works of Blake which had the most direct influence on Palmer, certainly the foremost was, as with Calvert, the Virgil series. Palmer calls them "perhaps the most intense gems of bucolic sentiment in the whole range of art."[142] These works were not the inception of the love of pastoral in Palmer, but they helped focus his ideas for embodying that spirit:

> I can remember nothing which so agreeably disturbed my lethargy except perhaps my first reading of Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess. But when there I found, in black and white, all my dearest landscape longings embodied, my poor mind kicked out and turned two or three somersaults![143]

There were, of course, other influences beyond those of Turner, Blake and Linnell. Palmer also admired Titian and Claude.

> If we look around us and behind us at the marvellous works of man in the various arts; at works and monuments modern and ancient, is there any greater measure of attainment than Titian's as a colorist; or of spiritual symbolism than in some of the more southerly Italians, and of Blake in his best and most highly finished drawings? Did not the Venetians "constitute the colour art"? Was not Titian particularly master of its phraseology?[144]

Claude also, was part of the Italian influence, with Palmer seeking his "magical combinations" in the Italian landscape. He called Claude "the greatest landscape painter who ever lived . . . superlative in "tree-drawing", whose "divinest" landscape was the Enchanted Castle. He also praises Rembrandt, Durer, Poussin, Sebastian Boudon, and Fuseli (this latter

one of the few of Blake and Palmer's enthusiasms which Yeats does not seem to have adopted), and says "the highest art is what you see in the Belvidere torso. . . ." He summarizes his own taste thus: "A test of taste. Do I love Virgi, the Antique, Michaelangelo, Milton, Nicholas Poussin and Claude? Or, more compactly, thus, Do I love the Guilio Romano in the National Gallery?"[145]

To the observer, the influence of Blake seems most present in the "certain strangeness in the proportion" that makes each picture seem to be compressed within its frame. But the actual greatest influence cannot be seen as such. Blake helped to confirm Palmer's tendency away from "naturalism" and into "vision." The epigraph to the Life and Letters contains these quotations: "Genius is the unreserved devotion of the whole soul to the divine, poetic arts, and through them to God; deeming all else, even to our daily bread, only valuable as it helps us to unveil the heavenly face of Beauty," and "The Visions of the soul, being perfect, are the only true standard by which nature must be tried." This quality accounts for his admiration of the painters he considers greatest. Claude, for instance:

> I do not think that it is either the truth of his colour, or the charm of his trees (unrivalled though they be), or the gold of his sunshine that makes Claude the greatest of landscape-painters; but that Golden Age into which poetic minds are thrown back, on the first sight of one of his uncleaned pictures.[146]

"Vision" and "dream" are key words to an understanding of Palmer. Although he differed from Blake, and even from Calvert, in the emphasis in his works on landscape, and therefore "nature," it is never actuality, but always that vision of the "Golden Age," that he sought to produce. As Cecil puts it, "his sketches from nature were only a preparation for the landscapes he painted at home: and these were inventions, ideal scenes designed as vehicles for religious sentiment, nature depicted as an expression of the mind of its Divine Creator."[147] Even the plants shown are not always indigenous, and his presentation is often expressionistically exaggerated, especially in the star and moon-filled skies that he loved. "I think the great landscape painter," he said, "needs only so much truth as is necessary to make the ideal probable."[148]

A frequent pre-painting ritual of Palmer's was the use of poetry for inspiration. I am not referring to his illustrations of poetry, but to his practice of reading poetry before going out to sketch or beginning a design, for the purpose of invoking a creative, visionary mood. He calls it "a great gorge of old poetry to get up the dreaming,"[149] from which he could paint. He would then paint the actual landscape as he saw it through this visionary glow--the finished painting having no direct reference to the poetry. Like Blake and Calvert (and Yeats, of course), Palmer saw the arts are more than akin. "Poetic art, expressing itself

by verse, by marble, or by picture, is one of man's loftiest pursuits. . . ."[150] As in Yeats, the distinctions are of the arts as mediums of vision: "It seems evident to me that poetry, being successional as to time and to suggestion of space, and as it can turn and look all round it, admits more objects than picture; but that picture, although tied to the unity of one moment and one aspect, gives incomparably more illustration to each of the images."[151] He describes Blake's Virgil woodcuts as "models of the most exquisite pitch of intense poetry."[152] Of Claude, he said, "Ordinary landscapes remind us of what we see in the country; Claude's of what we read in the greatest poets and of their perception of the country."[153] He too, places art above temporal life:

> I doubt not but there must be the study of this creation, as well as art and vision; tho' I cannot think it other than the veil of Heaven, through which her divine features are dimly smiling; the setting of the table before the feast; the symphony before the tune; the prologue of the drama; a dream, and antepast, and proscenium of eternity.[154]

At times one might think Yeats himself was speaking: Palmer says he thinks that Milton's poetry will be read in Heaven,

> And to be yet more mad--to foam at the mouth, I will declare my conviction that the St. George of Donatello, the Night of Michelangelo, and The Last Supper of da Vinci are as casts and copies, of which, when their artists had obtained of God to conceive the idea, an eternal mould was placed above the tenth sphere, beyond change and decay.[155]

This idea brings forth some of Palmer's most poetic prose:

> Planets and systems rolling through millions upon millions of miles of dark, empty space are dismal matters to think on, and repulsive to our human feelings, as crushing man and his concerns into less than a point--an atom. Whereas the Torso Belvidere is more truly sublime than an infinity of vacuum; and the Sistine Chapel, as an inspiration of the Spirit of Wisdom, than any of the material wonders of the universe. It is the work of God upon mind, which must needs excel His working upon matter, as the subject is greater, although the Infinite Wisdom the same. I have long believed that these vast astronomical spaces are real to us only while we sojourn in the natural body, and that the soul which has put on immortality will, so far as soul can be cognizant of space, find itself larger than the whole material universe.[156]

In the conveyance of these visions Palmer was supremely the conscious artist. He constantly analyzed his own virtues and deficiencies, writing himself endless lists as reminders of what he must aim for in his following work. Yeats, the man who made himself a poet, must have sympathized with Palmer's obsession with technique. A journal entry in 1843 reads, "Try to make my things first Poetic! Second effective," and goes on to explain that "Poetic" is to be achieved by "doing subjects I love and greatly desire to do. BRITISH: ROMANTIC: CLASSIC: IDEAL." A. H. comments that

> the resolution was not without a courage of its own, for my father knew from experience that the kind of art he expresses his intention of following was either repudiated by nine-tenths of those to whom an artist has to look for his daily bread, or put aside as we should put aside a book in Sanscrit. The Romantic and Ideal were dangerous reeds to lean upon even in the year of grace 1843. But sanguine, simple-minded enthusiasm, though meeting again and again with its

> rebuff, revived just as often, and clung just as unreasonably around the old loves of the mind.[157]

After he left Shoreham, Palmer's work changed dramatically. The "visionary" quality almost disappeared under the influence of the hyper-critical Linnell, now his father-in-law, and that of the Venetian landscapists and other "Old Masters" whom he began to emulate during his Italian trip. A. H. says that his father returned to England with the intention of taking up "the thread of his Shoreham studies," but the results were disappointing, "weak and timid to a degree surprising to those who are familiar with the crisp touch, glowing colour, and bold impasto of the best Shoreham panels. The composition might be graceful, the light and shade well studied, but the love of higher qualities than these--the 'double vision' so peculiarly evident in these works appeared no longer."[158] In the late 1870's, however, that tone was somewhat restored in the Milton and Virgil series of etchings. These are again referred to as "visions" by A. H.

Yeats's favorite of Palmer's works, The Lonely Tower etching, was completed in 1867. Cecil offers these illuminating comments on that work:

> In Italy Palmer was submerged; Claude's influence had drowned Palmer's native inspiration. Back in England this inspiration had emerged again. But for the time being Palmer dropped ideal landscape painting in favor of direct studies from nature. When he took up etching, however, he resumed his attempt at ideal landscape, but using a classic and not a Gothic convention for the purpose. The best of the Milton illustrations--

> The Bellmen and The Lonely Tower--show the perfecting and culmination of this phase of his art. They employ the classic convention of landscape composition, the classic mode of idealization; but these are adapted and acclimatized to suit the English scene and the Palmer spirit. Once more the typical Palmer scene opens before us; twilight with the moon rising over farm and village, the flocks in fold and their guardian, his labor over, returning home, or reclined in repose under the evening sky. The effect is not as compelling as that of the Shoreham masterpieces. For, even in its modified form, the classic convention could not convey the unearthliness of Palmer's vision as could the bold and Blakean mode he had employed in his youth. More importantly, the vision itself had faded. The Milton etchings represent rather the memory of a vision: in them we see it, as it were, at second remove--as a reflection, an echo. But that echo, that reflection, have their own fainter and elegiac beauty.[159]

Probably it was the "elegaic" tone which most attracted Yeats. Palmer's own comment upon this drawing was "We must reach poetic loneliness--not the loneliness of the desert, but a secluded spot."[160]

That elegaic tone is due in part to the reappearance in these etchings of some of Palmer's favorite symbols, the same that he had used to such good effect in the Shoreham panels. A. H. says, "If we hurriedly turn over the mass of these Shoreham productions we shall probably be struck first by the predilection shown for moons, church spires, flocks of sheep, twilights, and cornfields, and then by the fact that there is so little sameness or repetition in design. A fondness for certain effects and certain objects had not impaired the fertility of the inventor's imagination in representing them."[161] These symbols were largely drawn from the actual Shoreham countryside, described by A. H. as

> The great round hills of the valley and the surrounding country gave exquisite feelings of exuberance and richness. There were yew trees, great horse-chestnuts; as well as vast oaks (still existing) and beeches and chestnuts next door in the park at Lullingstone; there were churches with spires, vistas not far off from the lines of the Kentish Weald which suggested infinity and God's eternity to Palmer; there were walled gardens enriched with well-kept fruit trees; and the north-south run of the valley caused excellent effects of glow after the sun had disappeared, or before the moon rose, behind the black slopes.[162]

But all these natural objects became, as A. H. shows, symbols in Palmer's vision of the earth as Eden. Palmer himself wrote that:

> Creation sometimes pours into the spiritual eye the radiance of Heaven: the green mountains that glimmer in a summer's gloaming from the dusky yet bloomy east; the moon opening her golden eye, or walking in brightness among innumerable islands of light, not only thrill the optic nerve, but shed a mild, a grateful, an unearthly lustre into the inmost spirits, as seem the interchanging twilight of that peaceful country, where there is no sorrow and no night.[163]

Palmer described Blake as "a man without a mask," a phrase which must have stuck in Yeats's mind. Of Palmer himself, however, no such thing could be said; he was at times capable of an almost Yeatsian self-consciousness. In old age, he wrote of himself in the third person:

> He believed in men (as he read of them in books). He spent years in hard study and reading and wished to do good with his knowledge. He thought also he might by unwavering industry help toward an honest maintenance. He has now lived to find out his mistake. He is living somewhere in the environs of London, old, neglected, isolated--laughing at the delusion under which he trimmed the midnight lamp and cherished the romance

> of the good and the beautiful; except so far as that for their own sake, he values them above choice gold. He has learned however not to "throw pearls to hogs". and appears, I believe, in company, only a poor good-natured fellow fond of a harmless jest. . . .[164]

Here is indeed a "comfortable kind of old scare-crow," a figure who no doubt should be added to the list of protypes of Yeats "old man" along with Swift and Blake.

The major influence of Palmer and Calvert, as distinguished from Blake, was in their interest in the pastoral. It is among the antecedents of Yeats's own use of pastoral. Although this mode produced no great poems for Yeats, it led, as Marion Witt has shown in her study of the great Gregory elegy,[165] to the creation of at least that one poem, described by Yeats as the best thing he had done. The earlier attempt at the "pastoral elegy" form was the poem titled first "A Dead Shepherd," then "The Sad Shepherd," and finally "Shepherd and Goatherd." The pastoral mode in general, however, begins Yeats collected works (he regarded pastoral as a means of guiding early artistic development, as he says in the essay "The Theatre"). The first poems in the collected edition are pastoral: "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" and "The Sad Shepherd." Yeats says (in a note written in 1925) that these poems were written before he was twenty, for a pastoral play, "The Island of Statues" and that their sources were his reading: "probably" Spenser, Virgil and Sidney.[166] He nowhere attributes his use of pastoral to the influence of Blake and his followers; rather he cites literary

antecedents, later adding Jonson to the group. Witt, however, attempts to show (quite convincingly) that Blake, Calvert, and Palmer are unacknowledged influences on Yeats's pastorals. That Yeats probably also had in mind Gregory's own paintings (which he compared to those of Calvert and Palmer) is indicated by his remarks to Lady Gregory about the setting of "Shepherd and Goatherd." "A goatherd and a shepherd are talking in some vague place, perhaps on the Burren Hills, in some remote period of the world. It is a new form for me and I think for modern poetry."[167] Gregory, of course, painted the Burren Hills. There is also a rather apparent connection with his painting of Orpheus, not mentioned by Yeats, but striking to the observer. It would perhaps not be figurative to say that "Shepherd and Goatherd" stands in like relationship to "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" as the works of Calvert and Palmer to those of Gregory.[168] Witt suggests that the line from "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" that refers to "that stern colour and that delicate line / That are our secret discipline"[169] is an illusion to Palmer's letters and notebooks and to the "'secret' connection between the poet and the painter, both drawing strength from an asceticism of style."[170] One might well go further than all this to point out that the connection between pastoral and elegy places Blake and his followers in direct ancestry to many of Yeats's greatest poems, not just the Gregory elegy. Just as the theme of love invoked

in Yeats's mind the scenery of Pre-Raphaelitism, the elegaic mood brought forth evocations of Palmer and Calvert.

Among these early poems, however, the piece most influenced by the Blake group would seem to be "The Lake Isle of Innisfree."[171] We have noted that a characteristic of the pastorals of Blake, Calvert, and Palmer was their genuine rusticity, and this is especially true of Palmer. The vein of "high" pastoral that shows in the "faun" and "Arcady" motifs of Yeats's poetry may be attributable (as to visual background) to Turner ("The Golden Bough" is only one of a number of scenes from classical legend portrayed in a Romantic neverland of enchanted cities upon distant mountains, sunlit meadows, and incredibly graceful trees), and to some extent to Calvert, whose figures wear classical draperies. Palmer's shepherds (and other figures) wear, with only a few exceptions, garb that suggests the contemporary. And in both Calvert and Palmer, the scenery is realistic; in Palmer's case, as we have seen, it is carefully localized (Shoreham, usually, or areas of Italy), sometimes identified in the title, as in his painting of "The Weald of Kent." The later Pre-Raphaelites, of course, had little interest in landscape background, preferring the flat plane decorated with flowers, draperies, architectural details, etc. Thus an attempt to portray a specific locale, Innisfree, by Yeats, produced instead an evocation of Calvert and Palmer's paintings and etchings, complete with wattled huts, bucolic

appurtenances such as bean rows, flocks of birds, and the bower where stars and shadows dominate.

Blake and his followers stand among the antecedents of some of Yeats's central poetic symbols. We have mentioned the gyre and the tower, the possibility of a relationship to the wheel of phases of A Vision, and there are the less important connections such as wattled huts and spiralling flights of birds. The most important and striking likeness, however, is that of the dominance of the moon as a symbol in Calvert and Palmer's pictures, Blake's writings, and Yeats's poetry and philosophy. This relationship has been most fully investigated by Raymond Lister, in his essay entitled "Beulah to Byzantium: A Study of Parallels in the Works of W. B. Yeats, Wm. Blake, Samuel Palmer, and Edward Calvert."[172] Lister points out that the moon was the most consistent symbol of the group of the "Ancients" as a whole, though he examines it only as it appears in the works of Blake, Calvert, and Palmer. And although he notes the connection of the waning crescent of Palmer's "The Lonely Tower" with the title of Yeats's "The Phases of the Moon," he does not go on to remark Palmer's interest in those phases. Many of Palmer's pictures contain in their titles mention of whether the subject is seen by a full moon, harvest moon, crescent moon, moon and stars, stars alone, or twilight. The exact significance to himself of these phases Palmer leaves unstated, but we may feel certain that Yeats understood them fully!

