

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

**University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313-761-4700 800-521-0600**

Order Number 9510726

**The shaping of the eternal in the lyric poetry of William Butler
Yeats and Gerrit Achterberg**

Taaffe, Thomas Patrick, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1994

Copyright ©1994 by Taaffe, Thomas Patrick. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

st

**THE SHAPING OF THE ETERNAL IN THE LYRIC POETRY OF
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS AND GERRIT ACHTERBERG**

by

THOMAS P. TAAFFE

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York.**

1994

© 1994

THOMAS P. TAAFFE

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate faculty in Comparative Literature in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Sept 27, 1994
Date

Fred J. Nichols
Chair of Examining Committee

Sept 27, 1994
Date

James Pappano
Executive Officer

Catherine McKenna

Fred Nichols

Burton Pike
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

**THE SHAPING OF THE ETERNAL IN THE LYRIC POETRY OF
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS AND GERRIT ACHTERBERG**

by

Thomas P. Taaffe

Adviser: Professor Fred Nichols

The lyric poems of Yeats and Achterberg set the identity of each poet within an association of *self, other, and world*. Each develops an image of eternity which shapes the *world* of his poems and establishes their dramatic context. In imagined alliance with the eternal, each achieves identity as a poet in the struggle to overcome the sorrows of time.

For Yeats, this alliance is effected within the soul, that half of personality which is always in communion with its eternal nature and source. The temporal *self*, the other half, is but a passing phase of soul's eternal life. The activity of poetry forges this tragic awareness from the materials of historical experience.

For Achterberg, this alliance is achieved through belief in Jesus as the eternal incarnation of love, substantiating the poet's quest to create a new body for his dead beloved in the poem.

For both, the imagery of the non-temporal is grounded in certain anxieties of time. The opening section of the dissertation delineates these sorrows as expressed in the poems, evolving from this-- first for Yeats, then for Achterberg-- the framework within which each poet develops his central symbol of eternity (Chapters 1 to 4).

The second section of the dissertation articulates the central imagination of the

eternal as constructed in both sets of texts (Chapters 5 and 6). A third section demonstrates the resultant conceptions of the poetic *self* (Chapters 7 and 8). The final section examines its effects on each poet's understanding of the *other*, on which the poems depend for their fulfillment (Chapters 9 and 10).

The dissertation concludes with a note on the radical sense of lyric creation shared by both poets; and on the difference in their understanding of the *other*, which contrasts their conceptions of poetry. Yeats's eternity establishes the *other* within the soul, and therein, the core of poetic communication. Achterberg's forms the poem at the boundary of the *other*-- reaching there for *you*, his lost love. The poem cannot determine *your* response; it waits for *you*. Facing *your* death, the eternal life of Jesus grounds hope for restored communion.

Acknowledgements

As isolating as the work of completing a dissertation can be, the simple truth is that, in its process, I have experienced the support of an extended community to whom I would here formally express my gratitude:

to the Department of Comparative Literature, for the company, competence and support of its students and faculty, and of course, Barbara;

to Professor Fred Nichols, my mentor, particular thanks for introducing me to the work of Gerrit Achterberg, and my deep appreciation for his consistent and exemplary fidelity to what I found best about our department-- a critical, forthright respect for the intellectual freedom of students, which, as in my own case, continues to nurture creative and responsible scholarship;

to Professor Burton Pike, for his always challenging response to my work and for his equally persistent encouragement;

to Professor Catherine McKenna, for a post-factional perspective on Irish literature and for her unfailing motivation toward clarity;

to Juliette and Siobhan, for their loving tolerance of my three year occupation of most of the kitchen table;

for the love of those who have encouraged me in this task and the joy of their shared happiness at its completion;

to my mother and father, Catherine and Thomas, immigrants who would rightly have taken pride, and who, I hope would have seen this victory as also their own.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. The Sorrows of Time	17
2. The Ladder of Sorrow	32
3. Het verhaal van ons	45
4. Aan den einder	67
5. Another Troy	93
6. Zuster van Christus is het vers	113
7. Vacillation	146
8. Spiegeling	160
9. Forms of Hammered Gold	185
10. Who is you?	203
Conclusion	250
Selected Bibliography	268

Introduction

Death and life were not
Till man made up the whole,
Made lock, stock and barrel
Out of his bitter soul,
Aye, sun and moon and star, all,
And further add to that
That, being dead, we rise,
Dream and so create
Translunar Paradise. (Yeats, Variorum, "The Tower," 148-156; 415)

Drievoudig verbond

Wat is dit een zoete verbintenis
u en de dood en ik.
Dat liefde er niets bij heeft ingeboet,
te geraken tot deze rust.

Nu al de vuren zijn geblust,
gaan we over de zachte as
en denken wat geleden moest,

voor ieder tevreden was.

Triple Alliance

What a sweet alliance this is
You and death and I.
That love has lost nothing thereby,
to have come to this rest.

Now all the fires have been put out out,
we go over the soft ash
and ponder what must be endured
before each is fulfilled. (Achterberg, Verzamelde gedichten, 26)

The ultimate anxiety worked into human consciousness by the experience of time is the anxiety of death. Long before the event of our individual death, its unpredictability and its indifference to hopes and plans press in upon us. Indeed, the fears, even terrors, fostered by the awareness of death's inevitability require no special articulation here. Nonetheless, despite its being fearful, terrible and threatening, human consciousness of death is not simply negative. For all its dread, death may be welcomed as an avenue of escape from pain in any of its versatile forms. What is more, consciousness of mortality may become a most effective catalyst for embracing with our energy and reflection, the momentary, the fleeting, the vanishing world. In his "Ninth Elegy," at the end of a

magnificent panegyric of "things" ("die Dinge"), Rilke addresses "Earth": "Immer warst du im Recht, und dein heiliger Einfall / ist der vertrauliche Tod." "You were always right, and your most sacred / idea is death, that intimate friend" (Rilke, Poulin, 68, 76-77; 64-67). In its reflection, "The Tower" voices clear awareness that 'death' does not just refer to the dissolution of the biological organism, but like 'life' signifies a complex cultural manifold. Individual and social understandings of death, its expressions in mythologies, ceremonies, and art are all inventions of human experience: "Death and life were not / Till man made up the whole."

"The Tower" further presents mortal experience as "bitter" and suggests that this bitterness is the driving force of our invention of the senses of life and death. Still further, it suggests that the imaginative experience of death paradoxically creates images of resurrection: "That, being dead, we rise, / Dream and so create / Translunar Paradise." As we experience the bitter contradictions which death or which any of the other sorrows of life pose to our dreams, we compose visions of realities beyond the rhythms of mortality and change, sites of fulfillment of what mortal life leaves lacking. In "Drievoudig verbond," Gerrit Achterberg offers a similar form of paradox, that is, that the consciousness of death engenders the imagination of continued life. Personal life is not defeated when we allow into our consciousness the "soft ash" ("zachte as") of what has died. In a "sweet alliance" ("zoete verbintenis") between "you, death and I" "love loses nothing" ("liefde er niets bij heeft ingeboet, / te geraken tot deze rust"). Within this reflective plane, common to both bodies of lyric poetry, "The Tower" and "Drievoudig verbond" move us to a consideration of human completeness. What is "the whole" that "man" has "made up" out of "his bitter soul"? What finally, must we "endure" ("wat

geleden moest") before we are fulfilled or satisfied, before we are complete ("voor ieder tevreden was")? In fact, this is a recurring and central preoccupation of the entire body of texts of each poet. More specifically, the preoccupation is with the poet's role in knowing and achieving this wholeness. With profound awareness of the anxieties of time, especially the anxiety of death, each poet works out his self-definition as poet. What emerges in their texts, highly reflexive of the work of poetic self construction, is an alliance of the poetic *self*, the *other* whose reception completes that self, and the *world* in which the character of that communication is imagined, in the face of the change and losses of temporal existence.

A poet becomes a poet in the act of the poem. It is the poem which establishes the poet's identity; not just that the author is factually a poet, but that it is to the texts we turn for our readings of the distinguishing traits of the poet. In poems such as those of Yeats and Achterberg, which are continuously marked by reflection upon poetic process, the lyric texts themselves are major documents for the discernment of the elements of the poetics of their authors. Such reflexivity is not exclusively modern. It is certainly a characteristic of troubadour poets (such as Bernart de Ventadour and Arnaut Daniel) or the great Petrarca. However, it appears to be a significantly more critical factor in the work of modern poets, for whom communal attachments are more radically in question and for whom time and space are relative. When poetry is autonomous with respect to church, clan or nation, the poet has to invent the community from which he desires reception; and in the aftermath of Kant, the poem must also invent the world in which this reception takes place. What Yeats says in "A Prayer for my Daughter" concerning the goal of personality may well be taken to express the condition to which lyric poetry

aspires:

[learning] at last that it is self-delighting,

Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,

And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will (67-69; 405).

Such poetry, it is important to note, will have to carry the universe of its desired reception within its form, in some manner characteristic of the poet's style. For example, avant-garde poets, such as André Breton or Bertolt Brecht structure their works to create a reception which might become the ground of more socialized communities; and, it must be added, confirming therewith their senses of poetic mission.

A poem is fashioned as a sculpture is shaped, or a painting finished, with the audience it seeks somehow being called forth by its structure. In Rilke's "Archaïscher Torso Apollos," light effects-- what might be called the light-language achieved by the sculptor in the stone-- are described by the poet as a 'seeing,' as if the work of art itself held its anticipated viewers somehow within the "gaze" of its form. The stone has been chiselled by the artist according to the thus-defined way he wanted the finished work to be seen, as if the desire to be seen a certain way were shaped into the stone. In this sense, the receiving other to whose gaze the sculptor addressed the form is somehow anticipated in the produced work. Thus, the observing persona of "Archaischer Torso Apollos" can imagine this as an act of seeing: "denn da ist keine Stelle, die dich nicht sieht" "for here there is no place / that does not see you" (Rilke, Mitchell, 13-14; 60-61).

In a similar vein, a poet works to have the text read a certain way:

While still I may, I write for you

The love I lived, the dream I knew.

.

*I cast my heart into my rhymes,
That you, in the dim coming times,
May know how my heart went with them
After the red-rose-bordered hem.*

("To Ireland in the Coming Times," 33-34, 45-48; 139)

Concern with its reception is explicit in this poem, and this concern is common to many other poems of Yeats. Moreover, while fashioned for an audience sympathetic to Irish nationalism from whom it seeks inclusion in a canon of patriotic poetry, it seeks a further recognition, as the following makes clear:

*Nor may I less be counted one
With Davis, Mangan, Ferguson,
Because, to him who ponders well,
My rhymes more than their rhyming tell
Of things discovered in the deep,
Where only body's laid asleep. (17-22; 138)*

Similarly, textual awareness of the desire of the poem for its appropriate reception is a recurring feature of Achterberg's work. In particular, Ballade van de gasfitter, a major work among his later texts, focuses directly upon this quest.

In reality, the poet is the poem's first audience; shaping, in his creating, the "you" of the poem's reception. Yeats, for example, had to have read and heard his composition in its construction in order to judge whether the "you," his reader / hearer in the "coming times," would be able to believe, from the text, that his "heart" went with his "rhymes";

and/or, able to "know" the "heart" he "cast" there. The rhymes, tones, values, and images of the poem are bent toward the composing self's judgment of the poem's confirming reception. It is in such a sense that poetic form can be said to prefigure its "you," that is, the audience it needs for its completion (in Yeat's poem above, those who "ponder well"). It seems plausible then to propose that the form of the poem intends to influence its reception in a way that is analagous to the perspective a sculpture intends by virtue of its form. In the process of self-definition which occupies his poetic work, the artist is also constructing the receiving other, the work's "you," the audience it seeks and which it needs to be a poem. The poet cultivates his audience in and through the poem. An "I-you" symbiosis is at the heart of aesthetic communication. How the poet shapes this 'you' directly effects the self-construction of his voice, and thus, whatever poetic identity he works to achieve.

The lyric text, however, must also project the world in which its song is heard. While the poet cannot achieve the identity his imagination would create without appropriate reception of the poem, time poses threats to the possibility of this reception-- known and unknown, real and imagined. The mortality of the audience, indeed, the mortality of the poetic text, may be as much a concern for the poet as his own mortality. Poet, reader/hearer, and the poem exist in a temporal world, all subject to change and mortality. It is natural enough for poetry reflexive of itself to mirror the anxieties of time. Often enough this will show directly in the poem as if it were a victory over time's threatening annihilation: "a steady struggle / against the void ("in stagen strijd / tegen het niet"); that is, against the "jackal time" and the "hyena oblivion" ("de jakhals tijd / en de hyena vergetelheid" Achterberg, V.g., "Fata Morgana," 16-17, 2-3; 137). In poetry of

this sort, the form of its attitude towards time, particularly towards mortality, will greatly determine its character. (The poetry of Thomas Hardy seems a particularly lucid example). It will be the poem itself which carries the hope of its overcoming the anxieties of time. Certainly, for both Yeats and Achterberg, this is so. The poem is the physical site for the gathering of its reception-- for eliciting a world and communicating within a world not taken as undermined by change and death: "may these characters remain / When all is ruin once again" ("To be Carved on a Stone at Thor Ballylee," 5-6; 406). The identity of the poet, then, involves a relationship between the poetic self, a conception of the other as formed by the texts, and a conception of a universe in which the poem endures. How that universe is shaped in the poems, particularly with reference to the anxieties of time, will prove to be crucial to the poet's self-construction. This triangular alliance forms the thematic boundary of this study. As this alliance unfolds in the works of Achterberg and Yeats, differing constructs of deathlessness are articulated by each. Each poet establishes poem, self and audience within reality imagined as somehow flourishing beyond mortality-- within what Yeats calls in "Sailing to Byzantium," "the artifice of eternity" (24; 408). The form of this overcoming of time, within which the poetic communication is imagined, shapes that communication, and consequently, the poet.

The primary reference of 'eternal' in the Oxford English Dictionary shows the time-implicated core of the term: "infinite in past and future duration; without beginning or end; that always has existed and always will exist." On this ground, the 'eternal' is simply the antonym of 'temporal' and is used to refer to whatever we imagine to be "not conditioned by time; not subject to time relations" ('eeuwig' has the same connotation).

The poems of both Yeats and Achterberg manifest a recurring preoccupation with the 'eternal' in this general sense. However, on the basis of their time-related anxieties, constructed eternities can be identified in both sets of lyric poems which prove essential to each poet's understanding of poetic communication. Although the shape of the eternal abstracted from the texts in the two bodies of work does differ, even greatly, there are two crucial common features: first, what is eternal in each is presented as therapeutic to the perceived nightmares and ravages of time; and, secondly, the constructs of the eternal are fundamental to the completion of each poet's achievement of poetic identity.

The etymological meaning of the term, 'eternal', is identified in the OED as "lasting for an age or ages." This is clearly represented by the Dutch 'eeuwig' ('eternal') which is from 'eeuw' ('age'), paralleling the Greek 'αἰώνιος' from 'αἰών'. The English term has this relationship through the Latin 'aeternus' whose root is 'aetas' ('age'). The line of meanings, then, of 'eternal' and 'eeuwig' ranges from the simple etymological 'unending' to the indication of any element imagined or experienced as 'non-temporal.' Along the line of 'non-temporality,' at the greatest distance from the temporal, 'eternal' becomes synonymous with 'divine,' and is hypostatized as a state or place of being, or simply as a name for such a being ('the eternal').

In Yeats's texts, God, the non-temporal in its most extreme sense, is a primal unknowable ground of being whose ecstatic joy has birthed the universe, and who remains the inexplicable foundation of its unity, of the correspondences we seek or imagine in the perceived multiplicity of the universe. This rather Nietzschean sense of expressive Will, however, is not often the central reference of the eternal in Yeats's poems, at least not after The Wanderings of Oisín. The construction of the 'eternal' which is most important

to his work is the eternal cycle of history, that furthest emanation of the creating ecstasy. Temporal structures, especially the structures of personality, are finite expressions of the infinite articulation of the primal joy. It is especially fundamental to the understanding of Yeats's poetry to see that human personality experiences its spatio-temporal specificity (what he calls its "body of fate") deeply marked with its historical incompleteness. The feeling of the eternal in the cycle of time is carried by the heart, by dream and by the imagination. This tension between existential temporality and the non-temporality of the dreaming of the heart is basic to Yeats's casting of the poetic mission.

The most extreme form of non-temporality found in Achterberg's texts is a divinity with specific theological identity-- the Calvinist God, whose will is the source of order, and is played out inexorably as the law of the world. Within the terms of that theology the will of God the Father is felt as iron necessity. Nothing escapes God's decrees, especially not fallen humanity. The tension which haunts Achterberg's poetry throughout, and which identifies the poet's mission, is between this conception of eternal divinity, and what he calls "that other eternity" ("die andere eeuwigheid")-- that is, the eternity of love ("Over de Jabbok," 245).

For both poets, the imagination of the eternal will determine the defining tension of the poetry ("de juiste spanning," "Code," 11; 604). For Yeats, time itself is viewed as an artifice of the eternal. It is impossible to understand Yeats's idiomatic dualism of self and soul without anchoring the temporal self in the Great Wheel of Time. Vacillation becomes the dramatic content of the poetic act. In the poems, the root of the vacillation natural to human personality is the belief that each of us is an intersection of the temporal and the timeless. The siren of the anti-temporal tempts the Yeatsian imagination to

aestheticism, to poetic self-definition by metric virtuosity and by narcissistic song about, or for, the "Secret Rose," the "Eternal Rose" of Beauty. However, his poetry seems finally to turn to a search for the wisdom to live in the existential moment, which is ruled by the predatory "hawk" of time:

But hush, for I have lost the theme,

Its joy or night seem but a dream;

Up there some hawk or owl has struck,

Dropping out of sky or rock,

A stricken rabbit is crying out,

And its cry distracts my thought. ("The Man and the Echo," 41-46; 633)

His poetry explores and values, often with some defiance, emotions of grief, hate, and anger. In these protests against the sorrows of temporal life can be found our fullest identity. In the vein of Augustine, it is in the restlessness of the heart that the true self is to be found. The heart's longings are the substance of the self's reaching for its whole soul, imagined, with the help of lunar symbolism, to be rooted in a cyclic eternity. Yeats's heroic conception of the poet is impossible without the tension of this "ancestral night" within the human heart.

Achterberg's poetry also focuses less on the imagination of the eternal in its furthest remove from temporality. His main concern is its temporal incarnation. The central construction of the eternal for Achterberg's poems is, in fact, a Christology characteristic of a Reformed Church Calvinism. Its function is to promise within the poems the ransoming of time from death (perceived as punishment), the mending of broken love, and the healing of love's betrayal. This "other eternity" is the eternity of

love, not the cold eternity of natural law. The tension between these two eternities is very clear in a poem such as "Deïsme" (922). Under the original law of things we ought to be left to the karma of our own thoughtless wastefulness, like emptied "petrol drums" ("For him we are a full petrol drum, / that he leaves empty behind" "Wij zijn voor hem een vol benzinevat, / dat hij leeg achterlaat" 9-10; 922). The Father God of originating creation would leave us to ourselves. Only by the intervention of the eternally living love of Jesus is our dead love rescued from oblivion and illusion. Poetry must try to sing with the breath of Jesus on Golgotha (as "Graalridder," 140, expresses it)-- Achterberg's mythic image of eternal divinity succumbing to the fate of time, in fidelity to human love, condemned to work love out in a world grown hostile to it. The essential achievement of this Christology for his poetry is to validate its task. The hope of the poem, which is to reconstitute lost love, is not in vain. Shaped by the "breath" of Jesus, it shares his eternity. In fact, Achterberg calls the poem "Sister of Jesus" ("Zuster van Jezus" "Triniteit," 18; 601). Lost love, even when we are implicated in its death, can be reborn in the poem, imagined to live within the eternity of Jesus. For both poets, then, an eternity is constructed by the texts which is imagined to be the vehicle of recovery from the wounds of mortality and change, and the ground of the poet-hero / poet-mediator, struggling to create paradise out of his bitter soul.

'What can be shown?

What true love be?

All could be known or shown

If Time were but gone.'

'That's certainly the case,' said he. (16-20; 510)

Peter Ure calls this last stanza of "Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgment" a "microcosm" of Yeats's late poetic work, whose subject he names as "love, time and their reconciliation" (Ure, 105).

As unlike as William Butler Yeats and Gerrit Achterberg may seem (and their unlikeness proves itself to be instructive) there are enough connections between them within the claim of this dissertation to reward comparative study. First of all, and most importantly, the triangular alliance between the poetic self, the receiving other and the world in which the reception endures does exist in both sets of lyric texts. In the work of both there is profound textual reflection on the poetic self. Thirdly, a textual symbiosis of 'I-you' is common to both. For both Yeats and Achterberg, the problem of reception is centered on a woman, a Laura figure (or Beatrice, or Helen). Both show a shared sense of the anxieties of time; yet, with a decided focus on what Rilke would call "hiersein." Against time's erosion of what each considered precious, both poets present poetry as a healing, rescuing force. Both sets of poems present personas somewhat dislocated in their local communities. Both bodies of poetry have major biographical correspondences which encourage consideration of the nature of autobiography. Especially regarding the figure of Jesus, there is instructive polarity. Each has produced a considerable body of poetry intended to be read both as individual poems and as a body of poetry. Both share a deep devotion to and extraordinary expertise in lyric forms. In both sets of text is to be found the exaltation of the poet.

Finally, a major justification of the choices of theme and poets is the desire of this dissertation to introduce to a wider audience the work of Gerrit Achterberg, one of the most revered of 20th Century Dutch poets. His lyrics stand in quality and force against

the work of Yeats, who proves to be a challenging and appropriate figure of comparison. For this same reason, this dissertation pursues the Yeatsean and Achterbergean conceptions of the poetic task itself, which seems proper for a study which presents the work of a poet largely unknown to English-speaking audiences.

The first part of this dissertation will ground the imagery of the non-temporal in the anxieties of time. The first chapter, "Sorrows of Time" seeks to delineate the structure of the anxieties of time in Yeats's texts. The following chapter, "Ladder of Sorrows," demonstrates how the images of the non-temporal found in the poems of Yeats mirror these sorrows, thus evolving the framework within which the structure of his major symbol of eternity is developed. "Verhaal van ons" ("The Story of Us"-- Chapter 3) shows the intrusion of the non-temporal in Achterberg's work in the anxieties he attaches to the death of love. Paralleling the method followed in the textual exposition of Yeats's construction of the eternal, the fourth chapter, "Aan den einder" ("At the horizon") completes, from Achterberg's texts, the framework for his major symbol of eternity.

The second section of the dissertation will articulate the central imagination of the eternal as differently constructed in both sets of texts. "Another Troy" (Chapter 5) illustrates how the structure of eternal return shapes the world within which Yeats's texts are presented. "Zuster van Jezus" ("Sister of Jesus"-- Chapter 6) presents a textual exposition of the Christology which is the main symbol of eternity-in-time for Achterberg.

A third section demonstrates the effects of these imaginations of the eternal on the conception of poetic vocation in the texts: "Vacillation," for Yeats; "Spiegeling" ("Mirroring"); for Achterberg (Chapters 7 and 8). A fourth section, concluding the

demonstration of the thesis, will examine the effect of the conception of eternity on each poetry's conception of the audience, and therefore, on its definition of the poetic self. "Forms of Hammered Gold" (Chapter 9) will focus on the dialectics of the images of the *other* in the process of "self-making," which is conceived by Yeats as the essence of poetic activity. "Who is 'gij'" (Chapter 10) will reflect on the ambiguity of the identity of the *other* primarily through an analysis of Achterberg's Ballade van de gasfitter, his major work in this regard.

The figure of Cuchulain stands finally as the most complete model of personality for the Yeatsean poetic self, as I take the "Gasfitter" to stand for Achterberg. The tragic character of Yeats's poetry stems in large measure from the fixed destinies of all personality as these are continually replayed in the body of time. The poet is the voice of a fixed wisdom which sees the "falling apart" of history as one with rebirth. His "joy," that "the soul is love," is tragic, because love is a "continual farewell." Whereas the conception of the eternal cycle seems to encourage the Yeatsean voice to encompass all difference (as do the three Chinese figures of "Lapis Lazuli," 37-56; 566-567), Achterberg's conception of Jesus encourages the poet to be open to difference (as in "En Jezus schreef in 't zand," 9-14; 607). The former poetry seems to try to encompass and name the other it seeks; the latter to wait, as if, finally, only the *other* could name itself for the poet. In the Yeatsean world, the yearnings of the poetic self lie within and for the poem. In Achterberg, the yearning of the poetic voice (as in the "Gasfitter," for example) leaves both voice and poem waiting at a horizon beyond itself.

The method of the dissertation is integrative and comparative. The function of parallel arrangement is to assure equal distribution of textual focus. I will often compose

with the language and imagery of the poems to concretize my comparisons and conclusions and to strengthen their linkage to the poetic texts.

1. The Sorrows of Time

Oisín, the poet-warrior of the Fianna, proclaimer of its heroic deeds, is presented to us in The Wanderings of Oisín at the time of their final defeat at Gabhra. Oisín's world has been changed, "changed utterly" (cf., "Easter 1916," 15; 392). The world which his voice had sung, the world that secured his position as its poet, had come to an end. However, Oisín's songs are presented in the text as having also been received by the ever-listening company of the Danaan gods. At this apocalyptic moment of his earthly history, Oisín is invited to dwell in their land of undying youth (Tir na nOge, an Irish Eden imagined still existent and peopled, surrounding temporal sites and with an open border) by the beautiful demi-goddess, Niamh; an invitation which in his defeat it is impossible for his unvanquished spirit to refuse. Niamh, in Yeats's story, an Irish Daphne, has spurned her Apollo-like suitors to claim this mortal poet:

'I loved no man, though kings besought,
 Until the Danaan poets brought
 Rhyme that rhymed upon Oisín's name,
 And now I am dizzy with the thought
 Of all that wisdom and the fame
 Of battles broken by his hands,
 Of stories builded by his words
 That are like coloured Asian birds
 At evening in their rainless lands.' (I, 62-70; 7)

In the narrative, invented by Yeats from a translation of Mícheál Comáin's 18th Century

version of the medieval Irish "Acallam na Senórach" ("The Conversation of the Elders"), Oisín becomes torn between two worlds: a world outside time, promising fulfillment to his sorrowing heart, where "neither Death nor Change comes near us" (I, 316; 21); and the daily world of the Fenian life of "battle and love" of which his heart, in the sorrow of its loss, "still dreams" (I, 406; 27). The Wanderings of Oisín is a dream vision establishing a tension within the Yeatsian/Oisínian imagination between a poetry of undying love and beauty and a poetry of heroic engagement in the battles of time. This tension is fundamental to the conception of the poet constructed in Yeats's work. The Wanderings of Oisín work may be considered a *bildungsgedicht*, developing a poetic persona still viable in Yeats's final works. Yeats himself seems to have viewed this work in some such manner, for as Unterecker reminds us, he moved The Wanderings of Oisín from his Narrative and Dramatic texts "to the very beginning" of the Definitive Edition of his poems (47).

Yeats's poetry shows a consistent concern with poetic identity, principally with the place of the poet in his community. The options which appeared available to the young Yeats in search of his poetic focus were to struggle for acceptance into the pre-Raphaelite company of English poetry or to become the champion of a once-again heroic Ireland imagined to be the vanguard of a post-modern Europe. The Wanderings of Oisín is alive with the pressure of the ideals of Young Ireland: of a poetry that would form the national consciousness, leading to liberation and the advent of a new Ireland. This program of the Young Ireland Movement survives in Yeats's work, especially in his work for a National Theatre, and in his poetry, at least until Responsibilities (1914). It is true that his own

nationalism became transformed by his bitterness at the attacks on the Abbey Theatre, to which he joined his bitterness at the humiliation and rejection of Parnell. However, he really did not ever forsake a neo-Fenian ethos, (the prizing of the physical, confrontation of one's enemies and the righteousness of battle, unity of cause, celebration of the love of passionate men and women, heroic integrity) which, although redirected, remained vital even as late as the "Supernatural Songs" of 1934 (in particular, "Ribh Denounces Patrick" and "Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient" 556, 558). Denis Donoghue succinctly connects the involvement of the images and concerns of Young Ireland in Yeats's poetry with the larger enterprise of poetic self-making: "There is a direct relation between Yeats's calling upon the hidden Ireland to come forth, by myth and personification, and his effort to define himself as a poet. The same imaginative idiom applies to both. Yeats's Ireland is a fiction; so is his Poet" (15).

In Oisín we have an early Yeatsian mask. The Wanderings of Oisín announced the place and the purpose he would seek as a *fili* of 20th Century Ireland (the *filid* were the official poets of the Irish Gaelic order, learned guardians of clannic dignity). The materials of his work would be deliberately non-Christian and non-modern: he would make his "song a coat / Covered with embroideries / Out of old mythologies" ("The Coat," 1-3; 320). Yeats's intention was to be the prophet, if not the medium, of the hoped-for new culture. Oisín is the figure of that intention. The coat he would seek for his song would be the coat of the "warrior bard" of the Gaelic order, whether the song belonged to the nearly literal Fenian form of his early battles or the more symbolic Fenianism of his last. There are many ways in which Yeats's poetry seems informed by awareness of the privileged and official position of the *fili*. His poetry is alive with a

sense of public responsibility; he is forever defining and refining the genealogy of his vision of the Irish future: Cuchulain, Oisín, Swift, Burke, Grattan, et al.; his proclamations and declamations on behalf of the society whose poet he would be; his celebration of its achievements and attack on its enemies; and finally, his interest in ritual form as a sign of cultural unity (see Proinsias Mac Cana, The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland, 18-19). The Wanderings of Oisín establish for Yeats an heroic conception of the poet as well as the fundamental terms of the battle in which the poet is engaged, the battle between desire and experience. It sounds the basic sorrows of mortal existence, against which the fiction of an eternal cycle of time evolves as the shaping context of his definition of poetic mission. The Wanderings of Oisín is also of particular significance for this study because of an affinity of situation it shows the poems of Yeats to have with the poems of Achterberg, and within which a comparative dialogue may occur, especially with the theme I will call "Het verhaal van ons" ("The story of us"; see below, Chapter 3).

Within the "story of us," an ongoing Achterbergian tale, even to Vergeetboek, his final work, the poem's persona is, like Oisín, a wanderer and the protagonist/author of the story: "Over dit land alleen / zwierf ik..." ("Over this land alone / I wandered..." Gerrit Achterberg, Verzamelde gedichten, "Strofen 1," 1-2; 23). As in The Wanderings of Oisín, the quest of the poet is presented by Achterberg as a journey, even as a sea journey to a horizon on the other side of which a dead beloved, now living beyond death, holds the promise of fulfillment for the poetic self. Characteristic of Achterberg's poetic texts is their preoccupation with the definition of the poetic self, which is likewise true both of The Wanderings of Oisín and Yeats's larger poetic achievement. Like Oisín,

Achterberg's "I" ("ik") is torn by the tension of dream and reality (especially clear in the poem "Fata Morgana," 137). In both poets, specific fictions of eternity shaped by the wounds and subsequent anxieties of temporal existence create the world in which the poem is imagined to exist. A consistent movement of Yeats's poetry is to fill the void which change and mortality leave unfilled in the human heart. The Dutch word for filling a hole or a gap and for writing a poem are the same: "dichten." Achterberg's highly reflexive poetry often draws on the "dichter" ("closer/poet") ambiguity. For Achterberg, as for The Wanderings of Oisín, the inception of poetry is related to the longings which the sorrows of loss and defeat arouse in our empty and unfinished souls. G. Sötemann, in "Notities bij het lezen van Achterberg," asserts the importance which "lack" ("het tekort"), specifically "longing" and "loss" ("verlangen, verlies"), plays in poetic creation. In fact, he claims that the "occasion" of any creative act is the "consciousness" of "the missing" ("...de aanleiding tot elke creatieve daad ligt in het bewustzijn van een ontbreken"), and further that poetry tries to mend the distance between actual situation and longed-for ideal by taking its place ("...vervult het vers de functie het niet-aan-wezige tot ideële realiteit te bezweren uit de spanning tussen omstandigheid en ideaal" Sierksma, Commentaar, 213-214). Donoghue, in the same vein, commenting on Yeats, claims that "feeling, thwarted, compensates for lack by setting up a dream, a vision, a poem" (121). Ellmann, in The Identity of Yeats, attributes a similar position to Yeats himself: "Man...is a being," he interprets Yeats, "who is always endeavoring to construct by fiction what he lacks in fact. Born incomplete, he conceives of completeness and to that extent attains it" (xviii-xix). Interestingly, Dorothy Wellsley reports something of the same conviction in her account of Yeats's last days:

He then said to me: 'I feel I am only beginning to understand how to write'. I did not reply. For I believe that when a man says this...that man is approaching the end of his creative life; and this is because I believe that complete achievement, complete mastery, is the end of creation. The struggle is over (Letters on Poetry, 214).

This condition of "battle" for both Yeats and Achterberg continues to the final works. This is the condition of Oisín at the end of The Wanderings of Oisín, casting himself in the defiant pose of Fenian hero. The conception of the "battle" for each is determined by the eternity which inflects the world to which poet, poem, and reception belong. In broad terms, we can see that the goal of the struggle for the Yeatsian persona is the achievement of a fulfilling poetic personality. The poem is the victory of the poet in the "quarrel with himself" (Mythologies, 331). Achterberg's "ik" is seeking its victory through the poem (the self's "vessel of image and rhyme"), in the construction of a living presence of the beloved against the threats of her annihilation.

Finally, The Wanderings of Oisín lead us to clarify the anxieties of time which form the battlefield of the Yeatsian poet's struggle. Tir na nOge, the land of De Danaan immortality, inchoate eternity of return, is located by the poet on the far side of human fear, "by the wash of the tremulous tide" (I, 81; 8). The sea across which the goddess Niamh travels, the sea of temporality separating her from Oisín, is a "bitter tide" (I, 51; 5). A similar atmosphere of sorrow, bitter with time's ravages, haunts the entire poetry of William Butler Yeats. It is as if the refrain of "The Madness of King Goll," sounded six times in that poem (at every twelfth line), were indeed the refrain of his entire work: *"They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, / the beech leaves old"* (12, 24, ...72;

82-86). From The Wanderings of Oisín to the final set of published poems, the wind of mortality is a significant image in the texts of Yeats. It names an early collection of poems, published in 1899, The Wind among the Reeds, and is still to be found, a sustained emblem of change, in "The Curse of Cromwell" (published in 1937), a lament for the passing of the Gaelic order and a condemnation of the modern economy which destroyed it.

I came on a great house in the middle of the night,
 Its open lighted doorway and its windows all alight,
 And all my friends were there and made me welcome too;
 But I woke in an old ruin that the winds howled through;
 And when I pay attention I must out and walk
 Among the dogs and horses that understand my talk.

O what of that, O what of that,

What is there left to say? (25-32; 581)

Human life is marked by time, its price is physical. The Danaan people immediately observe, in abhorrence, the wear of temporality upon Oisín's clothes:

And when they saw the cloak I wore
 Was dim with mire of a mortal shore,
 They fingered it and gazed on me
 And laughed like murmurs of the sea (I, 207-210; 15).

In addition to a generalized anxiety of time, its specific structure, as expressed throughout Yeats's work, is already in evidence in The Wanderings of Oisín. The wounds of aging, betrayal, and love are the "ladder" to the conception of the eternal, the

formation of which "starts" in "the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart" ("The Circus Animals' Desertion," 39-40; 630).

Oisín. Ah me! to be shaken with coughing and broken with old
age and pain,
Without laughter, a show unto children, alone with remembrance
and fear;
All emptied of purple hours as a beggar's cloak in the rain
(WQ, III, 217-219; 63).

Oisín, Yeatsian poet-model, presents himself in his very first lines as "sick with years" (I, 5; 2). The sharpness of the Yeatsian persona's rage at the experience of aging is evident over and over again, from "The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner" (131) to the famous opening lines of "The Tower":

What shall I do with this absurdity--
O Heart, O troubled heart-- this caricature,
Decrepit age that has been tied to me
As to a dog's tail? (1-4; 409).

What the Danaan people had sung of mortality ("A storm of birds in the Asian trees / ...must murmur at last, 'Unjust, Unjust'" WQ, I, 416,420; 27-28) is basic to Yeats's poetic defiance: "I spit into the face of Time / That has transfigured me" ("The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner," 17-18; 132).

Yeats's texts likewise exhibit a strong sense of the frailty of human purpose, about which his bitterness often turns cynical. Two local incidents especially trace this sorrow within his work, that of the fate of the Irish National Theatre and the betrayal of Parnell.

The cause proclaimed by Young Ireland and served by The Wanderings of Oisín was of great importance to the earlier Yeats. He had taken up Oisín's mantle with something of Oisín's romantic defiance:

Oisín. Put the staff in my hands; for I go to the Fenians, o cleric,
to chaunt

The war-songs that roused them of old; they will rise, making
clouds with their breath,

Innumerable, singing, exultant; the clay underneath them shall
pant,

And demons be broken in pieces, and trampled beneath them in
death (III, 201-204; 61).

The first thirty years of his poetry continuously demonstrate his commitment to the romance of a new Ireland, grafted on to its Gaelic, and it is important to add, pre-Christian antiquity. He sought to be the voice of the Irish peasantry, of dreams such as he gives to "Billy Byrne," the beggar, "Of golden king and silver lady" ("Under the Round Tower," 13; 331). It was especially in the work of the theater that Yeats tried to cultivate a contemporary Irish voice as the vanguard of a new Irish society. His great contribution to the post-colonial future is centered on this effort.

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. ("The Second Coming," 3-8; 402)

The centre did not hold and things did fall apart. The riots at the Abbey production of Synge's "Playboy of the Western World" altered finally his view of the new Ireland. The bitterness of the voice of the poet and the sense of betrayal of the enterprise of Young Ireland become clear: "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, / It's with O'Leary in the grave" ("September 1913," 7-8; 289). He connects the action against Synge to his image of the "crowd" that destroyed Parnell, that image of thoughtless mob action that now would form a major part of the transformed challenges for his Fenian ethos:

Come, fix upon me that accusing eye.

I thirst for accusation. All that was sung,

All that was said in Ireland is a lie

Bred out of the contagion of the throng

("Parnell's Funeral," 1, 24-27; 541-542).

Although Yeats never abandoned the Fenian ethos (what Donoghue calls the "aesthetic of combat" 54), he significantly altered his poetic focus from its social axis (what he calls "race") to the axis of personal identity and integrity ("self"), an equally perilous purpose. Awareness of the eroding effects of time on human moral struggle is painfully evident in The Wanderings of Oisín. After 100 years of battle with the great enemy, Oisín is called away from the Island of Victories by the persisting memories of his Fenian company. The great demon of Book II, a figure of the enmity of time, knows the human heart well:

'But till the moon has taken all, I wage

War on the mightiest men under the skies,

And they have fallen or fled, age after age.
 Light is man's love, and lighter is man's rage;
 His purpose drifts and dies.' (II, 240-244; 45)

The disintegration of the social struggle mirrors the difficulty of the struggle for individual integrity. Characteristic of mortal purpose is that it "drifts and dies." What the great enemy of Book Two of The Wanderings of Oisín saw is repeated elsewhere and often in Yeats. "Everything that man esteems / Endures a moment or a day" ("Two Songs from a Play," II, 9-10; 438). Vacillation (499ff.) at the heart of human purpose, including his own, is a consistent index of mortal existence for Yeats.

I have not lost desire
 But the heart that I had;
 I thought 'twould burn my body
 Laid on the death-bed,
For who could have foretold
That the heart grows old? ("A Song," 13-18; 335)

Of all the sorrows of time the bitterest for human beings are the sorrows of love (119). In The Wanderings of Oisín the actual focus of love's tragedy is Niamh, the Danaan goddess who has travelled across time's bitter tide for Oisín, the mortal whom she has loved in his poetry, which she had heard sung among the gods. It is Niamh who pays love's toll. In this work, Yeats highlights the essence of love's sorrow by imagining an immortal being to suffer love's human rhythms. Only mortal love can break the divine heart. This polarity of love's immortal attraction and its temporal fleetingness is perfectly captured in the lines of "Ephemera": "Before us lies eternity; our souls / Are love, and

a continual farewell" 23-24; 81). Oisín cannot permanently shed his attachment to the memories of his Fenian life, despite Niamh's gifts of alternatives, the eternities of love (Book I) and battle (Book II). Even in the eternity of forgetting (Book III), an eternity of sleep, his dreams of the Fianna haunt him. He is a "wandering" poet, torn between self-fulfillment by way of solidarity with his historical community and self-fulfillment in dreams of undying love and beauty, and mythic victory. Niamh learns to her great sorrow that the joys of mythic love and battle are not stonger than Oisín's ties to earth: "O wandering Oisín, the strength of the bell branch is naught, / For there moves alive in your fingers the fluttering sadness of earth" (III, 123-124; 55). The goddess learns what mortal lovers know. What Yeats's voice sings elsewhere in his poems could as well be the song of her sorrow:

I wander by the edge
of this desolate lake
where wind cries in the sedge:
Until the axle break
That keeps the stars in their round,
And hands hurl in the deep
The banners of East and West,
And the girdle of light is unbound,
Your breast will not lie by the breast
Of your beloved in sleep ("He hears the Cry of the Sedge," 165).

Everywhere in Yeats's work, human love is marked with its inevitable sorrow, its character consistently a "continual farewell." In Crossways, published in 1889, "The

Falling of the Leaves" expresses it:

The hour of the waning of love has beset us
 And weary and worn are our sad souls now;
 Let us part, ere the season of passion forget us,
 With a kiss and a tear on thy drooping brow (5-8; 79).

From the 1904 collection, In the Seven Woods, it can be heard again in "Adam's Curse":

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

I had a thought for no one's but your ears:
 That you were beautiful, and that I strove
 To love you in the old high way of love;
 That it had all seemed happy, and yet we'd grown
 As weary-hearted as that hollow moon (28-39; 205-206)

Yeats intrudes death into poetic reflection on love. Here too, as in "Drievoudig verbond," "You death and I ("u en de dood en ik") "go over the soft ash"("gaan we over de zachte as") to see what must be endured (Achterberg, V.g., 2, 6; 26). Both poets focus primarily on love in its mortality. In Responsibilities, published in 1914, Yeats "remade" an "old story" (3; 270). Her young mortal lover has betrayed the love of Aoife, another

Niamh, for the sake of battle at the side of Murrough, King Brian Boru's son. In the poem "Grey Rock" she sounds the sorrow of faithlessness:

I'd promised him two hundred years,
 And when for all I'd done or said--
 And these immortal eyes shed tears--
 He claimed his country's need was most,
 I'd saved his life, yet for the sake
 Of a new friend he has turned a ghost.
 What does he care if my heart break?

 Why should the faithfulest heart love
 The bitter sweetness of false faces? (98-104, 112-113; 275).

In The Tower, published in 1928, "Owen Aherne and his Dancers," expresses once more the fickleness and inevitable fading of love:

A strange thing surely that my Heart, when love had come unsought
 Upon the Norman upland or in that poplar shade,
 Should find no burden but itself and yet should be worn out.
 It could not bear that burden and therefore it went mad (1-4; 449).

"Crazy Jane and Jack the Journeyman," from The Winding Stair and Other Poems of 1933, completes this sketch of the theme of love's sorrow as it is found throughout Yeats's work:

The more I leave the door unlatched
 The sooner love is gone,

For love is but a skein unwound

Between the dark and dawn. (3-6; 511)

Thus, the anxieties of time which consistently preoccupied Yeats's lyrics are all already present in The Wanderings of Oisín, his first major public work. Aging, the erosion of purpose, and the waning of love are the enemies by which the poet is challenged. It is to these that the saving wisdom of the poetic imagination would respond, and against these, shape the dream of the eternal.

