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BLAKE, YEATS, AND JOYCE.

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EVERY MAN'S WISDOM
LITERARY AFFILIATION AMONG BLAKE, YEATS, AND JOYCE

by

ANITA GANDOLFO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Introduction

I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's.
I will not Reason & Compare; my business is to Create.

William Blake, Jerusalem

The three artists who are the subjects of this study have been so copiously explored both individually and together that it is perhaps best to indicate immediately the precise nature of my work. This is not a comparative exploration of the visions or myths of Blake, Yeats, and Joyce. It is, instead, an examination of two modern artists, Yeats and Joyce, focusing on their knowledge and use of a major predecessor, William Blake--a poet whose work both of them studied and admired. This is, therefore, principally a study of the transmission of ideas, the process which is the basis of all tradition. I will study this process in the aesthetic development of Yeats and Joyce with particular reference to Blake, exploring how each artist's reading of Blake contributes to his own oeuvre.

Blake's often quoted phrase, "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's" is frequently employed to illustrate his revolutionary independence as an artist. But, as Northrop Frye has pointed out, the words are not spoken by Blake himself but by Los, his archetypal artist, and are clearly meant as an expression of the necessary work of every true artist.¹ As Yeats explained a similar

impulse in his own life, "Lacking sufficient recognised precedent I must needs find out some reason for all I did."² Creatio ex nihilo may be a worthwhile philosophic premise, but it is not an adequate poetic one.

Recent studies of artistic affiliation seem to suggest a sort of "King of the Hill" mentality among writers in which successive generations must annihilate their predecessors before they can rightfully get on with their own proper work. Consider the violence explicit in Richard Ellmann's description:

Influence is a term which conceals and mitigates the guilty acquisitiveness of talent. That writers flow into each other like waves, gently rather than tidally, is one of those decorous myths we impose upon a high-handed, even brutal procedure. The behavior, while not invariably marked by bad temper, is less polite. Writers move up on other writers not as genial successors but as violent expropriators knocking down established boundaries to seize by the force of youth, or of age, what they require. They do not borrow, they override.³

I cannot lightly dismiss Ellmann's forceful terms when one of my subjects saw the process similarly. Yeats wrote that "all creation is from conflict, whether with our own mind or with that of others, and the historian who dreams of bloodless victory wrongs the wounded veterans."⁴ Yet both descriptions must be understood metaphorically. Blake's Los creates imaginatively, and every artist constructs his own "system" in the same way. When Joyce's artist, Stephen Dedalus, realizes at the climactic moment in Ulysses that "in here it is I must kill the priest and king" he is "tapping his brow" to signify the internal, imaginative

nature of the warfare.

The fact that artistic influence is essentially a mental process presents an initial problem for the student of literature insofar as no one can fully understand another person's experience. This problem is further complicated by the fact that affiliations among artists seem to involve an identification of the other with the self. The later artist is not merely a passive recipient of his predecessors works, but an active participant in formulating their meaning. This is the ground for Harold Bloom's assertion that creative misreading is the basis of literary influence.

Poetic influence--when it involves two strong authentic poets,--always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation.⁵

Bloom stresses the "anxiety" occasioned by the later poet's effort to free himself from the dominance of the former, but in dealing with the literary rather than the psychological dynamics of such relationships (and to avoid the unfortunate connotation of error associated with the word "misreading"), I prefer the formulation of Jorge Luis Borges, which emphasizes the positive nature of influence as a creative act by the later artist.

In the critics' vocabulary, the word 'precursor' is indispensable, but it should be cleansed of all connotation of polemics or rivalry. The fact is that every writer creates his own precursors.⁶

As I will show, both Yeats and Joyce assumed that they understood Blake, but their presentation of that artist in their critical writings is colored by their own artistic

predilections. This is, of course, no new idea. In "The Critic As Artist," for example, Wilde pointed out that the best artists are the worst critics because "a great artist cannot recognize the beauty of work different from his own."⁷ The past is, as it were, grist for his own mill, raw material to be either used or discarded in the creation of his own "system." As Coleridge expressed it, "All other men's worlds are the poet's chaos."⁸ Making order from that chaos is the work of the imagination and the subject of this study.

In spite of the fact that there have been two book-length studies of Blake and Yeats, the actual nature of "Yeats's Blake," the poet's conception of his predecessor, has not yet been established, even though Yeats edited Blake's poetry and wrote numerous essays in which he frequently alludes to the poet. Margaret Rudd's Divided Image and Hazard Adams' Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision are aptly titled, for their subject is not really influence but comparative analysis of the two poets' mythic systems. Other studies which purport to demonstrate influence overlook the portrait of Blake which Yeats creates in his criticism. Bloom, for example, isolates specific errors in Yeats's presentation of Blake's symbolic system and simply concludes that Yeats's work is "misguided" and "nonsense,"⁹ thereby devaluing his own basic premise that the artist must necessarily misread his predecessor. Virginia Moore's chapter on "Blake as a Major Doctrinal

Influence" briefly attempts a study close to my present purpose. Although she can only touch upon Yeats's Blake in her book, she perceptively emphasizes that "what Yeats thought Blake stood for is more pertinent than what Blake actually did stand for."¹⁰ Both Moore and Deborah Dorfman, who also studied Yeats's Blake editions, have indicated that there is a need for a closer study of the influence of Blake on Yeats's thinking.¹¹ I will establish the nature of "Yeats's Blake," his conception of his predecessor as it is reflected in his writings, and from that knowledge I will determine the limits of the affiliation between them.

One result of my study will be to establish a context in which to examine the verbal echoes of Blake throughout Yeats's work which are continually cited as evidence of artistic "influence." Admittedly, sources have their own intrinsic fascination, but the tendency in Yeats criticism to continually note Blakean echoes illuminates the mind of the critic more than that of the artist and often minimizes the achievement of Yeats's poetry.¹² Forgotten is the fact that the poet's mind is "a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images."¹³ Yeats spent four formative years studying Blake's poetry, and he returned to Blake repeatedly throughout his life. The absence rather than the presence of Blakean echoes in Yeats's work would be remarkable. Yeats, writing about Blake's sources, offered some advice which Yeats critics

would do well to heed.

It has been happily suggested by John Stuart Mill that if we wish to estimate the value of an idea we should know its pedigree. But a knowledge of the pedigree of Blake's names--that is to say, of the sources from which he borrowed those which he adopted, is of very little real use in reading his myths. He laid hands on all that came within his reach, and he used them just when he thought they fitted his ideas.¹⁴

Very likely, as we will see in Chapter Two, Yeats was speaking of his own artistic practice rather than Blake's, and Mrs. Yeats supports this view when she describes her husband as "an intellectual magpie. . . [who] would have no hesitation in stealing the wings from an Angel, had he the opportunity and thought it would benefit his poetry."¹⁵

Richard Ellmann, who suggested that the search for sources in Yeats studies has become disproportionate,¹⁶ has very lucidly explored the factors that make the mental atmosphere of Yeats's poems distinctly individualistic, but even he cannot resist making continual, but basically unhelpful, references to Blake's presence in the poetry. By putting the Blake-Yeats affiliation in perspective, I will make clear to what extent a knowledge of Blake is actually necessary for reading Yeats's poetry.

The examination of the Blake-Joyce affiliation which follows my consideration of Yeats's Blake is not a separate study but actually contingent upon the earlier portion of my work. For although the relationship between Joyce and Blake has been the subject of much criticism, and despite the fact that Joyce's knowledge of Blake can be readily

traced to Yeats's interpretations, no one has observed that these interpretations are more important than the simple fact that Joyce knew and studied Blake.

Almost all of the study of Joyce's Blake has concentrated on Finnegans Wake because of its obvious cosmological resemblance to Blake's mythic system. Yet it is perhaps impossible to isolate influences in the prose of the Wake and, as James Atherton has observed, such resemblances may merely indicate that Joyce had been prepared for such concerns through his early study of Blake rather than that there was any specific Blakean perspective operative in the Wake.¹⁷ No one, however, has dealt with the possible symbolic importance of the specific allusions to Blake which occur throughout A Portrait and Ulysses. A large part of Joyce's use of Blakean allusion has remained unexplored because of the critical tendency to identify allusions by citing the proper passages in Blake, using contemporary standard texts. But, as we will see in Chapter Two, Blake scholarship did not begin before the twentieth century, and nineteenth-century editors were chiefly concerned with using Blake to illustrate their own particular aesthetic concerns. Only, I suggest, when we trace Joyce's allusions not simply to "Blake" but to Yeats's idiosyncratic interpretations of Blake, can we fully appreciate the use of Blakean allusion in Joyce's novels and the true nature of the affiliation between the two writers.

My primary sources for establishing the identity of "Yeats's Blake" and "Joyce's Blake" will, of course, be their critical writings rather than my own reading of Blake. Both Yeats and Joyce studied Blake very early in their careers and, as Eliot has observed,

a very young man, who is himself stirred to write is not primarily critical or even widely appreciative. He is looking for masters who will elicit his consciousness of what he wants to say himself. . . .The taste of an adolescent writer is intense, but narrow; it is determined by personal needs.¹⁸

The study of Blake was a part of the artistic development of both artists and was determined by their "personal need" to find a precursor for their respective aesthetic systems. How important a part Blake played in the forging of each artist's personal mythology will become clear as the basis of that affiliation is established in the chapters which follow.

With temperaments as complex as Yeats's and Joyce's, it is quite apparent that no one affiliation will provide a key to their work, and I certainly do not suggest that the Blake association is the paramount factor in either artist's career. But such a specialized study is not reductive either--"General Forms have their vitality in Particulars" and "he who wishes to see a Vision, a perfect Whole, /Must see it in its Minute Particulars."¹⁹ By focusing on even such a relatively small aspect of an artist's life and work as his association with one other artist, I will basically be studying the complex workings of imagination, and my

method and conclusions will therefore have application beyond the affiliation with Blake. "The best writers expropriate best," as Ellmann has observed,²⁰ and Joyce's and Yeats's use of Blake provides a paradigm of the complex workings of their particular talents.

Studies of artistic influence are, in a sense, really literary detective work. Several years ago there was a TV detective who was widely parodied because he asked for "Just the facts, Ma'am." Literary history would indeed be very limited if it recorded just the facts, but it can be very inaccurate if it ignores those facts. My purpose is to establish the facts of the affiliation between Blake and Yeats and Blake and Joyce and to offer interpretations based on those facts. The work of the scholar as well as that of the artist necessitates the creation of a system, but, unlike Los, I make it my business to "reason and compare."

Notes

- ¹ Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), Preface, n.p.
- ² W.B. Yeats, The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats (1936; rpt. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964), p. 102.
- ³ Richard Ellmann, Eminent Domain (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 3.
- ⁴ Yeats, Autobiography, p. 342.
- ⁵ Harold Bloom, The Anxiety of Influence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 4.
- ⁶ Jorge Luis Borges, Labyrinths, ed. Donald Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 201.
- ⁷ Oscar Wilde, "The Critic As Artist," The Portable Oscar Wilde, ed. Richard Aldington (New York: Viking Press, 1946), p. 128.
- ⁸ Quoted by John Livingston Lowes, The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of Imagination (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), p. 426.
- ⁹ Harold Bloom, Yeats (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 69.
- ¹⁰ Virginia Moore, The Unicorn: William Butler Yeats' Search for Reality (1952; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1973), p. 85.
- ¹¹ Moore, p. 84; Deborah Dorfman, Blake in the Nineteenth Century (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 225.
- ¹² Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. viii; Thomas R. Henn, The Lonely Tower: Studies in the Poetry of W.B. Yeats (1950; prt. London: Methuen, 1966), p. 264.
- ¹³ T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), p. 41.

14 Edwin John Ellis and W.B. Yeats, eds., The Works of William Blake (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1893), I, 338. Subsequent quotations from this edition will be cited within the text and abbreviate as E-Y, followed by appropriate volume and page numbers.