In "The Phases of the Moon," Yeats refers directly to Palmer's etching "The Lonely Tower":

> He has found, after the manner of his kind,
> Mere images; chosen this place to live in
> Because, it may be, of the candle-light
> From the far tower where Milton's Platonist
> Sat late, or Shelley's visionary prince:
> The lonely light that Samuel Palmer engraved,
> An image of mysterious wisdom won by toil.[173]

Any reader of Yeats will scarcely need to have the importance of the tower symbol pointed out to him, or, probably, the fact that this poem is one of Yeats's most important didactic works, and Robartes his personification of the sort of wisdom he wished, but hardly expected, to attain himself. What is not immediately evident to most readers, however, is that the scene portrayed in the poem is that of Palmer's etching. Robartes and Ahern are standing some distance away from the tower--between them is a bridge over a chasm. It is night: there is a "dwindling and late-risen moon," as the travellers pause and look back to where they can see the light of a candle through the tower window. In Palmer's picture, the two figures in the right foreground are shepherds, who gaze back towards the tower on the left horizon. A deep narrow gully runs from the left foreground back toward the right horizon. At the extreme left foreground a tree grows out of the gully, and out of that tree an owl is flying down the course of the wash. Rough masonry edges a road (or it could be a bridge) that runs along the left edge of the

picture. Along this road an oxwain travels toward the horizon: the tower itself is shaped much like Ballylee--a simple rectangle, though with the suggestion of battlements on top, and a long narrow window near the summit. This window is alight, and in the dark sky above and behind it are many stars. At the bottom of the downward slope to the right of the hill below the crest of the tower, just upon the horizon right of center is a crescent moon, which illuminates a small portion of the sky and silhouettes a group of three trees in the right middle ground that mask the right horizon. Below these trees are the flock and the shepherds. It is a work marvellously evocative, as Palmer often is, of the atmosphere of moonlight. Yeats has used many details of the etching--even the owl appears, transformed into a bat--as well as its moon-washed tone, but the most striking likeness is in the composition of the scene as a whole. It is impossible that such a likeness can have been accident, unlikely that it would have been subconscious--surely this is a case in which Yeats deliberately copied a work of graphic art for his poem.

A reference to Palmer occurs also in Yeats's last poem, "Under Ben Bulben":

> Gyres run on;
> When that greater dream had gone
> Calvert and Wilson, Blake and Claude,
> Prepared a rest for the people of God,
> Palmer's phase, but after that
> Confusion fell upon our thought.[174]

The "greater dream" refers to the Quattrocento period, when the dream portrayed as "God or Saint" against backgrounds of "gardens where a soul's at ease." The stages before this are first the Egyptians and Geeeks, whose "measurement began our might," then Michaelangelo, chief proof of the purpose of art: "profane perfection of mankind." The point of the section is to show how modern art has fallen away from its task of portraying "perfection"--the ideal--and because of that "confusion" has fallen upon "our thought," so that our children are "growing up / All out of shape from toe to top." Thus Blake and his followers appear as the last true artists: the last to portray the necessary vision of the ideal as a model for man's development. Elsewhere as we have seen Yeats has spoken with what is probably mild scorn of the "peaceful Swedenborgian heaven : invoked by these artists; nonetheless, that view of eternity is at least a view of eternity, not of the confusion of human life. Elsewhere he has referred to Palmer and Calvert as "fragmentary symbolists"; but that, of course, is preferable to no symbolism at all.

Yeats believed that ". . . there is for every man some one scene, some one adventure, some one picture that is the image of his secret life, for wisdom first speaks in images."[175] He also says that the eighteenth-century's horror of desolate places had led him to conclude that ". . . we see that not only people but entire epochs have

symbolical landscapes."[176] To this one might add that literary themes for him had their appropriate scenes and symbolical landscapes which, once established in his mind, he tended to modify, but not to change, in later poems on the same theme. But beyond the differences in landscapes, there is a similarity in the artists we have been discussing. They all (with the exception of Turner, and possibly Watts) favor a degree of distortion or "mannerism" in their figures, and above all in their composition. Here is the most truly striking comparison to the poetry of the early Yeats: the "claustrophobic" effect. The question of the psychological causes of a liking for this effect is beside my point. Its esthetic effect is to produce an emphasis on the artness of the work of art ("artificiality," if you will), an effect of at once emphasizing the subject and distancing it, as if it were seen through the wrong end of a telescope. The effect of the vignette is to say, "This is a picture: study it." The young Yeats's poetry is a thing far removed from life, but during the middle years it would be brought closer to reality by, among other factors, Yeats's efforts to follow Walter Pater's dictum that the arts should be "purified" of reference to one another.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1] Autobiography, p. 77.

[2] Memoirs, p. 121.

[3] Essays, p. 429 - 30.

[4] Bell, p. 37.

[5] Walter Pater has, from the point of view of this later century, come to be seen as part of the Pre-Raphaelite group, but he himself did not acknowledge the alignment. There is, moreover, an important difference in his attitude toward the relationship between the arts. It is the Pater-dominated group of "The Rhymers" that Yeats refers to when he mentions "the art criticism of friends" that caused him to feel "shame" in his admiration of the Pre-Raphaelites.

[6] Alan Pistorius, D. G. Rossetti and Early Yeats (Univ. of Calif., Berkeley, 1973).

[7] Bell, p. 65.

[8] Bell, p. 74.

[9] Bell, p. 69.

[10] Pistorius, p. 63.

[11] Pistorius, p. 66.

[12] Essays and Introductions, p. 495. Pistorius comments that Rickett's work represents the Pre-Raphaelite Style "pushed to its logical, perhaps self-parodic, conclusion" (p. 66).

[13] Letters, p. 865.

[14] Letters, p. 901.

[15] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 183.

[16] Essays, p. 430.

[17] Memoirs, p. 283.

[18] Autobiography, p. 96.

[19] Pistorius, p. 83.

[20] Bell, p. 53.

[21] Bell, p. 53.

[22] Uncollected Prose, p. 194.

[23] Autobiography, p. 95.

[24] Although Morris' influence was at its height from 1887-1906, and he is most often mentioned in what Yeats wrote then, he also figures in "If I Were Four and Twenty" (1919), and in letters dated 1927, 1930, and 1936.

[25] (Dublin: Dolmen, 1962).

[26] Peter Faulkner, William Morris and W. B. Yeats (Dublin: Dolmen, 1962), p. 31.

[27] Faulkner, p. 8.

[28] Essays, p. 64.

[29] Autobiography, p. 96.

[30] Vision, p. 162.

[31] Autobiography, p. 96.

[32] Autobiography, p. 102.

[33] Autobiography, p. 260.

[34] Autobiography, p. 130.

[35] Explorations, p. 275, and Letters, p. 430.

[36] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 292.

[37] Bridge, p. 41.

[38] Autobiography, p. 76.

[39] Autobiography, p. 76.

[40] Autobiography, p. 96.

[41] Autobiography, p. 102.

[42] Essays, p. 435.

[43] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 194.

[44] Autobiography, p. 338.

[45] Pistorius, p. 83.

[46] Pistorius, p. 26.

[47] Pistorius, p. 32.

[48] Pistorius, p. 35.

[49] Pistorius, p. 44.

[50] Pistorius, p. 38.

[51] Essays, p. 64.

[52] Essays, p. 65.

[53] Autobiography, p. 201.

[54] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 183.

[55] Vision, p. 129.

[56] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Hand and Soul," in The Bibelot (New York: William B. Wise and Co., 1895), I, pp. 271 - 90.

[57] Autobiography, p. 28.

[58] Autobiography, p. 106. It is surprising that Yeats should have chosen this work by Nettleship for his poem, for apparently the burden of his criticism in the review was of the "big lion pictures." These he castigated in the Autobiography as "too much concerned with the sense of touch, with the softness or roughness, the minutely observed irregularity of surfaces for his genius; and I think he knew it." Nettleship, however, defended these works, which he said Rossetti had called "potboilers," by insisting that they were "symbols." In this poem, Yeats seems to agree, but in the Autobiography, he reports having urged Nettleship to "design gods and angels and lost spirits once more." To this Nettleship replied, "Nobody would be pleased!" Yeats was disappointed:

> I had but little knowledge of art for there was but little scholarship in the Dublin art school, so I overrated the quality of anything that could be connected with my general beliefs about the world. If I had been able to give angelical or diabolical names to his lions I might have liked them also and I think that Nettleship himself would have like them better and liking them better would have become a better painter. (p. 106)

By contrast, the early "imaginative designs" retained their attraction:

> One of the sensations of my childhood was a description of a now lost design of Nettleship's, "God Creating Evil," a vast terrifying face, a woman and a tiger rising from the forehead. Why did it seem so blasphemous and so profound? It was many years before I understood that we must not demand even the welfare of the human race, or traffic with divinity in our prayers. Divinity moves outside our antinomies, it may be our lot to worship in terror; "Did He who made the lamb make thee?" (Essays, p. 62).

Nettleship brought together the influences of Rossetti and Blake. Yeats quotes his father as saying, "George Wilson was our born painter, but Nettleship our genius," and notes that the "early designs, though often badly drawn, fulfilled my hopes." These showed Blake's influence, "but had in place of Blake's joyous, intellectual energy a Saturnian passion and melancholy." Writing in the Autobiography many years later, Yeats says

> They rise before me even now in meditation, especially a blind, Titan-like ghost floating with groping hands above the tree tops. I wrote a criticism, and arranged for reproductions with the editor of an art magazine, but after it was written and accepted the proprietor, raising what I considered an obsequious caw in the Huxley, Tyndall, Carolus Duran, Bastien-Lepage rookery, insisted upon its rejection. (p. 105)

[59] Dwight Eddins, Yeats: The Nineteenth-Century Matrix (Univ. of Alabama Press, 1971), p. 89.

[60] Eddins, p. 90.

[61] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 401.

[62] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 185.

[63] Burne-Jones' nudes are so noticeably white as to have been called "soap sculptures."

[64] Collected Poems, p. 351.

[65] Collected Poems, p. 20.

[66] Collected Poems, pp. 40 - 1.

[67] "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," Collected Poems, p. 8.

[68] "Anashuya and Vijaya," Collected Poems, pp. 10-11.

[69] Collected Poems, p. 16. J. B. Yeats painted a portrait of William as King Goll.

[70] Collected Poems, p. 48.

[71] Collected Poems, p. 14.

[72] Collected Poems, p. 31.

[73] Collected Poems, p. 36.

[74] Pistorius, p. 126.

[75] "The Countess Cathleen in Paradise," Collected Poems, p. 42.

[76] Autobiography, p. 371.

[77] Vision, p. 137.

[78] Essays, p. 116.

[79] Uncollected Prose, I, p. 420.

[80] As a mystic, Yeats associated Blake with Swedenborg, and described in Explorations, p. 37, the peculiar character of their visions:

> Swedenborg, because he belongs to an eighteenth century not yet touched by the romantic revival, feels horror amid the rocky uninhabited places, and so believes that the evil are in such places while the good are amid smooth grass and garden walks and the clear sunlight of Claude Lorraine . . .
>
> His (Blake's) own memory being full of images from painting and from poetry, he discovered more profound "correspondences", yet always in his boys and girls walking or dancing on smooth grass and in golden light, as in the pastoral scenes cut upon wood or copper by his disciples Palmer and Calvert, one notices the peaceful Swedenborgian heaven.

[81] William Butler Yeats, John Sherman and Dhoya, ed. Richard C. Finneran (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1969), p. 97.

[82] William Butler Yeats, Early Poems and Stories (London: Macmillan, 1925), p. 484.

[83] Bridge, p. 163.

[84] Autobiography, pp. 76 - 7.

[85] Letters, p. 161.

[86] Memoirs, p. 67

[87] Letters, p. 686.

[88] Letters, p. 698.

[89] Letters, p. 710.

[90] Letters, p. 730.

[91] Autobiography, p. 109.

[92] Letters, p. 872.

[93] Introduction to Horton, p. 13.

[94] Essays, p. 132.

[95] Uncollected Prose, p. 400

[96] Autobiography, p. 122.

[97] Autobiography, p. 347.

[98] Explorations, p. 43.

[99] Memoirs, p. 284.

[100] Essays, p. 105.

[101] William Blake, The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 521.

[102] Blake, p. 540.

[103] Blake, p. 537.

[104] Blake, p. 625.

[105] Blake, p. 649.

[106] Blake, p. 631.

[107] Blake, p. 628.

[108] Blake, p. 629.

[109] Blake, p. 624.

[110] Blake, p. 634.

[111] Blake, p. 640.

[112] Blake, p. 563.

[113] Blake, p. 564.

[114] Blake, p. 644.

[115] Blake, p. 641.

[116] Raymond Lister, Edward Calvert (London: J. Bell, 1962), p. 4.

[117] Although his son Samuel wrote an extensive memoir, Samuel Calvert, A Memoir of Edward Calvert, Artist (London, 1893), it is in Raymond Lister's words, "of tremendous rarity" and does not circulate from the few libraries which own a copy. Thus one must rely upon Lister, who has written a biography, Edward Calvert, and an essay, "Beulah to Byzantium: A Study of Parallels in the Works of W. B. Yeats, William Blake, Samuel Palmer, and Edward Calvert" (Dublin: Dolmen, 1965). Unfortunately Lister down-plays and even seems uncomfortable about just those aspects of Calvert's mind which would have interested Yeats most. In his biography, Lister admits that Calvert did indeed put up an altar to Pan in his garden, but adds uneasily that there is "no real evidence" to show that he actually offered sacrifices there (p. 36). As Yeats himself notes in his writings about Gregory, he was familiar with, and presumably interested in, Calvert's mythological and musical theories. He refers to "Calvert's philosophy of myth and his musical theory" (p. 430). These Lister characterizes as "extremely boring to read" (p. 52) (an evaluation with which it is most unlikely that Yeats would have agreed) and gives these theories only the most cursory attention. That attention must suffice the student, however, as it is all he is going to get!

[118] Lister, Appendix III, "On the Late Oliver Finch as a Painter," pp. 109 - 119.

[119] Laurence Binyon, The Followers of William Blake (London: Halton and Truscott Smith, Ltd., 1925), p. 27 - 8.

[120] The musical "system" is even less accessible to investigation. The epigraph written by Calvert to Ten Spiritual Designs gives an indication of its basis: "I know that there is a mastery and a music that shall command truth itself to look as we would have it, and to echo the pulses of the heart. Physical truth being translated into musical truth." The particular "Physical" medium which Calvert attempted to translate was color. In a letter to Palmer, he wrote, "I believe that the chords of the visual medium should be governed, as in the audital, by musical harmony" (p. 53). Lister, as I have said, has little or no sympathy with Calvert's "theorising," but he does note:

> Apart from his conversations and correspondences with his wife, there survive transcripts of his notes on principles of art, of notes on the work of Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese, Titian, Corregio, Giorgione, Ingrés, and of a musical theory of colour, conceived early in life, and still attracting his attention until just before he died. Calvert was convinced that the Ancient Greek painters had built their art upon a musical basis, and his colour theory was in part a quest for the rediscovery of this. Most of his later works were painted according to this theory (p. 52).

Lister also offers one example, which he assures the reader is sufficient, taken from the memoir written by Calvert's son:

> At an early period he speaks of an ascending scale from the chryseic, 'climbing from the golden earth, through the rubiate to the sapphirine--the celestial.' We quote this passage one one of his early and most exuberant conceptions: 'Iris-like and centered in gold' the 'voice' is in descending scale from above.
>
> | Sapphirine | Chryseic | Rubiate | Divine, sacrificial, |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | 0 | 00 | 000 | and ending in |
> | I | 2 | 3 | blood. |
>
> But in the scale of returning and ascending flight, passing and climbing from the golden earth--piercing through veils, and passing things more and more precious--the links of the eternal chain are known but not seen. The last and uppermost flights, through a vaulted depth, is voiceless and sublime. This, the ascending vocal scale, is the fittest for man wherewith to hymn his paeans of praise,
>
> | Chryseic | Rubiate | Sapphirine. (p. 53) |
> |---|---|---|
> | 00 | 000 | 0 |

Lister notes that the original manuscript of this was destroyed by Calvert himself, who believed that not all "truths" were appropriate for the ears of all men. Certainly Yeats, however, might have wished to hear them. It is in this interest in the interaction of the arts that Calvert's influence, as distinct from Blake's, is evident.