2. The Ladder of Sorrow

'O Oisín, mount by me and ride
 To shores by the wash of the tremulous tide,
 Where men have reaped no burial-mounds,
 And the days pass by like a wayward tune,
 Where broken faith has never been known,
 And the blushes of first love have never flown (I, 80-85; 8).

Recall that it is precisely at the time of the defeat of the Fenians on "Gabhra's raven-covered plain" (I, 43; 5) that the heavenly vision comes to the poet Oisín, promising deliverance from the sorrows of time. As has been shown, these sorrows are named again and again over the course of Yeats's body of lyric poems. Furthermore, as it is clear as early as The Wanderings of Oisín, the texts make specific response to the anxieties attendant upon these sorrows: to the anxiety of death ("no burial mounds"), to the anxieties of aging and care ("days pass by like a wayward tune"), to the anxiety of betrayal ("broken faith never been known"), and to the anxiety of love ("blushes of first love never have flown"). In the first edition of The Wanderings of Oisín (1889), line 82 reads: "Where the voice of change is the voice of a tune" (Variorum, I, 82; 8). This earlier line corroborates that the desire of the imagination is to reverse these temporal sufferings. Somewhat prophetic of the later Yeats, "change" has been reduced by the poetic text to the condition of song. This evokes the golden bird of "Sailing to Byzantium" (25-32; 408), as well as the smiling Chinese figures of "Lapis Lazuli" (37-56; 566-567), and is a fair image of "tragic joy" ("The Gyres," 8; 564). Time is the sea to

be conquered-- the barrier between the "raven-colored plain" of Oisín's earthly defeat and a "Danaan leisure" (I, 100; 9). There, in Tir na nOge, time loses its measure-- "I know not if days passed or hours" (I, 133; 11)-- and there, human sorrows are healed:

And Niamh sang continually
 Danaan songs, and their dewy showers
 Of pensive laughter, unhuman sound,
 Lulled weariness, and softly round
 My human sorrow her white arms wound (I, 134-138; 11).

It is important to establish that the aesthetic temptation which the edenic land presents to the poet is exactly the negative image of his perception of the earth's sorrow. It is his imagination's dream of a place "Where care cannot trouble the least of our days, / Or the softness of youth be gone from our faces, / Or love's first tenderness die in our gaze" (I, 409-411; 27). Nonetheless, although he lives for three hundred years in this faeryland, by the count of earth-measured time, its satisfactions cannot dislodge his Fenian memories. He leaves the healing paradise of his imagination to return to a now-Christian Ireland, only to find, of course, that "the Fenians" and "the gods a long time are dead" (III, 172, 180; 59). Once again, at this new moment of apocalyptic insight into time's erosion, his imagination turns to Niamh: "And lonely and longing for Niamh, I shivered and turned me about, / The heart in me longing to leap like a grasshopper into her heart" (III, 181-182; 60). In Yeats's textual resolution of this struggle, Oisín, filled with longings for deliverance from the sorrows of time, is left for us in a pose of defiant loyalty to his earthly fate. This is his tragic world. His imagination cannot bring him to the "translunar paradise" it can describe out of the bitter soul, it cannot realize the healing

it imagines.

The eternity of Tir na nOge is shaped by the sorrows of temporality. It is constructed as a kind of anti-time, and possesses something of the relation to time which the anti-self has to the self. In fact, it seems to be its metaphysical ground. Analysis of the mirroring of the anxieties of time effected by images of non-temporality disclose a framework for understanding the function of eternal recurrence in Yeats's poetry.

On the one hand, poems like "The Stolen Child" and "The Hosting of the Sidhe" straightforwardly present the eternal as a place of escape from the sorrows of time (*"Come away, O human child! / ...For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand"* 9, 12; 87 // *"...Away, come away: / Empty your heart of its mortal dream"* 4-5; 140). However, it is not just that the *"...innocent and the beautiful / Have no enemy but time"* ("In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz," 24-25; 476) or that *"All could be known or shown / If Time were but gone"* (Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgment" 18-19; 510); more importantly, it is our mortal sorrows which structure these dreams of *"many a Danaan shore, / Where Time would surely forget us, and Sorrow come near us no more"* ("The White Birds," 9-10; 122), and gives the eternal its shape as a negative-image.

In "The Wild Swans at Coole," the authorial voice will project a quasi-eternity upon the wild swans, voiced directly out of his own experience of aging:

And now my heart is sore.

All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,

The first time on this shore,

The bell-beat of their wings above my head,

Trod with a lighter tread (14-18; 322-323).

Out of this he projects the wild swans as "Unwearied still" and with hearts that "have not grown old." He asks, as if these "mysterious, beautiful" creatures would never not be: "Among what rushes will they build, By what lake's edge or pool / Delight men's eyes when I awake some day / To find they have flown away?" (19, 22, 26-30; 323).

In a similar manner, "At Galway Races," in the context of the author's sadness at the deadening effects of bourgeois life on his work (compared to the electrifying unity of the crowd at the horserace), a prophecy is produced in his soul, foreshadowing the myth of eternal return:

Sing on: somewhere at some new moon,
 We'll learn that sleeping is not death,
 Hearing the whole earth change its tune,
 Its flesh being wild, and it again
 Crying aloud as the racecourse is (10-14; 266).

Furthermore, sorrows are instructive. They and their attendant anxieties are the "rag and bone shop" where all "ladders" start. It is out of the opposition of the heart to the terms of temporal experience that the land of heart's desire is sought and imagined. In Yeats's poems, the poetic voice of sorrow is almost never that of a passive victim. As with the "Old Pensioner," there is more often, anger: "I spit into the face of Time" (17-18; 132); or, out of the heart's pain, reproof:

Have you not heard that our hearts are old,
 That you call in birds, in winds on the hill,
 In shaken boughs, in the tide on the shore?

O sweet everlasting Voices, be still ("The Everlasting Voices," 5-8; 141).

The angers of the heart have the potential to unveil our full nature. In Yeatsian texts, the heart is often a witness against a world indifferent to its longings. The weather of the heart is in rebellion against the "wronging" of the wind, and its revulsion is a signal for the poet that we belong to another world:

All things uncomely and broken, all things worn out and old,
 The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a lumbering cart,
 The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the wintry mould,
 Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of

my heart ("The Lover tells of the Rose in his Heart," 1-4; 142-143).

Besides the formative influences of the anxieties of aging, love's ending, and the struggle for personal integrity, the conception of eternal return developed in Yeats's poetry is shaped to satisfy two historical wrongs against which his poems speak: the resistance of Christianity to the delights and battles of the physical world; and, the alienation of human personality from nature and from its own emotional integrity by the mechanistic rhythms of urban commercial life.

An important determinant of the conception of time as eternally cyclic in Yeats's poetry is his intention to cast it in a supra-Christian mold, to fix the Christian historical era as but one phase of the Great Wheel of Time. Three factors seem to motivate him. The more general motive, supported by his poems, is that Yeats sought to avoid parochialism in his vision. He sought a secular catholicity as the context of his poetry, including the world of his Fenian heroes. He seeks a world-class status for the ancient Irish tradition, and for his own poetic identity. Thus, Patrick's God is just the god of

another "moorfowl theology" which came into its own time (see "The Indian upon God," 3-8; 76). The dominant voice of "The Wanderings of Oisín" is Oisín, not Patrick. Patrick's extreme other-worldly views are violently rejected by Oisín. The poem, celebrating at its close Oisín's Fenian defiance, is constructed as if it had survived the events it narrates ("But the tale, though words be lighter than air, / Must live to be old like the wandering moon" I, 11-12; 3). The poem becomes in its twentieth century reading the fulfillment of the resolve of Oisín to "dwell in the house of the Fenians, be they in flame or at feast" (III, 224; 63). It creates an impression that Oisín's Fenian humanism did indeed survive Patrick's condemnations, a token of historical rhythms more universal than Christian. The conception of eternal return secures this imagination, wrapping pagan and Christian Ireland within the same overarching artifice.

Somewhat more speculatively, I suggest a second motive. Yeats was ever conscious of the liberal Protestant Irish tradition, and there is ample textual identification of the poetic self with that tradition, which he valued highly. He was also conscious that the Irish peasant tradition, still alive in the folk-ways of the West of Ireland, had been modified and softened by Roman Christianity. He thought to transcend sectarian Christian differences by creating the possibility of a unity of feeling founded upon the pagan Irish past which he took as a rallying point of a post-Christian Irish culture. Thus, it was important for his work that the pre-Christian ethos, which he found integral in the life of the people of the west of Ireland, be raised to some point of dignity equal to the Christian side of their story:

We sang the loves and angers without sleep,
And all the exultant labors of the strong.

And now the lying clerics murder song
 With barren words and flatteries of the weak.
 In what land do the powerless turn the beak
 Of ravening Sorrow, or the hand of Wrath?
 For all your croziers, they have left the path
 And wander in the storms and clinging snows,
 Hopeless for ever: ancient Oisín knows,
 For he is weak and poor and blind, and lies
 On the anvil of the world (II, 194-204; 42).

The third and deepest reason for Yeats's difficulty with Christianity, and his need for a concept of the world which would decentralize it and place it in a more universalized context, is clearest in the poems themselves. In The Wanderings of Oisín, when the poet speaks to Patrick of his hundred years' battle with the great enemy-- assumedly, Time itself-- he presents Christianity as too other-worldly. The battles against the ills of the world would not be led, so Yeats imagined, by one with a "milk-pale face" / Under a crown of thorns and dark with blood" (II, 134-135; 38). The Christ of Yeats's lyrics is, more often than not, a symbol of victimization by the world, an anti-hero; certainly, non-Fenian. The world's wise men rightly have to come again, so the Yeatsean voice assumes, "hoping to find once more, / Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied, / The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor" ("The Magi," 6-8; 318).

Here, there is an interesting contrast to Achterberg, who makes out of a similar Golgotha encounter a different sort of poem, and by it a different location of his poetry (cf. VG, "Gaalridder," 140). It will be within the breath of the eternal breathing on

Golgotha's hill ("in den eeuwigen ademhaal" 11; 140) that poetry will be placed; not in the apocalypse of an age reversing an age ("Parnell's Funeral," 16; 541). Again, the character of the fiction of eternity imagined by the poem provides its dramatic location, and influences, correspondingly, the conception of its struggle.

You ask what I have found, and far and wide I go:
 Nothing but Cromwell's house and Cromwell's murderous crew,
 The lovers and the dancers are beaten into the clay,
 And the tall men and the swordsmen and the horsemen, where
 are they?

.
 All neighbourly content and easy talk are gone,
 But there's no good complaining, for money's rant is on.
 He that's mounting up must on his neighbor mount,
 And we and all the Muses are things of no account.

("The Curse of Cromwell," 1-4, 9-12; 580)

Anti-modernity is the other historical pose projected by Yeats's work. As was the case with the poetic self's supra-Christian pose, the cycle of eternal return provides validation of the anti-modern shape of the *world* of the poems. The "merchant and the clerk" have "breathed on the world with timid breath" ("At Galway Races," 8-9; 266). The modern world is without heroic passion. The mechanics of "money's rant" rules human association. It intensifies the expansion of urban life increasing the alienation of human beings from nature. It is destructive of community, compartmentalizing and isolating individual human effort. It dislocates art from its social role, forcing an

unfortunate aestheticism. Above all, the "Grey Truth" of the modern calculating intellect cuts itself off from any possibility of communion with transforming spiritual energies ("The Song of the Happy Shepherd," 4; 65). "The Curse of Cromwell" is a lament for the passing of the perceived virtues of the Gaelic order. Aside from the murderous violence of a way of life, the bourgeois commercial democracy which replaced it ("Cromwell's house") dulled all but the "mounting" initiative.

From its roots in the perception of the sorrows of mortal existence, and its more specific roots in the anti-Christian and anti-modern emotions of Yeats, a complex non-temporal field is discoverable in Yeats's poetry and provides the framework for the synthetic conception of eternal return. This non-temporal field gets its best expression in The Wanderings of Oisín as a kind of theophany. Allusions to it can be found constantly, although loosely, reverberating through the whole of Yeats's work. Its sources seem to include Plotinus, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and a tradition of occult wisdom, elaborately traced by Virginia Moore in The Unicorn. To begin with, there is a primal reality, usually with no other name than "God." This "God" is "the "Primum Mobile that fashioned us" (of "My Descendants," 17; 423), but this connection is not further described; its character, beyond reckoning. The imagined "fashioning" of the universe by this "Primum Mobile" is fundamentally not a fashioning of Platonic Mind but of ecstasy, the expression of a primal "Joy":

'Joy drowns the twilight in the dew,
And fills with stars night's purple cup,
And wakes the sluggard seeds of corn,
And stirs the young kid's budding horn,

And makes the infant ferns unwrap,
 And for the peewit paints his cap,
 And rolls along the unwieldy sun,
 And makes the little planets run:

.

'Men's hearts of old were drops of flame
 That from the saffron morning came,
 Or drops of silver joy that fell
 Out of the moon's pale twisted shell;
 But now hearts cry that hearts are slaves,
 And toss and turn in narrow caves;
 But here there is nor law nor rule,
 Nor have hands held a weary tool;
 And here there is nor Change nor Death,
 But only kind and merry breath,
 For joy is God and God is joy' (WQ, I, 261-268, 276-286; 18-19).

In a somewhat Nietzschean framework, the origin of things is placed beyond the "nets" of good and evil (see "Into the Twilight," 2; 147). At the heart of the world in which Yeats's poems are imagined to exist is the spontaneity of an incomprehensible joy. Out of this joy are made: the cosmos, the turning of the earth and earth's creatures, time itself and the human heart. This conception is the foundation of the Yeatsean assumption of correspondences which provides the rationale for his symbolism and his belief in

magic. It is the necessity behind his pursuit of the stylistic attitude he called "*a cold eye*" ("Under Ben Bulben," 92; 640). Everything is wedded to this ur-joy. The scope and topography of heaven and hell are wide-- there is no Dantean ordering here. Yeats's pluralistic immortalities mirror the loose syncretism he preferred. It affected a meta-mythology, giving Irish myth equal place among the mythologies of the world (Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian, Judeo-Christian), so as to solidify the appearance of an encompassing unity as the air of his poetic world (cf., "Blood and the Moon," 480). The general character of the Yeatsean theophany, furthermore, allowed expression of his opposition to the scientism of modern western culture. Reality is unfathomable to intellect; not unknowable, but unfathomable:

[']An aimless joy is a pure joy.'

Or so did Tom O'Roughley say

That saw the surges running,

'And wisdom is a butterfly

And not a gloomy bird of prey['] ("Tom O'Roughley," 4-8; 338).

Order and rule do mark, in fact with cold necessity, the levels of eternity within the unfathomable One. Science, even mathematical science, is clearly possible with Yeats. No one familiar with A Vision could think Yeats's ignored the mathematical. However, it is only within, and after, the irruption of joy that the intellect works. Science is possible, and certainly its language is mathematical, but it will be a science of correspondences, especially correspondences among opposites.

There are actually a variety of immortals within the boundaries of Yeatsean texts: "high gods who never lived," that is, never lived a mortal life (WQ, II, 80; 34); lesser

gods such as Aengus who dream of the end of the Danaan paradise ("When the stars are to wane and the world be done" I, 220; 16); gods and goddesses with human ancestry (such as Niamh); there are angels and archangels from Judeo-Christian tradition (Gabriel and Michael); souls of animals once human (Bran and Sceolan and the birds of "Cuchulain Comforted"); and not the least important of immortal spirits for Yeats's work, human souls. This aspect of the polymorphous eternity to be found in Yeats's poetry is very important to the conception of self-making at the heart of poetic activity. It allows the poetry access to personalities in dialogue with whom the poetic self is shaped. They include relatives ("Pardon Old Fathers," 269); class idols such as Jonathan Swift ("The Seven Sages," 486); poet-colleagues, now dead ("The Grey Rock," 270); and his theosophic friends, Horton, Emery, and MacGregor ("All Soul's Night," 470-474). These and other human souls form the content of the myth of personality with which Yeats works in his later poetry and seem to form, together with fictive souls such as Hanrahan or Robartes or Crazy Jane et al., his main conception of the *other*. They find their coherence in the idea of anti-self which is itself made coherent by the conception of the eternal cycle of history. As in Achterberg, the dialogue of Heaven, Hell and Earth, of the living and the dead, is an open one for the poetic imagination.

At the center is heart, not mind. It is through the heart that we are anchored in "ancestral night" ("A Dialogue of Self and Soul," 20; 478) "before the world was made" (531). Time itself has become an artifice of eternal joy-- eternal recurrence is the structure of its embodiment. All, all is expressed. All contradictions, especially of personality, are harmonized, and "the voice of change is the voice of a tune." The need for conceptualizing time as eternal recurrence is clear in Yeats's texts, and its structure

will provide the focus of Chapter 5, "Another Troy." Eternal history is the space of retrieval and ransom, the anchor of critique, and the hope of personal growth.

3. Het verhaal van ons

As with Yeats, images of the eternal in the poetic texts of Gerrit Achterberg appear at points of tension between desire and loss; and the character of these images is set according to the perception of the loss. The "story of us" ("het verhaal van ons") is a theme pervading Achterberg's entire work. It manifests, within the texts, the motivation for the invention of the eternal. The elements of this theme are already clear in Afvaart, the first published collection of his poems. The coherence of reading "ik / gij" ("I / you") as personae of a story which continues over the entire range of his poetry encourages the effort to clarify it. It is within the space of this interpersonal relationship that Achterberg's imagination of the eternal is crafted, and within which that conception functions to shape the definition of the poet in these intensely auto-reflexive poems.

Although succeeding works, Eiland der ziel in particular, further articulate the story of "gij" and "ik" ("het verhaal van ons"), it is important to draw out the details of this relationship as they appear in Afvaart alone. As with Yeats's poetry, there is a heavy implication of the biographical in the poems. However, Afvaart presents an important opportunity to free the "story of us" from a simply biographical reading. Afvaart was published in 1931, some six years before the tragedy for which Achterberg was incarcerated, and despite its compatibility with the biography of Achterberg, the entire structure of the "story of us," as it develops in his poems, is already discernible in Afvaart.

The most remarkable feature of the forty-eight poems comprising Afvaart is their personal texture. All but three of the poems are voiced in the first person. In all but a

couple, this authorial "ik" is directly involved with or addresses an unnamed woman, almost always by means of second person pronouns ("gij," "u," "uw"). As the poems are read, "ik" and "gij" emerge as the partners of an ongoing story-- as it is explicitly put in "Heelal" ("Universe"), "het verhaal...van ons" (Verzamelde gedichten, 4-5; 55).

"Het verhaal van ons" is developed in Afvaart within the context of a journey, according to the opening leitmotiv, a journey of the heart: "*Aan het roer dien avond stond het hart*" ("At the helm that evening stood the heart" V.g., 1; 22). The terrain of the journey is endless: "...maar dit land heeft geen einde" ("...but this land has no end" "Strofen I," 2; 23). Secure moorings have been left behind, the journey is towards the deep sea "*voorbij die laatste stad*" ("beyond the last town" 6; 22). As with Oisín, out of sight of everyday life, the poet-wanderer is open to horizon "on all sides" ("openligt naar alle zijden," "Heelal," 9; 55).

I

Over dit land alleen
 zwierf ik, maar dit land heeft geen einde
 en nu dool ik bij u binnen;
 o oude wonde die ons pijnde,
 zult gij beginnen
 te helen hier,
 of heter nog te schrijven?

I

Over this land alone
 I wandered, but this land has no end

and now I roam with you within;
 O old wound which pained us,
 shall you begin
 to heal here
 or still more fiercely smart? ("Strofen I," 23).

To begin with, the authorial voice, the self ("ik") of the poem is "at the helm." It is "ik's" journey, and it is "ik" who is figuratively at sea. In "Strofen I," the very first poem, both the ambiguous status of *you* and the first form of "ons" can already be found. Although "ik" travels "this land" that has "no end" "alone," there is an "us" within the memory of an "old wound," a wound so present to the poetic voice that he addresses it as if it were personally there. There is another *you* than the "old wound;" the other, who with the "ik" forms the "us." Where this person might be is already ambiguous, as is who or what it might be. Is it in some interior region; perhaps within the memory of the "ik"; or perhaps, some separate region of the other's interiority? How are *you* and "I" and the "wound" related? What is the intended effect of personifying the wound? In any case, *you* and "I," the ongoing "us" of the story are first presented as sharing pain. Moreover, there is already a sense of struggle in the "story of us," a struggle between wound and healing. The "hier" of line 6 might also be read as the poem itself, as if in some way it were the vessel in which "ik" is journeying, and the locale of the struggle for healing. Finally, not the least important element of the story told in this poem is that except for *you*, the "I" travels alone:

Schepen schenen te varen

naar een doel, maar de horizon zweeg.

Wij blijven hier allen op aarde

alleen en van onszelve vervreemd.

Ships seemed to sail

towards a goal, but the horizon kept still.

We all remain here on the earth

alone and alienated from ourselves ("Eenzaamheid" "Solitude," 9-12; 62).

In the second of the three opening "Strofen," the *you* of the developing "story of us" is not directly addressed, but has become the one talked about. It is on the basis of the shared title, "Strofen," that the assumption of the identification of "zij" with "gij" is made ("II," 1; 24). I believe that the poet has made *you* an object of discourse to imply *your* existence in the world apart from the "ik," and to disclose that "gij" is a woman, as the third person form "zij" can disclose, whereas the second person form cannot: "Zij ging bij mij vandaan" / "She went away from beside me" ("II," 1; 24). In the poem, two further aspects of the "story of us" are given. First, she is seen as a being of light, into which she has departed ("en is toen in het licht vergaan" / "and then she departed into the light" 6; 24). Secondly, twice in this verse, in its first and last lines, her death is spoken of in terms of travel, "zij ging...vandaan" and "is...vergaan" (1, 6), as if she had made a journey to another place which the "ik" cannot reach, even though she is somehow within him.

In the third of this first group of poems, the departed woman is again directly spoken to, in second person terms, as "gij," while an important new element is introduced

into the story. There is clear allusion to Gethsemane: "Gij kwaamt terug onverwacht en vond mij slapen" / "You returned unexpectedly and found me sleeping" ("Strofen III," 2; 25); and, "Gij bidt u in den hof voor mij ten bloed. / Een haan driemalen kraaide, hoog en hees." / "You pray for me in the garden unto blood. / A cock crowed three times, high and hoarse" (6-7). This imprinting of the story of Jesus somehow on the "story of us" is a recurring and important aspect of Achterberg's poetry. At this stage of reflection on Afvaart, two features of the "story of us" which are of central importance are clearly in place. "Ik" presents himself as a betrayer, although one seeking and expecting forgiveness: "Ik kom u als een Petrus tegemoet" / "I come to meet you as a Peter" (8). The doubt in "Strofen I is thereby sharpened. Secondly, "your love" is identified as the healing force: "Zal dan uw liefde groter wezen dan mijn vrees"? / "Shall then your love be greater than my fear"? (1; 25). This struggle of love against the fear of its loss is a recurring characteristic of "het verhaal van ons," a natural enough condition for any human love.

In the poem which follows "Strofen," "Drievoudig verbond" (see above, p. 1), death is explicitly evoked, personified in its own name, forming a trinity with *you* that persists throughout Achterberg's work. It has an important bearing on the structure of the constellation of self, other, and world which is the theme of this work. Death is a partner in any reflection on love in Achterberg's lyrics. He refuses abstraction and sentimentality. Love must be thought concretely, and that means in full consciousness of its mortality, the specific mortality of *you*, whom or what "I" love. Paul Rodenko puts it this way: "...the death of the beloved is for Achterberg not so much a biographical fact, as an elemental truth, a dimension of human existence as such...The formula 'The beloved is

dead' is...a radicalization of the concept that man is mortal, for where can mortality be experienced more directly than in the death of those we love" (32-33).

While perhaps less saturated with thoughts of the beloved as dead, there are many instances of death-inflected reflection on the beloved in the poetry of Yeats. In "Baile and Ailinn," Ribh, a late-appearing poet-mask, claims for the light of his reflection the light produced by the heavenly intercourse of the dead lovers; "that light" is the poet's light (*Variorum*, 24; 555). In "The Tower," the poetic voice insists that the ghost of the dead poet, Hanrahan, remain:

...leave Hanrahan

For I need all his mighty memories.

Old lecher with a love on every wind,

Bring up out of that deep considering mind

All that you have discovered in the grave (103-107; 413).

In "All Soul's Night," he calls up "from the grave" old friends (61; 473), for he has "mummy truths to tell" (86; 474). In this poem, when speaking of Horton, who is presented as possessed by the living memory of his dead love, Yeats's is uncannily descriptive of the place the "dead beloved" commonly holds in Achterberg's verse:

Two thoughts were so mixed up I could not tell

Whether of her or of God he thought the most,

But think that his mind's eye,

When upward turned, on one sole image fell;

And that a slight companionable ghost,

Wild with divinity,
 Had so lit up the whole
 Immense miraculous house
 The Bible promised us,
 It seemed a gold-fish swimming in a bowl (31-40; 473).

Death is a natural companion to Achterberg's poems, and it is a source of light such as that claimed for the poet of "Baile and Ailinn." It is brought as near as the bread and books and lamps and oval shapes on the tables of the rooms in which we live. Then, it is made crystal by the poem:

Op zijn handen komt de dood voorbij
 aan de kamer, een kristallen ei,

 met de lamp, de boeken en het brood,
 waar gij levend zijt en levensgroot.

Death comes by silently
 into the room, a crystal egg,

with the lamp, the books and the bread,
 where you are living and life-sized (VG, "Comptabiliteit," 9-12; 923).

For Achterberg, the alliance of "Drievoudig verbond" is sweet, because "death" has not ended "our" story; *you* somehow remain, even though "I" have felt *your* death. With "all the fires put out," there is now time to "go over" what remains of "us," and "think about"

what we yet have to go through before each of us is satisfied." Death must yet claim "me." "I" am yet without *you* and must come to *you*. *Your* survival in the world depends on "me" (without the voice of Orpheus's song, Eurydice would have been annihilated for the world). Before all that must come to pass does come to pass, "we" have the time of the poem. Death is the horizon which separates "us," the 'living' horizon on all sides of Achterberg's "story of us." It, too, is part of the "verbond" and needs to come to its own completion, whatever that may finally be.

Regen

De regen deelt het donker hart
 zijn wenen mede en beide wenen
 om evenveel, in eenzelfde menen
 van zuivere smart.

Want toen zij in den regen heenging
 was het de regen die haar omhing
 en haar omhulde, een eeuwig ding:
 dit, wat ik weet, weet ook de regen.

En het wordt niet meer tussen ons verzwegen
 sinds dit uitwisselen ontstond,
 zo zoet, dat het hart een vrede vond,
 uit pijn en wanhoop weggeheven.

Rain

The rain shares its weeping
with the dark heart and both weep
as one, in one selfsame meaning
of pure grief.

For when she went away in the rain
it was the rain that hung round her
and enveloped her, an eternal thing:
this, which I know, the rain also knows.

It is no longer being concealed between us
ever since this interchange began,
so sweetly, that the heart found a peace,
raised out of pain and despair. (28)

With the poem "Regen," another set of features of the "story of us" is presented. One is a reliance on nature to express human emotion, a feature markedly true of Yeats's poems (for example, Variorum, "Everlasting Voices" 141, "He reproves the Curlew" 155, "The Wild Swans at Coole" 322). There is a confluence of the "weeping" of the "dark heart" and the "rain." The poem achieves its image of "pure grief" by the identification of the heart's sorrow with the rain, falling freely, unmodulated, unmonitored by self-consciousness. A second, and more important observation, crucial to the story being constructed, is that the rain becomes the medium of physical communion. It will always

remain true that the rain had once reached "her" and enveloped "her" body as once "I" had. As the memory of "her" lives in "me," there is imagined a comparable physical memory imprinted in the rain, which has also touched "her." The rain knows what "I" know, that is, "her" body. Thus, the rain now, in its touch, somehow brings "her" here. This is the beginning of an ongoing reflection on the body and its necessity to the integrity of human love, so essential to the conception of poetry in Achterberg. Indeed, the poem makes the remembering-rain present and its 'body' is formed by the same body which touched the poet-memory. This theme is picked up later in "Herinnering": De dode regen heeft de plaatsen aangetast, / waar ik u heb betast met handen die nog beven;" / "Dead rain has fallen into places, / where I have felt you with hands that tremble still" (VG, 1-2; 57). Because of the continuity of memory and the rain's touch, this rain today reaches within "me" where *you* also touch "my" heart "met handen die nog leven" (8; 57). The rain has become *your* living hands.

Wederkeer

Hoe keer ik zo in uw geheimnis weer?
 Langs welke wentelingen ben ik u ontstegen?
 En nu loodrecht gedaald, gelijk de regen,
 die keert naar de aarde weer,
 keer ik ter plaatse waar uw lichaam heeft gelegen
 en leg ik me in de rondingen neer
 die in het donzen gras zijn nagebleven;
 beluister ik dezelfde bladerensfeer,

die na ons heengaan ruisend is gebleven;
 gij zijt er weer, al zijt ge er niet meer.

Return

How do I return so into your mystery?
 Along what turnings have I risen up from you?
 And now, sunk lead-straight, like the rain,
 returning to the earth,
 I turn to the place where your body has lain
 and place myself down in the curves
 which were left behind in the down soft grass;
 I listen in on the same leafsphere;
 which remained rustling after our departure;
 you are there again, yet you are there no more. (59)

In "Wederkeer," the sense of her body as the lost vehicle of communion is expressed with pathetic beauty; for, though like the rain, "I can still find where *you* are, *you* are dead-- "gij zijt er weer, al zijt ge er niet meer." This is exactly the position of poems about *you*; they bring *you* here and yet *you* are here no more.

O gij die al eeuwen voor mij schrijdt,
 onbekommerd om dezen tijd,
 zie nog eenmaal om naar dit afscheid,
 dat ik den wil vinde

dit te laten aan zijn eigen eeuwigheid
 en de smart besta van dit tweede afscheid
 om onder uw ogen den weg te vinden.

O you who already for ages stride before me,
 free from the cares of this time,
 care once more for this parting
 that I find the will
 to leave it to its own eternity
 and leave the grief of this second parting

so as to find the way under your eyes. ("Tweede afscheid," 10-16; 54)

The poem had expressed a need for her physical presence: "waar zal ik mijn ogen op richten... Waar zullen mijn handen vinden"? / "Where shall I raise my eyes... Where shall my hands find"? (7,9; 54). Nostalgia for places once shared is one source of presence, but it valorizes the past where "our" love is no longer a living love. "We" are not real in the past. "Ik" must tear himself away from monuments of *you*. "Ik weet wel dat ik u niet weervinden zal / als ik hier blijf liggen, / maar o de plaats, waar gij afscheid nam" "I know well that I shall not find you again / if I stay lying here, / but, O the place, where you went away" (1-3; 54). Shall it then be in the rain which knew *you* once and still can touch *you*, or in the earth which holds *you* physically that "ik" shall be with *you*-- that "we" shall live? That, as voiced in "Wederkeer," is painfully ambiguous. In "Tweede afscheid," the voice of the poem prays to *you* as a living being that he might let the past go and "find the way" today "under your eyes."

Hoop

Lopende over den dood te denken
onder de sterren, met om mij heen
het voorbijgaan van de horizon,
omdat eenmaal alles bijeen moet zijn
waar het begon,
ook al komt ze niet en ik het enkel
blind in dit zingen verliezen zal,
moet ik nochtans blijven denken
dat ze er wezen zal.

Hope

Walking above the dead to think
under the stars, with the passing
of the horizon around me,
so that everything might be together once
where it began,
even if she does not come and merely
blind in this singing I shall lose it,
I must nonetheless continue to think
that she shall be there. (64)

In the resolve to struggle "under your eyes" against nostalgia and sentimentality, "ik" hopes to find *you* and be in a living relationship with *you*, forming with *you* an authentic "us," even though *you* are dead. I believe that we find here the motivation of the poems, and of the journey of Afvaart- to continually concretize her presence. Here, in this world, ever-journeying towards the horizon that cannot be crossed, reflecting on her death, these songs are pitched to the belief that she will be there; and, since her body is her *real* presence, that is what the poems seek.

O gij die ik had opgewacht.

Ik bond den wind om uwen hals
in verre sterrennacht, ik brak
uw dansen af tot op den grond,
uw lachen vond
den dood onder mijn schaterlach.

O you whom I had awaited.

I wound the wind round your throat
on a distant starry night, I broke
your dancing into the ground,
your laughing found

death within my roaring laughter. ("Droomballade," 1-6; 41)

The hint of violence, persistent in the "story of us," is brought out strongly in "Droomballade." The "oude wonde" of "Strofen II" (4; 23), the allusion to collaboration in a crucifixion in "Strofen III" (7-8; 24), the feeling of blood in "Afscheid" ("...maar

het bloed ontmoette / het weten hoe het was" / "...but the blood met / the knowing how it was 3-4; 31) have all preceded its eruption in "Droomballade," poetic nightmare of an act of violence. In the opening stanza, "ik" dreams he has been laying in wait for "gij," and in some cosmic region madly strangles her with the wind.

Toen stond gij op en wond
 mijn handen langzaam uit de knoop.
 Met nooit zo ondervonden handen
 sloot gij mijn opgebroken oog.

Gij held mijn hoofd in wind en licht
 en woei mij uit en liet doorstralen
 dit moegebeefde vlees, het lijf
 lag in uw schoot adem te halen.

En in uwer ogen spiegelzalen
 braken de eerste tranen los.
 Gij kunt uw dansen weer herhalen.
 Ik ben, o dromenbond, verlost.

Then you stood up and slowly
 unwound my knotted hands.
 With never so unexperienced hands
 you shut my burst-open eye.

You held my head in the wind and light
 and brought me fresh air and had
 the shivering flesh irradiated, the body
 lay to catch its breath in your lap.

And in the halls of mirrors of your eyes
 the first tears broke loose.

You can resume your dancing again.

I, O dreambond, have been delivered. (12-23; 41)

In the movement of this ballad, she comes to him in his despair ("en in mijn mond / de regen regende lang en zwart" / "and into my mouth / the rain rained long and black" 10-11) and from beyond her death restores his life; and, in some way, her own. She becomes the source of light and breath, the mother of his deliverance. It is in the mirrorings of her eyes that he sees, at last, and this releases his grief. As his living source of revival, she is "dancing" again. The medium of this mutual life is the dream ("o dromenbond"); its body, the poem.

Het schuldig lied

Nu heen te gaan met een lied in mijn mond,
 nu een klok voor eeuwig bonst in uw keel;
 nu gij geschonden zijt en gewond

en ik bleef heel,

maar niet dan door uw zuivere wond.

The Guilty Song

Now I go on with a song in my mouth,
 now a bell booms for ever in your throat;
 now you are damaged and wounded

and I remained whole,

but only through your pure wound. (51)

Besides the tension of dream and reality, another tension of the poet-ik's daily struggle has been made explicit, echoing the opening "Strofen" of Afvaart ("Zal dan uw liefde groter wezen dan mijn vrees?" "III," 25), a battle between guilt and forgiveness.

A summary reconstruction of Achterberg's "verhaal van ons" as it appears in Afvaart may now be offered, and the point and purpose of the intrusion of the eternal in the poetry made clear. The authorial "ik" is on a journey, across endless terrain, towards horizons never crossed. His primal condition, the human primal condition, is loneliness. *You* had come into "ik's" life and filled it. *You* have gone away. Death has taken *you*, but not ended *you*; and therefore, not put an end to "us." Yet, *you* are not here, and "I" can continue with hope only if *you* are real enough so that when "I" awake, "I" could find *you* by "my" side. *You* and *your* body are one, but *you* are dead. Only the rain still reaches *your* body. It touches *you* as "I" touched *you* and somehow knows *you*; for, like

"me," the rain had touched *you* before. "I" thus now feel *your* bodily presence in the rain; yet, *you* are both there and not there. "I" need *your* physical presence even more for "I" feel "I" have wounded *you*, even caused *your* death. "I" am like Peter who betrayed Jesus, his friend who loved him. "I" dream *your* forgiveness, it makes "me" whole, it makes "us" whole. "I" have to believe that somehow "I" can still reach *you*. I try to do this in my poems.

Wedergeboorte

Zij, die hun liefde tot haar einde gingen,
 die donker werd en kronkelend en dood,
 vonden in hun tentopeningen
 een nieuw, oneindig morgenrood.

Aan nieuwe verzen mogen zij beginnen,
 zij gaan van stad tot stad steeds voort;
 een aureool heeft haar omgloord,
 van wie zij heden helder zingen;

die hen bewoont, die hun behoort,
 die hen geleidt langs deze dingen
 der aarde naar het ander oord,
 zonder omzien of bezinnen.

Rebirth

They who saw their love to its end,
 who became dark and twisting and dead,
 found in their tent openings
 a new unending dawning.

They may begin new verses,
 they go forward steadily from town to town;
 a halo shone around her,
 of whom they sing so brightly today;

who lives with them, who belongs to them
 who leads them past these things
 of earth to the other region,
 neither looking back nor reflecting. (27)

It is within the struggle for her presence that the image of the eternal first emerges in Afyaart. It is presented as the region, perhaps even, the gift of love (as analogously, in The Wanderings of Oisín), a "new, unending morning." Love here appears as leading "us" to "het ander oord," unhesitatingly, without any doubt. This "ander oord" is the fundamental eternity called forth by the characteristic tension of Achterberg's poetry. It is, for example, the eternity of "Verbeiden":

hoe lang lig ik hier, dat ik u verbei,

als een bloem aan de eeuwigheid ontloken,
 terwijl ge naar uw horizon zijt overgestoken,
 waarvan ik het land voel bewegen in mij.

however long I lie here, I await you
 as a flower opened into eternity,
 while you have crossed over toward your horizon,
 whose land I feel stirring within me (6-9; 43)

"Achter het einde" ("After the end") offers another confirming reading of the eternal imagined as the destined site of love, despite its death, its "ander oord" beyond the experience of the actual beloved's tragic and confusing end:

De wind en haar kleren lagen nog saam
 maar het was al over;
 ergens tegen de sterren aan
 sloeg het raadsel uiteen, maar wie gelooft er
 dat het hiermee eindigt, wat zo begon
 dat het de elementen verzamelen kon
 in énen greep, binnen één bloed?
 wat zo begon
 dat ik het zelf niet geloven kon,
 dat ik niet wist waarom het begon
 dan dat het niet anders eindigen kon
 dan in de eeuwigheid.

The wind and her clothes still lay together
 but it was all over;
 somewhere against the stars
 the riddle broke apart, but who believes
 that it ends with this, what so began
 that it could gather the elements
 within a single grasp, within one blood?
 what so began
 that I could not believe it,
 that I knew not why it began
 except that it could not otherwise end
 than in eternity (45).

The final element of the "story of us" as developed in Afvaart is presented. The eternal is the "land" beyond the horizon surrounding the poet-wanderer where the dead beloved still exists, from which hope, forgiveness and life can come. It is towards this site, that the poet has embarked, beyond the "*laatste stad*" (6; 22) and the "*dingen der aarde*" (10-11; 27).

Heelal

Mijn geest met een bonzend hart
 over de dagen, want ergens wordt
 haar naam bewaard en haar lichaam
 is daar ook bij en het verhaal,
 slapende, van ons, aan haar zij.

Slapende zonder medelij
 en zonder onrust in de armen
 der eeuwigheid nu haar volein-
 ding openligt naar alle zijden.

Universe

My spirit moves with a throbbing heart
 over the days, for somewhere
 her name is preserved and her body
 is there as well and the story,
 sleeping, of us, by her side.

Sleeping beyond pity
 and beyond disquiet in the arms
 of eternity now her whole-
 ness lies open toward all sides. (55)

The space that "ik" and "gij" share is the poem, which now is her life, which now is his life, and through it, "we" are whole. The imagination of eternity allows her, although dead, to remain a living source of the poem, which thereby becomes her body in the world. "Het verhaal...van ons" is the central personal reality of Afvaart. If *you* are there to receive it, "we" will have become through the "story" which the poems are, a "universe" "sleeping...in the arms of eternity."

4. Aan den einder

In the poems of Eiland der ziel, Achterberg's first volume of published work after his incarceration, the "story of us" is continued, with developments which set its character as the prevailing tension of his poetic creation. The personal texture of the poems remains as remarkable as it had been in Afvaart. Each of the sixty-two poems of Eiland der ziel has a central and explicit personal referent. In all but one poem ("Henri Rousseau," 129), this is carried linguistically by a personal pronoun. More than 90% of the poems involve a first person voice and/or a second person 'other'. Secondly, more than two-thirds of the poems comprising Eiland der ziel can be read as directly continuing or expanding the content of "het verhaal van ons"; and, without at all forcing the point, all the rest have clear reference to its "universe" ("Heelal," 55). An identifiable vocabulary, shared by Eiland der ziel and Afvaart provides impressive confirmation of the shared story. After "ik" ("mijn," et al.) and "gij" ("u," "uw," et al.), "dood" ("dead," "death") is the most commonly shared term of these two early works. Thus, the "drievoudig" alliance continues, certainly on the verbal level. Associated with "dood" are such terms as "horizon"-- death's boundary; and "donker," or, "duisternis" ("dark," "darkness")-- where *your* death places the "ik." *You*, who are the dead other, need "eeuwigheid" as the present and continuing site of *your* "licht," *your* "bloed," *your* "geheim," and, above all, *your* "liefde"; that is, of everything by which *you* bring "leven" to the "ik." The struggle between fear and hope which marks the poetic tension for Achterberg is rooted in the death of the beloved other. For "ik," who still breathes the air of mortality, *you* must be somehow physically real, even though *you* are dead. Otherwise *you* will be lost in

nostalgia, alive in memory but without vital force. Now, only the poem can be *your* earthly "lichaam," the medium of "our" communion until "my" death. *You* are the forming energy of "woord," "vers," "beeld," "lied," "verhaal," and "relaas" ("word," "verse," "image," "song," "story," and "tale"). The poem becomes *your* only "naam" ("name") in the world, whoever or whatever *you* are. The death of love and "ik's" guilt at his complicity therein are the dominant sorrows of temporality for Achterberg. They form the anxiety which can be seen, within the texts themselves, to motivate the poem. Only the poem, keeps the dead beloved alive, and thereby, the possibility of forgiveness.

Met dit gedicht vervalt het vorige.

Ik blijf mijn eigen onderhorige.

Totdat in 't einde blijken zal,

wie meester is, en wie vazal.

With this poem the previous one expires.

I remain my own subordinate.

Until it shall appear at the end,

who is master, and who is vassal. ("Met dit gedicht...", 1-4; 90)

What the poems of Eiland der ziel effect is the strong sense that the "verhaal van ons" is an on-going story, which will remain an unfinished adventure until the "ik's" death. In "Met dit gedicht..." the poet is explicit. The "story of us" will be worked out from poem to poem; "ons" is the living mutuality which has become the creative context

of the poet-pilgrim. It has become the case that the life of "ons" is now the life of the poems. Indeed, in Vergeetboek, the last published work of poetry, this is borne out literally in an image of the actual writing of a poem:

Om adequaat te blijven, hic et nunc,
volg ik stenografisch in het klad

en rekt het teken zich reikhalzend uit
bij deze wedloop tussen taal en tijd.

Eens trekt de letter in het eindgedicht
zijn laatste vrije ophaal om u dicht.

So as to continue sensibly, here and now,
I pursue you in the rough draft as a stenographer

and stretch out the longed-for symbol
in this race between language and time.

