

THE VISIONARY POETRY OF YEATS

INSTRUCTOR'S HANDOUT

— A YEATS CHRONOLOGY —

- 1863: John Butler Yeats marries Susan Pollexfen.
- 1865: June 13: William Butler Yeats born.
- 1866: Susan Mary (Lily) Yeats born.
- 1868: Elizabeth Corbet (Lolly) Yeats born.
- 1871: Jack Butler Yeats born.
- 1871–75: Yeats educated by father who teaches “personality” in terms of Scott and Shakespeare.
- 1875–80: Yeats at Godolphin School, Hammersmith, England. Holidays in Sligo. Family moves to Bedford Park house in London.
- 1880: Land war brings family to Howth to take care of County Kildare property. Yeats enrolls at Erasmus High School, Dublin.
- 1882: First poems composed.
- 1884: Registers at Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin. AE fellow student. Father disappointed when Yeats refuses to attend Trinity College.
- 1885: First lyrics published in March issue of *Dublin University Review*. Yeats chairs first meeting of Dublin Hermetic Society.
- 1886: Art studies abandoned in favor of career as professional writer.
- 1887: Family returns to London. Mother suffers stroke which leaves her feeble-minded. Yeats joins Blavatsky Lodge of Theosophical Society in London, publishes first poems in English magazines, becomes literary correspondent for American newspapers *Providence Sunday Journal* and *Boston Pilot*.
- 1888: Meets William Morris, G. B. Shaw, W. E. Henley, and Oscar Wilde, Compiles *Fairy and Folk Tales*.
- 1889: Publishes first book of poems, *The Wanderings of Oisín and other Poems*. Essays, poems, short stories, plays planned. Editorial work, copying at Oxford; Blake edition begun with Edwin Ellis as collaborator. John O’Leary introduces Yeats to Maud Gonne.
- 1890: Joins Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.
- 1891: Founding member of Rhymers’ Club and Irish Literary Society (London). *John Sherman* published.
- 1892: Founding member, Irish Literary Society (Dublin). Death of grandfather and grandmother Pollexfen. *The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics* published.

- 1893: *The Celtic Twilight* and three-volume *Works of William Blake* published.
- 1894: Meets Mrs. Olivia Shakespeare through her cousin Lionel Johnson. Begins revision of all early poetry for first collected volume. *The Land of Heart's Desire* written, *The Shadowy Waters* begun.
- 1895: Editor: *A Book of Irish Verse*. Collected Poems published.
- 1896: Edward Martyn introduces Yeats to Lady Gregory. Moves to 18 Woburn Buildings. Tours west of Ireland with Arthur Symonds, Meets Synge in Paris.
- 1897: *The Secret Rose* published. First summer at Coole Park. Speaking tours of England with Maud Gonne to raise funds for Wolfe Tone memorial.
- 1898: Travel: Paris, London, Dublin, Coole, Sligo. Work on *The Shadowy Waters*.
- 1899: Rehearses plays for first performances of Irish Literary Theatre at Ancient Concert Rooms, Dublin. *The Wind Among the Reeds* wins *Academy* prize as best book of poetry of the year. Visits Maud Gonne in Paris.
- 1900: Death of mother. Yeats succeeds Mathers as head of London branch of Golden Dawn.
- 1901: *Diarmuid and Grania* by Yeats and George Moore produced by Benson at Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.
- 1902: Founding of Irish National Theatre Society: Yeats, president; Maud Gonne, Douglas Hyde, George Russell (AE), vice-presidents. *Cathleen ni Hoolihan* produced. Lectures with Arnold Dolmetsch and Florence Farr on "Speaking to the Psaltery."
- 1903: *In the Seven Woods, Ideas of Good and Evil* published. Macmillan begins American publication. *The King's Threshold* written. First American lecture tour (40 lectures) financial success. Founding of Dun Emer Press by Elizabeth Yeats. Maud Gonne marries Major John MacBride.
- 1904: Opening of The Abbey Theatre. *Deirdre* written at Coole.
- 1905: *The Shadowy Waters* produced in London, immediately rewritten.
- 1906: Named director of Abbey Theatre with Lady Gregory and Synge. *Poems, 1899–1905* published.
- 1907: Yeats defends Synge at *Playboy* riots. Tour of Italian cities with Lady Gregory and her son Robert. John Butler Yeats sails for America.
- 1908: Eight-volume *Collected Edition* finished, complete revision of early work. *The Player Queen* begun for Mrs. Pat Campbell. Visits Maud Gonne in Paris, studies French.
- 1909: Death of John Synge. Editor: Synge's *Poems and Translations*. Meets Ezra Pound.
- 1910: Civil List pension (£150 per year) awarded with proviso that Yeats is free to indulge in any Irish political activity. Lectures in London to earn money for Abbey Theatre. Death of George Pollexfen.