[121] Lister, p. 28.

[122] Binyon, p. 16.

[123] Binyon, p. 17. It should perhaps be added that Palmer's paintings show less of the influence of Blake's graphic art than do the Calvert woodcuts we have been discussing.

[124] Lister, p. 32.

[125] Lister, p. 109.

[126] In "The Tribes of Dann," New Review, Nov., 1897, reprinted in Uncollected Prose, I, p. 54.

[127] Letters, p. 799.

[128] Essays, p. 227.

[129] To top all off, Calvert was interested in ghosts. He took "opportunities of collecting evidence as to haunted houses," and talking to "alleged eyewitnesses" (p. 141), just as did Yeats himself.

[130] Letters, p. 646.

[131] The phrase isn't originally Palmer's, as Lister has pointed out, though he uses it in his description of Blake's Virgil series:

> They are like all that wonderful artist's works the drawing aside of the fleshly curtain and the glimpse which all the most holy, studious saints and sages have enjoyed, of that rest that remaineth to the people of God." (Life and Letters, p. 16).

The original phrase occurs in Paul's "Epistle to the Hebrews," IV:9--"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

[132] There was a vein of morbidity in Samuel's temper that A. H. ascribes unsympathetically to lack of exercise: "The lugubrious poetry and morbid prose upon which he sometimes spent his time would have been better unwritten; and the troubles which caused him to give way in that manner

would have appeared less formidable if he had found some healthy distraction other than mere walking, or an occasional jolt upon a superannuated cart-horse." (p. 137) There is indeed, a good bit of dramatic interest generated in the Life and Letters by the conflict of Palmer's artistic enthusiasm with his son's "sensible" exasperation (p. 138), and it is a conflict that Yeats must have often experienced in his own life.

[133] A. H. Palmer, ed. The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer, Painter and Etcher (London: Seeley and Co., 1892), p. 5.

[134] I think this is the reference in "Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillin" (CP, p. 283) to the light "somewhat broken by the leaves."

[135] Calvert, quoted in Carlos Peacock, Samuel Palmer: Shoreham and After (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, Ltd., 1968), p. 32.

[136] David Cecil, Visionary and Dreamer: Two Poetic Painters, Samuel Palmer and Edward Burne-Jones (Washington: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), p. 39.

[137] Palmer, p. 41.

[138] Palmer's claim that his paintings were deliberately placed in obscure positions in exhibitions was confirmed by Peacock, who says that their "brilliancy of tone" killed the effect of the neighboring paintings, as, indeed, did Turner's. But Turner was too important to be hung in a corner!

[139] Palmer, p. 14.

[140] Peacock, p. 25.

[141] Palmer, p. 20.

[142] Palmer, p. 323.

[143] Palmer, p. 18.

[144] Palmer, p. 319.

[145] Palmer, p. 250.

[146] Palmer, p. 250.

[147] Cecil, p. 48.

[148] Palmer, quoted in Cecil, p. 49.

[149] Palmer, p. 15.

[150] Palmer, p. 326.

[151] Palmer, p. 272.

[152] Palmer, p. 15.

[153] Palmer, quoted in Cecil, p. 65.

[154] Palmer, p. 176.

[155] Palmer, quoted in Geoffrey Grigson, Samuel Palmer: The Visionary Years (London, 1947), p. 150.

[156] Palmer, p. 216.

[157] Palmer, p. 77.

[158] Palmer, p. 73.

[159] Cecil, p. 82.

[160] Palmer, quoted in Marion Witt, "The Making of an Elegy: Yeats's 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory,'" Modern Poetry, XLVIII (195), p. 118.

[161] Palmer, p. 50.

[162] Palmer, p. 87. Turner and Palmer alone of English painters portrayed the horse-chestnut tree. Thus it was perhaps in one of their paintings that Yeats saw the "great-rooted blossomer" of "Among School-Children."

[163] Palmer, p. 46.

[164] Palmer, p. 81.

[165] Witt, p. 112.

[166] Yeats, quoted in A. Norman Jeffares, A Commentary on the Poems of W. B. Yeats (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1943), p. 3.

[167] Yeats, quoted in Joseph Hone, W. B. Yeats (New York, 1943), pp. 330 - 1.

[168] Blake is of course implied here, as his Virgil woodcuts were the inspiration of Calvert and Palmer's drawings.

[169] Collected Poems, p. 130.

[170] Witt, p. 119.

[171] Collected Poems, p. 39.

[172] This essay was published in Dublin, by Dolmen, 1965. It incorporated the material from an earlier study entitled "W. B. Yeats and Edward Calvert." Although Lister discusses other symbols as well, the primary focus of this article is the resemblance between "Blake's symbolic city of Golgonooza, the city of art and vision, surrounded by the lake of Udan-Adan, the waters of non-visionary life" and "Yeats's Byzantium, another city of art, 'the city of culture,' surrounded by that dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea'" (p. 43); and of the moon, Blake's symbol of Beulah, with its use in the works of Calvert, Palmer, and Yeats. "Moons appear everywhere in Yeats's and Palmer's works, and to each man they are the eternal feminine symbolized, once again Blake's Beulah symbol." (p. 61)

[173] Vision, p. 59.

[174] Collected Poems, p. 342.

[175] Essays, p. 232.

[176] Essays, p. 95.

CHAPTER IV

THE MIDDLE YEARS: "OF PATER'S SCHOOL"

Arthur Symons describes Pater's Studies in The Renaissance as "the most beautiful book of prose in our literature." To Yeats's fin-de-siecle group it was more than a study in art history--it was a model of style, and regarded as almost lyric. Symons says, "I have always thought that Pater's Conclusion to his book on the Renaissance is one of the most imaginative and perfect and intensely personal confessions that he ever wrote."[1] For some, it was a holy book--Oscar Wilde so admired Pater that he even imitated his speaking voice. Wilde called the Renaissance "My golden book . . . The very flower of The Decadence."[2] Yeats was himself never such a dedicated disciple, but he did adopt certain ideas from Pater, and recognized the power of his influence: "If Rossetti was a subconscious influence, and perhaps the most powerful of all, we looked consciously to Pater for our philosophy."[3] This influence included virtually everyone Yeats knew, even "Diana Vernon," who, he says,

taught him to admire Watteau and Mantegna: "She too was of Pater's School."[4] It is clear from the context that he included himself in that "school." Of Lionel Johnson, Yeats said "He was the first disciple of Walter Pater whom I had met, and he had taken from Walter Pater certain favorite words that came to mean much for me: 'Life Should be a Ritual'; and we should value it for 'magnificence,' for all that is 'hieratic.'" We can determine from his remarks that Yeats had read Marius The Epicurean (he mentions the "Animula Vagula" chapter several times) and probably Imaginary Portraits and The Renaissance, at least, of the other works. This is not to say that he had read no more--under the circumstances of his social group, he no doubt would have been unable to avoid doing so!

A primary effect upon his thought and art was that divorce between the arts that he attributes in "Art and Ideas" to the influence of Arthur Hallam. He calls this the "aesthetic school" and says "I developed these principles to the rejection of all detailed description, that I might not steal the painter's business, and indeed I was always discovering some art or science that I might be rid of: and I found encouragement by noticing all around me painters who were ridding their pictures, and indeed their minds, of literature."[5] Writing in 1910, he cites Pater as the source of the idea that "we should

use in every art but that which is peculiar to it, till we have turned into beauty all things that it has, and cease to regret the things that it has not."[6] Symons says that Pater came nearer "to a complete and final disentangling of the meaning and functions of the arts . . . than any writer on aesthetics has yet done."[7] It was on this issue that Yeats finally split with "aestheticism," but for a while he went along with the trend, seeing it as an important break with Victorian didacticism. Yeats says that he was the only one of the Chesire Cheese poets who would tolerate literary criticism of any sort, and yet "All silently obeyed a canon that had become powerful for all the arts since Whistler, in the confidence of his American naivete, had told everyone that Japanese painting had no literary ideas."[8]

This then, was the end of the Victorian period, and it is largely attributable to Pater's influence. That is one--perhaps the major--reason that Yeats begins his Oxford Book of Modern Verse with the description of the Gioconda printed as verse. In the "Introduction" to that book, Yeats describes the "new generation" as "in revolt against Victorianism," and as nurturing an "uncritical admiration" for the then-obscure writings of Pater:

> This is why I begin this book with the famous passage from his essay on Leonardo da Vinci. Only by

> printing it in vers libre can one show its revolutionary importance.

He describes the selection as "this passage which dominated a generation."[9] It was not, of course, the separation of the arts alone that was involved. A corollary to the excision of the pictorial from poetry was the elimination of the "literary" quality from painting. In the "School of Giorgione," Pater says,

> In its primary aspect, a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a few moments on the wall or floor; is itself, in truth, a space of such fallen light, caught as the colors are caught in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself.[10]

The basic idea was to "purify poetry of all that is not poetry," including "irrelevant descriptions of nature . . . scientific and moral discursiveness . . . political eloquence . . . psychological curiosity . . . and poetical diction." The poetry these "aesthetes" aspired to produce was to be like that of Catullus, the Jacobeans, Verlaine and Baudelaire--"lyrics technically perfect, their emotions pitched high, and as Pater offered instead of moral earnestness life, lived 'as a pure gem-like flame,' all accepted him for master."[11] To this "purity" the young poets clung, ignoring Morris' efforts at spreading social consciousness, but quite suddenly a change came. "Then in 1900 everybody got down off his stilts . . . Victorianism

had been defeated." The watchword was Verlaine's "wring the neck of rhetoric."[12]

Although at one stage Yeats describes himself bs "full" of a thought from the "Animula Vagula" chapter of Marius ("only the means can justify the end."[13]). he observed that the book had had a degenerative effect upon his friends.

> Three of four years ago I re-read Marius the Eipcurean, expecting that I cared for it no longer, but it still seemed to me, as I think it seemed to us all, the only great prose in modern English, and yet I began to wonder if it, or the attitude of mind of which it was the noblest expression, had not caused the disaster of my friends. It taught us to walk upon a rope, tightly stretched through serene air, and we were left to keep our feet upon a swaying rope in a storm.[11]

Of Symons, he says that he was at first exasperated with him because "with a superficial deduction I supposer from the Chapter in Marius called 'Animula Vagula'--Marius was, I think, our only contemporary classic--he saw nothing in literature but a series of impressions."[15] Further, there was an effect on character of which Yeats did not entirely approve--"He [Symons] alone seemed to me, to use a favorite meaningless word of that time, 'decadent.' He seemed incapable of excess and better than any of us lived the temperate life Pater had commended."[16] Of Lionel Johnson's later life, when he had become a solitary alcoholic, Yeats said, "I think he

had applied in too literary a form the philosophy of Pater in the Epilogue to the Renaissance and in the 'Animula Vagula' chapter, and finding that for him the most exquisite impressions came from books, he thought to be content with that."[17] Yeats's criticism of the direction taken by these men applies to the era as a whole:

> Surely the ideal of culture expressed by Pater can create only feminine souls. The Soul becomes a mirror, not a brazier. This culture is really the pursuit of self-knowledge in so far as the self is a calm, deliberating, discriminating thing, for when we have awakened our tastes and our criticism of the world as we taste it, we have come to know ourselves; ourselves, I mean, not as misers or spendthrifts, as magistrates, or pleaders, but as men, as souls face to face with what is permanent in the world. Newman defines culture as wise receptivity, though I do not think he uses those words. Culture of this kind produces its most perfect flowers in a few high-bred women. It gives to its sons an exquisite delicacy. I will then compare the culture of the Renaissance, which seems to me to be founded not on self-knowledge but on knowledge of some other self--Christ or Caesar--not on delicate sincerity but on imitative energy.[18]

In "Art and Ideas," as we have seen, he states this discontent in terms of poetry; the "aesthetic" method, he says, seems not at all that of "those careless old writers one imagines squabbling over a mistress, or riding on a journey, or drinking around a tavern fire, brisk and active men."[19]

Engelberg assigns the date of 1912 to the time when Yeats could consider that he had broken away from Pater's esthetic, and "established his own context."[20] "Art

and Ideas," which looks back upon the "aesthetic" days as past, outlived for something better, is dated 1913. But the Oxford Book of Modern Verse, with its homage to Pater is later (1936, in fact) and the art history of the section of "A Vision" owes its basic idea of the progress of Greek and Renaissance Art to Pater.[21] To say that Yeats ever broke entirely with an influence so pervasive would be ridiculous. There was, for one thing, the connection between the doctrines of Pater and of French Symbolisme, which Yeats encountered through Arthur Symons. Leonard P. Nathan, who has written a study of Yeats and Pater, includes both groups under the same category: "the work of Pater and of The French Symbolists, may for convenience be summed up by the term 'aestheticism'."[22] Nathan says that it is a tribute to the power of Yeats's intellect that he was able to exploit the doctrine of "aestheticism," criticize it, and go beyond it, so that he was not like "That melancholy tribe that failed . . . to get from the nineteenth to the twentieth century without disastrous consequences."[23]

Because we do not know the extent, not to mention the depth, of Yeats's reading of Pater, it may be useful to summarize Pater's esthetic for comparison with those art essays of Yeats that we have discussed. I am guided in this summary by Ruth C. Child's book, The Aesthetic of Walter Pater.[24]

Child makes the connection of Pater and the "aesthetic movement" (she identifies the leaders of this group as Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, O'Shaughnessy, and Wilde) and French l'art pour l'art in the centrality of their emphasis upon "beauty" above all other values whatever, an idea with roots in Keats among the Romantics and Ruskin among the Victorians. The "extreme point" of the movement was Wilde, and Arthur Symons its extension into the modern period.[25] But there is a distinction between Pater and most of the other "aesthetes," especially Swinburne and Wilde, in that his rebellion against Victorianism did not include an attack upon its moral code. There is also a distinction between him and Ruskin, Morris, and Wilde, in that he took no interest in their social and humanitarian activism. His interest was always, and strictly, in the "sensuous elements of art."[26] Of the activities of his contemporaries, he was interested in Ruskin's art criticism; the paintings of Rossetti, Whistlery, and Burne-Jones; the poems of Rossetti, Morris and Swinburne; and the literary history of John Symons. He also shared their common interest in all, or most, of the arts; in fact, he called himself an "aesthetic critic" to imply that he was "a critic of all things beautiful."[27] Also like his group, Pater believed in the importance of form, to be attained by devoted effort on the part of the artist. The relationship of form

and content was one of his preoccupations, and he believed that the union of the two could be achieved through conscious artistry.

The break between Pater and the "aesthetes" came when he began to alter his idea of "art for art's sake" to emphasize instead the ethical function of art. Art, he believed, expressed the individual personality in such a way as to provide the viewer "sheer intensity, intellectual and emotional excitement," and later, "enlargement" and "purification" of the "soul," by developing the emotions and intellect and "holding up a vision of the ideal."[28] The concept of "life as art " (teaching that art should be lived as an end in itself, in the spirit of artistic creation), was Pater's most original contribution to the movement. The individual must seek out the ideal, and attempt to live only for it. This idea was seized upon and distorted by Wilde, et al., into the exaggerated "aesthete" pose. As Pater's interests grew more ethical, he was distressed by this effect, and by the tendency of his disciples to translate his early works into an emphasis on beauty for its own sake, forgetting that "true beauty includes spiritual as well as sensuous loveliness."[29]

As an art critic, Pater had "one consistent critical aim," which was "to find and convey the 'formula,' the characteristic quality of each man's work."[30] This would

seem to apply an absence of absolute standards, but as a matter of fact, Pater tends to praise that art and those artists who exemplify "art for art's sake." This idea dominates The Renaissance with Leonardo, and Botticelli to a lesser degree, as its exemplars. The Renaissance emphasizes Pater's early view that the end of art is to attain intensity; of human life, "'to burn always with a hard, gem-like flame.'"[31] Here art is seen as for the purpose of pleasing alone, not for instructing. Although Pater's art criticism throughout continues to emphasize art as the expression of individual personality, he eventually comes to distinguish three "levels" of art:

1. "Simple imitation of nature."
2. "The expression of the artist's own personality rather than nature."
3. "The expression of the universal as found in the particular."[32]

It is important to note, however, especially in a comparison with Yeats, that Pater was never at all transcendental: "He was, through his whole life, unwilling to accept an absolute." His position might be described as agnostic--if such things as absolutes did indeed exist, they must be beyond human knowledge. "To him, art is always the sensuous expression of individual feeling, but not of any absolute idea."[33] Ruskin and the early Pre-Raphaelites had insisted upon "truth to nature"; Pater, upon "truth to the individuality of the artist." "Truth," in Pater's lexicon, is the artist's own sense

of fact; the vraie verite.[34] Here, of course, is the major break between Pater's thought and that of Yeats. It was a primary goal of Yeats's philosophical thought to perceive transcendent truth--indeed, to prove its existence. But, as Nathan points out, "Pater was more strictly naturalistic than the elder Yeats, for Pater did not assume that any knowledge was possible beyond subjective experience, and thought that objective reality, by implication, was simply a matter of individual dreaming: 'Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.'"[35] The change in Yeats's terms from "dream" to "trance" probably reflects his working through the Pater influence, for while "dream" implies a vision of nothing beyond the dreamer's subconscious mind, "trance" connotes a mystical connection to transcendent reality.