Once the letter moves into the poem's ending
its final free upstroke closes round you ("Stenografie," 9-14; 926).

There are four developments of the "story of us" in Eiland der ziel which are set as permanent formal features of its continual reappearance. First, it becomes clear that the struggle to sustain "ons" as a living possibility is a life and death struggle. It is a

battle, waged daily against despair, against feeling that the hope which the poem roots in "u" is a phantom hope, just a creature of the "ik's" morbid dreams. Somewhat evoked by the figure of Niamh in The Wanderings of Oisín, a similar struggle is rather more clear as the dramatic situation of much of Yeats's later poetry (cf., "The Man and the Echo," 632). The second feature of the "verhaal van ons," set in Eiland der ziel, is the identification of the poem with the beloved's body, towards which Afvaart clearly tended, but now becomes explicit. Thirdly, also comparable to Yeatsian texts, the sense of eternity which marks Eiland der ziel, is not simply the source of the possibility of "ons" (the region beyond time's "tremulous tide" where dead love still lives), but also, it is presented as the region of the poetic self's fulfillment (in Yeats, it is the locale of the anti-self). A fourth feature of the "story of us" is brought to the point of definition in Eiland der ziel and becomes the major force in the poet's self-making: an implicit theology becomes explicit, as the "verhaal van ons" becomes mingled with the "sage" ("legend") of the Christ.

II

Gij zijt met zoveel schemer heengegaan
 dat ik uw naam
 kan vinden met mijn ogen in het donker.

De ziel heeft aan de duisternis,
 die gij geschapen hebt, voldoende
 om daar in om te gaan.

II

You have gone away with just enough twilight
 so that with my eyes
 in the dark I can find your name.

There in the darkness
 you have shaped, the soul
 has enough to get around. (75)

This second of the two opening title-verses takes up again the association of "u" with light, as it had been previously constructed in Afvaart. Paraphrasing the poem: *You*, "my" light, have gone away, and "I" am in darkness. Yet, *you* have left so much light behind that "I" can find *you* even in the dark. Paradoxically, *you* are, in fact, the shaper of "my" darkness, because *you*, "my" light, have gone away. But nonetheless, in that darkness, which is the dwelling place of "my" heart, *you* have left enough of the 'light' of *your* "darkness" for "me" to find "my" way around.

tussen de mensen in te zijn als een
 tussen de stenen van de straat verloren steen;

 Laat mij weer worden aarde
 met aarde over mij heen;
 de ene vorm die mij bewaarde
 is heen.

among people to be lost as a stone

among the stones of the street;

.

Let me again become earth

with earth gone over me;

the one form which saved me

is gone. ("Het nameloze...", 2-3, 9-12; 83)

In "Het nameloze..." now in opposition to the confidence that *you* had left enough light for the "ik" to make his way around in the darkness without *you*, the poet voices profound feelings of despair. These feelings of despair are conjugated throughout Eiland der ziel, in fact throughout Achterbergean corpus, in such a way that we come to understand them as a feature of the weather of the poet's heart.

...de bruggebogen

worden kleiner en ik groter

waar ik sta...

.

o de grondeloze sponde

van dit slapen, zó volkstrekt,

dat de bruggen er in sluiten

tot een weifelloze stip

en de wereld buitensluiten

zonder wuiven, zonder snik.

...the bridge arches
 become smaller and I larger
 where I remain...

.
 O bottomless bed
 of this sleeping, so complete,
 that the bridges close in there
 to a waveless dot
 and shut out the world

without a wave, without a sob. ("Verdronkenen," 16-18, 29-34; 84-85)

In this poem, inspired by a print of Steinlen, the despair of "Het nameloze..." is intensified. Achterberg has created a stark image of the finality of death, and the fading of human memory by using the perspective of the "living" self watching the heads of drowned persons floating away, under the bridge of the present, down the river...out of sight...out of the world.

Nacht, ik lig in u over
 als een verdonkeerd deel;
 wentel het in het meer
 en sluit het water toe van boven.

Night, I lie within you
 as a darkened part;
 I roll over in the lake

and water closes over from above. ("Kain," 6-9; 116)

This poem poses the extremity of despair. Its subject, continuing the reference of the poems to the "story of us," is a possibility which a guilty heart might have to work through, given the "ik's" intimations of complicity in homicide. What makes the poetry a life-and-death struggle, this poem of "Cain" suggests, is a guilt so deep that it cannot be overcome.

Deze morgen...

In deze morgen, zonder schuld
 gevat in het geduld der doden,
 voel ik mij van het vers vervuld,
 dat uw geheim geheel onthult;
 gij komt gelijk een bloem naar boven.

Gij hebt mij in uw nacht geduld,
 ik had u voor het donker nodig,
 nu is het leven overbodig;
 want mijn gedicht
 verzadigt zich
 aan licht uit uwe hoven.

This morning...

On this morning, without guilt
caught in the patience of the dead,
I feel fulfilled in the verse,
that unveils your mystery wholly;
you come up like a flower.

You have put up with me in your night,
I needed you in the dark,
now living is hardly necessary;
for my poem
satisfies itself
in light from your gardens. (109)

Ontwaken

Des morgens kruipt een beest van vrees
door aderen en ingewanden,
en maakt mij weder tot een ander,
dan die ik slapende ben geweest.

.

...het woord is anders

dan het in 't donker is geweest:

brandend van den Heiligen Geest
om uwe allerlaatste gangen
nog in te lijven bij de lange
verhalen die wij zijn geweest.

Awake

A beast of fear creeps in the morning
through veins and intestines,
and makes me once more into an other
than who I had been [while] sleeping.

.

...the word is otherwise
than it was in the dark:

burning with the Holy Spirit
around your final leaving
to incorporate yet within the long
stories we have been. (1-4, 7-12; 108)

These two poems, adjacent to each other in Eiland der ziel, contrast two mornings and demonstrate forcefully how Achterberg situates the work of the poet within the vacillations of hope and despair. In one poem, a morning of fulfillment is sung; in the other, morning brings isolation. One celebrates the poem as being powerful enough to

have brought life. The other, laments the failure of the morning's word to burn with the light of the Spirit which surrounded *your* death in his dreaming. The "I" awakes to the fear that the stories of *you*, "our" stories, are but the inventions of his night.

Verloren

De donkere morgenregens
 verwilderen de bloemen,
 zij gaan voorgoed verloren;
 en ik kan ook niet nog eens
 van vorenaf aan beginnen
 haar lichaam toebehoren
 dat ligt begraven ergens.

Forlorn

Dark morning rains
 degrade the flowers,
 they are lost forever;
 and I cannot even once
 beginning from the beginning
 belong to her body
 which is buried somewhere. (95)

In a similar fashion, "Verloren" attributed to the rain an opposite character to what it was

given in "Regen" (28) or "Herinnering" (57). The rain, once the bearer of *your* still-living and healing hands (8; 57), is here the severer of blossoms from the stem. Cut off by death, she becomes "Droom" (111), "Fantoom" (113), "Geest" (114, 125). Here, at the brink of despair, there is only the terrible resolve of the poetic word:

Doodlied

Lied van den dood,
 verstom niet voor het gans ontbloot
 heelal, dat haar niet vinden laat
 in straat na lege straat;
 het is alleen maar rond.

Neem het alleen zolang te baat
 als beeld, hoe blind en desolaat,
 opdat niet hare staat
 onkenbaar wordt voor dit verstand.

Song of death

Song of death
 do not grow silent before the whole bare
 universe, that does not let her be found
 in street after empty street;

it is only but round.

Take it alone for its benefit
 as image, however blind and desolate,
 so that her state does not
 become unknown in the face of this understanding. (117)

Thus, a second determination of the "story of us" set in Eiland der ziel is that "beeld" ("image") brings "her" ("haar," "hare") here, overcoming death's "emptying" power. There are imagist affinities in Achterberg; here, neatly stated. The image, crafted according to the conception of "her" in the poet's memory, becomes through that, her embodiment in the world. The "image, not a book," sought by Yeats ("Ego Dominus Tuus," 67; 370), is an analogous poetic effort. Yeats mines images to embody his opposite self out of the "rich, dark nothing" of the anti-self ("The Gyres," 22; 565), through which the poetic task of self-making might be accomplished. Achterberg's poems are always, literally, constructions (the poem is "een gedicht" an enclosure). The image of the dead beloved "however blind and desolate" is "her" light given body, without which love is silent and empty and unknown in the streets of daily life.

Projectie

Ontstoken van een licht,
 dat in mijn bloed voorover ligt,
 met beide ogen dicht,
 ontwerpt het woord u in het wild

tegen het niet van ruimte en tijd,
 tot uw gestalte zoet en mild
 achter de sterren schrijdt.

Projection

Enkindled by the light
 which runs headlong in my blood,
 with both eyes shut
 the word designs you in the wild
 against the nothingness of space and time,
 until your form sweet and mild
 strides behind the stars. (118)

Her light runs through him "with both eyes shut," so well does her memory possess him. With her light, the "ik" creates-- into the wasteland which the world is without his beloved-- her form "against the stars." A magnificent poem, a central expression of poetic hope. The importance of the poetic word in the extreme straits of "ik's" loneliness is manifested, along with the further implication of the poet's intention to restructure the world in her light ("achter de sterren schrijdt").

Met dit gedicht...

Met dit gedicht vervalt het vorige.

Ik blijf mijn eigen onderhorige.

Totdat in 't einde blijken zal,
wie meester is, en wie vazal.

Tussen mijn leven en mijzelf
is enkel nog een graf te delven.

Maar buiten deze laatste dingen
is enkel nog het lied te zingen,
--is enkel nog den dood 't ontwringen

het lied dat van haar lichaam is,
het lied waarvan haar lichaam is
de onbevleete ontvagenis

en dat den dood niet toebehoort
binnen dit woord.

With this poem...

With this poem the previous one expires.

I remain my own subordinate.

Until in the end it shall appear,

who is master, who the vassal.

Between my life and myself
there is yet but a grave to dig.

But outside these final things
there is yet but the song to sing,
--there is yet but from death to wring

the song that is of her body,
the song of which her body is
the immaculate conception

and that does not belong to death
within this word. (90)

In Eiland der ziel, the central poetic expression of this aesthetic set by the "story of us" is "Met dit gedicht..." This poem proclaims that it succeeds its predecessor. To the extent that the voice of the poem claims to "remain" its "own subordinate," it can be inferred that such is "ik's" understanding of every poem he would compose, subordinating its voice to the voice of his previous verse. Each poem is its own moment-- its own occasion. This attitude of Achterberg is very important for the reading of later poems, particularly, the Ballade van de gasfitter. New day; new poem; perhaps, new self. Which of his often contrasting moods shall be seen as dominant must wait until he writes no

more. The space, open and empty, between now and that end time is to be filled with song-- the song of "haar." This song is something the poet has "wrested from death." In the poem, "Met dit gedicht...", the major articulation of the "story of us" has become: the essence of the song is her body, but not as her dead body now is, nor as "ik's" memory of how he last saw her or touched her alive; but her body as the creating-song would now make it, "the song of which her body is the immaculate conception," and in which death has no place.

The poem intends its victory over death by recreating the "face" of the other beyond the sorrows of time, as if it were at the point of, and possessed the power of, creation "before the world was made" ("Before the World was Made," Variorum, 7-8; 532 and "Young Man's Song," 11-12; 516). "Here," in the poem, "what can no longer live anywhere" can "still be present" ("Hier is het nog aanwezig, / wat nergens meer kon leven" YG, "Morgenmist," 1-2; 81). So, when the rain has severed the bloom (Verloren," 1-2; 95), when the body that once danced, lies in the churchyard ("die eens het lichaam dansen deden, // die straks het lichaam nederleggen / binnen de groene kerkhofheggen / van dit dorp" "Morgenmist," 8-11; 81), her love is still preserved in the body of the poem. This nuance of the "verhaal van ons" is also very evident in the poem, "In den regen" (80). "Regen" of Afvaart (28) is a poem rejoicing in the contact between the rain, "you" and "I." In this later poem, the hope is for the poem, that it may "acquire a voice as the rain" ("een stem verwerven als de regen" 2-3; 80). The rain's voice, that is, the poem's aspirations for itself, "is the same as your sorrows-- / chaste and at hand--, with which words trembled and were born; / where your love has grown silent" ("is hetzelfde als uw leden-- / kuis en nabij--, / waarmee de woorden / sidderen en worden geboren;

/ waarin uw liefde heeft gezwogen" 5-8). The poem seeks to be the medium of immortality.

Wil ons niet gans beroven,
 maar blijve het zwart op wit
 door uwe hand geschreven
 in dit onsterflijk lied,

dat gij hebt toegeschoven
 over ons laatst bezit
 den steen van deze strofen;
 dat gij dit lied zijt. Dit.

Nothing will deprive us entirely,
 if only the black on white continues
 written through your hand
 in this undying song,

that you have pushed across
 over our last possession
 the stone of these verses;
 that you are this song. This. ("Liefde II," 9-16; 131)

An even more active role is imagined for *you* in the writing of the poem which is *your* presence in the world. Not only are *you* the inspiration and the form of this body,

somehow the poem is written by "your hand."

"Contact" is a good poem with which to recapitulate the connections between her body, the poem and the poet:

Vanuit het oord
in donkerheid,
het dicht gebied
van leven niet,
waarin gij zijt
met dood omkleed
en zonder tijd,
plant gij u voort
door media
die ik niet weet
tot in mijn hart;
ik smeed het woord
dat naar u heet,
en ik besta
bij de gena
van deze blinde bezigheid.

Contact

Out of the region

in darkness,
 the closed land
 of the unliving,
 wherein you are
 clothed with death
 and without time,
 you reproduce yourself
 through media
 which I do not know
 unto my heart;
 I forge the word,
 named after you,
 and I exist
 by the mercy
 of this blind activity (122).

The third development of the "story of us" accomplished by Eiland der ziel is now expressible. It bears a likeness to the poetics of Yeats in which the sorrows of the heart paradoxically evoke the eternity of their healing. Brought to the edge of despair by *your* death, to the difficult and empty feeling that it is with ghosts and phantoms and illusions that he lives, it is in this grief ("Smart") that *your* presence is most felt, and from which "ik" will not be separated. This paradox is the beginning of "ik's" eternity, for where *you* are is his only life:

Smart, ik ontzeg

.

den dood het recht
op elk gericht,
dat mij van haar onthecht.

Ontwijk me niet, maar leg
het kleed gereed der eeuwigheid

Grief, I deny

.

death the right
to any judgment
that disengages me from her.

Avoid me not, but get
ready the robe of eternity ("Smart," 1, 5-9; 121).

The hope of the poet has now become the coincidence of the word and *you*: "zijt gij van ieder element / verzadigd en voldaan. // En nochtans moet het woord bestaan, / dat met u samenvalt" "you are full and satisfied / with every element. // And yet the word must exist / that coincides with you" ("Woord," 10-13; 126).

Woorden, Ontwaak!

Nu ik so zuiver thuis ben met mijzelf

zie ik de bodem van mijn zelfbesef.

Tijd en vertrek verdwijnen in

een ongevormd begin.

Woorden, ontwaak, ik ben uw naam

ik ben uw enige bestaan.

Ik zie mij ongeboren aan.

O kern, hoe ben ik u nabij,

alleen de dood is tussen u en mij.

Words, Awake!

Now I am so purely at home with myself

I see the ground of my self understanding.

Time and departure disappear

into an unformed beginning.

Words, awake, I am your name,

I am your only existence.

I see myself unborn.

O core, how near I am to you,

only death is between you and me. (91)

While somehow she is the material out of which he "forges the word," the work itself, the work as her body, could not exist without him. His words embody her and love; and thus, him and what he will be. He and his words are one. In and through the word "ik"

is fulfilled. He calls to words as if he were at their source. He moves, in the final couplet, to address the source itself. It is his self-source and source of self-fulfillment. It exists on the other side of death, where he can see his yet "unborn" self. Relating this to the other elements of the "story of us," "ground," and "home," and "core" consists in union with the beloved in her eternity, in which there is no death-- there, where he and his words at last are one. It is from this perspective-- the perspective of what waits to be born-- from this new primordial eternity, that poetry can achieve reconstruction of a fallen universe:

maar leg als laatste wat gij doet
al mijn gedichten aan mijn voet;
krachten, waarmee ik opstaan moet.

but as the last thing you do, lay
all my poems at my feet;
energies with which I must arise (25-28; 133).

Poems are presented as "systems of energy" (O'Loughlin, see Hidden Weddings, 8), as if the word made worlds. "Ik's" final hope is the poem, in which the self is wrapped as a "Pharao," facing eternity.

Stof

Alsof ik nimmer bij u sliep,
werd gij weer het materiaal
van voor dat God u schiep:

wind, grond, taal
 voor een nog niet geboren lied;

 ten overstaan van een heelal,
 dat wacht tot Hij opnieuw gebiedt;

 omdat ik hier nog ademhaal.

Matter

As if I never slept by you,
 you became once more the material
 of before God created you:
 wind, earth, language
 for a song not yet born;

 in the presence of a universe,
 which waits until He rules again;

 because I still breathe here. (136)

Because I have not yet died, the universe in which "I" exist is incomplete (as in the ending of "Drievoudig verbond"). "I" am as yet "ongeboren" (7; 91). *You* are in another region and come to "me" across its horizon ('einder') as "raadsel," "geest,"

"fantom"; but sometimes as "woord" and "liefde." "My" daily battle is to keep on believing in *you*. *You* there in that other element; "me," here. "I" seek the song that is of *you*, of which *you* are the immaculate conception ("onbevleete ontvangenis"). This places the "ik" at the ur-moment, seeking *your* body as purely as the divine creating word. Here where "ik" still breathes, the world has become alien to him, because he is near the "kern," in the presence of an undying universe into which he awaits birth. Even his memories of "sleeping with you" must be let go, as if they never were. It is only the poetic word that bridges to that other element, "eeuwigheid":

alleen het woord houdt aan
 u te groeten met eeuwigheid,
 nagebleven in bloei en tijd.

only the word holds on
 to greet you with eternity,
 staying behind in bloom and time ("Bolwerk," 10-12; 97).

The idea of a universe that awaits the restoration of God's rule leads to the confirmation of the fourth development of the "story of us" in Eiland der ziel. What was only an implication in Afvaart has become explicit-- the imprinting of a Christian theology, more specifically, a Christology, on the "story of us." "Jan Toroop," "Beumer & Co," "Fata Morgana," "Graalridder," and "Reiziger 'doet' Golgotha I, II, and III" are the poems of Eiland der ziel which effect this. The "story of Christ," as Achterberg's poems have it, resembles the "story of us." Christ died a bloody death, whose deep implications the believer accepts. The risen Christ lives, forgives our guilt, and loves us

by our name. He crosses the boundaries from his "element" (that is, "eeuwigheid," "eternity") to bring us light and he "unknots" our violence. His real presence is both promise and experience. He is the word; the world, His language, the body made by his poem. Jesus becomes the model of the poem, word made flesh. En Jezus schreef in 't zand, a collection of religious poems, which includes the seven above-mentioned poems of Eiland der ziel, presents the most compact version of the "story of Jesus," the controlling eternity of Achterberg's poetry. Within this hope he crafts his poetic identity:

Weer onder ziel, over de eenzaamheden
 van oceanen die mij van U scheiden,
 Christus, wil mij verschijnen aan den einder.

Again a-sail across the solitudes
 of the oceans which separate me from You,
 Christ, may You appear to me at the horizon
 ("Reiziger... III," 10-12; 143).

5. Another Troy

The origin of the non-temporal in the poetry of W.B. Yeats has been seen to be associated with a set of anxieties concerning time. Scrutiny of his texts for the ways in which these anxieties structure the eternal show an evolution culminating in the assumption of an eternal cycle of recurrence. In general, the experience of the non-temporal in the texts is polymorphous following the loose hierarchical theophany previously seen (see above, 36-40). It includes an originating eternity, an "ancestral night" of all form (see "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," 20; 478), archetypal forms of an eternal emanation (notably, beauty and love), the angels, gods, and demi-gods of the world's mythologies, human souls (especially, the dead), and finally, history itself. It is to the emergence of this latter form, the most important form of Yeats's imagination of the eternal, that this study now turns.

*Come near, that no more blinded by man's fate,
I find under the boughs of love and hate,
In all poor foolish things that live a day,
Eternal beauty wandering on her way.*

*Come near, come near, come near-- Ah leave me still
A little space for the rose-breath to fill!
Lest I no more hear common things that crave;
The weak worm hiding down in its small cave,
The field-mouse running by me in the grass,*

*And heavy mortal hopes that toil and pass;
 But seek alone to hear the strange things said
 By God to the bright hearts of those long dead,
 And learn to chaunt a tongue men do not know.*

("To the Rose upon the Rood of Time," 9-21; 101)

The eternal archetypal form which dominates Yeats's early work is the form of Beauty, the "*Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days!*" (1; 100). Beauty is the eternal muse to whom the poet first prays so that he may "*sing the ancient ways*" (2). The poet seeks to make his poetry the voice of the presence of perennial beauty in the world, a voice that might be a counterforce to her fading there. The poem becomes the embodiment of her praise, the instrument (it is the hope of the poet) of human awareness that beauty transcends mortality. The experience of beauty in the temporal world is inevitably sad; for, like love, it is "a continual farewell" ("*Ephemera*," 24; 81). Except for the aspiration of the poem, beauty can have no lasting home here in the mortal world. The earlier poems of Yeats are alive with the suggestion of their own immortality, but are set in no clear context which fixes or establishes this imagination. As indicated in "*To the Rose upon the Rood of Time*" (13-21; 101), the early Yeats was aware of the dangers of an esoteric aestheticism in poetry of transcendent meditation. Incarnate in some momentary form in the sounds of nature, or youth, or the body of the beloved, beauty inevitably fades from earth's ever-aging vessels. The human experience of beauty is a terrible sadness, like a wound:

O sweet everlasting Voices, be still;

.

Have you not heard that our hearts are old,
 That you call in birds, in wind on the hill,
 In shaken boughs, in tide on the shore?
 O sweet everlasting Voices, be still
 ("The Everlasting Voices," 1, 5-8; 141).

Sorrow is thus the index of the eternal for Yeats. In The Wanderings of Oisín, the "lady with soft eyes like funeral tapers" (II, 69; 33), the woman of the Isle of Battles, longs to find "the saddest of all men" (68; 33). She knows that sorrow implies the memory of some ideal from which there has been a lamentable falling away-- the stronger the attachment to the ideal, the deeper the sadness. This sense of the primary experience of the non-temporal in emotions and dreams remains a constant feature of the entire body of Yeats's poems.

The tension which circumscribed the poet's place in The Wanderings of Oisín, is also in evidence in "*To the Rose upon the Rood of Time*": the tension of a romantic poetry seeking to transcend temporal entanglements so as to embody a purer praise of beauty, triumphant over time. It must inevitably sing with the tongue of sadness, for it must find its images among temporal forms. So, the poet's first prayer is that he might sing the "ancient ways," which, unlike modern poetic ways, implies the conceit of poetic communion with the eternal. However, the prayer is conflicted in the petition it carries to the muse. It pleads with the "*Rose of Beauty*" to leave some room so that he might "hear common things." The poet seeks images available to common experience as well as images to carry the presence of timeless Beauty: "*In all poor foolish things that live*

a day, / Eternal beauty wandering on her way" (11-12; 101). Despite the eventually different casting of the eternal, there is a prayer in Achterberg to the muse of the Holy Spirit asking for a similarly paradoxical imagery- for "heavenly material" that yet will communicate eternal love to our common sinfulness: "moge ik zingen vinden / met hemels materiaal / voor dieven, hoeren, honden, / zondaren allemaal..." (YG, "Gaalridder," 140; 14-17).

Pardon, old fathers, if you still remain

Somewhere in ear-shot for the story's end,

.

You most of all, silent and fierce old man,

.

Although I have come close on forty-nine,

I have no child, I have nothing but a book,

Nothing but that to prove your blood and mine.

("Pardon, Old Fathers," 1-2, 15, 20-22; 269-270)

In Yeats's poetry, an imagined eternity is often constructed by invoking the presence of the dead, usually in verses in which the Yeatsean persona is seeking justification before an ancestral tribunal or before his self-selected jury of role models, or in verses of communion with lost friends. His poetry is often haunted by the 'real' presence of this formidable familial and collegial community. "The Grey Rock" (270) addresses the departed Lionel Johnson and Ernest Dowson, members with Yeats of the Rhymer's Club, a group of young poets of the 1890s. "All Souls' Night" explicitly invokes communion with the now-dead associates of his mystical explorations: William

Horton (21; 471), Florence Emery (41; 472), and MacGregor Mathers (61; 473). Swift and Grattan and Edmund Burke, models of Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and his own class longings, are also invoked ("The Seven Sages," 486); and Robert Gregory (323), Con Markiewicz and her sister (475), et al. Although dead, all are spoken of in these poems as if still real, not just remembered.

*My rhymes more than their rhyming tell
Of things discovered in the deep,
Where only body's laid asleep.
For the elemental creatures go
About my table to and fro,
That hurry from unmeasured mind
To rant and rage in flood and wind;
Yet he who treads in measured ways
May surely barter gaze for gaze.
Man ever journeys on with them
After the red-rose-bordered hem.
Ah, fairies, dancing under the moon,
A Druid land, A Druid tune!*

("To Ireland in the Coming Times," 20-32; 138-139)

In its most constant, although vaguest form, the eternal is imagined as the "faeryland" of Tir na nOge, an Edenic site whose half-gods and mortal souls are out of the reach of the losses of time, though near enough to the earth that its "everlasting voices" can be heard (such as Niamh). It is the "unmeasured mind" that is the source of

the elemental creatures who are imagined to live there in this mysterious land. It is the task of the poet to treat this "unmeasured" Edenic world of surreal possibility "in measured ways." Within the penumbra of this shadow eternity ("discovered in the deep, / Where only body's laid asleep"), Niamh, Aengus, Fergus, Aoife, mythic Irish kings and queens and poets, are brought into the verse, marking its alliance with what is taken to be undying. While Achterberg's poetry is rarely occupied with such an Edenic place, except as the lost eternity from which we are in exile, there is a similar sense of access to a living eternity from specific places in the mortal world, as if an eternal world encompassed us; and there is a similar sense of the poetic duty to cross the horizon dividing us. For Achterberg, the eternal imagined in his texts is almost solely a place of personal communion.

The imagination of the non-temporal simply as an other world, negative image of the anxieties of time, the place of eternal form and the communion of immortal souls, proved to be too remote and ethereal to be the locale of a poetry "chanting" a Fenian heroism. Yeats did not want to sing of modern Ireland; nor, when that had left him, of the modern personality in "*a tongue men do not know*." The situation of the poet before such an imagined overworld could only be that of tragic sadness and constant defeat. Required for the dignity and heroism of the poet was some resolution of this tragic sense of time. The opposition of temporal and eternal needed to be understood within the tensions of the poetic heart; that is, needed to have a metaphysical foundation less vague than the dreamy "*Rose of Beauty*," less Irish than Tir na nOge, and less dismal and distant than a Stygian after-life. Yeats found this in the imagination of eternal return, particularly as it affected his conception of the personality of the poet. The anxieties and

longings of our sorrows were thereby defined into our dualistic nature. We are temporal selves embodying eternal fates. Our souls *are* love. Yeats's poems finally move, at least from "The Phases of the Moon," within the imagination of human nature as individually and socially gathered into "the artifice of eternity" ("Sailing to Byzantium," 23-24; 408), that is within the eternal structure of human history. This effectively established within human personality itself the battleground for the poet. The tragic sadness of the human condition could be turned to tragic joy, by the poet who pursued "with the student's lamp" the images within the soul that would emerge within the suffering entailed in the task of self-realization.

The details of his assumptions regarding historical process, such as are worked out in A Vision, do not appear in the poems until "The Phases of the Moon" (372). Prior to it, the texts show only a generalized expectation that the succession of age upon age is cyclic, that all will come round again. In The Wanderings of Oisín this expectation has the tone of a defiant hope laid down to Patrick that his Christian time would yield once more to Fenian culture:

Put the staff in my hands; for I go to the Fenians, o cleric,

to chant

The war-songs that roused them of old; they will rise, making

clouds with their breath,

Innumerable, singing, exultant... (WQ, III, 201-203; 61).

It is important to recognize, here as elsewhere in Yeats, that such thoughts of return are not simply nostalgic, romancing a lost age. The poems intend critique, of the passivity of Christianity and its effete passion toward the world (in Catholic Ireland, above all) and

of the alienation and violence of modern life. To communicate that the poet's mission is more than the poet's illusions, Yeats anchors his Oisinic defiance in the structure of recurrence. The poetry needed this reconstruction of the eternal. Imagined as the eternal cycle of history, in which the soul is embedded, it will function for Yeats as the cauldron of otherness, for both self and race. It will ransom possibility for defeated or unrealized ideals. In Swan and Shadow, Thomas Whitaker comments on this critical moment in the development of Yeats's definition of his poetic identity: "The early Yeats was discovering that the apocalypse-- an image of wholeness transcending the fragmented temporal world and self-- could be nothing other than a full rendering of the opposites within that world and that self" (54).

In a general way, Yeats thought of form as energy, primordial energy seeking completion in a body: "All thought becomes an image and the soul / Becomes a body" ("The Phases of the Moon," 58-59; 374). Body, however, limits this energy as it expresses it. Within bodies then there can be imagined to be always the shadow of half-filled formal urgencies. Temporal realities possess subliminal energy, repressed energy. This is the energy of time, as if only in movement towards its opposite and repetition could the full expression of primal form be achieved. This is the awareness behind what is declared of "Helen" in the Irish context of "No Second Troy": "Why, what could she have done, being what she is? / Was there another Troy for her to burn?" (11-12; 257) What Yeats has done with this conception is to have interiorized the eternal. It is no longer a distant magical faeryland or esoteric exiled Beauty, but a field within the poet, the circumference of the emotional "quarrel with oneself" out of which poetry is made (Mythologies, 331). This ideal of the continued appetite of form for embodiment is

expressed in "The Folly of Being Comforted": "Time can but make her beauty over again" (8; 200). This general expectation of life-forms (individual such as Helen; or cultural, such as the Fenian way or the energy of the Renaissance) are built on construing form as eternally fixed energy ever seeking embodiment until its expression is complete, "changing till change be dead" ("The Lover asks Forgiveness because of his Many Moods," 19; 163). This construction of the poetic intellect has brought eternity within the imagination.

It is important to acknowledge that Yeats was not developing a metaphysics as such, but rather was seeking the symbols that would fix the total context of his poetry. He sought to give expression and form to a concept of the world free from the economic reductionism he perceived to be throttling modern life, in particular, the reception of poetry: "But there's no good complaining, for money's rant is on. / He that's mounting up must on his neighbour mount, / And we and all the Muses are things of no account" ("The Curse of Cromwell," 10-12; 580). There is philosophical vagueness and conflict in some of the poems. For example: Is the "Helen" of "No Second Troy" to be read as a universal type that the world should expect to see over and over? Does each age have its Lear or Hamlet whose formal energies flourish to the extent that physical circumstance ("body of fate") allows? Are we to understand that Yeats's Maude Gonne was a Helen, without a "Troy to burn"? Or, is Maude Gonne the reincarnation of the one eternal individual Helen? The questions of individuation and the existential status of separated form are not issues Yeats either solved or wished to solve. In fact, ambiguity serves the purpose of the poem, allowing at once the thought of the likenesses of contemporary heroines and heroes to the great Irish or Greek or Indian queens and kings and poets, as

well as the suggestion of reincarnation which intensifies the temporal impact of epic form.

Within the earlier poetry, the idea of return can be found only implicitly as the hope of the tragic pose with which the human hero (e.g., Oisín) defies mortality and his fate. However, any deeper reflection on the heroic individual's response to historical necessity is muted by the more dominant meditation on the "sorrowful loveliness" of human destiny, especially for the poet and lover ("He gives his Beloved certain Rhymes," 5; 158). At most, such poems will suggest a longing that what is lost might some day return. The primary experience of the eternal in the poetry up to The Wild Swans at Coole is the melancholy of the exiled soul: "I bring you with reverent hands / the books of my numberless dreams" ("A Poet to his Beloved," 1-2; 157).

...man's life is thought,
 And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
 Ravening through century after century,
 Ravening, raging, and uprooting that he may come
 Into the desolation of reality... ("Meru," 3-7; 563).

Yeats gradually turns from "dream-drenched" poetry to a more sustained exploration of human meaning in history, and above all to the mission of the poet within that meaning. That his poetry might be the clarion of a post-modern culture, of a new Ireland and a new Europe, involved Yeats in theory of history. His profound sense of the frailty of human hope and our delicate mortality led him to the experiment and architecture of A Vision. In this work, Yeats created a system of symbols which became for him the reality-reference of his poetic activity. That they were presented as revelations of other-worldly "instructors" gave it the air of objectivity and enhanced the mediating

image of the poet. While subordinated in A Vision to the primary mechanism of the gyres, Yeats evolved a lunar symbolism which proves to be a more fecund source of images after 1919. It becomes the chief emblem of the experience of the eternal cycle. It is worthwhile to review the advantages of the lunar cycle for Yeats's poetry as emblematic of our "two" earthly eternities, of "race and soul."

The moon, to our experience, is at any moment, a tension of fixity and flux-- its movement and change are as constant as its phases are fixed. The human soul is presented by these texts as an exile in the body, the self being understood as an eternal soul in a temporal appearance. Like the human soul's eternity, the moon's light is a borrowed light. It travels within the gravity of a superior stellar force at the ebb of a hierarchy of celestial bodies. More importantly, it is always half or more in obscurity. The moon is a whole of the evident and the hidden. Human life presents a comparable dualism whether considered socially (eternity of "race") or individually (eternity of "soul"). The rhythms of bodily existence, social or individual, are a growing to the full, and a falling from the full. Relative to any moment of life, we are defined as much by what we are not, or are not yet. Our projects and our selves, invariably narrower than our longings, are usually not even half of what would fulfill us. The soul's appearance at any moment of life or history is only appearance, never the whole. Like the moon, human identity at any moment is both changing and beyond all change, as if at once it were both entirely itself and not itself. The return of the moon to a new set of phases punctuates the hope of the unrequited lover, or of lovers at the waning of love, or of Young Ireland for lost Fenian glory, or a of disintegrating Europe for a new Renaissance-- promising one day a more compatible weather, or a return of the energies that formed them once to the full.

Above all, the lunar symbol christens Yeats's poetry with the magical allusions of the moon, with its alchemical and theosophical affinities, its commonly imagined connection to individual emotion and destiny. Yeats believed in the immaterial, in what the discipline of modern empiricism would call the occult. A Vision is a mystico-scientific account of the alliance of spirit and matter, accepting the communion of the living and the dead. Like Achterberg, when Yeats sought the dead, he sought the presence of the dead, not nostalgic remembrance. Yeats sought a science of the immaterial, of a Tir na nOge whose borders could be known and traversed. This sense of a surrounding eternal world, accessible within time, is related to Achterberg's recurring image of the "horizon" ("de einder") towards which he sails to find the beloved on the other side.

...Eleven pass, and then
 Athene takes Achilles by the hair,
 Hector is in the dust, Nietzsche is born,
 Because the hero's crescent is the twelfth.
 ("The Phases of the Moon," 44-47; 374)

The lunar symbol anchors Yeats's acceptance of a theory of correspondences. In this song of the "changes of the moon" (29; 373), there are implied influences of the moon on human character and destiny which have the ring of magic. Indeed, Yeats believed in magic. His interest in the parapsychological and the astrological is an extension of his poetic belief in and exploration of the spiritual.

Must we part, von Hügel, though much alike, for we
 Accept the miracles of the saints and honour sanctity?
 The body of Saint Teresa lies undecayed in tomb,

Bathed in miraculous oil, sweet odours from it come,

Healing from its lettered slab ("Vacillation," 78-82; 503).

In 1908, Friedrich von Hügel published The Mystical Elements of Religion as Studied in the Life of St. Catherine of Genoa and Friends. It was an influential account of mystical experience and Yeats may have wanted to ally his own critique of positivism with this respected affirmation of the reality of mystical phenomena. Von Hügel was a Roman Catholic and despite modernist sympathies, his account was considered orthodox within that tradition. Yeats did not view the experience of the spiritual parochially (nor, in fact, did von Hügel), as if only an orthodox Christianity had it right; or that only the morally righteous knew mystical experience. The context this text sought to compose for itself was neither Christian nor Western. Within a vision of some sort of historical necessity, it sought to define its world as universal, beyond any one culture or person's views, beyond their "nets" of right and wrong ("Into the Twilight," 2; 147). His references, in the same poem, to the "lion and the honeycomb" reveal Yeats's Blakean / Nietzschean attitude: that out of the conflict of opposites, the contest of good and evil, the world moved to complete its soul. The lion is for Yeats a symbol of worldly success, for it is thought of as king of the jungle. Within the carnivore-king's carcass, the bees have made a honeycomb from which Sampson feeds. This harmony of decay and growth is, in miniature, the idea of return. All form shall work itself out, violent and non-violent, good and evil, all play their part.

A Vision is best seen, perhaps, as a prolegomenon to a post-modern science. "Post-modern," if taken literally, is an appropriate descriptor of his aspiration. His celebration of Ireland's heroic past, or of the Renaissance or Byzantium, was for a quality

of human life he believed lost in the modern world, not for the re-establishment of some *ancien régime*. The world his poetry sought was not an historical Byzantium but a new "Byzantium," formed by the same cultural energy-- a world in which science, politics, economics, and art would again be integrated. I would limit any understanding of Yeats's "post-modern" impulses to his critique of modern societies, and believe that what he sought from A Vision was a quasi-scientific ground for the decidedly anti-modern world constructed by his poems. Perhaps, whatever we come to mean by "post-modern" may be less in manifesto than in shared critique. Yeats's poetry needed the allusion of a new science, a science that accepted the autonomy of the spirit world, and more importantly, its accessibility to intellect. His interest in the geometry of the gyres, therefore, was more his insistence that the larger new vision be expressible in the language of science, that in fact, its theorems be subject to measure. It was largely due to its mathematical genius that Egyptian civilization rose on the Nile. It was ultimately "Pythagoras" who bred the passion and success of Greek culture out of mathematical care which could bring "live lips upon a plummet-measured face" ("The Statues," 1, 8; 610). Yeats wished to insinuate, through the 'objectively' recorded discoveries of A Vision that a new mathematics of spiritual harmonies might foster trans-modern culture. Yeats sought a wider cultural unity than allowed by "money's rant" ("The Curse of Cromwell," 10; 580), one that restored the social viability of art, and thereby, the vocation of the artist.

Yeats's sense of the poet's place in society is never too far removed from his romanticization of himself in the role of the Irish 'file.' Oisín is almost never an inappropriate model. The poet is the voice of a people, their living and their dead, in time, or time to come. In this he must be a seer of connections between the enterprises

of the present and the past. The poet is the memory of a people, a sometimes dormant people. He knows or constructs their genealogy as if he were constructing their character. He may present himself as the herald of a coming age ("Easter 1916"), as well as its critic (e.g., "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen"). Like the troubadour-poets, he is the voice of a cultural ethos. Yeats worried that his play "Countess Kathleen" led to deaths in the Post Office during the rebellion of 1916; and indeed, argument to the contrary is difficult (see "The Man and the Echo," 11-12; 632). The task of the poet is the creation or sustaining of a culture, a voice that in constructing itself constructs and nourishes the unity of politics, craft and religion. Thus, he sought to move science beyond its role as the engine of the world's greed, of the technology of exploitation, of human life held hostage to the contest for wealth. He sought to win back for poetry its special place. Thus, A Vision is a symbol of an integrated science for which the ties of the physical to the inner life of the emotions become real. The idea of the Great Memory holds a promise that human suffering shall not be forgotten as the ash of some abandoned fire (that it *does* make sense, as in Achterberg's "Drievoudig verbond" for us to go over "the soft ash"). It allows the conceit that beyond our various ways of naming good and evil, indeed through that conflict, the carcass of the world shall yield its honey. The moral task of the poet, as Yeats finally rendered the Irish tradition, is to call the people to their soul, out of the self-"ravaging" of his own personality (cf., "Meru," 563).

The influence of the work of A Vision on Yeats's lunar emblem first enters the poetry of Yeats in "The Phases of the Moon," one of the poems of The Wild Swans at Coole published in 1919. "Aherne" speaks to "Robartes": "Sing me the changes of the moon once more" (29; 373). It is significant that the lunar symbol of eternal recurrence

first appears in this poem, so deeply reflective of the art of poetry, particularly regarding the mission of the poet. Aherne and Robartes, two of Yeats's masks of the poetic persona, come upon the tower of the poet, who is working therein, seeking images for his poetic creation in the study of books by candlelight. They raise for the reader, though on behalf of the towered poet, the perception that his study is fundamentally flawed:

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 missionary prince:
 The lonely light that Samuel Palmer engraved,
 An image of mysterious wisdom won by toil;
 And now he seeks in book or manuscript
 What he shall never find ("The Phases of the Moon," 12-20; 373).

Yeats presents the towered poet in a posture of one who seeks poetry's "mysterious wisdom" by reading and reflection, as if an effort of intellect ("the measured mind") alone. Aherne and Robartes, travellers in the night know from their experience that he shall "never find" the wisdom he seeks by the sedentary reflection of a tower scholar. Until he also becomes more of a night wanderer and listens to songs sung there like the sound of bats in the trees, he shall never find poetic completeness ("And talked of the dark folk who live in souls / of passionate men, like bats in the dead trees" "To Some I have Talked with by the Fire," 4-5; 136). The song of the wisdom of the wandering pair, the song of the changes of the moon, although in Robartes's words, is not Robartes's

song. In requesting him to sing it once more, Aherne quotes Robartes's own awareness concerning the origin of the song: "'mine author sung it me'" (30; 373). Robartes thus represents the wisdom the tower poet will miss, should he remain a book poet, a searcher for poetic secrets only in poetry's written tradition. Even though he wrote the words, it is not his song, Robartes knows, because the world of which the words sing is not his world. It is forever tied to the "changes of the moon." In this poem, Robartes and Aherne are the bearers of a recognition yet escaping the book-trusting tower persona. Nonetheless, they are both creations of Yeats, and thus form part of the complex and conflicted identity the poem constructs. These two well-travelled creatures of the night ("*They had kept a steady pace as though their beds, / Despite a dwindling and late-risen moon, / Were distant still*" 5-7; 372) have come upon their creator-persona. Robartes, while acknowledging the tower-poet's authorship, reflects on the tower-author's prior illusion, thinking that he could control the irrational ("the unmeasured") by controlling the fate of his characters (rounding his tale):

He wrote of me in that extravagant style

He had learned from Pater, and to round his tale

Said I was dead; and dead I choose to be (26-28; 373).

The suggestion of the text is that it is their un-rounded night-wisdom, "sung by bats in dead trees" that the author-poet is avoiding: "--*a bat rose from the hazels / And circled round him [Aherne] with its squeaky cry, / The light in the tower was put out* (137-139; 377).

"The Phases of the Moon" calls for the interiorization of the antinomies of human experience. It identifies two sources of poetic wisdom: candle-lit study of the books of

the poets; and, openness to the voices from the dark, of the folk who live in us as bats in dead trees. Robartes and Aherne are presented in this poem as having accepted the limits of appearance, the limits of what the mind can see by its own light. The poem suggests the tower-poet's new path. He must embrace the dark. This poem represents a turning point of the later poetry, the interiorization of the dark side of the self, hidden from the light; yet without which the personality is not whole. It is the advent of the anti-self, the opposition within the personality whose inclusion will be both its suffering and its wisdom. The movement to all that is other is the driving energy of history, the eternal purpose of time. This, interiorized in the personality, is the anti-self. Thus, Whitaker concludes that Yeats could expect history "to disclose all that he sought, all that seemed contrary to his own conscious state, all that lurked in his own depths, unmeasured and undeclared" (4).

