

Interrelations: Blake and Yeats

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Abstract: *Both Blake and Yeats were prophets of their own time and annunciators of the future. Both used a rich mythological structure of symbols to communicate the universality and unity of their ideas. The Illuminated Books present a prophetic view, one which projects the future. Yeats' search into the Spiritus Mundi, the origin of all images, may be seen in terms of Blake's archetypal forms.*

Dance, symbolizing destructive human passions which prohibit the individual's entry into the luminous circle of perfection, can be found employed analogously in the work of both poets. Whereas Blake had always decried the sadistic Female Will or Sphinx, Yeats is influenced by the Nietzschean acceptance of joy in pain and this is the triumph of A Full Moon in March. In Yeats the dance signifies the height of passionate abandonment. Yeats' apocalyptic dancers or goddesses are basically Blake's archetypal roles of the Female. The Female in Blake represents paradoxically the elements of both complete unity and conflict in the male. Both Blake and Yeats see the feminine principle as controlling human destiny. These archetypal images are related through their role of prophecy.

Both Blake and Yeats denigrate reason, law, science and materialism. However, while Blake deplores the possessive Female Will in its obstruction of the imagination through the force of materialism, the binding to nature, bringing destruction to humanity, Yeats' heroes are created from suffering and destruction. While Blake urges the fulfilment of the imaginative or eternal life through the liberated life of the senses and denounces the exclusively material world as frigid and dark, Yeats, in his final vision, urges the fulfilment of sensual experience, acclaiming heroic suffering through tragedy as creative joy, which transcends the world of time.

Interrelations: Blake and Yeats¹

Both Blake and Yeats were prophets of their own time and annunciators of the future. Both used a rich mythological structure of symbols to communicate the universality and unity of their ideas. Blake's Illuminated Books present a prophetic view, one which projects the future. Yeats' search into the *Spiritus Mundi*, the origin of all images, may be seen in terms of Blake's archetypal forms.²

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For Yeats and for Blake, the conflicts between the worlds of Innocence and Experience are the fundamental element in their poetic views of artistic creativity. Yeats' Great Wheel comprising twenty-eight lunar phases and Blake's twenty-seven phases of historical thought are each seen to encompass cycles within cycles, which move forwards by the movement of conflicting forces. Thus the whole historical development of civilisation and individual experience is based on the archetypal pattern of conflict.

In Yeats' play *The Hour Glass* the wise man must in frenzy "dance in the dream" (CPI 1977, 239-40) on perceiving the hawk of abstraction and ill-omen repeatedly swooping downwards. The loud laughter and the hysterical scream are symbolic of civilisation's loss of control through the decaying centre of cyclic progression. Dance, symbolising the destructive passions of humanity which prohibit the individual's entry into the luminous circle of perfection, can be found employed analogously in the work of Blake. The dance of Los at the conclusion of *Night the Fourth of The Four Zoas* symbolises humanity's Fall from Eternity into the physical existence of the Circle of Destiny as he enters the passage of history. The tragic Orc-Urizen cycle begins:

The bones of Urizen hurtle on the wind the bones of Los
Twinge and his iron sinews bend like lead and fold
Into unusual forms dancing and howling stamping the Abyss.
(FZ, IV; Erd 338).

The opening scene of Blake's *Night the Fifth of The Four Zoas* depicts the Fall of man from the world of imagination symbolised by Albion's dance of destruction. Having fallen into the cycles of reason and passion in Nature, his "centre cannot hold" and he disintegrates into the dance of madness:

Infected Mad he danced on his mountains high and dark as heaven
Now fixed into one steadfast bulk his features stonify
From his mouth curses and from his eyes sparks of blighting
Beside the anvil cold he danced with the hammer of Urthona
(FZ, V; Erd 338)

In Blake's *Jerusalem* we meet the tragic dance of death-in-life. The Giants symbolise the primitive character of physical man, as shown in the cruel practices of Stonehenge depicted in the poem. In this allegory Blake describes the wars of Napoleon "Over France & Germany: upon the Rhine & Danube" (J, 3: 68, 46; Erd 222)