- 1911: *Plays For an Irish Theatre* published. Meets George Hyde-Lees through Mrs. Shakespeare, visits Paris with Lady Gregory.
- 1912: Abbey American tour involves arrest of actors in Philadelphia for production of Synge's *Playboy*; Yeats lectures at Harvard on "The Theatre of Beauty." *The Cutting of an Agate* (essays) published in America. Yeats forms second Abbey company in Dublin. Ezra Pound with Yeats, reads aloud in evenings, teaches Yeats to fence.
- 1913: Pound acts as Yeats' secretary. *Poems Written in Discouragement* (Cuala) published.
- 1914: American lecture tour. Joins Maud Gonne in investigation of Mirebeau miracle, writes unpublished account of investigation. Ezra Pound marries Mrs. Shakespeare's daughter Dorothy. *Responsibilities* published.
- 1915: Winter in Sussex with Ezra and Dorothy Pound. Death of Hugh Lane on *Lusitania*; pictures controversy revived when Irish claim is rejected. Interest in Nōh plays stimulated by Pound. *At the Hawk's Well* written, produced in London with *Masks* by Dulac, dances by Michio Ito. Yeats refuses offer of knighthood.
- 1916: Easter Rising in Dublin. John MacBride (Maud Gonne's husband) executed. Yeats visits Maud Gonne in France, buys Ballylee tower from Congested Districts Board.
- 1917: Proposes to Maud Gonne's adopted daughter Iseult at Coleville; proposal rejected. Marries George Hyde-Lees. Mrs. Yeats automatic writing begins on honeymoon in Sussex. *The Wild Swans at Coole* published.
- 1918: *The Only Jealousy of Emer* written. Yeats and wife supervise restoration of Ballylee. John Butler Yeats ill with pneumonia in New York.
- 1919: February 24: Anne Butler Yeats born. Yeats and family move into Ballylee. Yeats reluctantly refuses invitation to lecture in Japan.
- 1920: American tour with Mrs. Yeats. Sees father in New York for last time. Reading history and philosophy as background for *A Vision*. At work on *Four Years, Michael Robartes and the Dancer* published.
- 1921: August 22: William Michael Yeats born.
- 1922: Irish Civil War precipitated by Free State Constitution. February 2: Death of John Butler Yeats. *The Trembling of the Veil* published. Yeats invited to become member of Irish Senate, attends faithfully. D.Litt. conferred by Trinity College. Proofs corrected for Macmillan's Collected Edition; *A Vision* underway.
- 1923: November: Nobel Prize for literature awarded. Accepts in person, writes *The Bounty of Sweden*.
- 1924: Tour of Sicily, Capri and Rome with Mrs. Yeats.
- 1925: Visit to Milan. Lectures in Switzerland. Irish Senate speech on divorce. First version of *A Vision* printed.