Aherne summarizes the lesson of the song of the "changes of the moon": Before the full / It [the soul] sought itself and afterwards the world" (94-95; 376). In the first phasing of the moon, the poet pursued dreams, sought the establishment of self. After the full, comes the narrowing of possibility, and thus, the struggle (inevitably tragic) for place in the world. Eventually, it is our blindness that completes us, the acceptance of what we cannot see and do not know as constitutive of our temporal identity. Yeats comes to think of this acceptance as a necessity for the poet. The time of wisdom in his lunar correspondences is the time of the moon's waning crescents: "Hunchback and Saint and Fool are the last crescents" (118; 377). As the earthly form of the self becomes empty, imagination becomes more open to the rich darkness:

Aherne. And what of those

That the last servile crescent has set free?

Robartes. Because all dark, like those that are all light,
 They are cast beyond the verge, and in a cloud,
 crying to one another like bats;
 And having no desire they cannot tell
 What's good or bad, or what it is to triumph
 At the perfection of one's own obedience;
 And yet they speak what's blown into the mind;
 Deformed beyond deformity, unformed,
 Insipid as the dough before it is baked,
 They change their bodies at a word (102-113; 376).

As Achterberg will seek the new body of the dead beloved in the "Stof" of the world, so does the tower-poet seek in his study images to en flesh his poetic wisdom. The song of Robartes and Aherne suggests that the Protean power sought by the poet will be found in accepting into himself the dark side, the side his candlelight study cannot illumine. They "chant" the wisdom of the "unmeasured mind," imagination open to all possibility, to "rant and rage in flood and wind" ("To Ireland in the Coming Times," 26; 138). The construction of history as eternal recurrence allows the unity of "measured" and "unmeasured mind." The polarity of personality is established (not just its estrangement, as the Fenian Oisín in a Patrician world). A dualism of self and soul is defined. The poetic mind, seeking self-definition, must become open to the darkness of the eternal, to the longings and angers of the human heart and the voices that live there

like "bats in dead trees." A human being is bipolar, embodied "self" in a specific time, as well as "soul" united to an "unmeasured" eternity where all that is opposite to that embodied fate-- the substance of its sorrows and longings-- lives within the mysterious history of the unnameable One.

6. Zuster van Christus is het vers

Lijnen, ik laat u niet meer los,

.

...vóór ge deze Christus kruist
tegen de einders van de slanke stad
zó mathematisch juist,
dat ze in al Zijn stralen ligt gevat.

Lines, I am not letting go of you,

.

until you cross this Christ
against the horizons of the slender town
measured so exactly
that she is pointedly set in all His shining.

(En Jezus schreef in 't zand, "Jan Toroop," 1, 10-13; 9)

In 1947, Achterberg published a collection of poems, En Jezus schreef in 't zand. Through 1993, this work has had nine printings. Actually, its initial printing is situated chronologically at the center of Achterberg's published work. Afvaart, his first collection of poems, was published in 1931; and Vergeetboek, his last, in 1961. While he obviously could not have foreseen this coincidence, the timing of the appearance of En Jezus schreef in 't zand is remarkably congruent with its theme. Its intention is pre-figured in the opening poem, "Jan Toroop." The "Lines" ("Lijnen"), directly addressed by the graphic

artist at the outset of this poem, may be taken as analogous to the poet's lines. The graphic artist struggling with the lines of his drawing is chosen as the opening voice by the poet as an emblem of his own intention regarding this book of poems. As the graphic artist works to center the "slender" lines of the "town" he has drawn in the mysterious radiance of Christ's crucifixion, as if to have his drawing share in the purposes of Christ ("that the justice / of heaven come to be" "dat recht / den hemelen gewordt" 3-4); so, the force of the image implies, the poet might wish to make of these poems a similar offering. The finished drawing, made out of Jan Toroop's lines, is presented as if it were another Christ, that is, a specific incarnation ("deze Christus") embodying His forgiveness, comfort, compassion... whatever the specific work of love would require for that "town."

The first seven poems of this work had already appeared in Eiland der ziel. "Over de Jabbok" is taken from Osmose. "Gebed" and "Pinksteren" are taken from Thebe. In Thebe, "Gebed" is entitled "Gebed aan God" to distinguish it from the poem that follows it there, "Gebed aan vuur." The order of "Pinksteren" and "Gebed" are reversed in En Jezus schreef in 't zand, in which "Gebed" follows "Pinksteren." This is consistent with, and a subtle clue to, the narrative line of the 1947 collection with which we are here concerned. "Bekering" and "Triniteit" first appeared in Sintels as "Bekering I" and "Bekering II." Only "Code," "Deoïde," the final two verses of "Triniteit" and the title poem are original to En Jezus schreef in 't zand. While these are not the only religious poems which Achterberg had written by 1947, the effect of composing En Jezus schreef in 't zand with poems selected from earlier published material is to reach across that prior body of work as if to "set it pointedly" in the light of Golgotha ("in al Zijn stralen ligt

gevat" 13; 9). It especially effects the inclusion of "verhaal van ons" within the light of the Christology begun in Eiland der ziel and now fully focused in En Jezus schreef in 't zand. The shaping of the eternal in the texts of Achterberg becomes complete with this work. The poetic *self*, the beloved *other* for whom the poems reach, and the *world* in which the poems exist are merged with the eternal life of Jesus.

As in the poetry of Yeats, the driving motivation for the imagination of the eternal is the healing of loss, especially love's loss. As already seen in the "story of us," only if *you* are believed to be alive on the other side of the horizon of death (not just remembered, and especially, not just dreamed about) can *you* be the living grace of the author's poems (see above, 51-52 and 70-72). Only if she is living beyond the possibility of annihilation could the poem become her "immaculate conception," her living body in the world ("Met dit gedicht...", 12; 90). Yet, by what energy can the dead beloved be imagined alive, and the "old wound which pained us" ("Strofen I," 4-6; 23) begin to heal? The poetry? Yes, but by what power can the poetry be imagined to overcome its recurring sense that it only creates a "mirage" ("Fata Morgana")?

in een fonkelender vragen
dijt het gedenken uit tot sage,
waarin de liefde houdt gespreid
sluimering over zaligheid
waarmee wij bij elkander lagen.

in an ever more brilliant questioning
remembrances bloom into myth,

within which love spreads a slumbering
out over the happiness

with which we lay with one another. ("Fata Morgana," 8-12; 11)

In these poems of En Jezus schreef in 't zand the figure of Jesus is confirmed for the poet as the hope of life in the face of death and the hope of rescue from the persistent temptation to despair. The story of Jesus becomes the "myth" ("sage" 9; 11) which shelters the "story of us" and rescues the poetry from "mirage." Jesus is constructed by these texts as the incarnation of love that conquers death, which is the creative energy sought for the poem. Born of the same spirit, the poem is the sister of Jesus.

It is of further importance, for this comparative reflection, to draw out the figure of Jesus for Achterberg, insofar as a crucial difference between the poetry of Yeats and the poetry of Achterberg is disclosed in the contrasting images of Jesus found in their texts. Even as early as The Wanderings of Oisín (Variorum, II, 134-135; 38 and 198; 42) and very clearly in "The Magi" (6-8; 318), there is strong aversion in Yeats's lines to the decidedly anti-heroic image of Jesus. Christ represents a stoic withdrawal from the drama and pleasures of bodily life which is deeply at odds with Yeats's Fenian romanticism. In Achterberg's texts, on the other hand, there is an explicit theology of redemption, shaped in the image of Jesus, in whose light the poems are centered.

One approach to the different readings of Jesus found in the poems of Yeats and Achterberg is to consider each poetry's need for the image of Jesus. For Yeats, it is almost always as a foil, in counterpoint to the spirit of Oisín or Cúchulain. The ways of the world require battle, and battle needs its charismatic voice, its priest-warrior. For Achterberg, as seen in "Gaalridder" (En Jezus, 11-14; 12), for example, the breath of

Jesus's love on Golgotha hill is sought as the breath of the poems, since that breath, that dying breath, is taken as the sign of love's eternal fidelity. Jesus is no figure of redemption in Yeats, for there is no need for redemption. There is no sense of sin in his poetry, at least not in the sense that human nature is constituted by its rebellion against the will of a personal creator. If anything, sin is simply being born, falling into the world of time ("The man and the woman bring / Hither, to our disgrace, / A noisy and filthy thing " "The Dolls," 10-12; 319). For Yeats, original sin is a general metaphor for the human condition: "What theme had Homer but original sin?" ("Vacillation," 77; 502). Achterberg's rather more anthropomorphic conception of eternity as the person of Jesus could have no hold for Yeats, for whom the primary eternal energy is beyond our conception and infinitely removed from our cares. As the moorfowl theology of "The Indian upon God" presents it (6-8; 76), we cannot help projecting the deity in our own image; however, the eternal source is trans-personal and is felt in the human soul only in its unsatisfied longings. There is certainly moral outrage in the poetry of Yeats-- at broken promises, betrayal, and petty ambition; but no sense of human sinfulness. His passion is directed against decay and change, against time itself, on behalf of ideals sadly bound to the wheel of time.

Achterberg's poetry is marked by a sense of decadent personality, of having collaborated in the erosion of love, even in its murder. At the heart of evil in the world is a labyrinthine karma of personal betrayal. The fundamental aspect of its theology of sin is creator-purpose or intention. The universe is a kind of personal construction, a complex but authored expression, achieving a divine plan; or better, intending a divine hope. Sin is the deliberate violation of that intention. Erosion of purpose and feeling, and

other sorrowful patterns of mutability are found in the texts of both Yeats and Achterberg. For Achterberg, unlike Yeats, these are not the cold inevitabilities of a universe ruled by iron necessity; but, too often, the effects of our own projects. Human involvement in the evil of history is not simply that of innocent or pitiable victims. At the heart of our suffering, for Achterberg, is a sense that this vale of tears is a just return for original and continuing species-collaboration in degeneration. The human world somehow has got out of hand, and before the eyes of the divine judge, rightly endures its attendant condemnation.

For Yeats, the eternity of the cyclic history of the soul offers assurance within his poems that nothing is ever absolutely lost; changed indeed, but returning to its essential form. Loss, however painful, becomes the illusion of temporality. The conception of a cyclic eternity also gives substance to the work of the poet. Battle is at the heart of human life, the self is always moving (like the moon) towards its opposite; and paradoxically, towards its fullest self. The poetic struggle is to express the hidden opposite, to reclaim from the sorrows of time the soul's lost or forgotten integrity. Within his poetry, the eternal cycle of history functions as the seal of the whole personality, and makes dialectics the pulse of the eternal in time. For Achterberg, the energy sought from the eternal is forgiveness, the great restorer of personal wholeness. For this reason his poetry must cast the eternal as personal. Both poets refuse to accept the death of love, one by gathering the poems within an "artifice" of eternal return; the other, through poetic communion with eternal love.

In a helpful article, "De religieuze grondslag bij Gerrit Achterberg," Hans Berendregt clarifies the key theological assumptions which operate in the poetry of

Achterberg, especially in En Jezus schreef in 't zand. An important distinction, shaping the situation of the poetic voice in the verse and based on the theology of the Calvinist Union of the Reformed Church is that between "toestand" and "staat" (56-57). "Staat" is a legalistic term referring to the human state or condition as ransomed by Jesus. "Toestand" is our condition in the world, our existential situation. It is fundamentally a condition of loss. The first eternity of Eden has been lost with our willing collaboration ("een verloren eeuwigheid," "Over de Jabbok," 6; 16). Strict justice required that we suffer the consequent alienation from the divine person whose purposes we contended. A Calvinist sensibility marks the poetry of Achterberg. Its power lies in the force of its perception that waste, disrupted harmony, and accelerated deterioration characterize the universe wherever it has been touched by the human promethean impulse. Economic imbalance, stockpiled weapons of planetary destruction, ozone depletion, toxic water supplies, failing cities proclaim the threatening despair of the human existential plane ("toestand"). However, Jesus took on our life and endured this sort of existence to the point of his execution under our law as a criminal. Ironically, by his death, human status before Creator-law has been altered. We have been ransomed by the fidelity of Jesus to human life.

This is the theology with which the authorial voice composed the poems of En Jezus schreef in 't zand. Our ransomed and true human condition ("staat") now is of another and new eternity. We are called to become "new creatures" ("nieuwe wezens" "Bekering," 3; 19), even "in the middle" of our sins (see "Pinksteren," 3; 17). There is no reason, in its iron-strict justice, for the original law of the Creator not to work its honing force upon us (see "Triniteit, 1; 20): death remaining death, failure remaining

failure, injustice working out its toll. Against such a conception of the world, Achterberg's poems offer an image of Jesus as God who does not condemn, who draws the figures of his message in the earth's sand leaves them for our freedom to read ("En Jezus schreef in 't zand," 1; 26). Thus, the crisis of "Triniteit," the axial poem of this collection, is the conflict in our experience between one God who leaves us to our just deserts, and an other who feeds us fish and wine (1-4; 20). Reflection on the first aspect of God leads us to believe that our dreams deserve their death, for we ourselves have been murdering them. The other, requiring the step of belief in the reality of Jesus, offers the image of love's power over death, not just as it is found in the actions of Jesus, but on his word, as it found in actual human life ("toestand"). The prayer of "Triniteit" is that these competing divine interests be reconciled-- that the God of strict justice be one with the God of love (11-12).

Along with this Christology, En Jezus schreef in 't zand also presents a narrative of the spiritual journey of the authorial voice, and a poetics fashioned by this theology. Within a framework suggesting the liturgy of a communion service, "Jan Toroop," the opening poem, intones the religious theme. As if it were a sacred text taken as an antiphon, it proclaims the intention of the graphic artist to join his work to the creation of justice, to cross his line-drawn image with that of the crucifixion of Christ on Golgotha, the recurring focus of En Jezus schreef in 't zand. The artist's image is a "woman's breast," held up as an "offering" by a lean hand free from "personal craving," sharing in the dignity of what is offered (5-9; 9). The crossed images serve to sacramentalize human love, as if it could be an intimate part of the satisfaction of justice achieved by the sacrifice of Christ. The effect of composing the opening poem in the

voice of another artist, and an artist working in another medium, is threefold. It initially distances the poet voice from the ritual offering of the graphic artist ("Jan Toroop") in order to underscore the poet's autonomy. It establishes the fact that any similar commitment of "ik's" poetic mission is open to his decision; actually, his conversion to the first poem's view of the cross. Secondly, it seems also intended to indicate the poet's awareness that he works within a community of art. It is as if the authorial "ik" wanted the poems placed within an artistic as well as a religious tradition. Finally, the opening poem suggests the core of the "verhaal van ons." Using the symbols of the communion service, the dead beloved ("gij") is the raised-offering; and the artist (mask of the "ik"), the ransomed object of her sacrifice. Her forgiving love, like Christ's, is his hope. Jan Toroop's resolution regarding his drawing introduces the allusion that the poem too might be a "deze Christus." The poetic lines which raise up the dead beloved could be written (pending a resolve similar to the graphic artist concerning the lines with which he works) in a way that the poem, like the drawing, might participate in the pursuit of justice ("tot en gebed, dat recht / den hemelen gewordt" 3-4; 9). In this opening poem, the interconnection of physical love, the aspiration of the artist, and the symbol of the cross are clear. The poems that comprise En Jezus schreef in 't zand can be thought of as having been selected by the poet according to the example of the opening poem, to be placed in the light of the cross, and with them, the "verhaal van ons." The poet seeks to share in her "dignity" through the fidelity of his poetic lines ("met eendere adel" 9; 9), by which he intends to elevate into the "shining" ("stralen" 13; 9) of Christ's life her love which has saved him. The bread of communion is the poem, whose lines the poet kneads as the grain of his human love.

Waar divan en donker stonden
 is, hun geheim ten spot,
 een vrouwenschoen gevonden;
 maar de liefde is uit God.
 En buiten zullen staan de honden.

Where divan and the dark shared ground,
 their secret in this way mocked,
 a woman's shoe has been found;
 but love is from God.

And outside shall be the hounds. ("Beumer & Co," 20-24; 10)

The second poem, "Beumer & Co," describes a scene of utter desolation. If the "ik" of the "story of us" were to describe a house once shared with the dead beloved, it would read like this text. The despair of the poetic voice at her absence is exquisitely articulated. The ruins which remain accentuate his loss: the lamp over a table which is not there (4-5); the shattered-glass reminders of a shared life (14-15) have become loot (8-9); a single shoe, not a whole pair, left under a divan which is no longer there (20-22), the exact spot of their intimacies. The mirror, fallen forward, now reflects nothing, as if shutting down the room's self-reflection (16-17); a home has disappeared (1-2), its memories cobweb-covered (19). Formulaic prayer erupts out of nowhere (10), without support, without reason. It also ends the poem, an almost mocking voice within the tragic air shared by the divan and the dark; yet, it is the last alternative to the hounds of despair (23-24). Out of these depths, the next poems come.

Dear friends, let us love one another
 because love comes from God.
 Whoever does not love does not know God
 for God is love...No one has ever seen God,
 but if we love one another
 God lives in union with us,
 and his love is made perfect in us. (1 John 4, 7-8, 12)

Critical lines of "'Beumer & Co'" and the poem which follows it, "Fata Morgana," seemed derived from this passage: the prayer of "'Beumer & Co'" (En Jezus, 10, 23; 10); and, the last two lines of "Fata Morgana" (21-22; 11). Indeed, the Christology of this entire book of poems is perfectly in line with this passage from the Letter of John. "Fata Morgana" continues the mood of "Beumer & Co'." The tension of the "story of us," previously seen in the poem "Ontwaken" (the fear that the "word" is "otherwise" than it was in "ik's" dreaming-- see above 72), is repeated here, in fact, in the very title, "Fata Morgana" ("Mirage" 11). In this poem, which expresses the possibility of the most intimate connection of Jesus to the promise of human love (His image is found in the lovers' eyes 21-22), there is, as deeply expressed, a terrible awareness of our capacity to fool ourselves (13-14). In the voice of the poem: the power of imagination finds the words to save "my" memories from time and oblivion (1-6), building them up "in an evermore brilliant questioning" ("in een al fonkelender vragen" 8) into a "myth" ("sage" 9), restoring "us" to some sense of home together, after the desolation of "'Beumer & Co'" ("de liefde houdt gespreid / sluimering over zaligheid / waarmee wij bij elkander lagen" 10-12).

Maar als ik deze zekerheid
 ook kwijt moet worden en versagen,
 in een al hachelijker wagen
 van beeld en rijm, in stagen strijd
 tegen het niet, als wild en zijd
 zijn woestenijen mij vervagen
 en geen teken mij onderscheidt
 van zand en stof...Heer, hoor dit klagen:
 ik houd U aan Uw eigen beeld,
 dat we in elkanders ogen zagen.

But if I have to be rid of '
 this security and must despair,
 in an ever more dangerous vessel
 of image and rhyme, I wage
 a steady struggle against the void,
 as far and wide wastes have worn me down
 and no sign distinguishes me
 from sand and dust...O Lord, hear my cry:
 I hold on to You in Your own image,
 which we saw in each other's eyes. ("Fata Morgana," 13-22; 11)

**Zekerheid? Fata Morgana? Security? Mirage? The "ik" will have to face sailing
 against the winds of "our" annihilation, in the vessel of his poetry alone. The life-**

endangering task of the poet receives a similar expression in "Code," one of the final poems in this book: "The poet, in the writing, weighs and sifts, / a skirmishing with life and death" ("De dichter, onder 't schrijven, weegt en wigt, / op dood en leven een schermutseling" 12, 13; 23). As with Oisín, the timeless is fashioned out of the need of the poet's desolation. In that "wasteland" ("woestenijen") where "our" love seems a "mirage," the poem prays with the words of David: "Lord, hear this cry" (Psalm 130). The "cry," which closes the poem, is the utterance of a resolution as well as a belief: "I hold on to You in Your image / which we saw in each other's eyes" ("ik houd U aan Uw eigen beeld / dat we in elanders ogen zagen"). The verb "aanhouden" and its root, "houden" has three important nuances in Dutch, somewhat the same as the English, 'to hold on to': 'to hold on to' as in 'to continue to honor' or 'to love' as we might 'hold on to' a set of values; 'to hold on to' as in 'to remain loyal to' or 'adhere to' as we might hold on to a commitment; and 'to hold on to' as in 'to keep' or 'to attach oneself to' as we might hold on to another's belief in us, as if it anchored us. All three senses seem applicable to the ending of this poem. Against the void, the poet affirms that he will anchor himself in the belief that the image of the eternal Lord is to be found in "our" eyes, seeking each other, and that there is honor there, and the substance of his loyalty. In the act of love, in *your* eyes are only "my" eyes looking for *you*, and in "my" eyes, a similar reflection of *you* seeking "me." There is the Lord. That is the site where "ik" believes he shall find the "image and rhyme" with which he builds his poetry, the vessel in which he sails against despair. It is the poem that battles "mirage." Honoring and commitment to this belief, that human love is the image of God, promises to be the power "ik's" poetry needs to continue to set the memories of "us" free from the savagery of the

"jakhai," time; and, the "hyena," oblivion (2, 4).

In den eeuwigen ademhaal
 dier hijgende seconden
 op den heuvel Golgotha,
 moge ik zingen vinden
 met hemels materiaal
 voor dieven, hoeren, honden,
 zondaren allemaal...
 en mijzelve in het bijzonder.

In the eternal, drawing full
 the breath of those gasping
 seconds on Golgotha hill,
 may I find singing
 with heaven's material
 for thieves, for whores, and for beasts,
 sinners each and all...
 and myself more than the rest. ("Gaalridder," 11-18; 12)

In "Gaalridder" as in "Jan Toroop," the poem focuses on Golgotha. The opening image of "Christus arsenaal" ("Christ's armory" 2) is strange at first. Recalling Achterberg's and Yeats's thoughts on Christ, as expressed in their poems, helps reveal an ironic intent in this line. Quietude in the face of suffering, entrusting the resolution of our personal anxieties to Jesus is precisely what Yeats would consider humanly

destructive. The Fenian hero is ready to take up arms. The Achterbergean "ik" seeks the grail of forgiveness within a perception of conflict between divine justice and love. To the extent that we "aanhouden" the image of the closing lines of "Fata Morgana," Jesus can present to the justice-exacting Father, our acts of hope and trust in Him, especially our refusals to despair. When the poet gives over his anxieties to Jesus, so as to complete the poem, he is providing 'armament' for Jesus's case before the cold necessities of the Father's law. The motivation for the eternal has turned explicitly in this poem to the enterprise of poetry itself. The vessel for sharing the eternal is the poem. Jesus's breath during his final seconds upon Golgotha hill is the breath of the eternal God, and it is within this breath that the voice of the poem hopes to find "singing" for us, "zondaren allemaal" (17). It is the enduring fidelity of the executed Christ to human life, a refusal to despair of human worth, even with full familiarity with our "depravities," including the sins tormenting the poet. In Christ, personal love survived his friends' depravities. In the gasping of His final seconds, God refused to allow His divinity to save Himself, breathing only human breath to the end. This is the air of the eternal which the poet begins to believe can make his song a eucharist, a transubstantiation of the material of the poem by Christ's breath, the breath that refuses to despair of love as we live it ("toestand"). It is also the air by which the poem escapes the deconstructive energy of self-enclosure. It is strictly an "offering" ("ten offerande heft" as "Jan Toroop" has it, 7; 9) made against and with the self-offering of Christ, that knows and wills its completion solely in the freedom of the other. The poem is to become the grail, the vessel for holding this breath (again, in another way the poem is "gedichten")-- embracing human life even at its worst moments. With this breath "mirage" is dissipated, as is the

desolation of "'Beumer & Co'." In this context, a mission for the poems similar to that of the "Lijnen" of "Jan Toroop" (1; 9), but specifically related to "ik's" life, becomes possible. It is as if the poems here realized a self-awareness of their sacramental possibility. The story of the poems has led to the story of Christ.

Consistent with his other work, the voice of these poems has been that of a pilgrim. In the three poems following "Fata Morgana," this motif, as well as the central focus of the book is clear in their title: "Reiziger 'doet' Golgotha" ("A Traveler 'does' Golgotha"). The sea journey alluded to in "Fata Morgana" ("in stagen strijd" 16), is continued in this trilogy (cf., "Reiziger...III," 11; 15). It connects these poems with the prelude-poem which opens Achterberg's very first published work:

*Aan het roer dien avond stond het hart
en scheepde maan en bossen bij zich in
en zeilend over spiegeling
van al wat het geleden had
voer het met wind en schemering
om boeg en tuig voorbij de laatste stad.*

*At the helm this evening stood the heart
And took moon and woods on board with itself
And along a mirroring
of all it had suffered
with wind and twilight around bow and rigging
sailed out beyond the last town. (VG, 22)*

The "ik" of "'Beumer & Co'," "Gaalridder," and "Fata Morgana" must travel back to the story of Christ, whose image the poetic self has resolved to hold on to as he finds that in his love. The story of Christ is told here as Kierkegaard told the story of Abraham in Fear and Trembling, as if it were a current event, and as it was seen by an outside observer "and I stood at a distance as if to chat" "En ik stond in de verte quasi wat te praten" (En Jezus, "Reiziger...I," 13; 13). This placement of the voice "shrewdly" accentuates ("ligt gevat" "Jan Toroop," 13; 9) the emotional non-involvement of the "ik" in the events of Christ's death, although demonstrating active intellectual curiosity. The voice of the poem is not yet with Jesus, not yet at the point of the opening invocation of "Jan Toroop." A major step would have to be taken for that. In subtly crafted irony, the quality of the voice's belief in Jesus is disclosed. The "ik" also has to be included among those who "weten niet wat ze doen" "know not what they are doing" ("Reiziger...I," 7). Because Achterberg continues the conceit of the Golgotha of "Jan Toroop" and "Gaalridder," this text deftly illustrates a characteristic of religious belief as true of a contemporary Christian (like "ik") as he takes it to be of believers in Christ's time. The "Easter" of "ik's" celebration, for which he must leave his place in the "verte" ("distance") of Golgotha (13; 13), is an Easter whose events he too would likely not recognize were he present to them, just as he does not recognize them in the here and now of the poem. Finally, this first "Reiziger" poem manages to evoke the cross scene of "Jan Toroop" (10-13; 9). It raises the cross in the midst of the eighteen poems of En Jezus schreef in 't zand, out of the physical despair of "'Beumer & Co'," the desperation of "Fata Morgana," and the resolve of "Gaalridder."

"Reiziger 'doet' Golgotha II" is really a poem about gospel, a commentary on how

the word about Jesus enters the human community. The poem continues to present the events of Golgotha as a contemporary event. The "ik" has been travelling, busy about his needs. He happens to read in a Cyprus newspaper, which he might just as easily have missed in his travels, a story of implied conniving (7-8), hysterical sightings (9), and contradictions cited by "official" sources (14). It forms an effective image of gospel accounts of Christ's life and their various inceptions and receptions. It is the human news of the resurrection, seeming fantasies-- a dead man walking in the meadow (10), fishermen who ate with a dead man by the lake (12-13)-- coming in the middle of our life-journeys, easy to miss, and in the various lights of every generation's sophistication, suspicious. The "ik" who has now heard the story-- as the confessional line of the narrative continues-- is still not with Jesus as were the fishermen or the women. He is still the intrigued and knowledgeable observer. For him, in one sense of the ending of "Reiziger...I," it is still "vóór Pasen" (17; 13). This poem also provides an indication of a common fascination in Achterberg's poems with their reception (see especially "III" of Ballade van de gasfitter, VG, 836). After all, the poet's conception of the reception of the poem as it structures the work is vital to his poetic self-definition.

"Reiziger 'doet' Golgotha III" is built around a personal call to faith in Jesus as experienced by the "ik" of the poem. Continuing the sailing theme and the narrative of a spiritual journey, an "SOS tears through his soul" (En Jezus, 6; 15). An awakening to the import of the distance he has maintained from Golgotha "crashes" into him: "Wie niet vóór Mij is, is tegen Mij geweest" "Whoever is not for Me, has been against Me" (8). This thought is found twice in Christian scripture" Matthew 12; 30 and Luke 11; 23. Achterberg's poem quotes the passage in Matthew's form, along with another scriptural

text which forms the opening half of the third strophe (7). This time the intertextual reference is to Acts 2; 15ff., which is itself intertextual. Explaining the phenomenon of speaking with tongues, Peter quotes from Joel 3; 1-2, in an attempt to convince people that his colleagues are not drunk:

Afterwards I will pour out my spirit on everyone: your sons and your daughters will proclaim my message; your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. At that time I will pour out my spirit even on servants, both men and women.

Thus combined, the texts create a formidable disaster warning to the "ik," as well as outline a prodigious historical texture to the call to believe. The "SOS" that tears through his soul signals that keeping his distance from Christ has meant enmity to Christ. The awareness of Christ expressed by "ik" in "Graalridder" and "Fata Morgana" condemn his indifference in "Reiziger 'doet' Golgotha." They are indications that the spirit had indeed already been "poured out" on the searching self. The "reiziger" has awakened to the understanding that indifference to the import of the "ademhaal" of Golgotha is sin. Though awakened by the living voice of God to the disaster of indifference, the persona yet remains without concrete direction concerning the specific way of his belief. His response, the closing line of this text is to pray that Christ appear at the horizon of his journey ("Christus, wil mij verschijnen aan de einder" 12; 15).

"Over de Jabbok" is the Penance-moment in the liturgical movement of the narrative. Faced with his own "depravities" ("verdorvenheden" 2; 16), he looks at them now in the light of the "myth" ("sage") of Jesus, that is, with the eyes of a God who has not avoided human life, who has met us even where we have spilled blood, as in

"Gaalridder" ("wandering through my sinning / I have found the sharing-cup / of His Last Supper" "dwalende door mijn zonden, / heb ik den graal gevonden / van Zijn laatste Avondmaal" 8-10; 12). Here too, it is at a moment of earthly sorrow that the form of its healing appears. "Over de Jabbok" is the revelation of our human "staat" spoken of in Berendregt's article. At a moment of brokenness ("when I had reached the end of my depravities" 1-2; 16), a living God who remembers "ik's" sinfulness speaks in forgiveness: "but that is now past, from this day / to that other eternity / is just one step away" "maar dit is voorbij, van heden / tot aan die andere eeuwigheid, / is maar een schrede" 8-10). This is the alternative to despair, to take the step to accepting this God who looks down with the "ik" on "ik's" "depravities," and although confirming their destructiveness, invites him to put the guilt aside. God has crossed the horizon of temporality into "ik's" life. Though his "staat," as ransomed, is now personally assured in the experience of forgiveness, "ik" still is in "toestand," the condition of his earthly life. To accept and live in this new eternity, to become a "new creature" requires that the "ik" take the "one step" ("maar een schrede" 10; 16) which will bring him victory over remorse and guilt.

"Pinksteren" is the poem of the coming of the Spirit. Here, the spiritual journey of the poetic voice and the poetic mission become joined. The "flame of the Lord" ("de vlam des Heren" 1; 17), God's affective life-- which had brought the word, Jesus, into flesh-- now comes to the poet. Despite his "depravities," as it had been expressed in "Over de Jabbok" (2; 16), and now carried into this poem, "though sin still marks your life" ("om midden uit uw zonden" 3), the voice of "Pinksteren" announces the baptism of the Spirit: "Receive the flame of the Lord" ("Ontvang de vlam des Heren" 1). The

voice directs him to feel the unseeable wonder ("het blinde wonder" 5) that now, within the presence of the Spirit, the "ik" will be able to find language to be understood by anyone (7). The voice commissions the "ik" to find the language to bring God present within daily life: "let God through you speak greeting" "laat God Zich door u groeten 14). On the basis of this orthodox Christology, Achterberg builds his radical poetics. In the beginning was the word...through the word, world...through the power of the Spirit the word took flesh. Through the power of the same Spirit, whether the word is spelled C-h-r-i-s-t or l-o-v-e or however (see "Code," 5-11; 23), God embraces our personal life, zonders altermaal "sinners each and all" ("Graalridder," 17; 12). The coming of the Spirit, the fire of God's dreaming ("dit vuur Zijner dromen" "Pinksteren," 13; 17), brings the receiving "ik" to the source of language, beyond "sense or understanding" ("zin en begrip verdwijnen" 11), a coming together of sound and being ("het samenkomen / van klank en wezen" 9-10). There is connection here to the poetics of Yeats, to his sense of the voices of dark folk living in us, like the sounds of bats in trees, the point of surreality that seems to fascinate the lyric poet, the "unmeasured mind." Indeed, the metaphor for the world in this theology is 'word.' In the beginning was the word...and through the word everything that was made ("All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be" John 1; 1-3). The inception of the poem is imagined to be at a nothingness like that of the origin of the world, of which the poem now becomes an analogue: "al hachelijker wagen / van beeld en rijm, in stagen strijd / tegen het niet" ("Fata Morgana," 15-17; 11).

It is somewhat paradoxical that the form of this poem is the sonnet, a form so precise and exacting as to seem singularly unfit for the metalinguistic explosiveness of the

Pentecost ecstasy. Yet, for at least two reasons, it is perfectly fitting for Achterberg's intentions. The first is that the sonnet form is multicultural. It could be said to speak in tongues; in Dutch, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, English, et al. A second reason is that it is generally considered as the quintessential lyric of love, which is the gift of "Pinksteren."

It is also interesting that in this poem Achterberg approaches the Yeatsian conception of the origin of the universe ("God is joy and joy is God" WQ, I, 300; 20): that is, "joy" is the force of emanation (I, 261-286; 18-19). The Spirit, the fire of God's dream, for Achterberg, is the power of incarnation. As Achterberg reads eternal form, God is manifest as Jesus, who is for the author, the security that the power of God in the world is the love in our lives. Thus, the mission enjoined on the "ik" is to allow God to speak through his experience. The "story of love" in his life is the "story of us." This is the word which the poet must make flesh .

"Gebed" explicitly involves the "story of us" in the confessional journey of the authorial "ik" of En Jezus schreef in 't zand. It supports the assumption made here, of the continuity of the personae, "gij-ik," throughout Achterberg's poetry. The voice of this poem is praying for its memories. The act of poetry remains a dangerous sailing against the void (En Jezus, "Fata Morgana," 15-18; 11). His poetry needs her. "Ik" needs your "white bird" memories, the "nests" in his blood (4). He needs the transformed hopes ("black butterflies" "Gebed," 5; 18) to write poems that bloom only under the "star-dome" of "our" love (9; 18), that myth ("sage") with which "love holds slumbering spread / out over the happiness / with which we lay with one another" ("Fata Morgana," 9-12; 11).

What placing "Gebed" after "Pinksteren" accomplishes (it appears before it in Thebe) is to emphasize that even after the ordination of the poetic mission by the Spirit, "ik" still needs her, for he still lives on the mortal side of the horizon of death. In our condition in the world ("toestand"), the eternal is only an abstraction (cf. "IX" of Ballade van de gasfitter, VG, 842). As such, it is empty of images for the poet, "beyond sense and understanding" (En Jezus, "Pinksteren," 11; 17). He would have no language with which to "greet" anyone were she to fall completely into the eternal ("Gebed," 2; 18). As his human experience of love, she is the life of his poetic language-- the dead beloved of the poem as well as the poet.

In "Bekering," the poetic voice has finally accepted the coming of the Spirit, and therefore the action of Jesus by which God has taken a name like that of our own. "Let God through you speak greeting" is the direct invitation to name God in our life with the names in our life ("Pinksteren," 14; 17). From "Pinksteren," and later, from "Code," the form of the name or its language are not as important as that the Christlike-ness be real. The wish of "Jan Toroop" is that "*this* Christ" ("deze Christus"), the woman's breast in the light of Christ's cross, be raised against the "horizons of the slender town" ("Jon Toroop," 11; 9). "Ik's" acceptance is like a second birth: new creature, new word, new creation. It is like "a summer is blooming around the towns." ("een zomer om de dorpen bloeit" "Bekering," 9; 19).

En moeten ook de bloemen weer verdorren:

mijn lenden zijn omgord, mijn voeten staan geschoeid.

Uit Uwe Hand ten tweeden maal geboren,

schrijd ik U uit het donker tegemoet.

**But flowers also must wither again:
 my loins are girded, my feet are shod.
 Having been born a second time from Your hand,
 I stride out to meet You from the dark. (10-13; 19)**

However, the memories of "'Beumer & Co'" and "Fata Morgana" feed his awareness that "flowers must also wither again" (10). In this poem, now accepting Christ as living, what otherwise would have been a nightmare intensifies his readiness to continue in the way of the "step" he has finally taken (cf., "schrijd" of line 13 and "schrede" of "Over de Jabbok," 10; 16). In the daily challenge of writing verse, "ik" is prepared to walk with Jesus. The emotional commitment has been made, "ik" is converted ("Bekering").

"Triniteit" is a complex and theologically compact poem, the axis of the collection. It focuses the tension within "ik's" experience of God; between the claims of an original justice on a ruined world, and the forgiving nourishment of Jesus. Without the light of the Holy Spirit and its consequent illumination ("Pinksteren"), this tension is unresolved and "ik" remains a wanderer between reality and illusion, guilt and forgiveness, hope and despair. The poem prays for the whole body of verse, that it en flesh the spirit of love, and that this hope not be a vanity. It prays for the oneness of God's love and God's justice, for the unity of the feeding God and the God of strict order. The poem turns into a prayer to the Holy Spirit, without whose light we remain "a dark phenomenon" ("een duister fenomeen" 6; 20). The prayer is that this light will come to the poetry and help it to be faithful to all three persons of the Trinity, yet see them as a triunity, as one being ("Drieën" 10), and thus resolve the conflict of guilt and love. The closing two strophes of "Triniteit" are original to this 1947 work. In them, the

prayer is explicit in its intention for the verse, that it become the "flesh of love" (13); that is, that it become so complete an openness to the action of the Spirit that it becomes the "sister of Jesus." As the flesh of Mary became Jesus, so the body of the poem is to be formed by the same Spirit.

A final acceptance of the creating Father's intention is made within the light of this prayer that nothing of the poem's structure move without the spirit of this unity. The poem is to be a closed achievement, there is to be nothing superfluous:

Heilige Geist, verful het vers
 zó gans, dat er geen vezel is,
 die niet van Uw belevenis
 vibreert, als van de liefde vlees.

Holy Spirit, so fully fill the verse,
 that there vibrate within its mesh
 nothing but Your Experience,
 as if love's very flesh (13-16; 20).

Poetry has become directly related to the "sage" of Jesus. The Spirit by which Jesus was incarnate is the very same Spirit by which the poem is to have its body. The poem, also, is to be the flesh of the Spirit of love. The aspiration for the poem symbolized in "Jan Toroop" is now clear; that it be made in so "precise a measure," that it will "pointedly be set" in all His "shining" ("in al Zijn stralen" 13; 9). The poem itself, like Toroop's drawing, becomes Christ-like, a "deze Christus" (10; 9). The poem is to be an ikon, a place of light, for which "Triniteit" is the prayer. This is very much an indication of

Achterberg's poetic style, and a further elaboration of what the poem is made to enclose ("gedichten").

"Damascus" advances the theology of Christ which is being developed through these poems, by contemporizing the experience of Paul, here the symbol of the converted poet. It is also to be noted that Paul, like the "ik" of "Strofen III" is "a Peter" ("een Petrus" YG, 8; 25), that is, a betrayer. In "Reiziger...III," the "SOS" from the "Geheime Zender" tore through the soul (En Jezus, 9; 15). In "Pinksteren," the "flame" of the Lord comes at its own will. Here, the poem presents the experience of a consciousness so filled, that no room remains to move away from what has filled it: as if all space had slammed in on him and he became immobilized by what had now seized him. What Achterberg's text can be taken to describe is the blinding shock of the deconstruction of Paul's former world. He was on his way to Damascus under the assumptions and energies of a clear mandate, but the space of its possibility was emptied. "Slamming" in on him was his new space, his blindness, within which he had no way to move. The poem is constructed as if the "ik" were an outside observer of Paul's conversion, situated in the 'real' world, in which he is holding Paul's coat. Then, suddenly, it hits home. Damascus is here. "I" am Paul. God has control of "my" space. No longer able to walk by "myself," "I" am as totally stricken, totally dependent, as blind and helpless as any believer in the face of the experience of belief (cf., "IX" of the Gasfitter, YG, 842): "Go to Damascus" (En Jezus, 12; 21), wait for the word which will reshape your world. Its effect on "ik" is to leave him open to the new space, the new world ("staat") he needs for his poetry.

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.

(Variorum, "Sailing to Byzantium," 17-20; 408)

As in Yeats, so here in Achterberg's "Mozaïek," a figure in a mosaic becomes a "singing-master." A mosaic "spins out" in multiplicity, increased by each tile (En Jezus, 2; 22). Thus, the unity is added to, and the phenomenon of a figure being enriched by each piece stands as the first half of the image of this poem. But each piece also can be seen as diminishing the figure's unity, by fragmenting it. Each piece "pernes in a gyre," that is, unfolds in a context which turns back on itself. The mosaic, as Achterberg's poem has it, has a unity which encompasses all the pieces, for they are all part of the one thing. Each piece, though a fragment, is placed according to the need of that unity. So, even in the fragments, the energy of the whole is the shaping force. The mosaic's broken lines then, even if "dizzying" in their fragmentation, and even if the figure's unity seem lost (1-4; 22), are the key to the unity of the whole. Brokenness is the way back (7-8)-- as it has been figuratively for the poetry of "us." No piece of the mosaic ever falls beyond the unity of the figure. Each is held within a whole by the "enchantment" (5) of its one-ness ("1-ness"-- following Achterberg's text, 14). The work of art is in imitation of the universe which emerges out of "God's holy fire"; in "Pinksteren," the "fire of his dream" (13; 17). The world, God's mosaic, and the poem emerge out of a kind of fire for both Yeats and Achterberg; and for both, the image is a means of enclosing, in gold, the fire of creation. Again, as in "Jan Toroop," "Fata Morgana," and in the next poem, "Code," Achterberg displays the signature of his style. The poem is a structured unity, a

'gedichten,' a light enclosed.

"Code" is original to this work, and in it the "gij" of the "verhaal van ons" is directly addressed. The opening of the poem is a summary of the conceit of that story-- the energy which she once possessed in the world can now form structures in the world with the letters of the alphabet. Words become the key to opening the door to the mystery of her death. This is a very significant poem for understanding an important attitude of Achterberg towards the theology of Christ which he has been proclaiming and applying in this work. In his poetry the term 'God' is found. However, the letters are "G-o-d," that "figuration" ("figuratie") is itself not the important thing. Any word, any series would do. What is crucial is the tension ("spanning" 11; 23); that is, the core of the poem (again, what Pound would call the image). What holds for G-o-d, assumedly holds equally for C-h-r-i-s-t, or I-o-v-e. In Mark 9, 40 and Luke 9, 50, the contrapositive of the SOS of "Reiziger...III" can be found (that is, "He who is not against you is for you," not "Whoever is not with me is against me"). In both these instances, in Mark and Luke, Jesus is insisting that his companions not valorize membership in their group. If devils are driven out in the name of Jesus, it need not have to be by one of the acknowledged or 'approved' disciples. Not the figuration of the word, but the "juiste spanning"- the pressure, or light, which the image is fashioned to contain. "Code" articulates the foundation of Achterberg's negative theology, which I believe heavily influences the Ballade van de gasfitter, perhaps his major reflection on the status of the *other* in his poetry. It seems also a point of connection to Yeats, specifically to the figure of "Ribh," part of whose wisdom is that negative images of God might "bring the soul to God":

Why should I seek for love or study it?