15 A personal conversation with Mrs. Yeats reported by Margaret Rudd, Divided Image; A Study of William Blake and W.B. Yeats (1955; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), p. 33.

16 Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, p. vii.

17 James S. Atherton, The Books at the Wake (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1959), pp. 235-36.

18 T.S. Eliot, "Yeats," Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot, p. 248.

19 William Blake, "Jerusalem," Blake: Complete Writings, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 738. This will be my standard reference for Blake quotations and will be indicated in the text by K followed by the appropriate page number.

20 Ellmann, Eminent Domain, p. 8.

Chapter One

No Rootless Flower

Above all it is necessary that the lyric poet's life should be known, that we should understand that his poetry is no rootless flower but the speech of a man. . . .

W.B. Yeats¹

To make an adequate assessment of the affiliation between William Blake and W.B. Yeats, we must first analyze the soil, as it were, the artistic milieu which nourished that relationship and influenced Yeats's choice of Blake as poetic mentor. But while Yeats advocated biographical inquiry, his autobiographical method poses hazards for the unwary student. Just as a poet can "create" his own precursors, he can similarly create his public persona, and Yeats's autobiography is a partly fictional construction which provides a somewhat mythologized background for the poet's career.² For Yeats the artist's life is a pattern of significant moments endowed with allegorical meaning, and how he reports events is often more revealing than what he reports.

It is therefore notable that Yeats's very early introduction to Blake's poetry is rather casually mentioned-- "When I was fifteen or sixteen my father had told me about Rossetti and Blake and given me their poetry to read"³--but the moment in which he discovered Blake for himself several years later in the studio of his father's friend Edwin John Ellis is reported in great detail and considerably elaborated

from the diary record of the event.

He [Ellis] had a passion for Blake, picked up in pre-Raphaelite studios and early in our acquaintance put into my hands a scrap of notepaper on which he had written some years before an interpretation of the poem that begins

The fields from Islington to Marylebone
To Primrose Hill and St. John's Wood
Were builded over with pillars of gold,
And there Jerusalem's pillars stood.

The four quarters of London represented Blake's four great mythological personages, the Zoas, and also the four elements. These few sentences were the foundation of all study of the philosophy of William Blake that requires an exact knowledge for its pursuit and that traces the connection between his system and that of Swedenborg or of Boehme. I recognised certain attributions from what is sometimes called the Christian Cabbala, of which Ellis had never heard and with this proof that his interpretation was more than fantasy he and I began our four years' work upon the Prophetic Books of William Blake. We took it as almost a sign of Blake's personal help when we discovered that the spring of 1889, when we first joined our knowledge, was one hundred years from the publication of The Book of Thel, the first published of the Prophetic Books, as though it were firmly established that the dead delight in anniversaries.⁴

Because this account is considerably enhanced by the retrospective arrangement of the autobiography, it clearly reflects Yeats's feeling about the importance of the "discovery." His interest was primarily in the "philosophy" of William Blake and in "his system"--a system he felt able to identify because of his own occult knowledge. Throughout his life Yeats referred to Blake's work as "philosophy," and even his continual citations from Blake's poetry in his critical prose are clearly seen by him as philosophic rather than poetic touchstones.⁵ This discovery of Blake the

philosopher occurred near the end of 1888 while Yeats was trying to formulate a personal aesthetic philosophy, a "system" of his own that would be the stem to support the flower of his poetry. An examination of his poetic concerns, as revealed in his critical prose and letters of this period, will establish a context for understanding this "discovery" of Blake as an epiphanic moment in the young poet's career. This initial emphasis on Blake as systematized thinker was the beginning of "Yeats's Blake," and was determined, as is any particular interest, by a complex of experiential factors.

Yeats had begun attempting verse about 1884, and from that time until he made his discovery of Blake's "system" in Ellis' studio, only about four years had elapsed. But they were years of intense activity. From a very apt metaphor of Ellmann we get "the impression of a man in a frenzy, beating on every door in the hotel in an attempt to find his own room."⁶ His discovery of Blake helped open the door to the proper room, but other conditions had led him to the right corridor. Yeats provided the primary reason for his varied interests with his remark that "lacking sufficient recognised precedent" he needed to "find out some reason for all I did."⁷ He was an individual talent in search of a tradition.

Yeats was very much between two worlds in both his personal and artistic lives. Much has been written about him as the "last Romantic," but he also described himself as "The last Victorian"⁸ and, as he himself said of Blake,

"No man, it will be seen, escapes altogether the infection of his century" (E-Y, I, 219). In the mid-eighties when he declared his vocation Yeats was faced with a moribund poetic tradition. The l'art pour l'art movement had not so much revolutionized the poetic world as split it, and Yeats described the opposing camps in an 1890 review of William Watson's poetry. He wrote of a "school of poets that looks upon poetry as a direct message from the Most High, and amenable to no law but its own," as opposed to a school composed of "those critics who consider it a purely human art, a criticism of life by subtle and refined thinkers."⁹ His fundamental opposition to the latter group is reflected in one of his earliest reviews, published in 1886.

Great poetry does not teach us anything--it changes us. Man is like a musical instrument of many strings, of which only a few are sounded by the narrow interests of his daily life; and the others, for want of use, are continually becoming tuneless and forgotten. Heroic poetry is a phantom finger swept over all the strings, arousing from man's whole nature a song of answering harmony. It is the poetry of action, for such alone can arouse the whole nature of man. . . .It ignores morals, for its business is not in any way to make us rules for life, but to make character. It is not, as a great English writer has said, 'a criticism of life,' but rather a fire in the spirit, burning away what is mean and deepening what is shallow.¹⁰

The Arnoldian view of poetry as "criticism of life" was one of Yeats's bêtes noires during the Nineties, a negative designation of what he called "noetry," verse full of the intellectual faculty but lacking imaginative impulse.¹¹

The importance of the life of the imagination was the principal reason for Yeats's initial choice of the Celtic tradition as a basis for his poetry. There was, of course, a certain chauvinism in this choice, just as there was a nationalistic basis for Ruskin's interest in Scott, for example. But the Irish tradition for Yeats was really more analogous to Ruskin's preference for the ancient Greeks. Using them as types for his imaginative renaissance, Ruskin felt strongly that the Greeks represented a race that was truly in touch with the life of the spirit since "the Greek never removed his god out of nature at all; never attempted for a moment to contradict his instinctive sense that God was everywhere."¹² Yeats similarly felt that "in Ireland this world and the other are not widely sundered; sometimes, indeed, it seems almost as if our earthly chattel were no more than the shadows of things beyond."¹³

Although a portion of Yeats's interest in the Celtic revival was rooted in the temporal spirit in which he helped found the Irish Literary Society of London in 1891 and the National Literary Society in Dublin in 1892,¹⁴ his use of Irish subject matter in his poetry was primarily dictated by aesthetic principles. He wanted to root his art in an awareness of a "land of heart's desire," a world beyond this physical realm, of which, as he agreed with Blake, our vegetable world is but a shadow. Throughout his reviews of the Nineties, Yeats consistently set up the Celtic past as an imaginative restorative for the ills which plagued the art

of the day. For example, in an 1891 review of some of Douglas Hyde's Gaelic folk stories Yeats wrote:

Here at last is a universe where all is large and intense enough to almost satisfy the emotions of man. Certainly such stories are not a criticism of life but rather an extension, thereby much more closely resembling Homer than that last phase of 'the improving book,' a social drama by Henrik Ibsen. They are an existence and not a thought and make our world of tea-tables seem but a shabby penumbra.¹⁵

Later in the same review he concluded that "after all, imaginative impulse--the quintessence of life--is our great need from folk-lore."¹⁶

From such pronouncements there might seem to be little difference between Yeats and Ruskin's other descendant, Swinburne, who defined his own aesthetic position by its distance from deliberate purpose--"Art for art's sake first of all, and afterwards we may suppose all the rest shall be added to her"¹⁷--and who also invested the imagination with absolute power.

No one again need be misled by the artist's eager incursions into grounds of faith or principle; his design being merely to readjust all questions of such a kind by the light of art and law of imagination--to reduce all outlying provinces, and bring them under government of his own central empire--the 'fourfold spiritual city' of his vision.¹⁸

There is indeed little difference in intent between Yeats and Swinburne here, but there is twenty-five years in time, years during which Swinburnian principle and practice had widely diverged. The problem with the aesthetic mode in the Nineties was its retreat to an ivory tower, its dissociation from temporal concerns. And while J.B. Yeats

always reminded his son that "all art is dreamland,"¹⁹ he never advocated aloof aestheticism but clearly pointed out the deficiencies of the aesthetes, as in this letter to his poet son.

I am trying to write an article which will have for its subject that art for art's sake is a good principle, but not the principle now so long in vogue--technique for technique's sake. Swinburne, whether he writes prose or verse is very largely the latter. Underneath his shining, many-coloured coat of technique beats a heart in which were some engaging feelings but mainly a craftsman's delight in the practice of his own craft. This delight is a very real thing, and interesting especially as being something mediaeval and monkish but not enough to make a poet.²⁰

The Celtic tradition, which Yeats used to banish the rhetorical excesses of the Arnoldians, was also his cure for the excessively aesthetic mode of the Nineties. In an 1889 review of a book of Irish verse he effectively diagnoses and prescribes for the problem.

As a literature ages it divides nature from man and sings each for itself. Then each passion is taken from its fellows and sung alone, and cosmopolitanism begins, for a passion has no nation. But in these poems man and nature are one, and everywhere is a wild and pungent Celtic flavor. When a literature is old it grows so indirect and complex that it is only a possession of the few: to read it well is a difficult pursuit, like playing the fiddle; for it one needs especial training. But these poems should rouse each one so far as he is human and imaginative.²¹

Human and imaginative--these then are Yeats's poultices to cure the infection of his century. Between the Eighties and the Nineties his poetic model changed from Shelley to William Morris²² as he tried to cure his own poetic problem--

"the flight into fairyland from the real world" which he (and subsequent critics) found characteristic of his early verse.²³ Clearly using himself as subject, Yeats announced in 1892 that

the typical young poet of our day is an aesthete with a surfeit, searching sadly for his lost Philistinism, his heart full of an unsatisfied hunger for the commonplace. He is an Alastor tired of his woods and longing for beer and skittles.²⁴

Yeats was seeking the tertium quid with which to bridge the gap between the polarities of English poetry represented by Arnold's descendants, typified by Watson and Alfred Austin, and the aesthetes of the Rhymers' Club.²⁵

In his effort to provide a poetic synthesis, Yeats brought the aesthete's concern for technique to Ireland. While he had found contemporary Irish literature vibrant, he felt that it lacked effective craftsmanship--"Side by side with this robustness and rough energy of ours there goes the most utter indifference to art, the most dire carelessness, the most dreadful mixture of the commonplace."²⁶ His early concern with precision of presentation is evident in an 1889 letter to a fellow Irish poet in which Yeats uses imagery strikingly compatible with Eliot's military metaphor in "East Coker," a poem which also presents the poet's medium as his perpetual opponent.

Words are always getting conventionalized to some secondary meaning. It is one of the works of poetry to take the truants in custody and bring them back to their right senses. Poets are the policemen of language; they are always arresting those old reprobates the words.²⁷

Craftsmanship was a concern throughout his career, and it helped balance his own basis solipsism more than it cured the Irish "indifference to art." In a 1937 letter he remarked on the general state of poetry with a typically personal reference. (Art and life were never separate in Yeats and by the end of his career he clearly regarded himself as the poetic representative of his generation.)

Goethe said that all our modern poetry is wrong because subjective; and in the part in The Battle of the Books connected with the fable of the bee and the spider Swift has said the same. All my life I have tried to get rid of modern subjectivity by insisting on construction and contemporary words and syntax.²⁸

And in spite of the basically aesthetic reason for his allegiance to Irish subjects, there were more pragmatic considerations as well, as reflected in this advice to a fellow Irish poet.