- 1926: Oedipus the King adapted for Abbey. *The Plough and the Stars* riots at Abbey.
- 1927: *Oedipus at Colonus* completed. Major speeches in Senate. Lung congestion and influenza lead to collapse, order to take complete rest.
- 1928: Moves to Rapallo with family. Term as Senator ends; because of poor health, refuses to stand for re-election. Begins *A Packet for Ezra Pound*. *The Tower* published.
- 1929: Last visit to Ballylee. *Fighting the Waves* produced in Dublin with Ninette de Valois dancing. December 21 collapse in Rapallo from Malta fever.
- 1930: *The Words on the Window-Pane* written.
- 1931: First winter in Ireland since illnesses begin. May: D.Litt. degree from Oxford. August: last summer visit with Lady Gregory at Coole.
- 1932: May: Death of Lady Gregory. Yeats organizes Irish Academy of Letters. Last American lecture tour, profits for Irish Academy.
- 1933 Cambridge degree awarded. *The King of the Great Clock Tower* written. *The Winding Stair* (Macmillan) published.
- 1934: Steinach rejuvenation operation performed, Yeats regarding it as successful. May: trip to Rapallo to bring back furniture. *Wheels and Butterflies* published.
- 1935: Lung congestion returns. *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* underway. *A Full Moon in March* published. Seventieth birthday banquet. Meets Dorothy Wellesley, goes to Majorca with Swami Shri Purohit for winter, assists him in translation of *The Upanishads*. *The Herne's Egg* begun. First *Broadsides* published.
- 1936: Ill with "breathlessness." Margot Ruddock's suicide attempt. BBC lecture on Modern Poetry.
- 1937: Four BBC broadcasts. Revision of *A Vision* published. Essays 1931–1936 published.
- 1938: Moves to south of France. *On the Boiler* written. May: Begins *Purgatory*. August: Last speech at Abbey Theatre on opening of *Purgatory*. October: Death of Olivia Shakespeare. December: *Death of Cuchulain* begun.
- 1939 Sudden illness, Thursday, January 26. Death, Saturday, January 28. Burial: Roquebrune, France.
- 1948: September: Yeats' body returned to Ireland on Irish corvette *Macha*. Body piped ashore at Galway. Mrs. Yeats, Yeats' children, and Jack Yeats accompany funeral procession to Sligo. Military guard of honor at Sligo: government representative, Mr. Sean MacBride, Minister for External Affairs (Maud Gonne's son). Burial at Drumcliffe "under bare Ben Bulben's head" with stone inscribed as directed in "Under Ben Bulben."

The Cat and the Moon

The cat went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon,
The creeping cat, looked up.
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For, wander and wail as he would,
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.
Minnaloushe runs in the grass
Lifting his delicate feet.
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance?
When two close kindred meet,
What better than call a dance?

Maybe the moon may learn,
Tired of that courtly fashion,
A new dance turn.
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
From moonlit place to place,
The sacred moon overhead
Has taken a new phase.
Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils
Will pass from change to change,
And that from round to crescent,
From crescent to round they range?
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
Alone, important and wise,
And lifts to the changing moon
His changing eyes.

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)

THE INDIAN UPON GOD (1889)

I PASSED along the water's edge below the humid trees,
My spirit rocked in evening light, the rushes round my knees,
My spirit rocked in sleep and sighs; and saw the moorfowl pace
All dripping on a grassy slope, and saw them cease to chase
Each other round in circles, and heard the eldest speak:
*Who holds the world between His bill and made us strong or weak
Is an undying moorfowl, and He lives beyond the sky.
The rains are from His dripping wing, the moonbeams from His eye.*

I passed a little further on and heard a lotus talk:
*Who made the world and ruleth it, He hangeth on a stalk,
For I am in His image made, and all this tinkling tide
Is but a sliding drop of rain between His petals wide.*

A little way within the gloom a roebuck raised his eyes
Brimful of starlight, and he said: *The Stamper of the Skies,
He is a gentle roebuck; for how else, I pray, could He
Conceive a thing so sad and soft, a gentle thing like me?*

I passed a little further on and heard a peacock say:
*Who made the grass and made the worms and made my feathers gay,
He is a monstrous peacock, and He waveth all the night
His languid tail above us, lit with myriad spots of light.*

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE (1893)

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from, the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

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

[Innisfree = an island in Lough (lake) Gill, in County Sligo, near Ben Bulbin and Drumcliff]

THE STOLEN CHILD (1889)

WHERE dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water-rats;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berries
And of reddest stolen cherries.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than
you can understand.