It is of God and passes human wit.
 I study hatred with great diligence,
 For that's a passion in my own control,
 A sort of besom that can clear the soul
 Of everything that is not mind or sense.

 Then my delivered soul herself shall learn
 A darker knowledge and in hatred turn
 From every thought of God mankind has had.
 Thought's a garment and the soul's a bride
 That cannot in that trash and tinsel hide:
 Hatred of God may bring the soul to God

("Ribh considers Christian Love insufficient," Variorum, 1-6, 13-18; 558).

As in "Pinksteren" (and as in Yeats's search "for the face I had / Before the world was made" 7-8; 532) "Code" seeks to be at the point before "sense and understanding" (En Jezus, "Pinksteren," 11; 17), where language and image begin ("at the meeting of sound and being" 9-10). It is at this still point that the poet seeks the shape of the language for "all speech and mouths" ("alle spraak en monden" 8). "Code" is a key to Achterberg's poetic style which seeks the "exact tension" / "juiste spanning" for the configurations constructed out of the ABC's. Joining this element of Achterberg's poetic to the "story of us" renders this sort of reading: *Your* "life-energy" ("levenskracht" 1; 23) is transformed by "my" "skirmishing with life and death" (13; 23) as "I" try to fashion keys (3; 23 and see "vessel of image and rhyme," "Fata Morgana" 16; 11) to open the door

to *your* death-- both that "I" may reach *you* there, and that "I" may come to know what *your* death means. The poem's exact structure is a code (although it must be 'I' as the mosaic; it could be a "I" under indefinitely different configurations of the letters of the alphabet). Once again, locking her meaning within these structures ("gedichten") is the daily task of the poet.

Jesus is the "Godoid" ("Deoïde"), the first creature of "another eternity" ("Over de Jabbok," 9; 16). In contrast to the voice of this so-named poem, who is more likely to seek security within the self-constructions of his own thought, the "Godoid" is open to the other. Jesus might equally be taken by some scene of natural beauty, or by some display of human energy or by almost any event of the day or the night ("Deoïde," 1-4; 24); but out of them He is always pioneering a path to God and to the home of love (8-11). In a similar way, the poem is meant to be a "Godoid," likewise "forcing / your feet further, creating / paths to God" ("trekken / uw voeten verder, wekken / de wegen op naar God" 8-10). In "Jan Toroop," leitmotif of these poems, the image of the woman's breast, drawn as a gesture of offering against the light of the offering of Christ's cross, is referred to as a "deze Christus." This conveys something of the sense of "Godoid," a new sort of being, when human life is joined to God's death-conquering love. Each poem is called to be such a new being, charting a new path to God across the horizons of its "town"-- the artist's "toestand".

Perhaps the fullest sense of Church is as a "communion of saints," a communion of the living and the dead. "Avondmaal" is the climactic poem of the liturgical movement inscribed in this work. It is the poem of the Lord's Supper, the sharing of bread and wine as the "face" of the Lord ("gelaat" 12; 25), which otherwise no one has seen. Here,

through communion, Christ is reproduced in his community (15). The poem affirms the absolute equality of all in the kingdom of Jesus (5-8), and suggests, to the authorial voice, that the "severe weather" (3) of the human community is precisely the climate of fidelity to it (for Christ's peace includes those one sees as enemy 6). At his final Passover, Jesus was faithful to the law of his historical community. He became himself the Passover lamb, a sacrifice of love to restore the human community to the divine community ("Adam is hier" 17). At the table of the Lord's Supper, the poem assembles the human community "foe / friend alike" "vijand / vriend gelijk" 6), and in the love of Jesus fulfills the new law. The implied aspiration of such poetry is to become the bread and wine of that community.

Although the Pauline texts are not specifically alluded to, Achterberg's poems move comfortably within a conception of the human community-- and through it, the world-- as the mystical body of Christ. The poems are meant to form that body, and to nourish it, by the spirit of Jesus which is the binding energy of this community. "Avondmaal" is perhaps the strongest expression of this ideal, which is quite compatible with the interpretation of *you* proposed in Chapter 10 of this study (see also 245-246 below).

Finally, the title poem: En Jezus schreef in 't zand... What did Jesus write in the sand? In the midst of the militant righteousness of an offended community, this poem discloses that Jesus, forgetful of himself or his safety wrote something in the sand. The letters are not important (1-4; 26). The orthodox, zealous in their orthodoxy, do not recognize the real tension ("juiste spanning") of the moment as it is understood by Jesus, that is, between forgiveness and the law. The sinner does. Because she does, she is able

to read the sand-signs of Jesus. The sand-marks burn their transforming message into her heart ("De woorden lieten los / van hun figuur en brandden in de bloes // waar mee zij heenging, als kind so licht" 11-12). They have appealed to her beyond any condemnation. Their appeal is to her freedom, to her power of self-construction. Jesus wrote nothing which her own experience could not make a reading of: "Go away and listen, listen to the song" ("Ga heen en luister, luister naar het lied" (10). Jesus wrote his poem in the sand to her freedom. That is his style (wanting *you* to become an "I"). "I judge you not" (9); be *your* song. In this poem, the promise of Jesus to each life is forgiveness and wholeness, not condemnation and separation. He is the undying word of love, the only eternity in which sinners full of remorse and guilt ("Gaalridder," 17; 12), might become whole, the only eternity in which the "story of us" is not just a dream.

This final poem suggests the Achterbergean hermeneutic. Human readers, sinners all ("zondaren allemaal" "Gaalridder," 17; 12), can only read the sand words of Jesus, as does the sinner of the poem, with the leading edge of their own sorrow. The poem tells us that Jesus lost himself in the words he wrote. Thus, the sand poem somehow holds his image. What letters he wrote we cannot read, but "Code" has suggested the key. The letters are not important; G-o-d is not important, but the energy of God is; C-h-r-i-s-t is not important, but the energy of love is. So, the sand figures of Christ's poem can be burning, burning like the energy of Yeats's mosaic fire which becomes the "singing master" of the law-breaker's soul. For the sinner, the sand signs of Jesus function as a mask, relative to the self who reads its figuration. In some manner, the sand words have become a "superhuman / Mirror-resembling dream" (Variorum, "The Tower," 164-165; 415). They mirror the anti-self, that self the sinner is not, but would become; the self that

makes the broken self whole, and new "like a child become" En Jezus, 13; 26). There is a further suggestion, perhaps the consumation of this poetics. The poem is related to Jesus, as if a sibling. To the extent that the spirit of his love "sinks into" and forms the poem ("verzonken in de woorden van Zijn hand" 4; 26), it becomes his incarnate sister. Jesus offers the "figuration" of his "lijnen" as an offering to the pilgrim-self of the compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance that makes the human self whole. Its "exact tension" is to form out of the "material" ("stof") of particular experience exactly what that forgiving love would say: "Sin no more...I judge nothing wrong. / Go your way and listen, obey the song" (9-10). The poem itself has become Achterberg's woman, the "deze Christus" of the opening antiphonal poem, "Jan Toroop."

7. Vacillation

. warum dann
 Menschliches müssen-- und, Schicksal vermeidend,
 sich sehnen nach Schicksal?...

. why,
 then, do we have to be human and, avoiding fate,
 long for fate?

(Rilke, Poulin, Duinsener Elegien, "Die Neunte Elegie," 4-6; 60, 61)

Yeats's conception of eternal recurrence establishes within the poetic personality the dramatic boundaries of the poetic task: to express in icons of self creation the polarity of human nature. Along with the lunar emblem, other symbols express the essential duality of human experience presented in Yeats's poetry. The "Rose upon the Rood of Time" (100, and see "Father Rosicross," "The Mountain Tomb," 311) is an early emblem of the suffering of an idealized beauty in its broken temporal forms: "All things uncomely and broken, all things worn out and old...Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart" (*The Lover tells of the Rose in his Heart*, 1, 4; 142-143). Yeats constructs his tower as another such symbol. "Half-dead at the top" (*Blood and the Moon* 12; 480), it is essentially a ruin, paradoxically, still being built. Within it, a "winding ancient stair" (in *"A Dialogue of Self and Soul,"* 1; 477), evokes the "gyres,"

the spiraling cones he invented to be symbolic of the dialectical cycles of history's eternal pattern. Another bipolar symbol of human duality is to be found in "Vacillation": "A tree there is that from its topmost bough / Is half all glittering flame and half all green" (11-12; 500). These co-existing autumnal and vernal halves each consume what they renew (viz., each other). Like the moon, this tree exists with, even through, its opposites. Enmeshed in the present, a single period of an eternal process, human identity is constituted in the tension between what it fully is and its temporal form (its so-called appearance). "Vacillation" is indeed a perfect Yeatsian name for human personality. His poetry echoes and re-echoes the constitutive polarity of human nature as proclaimed in Rilke's "Ninth Elegy"-- seeking, on the one hand, to be a self-defined individual in one's historical situation; resisting fated roles which the fortunes or forces of its temporal existence thrust upon the self. On the other hand, the human heart seems to long for some destiny, mysteriously at its core, as if to fulfill some restless and unknown fated course. Both in logic and emotion, a human being is a tension of the actual and the possible. For Yeats, possibility is always at least an equal definer of personality, and more often than not, a stronger element. The state of actuality, understood here as historical existence, is always a state of diminished possibility, and thus, a state of restlessness and sorrow: "Man is in love and loves what vanishes" ("Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen," 42; 429).

The human self in Yeats's poetry, (that is, the embodied soul), is an appearance of the soul in time and under time's weather. This is one pole of the duality of human nature. Yeats's poems constantly reflect this existential placement. In contrast to the "There" where "all the barrel-hoops are knit" (1; 557), there is the singularity of the here and now. Many poems bear explicit marks of this existential time reference. In "The

Phases of the Moon," for example, the opening lines sets the existential scene ("*An old man cocked his ear upon a bridge...*" see 1-7; 372), and the final strophe wraps the entire poetic dialogue within the same existential context ("*a bat rose from the hazels / and circled round him with its squeaky cry*" see 136-139). Along with his mystical ear for the song of the changes of the moon, Aherne is tuned to the moment: "What made that sound?" are his first words on the bridge on which the poem places him (8; 372). To complete the placement of the figures of this poem, Robartes's response to the encountered tower and its poet is likewise moment-bound: "We are on the bridge; that shadow is the tower / And the light proves that he is reading still" (10-11; 372-373).

But hush, for I have lost the theme,

Its joy or night seem but a dream;

Up there some hawk or owl has struck,

Dropping out of the sky or rock,

A stricken rabbit is crying out,

And its cry distracts my thought. ("The Man and the Echo, 41-46; 633)

The ending of this later poem similarly marks its self-reflection on the poet's work with an existential sign; however "sure" (30) and "clear" (31) the mind's referential unity, the poet lives and must continue to live in the carnivorous present. Human dreaming, the locus of critique and of hope for transformation, imagination's field of temporal transcendence, is rooted in its opposite. Eternal soul brings the longings, memories and claims of its dimly conscious history to distinctly time-marked moments: "*They will not hush, the leaves a-flutter round me, / the beech leaves old*" (the refrain of "The Madness

of King Goll" 12; 82). The consistently dialogic form of Yeats's poetry-- from the counterpointed juxtaposition of "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" and "The Sad Shepherd" (64, 66) to the intrinsic dialogue of poems such as "The Shepherd and the Goatherd" (338) and "Ego Dominus Tuus" (367)-- is in great part a stylistic reflection of the metaphysical necessity of a duality of self and soul within the imagination of history as eternal recurrence.

My Soul. I summon to the winding ancient stair;
 Set all your mind upon the steep ascent,
 Upon the broken, crumbling battlement,
 Upon the breathless starlit air,
 Upon the star that marks the hidden pole;
 Fix every wandering thought upon
 That quarter where all thought is done:
 Who can distinguish darkness from the soul?

("A Dialogue of Self and Soul," 1-8; 477)

In "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," the dualism characteristic of human life is explicit; in fact, it is the focus of the poem. "*My Self*" is the specific temporal identity of "*My Soul*." "Self" is here presented as fighting for its temporal place; or, even more strongly, for the legitimacy of its temporal identity. "Soul" is presented as pulling "Self" away from the maya of time, from accepting shadow for substance. What is at issue is poetic subject matter, as well as the poet's self-identity. This conflict in Yeats extends from the early work, The Wanderings of Oisín, to the very late, "The Man and the Echo." One should be careful not to read Yeats solely from the vantage point of the

transcendent images from that "quarter where all thought is done": images such as the "Marbles of the dancing floor" of "Byzantium" (36; 498), or golden Byzantine birds of "Sailing to Byzantium" (25-32; 408), or the Chinese figures of the sculpture in "Lapis Lazuli" (37-56; 566-567). The confusion possessing the persona of "The Man and the Echo" is as equally Yeatsian:

All that I have said and done,
 Now that I am old and ill,
 Turns into a question till
 I lie awake night after night
 And never get the answers right (6-10; 632).

Man is love and a continual farewell. A romantic poetry attracted by the essence of fading love or beauty is as unbalanced for Yeats as a realist poetry which would only sing the details of their fading. Yeats's form of symbolism needs to affirm both that a thing is its physical individuality ("all must come to sight and touch") and its opaqueness to an unseen world to which it is the gateway ("sinew / ...Can rule by supernatural light / Yet be but sinew" "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," 31, 34, 36-37; 386). Thus, in his poetry, the 'Eastern' wisdom of "*My Soul*" (Yeats would say "Asiatic") is often the bulwark of the poetic voice against the sorrows of time (in praise of the eternity of beauty and love), and especially against the untruth and arrogance of power (see, "At Galway Races" 10-16; 266, or "The Curse of Cromwell" 17-24; 580-581). In "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," in contrast to the dark wisdom of the soul (see 8; 477)-- a wisdom known and praised by the Robartes and Aherne figures of "The Phases of the Moon" (372)-- what "Self" finally sings is the praise of temporal things, particularly of those things which

fidelity to love and battle has fashioned. In this inner dialogue, "Soul" exhorts "Self" from that part of the personality which knows the vicissitudes of time's fashions:

Think of ancestral night that can,
 If but imagination scorn the earth
 And intellect its wandering
 To this and that and t' other thing,
 Deliver from the crime of death and birth (20-24; 478).

The call to the eternal (*Come away, O human child*" 9; 87) is from within the self, the call to Tir na nOge is a call from the darkness that is the soul ("Who can distinguish darkness from the soul ?" 8; 477). Eternity's gravity is most strongly felt in the great sadnesses of the human heart. Recall that Niamh is presented to us at the ebb of Oisín's Fenian history, after their defeat at Gabhra (*WQ*, I, 42-43; 5). It is in sorrow that the pressure of the eternal most often appears: "The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told" ("The Lover Tells of the Rose in his Heart," 5; 143). Within such contradiction ("tekort") the siren of eternity appears. Here, in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," "Soul," rooted in this "quarter," challenges "Self's" preoccupation with its earthly history of love and battle:

Why should the imagination of a man
 Long past his prime remember things that are
 Emblematical of love and war? (17-19; 477)

This poem resolves this characteristic tension of Yeatsian poetry with an embrace of temporality and the content of mortal existence; not in opposition to "Soul's" wisdom, but through its incorporation. Key to "Self's" joy is the "casting out" of remorse, through

acceptance of reality beyond good and evil (as phrased in "Into the Twilight: "clear of the nets of wrong and right" 2; 147); that is, as they are contained in the fullness of the "eternal":

Such fullness in that quarter overflows
 And falls into the basin of the mind
 That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
 For intellect no longer knows
Is from the Ought, or the Knower from the Known--
 That is to say, ascends to Heaven (33-38; 478).

It is within this duality, within its dialogue (Yeats refers to it sometimes as a "quarrel with one's self," Mythologies, 331), that the self attains its equanimity; and, I would add, the poem its structure. The achievement of "tragic joy" depends on this acceptance of the coincidence of opposites. This attitude has clear voice in "The Gyres" (564), among Yeats's Last Poems:

Conduct and work grow coarse, and coarse the soul,
 What matter? Those that Rocky Face holds dear,
 Lovers of horses and of women, shall,
 From marble of a broken sepulchre,
 Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl,
 Or any rich, dark nothing disinter
 The workman, noble and saint, and all things run
 On that unfashionable gyre again (17-24: 564-565).

"A Dialogue of Self and Soul" conveys the strong sense that Yeats is reflecting

upon the identity of the poem as well as the poet. Poetics and morality seem joined. Only the acceptance of his whole identity, dark side and day side, allows "Self" to look upon and accept his temporal history: the "toil of growing up" (44; 478), the "unfinished man and his pain" (47; 479), "the finished man upon his enemies" (49); and even, the agony of wooing "A proud woman not kindred of his soul" (63-64). What generates the courage to stare into the sorrows of time, without fear, is acceptance of his whole identity, self and soul. Incorporating the "unmeasured" wisdom of "Soul" with his own historical experience of love, inevitably sorrowful, "Self" sings this joyful response:

I am content to follow to its source
 Every event in action or in thought;
 Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!
 When such as I cast out remorse
 So great a sweetness flows into the breast
 We must laugh and we must sing,
 We are blest by everything,
 Everything we look upon is blest (65-72; 479).

Ellmann calls this drive towards completeness ("following to its source every event in action or in thought"), "affirmative capability."

The conception of affirmative capability provides, in short, that poetry must centre on affirmations or the struggle for affirmations, that it must satisfy the whole being, not the moral, or intellectual, or passionate nature alone... Affirmative capability does not free him from the responsibility of intellectual search or understanding

of experience, as negative capability might seem to; rather it forces him to live, as well as to write, in such a way that his consciousness be inclusive. (Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, 244)

"What is joy?"-- this question of the opening section of "Vacillation" receives, within that poem, a response similar to that of "A Dialogue of Self and Soul." The antinomies of our experience mean "death" to the "body" and "remorse" to the "heart" (7-10; 500). Only the personality who accepts these antinomies as the syntax of human life can overcome the terror of death and remorse. This need not mean there can be no rage at the dying of the body and of love. For Yeats, such sorrow was apocalyptic, a revelation of our deeper nature, the dawning awareness that nothing can save us from bodily death or love's continual farewell, because that is the nature of our being. It is a coming to accept that our deepest meaning is not on our terms. In "Byzantium," we read: "I hail the superhuman; / I call it death-in-life and life-in-death" 15-16; 497). "Vacillation" is structured around, even according to the dialectic thus set in our nature. Strophe IV seems a burst of mystical joy: "It seemed, so great my happiness / That I was blessed and could bless" (43-44; 501). The very next strophe is full of the daily sorrow of the self: "...not a day / But something is recalled, / My conscience or vanity appalled" (54-56). As Yeats's Oisín was torn between involvement and forgetting, as "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" is counterpoint to "The Sad Shepherd," it is "between extremities" that "man runs his course" ("Vacillation," 1-2; 499). In a world in which no fate it might offer on its own ground ("money's rant," e.g.) can be accepted, the poet-persona proclaims, nonetheless, a fate:

[I]...play a predestined part.

Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.

The lion and the honeycomb, what has Scripture said? (86-88; 503)

In Judges 14, 14, it can be read what Scripture said: "Out of the eater came / something to eat; / Out of the strong came / something sweet." Samson's riddle, the intertextual allusion, refers to the honey he found for his nourishment in the carcass of a lion he had previously killed. It is intended to differentiate Yeats's account of the mystical life from what he took to be Von Hügel's. It is as well a clue to the identity of his poetry. With Von Hügel, Yeats and his poetry affirm the mystical dimension of human experience, "accepting the miracles of the saints" (79; 503). Mystical life and miracles were not, for Yeats, parochially Catholic phenomena. Ancient Egyptian burial ritual sought the same possibilities, and respected the same realities. Inclusion of opposing reality always brings us nearer truth, he thought. Life and death, evil and good make up the whole. Yeats wanted to project the drama of human redemption to the whole of human history. Samson's riddle was its rhythm.

The essential wisdom of "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" is repeated in Strophe VII of "Vacillation," and it often appears throughout Yeats's poetry. "Seek out reality, leave things that seem," is "The Soul's" exhortation. This is one depth of the poet's life, freeing him from the tyrannies and terrors of the present. The other depth, an opposing one, "Self" embedded in the experience of mortality (here, in this poem. "*The Heart*") replies: "What, be a singer born [his predestined part] and lack a theme?" (72-73; 502), as if to say: "Of what can I sing at all, if not of my mortal life? For soul, mortal life is mere appearance; but for the poet's song, it is its substance." The poet returns to "things that seem," as Oisín returned to the earth, as Homer to "original sin"-- the "foul rag-and-

bone shop of the heart," "where all the ladders start" ("The Circus Animals' Desertion," 40, 39; 630).

For Yeats, poetry is a constant mining of the temporal self to bring it into the "desolation of reality" ("Meru," 7; 563). In the battle to "get it right" (see, "Man and the Echo" 10; 632), the imagination of the poet moves to a point before a god creates (Niamh's "bright body sang of faery and man / Before God was or my old line began" WQ, II, 7-8; 29). This seems the space Rilke describes in "Die Achte Elegie": "that pure space into which flowers / endlessly open" "den reinen Raum vor uns, in den die Blumen / unendlich aufgehn" Rilke, Mitchell, 15; 192, 193). It seems why the third sonnet of the first set of Die Sonette an Orpheus says: "Singing is being... A breath around nothing" "Gesang ist dasein... Ein Hauch um nichts" (Rilke, Poulin, 7, 14; 88). In a similar vein, Wallace Stevens seeks the "poem of pure reality, untouched / By trope or deviation, straight to the word" ("An Ordinary Evening in New Haven," IX, 4-5; 471). So also, the surrealist placement of the act of the poem in the void before consciousness; and Achterberg's recurring sense of the poetic image coming "uit het niet" (especially see, Ballade van de gasfitter, "I," 1-4; 834).

For Yeats, the eternal "pernes in a gyre" (cf., "Sailing to Byzantium," 19; 408); that is, seeks a body, over and over until "change be dead" ("The Lover asks Forgiveness because of his Many Moods," 19; 163). The essence of history is eternal form diffusive of itself; in Yeats's imagery: "Godhead on Godhead in sexual spasm begot / Godhead. Some shadow fell" ("Ribh in Ecstasy," 5-6; 557). What the poet seeks is to overcome the terror of becoming, to come into the desolation of reality; or as it is put in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul": to be delivered from the "crime of birth and death" (24; 478). The

poet's "life is thought" ("Meru," 3; 563). His work: to mirror our true nature. The icons of this deliverance from the "bitter furies" of temporal "complexities" are works of art, forms such "as Graecian goldsmiths make" ("Sailing to Byzantium," 27; 408):

Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,
 Spirit after spirit! The smithies break the flood, [of time]
 The golden smithies of the Emperor!
 Marbles of the dancing floor
 Break bitter furies of complexity,
 These images that yet
 Fresh images beget,
 That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea ("Byzantium," 33-40; 498).

To define his place in the world, to define a meaning and a destiny which it could not offer him, Yeats has constructed a context determining both his identity and his work. Fulfillment, maturity, joy (defiant and tragic), require the affirmation of the whole lunar personality, beyond our time-bound perceptions of good and evil.

Test every work of intellect or faith,
 And everything that your own hands have wrought,
 And call those works extravagance of breath
 That are not suited for such men as come
 Proud, open-eyed and laughing to the tomb.
 ("Vacillation," III, 30-34; 501)

Practically speaking, the seeking of the opposite self holds the key to the whole self. Everything is true. *How* so, is the adventure of the heart and mind. In defining the self,

for it is the fashioning of self that is our moral essence, we must come to terms with "ancestral night," to which "soul" calls us in "the deep heart's core" ("The Lake Isle of Innisfree," 12; 117).

Throughout his poetry, Yeats's voice laments the one-dimensional life fated to us by modern existence, measuring human achievement from the cradle to the grave by the currency of the moment. There is continuing encouragement in the poems to cultivate the heart, to hear our emotions, to learn of the world of which our anger and sorrow speak, to speak an opposite wisdom to the loaded fate of the age. In "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," William James offers an important way to understand what drove Yeats in this regard:

In point of fact, there are no absolute evils, and there are no non-moral goods; and the *highest* ethical life-- however few may be called to bear its burdens-- consists at all times in the breaking of rules which have grown too narrow for the actual case (James, 231).

The poems seek icons of true joy, even though presented as tragic; for beauty must fade and love will die and we suffer long to find ourselves. We must accept the entire lunar personality. The Yeatsian persona, "Crazy Jane," knows where "Love has pitched his mansion" and that "nothing can be sole or whole / That has not been rent" ("Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," 15, 17-18; 513).

Why do I hate man, woman, or event?
That is a light my jealous soul has sent.
From terror and deception freed it can
Discover impurities, can show at last

How soul may walk when all such things are past,
How soul could walk before such things began.

("Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient," 7-12; 558)

Perhaps, nowhere in the poetry of Yeats is his conception of the moral life clearer, nor his conception of the work of the poet. We are not only what we seem. We are not what the mechanisms of the world, engineered with its economic phantoms, would make us. We are also what we cannot see. We are from before things began. Our jealousies are lights, our angers, our hatreds are lights to our lives. Pursue their meaning, not for revenge, but for the sake of the liberation of the personality... in order to come, beyond fear, to self-possession: "Hatred of God may bring the soul to God" (18; 558).

8. Spiegeling

Gij hebt de huizen achterom bereikt.
 Aan de voorgevels, tussen de gordijnen,
 blijft ge doorlopend uit het niet verschijnen
 wanneer ik langs kom en naar binnen kijk.

Al moet ge in 't voorbijgaan weer verdwijnen,
 het volgend raam geeft me opnieuw gelijk.
 Daar wonen ene Jansen en de zijnen,
 alsof ge mij in deze naam ontwijkt.

You have reached the homes from round the back.
 In the window fronts, between the curtains,
 you continue to appear out of nothing
 whenever I come along and look within.

Although in the passing you vanish once more,
 the next window offers me again the same.
 A certain Jansen and family live there
 as if you evade me in this name.

(VG, Ballade van de gasfitter, "I," 1-8; 834)

Achterberg's imagination of Jesus as it is cast in the poems can be taken as the ground of his understanding of poetic mission. It defines the activity of the poet-self ("ik") as creating the new body of his dead love, in the spirit of Jesus (see "Fata Morgana," 137; "Gaalridder," 140; or "Pinksteren," 287). For the poet-"ik," to reach *you* ("uw" / "gij") beyond *your* death and embody *you* in the poem is both the commission and encouragement of Jesus, the incarnation of eternal love.

In the Ballade van de gasfitter, "ik" is presented as pursuing the 'face' of a "gij" who is evading him. The narrative line of the Ballade is the adventure of this pursuit. The critical literature concerning the Ballade van de gasfitter is filled with perspectives on who or what its "gij" might be. It is altogether as natural to raise the same question regarding the identity of "gij" in any of Achterberg's works, in particular the "gij" of the "verhaal van ons," especially given the perspective offered in the last two lines of "Fata Morgana" concerning how the "U" of the "Lord's" image connects to the reading of the *you* of the "story of us" (see above, 115-118). However, there is an initially striking difference between the *you* of the "story of us" and that of the Gasfitter. The *you* of the continuing communion of "u en de dood en ik" does not evade the "ik." This forces the very important question-- how, if at all, is the "gij" of other poems related to the "gij" of the Gasfitter? To ask this question need not indicate that some single personal referent is assumed, but rather to ask whether there is any coherence among the various shades of "gij" in the texts. John Coetzee's warning regarding the "gij" of the Ballade should be heeded, and by extension, may well be applied to the body of Achterberg's work: "Twenty years of inconclusive debate on the 'Ballade,' with a record of irreconcilability on the identification of I and You, should warn us that adequate grounds for such

identification may not exist within the poem..." (PMLA 92, 1977 286b).

Nonetheless, if the identification of "gij" cannot be made by the texts alone, a proposal for a coherent reading-- something less than identification-- must be rooted in the texts or in situations which the texts disclose. This would also apply to the associated reflection upon the identity of the "ik." This study finds important correspondence between the "gij" of the Ballade and the "gij" of the "verhaal van ons," and consequently, with their "ik," since "gij" and "ik" are in strict correlation in the "verhaal van ons," the on-going story of the communion of "u en de dood en ik."

While I believe that Ballade van de gasfitter is the most direct and most complete sustained reflection Achterberg's poetry makes upon the question of the identity of *you*, there is a group of poems, Stof, which record the creative results of this pursuit of *you* as first described in "Met dit gedicht..." and elaborated in "Fata Morgana." What Stof confirms is that the communion of authorial voice and a dead beloved is a viable assumption in the reading of Achterberg's corpus. Stof also offers a clarification of the turn of the "gij-ik" of the "verhaal van ons" towards the "story of Jesus" in "Fata Morgana." Before reflecting with the Ballade van de gasfitter on the complex identity of "gij" in the poetry of Gerrit Achterberg (see below, Chapter 10), this study turns to Stof. This work provides for a reading of Achterberg what "The Tower" provides for a reading of Yeats-- a clear textual articulation of the task of the poetic self in the light of an eternalized world.

To begin with, the thirty-one poems constituting Stof continue the "story of us." Every poem of this work can be read, unproblematically, within the sense of the journey undertaken by the first voice of Achterberg's poems in Afvaart: "sailing along a

mirroring / of all it had suffered" (" *en zeilend over spiegeling / van al wat het geleden had*" VG, 3-4; 22). Every poem of Stof, except for one, can be read as voiced by the "ik" of the "gij-ik" of the "ons" of the "verhaal van ons." The single exception, "Huid" (440), either seems to have reversed the personal voices, *you* now presented as speaking to the "ik" in her first person voice; or if not, "Huid" gives to the poem itself a personal voice, speaking either to the poet or to her. In any case, "Huid" remains well within the boundaries of the "story of us." A further signal that the "verhaal van ons" remains viable is that eighteen of the thirty-one poems of Stof explicitly continue the "drievoudig verbond" first found in Afvaart. Eight others contain direct reference to either "I" and "death" or to "you" and "death." In every poem of Stof this "triple alliance" of the "story of us" is alive. Lexically, the weight of the personal pronoun is felt in every poem; it persists as always, as a feature of the "story of us," and as will be seen, is characteristic of the Ballade van de gasfitter. From a suggestion of Professor Nichols, the poems of Stof do seem to construct "ik's" material world in the light of the beloved's death. In fact, this seems to me to establish Achterberg's sense of the identity of the poetic self: the "ik" of the "verhaal van ons" is the poet who keeps her alive in the world.

Being dead, what was once her body has now become "thickening of nature" ("verdikking der natuur" "Lithosfeer," 3; 422). It is true that there was already some of this sense in "Drievoudig verbond" ("Now all the fires have been put out, we go over the soft ash..." Afvaart, 5-6; 26), so, the awareness that the material world without her is experienced as if the ashes of a spent fire is not new in Stof. However, the entire concern of Stof is for what is left of her body (and thus, "our" physical love) in the world. The fundamental consequence of the death of the beloved is that the material world now

possesses only what is *materially* left of her body. Her ashes, her remains, are what these poems "go over" ("gaan we over de zachte as / al wat geleden moest"). The world is the place where what was once her body is turning to stone ("Lithosfeer" 422) and "our" love now, "a hard, cold state," "Een harde, koude staat" ("Steen," 4; 434), exists in this world as if "we" were a stone sculpture ("We are together as if a statue" "Wij zijn als beeldhouwerk bijeen" 1; 434). "Ik" suffers her loss, because she is gone from all ordinary physical perception: "You perceive yourself no more / in this lithosphere" ("Gij merkt uzelve niet meer / in deze lithosfeer" 7-8; 422). These poems present the topography of "ik's" "woestenijen" ("Fata Morgana," 18; 137) where he must find material for his poems which are now his only way to be with *you*. Thus, the songs of Stof are of her body ("het lied dat van haar lichaam is" 10; 90), fulfilling the earlier resolve of "Met dit gedicht..." It is in the poem alone that she can now have physical life, and that is "ik's" poetic purpose.

Besides fitting the sense of "ik's" daily task, as structured by the "story of us" ("With this poem the prior expires" "Met dit gedicht vervalt het vorige" 1; 90), the poems of Stof can also be read as fulfilling the mission of "Graalridder" (to find singing in the fidelity to love, in the "ademhaal" of the final seconds of the eternal Jesus on Golgotha 11-14; 140). They also fulfill "Fata Morgana's" determination to sail against the "wastes" ("woestenijen") which "mark" the world without you, in the vessel of the poem ("wagen / van beeld en rijm" 18, 15-16; 137). However, except for "Aluminium" (448), there is hardly an element that could be called theological in the sense of the poems of En Jezus schreef in 't zand. However, the commitment of "Fata Morgana" made to the Lord (always, as with any faith, risking mirage) is: "I hold on to You in

Your own image / which we saw in each other's eyes" ("ik houd U aan Uw eigen beeld, / dat we in elkanders ogen zagen." 21-22; 137). The intention of this theological construction for the poems of Stof, and the rest of his work as well, seems clear enough. The "You" which Jesus is, is found in the *you* who loves "me" and whom "I" love. In Stof, the religious dimension, a projected relationship within a living eternity, is immanent in the relationship of "ons," as it generally is throughout the body of poems. The gift of Jesus is that God appears under "our" name or a name like "ours"-- a name like "Jansen" of line 7 of the opening sonnet of Ballade van de gasfitter (834).

Huid

De tijd vouwt u naar binnen.

Ik breid mij om u uit
met het geheiligd linnen
mijner onsterfelijkheid.

Er kan geen dood beginnen
in deze nieuwe huid.

Skin

Time folds you inwards.

I spread myself over you
with the sacred linen of my immortality.

No death can begin there

in this new skin. (440)

This poem is pivotal in clarifying the ambiguity of person in *Achterberg*. It may be read as a simple and easily comprehensible reversal of voice. Since the relationship between "you, death and I" of "Drievoudig verbond" is presented as a living alliance ("love has not lost anything and we go over the soft ash") any of its three elements might speak as an "I." So, this text may be read that she is comforting him from her eternity: "I spread myself over you / with the sacred linen / of my immortality." The relationship of the eternity of the person of Jesus to the *you* of the "story of us" is that he is the ground of survival beyond death. In this light, the poem could be read as an achievement of the intention of "Graalridder" to find energy of song in the "ademhaal" of Jesus; or of the hope of "Pinksteren" "laat God Zich door u groeten" 14; 287). Thus, "Huid" might be read as the voice of Jesus to the poem, to the "ik" or the *you* assuring its life, somewhat the way in which Niamh functions as Oisín's assurance of the immortality of the poem. From this and as suggested simply by Yeats's "To be Carved on a Stone at Thoor Ballylee," the poem has a life of its own and the appearance of immortality: "And may these characters remain / When all is ruin once again" (*Variorum*, 5-6; 406). "Huid's" voice may thus be construed as the imagined voice of the poem, comforting the "ik," or proclaiming its loyalty to the dead beloved who has no life in the world without the poem. Thus, it may be read as the voice of the poem's own confirmation of the aspirations voiced for it by "ik" in "Met dit gedicht...":

Maar buiten deze laatste dingen
 is enkel nog het lied te zingen,
 --is enkel nog den dood 't ontwringen

het lied dat van haar lichaam is,
 het lied waarvan haar lichaam is
 de onbevleete ontvangenis

en dat den dood niet toebehoort
 binnen dit woord. (VG, 7-14; 90)

"Huid" suggests that the poem thus becomes *your* "new skin" "in which no death can begin" (5-6; 440). Within its artful ambiguity, the comfort of the poem is that whatever its skin covers somehow will not be "folded" into time as her dead body, left to temporal processes, would within this "Lithosfeer" (422).

Each poem of Stof is constructed on the base of a physical object which invites and is malleable to some memory of *you*. The thing becomes transformed by the poem. Into the object belonging to this "Lithosfeer" "ik" folds the energy of *your* life. "Our" love is a counter movement to the body's decay, and by means of this enclosure of *your* still living energy, (another 'gedichten') the thing becomes *your* new body in the world. In some fashion, the poem has captured the light of *your* enduring life. In Stof, it has iconized *you* in material such as "linoleum" (423), "mantel" (427), "asbest" (428), "albast" (430), "brons" (431), "rook" (433), "ijzer" (453), even "bakeliet" (442). The materials out of which "ik" constructs the images of these poems are among the most lifeless, least likely candidates for being *your* living presence in the world. Their dumb materiality speak the stone language of death, and offer explosive counterpoint to the life "ik" manages to image through them; as if their sheer 'stuffness' ('stofheid') were to

become the most eloquent evidence of *your* life. Most of the poems work to achieve something like the compact and explosive opening of "Cellofan": "Aquarium of light" "Aquarium van licht" (1; 443).

The poem has achieved a transformation of "gij's" body from its dead remnants to an icon, imagined to exist beyond death, so long as there are hearers. The world without *you* is by the work of the poet made into a threshold to *you*. Here again, the importance of the conception of Jesus to Achterberg's poetry. He is their eternal reception, the promise that the Lord is present in the images of our love. That the poems imagine Jesus as the living victory of love over death and betrayal saves them from pretense and vanity. The work of poetry and the identity of the poet are rescued from the "hyena oblivion and the jakhal time." The task of *Stof* is symbolic of the poetic task for Achterberg. An element with which what was once *your* body has joined ("Asbest" 428), or with which *your* body was once connected ("Mantel" 427), or which the "stof" of *your* former body has now become ("Blauw" 437) joined to "ik's" memory of *you*-- each thing in the way of its own nature-- bears *you* now in the world. The world becomes transformed through the poem by "ik's" memory of *you*. What the poetry achieves is a personalization of the "Lithosfeer," the stone world of *your* death. *You* become universalized. The poet sets out to make a new creation in which *you* are everywhere. Daniel Albright points out that "Yeats sometimes thought of his poetry as a kind of verbal reconstruction of a woman's body" (504). In "A Woman Homer Sung," Yeats wrote his hope of what "coming time" might say of him: "He shadowed in a glass / What thing her body was" (8-14; 255 and see also the ending of "The Gift of Haran al-Rashid" 179-193;

469-470).

Brei

Mijn buikweek brein zoekt de verzengde
 sulitstukken brei, dun en doorzichtig.
 En ik hanteer ze zeer voorzichtig.
 Ze zijn de met u aangelengde
 stollingen, die aaneengepast,
 u doen herrijzen in albast.

Knitting

My soft-belly brain seeks scorched
 endpieces of knitting, thin and transparent.
 And I handle them very carefully.
 They are solidifications
 diluted with you, which fit together,
 make you arise in alabaster. (426)

Out of pieces from the material world into which her body has passed, she is rescued for that world by the poem. It is as if the poet were attempting to reconstruct her body in the manner of the Egyptians of the Second Dynasty, who would attempt, with linen pads and resin, to make a perfect image of the dead body so that the spirit of the dead person might be able to dwell there should it return. The attempt to construct such images out

of material, "diluted with you," is the daily work of the poet, to fuse your light with material that would otherwise only mark your death, so that *you* arise again in the poem.

Stof evidences the work of the poet in a way that renders the blue-collar metaphor of the gasfitter in the Ballade van de gasfitter most apt. The task of constructing the image, almost mining it from the "lithosfeer," is not distant from the labor of the gasfitter. Achterberg's fourth sonnet of the Ballade van de gasfitter seems to focus deliberately on the physical endeavor of constructing the poem: "Beads of sweat trickle down my face," or, "I hoist the tool bag up from the floor / And lift it on my shoulder" ("Zweetdruppels lopen over mijn gezicht" or, "Ik beur de bak gereedschap van de vloer / en til hem op mijn schouder" 4, 9-10; 837).

What Stof especially prepares the reader for is the use Achterberg will make of the Dutch term 'gedichten.' It is the past participle of 'dichten' which means both 'to write verse' and 'to seal' or 'close up.' It also means 'poems,' the enclosures themselves. The work of an actual gasfitter is to enclose leaks; or to contain energy so that it is useful. Some act of shutting-in the image, charged with *you*, is what nearly every one of the poems of Stof attempts to do. Each poem is a body. Each has a skin within which *your* memory will be not be put out by death ("Dat liefde er niets bij heeft ingeboet" "Drievoudig verbond," 3; 26). The poem is a "rising" ("herrijzen") to counter the falling ("verdikking" / "thickening" or the "verdichting" / "condensation" "Lithosfeer," 4-5; 422) of *your* death. Everywhere death has thickened, petrified, coagulated, what was *your* body. To make these "solidifications" into poems which capture *you* within them results in the world of Stof. To close *you* within the world so that thereby it will name

you almost anywhere is the poet's self-determined mission. This is how Achterberg's poems present the poetic self. The poet unearths *you* and folds *you* within the "skin" of the poem, where "death cannot begin." The making of poems are therefore "gedichten," enclosings, lockings-in of *you*. Analysis of a few of the poems of Stof effectively chart these claims and demonstrate a permanent characteristic of Achterberg's poetic style.

Albast

Uw mond, over mijn mond gepast,
 is plotseling een harde bast.
 Uw hand, gebleven in zijn tast,
 houdt ons tesamen, ijzervast.
 Gij doet mij deze overlast,
 zijnde mijne koude, glazen gast
 binnen een wereld van albast.

Alabaster

Your mouth fit upon my mouth
 is suddenly a hard rind.
 Your hand, having remained in its touch,
 holds us together, ironfast.
 You give me this hassle,
 being my cold, glazed guest

within a world of alabaster. (430)

There is a funerary aspect to the poems of Stof. These sentiments of "Albast" belong to the whole work: I hold on to *your* hand, still there, in the memory imprinted on my hand. But *you* are dead, and not there except in such memories (*your* mouth too) with which I work to make the alabaster-like likenesses that are my poems. As in "Brei" there is evocation in this poem of the Egyptian belief in the need for perfect likenesses of the bodies of the dead. Also, as most of Achterberg's poetry relating to the "story of us," these poems are often sensitive to the unsatisfying nature of only an alabaster presence, only a monumentalized memory. However, in other poems of Stof, as also throughout Achterberg's work, her presence is less "cold" and more vital. In "Mantel" her coat brings her suddenly, "softly alive": "Even / beroerde ik een knoop. / Ik zag je zachtjes leven" ("As / I touched a button. / I saw you softly living 9-11; 427); and, what Stof makes clear, "softly living" in the poem.

Rood

In deze morgen van augustus
bereikt mij weer het rood,
dat eens op uw gelaat gekust is;
dat van u losliet en een groot
omgaan begon door duisternissen
om in dit eendeloze oosten
van alle vrezes uit te rusten.

Red

On this August morning
 the red reaches me once again
 that once was kissed upon your face:
 that let loose from you and began
 a great going-around through darknesses
 so as to rise in this endless east
 from all fears. (435)

Reminiscent of the touch of "Regen" in *Afvaart* (28), the red touch of an August dawn physically brings to the poet a kiss he gave *you* one other morning, a kiss that the dawning sun's red upon *your* face shared. *You* and this "red" have become one. The fact that it has travelled through "darknesses," yet still returns, brings comfort, as well as courage for the "ik" to continue to travel through his "darknesses." The "red," which reaches him once more this morning, is his physical touch from *you*, whom he experiences as dwelling in an eternal sunrise ("endless east"), thus allaying his fear.