You will find it a good thing to make verses on Irish legends and places and so forth. It helps originality and makes one's verses sincere, and gives one less numerous competitors.²⁹

The poet who would remark to his sister on the day after Swinburne's death, "I am the King of the Cats"³⁰ was clearly consciously involved with establishing his poetic reputation within this "vegetable world." He wrote:

The friends that have it I do wrong
When ever I remake a song,
Should know what issue is at stake:
It is myself that I remake³¹

but Yeats was not totally a soliloquist. A very real sense of his audience and a very human desire for approval and success are largely responsible for the eventual obliteration

of the effete magus image he projected in the Eighties and Nineties. Pragmatic concerns helped him remake his ivory tower with clay and wattles.

It is interesting to note that in the desire for the restoration of imagination and the insistence on both the power to perceive and the power to embody as essential attributes of the true artist, Yeats shared Blake's own aesthetic preoccupations. As Kathleen Raine has commented, Blake inherited no native mythology and "living at a time when the old landmarks of pre-industrial England were already beginning to be obliterated by mills and furnaces, Blake attempted to bring back the gods to a country from which they were being driven;"³² and since he found the land wanting in local deities, "he set about to repeople the rivers and mountains and cities of England with spiritual forms and energies"³³ much as Yeats did with Oisín and Cúchulain. Blake's prose reveals the same sense of the need for both imaginative impulse and precision of presentation in art that is characteristic of Yeats in the Eighties and Nineties. When the Director of the Royal Academy had Blake leave the study of Rafael and Michaelangelo for LeBrun and Rubens, he told that gentleman: "These things that you call Finish'd are not Even Begun; how can they then be Finish'd? The Man who does not know the Beginning never can know the End of Art" (K, 449). And he condemned poets for lacking the power to embody--"I do not condemn Pope or Dryden because they did not understand Imagination, but because they did not

understand Verse" (K; 602).

There is no evidence in Yeats's work on Blake that he specifically recognized the mutuality of their aesthetic concerns; his discovery of Blake's philosophy in Ellis' studio had, as we will see, a different impetus. Nevertheless his four-year study of Blake's texts certainly made Yeats's personal identification with Blake inevitable, as he must have found his own thoughts and principles reverberating from every page. Although Ellis and Yeats found Vala the central text in Blake's system, Yeats himself was very much interested in Milton, the prophecy which most directly addresses itself to the problems of poetic creation, the endeavor to establish "Jerusalem/In England's green & pleasant Land" (K, 481).

The direct impetus for Yeats's sense of identification with Blake came from his efforts, begun during this period and continued throughout his life, to find a personal philosophic basis for his art. His father's skepticism about both religion and education had, in effect, disenfranchised him from two powerful traditions. He knew neither the coherent system of organized Christianity nor the pattern of traditional English literature. His tastes had been formed by his father according to the heritage of the basically romantic pre-Raphaelites. He read much but according to his inclination, neither widely nor systematically.

But he had also learned from his father that some form of personal belief was a prerequisite for all artists.

J.B. Yeats had instructed his son that

there are two kinds of belief; the poetical and the religious. That of the poet comes when the man within has found some method or manner of thinking or arrangement of fact (such as is only possibly in dreams) by which to express and embody an absolute freedom, such that his whole inner and outer-self can expand in a full satisfaction.³⁴

One result of such advice was Yeats's lifelong search for "Unity of Being," an effort to assimilate both his personal interests and his artistic intentions within one philosophic system. This is clearly revealed in a 1919 essay.

One day when I was twenty-three or twenty-four this sentence seemed to form in my head, without my willing it, much as sentences form when we are half-asleep: 'Hammer your thoughts into unity.' For days I could think of nothing else, and for years I tested all I did by that sentence. I had three interests: interest in a form of literature, in a form of philosophy, and a belief in nationality. None of these seemed to have anything to do with the other.³⁵

Each of these seemingly disparate interests, part of the frenetic effort to find a room of his own, was rooted in the need to establish a personal philosophy that might inform his art. He came to realize that "all three are, I think, one, or rather all three are discrete expressions of a single conviction."³⁶

Eliot's despair at our dissociation of sensibility is, on the cultural level, not different from Yeats's personal desire for "Unity of Being." Each longed for the assurance of a coherent body of knowledge as a basis for art. Yeats's lack of formal religious training, coupled with inherited Victorian doubt, made necessary a more personally formulated

system of thought to answer man's traditional metaphysical questions. A satisfying philosophy was needed for poetic creation. As he wrote to his father later in life, "I think with you that the poet seeks truth, not abstract truth, but a kind of vision of reality which satisfies the whole being."³⁷

The rhetorician would deceive his neighbours,
The sentimentalist himself; while art
Is but a vision of reality.³⁸

The effort to establish a satisfying "form of philosophy" resulted in the first meeting of the Dublin Hermetic Society which Yeats helped to form, on June 16, 1885,³⁹ three days after the poet's twentieth birthday and a year before his first poems appeared in print. Yeats was not simply interested in esoteric lore; what he said of his later spiritualist experiences in London applies to his earlier occult forays as well.

I did not go there for evidence of the kind the Society for Psychical Research would value, any more than I would seek it in Galway or Aran. I was comparing one form of belief with another, and like Paracelsus who claimed to have collected his knowledge from midwife and hangman, I was discovering a philosophy.⁴⁰

Yeats's attraction to occultism is understandable. One of the first books on the subject he came across while still an art student in Dublin in 1884, trying to formulate a coherent aesthetic system from the fragmented beliefs he had inherited from his father, was A.J. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism. Sinnett's emphasis is on the solution to all Victorian religious doubt through an ontology and cosmology that are compatible with Darwin⁴¹ but which also recognize most

orthodox religious systems, stressing that their present institutional forms are deviations from their original foundations. They have, in effect, lost their original imaginative impulse. Yeats could not only acquire the religion he had not accepted as a child, but also get one which was pristine and compatible with contemporary science. In addition, Sinnett's description of the basic mode of inquiry reads very like Yeats's already formulated subjective and anti-Arnoldian aesthetic principles.

The Oriental and European systems of conveying knowledge are as unlike as any two methods can be. The West pricks and piques the learner's controversial instinct at every step. He is encouraged to dispute and resist conviction. . . . The East manages its pupils on a wholly different plan. . . . It enables the student to search Nature for himself, and verify its teachings, in those regions which Western philosophy can only invade by speculation and argument. It never takes the trouble to argue about anything.⁴²

As a recent study of Yeats and the occult points out, it is not particularly surprising that Yeats became a member of an occult society.⁴³ It was quite the trendy thing to do in the Nineties, and Yeats was very much the enthusiast in search of a creed. But what is little understood is why he remained a member for as long as he did. If we date his initial association from this first Hermetic Society he helped form in 1885, then Yeats was a member of one occultist order or another for the next thirty-seven years, from the ages of twenty to fifty-six.⁴⁴

The main reason for this allegiance to occultism, I suggest, is that while it provided a coherent basis for his

art, it was flexible enough to be accommodated to the demands of that art. Poetry remained Yeats's predominant preoccupation, and he could adopt and adapt such theosophical beliefs and practices as suited his own developing aesthetic system.

His description of the Irish fairies in the first issue of the Irish Theosophist in 1892 provides an example of the conflation of Celtic tradition and occult belief that produced one of the salient features of Yeats's aesthetic system--his concept of the "moods." He had already posited transcendence. His problem was now to account for immanence--how do we, as E.M. Forster would say, "connect"?

The fairies are the lesser spiritual moods of that universal mind, wherein every mood is a soul and every thought a body. Their world is very different from ours, and they can but appear in forms borrowed from our limited consciousness, but nevertheless, every form they take and every action they go through has its significance and can be read by the mind trained in correspondence of sensuous form and supersensuous meaning.⁴⁵

The "moods" are personified emotions in man, a combination of the emanating spirits of the universal mind from hermetic lore and Swedenborgian correspondences which communicate with the individual. Unfortunately, Yeats's choice of medium for the transmission of his ideas was infelicitous. Even his contemporaries took him literary for satiric purposes--witness Beerbohm's cartoon, "Mr. W.B. Yeats presenting Mr. George Moore to the Queen of the Fairies" (Fig.1, p. 27). There was a suggestion of imbecility about Yeats's occult beliefs which has persisted to our own day and is probably the main reason why Yeats's voluminous

occult papers have been neglected until recently. Auden reflected the viewpoint of the poetic establishment when he described Yeats's occult practices as somewhat "Southern Californian" and concluded, "how embarrassing."⁴⁶

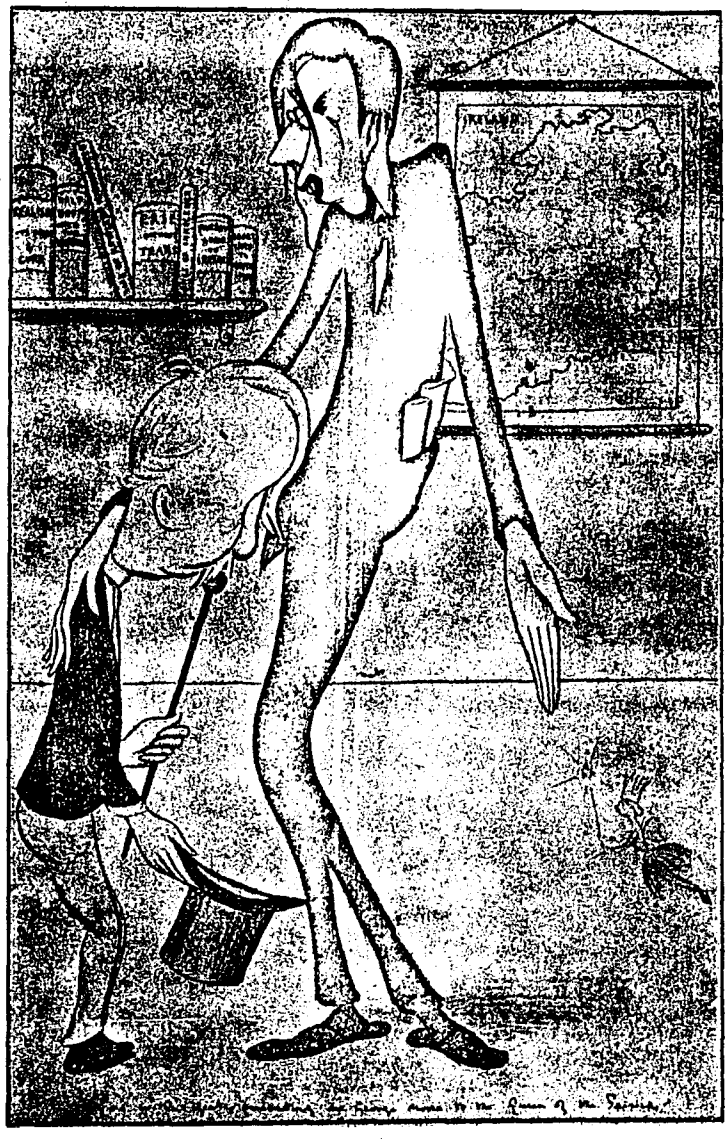


Fig. 1.--"Mr. W.B. Yeats presenting Mr. George Moore to the Queen of the Fairies."