[...] the Human Victims howl to the Moon & Thor & Friga
Dance the dance of death contending with Jehovah among the Cherubim.
The Chariot Wheels filled with Eyes range along the howling Valley
In the Dividing of Reuben & Benjamin bleeding from Chesters River

The Giants & the Witches & the Ghosts of Albion dance with
Thor & Friga, & the Fairies lead the Moon along the Valley of Cherubim
Bleeding in torrents from Mountain to Mountain [...]
The Cities & Villages of Albion became Rock & Sand Unhumanized.
(J, 3: 63: 9-18; Erd 214)

Crazy Jane, Yeats' social outcast, reaching towards the consummation of her life symbolised by the top of life's mountain, lying "stretched out in the dirt" and having "cried tears down" (CP 1969, 391), had "danced heart's truth". (295) Broken in body and in mind she paradoxically symbolises the completely human. The poet's symbolic female Crazy Jane, now old and demented, has achieved the wisdom of truth. She has undergone the whole process, to "fumble in a greasy till" (120) and suffer in "that most fecund ditch of all" (267), and "some foul sty". (294) Possessing wisdom through her wrecked body and mind, she dances Albion's dance of Eternal Death through which Albion will ultimately be perfectly reintegrated. Through this interpretation of the dance Yeats agrees with Blake that man must lose himself in order to find himself and become whole again. Crazy Jane at the end of her life, looks back on the dancers who are still participating. She dreams the process of the dance which is symbolically the sexual act and sees the participants killing each other as they dance, for their love is founded on hate.

Yeats had remarked about fifteen years earlier in 1917: "'sexual love', which is 'founded upon spiritual hate', is an image of the warfare of man and Daimon" (Myth. 1974, 336) We may attribute the source of this poem to Yeats' dream in which he describes:

[...] strange ragged excited people singing in a crowd. The most visible were a man and woman who were I think dancing. The man was swinging round his head a weight at the end of a rope or leather thong, and I knew that he did not know whether he would strike her dead or not, and both had their eyes fixed on each other, and both sang their love for one another. I suppose it was Blake's old thought "sexual love is founded upon spiritual hate".
(L 1954, 758)

Harold Bloom points out, however, that in Yeats' reference to Blake's idea that sexual love is founded upon spiritual hatred, Yeats failed to see that Blake was not referring to love between men and women, but between Albion and his Sons or between what man was before his fall, and the Zoas or warring faculties into which he has broken up after his fall. (Bloom 1970, 404) On a Freudian level, however, sexual love can be seen as an Oedipal revulsion from the natural affections inherent in all men. (404) The pertinent passage in Blake, can be interpreted on both levels, sexual or spiritual; the protagonists are morally bound by 'iron chains':

But Albion fell down a Rocky fragment from Eternity hurld

By his own Spectre, who is the Reasoning Power in every Man
Into his own Chaos which is the Memory between Man & Man

The silent broodings of deadly revenge springing from the
All powerful parental affection, fills Albion from head to foot
Seeing his sons assimilate with Luvah, bound in the bonds
Of spiritual Hate, from which springs Sexual Love as iron chains.
(J, 3: 54, 6-12; Erd 203)³

Both Blake and Yeats knew that love and hate were co-existent. However, in maintaining that hate is the basis of sexual love, Yeats accedes to the Blakean antithesis that proclaims the states of Innocence and Experience, depicted in the *Songs* and in the prophetic poems, as being dependent on each other. Eli Mandel, however, maintains that Blake fails to give a coherent structure of Experience when he asserts a far-reaching predominance of the primacy of art over life. (Mandel 1966, 17) Yeats, on the other hand, has come to affirm life as the basis for art. In describing the places of “joy and love as excrementitious”, Blake discloses a rejection of the Female Will and a yearning for the state of perfection:

The Man who respects Woman shall be despised by Woman
And deadly cunning & mean abjectness only, shall enjoy them.
For I will make their places of joy & love, excrementitious.[5]
Continually building, continually destroying in Family feuds.
While you are under the dominion of a jealous Female
Unpermanent for ever because of love and jealousy.
You shall want all the Minute Particulars of Life.
(J, 4: 88, 37-43; Erd 247).