"Email" (425) illustrates another characteristic of these poems, a tendency to make the material piece out of which it is built an image of the poem itself. Some "enamel" token, a shell, hangs above the bed. Imagination creates a mist that settles all around it. This effects an aura of union between the shell and its origin in the sea (as if "we" were now at its shore), and between the past and the present (that is, between the bed "ik" now lies in and the bed of their loving): "There was a sea to hear / far within our ears / uttered in this shell" ("Er was een zee te horen / ver binnen onze oren / aan deze schelp

geslaakt" 10-12). The poem closes within its structure "untouched states / of morning / forget-me-nots remained in our eyes" ("de onberoerder staten / ochtend / : vergeetmijnieten / stonden in onze ogen" 3-5). The shell ("schelp"), the conjugal bed, and, importantly, the poem have been enclosed within each other. The poem becomes that space "deep within our ears" where the sea can be heard. The shell, image of the bed, has also become an image of the poem itself. This poem has built a piece of "enamel" into an expression of what "Poeder" calls "your current body" ("uw lichaam geijkt" 9; 439); but it has also established an image of itself. It does for *you* in the world what "ik's" memory attaches to the "enamel." The poem is the "schelp" which now holds the sounds of the sea that could have been heard deep within "our" making love.

"Asbest" (428) is a poem whose mood is on the brink of despair, a constitutive condition of the "verhaal van ons." It is focused on her body in death. Even though *you* are properly mummified by these poems, *your* body is marked by the "hardening" ("verharding" 4) of your lips which have now become one with their covering ("lippen van asbest" 1), rendering *your* body as if it never were a vehicle of autonomous life ("as if you never were someone, / who could move, step by step, / to your own well-being" "alsof gij nimmer iemand was, / die kon bewegen, pas voor pas, / naar eigen welbehagen" 6-8). The empty shell that once was her body, now merging with the materials of earth, is indicative of a body-spirit dualism characteristic of the poetry of Achterberg.

Niet langer meer apart
 is 't kloppen van uw hart.
 Gij merkt uzelf niet meer

in deze lithosfeer.

Not any longer apart

is the beating of your heart.

You mark yourself no more

within this lithosphere. ("Lithosfeer," 5-8; 422)

The enclosure of the poem has become a substitute body trying to contain the energy of her being ("wezenkracht" "Mantel," 3; 427). The function of the body is to be the enclosure of life. This is also the function of the poem, now that the "beating of your heart" no longer sets *you* apart as the living body *you* once were in the world. To contain *your* energy, the poem must be an exact enclosure. Sonnet "IX" of the Ballade van de gasfitter expresses this rather explicitly: ("Life / feels enclosed in nickel and steel. / The structure is not one rivet too short" "Het leven / voelt zich door nikkel en door staal omgeven. / Het bouwsel komt een klinknagel te kort" (3-5; 842). The dualism is more Egyptian than Greek, in that it is built around a practical need for establishing a vehicle for her spirit in the world, rather than articulation of a metaphysics. It is actually the physical condition for the necessity of the poem. However, it makes the work of the poet-encloser more difficult; for it is never just a matter of copying your likeness from his memory, but of forging it anew, out of material enough like *your* body, for *your* spirit to be really present. Always, *you* are its measure. A poem, for "ik," is not just a reminiscence clothed in a rhyme-- it is a reincarnation of *you*.

Zog

Kunt gij uzelve contoleren?
Is er een innerlijk gebeuren,
waarvan ge zegt: dit ben ik nog?
spoor van gezeugenzog,
dat uw vergaan blijft kleuren?
of aan een eeuwig zelfbedrog
u nochtans constateren?
om dood te zijn maatstaf genoeg
voor ieder uiterlijk gebeuren
u te reconstrueren
naar de gestalte die gij droeg?

Wake

Can you audit yourself?
Is there an inner event
by which you say: Iam still this?
a trail of memory-wake,
that remains to match your going away?
or to confirm you nevertheless
in an eternal self-deception?
so that death be measure enough
for every outer event

to reconstruct you

to the shape you bore? (438)

The dualism is endemic to the "verhaal van ons." Her death surely is final in the geological strata of the "lithosphere." What is left of *you* there, are only your remains. Somehow, *your* spirit must be separate from the body, if *you* still live for me, or for the poetry; or, indeed, for *you* to be thought of as existing at all. *Your* spirit must somehow survive the body's obvious decay, if the poem is not to become just a memory of what *your* body was, but somehow *your* new body; or, at least (as is the intention of the mummy), the vehicle of *your* commerce in the world, particularly with the "ik." The problem in "Zog" is: what is the core of *your* identity? What is the criterion of *you* by which *you* can be "reconstructed" to *your* proper shape out of memory-wake or by which it may finally be concluded that this is "eternal self-deception? The doubt in the poem, evidenced by an entirely interrogative format, is a recurring condition of the poems within the "verhaal van ons." What is the measure, interior to *you-as-you-are-now* by which this poem (or any other) can be of *you* The work of the poet has been intensified. Whatever the material, the outer event, he sets out to shape, it must be informed by what *you* are now. What "inner event" of *your* life now finally controls such an audit? The poet needs more than 'stof'- he needs communion with *you*. To make the poem, *you* must live, despite death. To be the poet he aspires to be, he must commune with *you*, beyond mortality.

In "Basalt," her dead eyes are presented as congealed in the earth, as if looking out in layers of cold stone: "granite and gneiss glow in you, / feldspar and quartz. /

Those are your eyes now..." ("Grانيت en gneiss glimmen in u, / veldspaar en kwarts. / Dat zijn uw ogen nu..." 1-3; 447). In "Mantel," the room in which her coat hangs is somehow charged to its foundations with her vital energy: "Your entire essential energy / was in the wall..." ("Je ganse wezenkracht / stond in de muur...3-4; 427). When the "ik" touches her coat and finds her "softly living" he begins to experience the gaze of the room, as if *you* were always there, ready to look at him, ever since he was last there: "The room looked at me; / eyes, not closed / ever since I have stayed away" ("De kamer keek mij aan; / ogen, niet dicht gedaan / sinds ik ben weggebleven" 12-14; 427). So, *you* are embedded in things. *You* can look out from them. "Ik" can thus look at things as if at *you*. The world reflects *you* and "I" am reflected in *you*.

Het blauw van deze maand kan u bereiken,
omdat ik als een maagd geworden ben.
Mijn ogen kunnen zover naar u kijken,
dat zij zichzelf in u wierspiegelen.

The blue of this month can reach you,
because I have become like a virgin.
My eyes can look so far at you
that they are themselves reflected in you. ("Blauw," 1-4; 437)

If, as in "Blauw," "I" know no other "blue" and am completely open to *you* ("als een maagd"), "I" will see "my" reflection there in *you*. When my trusting, virgin gaze finally "reaches" *you* in the blue-sky-stof of this season, "I" will experience *you* looking at "me,"

and in these blue-sky eyes of *yours*, "I" see "myself." In her gaze, he also sees himself reflected. This poem constructs her bodily presence from the fusion of the energy of her still-active love and the blue sky. It also exemplifies the rich reflexivity characteristic of Achterberg's style. It evokes the closing lines of "Fata Morgana" (see above, 117-118) and is at the base of the opening strophe of Ballade van de gasfitter with which this chapter opened.

Bloem

De bloemen van uw leven bloeien nog.
 Ergens staan de geheime kelken open,
 wier reuk ik ken, die ik zal dopen
 met een nog onbekende naam,
 b.v. ledozame,
 de z.g. dolybloe,
 uit het geslacht der gelyroe
 behorend bij de dolydromen.

Flower

The flowers of your life bloom still.
 Somewhere secret calyxes open up,
 seawed smell I know, which I shall christen
 with an as yet unknown name,

e.g. ledozame,
 the so-called dolybloe
 from the family of gelyroe
 belonging to the dolydromen. (441)

Achterberg's poems also reflect their own newness, their status as creations. The poet-self finds his *you* dwelling within some sea smell, which he then uses to embody *you* in a poem built on its physical identity and the malleability of the world to *you*. In "Bloem" he looks upon these poems as flowers, new effects of *your* life: "flowers of your life bloom still." Looking at the "stof" out of which his poems are made, how could one expect a "flowering" of "Bakeliet," "Aluminium," "Cellofan," "Celluloid" ("secret calyxes open up")? Once again, the mission of the poetic self is not nostalgia. It is Orpheus trying to bring Eurydice back from beyond her vanishing.

He sees himself as a bird-catcher who tries to outwit death, an Orpheus who tries to rescue the beloved from death and lead her back to a new love relationship freed from the elements of death and time, a relationship situated not in the death-tainted reality of everyday life, but rather in the reality of the creative realm, the poem.
 (Rodenko, 34)

It is to find *you* anew, and daily establish *your* presence in the world, by writing, by producing from the interplay of *self*, *you*, and the *world* the poem which achieves a new creation-- new *self* and new *world* through *your* return. Poetry is a renaming of the world, a restoration of your spirit to earth, a "blooming" of *you* in bakelite, aluminum,

cellophane, etc. The close association between naming and identity runs throughout Achterberg's poetry, including the Ballade van de gasfitter. To name is to individualize something, to recognize its existence as itself. When the poem names things, it is creating that existence in the poem. This is another indication of the tendency of the lyric poetry of Achterberg, as it is for Yeats, to be placed in an aboriginal ground (like the "primitive" of Merleau-Ponty), as if they sought to create from a source within themselves imagined to be prior to space and time. The lyric poem is not a result, a product of influences, an inevitable reaction to forces upon the poet. The lyric poem is an achievement, a work, a creation, a new flower: "ledozame."

Baarmoeder

De zomerwind verwekt u uit het niet,
 waarbij mijn handen grote stilten zijn.
 Ik voel van deze lust alleen de pijn:
 een snelle zwangerschap die mij doorschiet
 en u voldraagt in minimum van tijd;
 baarmoeder van het woord die opensplijt
 om te laten vlieden in een lied.

Womb

The summerwind creates you out of nothing,
 by which my hands are great silences.

Of this desire I feel only the pain:
 a quick pregnancy which shoots through me
 and carries you full-term in minimum time;
 womb of the word which splits open
 so that you may escape into a song. (444)

There is explicit reflection in this poem of the work of the poet. The world is full of the potential to reproduce *you*; but that potential before the poem is indeterminate, a nothingness, the mirror of poetic freedom. Before that nothingness, "ik" is open. It might come on a "summer wind," the seed of a poem which passes through a short and painful pregnancy until *you* exist once more within the song. Achterberg has here and elsewhere an existential sensibility. The poem is not pre-ordained, it must await its occasion (in "Barmoeder," "a summer wind creates you out of nothing") and the occasion, the poet's work, notwithstanding the power the text attributes to the "summerwind). The poet's fear of losing her is real. His hands cannot simply draw out of the 'urground' a body in which she could dwell. The poet must search for images: "The universe from which you were removed / becomes large again / with my filling it with you" Dit van u afgestroopt heeal / spant zich alleen weer helemaal, / als ik het vul met uw geval" ("Gummi," 1-3; 450). The purpose of poetry is clear: "Everything of which you once consisted / rages through my voice in its reality" "alles waarmee gij eens bestond, / ijlt door mijn stem in zijn bestaan" (6-7). The poem seeks *you* "on all sides" openligt naar alle zijden" ("Heeal," 9; 55) searches for *you* everywhere. It effects *your* life in the world; without the poem, *your* condition in the world would just be the way of all material things,

"folded into time." Under the weight of *your* death and the poetry's commitment to *your* living, Stof shows us a new world in which *you* are raised to a new life, wherever there are readers/hearers, including eternal readers/hearers.

Heilige Geest, vervul het vers
 zo gans, dat er geen vezel is,
 die niet van Uw belevenis
 vibreert, als van de liefde vlees.

Holy Spirit, fill the verse
 so full, that there is no thread,
 which does not of Your experience
 tremble, as flesh of love. ("Triniteit," 13-16; 601)

The "story of us," under the "sluimering" of the myth of Jesus, gives a clear account of the work-- and consequent identity-- of the poetic self. It establishes a world enlarged beyond its temporality by the person of Jesus who has embraced it with his body and whose example invites the poet to incarnate the same spirit in his poems.

Before the reflection undertaken in this study is complete, a very important question remains essentially untouched: Who is "gij" even what is "gij"? With Coetzee's cautions in mind, what the texts so far show is that the "gij" is never named except by the images with which the poet constructs her body. The question of identity remains-- who or what is the *you* who is the source and aspiration of the poem? Textually, the range of possible referents so far include: an actual dead beloved; God in the eyes of the loving "gij-ik," the "ons" of the "story of us," the things in which "I" find *you* present,

even the "ik" itself reflected in those images by which he has projected *you*. Achterberg's definition of the poetic self, and the nature of the world, find their completion in the understanding of who or what "gij" is. I believe that the Ballade van de gasfitter is Achterberg's direct reflective contribution to the understanding of this *other* in his poetry, and it will provide the focus for Chapter 10.

9. Forms of Hammered Gold

If I make the lashes dark
 And the eyes more bright
 And the lips more scarlet,
 Or ask if all be right
 From mirror after mirror,
 No vanity's displayed:
 I'm looking for the face I had
 Before the world was made.

("Before the World was Made," 1-8; 531-532)

The dualism of soul and self, which is an effect of constructing human history as eternal recurrence, allows the reading of this text as a summary image of the task and goal of Yeatsian poetic practice. The complete personality includes the self (its temporal "face") and the soul (through which it is joined to the eternal process of history). As suggested by "Ribh Considers Christian Love Insufficient," the poet's exploration of his opposite self, particularly through his hatreds and jealousies, is his access to the fount of all images, to "how the soul would walk before such things began" (12; 558). Such was the object of the study of the tower poet in "The Phases of the Moon," but he would never find it in his sedentary scholarship. Within this wisdom, which Robartes and Aherne sang, the poet works to draw the fullest image of personality from the "ancestral night" of the soul. Image after image, images "more bright" or "images more scarlet," it explores countless "faces" of the self; not in vanity's pursuit but in search of the whole

person, self and soul in the eternal source, the "face I had before the world was made." The vehicle of self-construction for Yeats is the poem. The conception of the soul's foundation within a cycle of eternal recurrence allows Yeats the assumption of its *direct* access to all that is other, to all that the temporally determined self is not.

Hic. Why should you leave the lamp
 Burning alone beside an open book,
 And trace these characters upon the sands?
 A style is found by sedentary toil
 And by the imitation of great masters.

Ille. Because I seek an image, not a book.
 Those men that in their writings are most wise
 Own nothing but their blind stupified hearts.
 I call to the mysterious one who yet
 Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream
 And look most like me, being indeed my double,
 And prove of all imaginable things
 The most unlike, being my anti-self,
 And, standing by these characters, disclose
 All that I seek; and whisper it as though
 He were afraid the birds, who cry aloud
 Their momentary cries before it is dawn,
 Would carry it away to blasphemous men.

("Ego Dominus Tuus," 62-79; 370-371)

The dialogue about poetry was external to the poet in "The Phases of the Moon," at least in the sense that Robartes's and Aherne's thoughts and song of the "changes of the moon," important for the tower-poet, are spoken and heard outside in the dark, but are as unheard by him as the voices of bats in the trees. What the tower-poet has not yet learned is that those voices are in the soul, they are the "dark folk" living in the soul. In this poem, "Ego Dominus Tuus," the dialogue is within a single persona-author. The field of poetic construction is now available entirely within the personality of the poet. It will be in solving and resolving this tension within himself that his poetic style will be shaped. The terms of this "quarrel with himself" (*Mythologies*, 331), and thus of poetic self-determination, are made available in this form by the implication of the idea of eternal recurrence in the texts. In Yeats's own words: "...in the end the creative energy of men depends upon their believing that they have within themselves, something immortal and imperishable, and that all else is but an image in a looking-glass" (Whitaker, 3).

There is important connection between this poem of Yeats and Achterberg's "En Jezus schreef in 't zand" (*VG*, 607). "*Hic*" would "find himself." "*Ille*" replies otherwise, seeking his anti-self: "By the help of an image / I call to my own opposite, summon all / That I have handled least, least looked upon" ("Ego Dominus Tuus," 7-9; 367). In constructing a dialogue between Yeats and Achterberg by means of a reading of their texts, it can be said that a central role of Jesus for the believer is to function as an anti-self, the mirror to the self of what it is not (Yeats's "most unlike") and at the same time of what it inwardly yearns to be (Yeats's "most like" "being indeed my double" 72; 371). In some way, like Yeats's anti-self, Jesus is a synthesis of opposites. As different as

human beings are, all are supposed to find in Jesus, their true "face," as does the adulterous woman of Achterberg's poem. She is condemned by the men of the book ("schriftgeleerden" VG, 5; 26). They are sure she is lost. They know she is outside the law. Achterberg however, presents them as outside the process of regeneration that goes on in the communion between Jesus and the woman: "de schrijftgeleerden stonden aan de kant" (8; 607). This communion, mediated by Jesus as the anti-self mediates in "Ego Dominus Tuus," is between her existing self ("toestand") and her new self ("staat"). Jesus writes in the sand but not in characters the "schriftgeleerden" or we, other readers/hearers, can decipher ("wij weten / niet wat Hij schreef" 2-3; 607). Jesus's own communication is presented as beyond his script. So intent is he on the "exact tension" of the moment that he is "sunk into the words of his hand" "verzonken in de woorden van Zijn hand" 4; 607). The woman, though, becomes transformed by the sand words of Jesus's poem:

En Hij stond recht. De woorden lieten los
 van hun figuur en brandden in de blos

 waarmee zij heenging, als een kind zo licht.
 Zo geestelijk schreef Jezus Zijn gedicht.

 He stood upright. Words in a fiery rush
 from their figures burned into the blush

 with which she left, light as a child become

In this style, Jesus wrote His poem

("En Jezus schreef in 't zand," 11-14; 607).

The poem of Jesus, into which he had "sunk," spoke to her broken self: "Sin no more," "I judge you not," "Listen to," as in "pay attention to" the song" (9-10; 607). What song?...The sand-word song, whose figures touch her so intimately as to bring her face to a blush. Jesus's poem in the sand has mirrored her true 'face' to herself. She has become a new self, "a child so light" ("een kind zo licht"). This is the "innerstyle" of Jesus's poem-- to trace its figures so that they reflect the intimate self. Through the poem of Jesus, which those who stand on the side do not know, the woman has become herself. Yeats's words in "Ego Dominus Tuus" do not seem at all misplaced if applied to the Achtebergean situation. The "mysterious one" (70; 371), both the poet's double and his anti-self, "standing by these characters," does disclose all that he seeks (75; 371). Yeats's self-making song is within the same spirit and style of Jesus's composition ("Zo geestelijk schreef Jezus Zijn gedicht" 14; 607). Yeats did not see the historical Jesus this way; but, in fact, the description of the "mysterious one," the one "most like" and "most unlike" the self-seeking-self, the one who is the resolution of all personal conflict, the one who discloses the self I was "before the world was made" (the creating word), all are characteristic of Jesus in Achterberg's theology.

Read from the point of view of "*Ille*," the many masks that Yeats uses for the poetic voice-- Hanrahan, Robartes, Aherne, *Hic, Ille*, Goatherd, Shepherd, Tom the Lunatic, Crazy Jane, Ribh, Oisin, Fergus, etc.-- all are vehicles of self-exploration. The process of the poetic word is essentially an activity of self-creation. The multiplicity of Yeatsean masks is indexical of the richness of the human soul and the difficulty of self-

discovery and creation. What he observes about the history of the human race that "man's life is thought" and "despite his terror...cannot cease ravening, raging and uprooting that he may come into the desolation of reality" ("Meru," 3-4, 6-7; 563) is true of the individual soul (an activity of "self-ravening"). There is a way that Yeats situates his poetry at the side of this stream, as at what Wallace Stevens calls "the difficulty of what it is to be":

We keep coming back and coming back
 To the real: to the hotel instead of the hymns
 That fall upon it out of the wind. We seek

The poem of pure reality, untouched
 By trope or deviation, straight to the word,
 Straight to the transfixing object, to the object

At the exactest point at which it is itself
 ("An Ordinary Evening in New Haven," IX, 1-7; 471).

Dating at least from the poems of The Tower, Yeats's poetry seems to have definitively turned from a poetry of escape towards a poetry of scrutiny and exploration. Yeats's masks are the vehicles of his self exploration and discovery. There is something of Socratic doubt in the poetic habits of Yeats. The poet examines himself in the images he creates. It is the poet's confrontation with his own experience of aging which generates the rich self-reflective texture of "The Tower":

What shall I do with this absurdity--

O heart, O troubled heart-- this caricature,
 Decrepit age that has been tied to me
 As to a dog's tail?

Never had I more

Excited, passionate, fantastical
 Imagination, nor an ear and eye

That more expected the impossible ("The Tower," 1-7; 409).

This poem illustrates how the construction of the poetic self for Yeats can involve a dialectic of images, of tried-on "faces." It evidences what is meant by the poet's deliberate pursuit of angers and hates, an absorption with what is opposite. A dialectic between the pain and hatred of aging and the still passionate imagination becomes revelatory, and establishes in the persona a "faith" (145; 414) and a "peace" (157; 415).

The poem opens with an expression of anger at the felt contradiction of a dying body and the absolute youth of the imagination. Consistent with the lunar emblem of "The Phases of the Moon" ("Before the full / It sought itself and afterwards the world" 94-95; 376), the self fights to construct a poem, something in and for the world. However, the body of the poet has aged, nearly vanished. The poet perceives that his poetry as well as himself is suffering from the diminishment of sensual possibility. What becomes maximized in this contradiction, however, is the flood-tide of possibility carried by the imagination. It is near "ancestral night," the dark of the new moon where ending and beginning meet, the alpha point before the world was made. To see every form as strange and new, as for example, the first time one sees a praying mantis; to be at the point of

wonder, of the first light-- "Never had I more...Imagination, nor an ear and eye / That more expected the impossible" (4, 6-7; 409). At the still point of nothingness, all possibilities await. The weakness of his aging body forces him to find his images with the passions of imagination, of thought-born things. The physical logic of his creative situation is clear to the poet: "I must bid the Muse go pack" (11; 409) since he must expect to find his poems in "abstract things" (15; 409). Plato and Plotinus are friends to this endeavour, being spokespersons for the form-producing energy of Mind. His images will come less from sensuous impression than from his thought-born imaginations of what might be.

His imagination, ear, and eye must stare from the tower, this battlement of history and seek "Under the day's declining beam, and call / Images and memories / From ruin or from ancient trees, / For I would ask a question of them all" (21-24; 410). There is definite resemblance here to Achterberg's conception of poetic mission as exemplified by the poems of *Stof*, to find the dead beloved in the material world by asking the one question of everything: How does this material lend itself to become, through the poem built upon it, *your* body in the world. This poem of Yeats shows his imagination revivifying the souls of the dead from "this" ruin, and "these" ancient trees. These men and women of the poetic imagination are created out of its need to find the hidden sense of "this absurdity" (1; 409), the contradiction between desire and actuality:

Did all old men and women, rich and poor,
 Who trod upon these rocks or passed this door
 Whether in public or in secret rage
 As I do now against old age? (97-100; 413)

The important thing to note again is that these "old men and women" are creatures of the poet, as he himself acknowledges: "I myself created Hanrahan" (57; 411).

Earlier, the text proclaimed that it was the song which "commended" the beauty of the "peasant girl" and made "certain men" mad. One of them even "drowned in the great bog of Cloone" because the creature of the song had "driven" his "wits away" and caused him, "so great a glory did the song confer," to mistake "the brightness of the moon / For the prosaic light of day" (33-48; 410-411). The rhymer in the poem had success because he had made "the moon and the sunlight seem / One inextricable beam" (54-55; 411). Within the assumption of the historical structure of eternal soul, Yeats seeks poetic images that will fuse the opposition of idealized possibility (night-light) and physical actuality (daylight) as the harmony of "one inextricable beam." In this created light of the imagination, the folksong is presented to us as having made a new creature out of the peasant girl of these rocks and cottages. Viewed from this tower-view of the synthesis of the temporal and the eternal, the song succeeded in endowing her actual life with the idealized being she has "on the lonely height where all are in God's eye" ("Paudeen," 6-8; 291). In some such manner, Yeats thought that Homer created his Helen (49-53; 411). It is this form of creative "triumph" that the poet voice now seeks for himself. This company of invented persons-- icons of personality, the community of the poet's imagination-- were created out of the dialectic of mortal existence and "ancestral night" which the construction of the eternal recurrence of form allowed into the imagination.

Questioning the anguish of his aging, the poet finds an "answer" in "those eyes" he has summoned to his tower. Referring to this poem, Peter Ure describes the effect of

Yeats's interiorization of historical experience: "...time in his poetry is no longer a succession of instants, but a kind of room...where ghosts and the events of the past, the poet's self, Thor Ballylee as it is and as it was coexist..." (70). His "answer" emerges gradually as the poem continues. It begins with the poet's endowment of "Hanrahan" with a special relationship to himself. He dismisses all the others his poem had called forth, for he confesses to understand that temporal sorrow (from which they are released) would make them "impatient to be gone" (102; 413):

Go therefore; but leave Hanrahan,
For I need all his mighty memories.

Old lecher with a love on every wind,
Bring up out of that deep considering mind
All that you have discovered in the grave,
For it is certain that you have
Reckoned up every unforeknown, unseeing
Plunge, lured by a softening eye,
Or by a touch or a sigh,
Into the labyrinth of another's being (103-112; 413).

"The Tower" is quite Achtebergean in that its life-secrets are mined only if the dead are fully admitted into the imagination. Achterberg's still-living dead beloved is the key not only to the hope of forgiveness, but also to the hope of love, even when face to face with the grave and its threat of absurdity to our longings. As the "The Tower" seeks its Hanrahan, so Achterberg's poems can also be said to seek *you*, their dead beloved, in

order to know from her "deep considering mind / All that you have discovered in the grave" (106-107; 413).

There is a further relationship of "The Tower" to Achterberg's poetry, specifically, to an understanding of the identity of the "gij" (*you*) of the Ballade van de gasfitter. Within the poem is the admission of the authorial voice: "I myself created Hanrahan." "Hanrahan," and "his deep considering mind" are poetic inventions. Thus, in addressing his questions to Hanrahan's "mighty memories" (104; 413) he is addressing some projection of the poetic self. All of the company of the dead in this poem, like Hanrahan, are called from "somewhere in the neighbouring cottages" (59; 411). In fact, they are called from the anti-self of the poetic self, and are reflections of his *other*. Hanrahan, Yeats's invented version of the historical 18th Century Irish language poet, Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, a latter day Oisín, helps to concretize the Yeatsian persona's dialogue with the anti-self. "The Tower" provides a clue for a reading of Achterberg's central reflection on the identity of the *other*, his poetry's *you*. Parodying the opening of the first sonnet of the Gasfitter yields what seems a perfectly complementary approach to "The Tower." It is likewise an exploration of poetic identity, the pursuit of which involves the *other*, and the determination of which by the poetic voice is fully reflected in the text. A self-consciousness about a self-construction characterizes both works. The company of Oisín, Crazy Jane, Fergus, Aherne, Robartes, as well as Swift or Blake, all those brought forth into the poems for questioning or for what their "deep considering minds" and their "mighty memories" (104; 413) can tell are the company of the *other*, Yeats's *you*. In its awareness that "I myself created Hanrahan," the poetic voice has come

to understand its *other*. Yeats's *other* is constructed out of the anti-self, that cauldron of the possibility of personality, which the imagination (freed from existential literalness into "ancestral night") makes out of consciousness. The images of the poetic imagination serve the self's desire for self-definition-- for answering its questions, for resolving its antinomies and terrors, as here in "The Tower," regarding age. To this *other*, this self "most like and most unlike myself"-- Yeats's *you*-- the poet can say, like the "gasfitter," you cannot "evade me in that name" (VG, I, 8; 834) whether that name is "Hanrahan," or any of the entire company of what he later calls his "circus animals." All are creatures of the self-ravaging poetic intellect. What Yeats wants to know from Hanrahan's "deep considering mind" (that is, from his own consideration of his own "deep," the anti-self), may well be a clue to the quest of the "ik" of the Gasfitter. What "ik" may be said to be seeking from "gij" is what the Yeatsean voice seeks to know from Hanrahan; that is, whatever *you* have learned from *your* plunging "into the labyrinth of another's being" (112; 413). With the mind of "Hanrahan," his light from "ancestral night" (since "Hanrahan" is dead), the self of "The Tower" looks back over the experience of passion ("love's memories"). In the ensuing dialogic process, self-constructed and self-conducted by the poet, he declares a "faith" and acknowledges that he has prepared a "peace" (144-195; 414-415). This penultimate section of "The Tower" articulates well the poetics Yeats has evolved.

Nowhere than in the passage from "The Tower" which appears as the epigraph of the introduction to this study, is Yeats so clear about the creative power of the poetic word. His *filii*-role evolved to a perspective that is more universal-- as if the poet were

called, in the end, to announce a reconstruction of experience in the direction of his own personality, not just to sing the noble genealogy of one line of kings, or the history of one people, the meaning of their battles, and the price of their expectations. In his Identity of Yeats, Richard Ellmann observes: "In Yeats, the emphasis is on the tangibility of the images which the artist cleans and perfects, and the struggle to clean and perfect them. The poet is not ostracized from his poem, he is its all important inhabitant" (xiv). The poetry becomes at once less parochial and more personal, in the sense that it has become focused on the experience of the personality of the poet as if that might be his social task. Oisín, Cúchulain and Eire have become metaphors. The poet's sorrows and longings have become a school. The kingdom of the poet is within him: "Death and life were not / Till man made up the whole, / Made lock, stock and barrel / Out of his bitter soul" (148-151; 415).

I have prepared my peace
 With learned Italian things
 And the proud stones of Greece,
 Poet's imaginings
 And memories of love,
 Memories of the words of women,
 All those things whereof
 Man makes a superhuman
 Mirror-resembling dream. (157-165; 415)

Out of "learned Italian things," "poet's imaginings and memories of love"-- out of these things the poet has constructed the world of his poems, one that is a "superhuman

dream," reflecting, as it does, the anti-self sunk in the "ancestral night" of all temporal form. This poetic world that is his "dream" or "circus" he fashions by reaching into the night-side of the soul (as Achterberg sends his poetic imagination across the horizon of death), creating with his mortality, confronting his bitterness (here at aging) and winning for the species, images of human wisdom that we would not otherwise read. The poetic self has made that world-- that "superhuman mirror resembling dream." In this mirror, the poet reflects the whole world in the human soul: death, life, transtemporal paradise, history, love, poetry itself.

As at the loophole there

The daws chatter and scream

And drop twigs layer by layer (166-168; 415).

The poem moves suddenly here from the transcendent and overarching to the very concrete. This awakening to the existential, the seemingly incidental relative to the flight of the imagination, is a constant feature of Yeatsian texts, part of the pattern of vacillation which achieves metaphysical status in the construction of eternal recurrence. It seems important to Yeats that the poem show existential awareness, its physical contact with its temporal moment. The declension of Yeats's vision nearly always begins and usually returns to the now.

...in *The Wanderings*, Oisín's departure from each of the immortal realms is precipitated by contact with some item that calls to mind his former life. In making this modification Yeats made central to the poem a theme that runs throughout all his work: the "choice" dichotomy, a tension between the claims of this world and the one beyond. Oisín, like Yeats

himself was continually drawn back to the former.

(Philip Marcus, 245)

In "The Tower," it is important to its purpose that *this* ruin, *these* trees, *these* rocks speak to the Tower-reflective voice. It is in the living that he roots his dead: "that ridge (25; 410), "that rocky place" (35; 410), "somewhere in the neighboring cottages" (58; 411), the tower in which the poem happens ("that ruin" 81; 412), "this door" (98; 413). From the tower-ruin which has become a living dwelling, a primal awareness is sought, as Merleau-Ponty would have it, by a reduction to the primitive within the present. In "The Tower," the eternal is not so much an other world, as an encompassing within the personality.

Now shall I make my soul,
 Compelling it to study
 In a learned school
 Till the wreck of body,
 Slow decay of blood,
 Testy delerium
 Or dull decrepitude,
 Or what worse evil come--
 The death of friends, or death
 Of every brilliant eye
 That made a catch in the breath--
 Seem but the clouds of the sky
 When the horizons fades,

Or a bird's sleepy cry

Among the deepening shades. (181-195; 416)

With the help of "Hanrahan" and the others the poet had summoned to his tower, the outcome of examining the emotions of his experience of aging is a resolution to become the Cuchulain of personality. In the face of death (as a Cuchulain who tried to fasten his already half-dead body to a post so that he might "die upon my feet" Jeffares, The Death of Cuchulain, 214), the poet must do battle against the great sea of time and thus "make his soul." Yeats's posture (recalling, but transforming Oisín) is one of defiant creation, standing "in judgment on his soul, / And, all work done...sinks at last into the night" ("The Man and the Echo," 33-34, 36; 633).

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. ("Sailing to Byzantium," 17-24; 408)

The "learned school" to which the voice of "The Tower" (183; 416) has compelled itself to go had already been named by Yeats in this companion poem immediately preceding it. The reference to a Byzantine mosaic can be taken as a model for poetry. The work of art, the mosaic (by indirection, the poem) is itself the "school." It teaches, being a monument of its own magnificence (14; 407). The prayer to the figures in the mosaic is

that they become "the singing-masters of my soul" (it is the poet's education, the shaping of the poet that is surely on the poet's mind here), that they "gather" him "into the artifice of eternity"-- where his imagination would live within the "ancestral night," generative of all form. The work of art has this capacity, for it is itself an artifice of the eternal, a hammered-gold creation that transcends the sorrows of time by the integrity and sensibility of its form. Such a conceit is a working characteristic of Yeats's lyric construction. Denis Donoghue makes a helpful observation:

"Gather me..." means gather me into a self-subsistent world, an artifice indeed but only in the sense that it is man's creation and, Yeats would hold, all the nobler for that (63).

Yeats never seemed to lose the feeling of social responsibility that is a strong characteristic of Irish Poetry, and one which marked his early association with Young Ireland. His evolved understanding of that responsibility bears similarity to the formative assumption of the transcendentalists that self-knowledge is the deepest knowledge of the other. Thus, it becomes the poet's role for the human community, continuing the Fenian allusion, to win the tragic victory of self over time as Cuchulain did, to make one's self like the three "Chinamen," sculptured figures of "Lapis Lazuli." In their "self-delighting, self-appeasing, self-affrighting" form (see "A Prayer for My Daughter," 67-68; 405), their "ancient, glittering eyes are gay" (56; 567). Their "gaiety" is the formal achievement of self-definition, their 'knowing' endurance of time's erosion. As Whitaker expresses it regarding Yeats own self-making: "poetic transcendence of the fallen world towards which his work always tends [is] a tragic joy born not of escape from the human condition, but of a fullness of self-knowledge and self-judgment" (8). To the extent that

his poems embody such fullness, the poet is a "singing-master" and the poem a "learned school":

...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
("A Prayer for my Daughter," 65-69; 405).

10. Who is *you*?

We guess; we clothe Thee, unseen King,
 With attributes we deem are meet;
 Each in his own imagining
 Sets up a shadow in Thy seat (Hopkins, "Nondum," 13-16; 43).

To complete its reflection on the association of *self*, *other*, and *world* in Achterberg's poetry, this study turns to the question of the identity of "gij"-- the constant *other* of his lyric texts. The nature of the world in which the poet-self ("ik") achieves his poetic vocation is affected by the conception of Jesus who becomes the icon of the poem-- the embodiment of eternal love and the first-born of a new creation, a "Deoïde" (see above, 133 and 168-171). With such a reading in mind, as well as the cautions of Coetzee (see above, 151), what identification can be suggested for this recurring *you* of Achterberg's poems?

It is at least arguable that what Hopkins says about idolatry in human claims to knowledge of God is true of all inter-personal knowledge. We surely can "shadow" the other from our own need. It is easy enough to accept that Hanrahan, or Robartes or Aherne are "shadows" set up by the poet "in his own imagining." In fact, we have observed him to have said as much: "I myself created Hanrahan" ("The Tower," 57; 411). Likewise, Cuchulain, Fergus, Aengus, and Niamh, et al., fictions Yeats inherited from Irish tradition, were also "shadowed " by his imagination for the purposes of his poetry. Yeats did much "guessing" about and "clothing" of ancient Irish kings and queens to fulfill his own poetic agenda (cf., "A Coat'" 320). Likewise, the Grattan, Burke,

Goldsmith, or Swift we find in Yeats's poems, though these were historically real persons, are fictions nonetheless-- agents in his poetry, among their other purposes, of the valorization of an idealized Ascendancy. In the same sense, Maude Gonne, Robert Gregory, William Pollexfen, Con Markiewicz et al., although the poet's contemporaries (beloved, dear friend's son, grandfather, friend and revolutionary), are yet fictions in his poems. Whether these 'real' persons were as Yeats shadowed them is not answerable in the poems and of a different order of interest. In any case, they are constructions of the poetic self, fulfilling in the poems in which they appear, some "rivet" of the poem's structure (cf. 218-219 below, re. Sonnet X), however accurately or inaccurately they may serve as existential portraits. Where Yeats often uses proper names, or invents them for the company of persons that fill his poetry, Achterberg rarely does. Achterberg's personal references are nearly always unspecified, although almost always direct, by means of the second person pronoun ("gij," "u," "uw"). The company which Yeats calls forth in "The Tower" (Mrs. French, the blind poet, the song-maddened peasant, Hanrahan, etc.) are asked a question about their rage at aging. These are imagined to be dead, so the question is approached in somewhat of an Achterbergian spirit. In "The Tower," these figures form individually, and as a group, Yeats's *you*. The *you*, pursued from the outset of the Ballade van de gasfitter seems also such a term, referring possibly to a definite individual, or to an indeterminate individual in a group of persons, or at different times, or at different moments of the poem, to both. Like Yeats's creation of Hanrahan, the *you* of Achterberg's Ballade, whoever it (she, he, they) is, is his creation, a shadow of himself. The Ballade van de gasfitter offers a sustained inquiry into the recurring *you* of Achterberg's body of work, and in the course of the poetic-"ik's"

pursuit, presents us with a major reflection on the nature of his poetry.

The question of who or what *you* is has been posed by earlier works. In these, characteristically, "gij" or "u" is almost always unidentified. Nonetheless, the use of "gij" does imply that the person addressed is an intimate other; in traditional Dutch usage, possibly divine, or with some connection to the divine. In Afvaart and Eiland der ziel, wherein the major lines of the "story of us" were developed, Achterberg also uses this second person form to refer to the "heart" (in "De Slag," 33), the "sun" (in "Voltooiing," 50), artist's "lines" (in "Jan Toroop," 96), "death" (in "Aan den dood," 110) and "grief" (in "Smart," 121). While "gij" nearly always has direct or indirect reference to the woman who is the "lichtgenoot" of the "story of us" ("light-partner" in "Jericho," 5; 119), Achterberg often enough personifies and addresses things as *you* as well. As has been seen in "Fata Morgana" and reinforced by the whole of En Jezus schreef in 't zand, it is also possible to give a reading of the beloved *you* of the "story of us" as Jesus, so closely do their stories parallel. The use of the pronominal form 'gij' strengthens this, since it is an idiosyncratic form of address to the divinity. Given the pluralistic range of Achterberg's referents of *you* throughout the poems, it further becomes quite plausible that *you*, in his poems, might be best understood as Christ's mystical body-- the physical solidarity of the human race in Jesus, the incarnation of eternal love. Still further, in the first published version of the poem "Licht" (VG, 35 and see Variënten, Deel 1, 233), a specific identification of its *you* is made within the poem-- that is, "Cathrien." Assuming that this "Cathrien" is Cathrien van Baak, whom he eventually married, are we then required to assume that "gij/u" is always a veiled reference to her? On the other hand,

is it *ever* right to assume that "gij/u" is a specific individual? In "Woorden, ontwaak!" (VG, 91), "kern" ("core" 8; 91) is *you*. In that poem *you* may be read as the "unfulfilled self" which the authorial voice seeks, that *you* which "I" am not yet. The poetry, before the Ballade, shows therefore, a wide range of identifications of *you*. All of this is strong confirmation that the determination of the "gij" in the Ballade van de gasfitter must likewise be contextual.

With Coetzee's caution in mind, what does the Ballade itself have to say about who "gij" is? To begin with, as is characteristic of Achterberg, this work is scrupulously structured. Little about the form of the poem is accidental. This itself invites reflection. The thematic unity of the work is supported by the metric cohesion of the poems. Achterberg employs a Petrarchan form throughout, and except for Sonnet XI, all the sonnets share some pattern of end-rhyme, either in the first or second quartets or in the final sestet. The Ballade itself is a type of macrosonnet in which fourteen sonnets are thematically arranged to mirror the four, four, six line stanzaic pattern of the individual sonnets.

The enigmatic *you* (in the text "gij," "ge," or "u") is directly addressed in three of the first four sonnets, and once more in Sonnet IX (2; 842). The assumption that the "gij" of Sonnet I is continuously addressed rests on its position as the opening word of the entire sonnet sequence. The placement of "gij" as the opening word seems a deliberate means of permeating the entire work with its presence. "Gij" is always there in the personal field of the work, whether seen by the "gasfitter" or not, as the person of direct address. In Sonnet IV, when the gasfitter turns around, upon the completion of his work

(5-8; 837), "gij" has left the orbit of his sight, but not the orbit of the poem. The poetic voice continues to address this enigmatic second person, which, though out of the range of his gaze is never out of the range of his awareness. This is the clear confirmation of the opening of Sonnet IX (1; 842), in which "u" is quite normally addressed, as if it had never left the sonnet sequence, even though the pronominal form was last directly used in Sonnet IV.

The *you* of continuous address is almost immediately characterized as evading the "I" ("as if you evade me in this name" "alsof ge mij in deze naam ontwijkt" I; 8; 834). Nonetheless, "gij" is by no means unfamiliar to the ("ik"). There is between the *you* and the "I" of these poems an assumed mutuality, occasionally bordering on intimacy. In Sonnet I, the relation is symbiotic ("in the windowfronts, between the curtains, / you continue to appear out of nothing / whenever I come past and look within" "Aan de voorgevels, tussen de gordijnen, / blijft ge doorlopend uit het niet verschijnen / waanneer ik langs kom en naar binnen kijk" 2-4; 834). In lines 5 and 8-9 of Sonnet II (835), their mutuality is explicit. As the room fills up, threatening to turn into a grave, the "ik-gij" are together in the crisis, whatever it exactly is. As the gasfitter sets about to control the possible asphyxiation, he indicates that he is doing his part in maintaining their disguises, an interest he seems to assume "gij" would share ("So long as I keep myself to this task / we remain incognito for each other" "Zolang ik mij tot deze taak beperk / blijven we voor elkaar incognito" II; 8-9; 835). Furthermore, an aura of familiarity conveyed by the often easy conversational tone of the sonnets is complemented by textual assumptions that "gij" and "ik" exist in a shared world of "doors," "doorbells," "stoops," "letterboxes," the duties and habits of gasfitters, their uniforms and union, neighborhoods, schools,

street noises and the sounds of children playing ("...deuren zijn geduldig; / hebben een bel, een brievenbus, een stoep. / De kinderen, door moeders meegenomen, / vertellen. Fietsen bellen" et al., VG, 834-847). Finally, although not least important, this shared familiarity is signalled, grammatically, by the constant use of 'gij' in the sonnets-- the pronominal form reserved for God, or intimates, whom out of love or respect we hold in awe.

The connection of "I-you" in the text is further deepened by the language originating the action of the sonnet sequence. In Sonnet I, "gij" is generated by the gaze of the "ik" ("you continue to appear out of nothing / whenever I come past and look within" ("blijft ge doorlopend uit het niet verschijnen / waaneer ik langs kom en naar binnen kijk). In its "appearing" ("verschijnen") and "disappearing" ("verdwijnen"), "gij" is in tandem with the journeying "ik" (3; 834). At the outset, then, "gij" is the reflection of the "ik" in the windows, "between the curtains," as it walks along like some Narcissus. Whatever its identity, finally, "gij" is "ik"-engendered, and "ik"-needed.