It is clear, however, that Yeats's 1892 Irish fairies are essentially the same as the "instructors" who will visit him in 1917 with metaphors for poetry. There is no conceptual difference between these early "moods," here personified as Irish fairies, and the later initiators of the famous automatic writing. Throughout his life Yeats was consistently refining and developing his basic ideas about the source of imagination and the nature of poetic inspiration, but despite semantic adjustments, his principal concepts remained stable.⁴⁷ Change "moods" to "emanations" and "universal mind" to "Poetic Genius" and you have a Blakean system--at least according to the way Yeats interpreted Blake. For it was knowing the lineaments of hermetic doctrine which assured Yeats that he had particular insight into the pattern of Blake's Prophetic Books. Yeats felt he had discovered a poet who was no longer the Rossettian archetype of the pre-Raphaelite aesthetic mode or the Swinburnian proponent of art-for-art's sake, but a high priest for his own religion of art.

Yeats found confirmation and support for his own developing aesthetic ideas when he realized, or thought he did, that Blake was a fellow mystic who had constructed a poetic philosophy based on the same occult traditions. When, in Ellis' studio, he recognized correspondences between Blake's mythology and his own knowledge of occult philosophy, Yeats felt that he had found not only a sympathetic artist but a fellow adept. Here was sanction for an aesthetic system

built on Madame Helena Blavatsky's teaching. Yeats must have known, either from Isis Unveiled or from its author directly, that Buddhist doctrine was considered the basis of Irish folk-lore,⁴⁸ and Yeats effectively synthesized all his interests--Irish subjects, occult doctrine, and poetry--with his erroneous "discovery" that Blake was not only an occultist but an Irishman as well.⁴⁹ As Yeats wrote some years later, Blake "made possible a religious life to those who had seen the painters and poets of the romantic movement succeed to theology."⁵⁰ For "those" read "Yeats."

As with all his other endeavors of the Nineties, Yeats's occult practices, as I said, were principally informed by the desire to formulate a coherent aesthetic philosophy which he felt was a necessity for the creation of art. When the first Hermetic Society met in Dublin in 1885, Yeats proposed for its consideration the proposition that "whatever the great poets had affirmed in their finest moments was the nearest we could come to an authoritative religion, and that their mythology, their spirits of water and wind were but literal truth."⁵¹ There is no evidence that his view was accepted by the other members, and his subsequent disagreements with occultists were occasioned by what he considered violations of his artistic principles. When he left the Blavatsky group for that of MacGregor Mathers in 1890, the underlying cause was his allegiance to his recently discovered precursor, William Blake.

Certainly it was a romantic house, and I did not separate myself from it by my own will.

I had learned from Blake to hate all abstraction, and, irritated by the abstraction of what were called 'esoteric teachings,' I began a series of experiments.⁵²

Note that Blake is his authority here as a philosophic rather than poetic master. His reading of Blake's philosophy conflicted with Madame Blavatsky's teachings, and he felt that the artist was the superior mystic and had first claim to his loyalty. He had similar problems with Mathers. Yeats's unfinished autobiographical novel The Speckled Bird, which he worked on from 1896 to 1902, presents a picture of the basic conflict he always had with adepts. The novel satirizes the eccentricities of contemporary occultists, manifested principally in their philistine attitudes and inability to recognize artistic beauty. At one point a character who is considered to have been modeled on MacGregor Mathers scornfully tells the Yeats figure, Michael Hearne:

You thought all of forms, I of the inner substance, when I was thinking about the gathering into the order of ancient tradition you were thinking about making it the foundation for patterns. I have come to recognize that you are not a magician, but some kind of an artist, and that the summum bonum itself, the potable gold of our masters, were less to you than some charm of colour, or some charm of words.⁵³

Alchemy for Yeats was primarily in the transmutation of life into art⁵⁴--as it was for Joyce as well.

Nevertheless, Yeats remained with the occultists during practically all of his adult life. They provided him with the philosophic maturity he needed for his work (he reported that "it was only when I began to study psychical research and mystical philosophy that I broke away from my father's

influence"), and assured him that he had "allies" for his "secret thought."⁵⁵ His study even influenced his creative work directly. In 1895 he wrote to Olivia Shakespear, "I am now trying to do some wild Irish stories which shall not be mere phantasies but the signatures--I use a medium's term--of things invisible and ideas."⁵⁶

But occult philosophy's main impact on Yeats was in the formation of his own aesthetic philosophy. He had long discarded the Victorian notion of social progress. Unlike Joyce's Mr. Deasy he did not feel that all history moves towards one great goal. But since he viewed the contemporary state of art as decadent, it was difficult to posit an imaginative renaissance for any reason except that he willed it. Occult philosophy provided him with a cyclical theory of history which he could apply to art--particularly Irish art--as proof of its inevitable resurrection to greatness.⁵⁷ One of his most specifically occult titles is for the 1895 essay "The Body of Christian Rosencrucx," which expresses Yeats's basic anti-Arnoldian position, uses his concept of the "moods" as inspirers of art, and adds the idea of cycles of history developed by his reading of "signatures." He explained his title by telling the hermetic legend that the followers of Father Christian Rosenbrux wrapped his imperishable body and put it in a tomb containing "the symbols of all things in heaven and earth, and in the waters under the earth and set about him inextinguishable magical lamps, which burnt on generation after generation, until other students of the

order came upon the tomb by chance."⁵⁸ He then applied this "old tradition" to the modern artistic scene:

It seems to me that the imagination has had no very different history during the last two hundred years, but has been laid in a great tomb of criticism and had set over it inextinguishable magical lambs of wisdom and romance, and has been altogether so nobly housed and apparelled that we have forgotten that its wizard lips are closed, or but opening for the complaining of some melancholy or ghostly voice.⁵⁹

He continued with a prophecy for the future, formulated in appropriately religious terms as his combination of occult knowledge and aesthetic purpose became, in effect, a religion of art, a personal philosophy which guided his life and provided answers to metaphysical questions.

I cannot get it out of my mind that this age of criticism is about to pass, and an age of imagination, of emotion, of moods, of revelation, is at hand again. . .and when the external world is no more the standard of reality, we will learn again that the great Passions are angels of God, and to embody them. . .is more than to comment, however wisely upon the tendencies of our time, or to express the socialistic, or humanitarian, or other forces of our time, or even 'to sum up' our times, as the phrase is; for Art is a revelation, and not a criticism, and the life of the artist is in the old saying, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every man that is born of the spirit.'⁶⁰

Whatever the student of literature may think of the truth or validity of Yeats's occult practices and theorizings is irrelevant; they were clearly an integral part of the formation of his aesthetic philosophy and must be understood in that light. Yeats explained his need for a system on which to base his art in a 1917 letter to his father which

shows the direct relation of occultism to his poetry.

Much of your thought resembles mine. . .but mine is part of a religious system more or less logically worked out, a system which will I hope interest you as a form of poetry. I find the setting of it all in order has helped my verse, has given me a new framework and new patterns. One goes on year after year getting the disorder of one's mind in order and this is the real impulse to create.⁶¹

The "setting in order" referred to in this letter is, of course, the writing of Per Amica Silentia Lunae which expresses Yeats's belief in self-discovery as a means to creation--"we make out of the quarrel with others rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry."⁶² Later in life, while preparing the second edition of A Vision (direct descendent of Per Amica), Yeats wrote to T. Sturge Moore: "For a year now I have written little but prose, trying for new foundations."⁶³ The process of reformulating his personal aesthetic beliefs was continual, and its beginning was his interpretation of Blake, although this fact has been largely ignored in Yeats criticism. As with his occult practices, his work on Blake has been passed over by critics who are somewhat embarrassed that such a prominent poet was such a poor editor. The Ellis-Yeats Blake has been judged by its relevance to Blake studies rather than examined for what it contributes to our knowledge of Yeats.

Three letters, Yeats's earliest mentions of his work on Blake, show that he regarded Blake as an adjunct to his study of occult philosophy. In February, 1889 he wrote to Katharine Tynan about his new project.

You will be surprised to hear what I am at besides the new play; a commentary on the mystical writing of Blake. . . .It should draw notice--be a sort of red flag above the waters of oblivion--for there is no clue printed anywhere to the mysterious 'Prophetic Books'--Swinburne and Gilchrist found them unintelligible.⁶⁴

A letter to the same correspondent the following year indicates that Yeats had already begun to assimilate Blake into his own artistic system.

You will like Blake's system of thought. It is profoundly Christian--though wrapped up in a queer dress--and certainly amazingly poetical. It has done my own mind a great deal of good in liberating me from formulas and theories of several kinds. You will find it a difficult book, this Blake interpretation, but one that will open up for you, as it has for me, new kinds of poetic feeling and thought.⁶⁵

A letter to John O'Leary two years later, with the project all but completed, is mainly a defense of Yeats's occult interests, but it demonstrates how closely he linked his Blake study to theosophy and the relation of that amalgam to his art.

Now as to Magic. It is surely absurd to hold me 'weak' or otherwise because I chose to persist in a study which I decided deliberately four or five years ago to make next to my poetry, the most important pursuit of my life.

If I had not made magic my constant study I could not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would The Countess Cathleen have come to exist. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write. It holds to my work the same relation that the philosophy of Godwin held to the work of Shelley and I have always considered myself a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance--the revolt of the soul against the intellect--now beginning in the world.⁶⁶

It would be easy to ascribe Yeats's "discovery" of Blake as a fellow occultist to his own enthusiasm for that form of thought. His speculations about the sources of Blake's knowledge can easily be quoted out of context to demonstrate that Yeats's assumptions are based upon extremely weak methodology. For example, in the beginning of the Ellis-Yeats study of Blake we read:

It is possible that he [Blake] received initiation into an order of Christian Kabalists then established in London, and known as 'The Hermetic Students of the G.D.' Of course this conjecture is not susceptible of proof. He would have said nothing about such initiation even if he had received it. The 'students' in question do not name themselves, or each other and the subject of their study is nothing less than universal magic.

(E-Y, I, 24; italics mine)

What is important to remember is that neither by training nor by inclination was Yeats impelled to investigate his suppositions. But he was far more perceptive than has ever been acknowledged in Yeats criticism. Not until Kathleen Raine's study of Blake's sources more than seventy years later were Yeats's suppositions substantially confirmed. In her investigation of the neo-Platonic, hermetic, and cabalistic sources of Blake's mythology, she was the first modern critic to give Yeats credit for observing the importance of Blake's occult backgrounds.⁶⁷ Interestingly, Blake's discovery of occult lore seems to have provided him with a tradition as it did Yeats. Raine reports that "with his discovery of Neoplatonism, Blake found a structure able to express metaphysical meaning in symbolic terms both

coherent and beautiful; and he could now enter the central tradition of European poetic and pictorial symbolism."⁶⁸ Yeats's association with Blavatsky and Mathers had given him a similar background for his poetry.⁶⁹

In a recent study, James Olney has pointed out that the obvious similarities between Yeats and Jung--the anima mundi and the collective unconscious, for example--were not simply coincidental, but due to the fact that each, unaware of the other, was working within a similar occult tradition.⁷⁰ Olney terms this phenomenon a "simultaneous flowering" of thought from the same basic root,⁷¹ and we might term the thought of Blake and Yeats successive flowerings from a common root. But Yeats clearly recognized their shared tradition, and that was the source of his initial close identification with Blake. The predecessor provided the incipient poet with a model which united his philosophic and nationalistic interests under the single banner of Art.

Yeats's Blake editions have long been superseded by more accurate and scholarly texts, but his interpretations have never been thoroughly explored as a reflection of the mind of their author. That is the task of my next chapter. Blake himself confirmed the essential subjectivity of any form of criticism when he noted that "As a man is, So he Sees" (K, 793). Yeats's Blake interpretations are actually the first comprehensive statement of his own poetic concerns. Aside from its relevance to Blake, the Ellis-Yeats edition

is significant as a text which reveals the identity of W.B. Yeats, and it is from that perspective that I will examine it.

Notes

¹ Unpublished notes for a London lecture on "Contemporary Poetry" dictated in Dublin in 1910; quoted by Richard Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1948), p. 5.

² Discussed by Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, pp. 3-4.

³ Yeats, Autobiography, p. 70.