What Pater sees as the "Universal," then, is no Platonic ideal, but rather a "substratum of a human nature common to all."[36] Emphasis on beauty of form implies common qualities in the human mind. The spirit "possesses order and harmony, and requires the same from art."[37] And beyond this, there are common qualities among men who live during the same historical epoch--the Zeitgeist idea (Pater attributes this to Hegel). Both these factors--common human elements and spirit of the age--modify the theory of art as purely individual expression. Here, of

course, Pater seems to be a part of the background of Yeats's theories of the relationship of the character of the artist to the work of art itself--with the significant Yeatsian addition of the "vision" as "daemon," or autonomous active force. For Pater, the "ideal" is the "purified essence or type"--the "spiritual form" of the object (Pater attributes the term of Blake). He also uses the term "ideal" in describing art as "an ideal world better than the real one into which we may escape."[38]

In spite of this difference, it is clear enough that Yeats as an art critic could be classified as a Paterian "aesthetic critic." Like Pater, he did not attempt to "evolve an abstract definition of beauty," but rather to identify the exact quality of each example of it. Rather than being simple defenses of his proteges or favorites, Yeats's apologies for artistic flaws may be instead an attempt "to analyze each particular manifestation of beauty, to note fine distinctions, to define the individual."[39] Certainly he is not "impressionistic," however, as Pater sometimes is, in the sense of emphasizing purely personal reactions to the works he discusses. And he is only briefly interested in Pater's attempt (in "The School of Giorgione") to identify the "Peculiar and untranslatable sensuous chain . . . special mode of reaching the imagination . . . special responsibilities to its material" of the separate arts, which Pater says are "untranslatable into the forms of any

other."[40] And certainly, especially in A Vision, he is like Pater in the interest in "the fashions in which one period or school of art develops into another," in "great tendencies of human thought" and the tendency "to treat individual men as detailed illustrations of these great tendencies."[41] As to the relative importance of form and content, both Pater and Yeats fluctuate, but tend to emphasize form early in their writings, and gradually modify it to allow some importance to content: Although in the essay on Giorgione, Pater refers to the "mere matter" of a poem, in "Style" he concludes that the difference between good and great art is not in the form but the matter: "The greater dignity of its interests."[42] And whether they acknowledge it or not, both these critics are always "particularly interested in the presentation of the noble emotions and more worthy characters."[43]

Yeats's apparent favorites of the writings of Pater were the conclusion to The Renaissance and Marius The Epicurean, the latter of which Pater said that he had written in order to show what he had really meant by "the misleading conclusion to The Renaissance."[44] The "misleading" here refers to that exaggeration of the "aesthetic" doctrine associated with Wilde--both the preface and the conclusion of The Renaissance deal with the nature of the "aesthetic critic" and with the expansion of the doctrine of "aestheticism" into real life. The preface adds to what we have

said so far the idea that the critic should answer the question concerning a work of art, "How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence?"[45] It is here that Pater approaches Wilde's later theory that life imitates art, rather than art life, and it is quite possibly one of the bases of Yeats's insistence that the artist is the unacknowledged sculptor of the living human form. The conclusion also makes the point, however, of complete relativity in esthetic standards: "all periods, types, schools of taste, are in themselves equal."[46] With this extreme view, of couse, Yeats never agreed, having always his preferences in esthetic matters.

It is likely that the most obvious effects of The Renaissance preface and conclusion, the "burning always with a hard, gem-like flame" ideal of the esthete, were also those most quickly outgrown by Yeats. The principle of the importance of "passion," however, was not. Even the "pose" idea of Wilde had its lasting transmutation in Yeats's mind in to the "Doctrine of the Mask."[47] A similar sort of preservation in amber affected the Paterian emphasis on passion. In the words of Louis Macneice, "Pater had stressed the importance of the moods---the moods that are passionate or receptive. Yeats elevantes the mood into a kind of Platonic Form."[48] It is even possible that the conclusion was influential in the formation of Yeats's psychology based upon the interchanging gyres of the Faculties

in A Vision, for Pater vividly describes the Heraclitean flux of nature, applying it also to the human mind: "Or, if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring." He refers to the consciousness as "that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves."[49]

However often Yeats may have read Marius the Epicurean, and however much its prose style may have affected his, or its philosophy his thought and actions, its appearance in his poetry is minimal. The subtitle of the book is "His Sensations and Ideas," a limitation that Pater certainly fulfills. The novel was startling undramatic. Pater devotes a full chapter ("A Conversation Not Imaginary") to a discussion of the nature of philosophy, and less than two pages to the earthquake and subsequent arrest as a Christian by Roman soldiers that leads to Marius' speedy demise from a sudden fever (apparently Pater couldn't find a well to drop him down, as Twain recommended). The book is actually a summary of philosophical positions: Marius, the Epicurean (or Cyrenaic, or Paterian); The emperor Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic; Flavian, the Euphuist, the Pagan; Cecilia, the Christian; and, most interestingly, Apuleius, the "Platonist." Though Yeats may have gone through a brief phase of Marius-inspired Cyrenaicism, the lasting underpinning of his philosophy, as A Vision demonstrates, was Platonic (in its widest sense),

with additions from the doctrine of Neoplatonism. It is quite impossible to say how much of A Vision came directly from Plato, or through what strange channels, including Rosicrucianism, Neoplatonism reached Yeats. A distinct possibility, however, is this account of Apuleius, from Marius:

> Apuleius was a Platonist: only, for him, the Ideas of Plato were no creatures of logical abstraction, but in very truth informing souls, in every type and variety of sensible things . . . "Two kinds there are, of animated beings," he exclaimed: "Gods, entirely differing from men in the infinite distance of their abode, . . . the eternity of their existence, . . . the perfection of their nature . . .: and men, dwelling on the earth, with frivolous and anxious minds, with infirm and mortal members, with variable fortunes; laboring in vain; taken altogether and in their whole species perhaps, eternal; but severally, quitting the scene in irresistible succession."
>
> "What then? Has nature connected itself together by no bond, allowed itself to be thus crippled, and split into the divine and human elements?"
>
> . . . "Well, there are certain divine powers of a middle nature, through whom our aspirations are conveyed to the gods, and theirs to us. Passing between the inhabitants of earth and heaven, they carry from one to the other prayers and bounties, supplication and assistance, being a kind of interpreters. This interval of the air is full of them! Through them, all revelations, miracles, magic processes are effected. For, specially appointed members of this order have their special provinces, with a ministry according to the disposition of each. They go to ad fro without fixed habitation: or dwell in men's houses"-- . . .
> A celestical ladder, a ladder from heaven to earth: that was the assumption which the experience of Apuleius had suggested to him. . . .[50]

It seems likely that this passage had more lasting effect upon Yeats's thought than the chapter he most often cites, "Animula Vagula," which gives the account of Marius' actual conversion to Epicureanism.

The group of Pater's essays that seems to have had the most direct effect upon Yeats's poetry are the studies of Greek sculpture, "The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture," "The Marbles of Aegina," and "The Age of Athletic Prizemen," in Greek Studies. In the first of these essays, Pater attempts to redefine the exact quality of Greek statuary by recreating for the reader its background of artistic tradition, especially in the minor arts. He begins by saying that

> The works of the highest Greek sculpture are indeed intellectualized, if we may say so, to the utmost degree; the human figures which they present to us seem actually to conceive thoughts; in them, that profoundly reasonable spirit of design which is traceable in Greek art, continuously and increasingly, upwards from its simplest products, the oil-vessel or the urn, reaches its perfection.[51]

It is from the concomitant charge of "coldness" that he wishes to redeem this art. Greek sculpture began, he says, in the Homeric, or heroic, age, and was often made of, or combined, with metal, especially gold, so that it was also the age of the smith, of Hephaestus, typified by Homer's description of Achilles' shield. The "full development" of the art, however, came at the time of Phidias; what Pater attempts to prove is that the archaic phase was of true

Greek origin, not derived from Egypt, but similar in the way that all archaic arts resemble each other. The origins, rather, to the extent that they are non-Greek, are Asiatic--Assyria to Phoenicia to Cyprus--"a certain Asiatic tradition, of which one representative is the Ionic style of architecture, traceable all through Greek art--an Asiatic curiousness, . . . strongest in that heroic age . . . and distinguishing some schools and masters in Greece more than others; and always in appreciable distinction from the more clearly defined and self-asserted Hellenic influence."[52] The chryselephantine stage represents a midpoint of the two styles; Phidias, their meeting-ground.

> Greek art is thus, almost from the first, essentially distinguished from the art of Egypt, by an energetic striving after truth in organic form. In representing the human figure, Egyptian art had held by mathematical or mechanical proportions exclusively. The Greek apprehends of it, as the main truth, that it is a living organism. . . the work of the Greek sculptor, together with its more real anatomy, becomes full also of the human soul.[53]

It is Phidias who is "consummate" in this spirituality, "uniting the veritable image of man in the full possession of his reasonable soul, with the true religious mysticity, the signature there of something from afar."[54] Following the last of this school, Canachus, whose work Pater says embodies "the <u>poetry</u> of sculpture,"[55] there begins a new phase.

> . . . this philosophical element, a tendency to the realisation of a certain inward, abstract, intellectual ideal, is also at work in Greek art--a tendency which, if that chryselephantine influence is called Ionian, may rightly be called the Dorian, or, in reference to its broader scope, the European influence; and this European influence or tendency is really towards the impression of an order, a sanity, a proportion in all work, which shall reflect the inward order of human reason, now fully conscious of itself,--towards a sort of art in which the record and delineation of humanity, as active in the wide, inward world of passion and thought, has become more or less definitely the aim of all artistic handicraft.[56]

Pater equates his Ionic and Doric modes to general tendencies of the Greek society: the "centrifugal"--"flying from the center, working with little forethought straight before it, in the development of every thought and fancy; throwing itself forth in endless play of undirected imagination," bright, colorful, versasile, restless, graceful, free, and happy--with the "centripetal"--"a severe simplification everywhere," "the exaggeration of that salutary European tendency, which, finding the human mind the most absolutely real and peecious thing in the world, enforces everywhere the impress of its sanity, its profound reflexions upon things as they really are, its sense of proportion."[57] The Doric tendency Pater associates with Plato and Apollo, and its result in "finding in the affections of the body a language, the elements of which the artist might analyze, and then combine, order, and recompose."[58]

The relationship of these passages to "Dove or Swan" is very noticeable, and it is clear that they also

apply to the poem, "The Statues" and to the "Measurement began our might" stanza of "Under Ben Bulben."

Although the date makes an assignment of source unlikely if not impossible, the "age of the Athletic Prizemen" essay suggests a reference for "The Shadowy Waters." It describes as among the marbles in the British Museum a frieze from a tomb: "The Harpy Tomb, so called from its mysterious winged creatures with human faces, carrying the little shrouded souls of the dead. . . ."[59] This meaning, Pater says, is sometimes called in question but he believes it is correct because of the Medieval tradition of depicting "the souls of the dead as tiny bodies."

> Those infernal, or celestial, birds, indeed, are not true to what is understood to be the happy form. Call them sirens rather. People, and not only old people, as you know, appear sometimes to have been quite charmed away by what dismays most of us. The tiny shrouded figures which the sirens carry are carried very tenderly, and seem to yearn in their turn towards those kindly nurses as they pass on their way to a new world. Their small stature, as I said, does not prove them infants, but only newborn into that other life, and contrasts their helplessness with the powers, the great presences, now around them.[60]

Yeats's early adult years in London were spent as almost an inhabitant of the British Museum: he refers again and again to the sculptures there, using the tomb of Mausolus and Artemisia as a sort of leit-motif in opposition to the "Bastien Lepage rookery" in his autobiography. It is most likely that the great sonnet "Leda and the Swan" is a

depiction of the frieze portraying that subject which was in the British Museum when Yeats studied there. So this passage from Pater may be simply a reference to the same sculpture as the "man-headed birds" of The Shadowy Waters. A close reading, however, suggests that Yeats has also used Pater's interpretation of the frieze: the likeness of Harpy to Siren, the "charming away" by what is actually morbid to the point of the macabre.

And therein lies a very telling point of difference between Yeats and Pater. If one asks oneself, for instance, why Yeats did not adopt Pater's idol, Leonardo, as his own, displacing, at least temporarily, Michelangelo as his ideal artist, the immediate answer would seem to be that Pater presents Leonardo with an emphasis upon his sinister quality. This, of course, is characteristic of Pater's interests. Of Michelangelo, he says that while most critics have emphasized his "wonderful strength," he himself wants to show that that strength verges upon the "singular or strange."

> A certain strangeness, something of the blossoming of the aloe, is indeed an element in all true works of art: that they should excite or surprise us is indispensable. But that they shall give pleasure and exert a charm over us is indispensable, too; and this strangeness must be sweet also--a lovely strangeness.[61]

The strangeness that he points out as basic in Leonardo, however, is considerably less lovely: ". . . it is still by a certain mystery in his work, and something enigmatical

beyond the usual measure of great men, that he fascinates, or perhaps half repels."[62] He describes the beauty of Leonardo's work as "so exotic" that it fascinates a larger number than it delights."[63] The search for "some interfusion of the extremes of beauty and terror" led Leonardo to portray "grotesques" in every category of nature: "Legions of grotesques sweep under his hand."[64] The epitome of this quality is, says Pater, the Medusa of the Uffizii, in which the Medusa's head is portrayed as that of a corpse:

> What may be called the fascination of corruption penetrates in every touch its exquisitely finished beauty. About the dainty lines of the cheek the bat flies unheeded. The delicate snakes seem literally strangling each other in terrified struggle to escape from the Medusa brain.[65]

This was not a beauty that Yeats could much admire, even temporarily. It might well typify his discontent with "the Decadence."

For Yeats's poetry is seldom truly macabre. Morbid he is, in the sense of melancholy, in the early poems; in the sense of cynical, in his last poems; in the sense of elegaic at all times; but not in the sense of macabre. Pater, on the other hand, had a noticeably unhealthy--artistic as well as psychological--tendency to substitute the frisson of the macabre for dramatic tension. Marius arrives home well after the death scenes of his entire family; instead, just in time to view the results of an accidental brsakage of an ancient family tomb. The mouldering remains

exposed are those of an ancestor who died in infancy: Pater dwells upon the corrupted baby hand extending from the shattered sarcophagus. If for no other reason, one might well agree with Yeats that his venture into "aestheticism" was a misdirection, because it led him sometimes into the sensation, the horrifying:

> A severed head! She took it in her hands;
> She stood all bathed in blood; the blood
> begat.
> O foul, foul, foul![66]

It is in his drama that Yeats most often becomes macabre, and it is in the drama that the Paterian influence makes itself felt most strongly.