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim grey sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,
Weaving olden dances,
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight;
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping
than you can understand.

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car,
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,
We seek for slumbering trout
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams.
Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than,
you can understand.

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed:
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal-chest.
For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
From a world more full of weeping than he
can understand.

[Rosses Point = a noted tourist resort]

[salley = sallow = a willow-like plant; weir = a dam]

DOWN BY THE SALLEY GARDENS (1889)

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.
In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK PIG (1899)

THE dews drop slowly and dreams gather: unknown spears
Suddenly hurtle before my dream-awakened eyes,
And then the clash of fallen horsemen and the cries
Of unknown perishing armies beat about my ears.
We who still labour by the cromlech on the shore,
The grey cairn on the hill, when day sinks drowned in dew,
Being weary of the world's empires, bow down to you,
Master of the still stars and of the flaming door.

THE REALISTS (1914)

HOPE that you may understand!
What can books of men that wive
In a dragon-guarded land,
Paintings of the dolphin-drawn

Sea-nymphs in their pearly wagons
Do, but awake a hope to live
That had gone
With the dragons?

THE MAGI (1914)

NOW as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

A COAT (1914)

I MADE my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat;
But the fools caught it,

Wore it in the world's eyes
As though they'd wrought it.
Song, let them take it,
For there's more enterprise
In walking naked.

LINES WRITTEN IN DEJECTION (1919)

WHEN have I last looked on
The round green eyes and the long wavering
bodies
Of the dark leopards of the moon?
All the wild witches, those most noble
ladies,
For all their broom-sticks and their tears,

Their angry tears, are gone.
The holy centaurs of the hills are vanished;
I have nothing but the embittered sun;
Banished heroic mother moon and vanished,
And now that I have come to fifty years
I must endure the timid sun.

Yeats —*Magic* (1901)

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn & The Society for Psychical Research

I believe in the practice and philosophy of what we have agreed to call magic, in what I must call the evocation of spirits, though I do not know what they are, in the power of creating magical illusions, in the visions of truth in the depths of the mind when the eyes are closed; and I believe in three doctrines, which have, as I think, been handed down from early times, and been the foundations of nearly all magical practices. These doctrines are: —

- (1) That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
- (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
- (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols

I have now described that belief in magic which has set me all but unwilling among those lean and fierce minds who are at war with their time, who cannot accept the days as they pass, simply and gladly; and I look at what I have written with some alarm, for I have told more of the ancient secret than many among my fellow-students think it right to tell. I have come to believe so many strange things because of experience, that I see little reason to doubt the truth of many things that are beyond my experience; and it may be that there are beings who watch over that ancient secret, as all tradition affirms, and resent, and perhaps avenge, too fluent speech. (1901)

PerAmica Silentia Lunae (1917) The Friendly Silence of the Moon

That which comes as complete, as minutely organized, as are those elaborate, brightly lighted buildings and sceneries appearing in a moment, as I lie between sleeping and waking, must come from above me and beyond me.

. . . . the Daimon comes not as like to like but seeking its own opposite, for man and Daimon feed the hunger in one another's hearts.

I think that all religious men have believed that there is a hand not ours in the events of life; and that . . . accident is destiny; and I think it was Heraclitus who said: the Daimon is our destiny and I even wonder if there may not be some secret communion, some whispering in the dark between Daimon and sweetheart.

“You must first be married,” some god told them, “because a man's good or evil luck comes to him through a woman.”