⁴ Ibid., p. 98. We can compare the original diary account in Memoirs, ed. Denis Donoghue (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), p. 29. Yeats mentions Edwin Ellis, "who was an enthusiastic scholar of Blake," and tells of their meeting:

I had inherited from my father a like enthusiasm [for Blake] and on turning over a copy of the poems, in his studio, I found on a sheet of notepaper a series of attributes of the different districts of London to different human faculties and destinies. I recognised certain attributes of the cardinal points I had heard of among the kabalists, and Ellis and I began the four years of almost continual study that resulted in our interpretation of the mystical philosophy of the Prophetic Books.

⁵ John Frayne, ed., Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), I, 63.

⁶ Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 70.

⁷ Yeats, Autobiography, p. 102.

⁸ W.B. Yeats, The Letters of W.B. Yeats, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), p. 740.

⁹ W.B. Yeats, Letters to the New Island, ed. Horace Reynolds (1934; rpt. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 205.

¹⁰ Frayne, ed., p. 84. Italics mine.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 237.

¹² John Ruskin, "The Landscape of Literature," The Literary Criticism of John Ruskin, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton, and Col, Inc., 1971), p. 79.

¹³ Frayne, ed., p. 172.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 206. Frayne suggests that these temporal activities were very non-literary--probably designed to impress Maud Gonne with his abilities as a man of action.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 187. Italics mine.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

¹⁷ Algernon Charles Swinburne, William Blake: A Critical Essay, ed. Hugh J. Luck (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 91. Text reproduced from the first (1868) edition.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

¹⁹ J.B. Yeats, J.B. Yeats: Letters to His Son W.B. Yeats and Others 1869-1922, ed. Joseph Hone (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1946), p. 198.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 143. This decadence of the basic Ruskinian impulse is traced by Graham Hough, The Last Romantics (1947; rpt. London: Methuen, 1961), p. xvii, and its relation to Yeats's poetry is a theme of the entire book.

²¹ W.B. Yeats, Letters to the New Island, p. 191.

²² Frayne, ed., p. 419.

²³ Letters, ed. Wade, p. 63.

²⁴ W.B. Yeats, Letters to the New Island, p. 146. The personal application is clear when we know that Alastor was one of Yeats's earliest poetic heroes. In his autobiography (p. 39) he wrote:

I had many idols, and as I climbed along the narrow ledge I was now Manfred on his glacier, and now Prince Athanase with his solitary lamp, but I soon chose Alastor for my chief of men and longed to share his melancholy, and maybe at last to disappear from everybody's

sight as he disappeared drifting in a boat along some slow-moving river between great trees.

²⁵ The dichotomy in the art of the day is clearly developed by C.K. Stead, The New Poetic (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1964), especially pp. 11-15. Stead's entire book is an analysis of the response of Yeats and Eliot to the poetic dilemma.

²⁶ Frayne, ed., p. 249.

²⁷ Letters, ed. Wade, pp. 109-10.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 892.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 104. Italics mine.

³⁰ Joseph Hone, W.B. Yeats: 1865-1939 (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 230.

³¹ W.B. Yeats, The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 778.

³² Kathleen Raine, Blake and Tradition (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), II, 273-74.

³³ Ibid., p. 274.

³⁴ Quoted by Ellmann, Yeats: The Man & The Masks, p. 19.

³⁵ W.B. Yeats, Explorations (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 263.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Letters, ed. Wade, p. 588.

³⁸ Variorum Poems, p. 369. The poem "Ego Dominus Tuus" from which these lines are quoted was published within three years of the letter to his father in note #36, and the letter clearly provides a gloss for the poem.

39 Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 41.

40 Yeats, Explorations, p. 31. "Occult," which simply means "hidden," is a generic term for esoteric lore and refers to no specific body of knowledge but to a conflation of various hermetic, neo-Platonic, and cabalist teachings. When I refer to Yeats's occult knowledge I am using the term to denote the basic sources which we know he was familiar with; e.g. Sinnett, Blavatsky, and the principles and practices of The Golden Dawn. It is important to keep this in mind since in Yeats's discovery of Blake's occultist philosophy he assumed that Blake's sources were the same as his own when, in fact, as Kathleen Raine's study has shown, Blake's knowledge was as eclectic as Yeats's. The correspondences between the traditions they used make Yeats an especially able commentator on Blake, but his basic assumption that he knows all of Blake's sources will often lead him astray, as I will show in the next chapter.

41 A.J. Sinnett, Esoteric Buddhism (London: Trübner & Company, 1883), p. 197.

42 Ibid., p. 18. Italics mine.

43 George Mills Harper, ed. Yeats and the Occult (Canada: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. xv.

44 Ibid.

45 Frayne, ed., p. 247.

46 W.H. Auden, "Yeats," The Permanence of Yeats: Selected Criticism, ed. James Hall and Michael Steinmann (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 342.

47 Yeats reached this conclusion himself (Letters, ed. Wade, p. 798) and most of his critics agree; e.g. Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 287; Frayne, p. 34.

48 H.P. Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled: A Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology (1923; rpt. London: The Theosophical Publishing House, Ltd., 1884), II, 290-91. For an excellent summary of Yeats's association with Blavatsky see Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, pp. 62-67.

⁴⁹ W.B. Yeats, ed. Poems of William Blake (New York: The Modern Library, n.d.), p. xi. This is a reprint of the shorter edition of Blake which Yeats edited independently in 1893 for The Muses' Library. Blake's Irish heritage was a popular belief of the time, and Yeats naturally emphasized it.

⁵⁰ Yeats, Explorations, p. 45.

⁵¹ Yeats, Autobiography, p. 55.

⁵² Ibid., p. 111.

⁵³ Unpublished typescript, Yeats Archives, SUNY at Stony Brook, reel #23, vol. 6, p. 137.

⁵⁴ In his preface to his 1906 Collected Poems Yeats wrote:

All art is in the last analysis an endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapour of the world an image of human perfection, and for its own and not for the art's sake, and that is why the labour of the alchemists, who were called artists in their day, is a befitting comparison for all deliberate change of style.
(Variorum Poems, p. 849)

⁵⁵ Yeats, Autobiography, p. 54.

⁵⁶ Letters, ed. Wade, p. 255.

⁵⁷ In his 1893 essay "Nationality and Literature" (Frayne, ed. pp. 266-75) Yeats used the evolutionary stages of development of the occultists and applied them to literature according to his own fashion. He concluded that "the older literatures of Europe are in their golden sunset, their wise old age" (p. 273), but Irish literature is still in its infancy--"we are a young nation with unexhausted material lying within us in our still unexpressed national character" (p. 273). He incorporated Blake into this system with the remark that he could show "the causal universe itself, 'falling,' in the words of my master, William Blake, 'into division,' and foretell with him 'its resurrection to unity'" (p. 273). This synthesis of Ireland, occultism, and Blake will be more fully discussed in Chapter Two.

⁵⁸ W.B. Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil (1903; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 308.

- 59 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 309.
- 60 Ibid., pp. 310-11. Italics mine.
- 61 Letters, ed. Wade, pp. 626-27.
- 62 W.B. Yeats, Mythologies (New York: Collier Books, 1974), p. 331.
- 63 Ursula Bridge, ed., W.B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore: Their Correspondence 1901-1937 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 177.
- 64 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 112.
- 65 Ibid., pp. 152-53.
- 66 Ibid., pp. 210-11.
- 67 Raine, I, xxxii.
- 68 Ibid., p. 99.
- 69 Blavatsky also provided him with poetic as well as philosophic insight. As Northrop Frye has observed, "The Secret Doctrine, whatever else it is, is a very remarkable essay on the morphology of symbols;" Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963), p. 221.
- 70 James Olney, "The Esoteric Flower: Yeats and Jung," Yeats and the Occult, ed. Harper, p. 28.
- 71 Ibid., p. 44. Raine, I, xxvi, has pointed out that Blake and Jung participated in the same tradition. When Graham Hough points out a passage in a 1901 Yeats essay as "a surprising anticipation" of Jung (p. 229), his astonishment is due to his lack of knowledge of the basic esoteric tradition they have in common. Many of the "influences" of Blake on Yeats can be attributed not to poetic influence as such, but to the similar tradition in which both operated, as we will see in the two chapters which follow.

Chapter Two

A Portrait of the Artist

Myself must I remake
Till I am Timon and Lear
Or that William Blake
Who beat upon the wall
Till Truth obeyed his call.

W.B. Yeats, "An Acre of Grass"

I. The Artist As Critic

In 1888 Yeats was a poet who not only lacked sufficient philosophy, but who needed a technique suited to his aesthetic principles. The Spenserian-Shelleyan manner of The Wanderings of Oisín was not amenable to his talent. He wrote of that volume, "somewhat inarticulate have I been I fear. Something I had to say. Don't know that I have said it. All seems confused, incoherent, inarticulate. . . .Some day I shall be articulate perhaps. But this book I have no great hopes of--it is all sluggish, incoherent."¹ He also wrote in that same year that his work was "not the poetry of insight and knowledge, but of longing and complaint. . . .I hope some day to alter that and write the poetry of insight and knowledge."²

In an effort to enlarge his basic principles into a coherent system of thought that might inform his poetry, Yeats turned increasingly to prose in the late Eighties and Nineties. There was, of course, as always in Yeats's life, a practical reason for this prolific criticism. It helped pay the bills, since J.B. Yeats was inexorably opposed to any form of regular employment for the artist.

But through his reviews and critical pieces Yeats also cultivated the soil in which his later poetry is rooted. His work on Blake, reflected throughout his criticism, is the primary text for this remaking of his poetic self. This criticism, which I will examine before discussing the Ellis-Yeats Blake, provides a portrait of the artist as critic as it reveals the particular bias which was characteristic of all of Yeats's critical prose.

The collection of essays printed in 1903 under the Blakean title Ideas of Good and Evil³ reflects Yeats's critical concerns during the Nineties, his need to synthesize the polarities of the poetic world into a viable aesthetic philosophy. He is very much "triton/Among the streams," a man conscious of his divine inheritance of imagination but equally concerned with the problems of life in this temporal world--the rose, yes, but always upon the rood of time. Using one of his favorite poetic images of the tree, he expressed this struggle in a 1906 essay: "An art may become impersonal because it has too much circumstance or too little, because the world is too little or too much with it, because it is too near the ground or too far up among the branches."⁴

Although only two essays out of nineteen are specifically about Blake in Ideas of Good and Evil, Blake is alluded to or quoted a total of twenty-three times in nine other essays. So common was Yeats's use of a Blake citation during this period that John Frayne regarded it as one of the criteria

for determining authorship of anonymous reviews in compiling his edition of Yeats's uncollected prose from 1886 through 1896.⁵ The picture of Blake in Ideas of Good and Evil is of an artist who is on the side of imagination and who offers a solution to the poetic problems of the day.

In one of the Blake essays Yeats wrote of the familiar contemporary aesthetic philosophies in diametric opposition; one made by "men of action, drudges of time and space," the other by artists and poets "who are taught by the nature of their craft to sympathize with all living things, and who, the more pure and fragrant is their lamp, pass the further from all limitations, to come at last to forget good and evil in an absorbing vision of the happy and the unhappy."⁶ Added to Yeats's usual preference for the life of imagination, we now find its salutary effect as well. Aided by the tenets of occultism which he had grafted to his aesthetic system, Yeats had made Blake a type of the savior in his religion of art, the "chanticleer of the new dawn."⁷ He viewed the artistic process as a means to personal spiritual transcendence.

Our imaginations are but fragments of the universal imagination, portions of the universal body of God, and as we enlarge our imagination by imaginative sympathy, and transform with the beauty and peace of art, the sorrows and joys of the world, we put off the limited mortal man more and more⁸ and put on the unlimited 'immortal man'.