The motif of the severed head, one that Yeats repeats in his plays, comes, he says in his commentary on The King of the Greak Clock Tower, from Wilde's Salome, "who may have found it in some Jewish religious legend for it is part of the old ritual of the year: the mother goddess and the slain god." Of the version in poetry of The Secret Rose, he says it comes from "some old Gaelic legend," for in Wilde the dance precedes the beheading.[67] This source also, of course, involves Beardsley's illustration to Salome, which shows Salome kneeling, holding the head of John the Baptist up before her face, and which is inscribed with her speech: "J'ai baise ta bouche, Iokanaan, j'ai baise ta bouche!"[68] This drawing is one that Yeats described as the only "beautiful" one that Beardsley had

done, the only one characterized by "energy" (as contrasted to the langour associated with the Decadence).[69] To the list of inspirations for this most disgusting of Yeats's repeated scenes, add the following passage from Marius which describes one of the "oriental devotions" practiced by the women of Rome:

> And one morning Marius encountered an extraordinary crimson object, borne in a litter through an excited crowd--the famous courtesan Benedicta, still fresh from the bath of blood, to which she had submitted herself, sitting below the scaffold where the victims provided for that purpose were slaughtered by the priests.[70]

The victims in this case were only animals, but the picture of the woman "bathed in blood" is scarcely the less horrible for that, and Pater has to be reread to banish the impression that a human sacrifice has been involved.

Beyond an emphasis on the extreme of the "exotic," Yeats was influenced by Pater in his theory of what drama should be: the "theatre's anti-self." In the words of Nathan, "Pater, as no one else before, gave Yeats a thoughtful and authoritative rationale for the lyrical drama," and was also the basis for Yeats's simplification of dramatic staging.[71] It is probably a matter of individual judgment as to how far this influence constituted a "disaster" for Yeats--artistically, rather than practically, as in the case of his friends. An evaluation of Pater's effect on Yeats's writing must recognize that the primary influence

was on prose style. Robartes, protagonist of several of Yeats's stories, recognizes the influence in "The Phases of the Moon," saying, "He wrote of me in that extravagant style/ He had learnt from Pater. . . ."[72] The stylistic similarity is equally evident in the essays, the Autobiography, and A Vision. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Pater was the major shaper of Yeats's prose style. His effect upon the development of Yeats's drama was almost as extensive.

As we have seen, Pater may have influenced the subjects of Yeats's drama toward the sensational, for Pater's preference for the "exotic" often degenerated into the macabre. But whatever the origin of this tendency, certainly Yeats's dramatic theory, his formulation of the idea of the theatre's anti-self owes much to Pater's esthetic. Yeats has said that his "watch-words" from Pater were "hieratic," "magnificence," "ritual." To no other expressions of Yeats's genius do these words so well apply as to the drama. Nathan attributes the "rationale" of Yeats's "lyrical drama" to Pater, citing this passage from Appreciations:

> A play attains artistic perfection just in proportion as it approaches that unity of lyrical effect, as if a song or ballad were still lying at the root of it, all the various expression of the conflict of character and circumstance falling at last into the compass of a single melody, or musical theme. As, historically, the earliest classic drama arose out of the chorus, from which this or that person, this or that episode, detached itself, so, into the unity of a choric song the perfect drama ever

> tends to return, its intellectual scope deepened, complicated, enlarged, but still with an unmistakable singleness, or identity, in its impression on the mind. Just there, in that vivid single impression left on the mind when all is over, not in any mechanical limitation of time and place, is the secret of the "unities"--the true imaginative unity--of the drama.[73]

This approach to theatre shows, says Nathan, in Yeats's attempts to "simplify" his dramas of the "restless" quality of reality, to focus upon voice and movement of the actors. But to this Yeats added an emphasis upon what he called "the nobler movements that seem to flow up into the imagination from some deeper life than that of the individual soul."[74] (Here again, we see Yeats's insistence upon a transcendent reality, his going on beyond anything Pater could accept in the theme of his dramas.)

Yeats thought of his desired changes in the theatre as a reformation: in 1903, he wrote an essay entitled "The Reform of the Theatre," which begins:

> I think the theatre must be reformed in its plays, its speaking, its acting, and its scenery. That is to say, I think there is nothing good about it at present.[75]

In practice, much of his reform, and his published theorizing, centered around a Paterian purification of stage scenery. It is in the essay "The Art of the Theatre" that he calls for the "use in every art of but that which is peculiar to it," and goes on to make a distinction between the "stage" and "easel painting."

> Once the art of "easel painting" has been removed from stage design, Yeats says, "We shall have . . . created a new art--the art of stage decoration."[76]

He calls for a recognition of the peculiar elements of the stage as "real light and the moving figures of the players."

> If one would work honestly in any art, it is necessary to ask oneself what that art possesses as distinguished from all other arts.[77]

In the 1902 Samhain, he states briefly his desired effect:

> . . . I would like to see poetical drama, which tries to keep at a distance from daily life that it may keep its emotion untroubled, staged with but two or three colours. The background, especially in small theatres, where its form is broken up and lost when the stage is at all crowded, should, I think, be thought out as one thinks out the background of a portrait. One often needs nothing more than a single colour, with perhaps a few shadowy forms to suggest wood or mountain. Even on a large stage one should leave the description of the poet free to call up the martlet's procreant cradle or what he will. . . ."[78]

Thus in intent and method Yeats's drama is clearly much controlled by a Paterian esthetic.

A connection less easy to document is that between Pater, sculpture, and Yeats's plays. In the "Tragic Theatre" essay, 1910, Yeats said ". . . tragic drama must be carved out of speech as a statue is out of stone. . . ."[79] As early as 1902 he had praised Bernhardt's Phédre for its evocation of sculpture, the chorus "a crowd of white-robed men who never moved at all, and the whole scene had the

nobility of Greek sculpture, and an extraordinary reality and intensity."[80] The connection of sculptural effect and intensity make it likely that the reference in "The Tragic Theatre" is more than a casual simile. Although Yeats certainly never simplified it to this point, at least not in writing, he perhaps saw an analogy between poetry and painting on the one hand and drama and sculpture on the other, the basis of the contrast being an attempt at defining what is "peculiar" to the latter pair: a third dimension lacking in the first pair. The song for the closing of the curtain in "A Full Moon in March" explicitly compares its heroine to a statue:

> Why must those holy, haughty feet descend
> From emblematic niches, and what hand
> Ran that delicate raddle through their
> white?[81]

There were, of course, other influences operating in the formation of Yeats's drama than that of Pater. Robert Gregory designed sets for the Abbey Theatre that emphasized simplicity, a direction that reached its ultimate in the creation of Gordon Craig, the "Craig Screen." This, or these, were a group of screens similar to the usual theatrical "flat" but of varying sizes, so that they could be arranged in a variety of configurations, easy to change and adaptable to any play. The screens could be decorated or left unadorned for a more abstract effect, and, of course,

varied by lighting. Charles Ricketts also did Abbey sets and costumes, but probably the most important innovation was due to Edmund Dulac: the mask (Dulac also helped de develop the oriental influence that came through Pound and the Noh). In the masks, and in the "severed heads," Yeats incorporated into his plays actual sculptures, as well as attempting to create a sculptural effect in set, costume, and gesture.

From about 1900 on, when Yeats talks about sculpture--especially Greek sculpture of course--he is also talking about Pater. The Greek Studies is one source; another is Plato and Platonism. It is probably from the latter that Yeats developed his symbolism for Pythagoras, as it was from the former that Phidias began to take a symbolic meaning. The final chapter of Edward Engelberg's The Vast Design: Patterns in W. B. Yeats's Aesthetic discusses this pattern at some length. He describes the poem "The Statues" as setting forth Yeats's "conception of the single image in relation to the vast design," "a final poetic embodiment of the aesthetic and a philosophic analogue to Yeats's aesthetic-centred interpretation of history."[82] It is Yeats's intention, says Engelberg, to form an historical parallel between contemporary Ireland and Greece at the time of Phidias and of the defeat of the Persian invasions. The interpretation of Greek history in the poem takes both its "philosophic and aesthetic meanings" from Pater; "whether Yeats

knew these works closely is not crucial," for they formed part of a re-interpretation of Hellenism that he certainly acepted.[83] In Plato and Platonism, Pater presents an analysis of the philosophical history of Greece which traces the Platonic background through Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Pythagoras. Plato's "Doctrine of Rest" developed in opposition to Heraclitus' "eternal flux"; Parmenides suggested to Plato the idea of an "unchangeable reality"; Pythagoras, through his "doctrine of number" inclined Plato finally toward a compromise between what Yeats called the conceptions of reality as "a congeries of beings" and "reality as a single being."[84] The idea of flux Pater sees as Asiatic, the Parmenidean paradox of "perpetual motion" becoming eventually "perpetual rest" (Engelberg calls this "the analogue to Yeats's aesthetic use of the dance") as European. Neither extreme is fully acceptible; thus the importance of Pater (and Yeats) of Pythagoras, who "perfected" Parmenides' "unity of Being" into a concept of number, "the essential laws of measure in time and space." Pythagoras helped Plato to find "unity in variety": "the goal of art, like the goal of Plato's 'theory of ideas,' is the "eternal definition of the finite, upon . . . the infinite, the indefinite, formless, brute matter, of our experience of the world."[85]

The Greek Studies, which discusses Phidias but not Pythagoras, is also important in the background of Yeats's poem because it shows the "Hellenistic aesthetic" as a

point of changed direction that led to the development of Medieval and Renaissance art. In Yeats's poem, the "lineage" is from Phidias to William Morris (as "the dreamer of the middle ages"), Hamlet, and Titian.[86] Basic to this change is the illusion of motion, found in Phidias's measured forms, but not in the Egyptian, and the control of the chaotic motion of Asian art. The change from Ionic to Dorian style is, as we have seen, a similar one, noted by both Pater and Yeats (the "moving statue," the dancer, in the plays has this reference):

> For Hellenic sculpture brought to Asiatic Greece not merely order and proportion, but 'a revelation of the soul and body of man.' How highly Pater regarded the culminating Dorian influence may be judged by what he attributed to it, precisely the same feat as Yeats does in "The Statues": the defeat of the Persians at Salamis.[87]

Engelberg attempts to explicate the third stanza by reference to three passages from Yeats's prose: his description of Watt's portrait of Morris (Autobiography, p. 87), the passage predicting the return to modern art of "Greek proportions" (On the Boiler, p. 37), and a passage (also from On the Boiler, p. 33 - 34) describing Hamlet as a "medieval man of action." These certainly offer much enlightenment, but the final result is that still, as Engelberg remarks in a note, "No one has yet, I think, explained satisfactorily the whole of the third stanza."[88] Fortunately such an explanation is not my present purpose. What I hope

to have shown is that a reference to sculpture, and also to dance, in any of Yeats's middle or later plays and poems should suggest to the careful reader a mental review of the fundamentals of the esthetic of Walter Pater.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1] Arthur Symons, A Study of Walter Pater (London: Charles J. Sawyer, 1932), p. 31.

[2] Memoirs, p. 22.

[3] Autobiography, p. 201 (date is 1922).

[4] Memoirs, p. 86.

[5] Essays, p. 432.

[6] Uncollected Prose, II, 383.

[7] Symons, p. 24.

[8] Uncollected Prose, p. 433.

[9] OBMV, p. viii. There is an interesting identity between Leonardo, Rossetti, and Pater. Symons says "Two men of genius, in their own generatin, have revealed for all time the always inexplicable magic of Leonardo da Vinci; Walter Pater in his prose and Dante Gabriel Rossetti in his sonnet." (p. 13). He goes on to quote both Pater's description of the Mona Lisa and Rossetti's sonnet to the Virgin of the Rocks.

[10] Pater, quoted in Symons, p. 20.

[11] OBMV, p. ix.

[12] OMBV, pp. xi - xii.

[13] Memoirs, p. 42.

[14] Autobiography, p. 257.

[15] Autobiography, p. 36.

[16] Autobiography, p. 97.

[17] Autobiography, p. 95.

[18] Autobiography, p. 159.

[19] Essays, p. 432.

[20] Engelberg, p. 120.

[21] I do not imply that Yeats acknowledges this debt. He cites only Furtwangler, whose books are such technical archaeology that it is unlikely they apply to the larger esthetic patterns that Yeats discusses. My assignment of influence here is based upon my reading of Pater (Engelberg also recognizes the influence: The Vast Design, p. xxii).

[22] Leonard P. Nathan, "W. B. Yeats's Experiments with an Influence," Victorian Studies, VI (September, 1962), p. 68.

[23] Engelberg, p. 66.

[24] (New York: Octagon Press, 1969).

[25] Child, p. 7.

[26] Child, p. 8.

[27] Child, p. 9.

[28] Child, p. 10.

[29] Child, p. 22.

[30] Child, p. 23.

[31] Child, p. 26.

[32] Child, p. 30.

[33] Child, p. 31.

[34] Nathan, p. 71.

[35] Child, p. 34.

[36] Child, p. 36.

[37] Child, p. 48.

[38] Child, p. 109.

[39] Child, p. 58.

[40] Child, p. 118.

[41] Child, p. 53.

[42] Child, p. 127.

[43] Child, p. 38.

[44] Walter Pater, Preface to The Renaissance, (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), xxvii.

[45] Pater, p. xxvi.

[46] Pater, p. xxviii.

[47] The "mirror" image that Yeats sometimes uses as an opposition to "mask" no doubt also has reference to Pater.

[48] Louis Macneice, The Poetry of W. B. Yeats (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1941), p. 36.

[49] Pater, Conclusion to The Renaissance, p. 196.

[50] Walter Pater, Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas (New York: Modern Library, nd), pp. 269 - 71.

[51] Walter Pater, Greek Studies: A Series of Essays (London: Macmillan, 1925), p. 190.

[52] Greek Studies, p. 216.

[53] Greek Studies, p. 239.

[54] Greek Studies, p. 240.

[55] Greek Studies, p. 248.

[56] Greek Studies, p. 251 - 2.

[57] Greek Studies, p. 252 - 3.

[58] Greek Studies, p. 255.

[59] Greek Studies, p. 272.

[60] Greek Studies, p. 274.

[61] Pater, Renaissance, p. 60.

[62] Renaissance, p. 81.

[63] Renaissance, p. 82.

[64] Renaissance, p. 87.

[65] Renaissance, p. 87.

[66] Collected Plays, p. 393.

[67] KGCT, pp. 21 - 22.

[68] This drawing is reproduced in Salome, Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde (New York, Dover, 1967), p. 66.

[69] Memoirs, p. 284.

[70] Pater, Marius, p. 234.

[71] Nathan, pp. 70 - 1.

[72] Collected Poems, p. 161.

[73] Pater, quoted in Nathan, p. 70.

[74] Yeats. "The Reform of the Theatre," quoted in Nathan, p. 71.

[75] Explorations, p. 107.

[76] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 383.

[77] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 398.

[78] Explorations, p. 88.

[79] Uncollected Prose, II, p. 390.

[80] Explorations, p. 87.

[81] Collected Plays, p. 396.

[82] Engelberg, p. 180.

[83] Engelberg, p. 181.

[84] Engelberg, p. 184.

[85] Engelberg, pp. 186 - 7.

[86] Engelberg, p. 187.

[87] Engelberg, p. 189.

[88] Engelberg, p. 190.

CHAPTER V

THE FINAL SYNTHESIS: "OUR MORE PROFOUND PRE-RAPHAELITISM"

Toward the latter part of the middle period of Yeats's poetry, direct references to painting and sculptures begin to appear again, and continue throughout the rest of his life. It is in the Last Poems, however, that most of the references cluster, culminating in Yeats's masterpiece in that "Rossettian genre," "Lapis Lazuli." Thus it would seem that the thoughts expressed in "Art and Ideas" did not remain theoretical but actually did influence his poetic practice. The essay is dated 1913, and it was in 1914 that Responsibilities was published, containing "On Those That Hated 'The Playboy of the Western World,' 1907," "To a Wealthy Man Who Promised a Second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Gallery If It Were Proved The People Wanted Pictures," "The Realists" and a poem that is probably a description of a mosaic, "The Magi." It would perhaps not be indefensible to include "The Dolls" and "The Coat" in this category as well.

We have seen that Yeats described the change in attitude toward the relationship of poetry to painting as a reversion to a former position, now better understood and more significant: "Our more profound Pre-Raphaelitism." In the essay, he connects the separation of the arts from each other with the "casting out of ideas" in all the arts. This period (in his own life, the Pater period) he sees as a crippling restriction:

> The manner of painting had changed, and we were interested in the fall of drapery and the play of light without concerning ourselves with the meaning, the emotion of the figure itself. How many successful portrait painters gave their sitters the same attention, the same interest, they might have given a ginger-beer bottle and an apple? and in our poems an absorption in fragmentary sensuous beauty or detachable ideas, had deprived us of the power to mould vast material into a single image.