In Yeats, the “place of excrement” is itself the “heavenly mansion” (CP, 294)

“Fair and foul are near of kin,
And fair needs foul: [...]
“[...] Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent.”

(CP, 294-5)

As the old and broken body denotes wisdom and the “place of excrement” the centre of love, the “fury and the mire of human veins” (CP, 280) in “Byzantium” ultimately becomes the creative force of the immortal legacy of human endeavour

symbolised by the golden bird. In Yeats' series of poems dealing with Crazy Jane we may see a strong affinity with Blake in the view that religious and moral institutions, representing, reason, tradition and law, forbid a fully liberated expression of the sensual life and prohibit a perfect union of the physical with the spiritual. The spiritual values of the Church are revealed as malevolent and hypocritical as they forbid a full expression of life in the physical world. Yeats, however, accepts the sufferings of human existence for their own purpose in life itself, whereas for Blake experience is the transitional process to spiritual redemption. Both Blake and Yeats, embrace those who are social outcasts, for example the beggar and the harlot, and in fact expose the truth of their love amid misery that condemns the institutions through which they have been rejected on social, moral or religious grounds.

In Yeats' play, *A Full Moon in March*, the queen is a re-enactment or variant of the "staring virgin" who tore out the heart of the god Dionysus and "lay the heart upon her hand" from "Two Songs from a Play" which commences Yeats' play *The Resurrection*, while the swineherd represents the hero god. Sexual passion, violence, fertility, rebirth and resurrection are portrayed by the dramatic conflict of opposites. Passion, rage and violence are the sources of inspiration and creativity for when the virgin bore "that beating heart away" rebirth was announced, "Then did all the muses sing [...] /As though God's death were but a play." These opposing cycles represented by alternating male and female dominance recall Blake's symbolic description of human civilisation in *The Mental Traveller* where the perpetuation of love, passion, cruelty, violence, death and rebirth are shown to be the source of human tragedy and creativity.⁴ In Yeats' *Full Moon* dramatic truth is garbed in myth. It is up to us as actors and dreamers to perceive the truth of the immortal song and dance of the eternal dancers.⁵ Yeats' play is a symbolic representation of human passion. The ritual dance celebrates creative joy arising from destruction, which is the mainspring of the emotions dramatized in Yeats' theatre: "vast sentiments, the desires of the heart cast forth into forms, mythological beings, a frenzied parturition".⁶

Yeats' apocalyptic dancers or goddesses are basically Blake's archetypal figures of the fallen Female. The Female in Blake represents paradoxically the elements of both complete unity and conflict in the male. Both Blake and Yeats see the feminine principle as controlling human destiny. In her unfallen state woman is man's spiritual redeemer. Fallen, she is Vala the goddess of Nature who seduces man to destruction. Hazard Adams sees these archetypal images as related through their role of prophecy:

Ledaean goddess, epiphanic Mother of God, and ritualistic dancing girl are related images of prophecy, intimations of a new historical period. The Ledaean goddess and Mother of God also symbolize partial attainment to Godhead – "Did she put on his knowledge with his power" – and the dancing girl is the temporal image of complete spiritual and bodily equilibrium. As archetypes, all are related to Blake's "eternal female". They represent man's goal, the base of the cone opposite to his own. (Adams 1968, 220)

In Yeats' poem "The Crazy Moon" the moon represents the archetypal goddess controlling the courses of civilisations in her ritual cosmic dances. From the perfect beauty of her virgin youth, where her dance controls an ordered and flourishing civilisation, the moon waxes and wanes. Her cosmic whirls decree the pattern of the cycles of history. In the first stanza the image of the moon, "staggering in the sky", "crazed through much child-bearing" and "Moon-struck by the despairing/ Glances of her wandering eye", (CP, 273) recalls the image of the first stanza in "the Second Coming", in which the loss of control of civilisation, as

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold,

(CP, 210-1)

is finally climaxed in the terror arousing "gaze blank", "pitiless as the sun", of the shape emerging from the controlling forces of *Spiritus Mundi*. The opening image of "The Crazy Moon" also parallels the growing hysteria in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen". The violent horses

[...] wearied running round and round in their courses
All break and vanish, and evil gathers head.