A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER (1921, June 1919)

ONCE more the storm is howling, and half hid
Under this cradle-hood and coverlid
My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle.
But Gregory's wood and one bare hill
Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind,
Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;
And for an hour I have walked and prayed
Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.

I have walked and prayed for this young child
an hour
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,
And under the arches of the bridge, and scream
In the elms above the flooded stream;
Imagining in excited reverie
That the future years had come,
Dancing to a frenzied drum,
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

May she be granted beauty and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

Helen being chosen found life flat and dull
And later had much trouble from a fool,
While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless could have her way
Yet chose a bandy-legged smith for man.
It's certain that fine women eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wise
And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,
And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound,
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment a quarrel.
O may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

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

An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

A MEDITATION IN TIME OF WAR
(1921)

For one throb of the artery,
While on that old grey stone I sat
Under the old wind-broken tree,
I knew that One is animate,
Mankind inanimate phantasy.

TO BE CARVED ON A STONE AT
THOOR BALLYLEE (1921)

I, THE poet William Yeats,
With old mill boards and sea-green slates,
And smithy work from the Gort forge,
Restored this tower for my wife George;
And may these characters remain
When all is ruin once again.

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM (1928, 1927)

I

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
--Those dying generations--at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded
 seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer
 long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

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

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

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

AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN (1928)

I

I WALK through the long schoolroom
questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and history,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way—the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.

II

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

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age—
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage—
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

IV

Her present image floats into the mind—
Did Quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind—
Had pretty plumage once—enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old
scarecrow.

V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to
escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her son, did she but see that
shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Solider Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts—O Presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolise
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening
glance,
How can we know the dancer from the
dance?

Yeats — A Vision (1937)

- I had made a distinction between the perfection that is from a man's combat with himself and that which is from a combat with circumstance. and upon this simple distinction he built up an elaborate classification of men according to their more or less complete expression of one type or the other.
- It was part of their purpose to affirm that all gains of man come from conflict with the opposite of his true being.
- The automatic writing and the speech during sleep were illustrated or accompanied by strange phenomena.
- And again and again they have insisted that the whole system is the creation of my wife's Daimon and mine, and that it is as startling to them as to us.
- . . . Michael Robartes called the universe a great egg that turns inside-out perpetually without breaking its shell. . . .
- Life is no series of emanations from divine reason such as the Cabalists imagine, but an irrational bitterness, no orderly descent from level to level, no waterfall but a whirlpool, a gyre.
- . . . preferring to consider subjectivity and objectivity as intersecting states struggling against one another
- Within these cones <gyres> move what are called the *Four Faculties: Will and Mask, Creative Mind and Body of Fate*.
- The *Four Faculties* are not abstract categories of philosophy, being the result of the four memories of the *Daimon* or ultimate self of that man.
 1. His *Will* or normal ego
 - is shaped out of the Daimon's memory
 - of all the events of his present life, whether consciously remembered or not.
 2. His *Mask* or object of desire or idea of good is shaped out of the Daimon's memory of the moments of exaltation in his past lives
 3. His *Creative Mind*
 - is shaped out of the Daimon's memory
 - of ideas — or universals — displayed by actual men in past lives, or their spirits between lives.
 4. His *Body of Fate*, the series of events forced upon him from without.
 - is shaped out of the Daimon's memory
 - of the events of his past incarnations.

LAPIS LAZULI (For Harry Clifton) (1936–39)

I HAVE heard that hysterical women say
They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow,
Of poets that are always gay,
For everybody knows or else should know
That if nothing drastic is done
Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come oust,
Pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in
Until the town lie beaten flat.

All perform their tragic play,
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,
That's Ophelia, that Cordelia;
Yet they, should the last scene be there,
The great stage curtain about to drop,
If worthy their prominent part in the play,
Do not break up their lines to weep.
They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay;
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread.
All men have aimed at, found and lost;
Black out; Heaven blazing into the head:
Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.
Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,
And all the drop-scenes drop at once
Upon a hundred thousand stages,
It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce.