By contrast, a return to the older esthetic offers an expansion of subject matter, theme, and even audience:

> In the visual arts, indeed, 'the fall of man into his own circumference' seems at an end, and when I look at the photograph of a picture by Gauguin, which hangs over my breakfast table, the spectacle of tranquil Polynesian girls crowned with lillies gives me, I do not know why, religious ideas. Our appreciations of the older schools are changing, too, becoming simpler, and when we take pleasure in some Chinese painting of an old man, meditating upon a mountain path, we share his meditation, without forgetting the beautiful intricate pattern of lines like those we have seen under our eyelids as we fell asleep; nor do the Bride and Bridegroom of Rajput painting, sleeping upon a house-top or wakening when out of the still water the swans fly upward at the dawn, seem the less well-painted because they remind us of many poems. We are becoming

> interested in expression in its first phase of energy, when all the arts play like chidren about the one chimney and turbulent innocence can yet amuse those brisk and active men who have paid us so little attention of recent years.

It is this "re-integration of the mind" that will recover for the poet "the old, abounding, nonchalant reverie," and free him from intellectual pride, "sedentary meditation," and shallow emotion.[1]

As his representative of ths renewed style, Yeats mentions Charles Ricketts, "my education in so many things,"[2] whose drawings "prolonged the influence of Rossetti."[3] Ricketts appears in all of Yeats's lists of special artists: the "great myth and mask-makers," the painters who "share moods" with lyric poetry, and the "symbolists." But the admiration is qualified to some extent: Yeats singles out The Danaides, "the earlier illustrations of The Sphinx," and the "landscape background" of The Wise and Foolish Virgins, from the corpus of Ricketts' work, and in the "Symbolic Artist" discussion, Ricketts is paired with Burne-Jones as one who is too hampered by an attachment to "life" to become a true Symbolist, and so whose work has become "delicate and languid." Nonetheless, Ricketts worked with Yeats not only on his theatre designs, but on his book-covers. The covers of his books were a matter of extreme importance to Yeats; he employed only his favorite artists (besides Ricketts, Gyles and T. S. Moore did most of this work). He wrote to Ricketts in 1922 about the covers for

the Macmillan collected edition, Later Poems, and Plays in Verse, for which Ricketts had designed the binding and the decoration of unicorn and fountain:

> It is a pleasure to me to think that many young men here and elsewhere will never know my work except in this form. My own memory proves to me that at 17 there is an identity between an author's imagination and paper and bookcover one does not find later in life. I still do not quite separate Shelley from the green covers, or Blake from the blue covers and brown reproductions of pictures, of the books in which I first read them. I do not separate Rossetti at all from his covers.[4]

Ricketts was one--and for Yeats at least, the focal point--of a group of other admired artists. For most of their adult lives, Ricketts and Charles Shannon lived together, separating only through Shannon's tragic death. It was Ricketts who made the dolls representing Beardsley characters that Yeats describes in his poem on Mabel Beardsley's death, "Upon a Dying Lady." He was also a close associate of art historian and critic Laurence Binyon, with whom he shared a preoccupation with oriental art. It was at Ricketts' that Yeats says he spent Friday evenings discussing painting, sharing in the group's enthusiasms. One of these was for an obscure (then as now) artist named Cole, whom Yeats discusses in terms revelatory of the group's arch-conservative[5] tastes (and of his own limited acceptance of them):

> He is a thorn in the Futurist and Cubist flesh for he draws incomparably in the style of Michelangelo. If his sculpture, which no one seems to have seen, is as fine as his drawings, it will be like the publication of Paradise Lost in the very year when Dryden announced the final disappearance of blank verse. Personally, I am as much moved by Gregory's work as by anything else. He has a fine picture in the New English, a decorative landscape suggested by Coole Lake, full of airy distinction.[6]

When Ricketts died in 1931, Yeats wrote to T. S. Moore, suggesting that Moore do a study of Ricketts' work, and saying, "I, though he was less to me than to you, feel that one of the lights that lit my dark house is gone."[7]

Moore did not do a separate "study" of Ricketts, but he did write the introduction to a selection of Ricketts' paintings,[8] and edited Ricketts' letters and journal. He calls Ricketts "incomparable," the leader of a group whose enthusiams he lists as "Paul Baudry, Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Rossetti, Watts, Flaubert, Zola, Sarah Bernhardt, Wagner, Chopin, Berlioz, Carpeaux, Rodin."[9] This list was for about the year 1887, following which the group began to study "art journals and expensive publications" and "soon the old masters began to rise like peaks over the foothills, but never became an exclusive object of study." The works of illustrators--"the Pre-Raphaelites, Boyd Houghton, Keen . . . Willette and Menzel or Blum, Brennan, Howard, Pile, and Abbey"--were also studied, some because they were genuinely admired, others just for "cribs." Ricketts was usually well ahead of his time in knowledge

of artistic trends: "He had canvassed the work of Gauguin, Van Gogh, Cezanne, Rimbaud, and Mallarme, before those who wrote them up in this country had heard of them. But no fashion ever imposed on him. He never accepted or rejected artists, movements, or periods wholesale." Ricketts had certain favorite subjects that he liked to treat repeatedly: Montezuma, Don Juan, The Passion of Christ, the Good Samaritan, the Wise and Foolish Virgins, and in particular "The Sacrilege of Heliodorus," a subject that had been done first by Raphael, then Delacroix, then Ricketts. "Ricketts was delighted to be the third, just as Delacroix no doubt had been to be second. . . ."[9] In all things Ricketts was the traditionalist: he felt that "beauty" should be the aim of art. Moore says that Ricketts "could not forgive Holbein for painting anyone so ugly as Archbishop Warham (he actually didn't believe that anyone so ugly could have been good) . . . or the man with the bulbous nose in the Prado . . . Raphael would not have accepted the commission."[10]

Ricketts was an author as well as an artist: he wrote a volume of stories illustrated by himself, Unrecorded Histories;[11] a series of essays of art criticism, Pages on Art;[12] and many of his letters are preserved in a memoir, Self-Portrait Taken from the Letters and Journals of Charles Ricketts.[13]

Unrecorded Histories is of interest in that Ricketts deals in his stories with certain themes that were current

among Yeats's writer and artist friends: "The Transit of the Gods," for instance. The illustrations, while of little artistic merit, show a transition toward Art Deco style in their use of silhouette: an effect much bolder and simpler than Ricketts' earlier style. The story "The Two Peaches" involves Leonardo, invoking the sinister quality that we have seen in Pater. His room, says Ricketts, resembles "rather the kitchen of an alchemist than the studio of an artist," and he is involved in trying to produce poisoned peaches by feeding his peach tree a solution of copper. "The Pavilion of the Winds" has a closer relationship to Yeats's own themes, as it describes a visit to King Solomon by the Queen of Sheba. The main character is Solomon's cup-bearer, Adriel, who sleeps in Solomon's couch, makes love to his wives, and helps him write the "Song of Songs." Sheba is sent for in the hope that she may persuade Solomon to father his own children upon her. She arrives wearing a "mask of gilded leather" as a "protection against the sun." The rest of the story is confused and of little interest to Yeats's readers, ending with Solomon drugged, robbed of the signet of David, Adriel castrated and murdered, and Sheba departed. "The Transit of the Gods" treats Heine's "return of the gods" theme, including Mephistopheles with the Greek gods. He claims to be "older than any god," calling himself "the spirit of curiosity and change," and saying he added to creation "the arts instead of morals."[14]

He and Apollo argue over the nature of art and love, with Mephistopheles claiming that the Greek ideals of order and beauty are gone; in modern times, "order is relative and beauty a matter of opinion." But it is, of course, Apollo who has the last word:

> Reality may be, as you say, a chance appearance without true form and without a purpose, save Death. Art would stand outside these conditions, and give to things uncertain and fugitive in essence, a seeming order, a relative permanence, an existence (as fragile as music possibly) which we call beauty, the one thing we need to know.[15]

The table of contents of Pages on Art includes many of the artists who interested Yeats also: Conder, Shannon, Watteau, Chavannes, Rodin, Watts, Moreau, and several oriental artists, as well as an essay on "The Art of Stage Decoration." The essay entitled "A Century of Art" (1810 - 1910) displays Ricketts' accomplishments as a scholar of art history, and also gives some notion of his esthetic preferences. He calls this era "the period of competitive painting," characterized by the "fruitful feud between realism under many disguises and idealism under many names, or, to put it briefly, the struggle between observation put into immediate terms of painting and experience translated into terms of art." He identifies the two primary aims of art in all ages as "the wish to conquer facts for their own sake" on the one hand and "to express that which lies beyond fact" on the other, but beyond this, "one

quality counts for most, namely, the essential quality of the artistic temper of the painter."[16] He describes the nineteenth century as a "new Renaissance," which has continued to achieve in spite of public lack of faith in the arts. Its chief achievement has been in landscape, perhaps, but to say that is to overlook the fact that such landscapists as Turner and Corot have been equalled in other areas by Rodin, Hokusai, and Puvis.

> The vistas opened up to the world by the great musicians have their counterpart in the poetic painters of the century, in Delacroix, for instances, and in the soaring art of G. F. Watts. There is the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England, which can be compared in its significance to that outlook upon Nature and Romance which was realised in the poetry of Keats and the music of Schubert.[17]

Besides these great masters, there have been "craftsmen and experimentalists without number working in self-imposed fields of research and along curious byways of endeavour, such as the great caricaturist Daumier, some book-illustrators, and the Impressionists."[18] If Ricketts is condescending toward the Impressionists, their successors provoked him to outright vituperation. In his review of the exhibit at the Grafton Gallery, he describes Post-Impressionism as a "parody" of Impressionism. He is agitated at the reception of these artists by the press: "Post-Impressionist works may some day be deemed masterpieces! Caliban worshipped the god Setibos, and Novelty may also be a god!"[19] Cezanne, says Ricketts, is the "root" of this movement,

and "Monsieur Matisse" its "flower," the leader of those who would subvert civilization: "To revert in the name of 'novelty' to the aims of the savage and the child . . . is to act as the anarchist, who would destroy where he cannot change."[20] He goes on to describe the artists of "Post-Impressionism or Proto-Byzantinism, as it has been fatuously described"[21] as color-blind maniacs, excepting only Gauguin, whom he does not "always dislike," and Denis, who "alone has brought a decorative or symbolic element to this 'agony of Impressionism.'"[22] Denis, Ricketts says, "remembers the great Puvis de Chavannes," and participates in the "'cult of the Lily,'" a tendency with "roots in Symbolist literature."[23] He sums up Post-Impressionism, however, by saying, "Their aim has nothing to do with art or its future, it is but a new phase of self-advertisement."[24]

By contrast Yeats's own remarks about Impressionism and "modern" painting seem almost sympathetic. As his comments on Cole and Gregory show, he was never so rigidly conservative as Ricketts. When George took over the Cuala temporarily in 1923 because Lolly was ill, Yeats said he hoped for improvement because George had "seen modern art," whereas Lolly's work had become "too sere, a ghost of long past colours and forms."[25] It is clear from his comments in "Bounty of Sweden" and elsewhere that he understood Impressionist technique. In "A Packet for Ezra Pound," he refers to the art of Cezanne as "characteristic of our time,"[26]

and he praises the "energy" of Epstein and Wyndham Lewis, even comparing A Vision to the art of Lewis and Brancusi. Nonetheless his taste never became thoroughly "modern." In a 1929 letter to T. S. Moore, he indicates a standard:

> Your definition of beauty was 'the body as it can be imagined as existing in ideal conditions' or some such phrase. I understand it as including all the natural expressions of such a body, its instincts, emotions, etc. Its value is in part that it excludes all that larger modern use of the word and compels us to find another word for the beauty of a mathematic problem or a Cubist picture or of Mr. Prufrock. It does not define ideal conditions nor should it do so, and so it remains a starting point for meditation.[27]

Upon certain artists, however, there was a greater degree of agreement. Ricketts, too, admired Watts, calling him one of the greatest artists of the nineteenth century. He is, says Ricketts, comparable to the early Rossetti in "poetic quality," in the rendering of the "invisible through the visible."

> The invisible! The pulsations in the air about a spiritual manifestation, the peculiar rhythm belonging to 'Les gestes insolites,' the appeal to our emotions by some intuitive use of line, mass, tone, and colour, or expression,--this poetic, or emotional gift has been at the command of this master in many of his imaginative designs.[28]

Another important figure for both men was Puvis de Chavannes. To Yeats, Puvis represented "elegance" as opposed to the modern tendency toward "thick and heavy forms," expressionistic exaggeration.[29] He was the best of tradition:

its interest in technique. Yeats says that the Japanese, who invented "listening to incense," would have understood "the prose of Walter Pater, the painting of Puvis de Chavannes, the poetry of Mallarme and Verlaine. When heroism returned to our age, it bore with it as its first gift technical sincerity."[30] Puvis appears third in the list of "myth and mask-makers," and his name is unqualified. Yeats reacted to seeing a performance of L'Ubu Roi by describing "our" art:

> Feeling bound to support the most spirited party, we have shouted for the play, but that night . . . I am very sad, for comedy, objectivity, has displayed its growing power once more. I say, "After Stephane Mallarme, after Paul Verlaine, after Gustave Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the Savage God."[31]

Ricketts, too, sees Puvis as a resuscitator of traditional style, notably landscape, calling him "the most original designer of landscape since Rembrandt," able to maintain "a curiously fortunate and quite original balance of interest . . . between the environment of land and sky and the human interest in his paintings."[32] His interest in the figure or model never overshadowed the sense of the importance of the entire composition; he was occupied with "finding a kind of drawing which would express the major saliences and characteristics and yet form part of the design of the whole picture." This interest may have contributed to the

result; "some of his later figures" were "reduced" "almost to symbols."[33] Yeats, of course, would not have regarded this as a "reduction," and no doubt such an attitude would have seemed to him evidence of that attachment to "life" that weakened Ricketts' own work.

Moreau, too, is an artist who represented for Yeats the ideal that he opposed to modern art. He is included among the great mask-makers, and in the Autobiography, Yeats contrasts his popular appeal to that of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. An "Aran Islander," Yeats says, who could not admire the "moderns" would still be seen

> lingering at Moreau's 'Jason' to study in mute astonishment the background where there are so many jewels, so much wrought stone and moulded bronze. Had not lover promised mistress in his own island song, 'A ship with a gold and silver mast, gloves of the skin of a fish, and shoes of the skin of a bird, and a suit of the dearest silk in Ireland?'[34]

The appeal for Yeats himself was life-long; in 1936 he wrote in a letter that Moreau's Women and Unicorns still hung upon his wall.[35] Ricketts too sees Moreau's traditionalism, but is less sympathetic, describing it as "an air of nostalgia and Pallor."[36] But Ricketts has begun his essay with the stated intention of trying to arrive at Moreau's "characteristics" separate from the "exaggerated admiration they have sometimes brought about."[37] His discussion of Moreau as a literary painter contrasts him with Rossetti, who, Ricketts says, sometimes "succeeded in painted narrative."