(CP, 236-7)

This vision of growing loss of control is climaxed by the depiction of the dancers, "Herodias' daughters", the dancing goddesses of apocalypse who are here associated with frenzied cries and hysterical "great eyes without thought". As in "The Second Coming", where the rough beast will be born amongst a welter of blood and pain, in "The Crazy Moon":

We grope, and grope in vain,
For children born of her pain.

(CP, 273)

The crazy moon, who dances the dances of conflict pertinent to Yeats' "The Second Coming", is also Blake's archetypal goddess of Nature, Vala who manifests herself in all the Daughters of Albion. In Blake's *The Book of Urizen* the birth of humanity is announced by howlings and pangs of pain.⁷ This repeated birth-cry of humanity can be seen as inaugurating the historical-mythic cycles in Blake.

In the fallen vision, Blake's Daughters of Albion bring war to mankind through a sado-masochistic ritual dance:

[...] the Daughters of Albion Weave the Web
Of ages & Generations, folding and unfolding it, like a Veil of Cherubim
And sometimes it touches the Earths summits, & sometimes spreads
Abroad into the Indefinite Spectre, who is the Rational Power.

Then All the Daughters of Albion became One before Los: even Vala!
And she put forth her hand upon the Looms in dreadful howlings
Till she vegetated into a hungry Stomach and a devouring Tongue.
Her Hand is a Court of Justice, her Feet: two Armies in Battle
Storms & Pestilence: in her Locks: & in her Loins Earthquake
And Fire, & the Ruin of Cities & Nations & Families & Tongues.

(J, 3: 64, 2-11; Erd 215)

Los asks, “Art thou Vala the Wife of Albion [...] All quarrels arise from Reasoning” (J, 3: 64, 19-20; Erd 215).

However, while Blake deplors the possessive or fallen Female Will, Yeats on the contrary, exalts it. To Yeats, joy and even exultation are born from suffering and tragedy. While Blake subjugates the life of the senses as ancillary to spiritual freedom, Yeats demands its full involvement as a means to attaining a transcendent reality. Blake’s Urizen represents both dogmatic religion and materialistic reason. The first is superseded by the Christian religion of love while the second must be fought by imagination. Yeats’ circle images denoting love, imagination and eternity are contrasted with Blake’s circle images of Selfhood, constriction, reason and materialism in the world of time.

Both Blake and Yeats criticise the unliberated woman. (Cf. Billigheimer 1986 Female) In Blake the woman of moral tradition and religious chastity is associated with the obstruction of the imagination by materialistic reason and is characterized by the fallen vision:

The Building is Natural Religion & its Altars Natural Morality
A building of eternal death: whose proportions are eternal despair
Here Vala stood turning the iron Spindle of destruction
From heaven to earth.

(J, 3: 66, 8-11; Erd 218)

In Yeats as depicted in *Full Moon* the virgin is associated with sexual violence and cruelty, symbolically controlling man’s destiny. Her liberation signifies the apocalyptic birth of a new civilisation through the contrary forces of love and war within a tragic world view. In the mythic views of Blake and Yeats the dance is symbolic of woman’s control in sexual and psychological conflict as well as of love’s fulfilment reaching inspiration and vision. It poetically conveys the Female’s eternal control and caprice in her relationship with her male counterpart divining and determining man’s destiny. Both poets, through the archetypal vision of the Female, aim to communicate a

world view beyond rational boundaries. While in Blake woman's subjugation of man as she controls his destiny through the fallen vision is a preparatory stage to his spiritual freedom, in Yeats woman frenetically carries out her prophetic role of inaugurating the apocalyptic birth of a new civilisation while signifying the attainment of a transcendent reality. While in Blake's fallen vision she brings "war" to humanity, in Yeats she ushers in a new era of an essentially tragic vision of history. In both poets, through biblical and romantic allusion, woman is associated with the terror and destruction which is linked to the origin of the Sphinx and the *femme fatale* and final redemption through inspiration.