Thus, a first response to the question, "Who is *you*," is that "gij" is the reflected self of a gasfitter/poet in the throes of a crisis of identity. While I believe this self-reflexivity is the basic dimension of the texts, to equate "ik" and "gij" as the single persona of the poem fails to account for the complexity of *you* as the work unfolds. In Sonnet I, which is the basis for the symbiotic relation of "gij" and "ik," we also find the foundation of "gij's" otherness; presented not just as masking itself in the "Jansen" family but as requiring a whole array of tactics for the "ik" to overcome *your* evasion. The autonomy of *you* implied by "De appelkoopman lokt u met zijn roep" is great (11; 834). "Ik" would have to wait for "u" to come out in response to the "appleseller's call." In

Sonnet II, the autonomy of *you* relative to the poem's persona, is furthered by a kind of daydreaming fantasy which requires the separate identity of *you*, possibly as a sexual partner. The autonomy of *you* is further strengthened by "ik's" resolve to protect a mutual incognito: "So long as I keep myself to the task / we remain incognito before each other" ("Zolang ik mij tot deze beperk / blijven we voor elkaar incognito" 8-9; 835). The otherness of *you* is most pronounced in Sonnet IX: "The higher I rise the greater becomes / the distance between you and me" ("Hoe hoger of ik stijg hoe groter wordt / de ruimte tussen u en mij" 1-2; 842).

Acquaintance with Achterberg's other work makes it natural, if not necessary, to read "gij" as the dead beloved of the "verhaal van ons." Such a reading of the identity of "gij" would be in accord with the autonomy of "gij" in Sonnets I and II, the sexual imagery of II, and possibly with the imagined death of the "landlady" ("huisgenares") of III (10; 836). The symbiotic connection of Sonnet I would then receive the interpretation that at least initially, our loves are often self images (Hopkins's "shadows in Thy seat").

However, a difficulty in simply identifying the "gij" of the Ballade as the haunting presence of the dead beloved of the "story of us" is that the Ballade would then be presenting us with a major revision of that theme, which is not met in poems before the Gasfitter nor carried through in later work. In other works, "gij" is not adversarial as it is in the Ballade. In fact, it is usually the "ik" who is resistant and who is pursued and pacified by the "gij." In "Licht," a poem from Afvaart, for example: "You stood with a high hope / against me. / I was the very one who stood / against your hope" ("Gij stondt met een hoog hopen / tegen mij aan. / Ik was het zelf die stond / tegen uw hopen aan" 1-4; 35). Furthermore, the allusions of Sonnet II are coarser than Achterberg's more

usual sexual imagery concerning the beloved of the "story of us." Above all, the fate of the "ik" in the Ballade (as the old self, buried in Sonnet XIV) would imply the failure of its quest for union with the "gij" as the feminine other who is the sustaining hope of the "ik" of the "verhaal van ons." Finally, in Sonnet IX, the "ik" turns from the "gij" to a vertical search for the elusive other. This is distinctly uncharacteristic of the way "gij" relates to "ik" in Achterberg's other work. "Gij" is normally the embodiment of the transcendent, at least as far that is possible for "ik." This thematic assymetry suggests that the *you* of the "story of us" cannot, by itself, fill the requirements of the identity of the "gij" of the Gasfitter.

Who "gij" is in the Ballade, of course, is not answered by transferring the question of identity from the Ballade to the body of Achterberg's work, as if that would solve it. It is rather more the other way around. In the Ballade, Achterberg is reflecting on the "gij" of all his work. It is the Ballade, perhaps, more than any other of Achterberg's works, which focuses the question who or what exactly is the dead beloved? Who the *you* of Achterberg's other poetry might be is a different question than who is the *you* of the Gasfitter. I do believe that the Ballade offers important perspective on the general question, but only if the *you* of the Ballade is first pursued within that text itself. To look for a biographical tag outside the poem, or even outside the whole body of Achterberg's work is likewise no solution. Were we to acknowledge that at least two collections of Yeats's poems were about Maude Gonne, or written to her or for her; would understanding and appreciating those texts simply be a function of getting the biographical and autobiographical details straight? Who or what the *you* of such of

Yeats's poems might be is simply not answered by knowing: "O, that's Maude Gonne. He just found out she married Sean MacBride. Yeats was in love with her, and that is the sorrow he speaks of here." Yeats's imagination of his contemporaries are no less fictions in his poems than his Swift or Grattan or even, his Cuchulain. To say that the "gij" of the Gasfitter is Achterberg's landlady, or her sixteen year old daughter, or someone else whose biography seems to fit the action of the work is still not to understand it. Who or what the *you* is would still be worth asking even if we had a name for it and a definite identity-- the important thing is how that "rivet" is in place in the structure of the poem. "Gij" is, after all, like "Hanrahan," the poet's invention.

Some critics (among them Coetzee and Wiersma) note that the Ballade takes a turn in Sonnet IX from what was primarily an erotic, aesthetic quest to a mystical one. While there is strong underlying validity to this observation, it does not entail that God is the "gij" of this work; certainly not, in any direct or simple way. The "God" of Sonnet IX is distinctly other, a third person. The daydreaming of Sonnet II, for example, could not really hold together if God were to be taken as the exclusive identity of the Ballade's "gij."

I suggest that it may fit this work to think of "gij" as the persona's allegorized projection of the personal other which constitutes the poem's intended reception. Projected readers are likely to be many and varied in the poet's mind, not homogenous. Everyone who reads or hears the poem meets it one by one, as its "gij," the one to whom it now directly speaks in the intimacy of poetic communication. "You" is always singular in the moment of reading. This adds to the texture of intimacy characteristic of these texts which in fact inscribe the poet's hope for intimate reception. It seems to be why *you* are

addressed familiarly and why "ik's" familiar world is worked into the poems. It is exactly that level of communion which seems to be the intention of the poet. Those whom the poem seeks, who would fill the referential intentionality of "gij" as reader/hearer might include persons known, unknown, the beloved, the feared, the desired, the divine, the living and the dead. Lines between erotic love and aesthetic or religious desire are not hard and fast; and God, a woman (landlady or not), a Jansen, strangers-- all move easily into the complex personal field of Achterberg's composition. There is a journey structure to the Gasfitter, as of his work in general. This suggests-- if indeed Achterberg, in the Gasfitter, is reflecting on the *you* in his work-- that the sonnet sequence is exploring nuances of "gij" which might be understood as the receiving *other* of his poems. Certainly, the tone of urgency and anxiety is not misplaced; since the poem's fulfillment requires the reception by other persons.

In the Ballade, "ik's" "governing purpose" ("einddoel" VII, 4; 840) is vague, even unclear to the gasfitter. This accurately mirrors the limits of the poet's knowledge of *you* whom he has labored to reach. In Sonnet II, the poet acknowledges that he is maintaining the mutual "incognito" of self and *you*. This "incognito" could be interpreted as the recognition by the poetic voice of the autonomies of self and the other. Although *you* must be there for his work to be fulfilled, and he must work with *you* in his imagination, he also knows he doesn't actually know who *you* are, for *you*, as well as himself, are not identical with the 'faces'/masks mutually presented in daily life. The poet could wonder, to the point of great anxiety-- should it be true that his personal identity is so tied to his work-- what will be the outcome of his reaching

("bereiken") for *you*. Will the poem have any reception like that for which the "I" reaches? Can "ik" reach *you* in the "Jansens"? Indeed, the unknown *you* who reads/hears the Ballade, and who finally make the poem complete and the poet whole, may be looked at as triggering the crisis of identity which is the allegorical subject of the Ballade. Confirmation of the poet's identity as poet comes from *you* the reader; but *you* are, in the composing, but a projection of the poet's reaching for *you*. Thus, *you* are always present to the working out of the poem (as made explicit in Sonnet II) as its intended audience, but *you* vanish with the completion of the work (as in Sonnet IV), in the anxiety over its reception. Is this not why "mutual incognito" is "better" (II, 9, 12; 835).

In summary, then, we are left looking for the identity of "gij" in the Ballade van de gasfitter as one who is as near as the self (for *you* as audience are first imagined by the composing poet), and as far (from the self) as the other; and the identity of this other is as varied as a dead beloved (haunting all of Achterberg's work), the gasfitter's beloved, a landlady, God, the present reader (limiting these identities only to what the text explicitly allows). The gasfitter's initial awareness of the shifting *you* is in part communicated by the deliberate holding to the second person pronominal form. It is why Coetzee is correct to claim that adequate grounds for the identification of I and You "may not exist in the poem." Certainly, regarding the identification of *you*, the pronoun is an "empty" sign, "filled variously as the axis of utterance and the point of consciousness that is the I move through the poem" (286b). If "gij" is empty and there is no single individual or entity to which it refers, it does

not follow that it has no intentional structure in the poems. Yeats's poems such as "The Tower," "The Man and the Echo" and "The Desertion of the Circus Animals," suggest a reading of the Ballade van de gasfitter as a similar work of retrospection and self-analysis. The Ballade itself may be the poet's response to a question critics often raise: Who or what, in general, is the *you* of Achterberg's poetry.

So approached, as the other in whose gaze I construct the poem, the *you* pursued by the gasfitter-poet is intimate, familiar, evasive, separate, as available as the Jansens, as empty as God, as near or as far as you or I who now read the gasfitter back to life, whom otherwise the earth alone would have received ("De aarde dekt hem toe" XIV, 14; 847). In the end, encountering *you* for or to whom "I" write is encountering "my" own work as poet (as in Sonnet II, 8-14; 835 and Sonnet IV, 7; 837). "Who is *you*" becomes one with "Who am I." The *you* of the Gasfitter is the creation by the poet of the personal other his imagination reaches to engage, love, transform or become through the action of the text.

Before probing the Ballade with this assumption it is necessary to examine the textual clues which support the claim that the gasfitter's quest has anything to do with poetry. It is also important to examine the range and appropriateness of the metaphor "gas."

The assumption that the Ballade van de gasfitter is an allegory of a quest for poetic identity rests on a well-known Dutch homonym. 'Dichten' means both 'to write poetry' and to 'close' something. 'Gedicht' is the Dutch word for 'poem' as well as the past participle of 'dichten.' Thus a gasfitter would be someone as in the Ballade, whose work it is to enclose gas for the use of the community. Linguistically, it is a

ready-made mask of the poet. The work in both cases would be 'dichten.' In the end, Coetzee refers to the poet-gasfitter as "wordfitter." Within the text itself, there is only one place in which this connection is explicitly marked. The opening line of Sonnet IV, "Eindelijk is het kleine lek gedicht" / "Finally, the small hole has been closed" might also be rendered "Finally, the small hole has been made a poem" (1; 837). This is the axis in the text around which the allegory moves. At the end of the final sonnet, the gasfitter/poet has filled his final hole (he is buried) and completes thereby the achievement of the poem. It is his story that is locked in and saved for us. This is, as Coetzee points out, both a ballad about a gasfitter and a ballad by a gasfitter.

The choice of a gasfitter as the worker-model for the poet also has further compatibility with Achterberg's sense of the working poet. The gasfitter has a right of entry into homes, to the intimate spaces of families such as the "Jansens"; a sign of the Protean aspirations of the poet. 'Gas' itself is an apt and powerful metaphor for what the poet is trying to enclose. The prevailing theory of the physical universe affirms the primordial stuff to be hydrogen. The forms of all things are thus exploded, rearranged, embodied forms of primal gas. Gas is the energy of the universe, it is matter at its most airy form-- close therefore to both spirit and chaos (the constant dramatic ground of Achterberg's poems, as explored in "Fata Morgana"). It is its own system ("De fabrieken draaien op hun as" XI; 1). It is dangerous, indeed deadly, yet it is the form of all life and the source of the light and the heat crucial to life's survival. So, 'gas' affords a wonderful range of images of what it is the poet might try to 'dichten.' It is Achterberg's "death-in-life and life-in-death" ("Byzantium," 16; 497). The relationship to chaos is important. Outside hydrogen, there is nothing for a

gasfitter-poet to work with, and outside its formations, there is nothing. However, God is only experienced as outside the world of gas, as 'gat' (IX, 5; 842), not the fullness but the emptiness out of which all things come. God is outside what language can enclose, the hole prior to its being filled. Language attempting to capture transcendence leaves us trying to decode the uncodable. Language is shadowing the other person, including God, in the image of the self. The poet's longings for reception are initially narcissistic (Yeats says to his "echo": "What do we know but that we face / One another in this place?" "The Man and the Echo," 39-40; 633). Achterberg himself is aware of the narcissistic dimension of the search for other (in the words of "Fata Morgana," "memories bloom into myth" VG, 9; 137). Sonnet I confirms this. On such assumptions, it is possible to offer a reading of the Ballade van de gasfitter as the story of the poet's pursuit of his poetic identity, which cannot be complete until he reaches *you*.

I

You have reached the houses from round the back.

In the windowfronts, between the curtains,

you continue to appear out of nothing

whenever I come past and look within.

Although in the passing you vanish once more,

the next window offers me again the same.

A certain Jansen and family live there,

as if you evade me in that name.

But that does not matter. Doorways endure;
 they have a letterbox, a stoop, a bell.
 The appleseller tempts you with his yell.
 And master keys are plentiful there
 Besides I can come in inside, dead innocent
 and at your service, gasfitter by trade.

The poet-gasfitter immediately confronts "gij," as if to let the *you* know that it is *you* he is pursuing and that he is aware that *you* are evading him. What he sees of *you* is his own reflection, changing from home to home, as he walks along, searching. Here, as elsewhere, the poet-voice is 'wandering.' With the looked-for survival of his poems over time (as, for example, Petrarca's) the 'wandering' that is the persisting mode of the Achtebergean persona (as also for Yeats) becomes a more complex 'wandering' in that the identity of the *other* for whom the poem reaches will include persons of differing eras and cultures, even though the poet must speak from his own existential plane.

In this first sonnet he expresses full confidence in his capacity to achieve such contact, seeking *you* in his daily life. After all, *you* do have to live, so he can wait for *you* to come out to buy apples or whatever else might tempt *you*. Doors and stoops and mailboxes all say to him that he will find *you* there in the streets of everyday. And if *you* still avoid him in the public areas of life, he can find plenty of "keys" which would get him into *your* private space. He could do this innocently and rightfully, for he is a gasfitter, and it is perfectly appropriate for him to enter people's

homes in his line of work.

An issue of identity seems to present itself in the first sonnet. Being a gasfitter-poet seems to be a role the "I" has assumed as the best way for him to reach *you*-- the completing self for whom this "I" gives indication he has long been searching in the "windows" of the other (in the "Jansens," e.g.). The situation seems similar to the tower-poet searching "Hanrahan's" "deep considering mind" in order to learn what it is to "plunge" into the "labyrinth of another's being" ("The Tower," 110-112; 413). Again, this "deep considering mind" is a construction of the poet, born out of his own memories of passionate life. The text of "Hanrahan's" mind becomes the vehicle of the poet's self-making. In the gasfitter's case, whatever structure *you* receive in the poem will be invented by the poet. The occasion of pursuing who *you* are is anxiety over his own identity. The first sonnet leaves a number of questions, relating to that crisis. How does the voice of the sonnet, the voice of the gasfitter relate to the work of wordfitting? Does the gasfitter-poet work just to find *you*. What is it that the gasfitter-poet wants from *you*? What is it that he thinks *you* can tell him? He has to find *you* so that *you* will make all this clear to him. Such preoccupation is a constant feature of these sonnets. The gasfitter never really stops seeking clues to *you* in directories and street names, even after surrendering his disguise (V, VIII, and XIII are explicit about this). The work of a poet, like the work of public utility worker, allows entrance to the most intimate spaces of the human community, its homes (*huizen*). The poetic self, the wandering gasfitter, seeks *you* in order to define himself. *You* reflect him even though *you* hide in the other.

There is one other important implication concerning poetry made by this poet-gasfitter conceit. The poet is put forward in this connection as a public servant. The tie of the poet to a community is another constant of the ballad (See Sonnets II, V, VII, and XI-XIV).

II

Then-- in broad daylight at work with you there,
 uniformed as a public servant-- I
 circle with my eyes and see you standing.
 But the ceiling slowly becomes a gravestone.

The walls are earthen. We are misting up.
 The room is sated, I grimly perceive.
 This just cannot be. I tighten the screws.
 So long as I keep myself to the task

we keep our mutual incognito,
 while I am busy, bent, on my knees,
 or on my belly tracing what is wrong.
 And thinking all the while: it is better thus.
 Dead silence, broken by a hammerblow.
 Dead stillness, which heals the hammerblows.

Somehow, playing the role of the gasfitter-poet has worked. *You* are there. As he starts out to work (write) in the public service mask he has chosen so that he might

reach *you*, he has a clear sense of *your* presence; he sees *you* standing there. From the language of the sonnet, it seems that he is first thinking of *you* as a potential partner of desire. The way to this reception (which would fulfill him) is through his gasfitting (imagined as a poetry of sensuous love). However, this thought immediately asserts its risk. It is the Stoic sensibility. Too much desire is painful, even threatening. Gas (and love or desire) is dangerous, and working as a gasfitter-poet in this manner immediately poses the threat of death. The mortality of this desired *you* as well as of the "I" becomes immediately clear in the experience of desire. The space they share seems to be turning into a grave. The connection of the *you* of desire and the poem-voice is real, especially at the outset. However, giving himself over to the gasfitter-poet role as a means of reaching *you*, the work which the mask has pressed upon him (closing a leak, finishing a poem) becomes overwhelming. The *you* in the "circling eyes" of the poet-- the *you* of his sensual desire is never really reached or touched, nor have *you* a name. The *you* in Sonnet II has only been distinguished as an other (the advance over the *you* of Sonnet I, for it is perceived as autonomously standing). The "we," that is, the imagined but as yet unexperienced and unknown communion sought (and the poetic voice hopes, mutually sought), is "misting up." "Beslaan" (5; 835) may refer to an external misting as if something were leaking into the room like steam (which a gasfitter would have to close) or the internal steaming of desire (which could be what the poet seeks to enclose in his poem). The poem goes on as if *you* had gotten mixed up with the work. The work has become the imagined object of desire. For the poet, this would mean *you* have become the poem. The work requires its own

attention and I lose the desired communion with *you*, in the consumation of the work. In so doing, a mutual incognito continues. Intimacy seems fearful. We cannot know each other this way. Preoccupation with reaching *you* as the reader/judge/lover of his 'gedichten' seems to be generating fear that his identity as a gasfitter is vulnerable. So, it is better to keep working to close the hole (finish the poem). He continues to work, writing the poem, which encloses this longing and anxiety. *You* have entered the poem. Each blow of the hammer (typewriter) is disturbing, the desire for *you* is being sublimated in the poem. Each silence (reflection) at the end of a typing sequence is part of a healing (the fixing, closing, finishing of the poem).

III

Shall I send the dwelling under water?
 Or shall I beat holes in the gasline?
 I see the fault, must tend to the fittings
 and quickly undo thinking's error.

Then there would appear in the papers later:
 "Through unknown causes a fitter was found,
 in the practice of his own existence,
 death through suffocation. In the apart-
 ment adjoining, the same bitter

fate fell to the lot of the landlady.
 She lay face down with her hand before her,

which clutched a letter that began this way:

'However wide the world, I come round again.'

It seems she was surprised while reading it

and there can be no talk about adultery."

Sonnet III continues the narrative line of this ballad-- the story of the gasfitter-poet's reaching for *you*. The poetic voice is still wrestling with his desire for *you*, the perceived but still unidentified other, whose reality seems only approachable in his gasfitter work. Shall he reach *you* by causing a crisis, a flooding or a gassing? Stanley Wiersma's reading of the Ballade van de gasfitter suggests that this sonnet is key to what he takes to be its highly autobiographical texture (311-312). He supports his interpretation with an analysis of the connection between the poem's form (the only 15 line poem in the Ballade) and the date of Achterberg's violent crime (December 15); and by Achterberg's use of the details of an actual crime, reported two days earlier in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, for the gasfitter's imagined news report in lines 5 to 15. These seem strong external indications that the poet's life history was here on his mind. Whether or not this is the case, the question of the connection between personal history and poetic text is surely one that would be explored in the sort of poetic self-reflection proposed to be the story of the Ballade van de gasfitter. However, the text does not support any reduction of the identity of the gasfitter to that of Gerrit Achterberg pursuing forgiveness for his crime. Two-thirds of this sonnet contains the gasfitter's imagined newspaper account of his contemplated gassing or drowning as an attempt to reach *you*. As he plays out how the newspaper might

determine history, he changes his mind. *You* become even more evasive and mysterious when the gasfitter thinks about using personal crisis as the subject of his wordfitting. For example, how could his killing *you*, the "landlady" be presented? How could he communicate a feeling that he had killed himself as well? And to whom would that distinction matter? What "pipe" (story line) should he follow? Perhaps he should present *your* death as drowning, or asphyxiation and not exactly as it *really* happened? As a gasfitter working among all those pipes (possibilities of poems, closings, containings), what closure best attains *you*? What is the truth of "my" past? And in what fiction may "I" best enclose that? And does that bring "me" to *you*? In this sonnet, the gasfitter seems making the same reflection as Yeats in "The Man and the Echo"-- on personal history and its relation to his poetry:

All I have said or done,
 Now that I am old and ill,
 Turns into a question till
 I lie awake night after night
 And never get the answers right.
 Did that play of mine send out
 Certain men the English shot?
 Did words of mine put too great a strain
 On that woman's reeling brain?
 Could my spoken words have checked
 That whereby a house lay wrecked? (6-15; 632)

As did Yeats, the gasfitter catches himself in this futile train of thought ("thinking's error" "denkfout") and returns to the journey of self-making (19-36; 632-633).

To this point in that journey, the gasfitter has become aware that the *you* he seeks has wider referentiality than to the Jansen family, or to a desired sexual partner, actual or ideal, historical or imagined. The images he conjures up in the "newspapers" clarify the poet's awareness of a larger community, for they are the media of public reception. However, new anxieties have emerged. He has come to realize that whatever he does (writes) will be subject to community interpretation. Whether the "I" follows an autobiographical track or not, the public will likely read that into his work. More importantly, the "I" realizes that there is both autonomy as well as fashion to public interpretation. Later, in Sonnet XI, this recognition, a continuing feature of the Ballade, is formulated well: "Gasworks run on their on axis" ("De gasfabrieken draaien op hun as" 1; 844). They may even see the letter he imagines held by his "landlady" (possibly, another poetic text) as a sign of some secret relationship. They won't say anything about adultery. Perhaps, the letter is enough for their gossiping. They will think it a letter from him, perhaps a poem, and will connect the gasfitter with the "landlady" anyway, even in surprising ways. Public gossip has its own subtleties. Concern about reception (reaching *you*) now includes the gasfitter's anxiety over community pressure, which will show its presence more than once in this work.

Perhaps, it is because of the world's words about what we do (the poet has a good idea of how newspapers work, and about what makes for a good story) that we disguise ourselves. Must human beings wear gasfitter-poet uniforms in the process of becoming ourselves, protected from a voracious media-*ted* world, forever spinning on

its own axis? Does the poet hide behind the poet-persona? Is the poetic pursuit of *you* a pursuit of the possibility of authentic communion, or a way to control what others think of him? Does the poet really aim at himself? Or at constructing a self for public acceptance? Community pressure and individual concern about it are the enemy of self-definition.

Another observation prompted by Sonnet III is that poet as well as gasfitter must face death. Personal love is risk heavy. Writing seriously about it cannot avoid its death. The death of any love is not an abstraction. It is specific, individual, and may well entail suffering and confusion. The dramatic casting of this and Sonnet II do not therefore seem overdrawn.

IV

Finally, the small hole is closed.

Slowly, I try to get my stuff together.

My legs are as heavy as lead pipes.

Drops of sweat are rolling down my face.

As if performing something superhuman,

I turn with an explanatory sign

around to you, but you are there no more.

There is but the light of late afternoon.

I hoist the tool bag up from the floor

and lift in on my shoulder. In leaving,

my footsteps wake up a hollow singing.

The door shuts with its click. The street noises
seem further off. A heavy fog hangs there.

I see I have made a mistake this time.

The aberrant experiment ("denkfout") has been dealt with, "the small hole has been closed, the small poem is done." The "I," possessed and motivated by the desire to reach *you* wants *you* to see and approve how hard and well he has worked; but *you* are gone. He cannot find *you*. *You* have completely disappeared from his physical space. Were *you*, after all, only his desire, and has the poem satisfied that for now? All that is left of *you* is the poem. It is as if *you* died. Are *you* always only what he writes to find? Are *you* only what he constructs in his work-- some Jansen or other, a desired one, a remembered or imagined story about a landlady, or some approving other? Even though he now only sees the light of the late afternoon, and not *you*, he still wanted *you* to be there, to hear how making a poem, sealing in its energy, was work; even, something "superhuman." He looks to *you* for appreciation. However, the fact is he does not see *you*. An absent *you* cannot confirm his work. Furthermore, what he had taken as a life and death crisis-- like gas or steam filling the room-- he now sees was possibly only the fog. He was mistaken. The opening quartet of sonnets has only established, for the gasfitter-poet, his desire, guilt and longing in the horizontal line of everyday experience. The *you* for whom he had undertaken a gasfitter's work has evaded him in this everyday dimension.

Home now, all well and good, just as I sit
 to have my dinner, the telephone rings.
 I answer it and in a normal way
 a new order sounds from the other end.

The director. His voice is hard and shrill
 with a subtle gentle undertone.
 "Go to the same street tomorrow, my son.
 You know how much importance I place in you."

No ass bumps itself twice on the same stone.
 It would be best, I did not stay here alone,
 but made a quick survey this evening
 of the apartment house risen from the ground
 across the way. Through the directory
 it shall all become clear to me by itself.

At the end of the opening quartet of sonnets, the quest of Sonnet I has not been fulfilled. Here in Sonnet V, a community presence which was abstractly exerting itself in the consciousness of the "I," especially in Sonnet III, is given here an autonomous voice. Through the "director" this community has asserted itself within the reception of the gasfitter-poet's work. The "director" represents the assertion of the community that it is part of the *you* for whom he works, and who have a role in his identity. He is being told how to be a gasfitter, supportively, assuringly, but nonetheless told.

Furthermore, it is also the case that the "I's" identity is no longer only his concern, but that of the community, of whose ways Sonnet III has already implied suspicion. The voice of the "director" clearly directs the gasfitter to continue his work the following day, in the same place, in the everyday way of a gasfitter. In a way, his work has reached some *you*, a *you* that seems to declare itself to him. Importantly, it accepts him as a gasfitter. However, on the gasfitter's own terms, his experience as a gasfitter did not fulfill him. It had revealed him to have been full of mistaken assumptions. The exact identity of the director (manager of public works, head of the gasfitter's union; or, derivatively, through the metaphor for poet-- publisher, pastor, or even some interior voice of social conscience) is not developed beyond its power, or rather assumption of power to direct him. That ambiguity recognizes the complex structure of community pressure. Though complex, it is somehow integrated and can speak with one voice. Institutions move "around their own axis." The centers of social pressure may shift. They may even be somewhat abstract or unknown. The voice of the community is telling the gasfitter-poet to go on in the way that it, not he, judges best. The ambiguity surrounding social authority in this sonnet, which is only named by its force (directing), is a wonderful device to mirror the complexities, difficulties and mysteries of interpersonal life. In terms of the dramatic content of this sonnet, the telephone directive confronts the gasfitter with a level of community interest somewhat more compelling and threatening than he had first imagined. One of the problems with disguises, is that they carry expectations (for poets as well as gasfitters). Our occupations sometimes get in the way of our being ourselves, because they entail expectations deeply ingrained in the habits of our communities, expectations which

may run counter to the self's autonomy. This is exactly the focus of Yeats's "To a Friend whose Work has Come to Nothing." To hold on to one's sense of one's self in the face of public criticism is most difficult (... "turn away / And like a laughing string... Be secret and exult, / Because of all things known / That is most difficult" 10-11, 14-16; 291). "Ik" wants gasfitter work for his own reason, confident he will find the evasive *you* through it. He will not go back to those places in which he first expected his gasfitter's goal to be accomplished. He will not make that mistake again. He decides, in response to this pressure, to resume his quest immediately, not even waiting for the morning. He had been working within the customary practice of a gasfitter; now he departs from that, consumed by his own "ultimate goal" ("einddoel" VII, 4; 840). He will go over to the new high-rise, and look at all those names and numbers on the directory board. He is sure those names and numbers will be clues to who *you* are and how he may reach *you*. His inner sense of *you* is strong, and he is guided by it. *You* are at least in him in a strong enough way to direct him... *You* are first within. The self certainly knows the *you* he seeks better than the "director." The poetic self remains a lonely wanderer.

VI

That night all I came to know at all
 was that the concierge slept. He was tired
 and had forgotten the numbers in his head.
 He lay turned over on an arm. Stymied

I looked through the window from the outside. There

a soft wind blew. It rustled a little
across the ground and nearby, negligently,
a live person, one who could have helped me

out of my trouble, if it had not
become so lonely and dark
for me to waken him with a whisper.
He would lose his head. That would not do.
It would also cost the director his job.
No one heard me go away. Did he look up?

The "I" is blocked. There is no way for him to get to see the directory of names, which he now believes encode *you*. The concierge, who might have the numbers in his head, is asleep. The concierge is a person of responsibility, well positioned in the community; to disturb him might cost the director his job. The director is sort of a community sponsor of the gasfitter poet, and would be implicated in any gasfitter behavior which the concierge found disturbing. The concierge also represents the unresponsive other. The "ik" needed him. If the director of Sonnet V somehow represents misreception, the concierge represents nonreception. There is nothing else to give him a clue as to where to begin to work in this strange place to which his quest has brought him. The censoring presence of the community troubles his mind, and keeps him from waking the sleeping concierge who might well have been of help. "Ik" cannot afford to have the director lose his job for he would then lose his, and he needs the gasfitter role as his way to reach *you*. The gasfitter still

believes he must continue incognito to protect his true self and he believes that of *you* as well. As the "I" turns away, thwarted again in his search, he finds himself wondering, in some paranoia, whether he is already in trouble in the community given the way he practices gasfitting: "Did [the concierge] look up?"

VII

On the road at the crack of dawn,
 sleep still in my eyes, the streets appear
 to me this first hour to be beyond the law,
 although somewhere the final goal has prevailed.

That is an unprecedented safe feeling.
 Some member of the board cycles past.
 I say hello, but he scarcely looks up.
 Certainly he quarreled again with his wife.

Perhaps he finds it rather suspicious
 that he comes across me in neighborhoods
 where a fitter has no business to be.
 A young and reckless generation lives there
 by another light. I have been spotted.
 Therefore I have turned my steps toward the town.

In this sonnet, the wandering poet-gasfitter finds himself in an alien place, where it turns out that there is no need for a gasfitter. The strange morning streets

somehow make him feel like an outlaw. Paradoxically, although he has pushed his gasfitter role to its limit, without apparent success, he feels at peace within himself about the purpose of all his wandering. He seems at peace with the "ultimate goal" ("einddoel") of his gasfitter role. It has led him to a neighborhood where "a young and reckless generation" live a new way. In this new stage of his sustained pursuit of *you*, he finds himself among non-gasfitter people, an unresponsive audience, foreign linguistically, or generationally. There is some hint that the gasfitter-self is prepared to travel further in this new direction, but his fears of the community, which has expressed its expectations of him and whose directives he has disobeyed, remain. Spotted by one of the "members of the board" (it's alright for him to cycle out of the community) he knows he has been observed violating the community's sense of his public service, and so starts back towards its everyday life.

VIII

I am now approaching the last option.
 White pushbuttons, in ferocious array,
 challenge me as if a set of false teeth.
 My fingers are waging a grim struggle.

While I am standing and biting my nails,
 the door suddenly springs opens. A maid
 is putting the ashcan outside. Without this
 I would not have done anything, but time

is short. Flustered I ask her where the gap is.

She points upward in vague derision,

that can be taken to mean: You are touched.

I know this well; that's why I pray to God.

The elevator moves upward to the ending

which no fitter has yet been able to close.

He wanders back to the high-rise, to get a look at the numbers in the daylight; still trusting that he will know *your* name when he sees it. Surely *your* name will lead him to *you*, he hopes, still wandering with the dim light of *you* that leads him to look in on all the "windows" he passes. The Yeatsean persona summoned figures to his tower whom he both defined and named; Achterberg's *you* still has no face. Although the use of the second person pronoun form brings *you* directly into the poem, it does not identify *you*. What identity *you* have is entirely from within "my" guessing, shadowing "my" need. He becomes terrified by the number board he thought would direct his quest for *you*. It is his last option. Has he not been found out? And has he not violated the community's directive? He struggles with some surreal delusion born out desperation. It seems no use, he is reduced to nail-biting anxiety. Out of nowhere, a houseworker comes out to empty the ashes, just as he is about to give up. It is important to remember that he has no business (as community gasfitter) being there. There is thus no way he can explain what it is he is doing there. He can only revert to what he knows. Acting as a gasfitter, he inquires of her where the "gat" ("hole") is, as if he were there to fix it. Since there is no gas leak, she does not make sense out of

"gat" and hears "God" instead. She signals upward, as if a stupid question, from a rather weird gentleman. He believes that he has stumbled across the clue he had been seeking in the numbers. He turns her misheard word into his greatest challenge-- to fill a space no gasfitter has ever filled. It leads him to believe that "God" is the *you* he has been pursuing, who has been hiding in the Jansens, in his desire, in remembered love, in his past self, in his fantasized approving other, and in his cabalistic other. He believes that he will be able to enclose God ("dichten") by his gasfitter-work this very day.

IX

The higher I rise the greater becomes
 the distance between you and me. Life
 feels enclosed in nickel and steel.
 The structure is not one rivet too short.

Here is no gas. God is the hole and pours
 out his depths upon me in order to draw
 out of an arrogant fitter how elevated
 he becomes floor after floor.

Story after story goes by
 I know not where or what I may begin.
 A final word, perhaps will come to me
 if I ask him about the first cause.

A shock goes right through me. I must get out
and leave it all to his decision.

In the manner of the Petrarchan sonnets used as the formal structure of each poem, this first tercet of the final two tercets provides the 'volta' of the work. It begins the turn from the old self to the new that is the heart of this ballad. Something has happened. If God, up there, were the *you*, "I" (the "ik" of the sonnets) should be drawing closer in this vertical quest. The opposite is happening, the distance between *you* and "me" becomes greater, the higher up I go. The elevator carrying the "I" to the climax of his quest (now turned mystical) images the poet's body, but also the poem, and creation. The body is the sealed container of the self, characteristic image in Achterberg's dualism. The elevator, containing the gasfitter-poet and all the pathos and dignity of his quest, equally symbolizes the poem-- this ballad. Like the elevator, it is a structure that is containing ("dichten") the poet for us ("not one rivet too short"). That is both a reference to the sonnet style and a marked characteristic of his work. I believe it also carries the poet's sense of creation. "Life" connotes 'human life' and 'reality' in general. The elevator-container is an emblem of Achterberg's sense of divine art. Everything is structured, down to its last "rivet." Within that structure the swirling of chaos, is brought under control, by God's gasfitter art.

The gasfitter-poet's quest has led to both illumination and personal trauma. Going up further and further alienates him from the horizontal daily plane (from Jansen, director, the people like the maid and concierge and perhaps any you or I who read this story). When he reaches the top, there is, of course, no gas to enclose. Being a gasfitter under false pretenses will now exact its toll. He discovers the idolatry

implied in thinking of "God" in the same way as "gas." God is empty. The grand expectations of his searching have brought him to experience the emptiness of God. That emptiness is humiliating, for it reveals the pretentiousness of the prior expectations of the persona. It is also humiliating because in the eyes of the housemaid and all the people in the building, he is some kind of lunatic, a gasfitter looking for "God" in a "hole" ("gat") in the roof. In the grip of his dark night, the "I" tries to save the dignity of his search by considering some trite philosophical question about the first cause. However, he also experiences illumination. Paradoxically, in his experience of emptiness he is in communion with God. God is pouring out his emptiness into the gasfitter-poet's consciousness. In this trauma of the breakdown of gasfitter (poetic) language, he is closest to God. To experience God's emptiness is the most profound, if most terrifying experience of God. In the elevation of God, he encounters himself and accepts his individual reality ("I must get out / and leave it all to his decision"). The gasfitter has resigned himself to give up his disguise which has led him to humiliation. He surrenders his gasfitter self to God's absolute otherness. He has been received by God; but God is far from *you*. God is absolute unidentifiability. There is not a single word that would fit, not a single thing to write to achieve the ending "no fitter has yet been able to close." Experience of transcendence has been an experience of negative communion and surrender, ending his public career as a gasfitter.

X

Room after room the doors are opening up.

People of every nation, tongue and race

speak in unison, as if I were a ghost:
 you have no story here to pawn on us.

Is this why I am crawling underground?
 With the descent into the pit of glass
 a bag of dirty wash lays at my feet.
 Hear how they move above every which way.

I hang around the neighborhood a bit.
 I see clearly it has meanwhile become midday.
 School is out. The rush hour is approaching.
 Children, their mothers calling them across,
 prattle. Bicycles ring. Autos hurry a-
 long past me, as if I stood there for years.

Sonnet X narrates the subsequent experience of "ik's" loss of his social identity. The gasfitter mask has become useless, he is treated as if he were a ghost. The work which "ik" sought to do (the poem he sought to write in which he would find *you*) is impossible. No one in the building, a symbol of the world, understands. "Ik's" desolation is total. There is, he seems to feel, no reception of his work possible anywhere, not from the women of his fantasy and memory, not from the community, not from God. Everyone will find the story of his quest false, especially the mystical experience of God's absence. It is at this point that the gasfitter senses his identity, although not the one he sought to author; rather it is one determined by the world

which is incapable of understanding eccentricity regarding its expectations.

Interpersonal life becomes replete with masks. He is in their gaze, the epitome of an object, like something in a glass cage ("de put van glas" X, 6; 843). He is a used-up gasfitter, a "sack of dirty wash." He has been categorized and rejected. He has descended into hell.

The style of this work is somewhat decided here. It is clear that there is no audience for a straight confessional tale of the difficult, even circuitous journey of the gasfitter-poet. In part, this is due to his own ambivalence about his poetic identity. Perhaps, he has misrepresented to himself what poetry could contain. The personal reception he needed seemed possible to him only under the disguise of poetry. However, poetry of the every day (I; 834), poetry of desire (II; 835), biographical poetry and poetry of romance (III; 836), self-reflexive poetry (displaying its own workings as the gasfitter's tour de force in IV; 837), poetry of the modern city (V and VI; 838-839), poetry of postmodern life (VII; 840), poetry of symbols and the surreal (V and VIII; 838, 841), and poetry of transcendence (IX, 842) have each failed to bring *you* to "me." How does he now live in the community, the horizontal plane of daily life? His mystical awareness implied *you* would have to be found there, for the "higher" he ascended, the further away from *you* he became. The transcendent God was not *you*. Perhaps, he should leave the question where experience of God has led him: to surrender to the paradox of the divine, the "todo y nada" of the mystics. Perhaps, *you* have the same paradoxical character. In any case, an old self must be let go. A new self, the poet undisguised, could tell the story of the gasfitter on the

horizontal plane, where the "I" must live its post mystical life. I believe that is how the Ballade resolves its story. Such a reading provides a coherent understanding of the ambiguity of the voice of the poem after Sonnet XII, and yet maintains the unity of the poetic personality being reflected in the Ballade. The new self, having surrendered the gasfitter's mask, can try to bring into the world some understanding of the gasfitter's longing. In fact, it will be by looking into the "window" of himself that he will find *you*.

To come back to the narrative line-- as the defeated gasfitter goes outside again, he sees things now as objects, that is, as they are without his looking at them as a Narcissus. He is able to see clearly the activity of the midday streets ("School is out. The rush hour is approaching. etc."). He finds himself reflected in nothing, nothing reflects him back. He is completely alienated. The "I" feels as if he had no face in the world for anyone to recognize. All pass him by as they would a utility pole that has stood on that spot for years, anonymously.

XI

Gasworks run on their own axis.

Then I saw my purpose in a hundred pieces

And with nothing to hope for

I have slinked away as a beaten dog,

a vacuum must have intruded itself there.

Not a single trade coming along there fits.

Children are playing in a circle once again

and turn again as if from memory.

I take the shortest way to the office.

The director personally invites me in
and submits me to a mild questioning.

I have no further lies to invent.

There is a flow behind his glasses, as if he cries

He presses my hand, pulls himself together and half-smiles.

Besides learning the impossibility of containing ("dichten") "God," the "I" has come to see more clearly the ways of communities. Social structures are weighted toward their own preservation. Anyone who breaks the circle of their ways will suffer. The "I" is totally defeated by the solidity of the community's habits. Like the playing children, the community (gasworks) turns in a circle as if from memory. Yet, through his experience, his own unmasking, the horizontal plane of everyday life has become clearer to the "I." He tries to find on this ordinary plane some other trade to fit him. However, what seems to have happened is that the emptiness he is experiencing, both of God and himself in the world, has moved inside him. There is nothing he can do but carry this emptiness, living out God's decisions as well as the verdict of the community. There is no more need to lie. He can admit the truth and accept his fate.

XII

The managing board of the christian trade union
calls all gas- and waterfitters today
to an emergency meeting, announces

that one of them has broken the rules

by appearing with his instruments

in any place he found whatsoever

and demands, now that the whole body has suffered

confession of guilt on this basis.

For the first time in the history of the trade,

gas- and waterfitters are kneeling,

without looking for a hole at the same time;

solidarity in every corner.

Then, the chairperson says: sin no more.

And they depart, completely at their ease.

The gasfitter of Sonnets I-XI has now disappeared into the ballad, he has become an object within the narrative. With this first sonnet of the final tercet of sonnets, his personal voice has left the story. The gasfitter speaks no more to us. The split of old self and new self has occurred in the poem as the new self presents his old gasfitter self as the object of the community's need for atonement, for some ritual act to restore the wound of the gasfitter's sin against it.

The force of community continues to assert itself in the Ballade. The gasfitter's lawlessness has threatened this Christian community in such a way that it needs to formally shore up its "solidarity," to mend the circle he has broken. The sense of the relationship between the individual (especially the creative individual who prizes a

self-authored relationship) and the community that is at work here seems to be that of Bergson's The Two Sources of Morality and Religion. The life of a community involves the interplay of conserving energies (e.g., the board of directors' enforcement of gasfitter rules, and the group ritual) and the creative energies of self expression (e.g., the gasfitter setting out in Sonnet V on his own course). Although opposite energies, the health of both community and individual depends on their reception of each other.

The identification of the offended community as Christian is important for Achterberg. The ending of "Fata Morgana" and its resolve to "hold on to [God's] image, which we saw in each other's eyes," may well be thought by this community to be theologically presumptuous. Many might see a danger to the conservation of Christian values in the kind of poetic innovation which would try to find God in the eyes of human lovers, and to claim sanction for this in an interpretation of Jesus. This would be for many a blasphemous projection, something a director of a Christian union would want to monitor-- might the gasfitter presume to find "God" in sexual union? (cf., Yeats's trinitarian image of creation: "Godhead on Godhead in sexual spasm begot / Godhead. Some shadow fell" "Ribh in Ecstasy," 5-6; 557).

XIII

Years later we find the fitter again
 in the odd fellows home. His hair is white;
 a childish fellow, who frets over a street map
 spelling names, letter by letter.

He has to share table and bed with
 postman, collection agent and plumber.
 He continually gets the shit beat out of him
 because he always finds fault with the food.