Rossetti has portrayed his situations with settings of greatly detailed realism; "with Gustave Moreau the dramatic element is also realised, but under different conditions." Those conditions have nothing to do with "real facts and passions"--"Reality is suggested only by a few fair things fostered in the shadow of palaces, ravines, and by dim rivers, where light, water and air have become resolved into the limpid colours of rare crystals."[38] For Rossetti's sense of the "without," Moreau substitutes the "half-fascinated wheeling, the circular flight of a bird . . . ."[39] Ricketts ends his essay by saying that Moreau "has translated into terms of painting that craving for better and more perfect things which is a part, the better part, of all art expression."[40]

Ricketts' Self-Portrait often singles out Tintoretto for scorn, contrasting him with Titian in the same way Yeats does in 'Symbolism in Painting.' These and other of the older painters are very evident in the letters around 1903, when Ricketts visited the Prado Museum preparatory to writing a book about it.[41] Ricketts mentions particularly Titian's Ariosto, the same title Yeats used. He often praises Ingres, as well as those artists of whom he has written in the Pages on Art. His taste was that of an extremely well-educated eclecticism. Cecil Lewis' preface to the Self-Portrait describes Ricketts' house:

> On the first floor . . . was a small museum. Egyptian antiquities, Greek vases and figurines lived in glass cases. Below were drawers full of antique beads and Chinese hair ornaments . . . there were Adam sofas and chairs, Italian side-tables, a marble torso, a bas-relief, a picture of Don Juan by Ricketts, a portrait of Mrs. Pat by Shannon. . . .
>
> [The drawing room] was the most perfect I have ever seen . . . you would not think that Old Master drawings would be at home with a Chinese bird-cage; you would not think that red and green marble-topped tables could live in amity; you would fancy that Empire chairs might swear at Morris chintzes, French knives could not harmonize with Georgian silver, and a modern blue glass bowl could never stand at the feet of a Grecian statuette; the whole certainly could not be lit hard with clear bulbs hanging from sixpenny porcelain shades. Yet, strangely, all combined to give a sense of luxury and elegance that was incomparable.[42]

Many of Ricketts' art treasures found their way into the "Ricketts and Shannon Rooms" at the Fitzwilliam Museum:

> The noble Greek vases, the flying Tanagras, the bronze men (handles of an urn) arched back like swallow divers, the wooden duck with sliding wings (rouge for an Egyptian queen), the ivory monkey, minus one leg, smaller than my finger . . . the Watteaus, the Fragonards, that superhuman Rubens head, that Angel by Tiepolo, the Rembrandt cartoon . . . works of art brought together from every epoch with an eclectic and impeccable taste.[43]

It seems appropriate that this king of connoisseurs should have been followed by the deluge which he characterized as dominated by "a wish to <u>contradict</u> everybody and everything."[44] His place as Yeats's mentor was eventually usurped by that spirit of contradiction., Ezra Pound. The Grafton Exhibit that Ricketts reviewed in 1910 was, as Bell has said, the end of the Victorian Era. Virginia Woolf observed,

"On or about December 1910 human character changed."[45] Before 1910, and after 1900, English art might fairly be described as "dormant." In the words of Herbert Read,

> It was a world in which the sprightly academicism of Augustus John could excite the cognoscenti. Ricketts and Shannon, Conder and the Rothensteins--these were the shimmering stars in a twilight through which the sinister figures of Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley still seemed to slouch. Walter Sickert was the closest link with reality--the reality of Degas and Manet, but Sickert was not then taken so seriously as of late.[46]

Between the years of 1910 and 1914, a series of explosions disturbed the quiet, in the form of several new "isms" in the art world. Futurism, the first of these, declared "We are young and our art is violently revolutionary," and issued manifestos detailing their attack on "passeism." One of these gives as its first objective: "To destroy the cult of the past, the obssession with the antique, pedantism, and academic formalism."[47] Wyndham Lewis and C. R. W. Nevinson threatened to "take over control": to cure England of "aestheticism, crass snobbery and langours of distinguished phlegm," its "canker of professors, connoisseurs, archaeologists, cicerones, antiquaries, effeminancy, old fogyism and snobbery."[48] The battle-lines originally drawn by the Grafton Exhibit were clarified by a series of manifestoes, first from the Futurists, led by the Italian poet Marinetti, and then from the Vorticists, whose leader

Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska put out a magazine entitled Blast.

Yeats began this period comfortably ensconced in Woburn buildings and already able to regard himself as an established poet. His reaction was predictable, in view of the history we have seen in his relationship with his father; he observed the new trend, but repudiated it in favor of Ricketts and his "nest of decayed Pre-Raphaelites," as Augustus John called them. Even John himself, widely regarded as the "true" modern--"he is a development, whereas Post-Impressionism is an open breach," according to an essay in the Nation[49]--was not really acceptable to Yeats. John did numerous sketches as well as several portraits of Yeats, but he liked none of them very much--"all powerful ugly gypsy things," he said of them.[50] He called John "the extreme revolt from academic form," and criticized him for portraying ugly models, breaking "with violence the canons of measurement which we derive from the Renaissance." John's interest in "character" has led him away from the "social need," to produce "bodies fitted for the labor of life." In this John is in contrast with the "poetical painters"--Botticelli, Leonardo, Watts, Rossetti--who create "one type of face." John's is a "powerful but prosaic art, celebrating the fall into division not the resurrection into unity."[51] Probably it was John whom Yeats remembered as the "modish painter" who "shirked" his duty to "make him fill the

cradles right."[52] Yeats's letter to Oshima mentions contemptuously the "modern European painter": ". . . one feels that Orpen and John have relations in the patent office who are conscious of being at the forefront of time."[53] That Yeats was not alone in this opinion may be attested by his account of how Wyndham Lewis came visiting and "mourned over John's present state, that of much portrait painting for money, and thought his work was falling off."[54] No doubt it was Lewis to whom Yeats was referring in "Art and Ideas" as "those exuberant young men who make designs for a Phallic Temple, but consider Augustus John lost amid literature."[55]

For whether Yeats approved or disapproved of these young revolutionaries, he could not avoid them. Lewis was an associate of T. S. Moore as well as of John, and Pound described himself as Laurence Binyon's "bulldog."[56] After 1910, London was a ferment of radical art groups, which broke up and reformed under slightly different aegises with dizzying speed, prompting Pound to describe the situation as a "Vortex." Wees records several meetings between Yeats and Marinetti, one of which ended with Marinetti bellowing his own lines at the top of his lungs, apparently in an attempt to upstage a previous reading by Yeats. This incident does not appear, as far as I am aware, in any of Yeats's published writings. Yet there are unacknowledged effects: Rickett's description of the Post-Impressionists as

"Proto-Byzantinism" is certainly striking. The comparison is even more interesting in view of Wees's description of a dinner for Marinetti at the Dieppe, "with its little tables and arbours decorated with flowers and cages of singing birds, some real and some mechanical."[57] It is difficult to believe that all this has nothing to do with the "golden bird upon the golden bough" singing to "Lords and Ladies of Byzantium," of what is "past, and passing, and to come."[58] By 1914, Pound had become Yeats's secretary, and was working on the Vorticist Manifestoes at the same time.[59]

In his "official" position, however, Yeats never aligned himself with any of the new "isms." This is strange, in a sense, because these people were in fact the new Pre-Raphaelites: the poet Pound, the painter Lewis, the sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska embodied the spirit of the new wave---the arts had found a common aim, revolution. But it was not an aim with which Yeats could sympathize. The Blast aligned itself with all revolutionaries everywhere, even with the Suffragettes, in spite of its stated anti-feminism (in this process it also aligned itself with the cause of Ulster against home rule in Ireland, and it may be that thereby hangs a tale). There were other reasons, however, for Yeats's lack of sympathy, such as T. E. Hulme and his campaign to "clean the world of these sloppy dregs of the Renaissance."[60] There was the pervasive attempt to shock with references to sex, to excrement, to violence. Although the Vorticists were

not violent themselves, they encouraged it in others, even in the Suffragettes' slashing of paintings (so long as they were not Vorticist paintings). Probably most objectionable to Yeats, however, was the devotion of the Futurists and Vorticists to the machine. The interpretation of that machine in art was the shoal upon which the two movements broke apart, but in a more general way it remained characteristic of both. Hulme described Lewis' pictures thus: "it is obvious that the artist's only interest in the human body was in a few abstract relations perceived in it, the arm as lever and so on. The interest in living flesh as such . . . is entirely absent."[61]

As Yeats had objected to the Realists because they eliminated subject, the Impressionists because they eliminated form, yet he must object more than all these to the elimination of the human, the organic life that mattered more than anything else to the "last Romantics." He wrote in retrospect about his first experience of Shaw's "Arms and the Man" that he felt for it "admiration and hatred," because "It seemed to me inorganic, logical straightness and not the crooked road of life, yet I stood aghast before its energy as today before that of the Stone Drill by Mr. Epstein or of some design by Mr. Wyndham Lewis."[62] Although Yeats once described himself as Lewis' "most humble and admiring disciple," he was speaking of Lewis's philosophy, specifically Time and Western Man, not of his art.[63] Engelberg

cites the 1925 edition of A Vision, p. 211:

> They [Brancusi, Wyndham Lewis, and others] are all absorbed in some technical research to the entire exclusion of the personal dream. It is as though the forms in the stone or in their reverie began to move with an energy . . . not that of the human mind. Very often these forms are mechanical . . . mathematical . . . [They were] . . . masters of a geometrical pattern or rhythm which seems to impose itself wholly from beyond the mind, the artist "standing outside himself."[64]

Ellman, in his Identity of Yeats, quotes this unpublished poem which he says was "written late in Yeats's life":

> Art Without Imitation
>
> Old Mathematics plied the shears,
> He has the fragments in his bag,
> And trundles it about and swears
> Nature may fling off every rag
> And hardly find a single painter
> To beg her picture for his book,
> Or who is fitted for the quainter
> Operation of sweet love.
> How could he answer look for look
> And often clip being clipped enough.[65]

Yeats's use of the term "imitation" can be confusing. He attempted to explain it in a letter to his father:

> You ask for examples of "imitation" in poetry. I suggest that the corresponding things are drama and the pictorial element and that in poetry those who lack these are rhetoricians. I feel in Wyndham Lewis's Cubist pictures an element corresponding to rhetoric arising from his confusion of the abstract with the rhythmical. Rhythm implies a living body, a breast to rise and fall, or limbs that dance, while the abstract is incompatible with life. The Cubist is abstract. At the same time you must not leave out rhythm and this rhythm is not imitation. Impressionism by leaving this out brought all this rhetoric of the abstract upon us. I have just been

> turning over a book of Japanese paintings. Everywhere there is delight in form, repeated yet varied, in curious patterns of lines, but these lines are all an ordering of natural objects though they are certainly not imitation. In every case the artist one feels has had to consciously and deliberately arrange his subject. It was the Impressionists' belief that this arrangement should be only unconscious and instinctive that brought this violent reaction. They are right in believing that this should be conscious, but wrong in substituting abstract scientific thought for conscious feeling. If I delight in rhythm I love nature though she is not rhythmical. . . . I separate the rhythmical and the abstract. They are brothers but one is Able and one is Cain.[66]

For all his protest, however, Yeats could not help being affected by what was, after all, the atmosphere of his time. Wees summarizes these tendencies as reflected in Blast and Vorticism:

> Rebellion against the nineteenth century; fascination with machinery, the city, energy, and violence; commitment to anti-romanticism and pro-classicism (albeit a tough, anti-humanistic 'classicism' most often associated with T. E. Hulme); experiments with pure form in art, with particular emphasis on geometrical abstraction and the interplay of 'planes in relation'; attempts to create spatial forms in literature and discover common aesthetic ground for all the arts.[67]

Those critics who complain of Yeats's obsession with sex, the increasing violence of his later poems, his interest in Fascism, would do well to consider the spirit of the age in which he had begun to live. In 1913, Pound wrote this poem, entitled "Fratres Minores," which not even Blast would publish without deleting the first and the last two lines:

> With minds still hovering above their testicles
> Certain poets here and in France
> Still sigh over established and natural fact
> Long since fully discussed by Ovid.
> They howl. They complain in delicate and exhausted
> meters
> That the twitching of three abdominal nerves
> Is incapable of producing a lasting Nirvana.[68]

Here, as well as in Yeats's heart, is the "foul rag and bone shop" that originated Crazy Jane. She would have been most out of place among Ricketts' Tanagras.

Certain of Yeats's comments later in his life would even seem to indicate that he had come to understand and to use the "geometrical abstraction" and the "creation of spatial form in literature." Of the wheels and gyres of A Vision, he said "I regard them as systematic arrangements of experience comparable to the cubes in the drawings of Wyndham Lewis and to the ovoids in the sculpture of Brancusi."[69] Indeed, these lines from "The Words Upon the Windowpane" indicate a place for the latest artists in the development of the "measurement" that began with the "stark Egyptian":

> Let images of basalt, black, immovable,
> Chisseled in Egypt, or voids of bright steel
> Hammered and polished by Brancusi's hand,
> Represent spirits.[70]

But whatever we may think we discover in retrospect, during Yeats's life, as D. J. Gordon phrased it, "his approaches . . . to other forms of modern art, which he rather uneasily knew to engage the contemporary imagination

far more deeply than those with which he had spent his life, were tentative and hesitant."[71] The artists to whom he could wholeheartedly give his allegiance were much less "modern" than the mildest of the Futurists: Ricketts, T. S. Moore, Robert Gregory, George Innes, and his brother Jack. And for his "primitivism," the art of Byzantium; hardly comparable to Picasso's use of African sculptures, but in the same line. Yeats, after all, was long-lived--not exclusively a man of the twentieth century, but of the nineteenth as well. Just as he survived and used the "disaster" that was Pater, so he weathered the Vorticist Maelstrom, and emerged as its end, still writing meter and rhyme. His own "manifesto," as we have seen, invokes the spirit of Michelangelo, and "condemns the art and literature of modern Europe."

The artist who immediately succeeded Ricketts in Yeats's esteem was T. S. Moore. These two men were friends of Yeats for about the same time period, although Moore outlived Ricketts (who died in 1931). Their art is similar; both liked to work in black and white, although Ricketts did paintings as well. The major difference is in style: Ricketts close to Art Nouveau throughout his career, though growing gradually less elaborate; T. S. Moore reflecting the Art Deco taste for geometry, heavy architectural verticals and horizontals. Although Moore wrote several volumes of criticism of art and literature (Art and Life, Hark to

These Three Talk about Style, and Armour for Aphrodite), it was his work as an artist and a poet which seems to have had the greatest effect on Yeats. Between the years 1915 and 1939, Moore designed the covers for twelve of Yeats's books, as well as bookplates for Yeats and Mrs. Yeats. The relationship between the drawings and the poetry was a much more vital one than such a statement would seem to suggest, however. I have already remarked that Yeats suggested a design based on Blake for the cover of The Winding Stair. In that letter, he goes on, "If you cannot get a good design on The Winding Stair idea I might change the name of the book, but prefer not."[71] He apparently considered the cover-design to be more important than the title. In 1930, Yeats wrote to Moore that he had indeed changed the title, though not because of the design (he discovered that it had already been used).

> Yes, I have decided to call the book Byzantium. I enclose the poem, from which the name is taken, hoping that it may suggest symbolism for the cover. The poem originates from a criticism of yours. You objected to the last verse of Sailing to Byzantium because a bird made by the goldsmith was just as natural as anything else. That showed me the idea needed exposition.[71]

The reasons for this strong consideration of picture in what would seem an inappropriate context are partially Yeats's conviction of the power of the symbol over the subconscious mind, the result of his hermetic studies. He had wanted to use a hawk for the cover of Four Years: 1887 - 1891;

Moore suggested a hawk mounted, and Yeats replied:

> I am sorry for it would make a fine design but don't nail the hawk on the board. The hawk is one of my symbols and you might rather crudely upset the subconsciousness. It might mean nightmare or something of the kind for some of us here. Life when one does my kind of work is rather strange.[73]

It is difficult to assess the exact importance of Moore's designs in Yeats's poems. A favorite of Yeats's was the bookplate for George that showed a unicorn springing forth from the ruin of a lightning-struck tower. How much has this to do with the image of the "colt" of "holy blood" in Yeats's poem? Jeffares attributes Yeats's ladies riding unicorns to Moreau's picture, but Moore had designed for Yeats a wardrobe embroidery depicting a young girl riding a unicorn among steep mountains.[74] And Moore did a series of drawings featuring Pan, one of which is entitled "Panas a Cliff." Do these belong with Poussin in the backgrounds of "News for the Delphic Oracle"? In 1921, Moore sent Yeats an engraving that he and Mrs. Moore used for their Christmas cards. Bridge's note describes the picture:

> The engraving referred to was done on soft wood, with the grain showing through, like a Japanese print, and represented sphinx-like statues or daemons seated in the desert.[74]

It was in the same year that Yeats published "The Second Coming," with its famous description of the avatar, the "rough beast":

> . . . somewhere in sands of the desert
> A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
>
> A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
> Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
> Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.[76]

Surely there is more involved here than coincidence! The most nearly verifiable of the references is that in "Leda and the Swan." This poem has been the subject of an argument, printed in the 1962 Times Literary Supplement between critics Charles Madge, Giorgio Melchiori, and Charles B. Gullans.