Whereas Blake had always decried the sadistic Female Will or Sphinx, Yeats is influenced by the Nietzschean acceptance of joy in pain and this is the triumph of *A Full Moon in March*.⁸ In Yeats the dance signifies the height of passionate abandonment. (Cf. Billigheimer 1999 Dance.)

In the symbolist tradition the exemplary act is the individual's contemplation of his own mind, described by Denis Donoghue as "like Mallarmé watching himself in a mirror in order to think. (Donoghue 1977, 166) In Yeats, this intense act, constrained from everything extraneous, is symbolised by the artist's mind moving within its own circle bound by time and space and is embodied in the dance. The dancer, with her natural body, and sensuous movements, communicates with the metaphysical world by mentally annihilating her external surroundings and focusing the full intensity of her concentration on her own image. In "The Symbolism of Poetry" Yeats maintains that to reach "the hidden laws of the world" we should cast out the "energetic rhythms" of the external world of practical action and "seek out those wavering, meditative, organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of the imagination, that neither desires nor hates, because it has done with time, and only wishes to gaze upon some reality, some beauty. (E & I,163) Though her mental contemplation the dancer imbibes the metaphysical into her sensuous body and unites the worlds of time and eternity through her whirling movements in her contemplated, imagined circle. Yeats recalls Symons' reading of Mallarmé's *Hérodiade*, the virgin goddess who could separate herself from the physical world through the inner contemplation of her own image:

So rare a crystal is my dreaming heart,
And all about me lives but in mine own
Image, the idolatrous mirror of my pride,
Mirroring this Herodiade diamond-eyed.

(A 321)

Yeats attempts to model his symbolic dancer of the theatre on Mallarmé's *Hérodiade*. Mallarmé's virgin princess *Hérodiade* opposes the natural flow and changes of normal life by her concentrated, icy frigidity. Her opposition to the normal motions of life is the projection of what Mallarmé believed to be the character of the poet. *Hérodiade* embodied the three major aspects of poetry as put forward by Mallarmé,

angelism, hermeticism and narcissism. Narcissism, as exemplified by Hérodiade speaking to her mirror, is considered to be by far the most significant aspect for the poet. Hérodiade's beauty is symbolic of the poet's inner world of beauty. As she contemplated her beauty in her mirror she reaches a oneness of being with her narcissism. Hérodiade not only seeks her self-image in isolation but also desires the acquaintance of her beauty and chastity with the actual world in order that she will be deeply involved in the full experience of life and its mysteries. The myth of the basic urge to self-destruction, believed to be repeatedly submerged by forgetfulness, is here realised as being at the root of creation and of the basic conflict in love, divine love and artistic creation. In order to create, the poet must first experience self-destruction and must break away from his solipsistic state of narcissism and, like Hérodiade, seek self-unity with the world of experience. In Dante's *Inferno* this transformation is shown by the circle of thieves being punished by having their bodies changed to serpents or intertwined with a serpent. In Blake, man's knowledge of the actual world is attained by his progression through the Eyes of God cycles where he is subject to error. Hérodiade does not merely unite the subjective with the objective. She transcends this state to a condition removed from the actual world, somewhat akin to Blake's vision of the Higher Innocence. Since pleasure and pain are inseparable the most important aspect of Hérodiade's beauty is the romantic equation of beauty and death, sadness and danger which also come to be allied with physical suffering and torture. (Cf. Fowlie 1970, 135-6) On the one hand we have the drama of hermeticism, that of Hérodiade's search into the inner occult world of poetry, and angelism, experience liberated from life by hieratic symbolism, while on the other hand we see this harmony shattered by cruelty and sexual violence, which in Nietzschean terms is expressed by the counterbalancing of Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies.