It is clear also that this notion of the redemptive effect of art was no mere rhetorical excess for Yeats. In the introduction to his Poems of 1895 Yeats explained his

preference for certain lyrics: "in them he [Yeats] has found, he believes, the only pathway whereon he can hope to see with his own eyes the Eternal Rose of Beauty and of Peace."⁹ The notion of art as the supreme form of religion is also reflected in his 1897 story "The Tables of the Law" in which Owen Aherne declares that

the world only exists to be a tale in the ears of coming generations; and terror and content, birth and death, love and hatred, and the fruit of the Tree, are but instruments for that supreme art which is to win us from life and gather us into eternity like doves into their dove-cots.¹⁰

But adherence to the dictates of imagination not only keeps the poet on the side of the angels, as it were, it also makes him a better artist, as Yeats explained in his essay "William Blake and the Imagination."

This philosophy kept him [Blake] more simply a poet than any poet of his time, for it made him content to express every beautiful feeling that came into his head without troubling about its utility or chaining it to any utility. Sometimes one feels, even when one is reading poets of a better time--Tennyson or Wordsworth, let us say--that they have troubled the energy and simplicity of their imaginative passions by asking whether they were for the hindrance of the world, instead of believing that all beautiful things have 'lain burningly on the Divine hand.'¹¹

Yeats's perception of Blake's coherent, occult, philosophic system offers him an alternative to the impressionism of l'art pour l'art.

His conviction of the need for a "philosophy" is part of his determination to have a viable tradition within which to work. In his 1900 essay "The Symbolism of Poetry" Yeats

wrote that

all writers, all artists of any kind, so far as they have had any philosophical or critical power, perhaps just in so far as they have been deliberate artists at all, have had some philosophy. . . that has evoked their most startling inspiration, calling into outer life some portion of the divine life, of the buried reality. . . They have sought no new thing, it may be, but only to understand and to copy the pure inspiration of early times.¹²

This need to find a poetic model with the proper philosophic credentials is the source of his dismissal of Shelley, his earlier poetic hero. Having decided, with the help of Goethe¹³ and his father, that the poetic ideal required a sound philosophic basis, he reread his first poetic model in this light and found him wanting.

His [Shelley's] early romances and much throughout his poetry show how strong a fascination the traditions of magic and of the magical philosophy had cast over his mind, and one can hardly suppose that he had not brooded over their doctrine of symbols or signatures, though I do not find anything to show that he gave it deep study.¹⁴

Yeats, as Harold Bloom has observed, in effect blames Shelley for not being Yeats.¹⁵ The major attraction of Blake for Yeats was the lineaments of occultism to be observed in the Prophecies; he felt that in Blake he had an imaginative precursor with a sound philosophic system-- and a system with which he was in accord. He also found a poetic manner in Blake which was the solution to his technical problems.

Symbolism was the mode of the moment, of course, and Yeats would have known of it whether or not he had ever

heard of Blake, but note how in an 1898 essay on symbolism Yeats associates the technique with Blake and uses a familiar hermetic aphorism as well. His aesthetic is being formulated with Blake and theosophy at its center.

In England, which has had great Symbolic Art, most people dislike an art if they are told it is symbolic, for they confuse symbol and allegory. . . .It is only a very modern Dictionary that calls a Symbol 'the sign or representation of any moral thing by the images or properties of natural things,' which, though an imperfect definition, is not unlike 'The things below are as the things above' of the Emerald Tablet of Hermes! The Faery Queen and The Pilgrim's Progress have been so important in England that Allegory has over-topped Symbolism, and for a time has overwhelmed it in its own downfall. William Blake was perhaps the first modern to insist on a difference. . . .William Blake has written, 'Vision or imagination'--meaning symbolism by those words--'is a representation of what actually exists, really and unchangeable. Fable or Allegory is formed by the daughters of Memory.'¹⁶

Because of his identification of the occult backgrounds of Blake's mythology and his sympathy with Blake's use of symbolism, Yeats is both the last nineteenth-century critic of Blake and the first modern one. Although he participates in the subjective manner of the last century, following D.G. Rossetti and Swinburne, he is the first Blakean to apply archetypal criticism to Blake's poetry. His sense of personal identification with Blake resulted in some rather dubious critical methodology but, as we will see, Yeats was at the same time extremely perceptive. However, before examining his work on Blake in any detail, I think it is important to recognize that Yeats was always, and primarily,

an artist, and all his efforts as historian, philosopher, editor, or literary critic, were a portion of what his father termed the artist's "tyrannous need for self-expression."¹⁷ We must lay to rest any notion that Yeats was, in any useful sense, an objective and disinterested critic or a systematic thinker.

Yeats's correspondence with T. Sturge Moore during the late twenties, during his most specifically "philosophic" phase, provides an interesting portrait of his limitations as an objective thinker. Their letters about "Ruskin's cat" are a semi-idealist discussion of the nature of reality with Yeats attempting to prove that the world of imagination is at least as real as the temporal universe. But Moore's replies to Yeats's earnest propositions succinctly deflate the latter's philosophic pretensions. When Yeats tried to refute a position taken by Bertrand Russell, for example, Moore answered practically, "You don't seem to follow or answer Russell's argument, only to re-state your case."¹⁸ Later Yeats attempted to disprove Moore's brother, the philosopher G.E. Moore, but Sturge Moore pointed out that Yeats had misread his brother's essay--"My brother did not deny your facts; he only said that he had not referred to them in his essay. Any application of his argument is therefore yours not his."¹⁹ And when Yeats asserted that Professor Moore contended that sensations were "behind, not in, the mind," G.E. Moore himself noted that Yeats had misread "before" as "behind"

and in doing so had simply made nonsense out of the argument.²⁰ (We will meet this problem of Yeats's poor eyesight and disregard for exact quotation over and over again.)

Yeats's reading of philosophy during the late twenties while preparing the second edition of A Vision was just as subjective, and primarily intended to confirm that "those invisible persons knew all,"²¹ just as the result of his reading of Nietzsche at the turn of the century was to fit the German philosopher into his already partially formulated system of thought. "Nietzsche completes Blake and has the same roots," he wrote to Lady Gregory in 1902.²² His "study" is always a subjective search for sanction of his own thought.

In examining Yeats's early work on Blake we are, in essence, exploring the entire philosophic basis of his poetic career. Periodically throughout his life we find him turning to prose, whether to the reviews of the Nineties or the final complexities of A Vision, to shore up the fragments, to work out and refine his personal system. Both Per Amica Silentia Lunae and A Vision are the products of a lifetime effort to formulate a personally satisfying philosophy to serve as a background for his art. As he wrote to Joseph Hone about the problems of writing a Yeats biography in 1916 (before Per Amica appeared), "your difficulties have come from my house being still unfinished, there are so many rooms and corridors that I am still

building upon foundations laid long ago."²³ Or, using his favorite metaphor of organic growth, Yeats commented in a 1910 poem, "Though leaves are many, the root is one."²⁴

That one root was his need for self-expression, and whether he was writing a philosophy of history or a critical commentary on Shelley or Shakespeare, Yeats was above all a poet in search of identity. As he said of himself at the time he began his poetic career, "I had many ideas as I have now, only I did not know how to choose from among those that belonged to my life."²⁵ Since his criticism was a part of that process of choosing things that belonged to his life, Yeats's comments always reveal their author more than his subject. As Thomas Whitaker has observed in his analysis of A Vision, Yeats was "no historian but a poet. He was not in the academic sense, a disciplined thinker. . . .Yeats was skilled at finding what he wished to find; and he often oversimplified and distorted the thought of others, moulding it to resemble his own."²⁶ The same is true to an even greater extent of his literary criticism. Through his comments on other artists we learn much more about Yeats's art than about theirs.

This subjective use of criticism as a form of self-definition was partially a heritage from his father, whose view of criticism reflects his son's practice of that craft. J.B. Yeats once wrote to his son that

to find out what was the mind of Shakespeare
is valuable but the real thing is to find out

what is my own mind when I read Shakespeare or any other poet. If I know the mind of Shakespeare and in order that I may know it better, am made acquainted with the period in which he lived, it is good because thereby I may come more quickly to know my own mind--
for I study him and all other poets exclusively that I may find myself.²⁷

As early as 1887 Yeats declared that "I see everything through the coloured glasses of my own moods,"²⁸ and he described the artist in a later essay as a man who "is known from other men by making all he handles like himself."²⁹

Yeats's 1901 essay on Shakespeare provides an interesting and typical example of his critical method. His preference for Richard II and dislike of Henry V is expressed not in terms of their qualities of kingship but of their merits as poets. Yeats's central concern over the proper stance for contemporary poets is clearly reflected in his comment that

instead of that lyricism which rose out of Richard's mind like the jet of a fountain to fall again where it had risen, instead of that phantasy too enfolded in its own sincerity to make any thought the hour has need of, Shakespeare has given him [Henry V] a resounding rhetoric that moves men, as a leading article does to-day.³⁰

Yeats sees the two kings as opposites, comparable to the discursive descendants of Arnold and the aesthetes of the Rhymers' Club in the Mauve Decade. Furthermore, in his analysis of Shakespeare's histories, Richard and Henry become Robartes and Aherne, Fergus and the Druid, and all the other dualities which expressed Yeats's view of existence. Describing Shakespeare's dramaturgy Yeats

commented that

to poise character against character was an element in Shakespeare's art, and scarcely a play is lacking in characters that are the complement of one another, and so, having made the vessel of porcelain Richard II, he had to make the vessel of clay Henry V. He makes him the reverse of all that Richard was.³¹

Clearly Yeats is not commenting of Shakespeare's dramatic practice so much as signalling his own.

As critic, at least as Blakean critic, however, Yeats was much more the rule than the exception in his century. As Deborah Dorfman has so ably chronicled, the nineteenth-century Blake revival was a remaking of Blake to the commentators' taste.³² The first genuinely critical edition of Blake's poetry did not appear until 1905,³³ and three of the major interpreters of Blake in the period, D.G. Rossetti, Swinburne, and Yeats, were all practicing poets engaged in formulating a new poetic.³⁴ Their enthusiasm for Blake was imbued with a missionary zeal. Here was a poet who had not yet been placed in the tradition of English poetry and could be used for their own (albeit unconscious) purposes. The state of the Blake canon was particularly conducive to such a purpose. For example, the Ms. Note-book, now commonly known as the Rossetti Ms., contains sketches, early drafts of poems, and various prose writings, and was used by Blake as a commonplace book for at least eighteen years. Blake's nineteenth-century poet-critics culled from it at will. As Dorfman reports:

Both Rossetti and Swinburne saw the Note-Book largely as diary--Swinburne calls it a repository of 'points of personal faith and

feeling'; each draws from it poems that enforce his view of Blake. Swinburne neither alludes to nor quotes the Epigrams on Art that Rossetti printed for their Pre-Raphaelite sentiments. When he came to print as yet unpublished writings (mainly out of the Note-Book), Swinburne chose lines, stanzas, and epigrams on repressive morality or else those that conveyed the range of Blake's thought.³⁵

Yeats's excursions into revisionism are equally personal readings. In the smaller edition of Blake which he edited independently in 1893, Yeats offered the following note for a prose passage which he had chosen to print even though he found it deleted by Blake.

From the sequel to his description of the picture of 'The Last Judgment.' It is omitted in Gilchrist perhaps because Blake himself drew a line through it. It was probably objected to by Blake simply because it added to the obscurity, without greatly helping the argument, of his 'sequel', and not because he disapproved of it itself, for it states more shortly and explicitly than elsewhere a fundamental conception of his.³⁶

When we examine the passage in question, we discover that the "fundamental conception" is Yeats's as well, his familiar concern with psychological duality, the Richard and Henry of his mind.