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

Then they and their wisdom went to rack:
No handiwork of Callimachus,
Who handled marble as if it were bronze,
Made draperies that seemed to rise
When sea-wind swept the corner, stands;
His long lamp-chimney shaped like the stem
Of a slender palm, stood but a day;
All things fall and are built again,
And those that build them again are gay.

Two Chinamen, behind them a third,
Are carved in lapis lazuli,
Over them flies a long-legged bird,
A symbol of longevity;
The third, doubtless a serving-man,
Carries a musical instrument.

Every discoloration of the stone,
Every accidental crack or dent,
Seems a water-course or an avalanche,
Or lofty slope where it still snows
Though doubtless plum or cherry-branch
Sweetens the little half-way house
Those Chinamen climb towards, and I
Delight to imagine them seated there;
There, on the mountain and the sky,
On all the tragic scene they stare.
One asks for mournful melodies;
Accomplished fingers begin to play.
Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay.

A VISION

Table of the Four Faculties

WILL	MASK	CREATIVE MIND	BODY OF FATE
1. No	description except	Complete plasticity.	
2. Beginning of energy.	<i>True.</i> Illusion. <i>False.</i> Delusion.	<i>True.</i> Physical activity. <i>False.</i> Cunning.	Enforced love of the world.
3. Beginning of ambition.	<i>True.</i> Simplification through intensity. <i>False.</i> Dispersal.	<i>True.</i> Supersensual receptivity. <i>False.</i> Pride.	Enforced love of another.
4. Desire for <i>primary</i> objects.	<i>True.</i> Intensity through emotions <i>False.</i> Curiosity.	<i>True.</i> Beginning of the abstract supersensual. <i>False.</i> Fascination of sin.	Enforced intellectual action.
5. Separation from innocence.	<i>True:</i> Conviction. <i>False:</i> Domination.	<i>True.</i> Rhetoric. <i>False.</i> Spiritual arrogance.	Enforced belief.
6. Artificial individuality.	<i>True.</i> Fatalism. <i>False.</i> Superstition.	<i>True.</i> Constructive emotion. <i>False.</i> Authority.	Enforced emotion.
7. Assertion of individuality.	<i>True.</i> Self-analysis. <i>False.</i> Self-adaptation.	<i>True.</i> Creation through pity. <i>False.</i> Self-driven desire.	Enforced sensuality.
8. War between individuality and race.	<i>True.</i> Self-immolation. <i>False.</i> Self-assurance.	<i>True.</i> Amalgamation. <i>False.</i> Despair.	The beginning of Strength.

A VISION

Table of the Four Faculties

WILL	MASK	CREATIVE MIND	BODY OF FATE
9. Belief takes place of individuality.	<i>True.</i> Wisdom. <i>False.</i> Self-pity.	<i>True.</i> Domination of the intellect. <i>False.</i> Distortion.	Adventure that excites the individuality.
10. The image-breaker.	<i>True.</i> Self-reliance. <i>False.</i> Isolation.	<i>True.</i> Dramatization of Mask. <i>False.</i> Self-desecration.	Humanity.
11. The consumer. The pyre-builder.	<i>True.</i> Consciousness of self. <i>False.</i> Self-consciousness.	<i>True.</i> Emotional intellect. <i>False.</i> The unfaithful.	Natural law.
12. The Forerunner.	<i>True.</i> Self-realization. <i>False.</i> Self-abandonment.	<i>True.</i> Emotional philosophy. <i>False.</i> Enforced lure.	Search.
13. The sensuous man.	<i>True:</i> Renunciation. <i>False:</i> Emulation.	<i>True.</i> Creative imagination through antithetical emotion. <i>False.</i> Enforced self-realization.	Interest.
14. The obsessed man.	<i>True.</i> Oblivion. <i>False.</i> Malignity.	<i>True.</i> Vehemence. <i>False.</i> Opinionated will.	None except monotony.
15. No	description except	Complete beauty.	