While in his drama Yeats sought to exalt human passions, in the dance he sought to unite the abstract and symbolic and physical movement and action. In his early work the dance is associated with a supernatural world and mystical cosmic forces. Later we see the dance representing the apocalyptic meeting point of the natural and supernatural. In his late middle and last poems the dance symbolises the passions and vicissitudes of the physical world. Finally in his late drama the dance represents the transcendent phase of a higher, more complete self-fulfilment of joyous ecstasy reached through suffering and tragedy. This vision of life's completeness achieved through conflict places a great emphasis on the meaningfulness of the sensuous life. Blake, whose task was "to open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes/Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity, (J, 1:5, 18-9; Erd 147), presents the dance of Eternal Death, through the twenty-seven Churches of history, as a spiral ladder to the eternal city, the spiritual sun symbolising "the great Wars of Eternity, in fury of Poetic Inspiration/To build the Universe stupendous: Mental forms Creating". (M, II: 30,19-20; Erd 129). In both Blake and Yeats, however, dance is in part seen to represent the eternal conflict between life and art, time and eternity and the natural and the supernatural. While in

Blake dance is used to symbolise life in its intensity, in Yeats the moment of vision is ultimately realised amid the violence of the highest form of passionate abandonment, by embracing the world of tragedy as the basis of art. This is symbolised in the ritual dance.

In Yeats' *Last Poems*, in direct contrast with Blake, he embraces the tragic conflicts of the physical world and finds his own transcendence in the world of time. The cycles of "tragic joy", in contrast to Blake's Eyes of God cycles which are fulfilled only as a preparation for Eternity, summon men to a firm acceptance and brave endurance of a substantially tragic vision of history. While, to Blake, Eternity is the ultimate deliverance from the constricted vision of the fallen cycles, Yeats' Eternity is contrastingly constituted out of the cycles of historical time.

Yeats' poetic drama and Blake's epics speak beyond rationalist boundaries. Both want to communicate with leading spirits beyond the sphere of the masses. For this reason both were charged with obscurity by their audiences. Both advocate freedom of the imagination as the means to express great emotions, the Sublime. Blake achieves this through a grand style of language, biblical allusion and the exalted nature of his subject. Through his deprecating usage of biblical allusion, he undermines the stability of biblical tradition and religious authority and "endows" or credits the individual with prophetic attributes, while at the same time attacking his inclination towards reason and dogma. The unity of humanity, denoted by the symbolic circle of the four Zoas, disintegrates since these faculties are no longer in equilibrium. Both Blake and Yeats denigrate reason, law, science and materialism. However, while Blake deplores the possessive Female Will in its obstruction of the imagination through the force of materialism in its binding to nature, bringing destruction to humanity, Yeats' heroes are created from suffering and destruction. While Blake urges the fulfilment of the imaginative or eternal life through the liberated life of the senses and denounces the exclusively material world as frigid and dark, Yeats, in his final vision, urges the fulfilment of sensual experience, acclaiming heroic suffering through tragedy as creative joy, which transcends the world of time.

Blake tries to resolve the tragic vision through redemption, opposing dogmatic religion by love and materialistic reason by imagination. In his condemnation of the earthly existence based on church dogma, his circle images convey meanings which denigrate the material and rational life based on traditional authority and custom. Yeats' circle images are distinct from Blake's through their optimistic meanings and aesthetic appeal, connotative of artistic creativity and fulfilled ideals in the temporal world. Yeats in his historical view of humanity shares Blake's denigration of the rationalistic dogmatic values of "Urizen" and his exalting of the imaginative, individualistic values of "Los". In both poets the symbolic circle, the union of the individual's faculties, is continually disrupted by conflict. A unifying principle that reconciles humanity's universe is no longer available, and yet life is meaningful. Life with its continual tragedy, fragmentation and discord, counterpoised by love and passionate striving, underlies the heroic vision

of struggling humanity perpetuating the cycles of history. Yeats can accept the paradox that, although the centre of the symbolic circle has disintegrated and the circle been broken, the circle is yet whole.

Yeats' Unity of Being, the fulfilment of sensual experience merging into the transcendent symbolised by the rose, (Cf. Billigheimer 2002 Rose) the image of the circling dancer and the dance, the sphere, the consummation of love, the visionary city of art and the conflagration of the sun and the moon, likewise presents the imagination as essentially predominant, replacing, as it were, the former stability of tradition. In the event of "Urizen" dominating the faculties, humanity is dominated by fear and his imagination is thwarted. Thus Blake advocates redemption through the individual imagination. This revolutionary system of thought is followed in the twentieth century by a much greater prejudice in favour of the inevitability of scientific and material advancement, as seen especially in the Marxist view of history as a self-determining process, in Darwin's deterministic evolution and in the Freudian teaching that church authority and divine faith are illusory. With these currents, custom, ceremony and morality are weakened in significance. The individual becomes over-preoccupied with the freedom of the self and is urged to deride authority and criticise the order of society. Humanity, however, is moved to reintegration by its striving for love. Yeats, in "The Second Coming", prophesies the danger of Blake's "Urizen" disappearing from culture, when ceremony and tradition will be abandoned, morality overturned, violence and revolution become romanticised and the centre of the circle will disintegrate to permit the birth of a new cycle:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand

(CP, 211).

Key to references/abbreviations

FZ	<i>The Four Zoas</i>
J	<i>Jerusalem</i>
M	<i>Milton</i>
CP	(1933) <i>The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats</i> . London: Macmillan, 1969.

- CPI (1934) *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats*, London: Macmillan, 1977.
- L *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, Allan Wade (Ed.). London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.
- Myth. W. B. Yeats, (1959) *Mythologies*, New York: Collier, 1974.
- Erd (1965) *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. David V. Erdman (Ed.). Commentary by Harold Bloom. New York: Doubleday, 1982.
- EW. B. Yeats. *Explorations*. London: Macmillan, 1962.
- AW. B. Yeats. (1955) *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan, 1973.
- AV(B)W. B. Yeats, (1937) *A Vision*, New York: Collier, 1972.
- E-Y Edwin John Ellis and William Butler Yeats (Ed.). *The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical*, v. 3. London: Quaritch, 1893.
- E & IW. B. Yeats. *Essays and Introductions*, 1961; reprinted New York: Collier, 1973.

Notes

- 1 Adapted from Rachel V. Billigheimer. *Wheels of Eternity: a Comparative Study of William Blake and William Butler Yeats*. Dublin/New York: Gill and Macmillan/St. Martin's P, 1990, 243.
- 2 In Yeats' own study of Blake's symbolism in the three-volume edition of Blake's works with detailed commentaries and essays, *E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic and Critical* (1893), the section most relevant to their inter-relationship, "The Symbolic System", was carried through by Yeats.
- 3 In their comment to *Jerusalem* 4, 88, 36-50 where Los' Spectre rejoices at the discord between Los and Enitharmon, Ellis and Yeats remark on "the strange paradox, continually recurring in Blake, that sexual love springs from spiritual hate." (E-Y II, 250).
- 4 Morris Dickstein in "The Price of Experience: Blake's Reading of Freud" emphasises Blake's pre-Freudian plea for the free life instinct of love and imagination without crippling repression or its turning inward in narcissism. (Psychiatry and the Humanities, v. 4. *The Literary Freud: Mechanisms of Defense and the Poetic Will*, Joseph H. Smith, M. D. (Ed.). New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1980. However, Leopold Damrosch, Jr. *Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth*, 216, recognises that "Blake's closest affinity with Freud lies in his deep appreciation of the difficulty of doing this." Diana Hume George. *Blake and Freud*, notes that Freud is limited by his belief in immutable nature whereas Blake rises to the affirmation of imagination. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1980, 233.
- 5 "As we watch and listen, we realize that those who are receptive to great poetry have the ultimately inexplicable and disturbing satisfaction of standing before a stake to hear the dead lips of Orpheus alive with song." (Andrew Parkin, "Yeats' Orphic Voice". *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, v. 2, n. 1, May 1976, 49.
- 6 "The Poet and the Actress" (Unpublished dialogue, 1916). See Curtis B. Bradford. *Yeats at Work*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1965, 292-3.
- 7 See stanzas, 8-9; Erd 79.
- 8 Bloom. *Yeats*, 341. Whitaker points out more emphatically, that the dance signifies for Yeats the height of passionate abandonment, "when suprahistorical man may transcend the cycles while remaining within them, when his vision may cause all things to be eternalized. The prerequisite for that moment is his acceptance of all, his learning that 'Pain is also a joy, curses is also a blessing, night is also a sun'." *Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History*, Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P., 1964, 286. (Quoted from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in *The Complete Nietzsche*, 396.)

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