The combats of good and evil is eating of the Tree of Knowledge. The combats of truth and error is eating of the Tree of Life. These are universal and particular. Each are personified. There is not an error but has a man for its agent; that is, it is a man. There is not a truth but it has also a man. Good and evil are qualities in every man whether a good or evil man. These are enemies, and destroy one another by every means in their power, whether of deceit or open violence.³⁷

This is typical of Yeats's method throughout his work on Blake. He overidentifies with Blake and makes editorial judgments with little or no basis in either external or internal evidence, but solely from his sympathy with Blake's "philosophy"--as he understands it. But very often, since he and Blake work within similar neo-Platonic systems, Yeats will instinctively light on a truth in spite of his faulty technique. In this case, for example, although his methodology is suspect, Yeats was right. Modern editors do print this passage--not because they feel, as Yeats did, that they have private access to Blake's intentions, but because manuscript evidence indicates that Blake's line usually means that there was another copying elsewhere, perhaps lost, rather than a deletion or rejection of the passage.³⁸

The subjective manner is, of course, not limited to explications of Blake's philosophy but extends to the interpretations of the poetry. If we compare the poem "Mary" as interpreted by Swinburne and as it is explained in the Ellis-Yeats Blake, it is clear that both poets projected their own poetic concerns. On the literal level, "Mary" is a narrative which tells of a beautiful young woman who is persecuted by the envious townspeople. Swinburne, as can be expected, sees the poem as a "frank acceptance of pleasure" and a comment on the persecution by the world of "purity of instinct and innocence."³⁹ Yeats, on the other hand, is concerned with showing that

Blake's system is a consistent mythology with all the poems fitting into a larger pattern. Since he himself views all of life as the necessary conflict between dualities, he offers an interpretation based on that principle, with an analogue to his own poetic practice as he makes Blake's poem autobiographical. Noting that Blake's letter to Butts (16 August 1803) echoes Mary's lament, "O, why was I born with a different Face?", he concludes that "Mary" is an expression of the feminine aspect of Blake's own personality (a Jungian anima) which Blake was forced to cast out so as not to raise envy (E-Y, II, 21). To Yeats, the poem is autobiographical and symbolic and an expression of Blake's awareness of psychological duality. Yeats understands Blake as he understood Shakespeare--principally in self-reflexive terms. He does not so much remake himself as he remakes Blake into his poetic counterpart. But this very tendency toward self-projection makes Yeats's Blake an extremely useful text for understanding Yeats. His extensive work on Blake is really a portrait of the artist William Butler Yeats.

In addition to making frequent mention of Blake in his critical prose, Yeats produced two editions of Blake's works which were published in 1893, and we must briefly turn our attention to the facts of the Ellis-Yeats collaboration before attempting any further analysis of Yeats's Blake. The Works of William Blake, Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical, edited by Edwin John Ellis and W.B. Yeats, was a massive

three-volume edition that included a biographical memoir, an explication of Blake's symbolic system, commentaries on individual poems, facsimiles of the engraved books, and prose paraphrases of the prophecies. It is, as Deborah Dorfman has observed, both "brilliant and revolutionary" and "one of the most idiosyncratic and poorly put-together among literary critiques."⁴⁰ Ellis and Yeats printed the text of Vala for the first time, and their emphasis on the prophecies as Blake's central texts was a needed corrective for the common critical opinion of Blake as having been sane only in the Songs of Innocence and Experience. But unfortunately the editors also reflected the nineteenth-century aesthetes' disdain for "mere scholarship," as is revealed in their protest that "with every year poetry tends to fall more and more into the clutches of the merely scholarly editors who prize the exact reproduction of an error above the enjoyment of ten beautiful songs" (E-Y, I, 183). Neither editor could ever be accused of the sin of scholarship, and many textual errors vitiated the validity of the edition.⁴¹ Such errors were not due solely to carelessness, but represent a distinct editorial policy. As late as 1907, when Blake scholarship had already begun to establish correct texts for the shorter poems, Ellis persisted in his belief that the correct way to edit Blake was to rewrite his verse. In The Real Blake he argued that

the edition of Blake that is wanted in the future would be one in which a capable and careful editor corrected for Blake every line

that his hasty hand mis-wrote, relegating to foot-notes the record of the original slips of the pen.⁴²

Ellis' collaborator was equally unsuited to the role of editor. Yeats was a notoriously inaccurate copyist because of his poor eyesight, and he had a lifetime struggle with printers because of his almost indecipherable handwriting.⁴³ He also had a rather cavalier attitude toward exactness. He tended to appear to be directly quoting authors when he was actually quoting a commentator on the writer in question rather than the original text.⁴⁴ Even when exactness might be most expected Yeats was scandalously careless. He used a quotation from Vala, for example, as an epigraph when his poems "Crossways" appeared in 1889. Through all editions of Yeats's poetry the quotation remained "The stars are threshed, and the souls are threshed from their husks," although the line should read "And all Nations were threshed out, and the stars threshed from their husks."⁴⁵ Since the line is correctly printed in the Ellis-Yeats Blake (E-Y, III, 131), it is apparent that Yeats tended to quote from memory and rarely bothered to check on the accuracy of his memory, not an uncommon practice among poets but a fatal flaw in an editor.

We get some sense of Yeats's contribution to the project from his letters of 1890 and 1891 when he writes about going over everything with Ellis even though he despairs at times because his collaborator is "useless through lack of mystical knowledge."⁴⁶ He wrote in an inscription in Lady

Gregory's copy of the Ellis-Yeats Blake, "I have a tendency to make generalizations on imperfect foundations, and he to remain content with detached discoveries."⁴⁷ The edition's overall emphasis on the unified, coherent pattern of Blake's mythology seems, in light of this comment, to reflect Yeats's domination of the project, just as its portrait of Blake as Irish mystic symbolist poet reflects Yeats's tripartite obsession with nationalism, occultism, and poetry.⁴⁸ Lady Gregory's copy of the Blake edition is inscribed by Yeats and dated Nov. 14, 1889, and another inscription in Yeats's own copy dated May 3, 1900 gives a similar account of the collaboration:

The writing of this book is mainly Ellis's. The thinking is as much mine as his. The biography is by him. He wrote and trebled in size a biography of mine. The greater part of the 'symbolic system' is my writing; the rest of the book was written by Ellis working over short accounts of the books by me except in the case of the 'literary period,' the account of the minor poems, and the account of Blake's art theories which are all his own except in so far as we discussed everything together.⁴⁹

These comments, written several years after publication, are not totally reliable. Yeats's "written by" seems to be mainly an indication of which hand held the pen rather than of whose ideas were expressed, and his final comment, "except in so far as we discussed everything together," clouds the clear division of labor he presents. Ian Fletcher's recent examination of the extant manuscript material indicates that it is not easy to separate the contributions of the editors, since the manuscript shows

that "the Yeats-Ellis commentary was collaboration in the deepest sense" and "it seems important to remember that much of the revision was done in the same room at the same time and that whose hand held the pen is not always significant."⁵⁰

Yeats also added a note that the text "is substantially correct, in its interpretations, but it is full of misprints for which I am not responsible as I saw only a few of the proofs."⁵¹ Certainly many of the misquoted lines can be attributed to Yeats's poor eyesight and equally poor handwriting, but his penchant for mystical meanings also contributed to the edition's inaccurate text. For example, one of Yeats's favorite passages is from one of Blake's last letters, 12 April, 1827, to George Cumberland, which reads:

Flaxman is Gone & we must All soon follow, every
one to his Own Eternal House, Leaving the
Delusive Goddess Nature & her Laws to get into
Freedom from all Law of the Members into The
Mind, in which every one is King & Priest in
his own House. (K, 879)

Yeats frequently quoted this portion of Blake's letter. It appears in the introduction to his shorter Blake edition, in his explication of Blake's symbolism in the Ellis-Yeats Blake, and in his 1896 essay "William Blake and his Illustrations to The Divine Comedy." But he consistently replaces Blake's words with the ones I have italicized.

'Flaxman is gone, and we must all soon follow, every one to his eternal home, leaving the delusions of goddess Nature and her laws, to get into freedom from all the laws of the numbers,' the multicplicity of nature, 'into

the mind in which every one is king and
priest in his own house.'⁵²

The first two changes are hardly major, although Yeats does change the focus so that Blake's characterization of Nature as a diabolical Rahab is slightly minimized. However, the change from members to numbers, which Yeats interpolates to explain as "the multiplicity of nature," suggests a more conscious misreading. The word may have been difficult to transcribe, but Yeats immediately imposes a "mystical" meaning and proceeds to establish an interpretation based on his reading. He felt that Blake's use of language shows that "in the letter, as everywhere else, the mystic suggestion and the symbol or fact are alternately referred to as though the mental transition were quite customary, and to be expected from the average reader" (E-Y, I, 163). He then explained the "laws of the numbers."

The 'Laws of the Numbers' refer not only to Newton, but to the Numbers of darkness, 6, manifestation, 7, separated personality, 9, &c., which are illustrated in the stanzas of 'Los,' 'Urizen,' 'the Nights of 'Vala,' &c.
(E-Y, I, 164)

The reader is led to believe that "laws of the numbers" is a salient feature of Blake's philosophy and is reflected in his poetry through a complex system of numerology when, in fact, "laws of the numbers" is purely Yeats's own construction. Later in his explication of the symbolic system Yeats returns to the "laws of the numbers" which he has extrapolated from his misquotation of Blake's letter.

As soon as reason had set bounds to life,
'the law of the numbers' began, and multiplicity

endeavoured to take the place of unity,
 continually struggling with that from whence
 it came. (E-Y, I, 248)

So sure was Yeats that whatever was unintelligible in Blake had mystical significance that he established a veritable doctrine from his misreading. Yeats felt that Blake was an occult philosopher, and since he himself had learned the mystic significance of numbers from his earliest occult associations, he naturally felt that Blake had used the "laws of the numbers" in his poetic system. The generally accepted occult teaching on numbers is expressed thus by Blavatsky:

The sacredness of numbers begins with the great First--the One, and ends only with the naught or zero--symbol of the infinite and boundless circle which represents the universe. All the intervening figures, in whatever combination, or however multiplied, represent established philosophical ideas, from vague outlines down to a definitely established scientific axiom, relating either to a moral or a physical fact in nature. They are a key to the ancient views on cosmogony, and its broad sense, including man and being, and the evolution of the human race, spiritual as well as physical.⁵³

Yeats, with his emphasis on conflict, uses a version of the "laws of the numbers" in a 1901 mystical pamphlet in a context similar to that of the Blake letter.

Incarnate life. . . is an open or veiled struggle of life against life, of number against number, and of all numbers against unity. . . . The White Light is in itself an undifferentiated energy and receives its differentiated impulse from the symbol that collects it.⁵⁴

It is apparent that Yeats's misquotation of the Blake

letter diminishes the validity of the text, and such errors, whether from misreading, poor copying, or conscious re-writing, are the principal reason that the Ellis-Yeats Blake, in spite of its fuller presentation of the major prophecies, never supplanted the Aldine as the standard Blake edition prior to Sampson's 1905 text.⁵⁵ Yet it is also apparent that Yeats's interpretations, even when based on an erroneous reading, are not substantially incorrect. Blake was writing about the return to unity, to the oneness of all things--though he did not use those particular terms. Yeats's underlying sympathy for the occult background of Blake's poetic system is what saves him from seriously misinterpreting Blake in his explications. Indeed, although the Ellis-Yeats Blake has been rightfully ignored because of its textual inaccuracies, the large portion of the first volume (I, 235-420) devoted to Yeats's explication of Blake's symbolism has been singled out as the most valuable part of the entire edition.⁵⁶ Yeats's insistence on a coherent system throughout Blake's canon is the first articulation of Blakean dialectic progression found in nineteenth-century criticism, and in introducing, identifying, and explaining the symbols, genealogies, and histories of the four Zoas, Yeats made a significant contribution to interpretation of the prophetic books.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, Yeats's explications were not accepted in his own time, with critical dismissal of the entire Ellis-Yeats Blake as a result. In a note in Lady Gregory's

copy Yeats wrote that the text "is substantially correct, in its interpretations," but he is much more tentative about his mystical explications, which are presented quite dogmatically in the text.