Early in 1962, Charles Madge writes a note to the TLS, pointing out what he considers a direct resemblance of Yeats's sonnet on Leda to a bas-relief on display at the British Museum. Melchiori then writes in response, agreeing with the identification on the basis that an early draft of the poem (published in Ellmann, Identity of Yeats, 176 - 77) shows an even closer resemblance to the relief, and concluding that in the draft Yeats was "actually trying to describe this particular piece of sculpture," whereas in the final version of the poem, "the picture grew somewhat blurred (though emotionally much sharper) by the crowding in of other visual and literary reminiscences."[77] But a dissenting voice is soon heard: Charles B. Gullans challenges the relief with a book-plate created by T. Sturge Moore for A. G. B. Russell, published in 1921 in Modern Woodcutters No. 3: T. Sturge Moore, which he thinks Yeats

was certain to have seen, since he and Moore were intimate friends. Both draft and final poem, says Gullans, more exactly describe the woodcut than the relief. He cites several details in support of his theory--primarily the fact that to him the Leda of the woodcut looks "terrified," while the one in the relief does not (The woodcut is reproduced along with this essay so that the reader may judge of its expression himself; to me, "terrified" seems an exaggeration). Further, Gullans cites and analyzes the Moore ode "To Leda" (To Leda and Other Odes, 1907), deciding that Yeats's poem "seems to be a conscious criticism of Moore's thesis in the ode," and concludes that the three (relief, bookplate, and ode) together "explain every feature of all versions of the Ode." This enthusiastic statement is countered by a rather miffed Madge, who says that he has since visited a collection of Lediana (at the Warburg Institute), and found that there are indeed very many versions of the myth which Yeats might have seen or referred to. But, he says, he is himself unwilling to accept the bookplate as a source of such a fine poem, because the plate has "little aesthetic merit."[78]

This sort of thing is useful to some extent, I think, because out of all the Lediana, for instance, it is interesting to identify those versions with really significant similarities. The position of the beak of the swan is a telling point, and might well cause an observer to conclude

that both the relief and the bookplate are likely sources--or that Moore, too, had seen the relief. Moore was not at all disinclined to borrow motifs from earlier art, as Yeats pointed out in the case of his centaurs. Interpretations of expressions, on the other hand, remain interpretations, and to conlude that every detail of a great artist's creation derives from some other source seems ridiculous. Surely we may accept "terrified" as Yeats's expression of Leda's subjective state? If one insists upon being literal, it is her "fingers" which are "terrified" anyway, not her face. And Mr. Madge's statement that an artistically insignificant work could not inspire a truly great creation such as Yeats's "Leda" would eliminate from consideration many of the artists whom Yeats most admired.

The interaction of these two artists through their poetry is perhaps less arguable. Moore's "Reflected Visions" carries on the genre of Rossetti's "Sonnets Upon Pictures." These poems were published in Moore's Collected Poems in 1931. I have already listed the artists Moore uses; the poems are not all sonnets, but they are like Rossetti's in that they "animate" a picture which is identified in the title. They are present tense, and in most cases rather objective than interpretative. They do not, as did Rossetti's poems and Yeats's early sonnet on the Nettleship lion-picture, use the painting as a point of departure for philosophical enormities such as the "armies of unalterable Law." Yeats's

own "Lapis Lazuli" was written in 1936. That the development is attributable to Moore is of course, extremely debatable, but the fact is that this poem shows a similar structure in its lack of the centrifugal pattern of thought. Instead, it moves in from the state of society to focus upon the carving as an exemplar of the answer to the larger question of how the problems of life may best be faced. Unlike "On Those Who Hated the 'Playboy,'" it acknowledges and emphasizes its genesis in the work of art, as does "A Bronze Head," which uses Epstein's bust of Maud Gonne as a focal point for Yeats's meditation upon her part in his life.

Another contemporary artist whom Yeats admired was Robert Gregory, but his untimely death in the war prevented him from becoming, as he no doubt otherwise would have the force in Yeats's life that Ricketts and Moore were. However, it also served to enshrine him in Yeats's memory, so that he, like Michelangelo, Blake, Calvert and Palmer, becomes a symbolic figure. Neither Ricketts nor Moore figure as themselves in Yeats's poetry, though their paintings do. In addition, it was probably Gregory and Innes' landscape style that Yeats used to replace that of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Murray Prosky's unpublished dissertation traces the changes in Yeats's landscapes (Prosky defines a "landscape poem" as one which "includes a visual description either

as a setting or as a figure of speech," including as "visual description" either "natural scenery" or a "man-made object such as a house."[79]) Prosky characterizes the early landscapes as "deliberately dreamy, vague, and indistinct," dominated by auditory imagery.[80] The vagueness is often achieved through the use of tree shadows or moonlight. These early scenes were "arrangements of impressions" rather than portrayals of natural scenery, selecting certain scenes because of the mood they invoked. Toward the middle period of Yeats's career, the sense of specific place begins to replace these generalized landscapes, and with it comes the idea of the relationship of personality to landscape. Prosky thinks that Pater's descriptions of Leonardo and Giorgione's paintings began Yeats's thinking along these lines, for Pater sees the background landscape of the paintings as reflecting the essence of the personalities in the foreground: La Gioconda is "older than the rocks among which she sits." Next came an interest in local color: by 1900, Yeats was "convinced that great writers projected symbolic landscapes in harmony with the writer's personalities as well as their epochs." Yeats asserted that a poet should be familiar with the countryside in which his poetry was rooted. There is always an element of invocation in Yeats's landscapes: some places were suitable for the summoning of spirits. The Wind Among the Reeds landscapes use places imbued with mythology and mysticism, but having no sense

of exact place, and even begins to eliminate the use of landscape entirely. The Seven Woods shows the change to local color and also begins to replace auditory with visual imagery. The Responsibilities landscapes show "images of remote, inaccessible places: barren strands, high mountains in Connemara, stately mansions hidden behind tall trees."[81] Yeats describes in the Autobiography his growing disgust with "that overcharged colour inherited from the romantic movement," and his attempt to create "an impression as of cold light . . . an emotion which I described to myself as cold."[82] In the Essays, Yeats had said that "there is for every man some one scene, some one adventure, some one picture that is the image of his secret life, for wisdom first speaks in images."[83] Prosky remarks that Yeats's landscapes after 1914 were sometimes "treated as empirical evidence of certain movements in history, something more than appropriate metaphors and ideas originating in the poet."[84] He concludes that

> The spare quality of the mature Yeatsian landscape reflects the stern principles he turned to, principles derived from "a mind that delights in strong sensations whether of beauty or of ugliness, in bare facts, and is quite without sentimentality" . . . Grey truth replaces grey mist and images become stark, sharply outlined, and above all, functional. Just as Yeats sought an athletic quality in his verse by stripping depression down to its bare essentials, so did he strip his landscapes of extraneous, non-functional "poetic" elements . . . scenery and natural history are not treated for their own sakes, but as appropriate background to or projection of attitudes and emotions.[85]

A discussion of the antecedents in painting of this mature landscape style must include not only Calvert, Palmer, Gregory and Innes, but also Ricketts, Moreau, Moore, and the theatre designs of Craig and Dulac. All these are characterized by a developing simplicity, a tendency to use only the barest esssentials of landscape, and those symbolic. Bare rock cliffs, broken only by a leafless tree, often constitute the backgrounds of works by Moreau, Ricketts, and Moore. Gregory and Innes often pictured water: the same streams and lakes that replace the seashore and everlasting dewdrops of the Pre-Raphaelites in Yeats's poetry. Prosky attributes the clarification in Yeats's concept of landscape to his theatre experience, and of course the background there is the art of the Orient. Yeats's "more profound Pre-Raphaelitism" is characterized by the search for "simplicity" which he says he is still pursuing as late as his letter to Noguchi. In "The Bounty of Sweden" Yeats writes of the Japanese:

> How serene their art, no exasperation, no academic tyranny, its tradition as naturally observed as the laws of a game or dance. . . . May it not have been possible that the use of the mask in acting, and the omission from painting of the cast shadow, by making observation and experience of life less important, and imagination and tradition more, made the arts transmittable and teachable?[86]

The concept of the symbolic landscape is at the heart of Yeats emphasis upon the plastic arts in his prose, plays, and poetry. He says of his attachment to the landscape

of Rosses Point, "It is a natural conviction for a painter's son to believe there may be a landscape which is symbolical of some spiritual condition and awakens a hunger such as cats feel for Valerian."[87] In A Vision, he has described the Image that it is the task of the self to find in order to achieve Unity of Being: "The Image is a myth, a woman, a landscape, or anything whatsoever that is an external expression of the Mask" (very often that Image was a work of art), and he describes Unity of Being as "like a perfectly proportioned human body,"[88] Moore's definition of Beauty. Art as the antiself he describes best in Per Amica Silentia Luane, speaking of an actress friend:

> When last I saw her in her own house she lived in a torrent of words and movements, she could not listen, and all about her on the walls were women drawn by Burne-Jones in his latest period. She had invited me in the hope that I would defend these women, who are always listening, and are as necessary to her as a contemplative Buddha to a Japanese Samurai, against a French critic who would persuade her to take into her heart in their stead a Post-Impressionistic picture of a fat, flushed woman lying naked on a Turkey carpet.[89]

Everything Yeats encountered was grist for his mill of symbolism; C. M. Bowra says he even conversed in that pattern: "As in his poetry he made a personal mythology out of people whom he had known and pesented them as symbols of various ways of life, so in his talk he did something of the same kind."[90] The work of art as symbol offered all the potential for subtlety that even Yeats could desire:

the symbolic quality of the artist; the symbolic quality of his artistic tradition; the symbolic quality of the landscape presented; the symbolic quality of its literary reference; the symbolic quality of the persons portrayed; the symbolism of the painting as the opposite of the character of those who admired it, and finally its relationship to the "Zeitgeist" of artist and viewer. Any or all of these may be operating in any Yeats reference to a painting or statue. For the reader who wants to know Yeats's full intention, it is not enough to know that he used Ricketts' picture for his poem, for instance. One needs to know why--the symbolism of the scene, with Don Juan and the eunuchs identified with Synge and the rioters is clear enough. But to this Yeats would no doubt have added his symbolism for Ricketts as well: Ricketts the aristocrat versus the barbarians--perhaps, since the poem was published in 1911, the "savages" of Post-Impressionism. Synge was, in Yeats's mental symbolism, the peasant, a sort of folk-hero associated with the true native stock of the Aran Islanders. The aristocrats and the peasants against the hucksters and philistines is a typical enough Yeatsian theme. That the average reader might not fully appreciate all these nuances is not likely to have concerned Yeats greatly, so long as his own desire for complex and reverberating patterns of association was satisfied.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1] Essays, pp. 438 - 41.

[2] Vision., p. 277.

[3] A letter from T. S. Moore to Yeats says Ricketts had a period (1890 - 91) when he was "entirely absorbed" in Rossetti, but doubted he "consciously" "modelled himself" on Rossetti, because he "greatly disapproved of the unbuttoned Rossetti." Also there was "something 'stuffy'" in Rossetti's mind that he disliked--"something of the period and millieu,' he would say." (Bridge, p. 42)

[4] Letters, p. 691.

[5] In fact Ricketts, like Pound, had an admiration for Fascism which may have helped to inspire Yeats's own much milder views: "I read every morning whatever news there is from Italy, re Mussolini and his incomparable Fascisti. Are they the counter-revolution? Are they the sign of a world returning to order, duty, sense of real values, a return to construction and veneration for firm things? . . . I wonder if there will be a Fascist movement here? I think it possible, but only after a greater period of discomfort and trouble." (Ricketts, Self-Portrait, p. 343) Like many of Yeats's close friends--for instance the august Lady Augusta--Ricketts was a hard man to stay friends with. The reason was probably in his aristocratic-reactionary tendencies. Bernard Shaw remarked that the "noble and generous" Ricketts always dealt "en grand seigneur." (Charles Ricketts, R. A., n. page).

[6] Letters, pp. 595 - 96.

[7] Bridge, p. 168.

[8] T. S. Moore, ed., Charles Ricketts, R. A.: 65 Illustrations (London: Cassell, 1933).

[9] The connection of Ricketts and Delacroix lies behind the very puzzling poem, "A Nativity." "Ricketts made pictures that suggest Delacroix by their colour and remind us by their theatrical composition that Talma once invoked the thunderbolt. . . ." (Explorations, p. 418)

[10] The quotations in this paragraph are from T. S. Moore's introduction to Charles Ricketts, R. A. The volume is not paginated.

[11] (London: Martin Secker, 1933).

[12] (London: Constable, 1913).

[13] Comp. T. S. Moore, ed. Cecil Lewis (London: Davies, 1939).

[14] Ricketts, Unrecorded Histories, p. 24.

[15] Histories, p. 27.

[16] Ricketts, Pages on Art, pp. 48 - 49.

[17] Pages, p. 52.

[18] Pages, p. 53.

[19] Pages, p. 150.

[20] Pages, p. 151.

[21] Pages, p. 154.

[22] Pages, p. 158.

[23] Pages, p. 159.

[24] Pages, p. 164.

[25] Bridge, p. 49.

[26] Vision, p. 4.

[27] Bridge, p. 144.

[28] Ricketts, Pages, p. 103.

[29] Explorations, p. 450.

[30] Essays, p. 292.

[31] Autobiography, p. 234.

[32] Ricketts, Pages, p. 77.

[33] Pages, p. 71.

[34] Autobiography, p. 215.

[35] Letters, p. 865. The actual title of the painting is simply Licornes.

[36] Pages, p. 254.

[37] Pages, p. 253.

[38] Pages, p. 261.

[39] Pages, p. 262.

[40] Pages, p. 265.

[41] Velasquez was one of Ricketts' few enthusiasms which Yeats did not share. Yeats thought of Velasquez as an enemy because Henley's group praised him: "praise at that time universal wherever Pre-Raphaelitism was accurst, and to my mind, that had to pick its symbols where its ignorance permitted, Velasquez seemed the first bored celebrant of boredom." (A, 89)

[42] Ricketts, Self-Portrait, pp. viii-ix.

[43] Self-Portrait, pp. v-vi.

[44] Self-Portrait, p. 339.

[45] Woolf, quoted in William C. Wees, Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 13.

[46] Wees, p.

[47] Futurist Manifesto, quoted in Wees, p. 12.

[48] Lewis and Nevinson, quoted in Wees, p. 12.

[49] Wees, p. 31.

[50] Memoirs, p. 187.

[51] Memoirs, pp. 188 - 89.

[52] Collected Poems, p. 342.

[53] Oshima, p. 20.

[54] Memoirs, p. 214. John himself thought that Yeats did not like his unsentimentalized approach to portraying the famous poet. But the problem might have been simple vanity. Yeats describes sitting for John as making him feel a "martyr": "He exaggerates every hill and hollow of the face until one looks like a gypsy, grown old in wickedness and hardship. If one looked like any one of his pictures the country women would take the clean clothers off the hedges when one passed, as they do at the sight of a tinker." (Letters, p. 497)

[55] Essays, p.

[56] Pound, "Canto LXXX," quoted in Wees, p.

[57] Wees, p. 46.

[58] Collected Poems, p.

[59] In the background of Yeats's "gyre," how is one either to explain or to overlook Pound's "vortex," which symbolized creative energy? Yeats's final symbol for the self/anti-self relationship was the gyre. As a development from the rose and the mask, this appears to indicate an acceptance of modernist esthetic greater than Yeats ever admitted in print.

[60] Wees, p. 82.

[61] Wees, p. 83.

[62] Autobiography, p. 188.

[63] Letters, p. 733.

[64] Engelberg, p. 21.

[65] Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964), p. 243.

[66] Letters, p. 608 - 9.

[67] Wees, p. 212.

[68] Wees, p. 129.

[69] Vision, p. 25.

[70] Plays, p. 367.

[71] Bridge, p. 163.

[72] Bridge, p. 164.

[73] Bridge, p. 38.

[74] Bridge, p. 191.

[75] Bridge, p. 192.

[76] Yeats, Collected Poems, p. 185.

[77] TLS, p. 577.

[78] TLS, p. 532.

[79] Murray Prosky, "Landscapes in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin 1966, p. 21.

[80] Prosky, p. 32.

[81] Prosky, p. 117.

[82] Autobiography, p. 57.

[83] Essays, p. 232.

[84] Prosky, p. 19.

[85] Prosky, pp. 19 - 20.

[86] Autobiography, p. 369.

[87] Autobiography, p. 48.

[88] Vision, p. 107.

[89] Essays, pp. 487 - 88.

[90] C. M. Bowra, Interviews and Recollections, II, p. 398.

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