There, he is being cared for till his death.
 Funeral and sick benefits repay
 the trouble, to show charity
 and to keep the warden from strangling him.
 Public works provided shelter for him.
 He may have chewing tobacco, as he wishes.

As in Sonnet XII, the voice does not refer to himself in the first person. The "I" of the previous sonnets has vanished from the ballad, coincidentally, with the gasfitter disguise. As in the previous sonnet, the unmasked, resigned gasfitter is the focus. The story of the ballad has now clearly become the story of him. The voice of this sonnet identifies himself with its readers: "we find the fitter again." The voice includes himself with the "we" who are following the fitter's tale. As the following sonnet confirms, "we" are thought of as members of an ordinary enough human community, who might be found attending a burial service. "We" are among the Jansen family, the maid, the director. The use of "we" here in Sonnet XIII thus constructs, I maintain, all of that company into the *you* whom the Ballade van de gasfitter both seeks and directly addresses. It is very important to add that the "we" now includes the poetic "I" within this *you*-- the poetic self now free from the gasfitter

mask. The voice of the new poetic self invites all those attending to and reflecting upon the story of the gasfitter, including himself, to imagine how the gasfitter would have lived out his life, had he given up poetry altogether, just carrying the emptiness of XII within him. If the gasfitter retired from gasfitting, he would have had to live out the decision of the community. The community, thinking itself healed by his resignation and its own atonement, would confirm its circular habits by supporting him with its charity; after all, they are Christian. The tone of the poetic voice is heavily ironic, signifying the empathy of the new voice with the old self. Of course, even though resigned to God's will, and accepting that he would no longer experiment with poetry as a disguise of attaining a full personal life, the old self would not have had to lose passion, and would likely have obsessed over clues encoded in name and numbers, in symbols. Denied his poetry, and having to live according to the expectations of the community, the new self can see the old self becoming cranky and difficult, living out his dark night among them.

XIV

Finally, his eyes are closed for good.
 The mouth fell open, but was tied shut.
 He was measured and found suitable
 to fill up a coffin of six feet.

And everyone paid him their last respects:
 Jansen, maid and director, stood together
 Allied with those of the apartment house;

I, also, in black, with cane and high hat.

At the grave all kept silence from then on.

People stepped and watched critically how

the fitter slowly sank into the ground,

as if to find fault with him still,

now that he had filled up his final hole.

He rests in God. Earth covers him over.

The new voice identifies himself in this sonnet in the first person, confirming his identification with the person who spoke through the mask of the gasfitter. The "I," "also in black, with cane and high hat," imagining himself at the burial of his old gasfitter self pays his respects with the rest of the community. He is imagining what would have happened if he had died, and never practiced poetry again, simply having lived out his alienated life. Their verdict would be the same, critical even in his death. He is respectful of that old self, and certainly understood his alienation. However, the new self does not wear the mask anymore. He shows us by the existence of this ballad that he did not simply live out his life as a failed gasfitter, according to the community's expectations. He has remained in the community, and understands their ways, he has learned the limits of poetry and he has learned the importance of self-acceptance. But his old gasfitter self is important to understand; for the community's expectations (its "circles") should be challenged. The poet wants "us" the readers to receive the gasfitter, to become the *you* he reached for in that disguise, to acknowledge his quest as part of a world "we" share with him. He speaks now not in

disguise, but as a poet on his own terms. Self-understanding is a form of self-reception. By accepting himself he has become part of the *you* his old self strived for. The vehicle of this self-creation is this ballad.

In the burial of his old self (the disguised self, the self fearful of the community's eyes, the self who would not accept himself and his legitimacy as a poet on his own terms) the poet-self also accepts his experience of the limits of poetic language. It is not of God, for example, that it can ever speak, for God is outside the gasworks. He is the hole in which the whole is. He is an infinite emptiness (to our gaswork eyes) as necessary to our life as the elevator shaft to the elevator. That outsideness is beyond language. While a poetry of transcendence is impossible, it is possible to write of the human search for completeness.

In his analysis, "De tragedie van de gasfitter," Andries Middeldorp notes the import of Achterberg's choice of the "volksballade" form. It is consistent with the epic-tragic story of the gasfitter, and its intended universality. Somewhat analogously, Yeats's choice of ancient Irish material was meant in part to convey a 'timeless' air to his work, allowing it a post-modern referentiality. Achterberg's use of this medieval form, one common to other literary traditions than his own, has the effect of lifting the story of the gasfitter beyond its spatio-temporal frame. Echoed as well in the choice of the sonnet structure (see above, 125) is the centrality of love to the "volksballade" (Bakker/Middeldorp, Nieuw Kommentaar, 175).

The Ballade van de gasfitter now confirms the poetics already drawn from Achterberg's other work. As does "Drievoudig verbond," the Gasfitter has involved an alliance of "u en de dood en ik" as the focus of poetic reflection ("en denken wat

geleden moest, / voor ieder tevreden was"). The healed poet of the gasfitter captures what he thinks poetry might be by offering us this Ballade. Enclosed carefully ("dichten") is the story of his own terror, and of his experience of "God" as "gat" not "gas." In that "gat" ("God") is the gasfitter's final resting place. But the gasfitter also rests in the poem. Achterberg seems to have constructed a connection between the poem and "God," particularly in regard to "God's" emptiness-- the "final hole" ("laatste gat" XIV, 13; 847) which the gasfitter has filled. For Achterberg, Jesus is the incarnation of a God whom human beings would otherwise experience as the gasfitter does in Sonnet IX, "pouring out his depths upon us" (5-6; 842); or as the persona of "Triniteit" who feels God only in the relentless application of his law (God scherpt Zijn wet op deze steen, / die mijn bestaan geworden is" 1-2; 601). For human beings there is a terrifying emptiness surrounding our self-making. About the final context of our journey, the divine emptiness surrounding us, we can only conjure abstractions about the "first cause" (IX, 12; 842) about a God of power and might, but not of human beings. Into or out of that nothingness, Jesus comes, incarnating the energy and light of love; and telling us (if we believe "Fata Morgana") that our human love holds God's image. The Ballade van de gasfitter makes no direct mention of that Christological poetic. It rather exemplifies it. It is a "deze Christus." The explicit appearance of the name is not important ("Code"), the dramatic tension is. The gasfitter is buried in this poem, and is left to rest there as in God's will. The poem is the earth which covers him. But the poem was made in the hope of rising in *you*.

Particularly powerful for Achterberg is a sense of triumph of the poem over death. His epitaph, first appearing in Osmose, is similar in intent and form to Yeats's

"To be Carved on a Stone at Thoor Ballylee" (406).

Grafschrift

Van dood in dood gegaan, totdat hij stierf.

De namen afgelegd, die hij verwierf.

Behoudens deze steen, waarop gefschreven:

de dichter van het vers, dat niet bedierf.

Epitaph

He went from death to death, until he died.

He laid aside the names, which he had attained.

Except for this stone, on which is written:

Poet of verse, that did not decay. (247)

A trust that there will always be someone (some *you*) to receive the verse seems clear enough, and the will to reach over time is written in stone, for both poets. What is more forcefully communicated is poetry's intention and capacity for this victory over mortality.

Were the gasfitter forgotten, and not resurrected in the poem, his quest would have vanished with him. The word of the poem reinstates the personal quest, affirming the value of human experience, even when broken or alienated. The poem brings to our eyes (in the reading/hearing, we join the *you* of its desire) all the complexity of the personal other which the poem reaches for to be complete, and to complete the

self-making of the poet who created it. Who is the *you* of the Gasfitter, and of his other poetry, the *you* of the "verhaal van ons"? Achterberg seems to tell us it is the personal other for which the poem longs. All of "us" who "years later find the fitter again" are within the company of its *you*. *You* finally is the entire community of the poem's reception, unidentifiable in the poem, because--at the end-- it must await what it cannot structure, *your* reading.

Conclusion

Comparative study of the connection between the poetic *self*, the *other* for whom it reaches in the poems, and the *world* in which that communication is projected to occur, permits some conclusions about the character of poetic mission as inscribed in the lyric poems of Yeats and Achterberg. For each poet, the main determinant of the character of the world of the poem has been seen to be its attitude towards temporality. The anchoring of the poetic self in an imagined eternity becomes crucial to the conception of its task, indeed will define the poetic mission. Poetic effort, however, remains short of its goal and the poetic self unfulfilled without the reception of the poem. Since both sets of texts are equally reflexive of the poetic process, this anxiety over reception shows in the poems themselves. As with any work of art, the poem itself is the site of its reception. By no means a solitary example in Achterberg's work, the Ballade van de gasfitter has been seen to involve sustained reflection on the problem of reception (cf., Chapter 10). Poems like "To Ireland in the Coming Times" (Variorum, 137), "The Grey Rock" (270), "The Tower" (409), "Among School Children" (443), "Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn" (554), "The Man and the Echo" (632), to name a few, show that a similar concern with reception often becomes explicit in Yeats's work. The 1914 collection of poems, Responsibilities (269) provides perhaps the best example of a sustained concern of the Yeatsean voice concerning its desired other. Once again, what distinguishes the nature of the poetic self's aspiration for the reception of his work (the reached-for *you*) is the alliance of that *self* and the *other* in a *world* which is imagined to transcend death. Whatever

wisdom or energy or beauty the poem is thought to capture is conveyed by both authors as coming from a deathless source in the imagination of the poet. Against the threat of death or the tyranny of the times, against oblivion and the erosion of love (the "sorrows of time"), differing constructions of the eternal offer differing versions of historical experience; and thus, differing understandings of the poetic mission. In this conclusion, I would first like to give summary expression to the conception of the poet's task as found in the texts of Yeats and Achterberg. Then, I would reflect on one aspect of their poetries in which they seem quite near to each other, a textual fascination with nothingness. Finally, I would reflect on what appears most different in their poetry, their conceptions of the other.

Myself must I remake

Till I am Timon and Lear

Or that William Blake

Who beat upon the wall

Till Truth obeyed his call ("An Acre of Grass," 14-18; 576).

For Yeats, the conception of the task of the poet ultimately left by his texts is the task of self-making. Since we find ourselves already marked by habits and experience before critical activity becomes focused, self-making is an activity of "remaking." The place of that remaking is the poem. The "Timon," the "Lear" and the "Blake" into which Yeats would forge himself are, like the "Hanrahan" of "The Tower," creations of the poet (57; 411). What these mixed literary and historical 'others' of "An Acre of Grass" have in common is their status as Yeatsian models for the work of self-definition. He himself has chosen those images of self-reconstruction,

and he himself has set their poses. It is the poet who calls into the life of his poem *that* "William Blake who beat upon the wall till Truth obeyed his call." The "anti-self," as conceived in "Ego Dominus Tuus" (74; 371), is that power in the imagination from which Yeats calls up such images of self-exploration. What gives transcendental scope to the "anti-self" (for, though "most unlike," it embraces "All I seek" 74-76) is the construction of the historical experience of human personality as eternal recurrence. The idea of eternal recurrence allowed Yeats to imagine one-half of the poetic personality tied to its "ancestral night" ("A Dialogue of Self and Soul," 20; 478), as any phase of the moon is tied to its dark side. The soul is a "darkness," "where all thought is done" (7-8; 477). In a way which evokes the negative mystical insight of the "gasfitter" the soul is the personality's tie with "Heaven" and thus with the eternity which encompasses the whole of history (God is not its "gas," but the "hole" in which history turns):

Hier zit geen gas. God is het gat en stort
 zijn diepten op mij uit om te beleven
 aan een verwaten fitter hoe verheven
 hijzelve bij iedere etage wordt

Here is no gas. God is the hole and pours
 out His depth upon me in order to draw
 out of an arrogant fitter how elevated
 he becomes floor after floor

(VG, Ballade van de gasfitter, "IX," 5-8; 842).

This "Heaven" is a darkness to thought, and a confusion to descriptive language.

However, it is, the "Soul" reminds the "Self," the generating source of all form and meaning:

Such fullness in that quarter overflows
 And falls into the basin of the mind
 That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
 For intellect no longer knows
Is from Ought, or Knower from the Known--
 That is to say, ascends to Heaven (33-38; 478).

While the intellect "no longer knows" therein, either what is or ought to be the case, the Yeatsian darkness is "rich" ("The Gyres," 22; 565). It is the "fabulous" and "formless" dark ("Two Songs from A Play," II, 5; 438) which is the life of poetic imagination. It is this history-generating dark out of which the "anti-self" comes. The figure of the "anti-self" gives metaphysical status to all that the "Self" is not, and all that the times are not. It lends authority to the poet's critique and substance to his longings. It allows the poet to imagine his own personality as symbolic, and eventually make of it mythic material. As Peter Ure has it: "this deliberate stylization of himself as the mythological learned man, recurs again and again in the later poetry" (63). The laboratory of self-making is the personality of the poet. As if to an echo, the poet speaks to and hears the "Rocky Voice" (lunar emblem of Yeatsian eternity): "What do we know but that we face / One another in this place?" (39, 40; 633). He speaks to and listens to his *self*.

Despite the self-focus of his determination of the poet's task, Yeats deeply

sought and believed in his social role. However transformed his conception of this role became in the events of his life, it remained true that Yeats sought a place of social honor for his work: to make himself (that is, the poet he had made himself) an icon of wisdom won from unrelenting pursuit of his opposite self (a "self-ravaging" pursuit-- see "Meru," 563). Out of the vacillation that is the essence of the human personality (both fated in time, and free from that fate, a creature not of just one moment, but of eternity), it is the poet's task to forge himself on the "anvil of the world" (WQ II, 204; 42). In the language of Yeatsian symbols, this would mean for him to become the Cuchulain of the spirit-- to be as honored by his people as Oliver Sheppard's mythic statue of Cuchulain in the Dublin Post Office. His poetry is an heroic creation won out of the suffering of the poet. It is with his own "deep considering mind" that he plumbs the "labyrinth of another's being" ("The Tower," 106, 112; 413), and it is his own mind that "stands in judgment on his soul" ("The Man and the Echo," 33; 633). A prayer for his daughter might well be his prayer for himself and for his poetry: that it may recover "radical innocence" and learn "at last that it is self-delighting, / Self-appeasing, self-affrighting, / And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will" (66-69; 405). This is the task of his poetry. It is a work of the "measuring" mind celebrated in "The Statues" (610). Self as self-judging is the essence of Yeatsian freedom, the self coming to know the essential one-ness of its personality, like the '1-ness' of Achterberg's "Mozaïek, that nothing that happens to us falls outside the essence of the soul that emerges from "God's holy fire" (see above, 130-131). The self-overcoming wisdom, the remade-self coming at last to understand and accept the necessity of his character. Like Cuchulain, human freedom

is tragic.

Whatever its merits as a general aesthetic principle, Sötemann's suggestion about the role of "lack" ("hoe groot de rol is die het tekort [verlangen, verlies] speelt in de poëzie")-- even that the "consciousness of something missing is the occasion for any creative work" (Sierksma, Commentaar, 213)-- certainly has applicability to the work of both Yeats and Achterberg. No less than the Yeatsian poetic self, the Achterbergian "I," the self of his poetic texts, consistently seeks to bridge the gap between desire and actuality by means of the poem. The figure of what is missing in Achterberg is a dead beloved, whose love, and especially whose forgiveness the poet needs for fulfillment. As poet, he keeps that hope alive on this side of the annihilating force of death. His task is to make the world contain her life-sustaining energy. The task of reaching this personal other is set for the poet by the struggles of daily life. Death is the divide between human life and understanding and completeness. Love dies too soon and its confusions often not resolved. In the experience of its death, what or whom is loved becomes more clear. To the extent of our care for what is lost, we are forced to rethink the world in the light of that now absent energy. The poet's daily work is to make the world physically responsive to the importance of this no longer abstract longing. It was made concrete in its death. Despite the preoccupation of the "ik" with the other for whom he reaches, there is an interpersonal cast to the poetic mission for him; it is the preservation of "ons," ("we") in the face of mortality. This whole conception of poetic vocation and the importance to poetic language of the intimacy of human love is enabled for Achterberg by the imagination of the eternity of Jesus. Jesus is the figure of assurance in his poetry that death is a traversable horizon,

and that human love, in just the forms it is available in the world, is divine. On that ground, the poet seeks to make the temporal world alive with her, the dead love: "Objects, in my song / I perpetuate you [make you eternal]" ("Voorwerpen, in mijn lied / vereeuwig ik u" "Ode," 1-2; 146.). To personalize matter, as in "Stof," is to mark it with her love. So intimately present would the poet make her, that, as "Mantel" has it, the wall of his home would be charged with the "energy of her being" ("Je ganse wezenskracht / stond in de muur" 3-4; 427). Paradoxically, the poem is composed out of her absence-- out of her coat, hanging empty in the corner. This image is enlarged in a later poem:

De nachten doen u langzaam in elkaar,
 totdat ik u op mijn netvliezen vang.
 Ik zie u groeien op het maanbehang.
 Gij komt weer met uw eigen lichaam klaar.

The nights work you slowly into one another
 until I capture you upon my retina.
 I see you growing upon the wallpaper moon.

You are coming again with your own clear body ("Silhouet," 809).

Out of the beloved's absence, which is the poet's "doodklimaat" ("Doodbloei," 13; 155), he works to achieve a new creation informed by her "hemels materiaal" ("Graalridder," 15; 140). The poet's vocation is to bring love home in the world, to make the physical universe grow with her presence so that it becomes like a familiar wall of a human dwelling; and not, as in the Sonnet II of the Gasfitter, the side of a

grave ("the walls are earthen" "II," 5; 835).

In both Achterberg and Yeats, Söteman's "tekort" (the dead beloved or the longing for all I am not) needs to become explicit in the poem, for the healing or the self-making to occur. Both sets of poems often paradoxically include within the poem the absence they seek to overcome. What I call 'the fascination of nothingness' is a tendency of both poets to place the poem at the point of its own inception. We have seen its most common expression as a Yeatsean refrain as early as Niamh singing of "of faery and man / Before God was or my old line began" (*WQ*, II, 7-8; 29), and later in "Before the World was Made": "I'm looking for the face I had / Before the world was made" 7-8; 532). Its general form in Yeats is his constant vacillation, a form of self-deconstruction practiced in the attempt to keep the self in an ever original relation to itself (e.g., "Ego Dominus Tuus" 367). It is also evident both in the dialectical form of most of the dialogic poems, and in abrupt countertruths within poems, such as the distraction of the "daws" in "The Tower" (167; 415), or the "cry" of the "stricken rabbit" which ends "The Man and the Echo" (45-46; 633). In Achterberg, its recurring expression is "uit het niet." It appears in the *Gasfitter*, as that out of which *you* appear and reappear (I, 3; 834). In the poem "Barmoeder" ("Womb"), the "summer wind creates you out of nothing" ("De zomerwind verwekt u uit het niet" 1; 444), and is especially clear in "Fata Morgana." as that against which the vessel of the poem strives ("in stagen strijd / tegen het niet" 16, 17; 137). It is generally present, in Achterberg's poems, in the figure of death, the constant deconstructive force of human expectations. This sense of marking the poem with its own need of overcoming seems to be the reason that Achterberg's texts are often

being placed at a point that is all horizon ("Heelal," 9; 55), as if at the beginning of things. It determines the setting of The Wanderings of Oisín, in which Oisín is given the horizon of a new world, as counterpoint to his inevitable choice of earth, as if it were his aboriginal choice to be the eternal Fenian. The penchant for apocalyptic moment marks Yeats poetry to the end: ("Second Coming" (401), "Two Songs for a Play" (437), "Leda and the Swan" (441), "Byzantium" (497), "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (629). In the cases of both Yeats and Achterberg, it is their conception of eternity which allows the poet voice to be at the moment of pure beginning (Yeats's idea of soul; and Achterberg's sense of conversion-- see above, Chapters 5 and 6), as if the poem sought to link itself with the creative action that makes or remakes the world.

Furthermore, both poets have a strong sense of the body as the locus of human value, as the theater of the poem: "Paul Veronese / And all his sacred company / Imagined bodies all their days" ("Michael Robartes and the Dancer," 26-28; 386). Achterberg explicitly speaks of his poem as the "song that is of her body, the song of which her body is the immaculate conception" ("Met dit gedicht..." 10-12; 90). Albright's comment is worth recalling, that it is often possible to look upon a Yeatsian lyric, as a "verbal reconstruction of a woman's body" (504). In "A Woman Homer Sung," Yeats's poetic voice says of Homer, what Albright says of Yeats: "He shadowed in a glass / What thing her body was" (13-14; 255). Both poets show great concern for the body of the poem, for the poem as a physical construction-- as if making it an exact structure would counterpoint its achievement as something constructed out of nothing. The poem itself thus becomes an icon of creation. "I made

it out of a mouthful of air" ("He thinks of those who have Spoken Evil of his Beloved," 5; 166). Such structure, in the context of the genesis texture of the poem, highlights its newness and the fecundity of the nothingness (Yeats's "rich" darkness of "The Gyres," for example or Achterberg's "Barmoeder"). Yeats's question from "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" is very close to the sentiment of Achterberg's "Avondmaal": "Did God in portioning wine and bread / Give man his thought or mere body?" (*Variorum*, 39-40; 386; and see, *YG*, 9-12; 606). Out of different concepts of eternity comes a sense common to both poets that "all must come to sight and touch" ("Michael Robartes and the Dancer," 31; 386).

The form of "The Phases of the Moon" (372) follows in its structure Yeats's conception of ancestral night. The night that promises to be the creative wisdom of the poet is made the environment of the voices of Aherne and Robartes, outside his tower. It is an early genesis moment, the moment of the dark upon the waters. It is a poem of the dark before poetic enlightenment, and of the nature of the dark which brings poetic enlightenment.

De ruimte in zijn hand voldoet bij God
 die, toevend aan de border van vandaag,
 zichzelf onledig houdt in de natuur
 de schepping door te zetten op den duur
 met nieuwe creaturen, laag op laag;

Space in his hand passes for God

who, waiting at the border of day
 busies himself with nature
 seeing creation through in the long run
 with new creatures, layer upon layer (VG, "Tuinarchitect," 9-13; 928).

"Space" here is the desire of the poem for its own nothing, the space of its creation (space in the poet's hand). It is the point of the freedom of the lyric, as if it called itself into being. In Achterberg's eyes, the world is seen as shapeless before the poet's creation, and the shapelessness is the invitation as well as the possibility of creation. Under the force of the life of Jesus, the challenge to the poet is the humanization of natural space.

Both poets work with carefully casted poetic forms. The deconstruction achieved by the intrusion of an air of nothingness is a deconstruction for the sake of a construction, the body of the poem. I suspect that this reflects a shared sense of the lyric, as a creation that stands on its own, a work. Within the body of the poetic construction, the lyric poet may voice its freedom, by imprinting it with its own inception. It is as if it were the desire of the lyric poem to pitch experience in the direction of its song. Thus, in Achterberg's "Met dit gedicht..." the poem gives voice to its own intention to begin again, aware that a similar deconstruction awaits it by the action of its successor (see above, 78).

The greatest difference between Yeats and Achterberg is their conception of the other. Yeats pursues his self, a journey of Narcissus. Achterberg pursues an other, an Orphean quest. One is a gasfitter, the other a Cuchulain. No doubt somewhat overdrawn, but the comparison focuses a central difference in the directions of these

two bodies of lyric poems.

"In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" is not biography, but the careful articulation of an ideal personality: "Soldier, scholar, horseman, he, / As 'twere all life's epitome" (86-87: 327). It is a studied construction of the poet's desired social class (reconstruction, after "Romantic Ireland" was "dead and gone" for him "September 1913," 7; 289). Maude Gonne seemed never to have accepted her self as Yeats's "white woman that passion has worn" to whom he has brought "his numberless dreams" and "passionate rhyme" ("A Poet to His Beloved," 3, 7-8; 157). Yeats's "Municipal Gallery Revisited" provides a good illustration of a general symbiosis of self and other in his poetry.

Around me the images of thirty years

 John Synge, I and Augusta Gregory, thought
 All that we did, all that we said or sang
 Must come from contact with the soil, from that
 Contact everything Antaeus-like grew strong.
 We three alone in modern times had brought
 Everything down to that sole test again,
 Dream of the noble and the beggar-man

 You that would judge me, do not judge alone
 This book or that, come to this hallowed place
 Where my friends' portraits hang and look thereon;

Think where man's glory most begins and ends,

And say my glory was I had such friends.

(1, 41-47, 50-55; 601, 603-604)

In this poem, which shows anxiety over his reception, at least as clearly as "To Ireland in the Coming Times" (137) or "Pardon, Old Fathers" (269), the poet voice works to construct his identity. He shapes for us the images of Synge and Augusta Gregory according to the exigencies of his own sense of poetic imagination. Whether Synge and Augusta Gregory agreed with him or not about the relation of their art to "contact with the soil" or "dream of the noble and the beggar-man" is not as important as the self-portrait Yeats, in effect, is hanging in the gallery of his own poetry.

Whether it was really true that "We three alone had brought everything down to that sole test again" does not matter as much as the character the voice is proclaiming for himself. The poet wants us to see his gallery as a public space, celebrating values which identify him, and an honorable company of friends with whom he belongs; in short to see the poet with the eyes he would construct for us through the body of the poem. Along with the images, mainly heroic, in the "Municipal Gallery," we might well include all those other portraits Yeats has drawn out of his imagination, which have served as masks for his self-exploration: King Goll (81), Fergus (102), Cuchulain (105, 635), Aengus (149), Solomon and Sheba (332, 387), the Connemara fisherman (347), Crazy Jane (507ff.), Ribh (554), et. al. All are from the same mind as "Hanrahan," and in that sense, all are Yeats. These are the images of more than "thirty years" which his poetry has brought around him. They are Yeats's *other*. His poetry has carefully named them all and he has as deliberately crafted the poetic

persona through them as he does through the "Synge" and "Lady Gregory" of "Municipal Gallery Revisited." Characteristic of Yeats's style is to determine the other, even to the point of voicing what that other thinks and feels (again as here regarding Gregory and Synge). For him, the other always seems to be folded back into the imagination of the poetic self, as part of the content of his "own opposite" ("Ego Dominus Tuus," 8; 367), out of which he will articulate this self. Yeats tends to circumscribe the identities of the other; including his audience. For example, in "To Ireland in the Coming Times" he appeals to those who "ponder well" -- as if to seduce his hoped-for reception-- to recognize that his rhymes tell *more* than the rhymes of the poets of Young Ireland, that is, "Of things discovered in the deep, / Where only body's laid asleep" (21-22; 138). The Yeatsian self absorbs the other in its self-making.

Reading Achterberg, particularly the Ballade van de gasfitter, involves coming to terms with the identity of the personal other, especially the beloved dead woman, who consistently seems the goal ("einddoel") of the poet's reaching, his confirming and fulfilling reception. The Gasfitter seemed to tell us that the dead beloved of the "verhaal van ons" is itself symbolic of the general community of readers with whom the poet seeks personal communion through the body of the poem. Achterberg's Petrarchan connections corroborate this approach and are helpful in developing a further appreciation for the Achterbergian *you*.

Achterberg's collection of poetry bears resemblance in its physical form to the Rime sparsa of Francesco Petrarca. It is especially clear in the Ballade van de gasfitter in which the poet reflects on his own poetic quest. Both in the form of the individual

sonnets and the macrosonnet itself, the structure is Petrarchan. The opening word of the Rime sparsa is "Voi," Achterberg's opening "Gij." Like the "gij" of Achterberg, the "voi" of direct address of Petrarca is evasive, both available in the poem and unavailable otherwise to the poet. The "voi" of the Rime sparsa has, as does Achterberg a similar range of referents-- including the poet's old self and new self, a desired beloved, an historical beloved, an idealized beloved including Jesus and personified love, readers including societal others like Achterberg's Jansen, and not least, the poem itself. Such associations give some external assurance to the coherence of the *you* suggested by the Ballade van de gasfitter. It is the reflection in the poem of its desired reception by a community of persons who are sought as healing and life by the poet. Coetzee helps complete this reflection. He notes the *you* as the "phantom" reader (286a). The I-You of the poems is symbiotic. No less than for Yeats is the projection of the desired other self-born. Out of the "rag-and-bone-shop" of Achterberg's heart, and his "memories of love" are constructed *your* body in the world. Within the poems themselves the *you* of Achterberg is no less a shadow self that "Hanrahan" of "The Tower." However, Achterberg does not name *you*. He doesn't identify *you* with the images his longings construct. The reason the *you* cannot be identified in the texts, as Coetzee observes (286b), is because *you* are not there. It is Achterberg's deliberate discipline to maintain the personal pronoun as the form of the address to the other. As in Petrarca, this gives energy to the poem. The ambiguities which it encloses ("gedichten") establish within the poem layers of intratextuality. No doubt it struck Achterberg that the use of the pronoun allowed him

to bring *you* directly into the possible communion of the poem. The *you* the poem succeeds in reaching is someone the poet would not usually know. Thus, the disappearance of *you* at the end of the gasfitting task in the fourth sonnet of the Gasfitter is appropriate. Furthermore, the phantom identity carried by the pronoun allows the poem's direct appeal to survive time. Petrarca's "voi" has current life and reference. I believe that Achterberg's intended other is a similar personal community, a transtemporal community of the living, the not yet living and the dead. The poem wants to embody this *you*, this vision of the human community, of which the poem is the body, and in which death has no place.

Yeats's perception of eternity mirrors his perception of the other and the artistic ideal. There is a necessity at the heart of things. Helen is iron-bound to Troy, and the sorrow of her heart is great when her self exists in an age that is no Troy. There is a unity to the soul's incarnations, set by the mysterious unity of the dark ancestral joy. The opaqueness of things, that the self can be mythic, is the complement the Unity of Being, seeking form and touch in the cycle of history. The poetic self seeks to become a bird of "hammered gold": "Out of nature I shall never take / My bodily form from any natural thing." "Byzantium" 25-26; 408). Thomas Whitaker remarks that the golden bird of Byzantium is not more alive than the "richly passionate speaker," who finally "is his own bird...soul clapping its hands and singing in its own artifice of eternity" (274). Yeats's wisdom is the perception of a tragic consciousness, that at our core we live a role in a play not of our making.

In his compelling analysis of the Gasfitter, Coetzee remarks:

[it is in suspended identity] that *I* and *You* exist and have their relations

in ways prior to the ways of true names, with their firm significations, or true identities, and that the poem therefore works at, and sometimes absurdly beyond, the borders of language (288 a, b).

I believe Achterberg knew this border very well and knew that it was exactly where his poetry had to leave us. It is at the border of the sand poem of Jesus, with the woman of "En Jezus schreef in 't zand." His poetry is presented to us as Jesus presents his to the woman: "ik oordeel niet. / Ga heen en luister, luister naar het lied" (VG, 9-10; 607). The intention of his use of the second person pronoun is to bring the beloved into direct communion with the poem. However, there is a further recognition at work in his poetry, requiring the complete discipline of his use of the pronoun. The poem is not *you*, it is the place which the poet works to make ready for *you* out of his memories and hopes. However, he knows *you* are not the same as his desire. He cannot name *you* with *your* name in the poem. All the clues he finds all around him suggest *you*, but *your* identity cannot be determined by the poet. The "ik" cannot enclose *you* because *you* are other. All he can do is write his song, and ask *you* to "listen." The poem contains its longing, constructs *your* presence out of the memories of *your* absence. It desires to be *your* body; but it must wait for *you* to come. *You* are beyond the language of the poem and without identity from it. *You* cannot enter into communion with the poem which desires *you*, apart from the listening which is *your* act. The poet knows this. The poet writes respectfully of this. The other who would complete him, the beloved other of personal reception, *you*, are free. At the border of "You and I," on the other side of the horizon which its

language crosses, the poem waits.

Selected Bibliography

The following bibliography is circumscribed by the requirements of this study. It identifies only works important to its development and works quoted in the text.

Works by Achterberg

- Achterberg, Gerrit. Achtergebleven gedichten. Amsterdam: Querido, 1980.
- . But This Land Has No End: Selected Poems. Trans. Pleuke Boyce. Lantzville, B.C.: Oolichan, 1989.
- . En Jezus schreef in 't zand. Bert Bakker. 7e druk. Den Haag: Daamen, 1963.
- . Hidden Weddings: Selected Poems. Trans. Michael O'Loughlin. Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1987.
- . Dutch Interior: Selected translations of various modern Dutch poets. James S. Holmes and William Jay Smith, eds. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. 5-13.
- . Selected translations by James S. Holmes. Delta 1, 2 (Summer 1958: 25-31).
- . A Tourist Does Golgotha and Other Poems. Trans. Stanley Wiersma. Grand Rapids: Being Publications, 1972.
- . "Twelve Poems." Trans. James Brockway. Odyssey Review, 1(December 1961).
- . Varianten bij Achterberg. Uitgeg. toegelicht door R.L.K. Fokkema. 2 vols. Amsterdam: Querido, 1973.
- . Verzamelde gedichten. Elfde druk. Amsterdam: Querido, 1991.

Works by Yeats

- Jeffares, A. Norman, editor. Eleven Plays of William Butler Yeats. New York: Collier, 1964.

- Mc Hugh, Roger. Ah, Sweet Dancer: W.B. Yeats and Margot Ruddock. A Correspondence. New York: Macmillan, 1970.
- Yeats, William Butler. Essays and Introductions. London: Macmillan, 1961.
- . Explorations. London: Macmillan, 1962.
- . Autobiographies. London: Macmillan, 1955.
- . The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats. I. 1865-1895. Ed. John Kelly and Eric Domville. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- . W.B. Yeats: Interviews and Recollections. 2 vols. E.H. Mikhail, ed. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1977.
- . The Letters of W.B. Yeats. Allan Wade, ed. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.
- . Letters on Poetry from W.B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley. London: Oxford University Press, 1940.
- . Mythologies. London: Macmillan, 1959.
- , ed. The Oxford Book of Modern Verse. 1892-1935. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- . The Secret Rose. Stories by W.B. Yeats: A Variorum Edition. Phillip L. Marcus, Warwick Gould, and Michael J. Sidnell, eds. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- . Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats. Vol. 1. Ed. John P. Frayne. London: Macmillan, 1970.
- . Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats. Vol. 2: Reviews, Articles and Other Miscellaneous Prose 1897-1939. Eds. John P. Frayne and Colton Johnson. London: Macmillan, 1975.

- . The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats. Russell K. Alspach, ed. London: Macmillan, 1966.
- . The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats. Peter Allt and Russell Alspach, eds. First Hudson River Edition. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
- . A Vision: With the author's final revisions. New York: Macmillan, 1957.
- . W.B. Yeats: The Poems. Daniel Albright, ed. London: J.M.Dent, 1990.
- . W.B. Yeats The Poems: A New Edition. Richard Finneran, ed. New York: Macmillan, 1983.

Books and Articles on Achterberg

- Bakker, Bert and Andreas Middeldorp, eds. Nieuw Kommentaar op Achterberg. s'Gravenhage: Daamen, 1966.
- Barendregt, Hans. "De identiteit van Achterberg geliefde." Maatstaf. 28,2 (Feb. 1980): 27-32.
- . "De religieuze grondslag bij Gerrit Achterberg." Maatstaf. (Jul.1980): 54-64.
- Calis, Piet. "Verstarring en vernieuwing bij Gerrit Achterberg." De Gids. 125, 1 (Jan. 1962): 63-67.
- Coetzee, John. "Achterberg's 'Ballade van de gasfitter': The Mystery of the I and You." PMLA 92, 1 (1977): 285-296.
- David, Rosalie. The Ancient Egyptians: Religious Beliefs and Practices. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.
- Donker, Anth. "Het experiment van de gasfitter." Critisch Bulletin. 21 (April 1954): 160-167.
- . "Standbeeld." Maatstaf. 11 (Jan.-Feb. 1964): 731-736.

Hazeu, Wim. Gerrit Achterberg: Een biografie. Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1988.

Kingstone, Basil D. "Reflections on the Translation of Two Poems." Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies / Revue Canadienne d'Études Néerlandaises. Fall, v. 5, 2 (1984): 62-70.

de Longie, Albert. Gerrit Achterberg. Utrecht: Deaclee de Brouwer, 1969.

Meeuwesse, K. "Bij Achterberg's ballade van de gasfitter." Ons Erfdeel, 13 (1970): 19-23.

Middeldorp, A. "De tegenwoordige tijd van toen, over de poëzie van Gerrit Achterberg en zijn komaf." De Gids, 123,9 (Sept. 1960): 169-181.

Rodenko, Paul. "Dichter in het huis des levens." Maatstaf, 2(1955): 795-807.

---. "A Matter of Life and Death: The Poetry of Gerrit Achterberg." Delta, 1, 2 (Summer 1958): 32-36.

Rutten, M. "Het dichten van Achterberg." Vlaamse Gids, (Jun 1956): 345-362.

Sierksma, Fokke. Commentaar op Achterberg: opstellen van jonge schrijvers over de poëzie van Gerrit Achterberg. 's-Gravenhage: Daamen, 1948.

Vinkenoog, Simon. "Een verkenning in de tijd." De Gids, 125, 3 (mar. 1962): 213-217.

Books and Articles on Yeats

Adams, Hazard. Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Adams, Joseph. Yeats and the Masks of Syntax. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

Allt, G.D.P. "Yeats, Religion and History." Sewanee Review LX 4 (Autumn 1952):

624-658.

- Alspach, Russell K. "Some Sources of Yeats' 'The Wanderings of Oisín.'" PMLA LVIII, 3 (Sept. 1943): 849-866.
- Bjersby, Birgit. The Interpretation of the Cuchulain Legend in the Works of W.B. Yeats. Upsala Irish Studies I. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Bloom, Harold. Yeats. New York Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Bohlmann, Otto. Yeats and Nietzsche: an exploration of major Nietzschean echoes in the writings of William Butler Yeats. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Boyd Ernest. Ireland's Literary Renaissance. New Edition. Dublin: Allen Figges, 1968.
- Brooks, Cleanth, Jr. The Hidden God: Studies in Hemingway, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot, and Warren. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.
- Donoghue, Denis. William Butler Yeats. New York: Ecco Press, 1988.
- Donoghue, Denis and J. R. Mulryne, eds. An Honored Guest: New Essays on William Butler Yeats. London: Edward Arnold, 1965.
- Egleson, Janet Frank. "Christ and Cuchulain: Interrelated Archetypes of Divinity and Heroism in Yeats." Eire-Ireland 4, 1 (1969): 76-85.
- Ellmann, Richard. Eminent Domain. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- . The Identity of Yeats. London: Faber and Faber, 1954.
- . Yeats: The Man and the Masks. New York: Penguin, 1987.
- Engelberg, Edward. The Vast Design. Patterns in W.B. Yeats's Aesthetic. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.
- Farag, Fahmy. The Opposing Virtues. Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1974.

- Finneran, Richard. Critical Essays on W.B. Yeats. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1986.
- . Editing Yeats's Poems. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- , ed. Yeats: An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983-85; then, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1986-.
- , ed. Letters to W.B. Yeats. 2 vols. With G.M. Harper and W.M. Murphy. 1977.
- Frye, Northrop. "Yeats and the Language of Symbolism." University of Toronto Quarterly. XVII (Oct. 1947): 1-17)
- Garab, Arra. Beyond Byzantium. The Last Phase of Yeats's Career. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1969.
- Good, Maeve. William Butler Yeats and the Creation of a Tragic Universe. Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1987.
- Gregory, Lady Augusta. Cuchulain of Muirthemne. London: Colin Smythe, 1970.
- Hall, James and Martin Steinmann, eds. The Permanence of Yeats: Selected Criticism. New York: Macmillan, 1950.
- Harper, George Mills. The Mingling of Heaven and Earth. Dublin: Dolmen, 1975.
- . "The Reconciliation of Paganism and Christianity in Yeats." In Unicorn from the Stars: Essays in Honor of C.A. Robertson. Ed. Robert A. Bryan and others. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965. 224-36.
- Henn, T. R. The Lonely Tower: Studies in the Poetry of W. B. Yeats. London: Methuen, 1965.
- Hone, Joseph. W.B. Yeats, 1865-1939. New York: Macmillan, 1943.

- Hough, Graham. The Mystery Religion Of W.B. Yeats. Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Robert Bridges and W.H. Gardner, eds. 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press, 1948.
- James, William. Pragmatism and other Essays. New York: Washington Square Press, 1975.
- Jeffares, A. Norman. Anglo-Irish Literature. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- . A New Commentary on the Poems of W.B. Yeats. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984.
- . W.B. Yeats: a new biography. London: Hutchinson, 1989.
- Jochum, K. P. S. W.B. Yeats: A Classified Bibliography of Criticism. 2nd Edition, revised and enlarged. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.
- Keane, Patrick, ed. William Butler Yeats: a collection of criticism. New York: McGraw Hill, 1973.
- Koch, Vivienne. W.B. Yeats: The Tragic Phase. A Study of the Last Poems. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951.
- Longenbach, James. Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats and Modernism. New York: Oxford, 1988.
- Lynch, David. The Poetics of the Self. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- MacCana, Proinsias. "The Irish Storyteller" in The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland. Dublin: Magowan for the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980.
- Marcus, Phillip L. Yeats and the Beginning of the Irish Renaissance. 2nd edition. New York: Syracuse University Press.

- Martin, Augustine. W.B. Yeats. Revised edition. Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1990.
- Melchiori, Giorgio. The Whole Mystery of Art: Pattern into Poetry in the work of WB Yeats. New York: Macmillan, 1961.
- Moore, Virginia. The Unicorn: Wm. Butler Yeats' Search for Reality. New York: Octagon Books, 1973.
- Murphy, Frank Hughes. Yeats's Early Poetry: The Quest for Reconciliation. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1975.
- Olney, James. Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Parkinson, Thomas. W.B. Yeats: Self Critic and the Later Poetry. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- Parrish, Stephen Maxfield, ed. A Concordance to the Poems of W.B. Yeats. Programmed by James Allen Painter. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1963.
- Pritchard, William, ed. WB Yeats: A Critical Anthology. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria. "Die Neunte Elegie," from Quinesener Elegien. Trans. A. Poulin Jr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
- . The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. Ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell. New York: Random House, 1984.
- Saul, George Brandon. Prolegomena to the Study of Yeats' Poems. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1957.
- Seiden, Morton Irving. William Butler Yeats: The Poet as Mythmaker 1865-1939.

- East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1962.
- Shaw, Priscilla. Rilke, Valéry, and Yeats: The Domain of the Self. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964.
- Sherrard, Philip. W.B. Yeats and the Search for Tradition. Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1975.
- Skelton, Robin and Ann Saddlemeier, eds. The World of W.B. Yeats: Essays in Perspective. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. Myself must I remake: the life and poetry of WB Yeats. New York: Crowell, 1974.
- Stauffer, D. A. The Golden Nightingale: Essays on Some Principles of Poetry in the Lyrics of William Butler Yeats. New York: Macmillan, 1949.
- Stevens, Wallace. Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. New York: Vintage, 1982.
- Timm, Eitel. W.B. Yeats A Century of Criticism. Columbia, S.C.: Camden, 1990.
- Unterecker, John, ed. Yeats: A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats. New York: Noonday, 1959.
- Ure, Peter. Towards a Mythology: Studies in the Poetry of W.B. Yeats. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1946.
- . Yeats and Anglo-Irish Literature: Critical Essays. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974.
- Wade, Allen. A Bibliography of the Writings of WB Yeats. 3rd Edition revised and edited by Russell Alspach. London: Hart Davis, 1968.
- Whitaker, Thomas R. Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964.

Wright, David G. Yeats's Myth of Self: The Autobiographical Prose. Totowa, N.J.:

Barnes and Noble, 1988.

Zwerdling, Alex. Yeats and the Heroic Ideal. New York: NYU Press, 1965.