I think that some of my own constructive symbolism is put with too much confidence. It is mainly right but parts should be used rather as an interpretitive [sic] hypothesis than as a certainty. The circulation of the Zoas, which seems to me unlike anything in traditional symbolism is the chief cause of uncertainty, but most that I have written on the subject is at least part of Blake's plan. There is also uncertainty about the personages who are mentioned by him too seldom to make one know them perfectly; I here and there elaborate.⁵⁸

I suspect that Yeats's disclaimers of responsibility for both the "misprints" and the mystical interpretations reflects his sensitivity to the critical reception the edition received. Just as the Ellis-Yeats text was never established as the standard edition, Yeats's presentation of Blake as systematic mystical philosopher was rejected. For the reader of the Nineties it confirmed rather than corrected the orthodox Victorian view of Blake as aberrant personality. In his review of the volumes, Lionel Johnson pointed out that Ellis and Yeats had established beyond question that Blake has a system and that they effectively delineated that system for the reader, but he concluded:

Blake is among the greatest mystics; but the greatest mystics have not been among the greatest writers. They are a class apart, select, elect, previous, but not perfect artists, and too often either the idols or the play things of fools. The greatest writers are mystical not mystics. Pure mysticism, though skilled interpreters, as Mr. Ellis and Mr. Yeats, may make it plain

to us, is still too far away to be the staple and substance of common literature.⁵⁹

This was apparently the general opinion of Yeats's enthusiastic presentation of Blake the mystic. In 1896, three years after his own editions were published, Yeats reviewed Richard Garnett's William Blake and concluded somewhat wistfully:

Dr. Garnett's book may be cordially recommended to all who would learn a little of one of the most creative minds of modern days, for its futilities are wholly, and its errors almost wholly, in the parts where it touches mysticism, and for mysticism the general reader cares naught, nor is it needful that he should.⁶⁰

Yeats's understanding of Blake's occult sources made him superior to any Blake commentator of his day, although his reputation in this respect has been established only in the last fifteen years.⁶¹ He may, as he understated, "here and there elaborate" and make suggestions that cannot really be substantiated, but because of his underlying sympathy for the neo-Platonic tradition and the occult background of Blake's mythology, he never drastically distorts Blake's poetic system. Yeats's is not a scholarly criticism but an imaginatively sympathetic reading.

My intention, however, is not to restore Yeats to prominence as a Blake critic, but to establish his work on Blake in proper perspective. It is closer to accuracy than aberration. Indeed, the chief stumbling block to lucid presentation in Yeats's explication is his reliance on mysticism to illuminate Blake. Perhaps mysticism clarified

Blake for Yeats, with his extensive background in theosophy, but it does little but obfuscate the symbolism for the common reader. Yet that very conflation of Blake and the occult which is characteristic of the explications in the Ellis-Yeats Blake defines Yeats's own philosophic posture and is of value as an expression of Yeats's developing aesthetic ideas. The best description of the process at work comes from Yeats himself when (with characteristic subjectivity) he described Blake's method of treating his sources.

It must never be forgotten that whatever Blake borrowed from Swedenborg and Boehme, from mystic or kabalist, he turned to his own purposes, and transferred into a new system, growing like a flower from its own roots supplementing in many ways though not controverting in any main matters, the systems of his great predecessors.⁶²

This is the creation of a "system" which Los defends, and Yeats's Blake explications, rightly understood, are part of this process of development in his own artistic life. Although there is critical agreement that the explanations of Blake's symbolism in the Ellis-Yeats edition are a revealing statement of Yeats's own poetic philosophy,⁶³ his interpretations have never been examined from that perspective.⁶⁴ Therefore, despite the editorial deficiencies of the Ellis-Yeats Blake, I will use its explications as my central text in examining "Yeats's Blake," always remembering that the critic is primarily an artist who reveals himself more than his subject.

II. The Critic As Artist

The Ellis-Yeats Blake, then, Yeats's most ambitious critical work in the nineteenth century, occupied him for four of the most formative years of his development and is not only a particularly interesting exposition of Blake's thought and an advance over contemporary Blake criticism, but a major text for an understanding of Yeats's artistic philosophy.

Its preface gives an account of the genesis of the undertaking. Ellis, according to this version, had originally speculated about the beginning of the second part of Jerusalem: "What if Blake should turn out to use the quarters of London to indicate the points of the compass, as he uses these to group qualities of mind associated with certain of the senses and the elements?" (E-Y, I, ix). This idea, however, was put aside as Ellis became caught up with other things, but

in the meantime the other editor had grown up, and become a student of mysticism. He came one day and asked to have Blake explained. Very little could be given him to satisfy so large a demand, but with his eye for symbolic systems, he needed no more to enable him to perceive that here was a myth as well worth study as any that had been offered to the world, since first men learned that myths were briefer and more beautiful than exposition as well as deeper and more companionable. He saw, too, that it was no mere freak of an eccentric mind, but an eddy of that flood-tide of symbolism which attained its tide-mark in the magic of the Middle Ages.
(E-Y, I, ix-x)

This is less ingenuous and probably more accurate than

Yeats's account in his autobiography. Having found a "philosophy" in theosophy which satisfied his intellectual need for cosmic assurance, Yeats still needed poetic precedents to incorporate his interest into a form of art. Since he had known Blake from adolescence, it is hardly likely that he was unaware of his reputation as a mystic. The two-volume Gilchrist edition, the standard Aldine text, and Swinburne's interpretive essay, the major texts of the period, all suggested the influence of Swedenborg, Boehme, Paracelsus, and other occultists.⁶⁵ This fact would have made little impression on Yeats, I suggest, until 1888 when, learned in mystic lore via Sinnett and Blavatsky and unhappy with his own poetry, he was looking for a poetic mentor. His visit to Ellis, who had a reputation as a Blake adept in J.B. Yeats's circle, was very probably deliberately inspired by the desire to learn more about Blake for the precise purpose of establishing the poet as high priest in Yeats's evolving religion of art.

Nor would Yeats have been very long in discovering the correspondence between Blake's mythology and his own occult knowledge. He had learned about the "delusive goddess Nature" as early as his reading of Sinnett, who preached that "above all things, to the profound philosophy of Occultism, are the chairs and tables, and the whole objective scenery of the world, unreal and merely transitory delusions of sense."⁶⁶ And as Denis Saurat has pointed out, Blake drew two of the leading ideas of his mythology

from the Cabala.⁶⁷ So Yeats as Kabalist would have immediately recognized the occult source of the being from whom all things are drawn (Adam Kadmon, who became Blake's Albion), and the notion of the subsequent division into male and female, the basic dualities from which all the essential dualisms in nature proceed. "Any student of occultism," wrote Yeats, "will recognize the essential unity of their system with that of Blake" (E-Y, I, 313). His introduction to Blake's symbolism clearly places the poet among the seers of a great tradition which has always spoken through symbols.

The Hindu, in the sculptured caverns of Elephanta; the gipsy, in the markings of the sea shell he carries to bring him good fortune; the Rosicrucian student, in the geometric symbols of medieval magic, the true reader of Blake in the entangled histories of Urizen and his children, alike discover a profound answer to the riddle of the world.
(E-Y, I, 235)

Yeats's study of Blake, part of his effort to synthesize his interests into a coherent aesthetic philosophy, quite naturally became involved with his theosophical work. In an entry in his esoteric journal dated October 1889, he wrote:

About Xmas 1888 I joined the Esoteric Section of TS. The pledges gave me no trouble except two--promise to work for theosophy and promise of obedience to HPB in all theosophical matters. Explained my difficulties to HPB. Said that I could only sign on the condition that I myself was to be judge as to what Theosophy is (the term is wide enough) and I consider my work at Blake a wholly adequate keeping of this clause.⁶⁸

As his conflicts in The Speckled Bird indicate, Yeats's primary interest in the occult was always basically artistic, and his central concern in the late Eighties and Nineties was with forging a viable poetic system. In 1891 he declared to a correspondent that "mystics all over the world will have to acknowledge Ellis and myself among their authorities. We shall help good people 'to make their souls'."⁶⁹ But the preface to the Ellis-Yeats Blake clearly indicates that the study primarily helped its younger editor to make his own soul. The Blake pictured is a symbolist philosopher-poet who disdains to be either a legislator of the world (however unacknowledged) or to offer any "criticism of life." He is a high priest of the imagination, a voice crying in the current artistic wilderness. Blake is both Yeats's literary precursor and persona.

As the language of spiritual utterance ceases to be theological and becomes literary and poetical, the great truths have to be spoken afresh; and Blake came into the world to speak them, and to announce the new epoch in which poets and poetic thinkers should be once more, as they were in the days of the Hebrew Prophets, the Spiritual leaders of the race. Such leadership was to be of a kind entirely distinct from the 'temporal power' claimed to this day elsewhere. The false idea that a talent or even a genius for verse tends to give a man a right to make laws for the social conduct of other men is nowhere supported in Blake's works. The world in which he would have the poet, acting as a poet, seek leadership is the poetic world. That of ordinary conduct should be put on a lower level. It belongs to Time, not to Eternity. It is only so far as conduct affects imagination that it has any importance, or, to use Blake's term, 'existence.'

(E-Y, I, xi-xii)

Near the end of his life Yeats wrote of this period in terms of the poetic problems that required attention:

Nature, steel-bound or stone-built in the nineteenth century, became a flux where man drowned or swam; the moment had come for some poet to cry 'the flux is in my own mind.'⁷⁰

Yeats, always timorous about dogmatic pronouncements, made the cry through his literary persona, William Blake. Just as the use of the Ulysses myth helped Joyce get a hold on the flux of modern civilization, Yeats's use of occult lore, coupled with the sanction that Blake's use of the same tradition offered him, gave the first modernist poet a fixed point for his own art.

The Ellis-Yeats preface presents the stunning assertion that "the whole of Blake's teaching. . . may be summed up in a few words" (E-Y, I, xii). This startling idea is followed by five brief paragraphs that attempt to do exactly that. I quote them in their entirety because they illustrate Yeats's fundamental conception of Blake and show the emergence of his own poetic ideas, revealing the presence of "Yeats's Blake," the salient feature of the entire work.

Nature, he tells (or rather he reminds) us, is merely one form of mental existence. Art is another and a higher form. But that art may rise to its true place, it must be set free from the memory that binds it to Nature.

Nature,--or creation,--is a result of the shrinkage of consciousness,--originally clairvoyant,--under the rule of the five senses, and of argument and law. Such consciousness is the result of the divided portions of Universal Mind obtaining perception of one another.

The divisions of mind began to produce matter (as one of its divided moods is called), as soon as it produced contraction (Adam), and opacity (Satan), but its fatal tendency to division had further effects. Contraction, or divided into male and female,--mental and emotional egotism [sic]. This was the 'fall.' Perpetual war is the result. Morality wars on Passion, Reason on Hope, Memory on Inspiration, Matter on Love.

In Imagination only we find a Human Faculty that touches nature on one side, and spirit on the other. Imagination may be described as that which is sent bringing spirit to nature, entering into nature, and seemingly losing its spirit, that nature being revealed as symbol may lose its power to delude.

Imagination is thus the philosophic name of the Saviour, whose symbolic name is Christ. Just as Nature is the philosophic name of Satan and Adam. In saying that Christ redeems Adam (and Eve) from becoming Satan, we say that Imagination redeems Reason (and Passion) from becoming Delusion--or Nature.

(E-Y, I, xii-xiii)

This is the essence of Yeats's Blake. Though "not controverting in main matters," Blake is clearly "turned to a new purpose." There is no evidence here of the "prophet against Empire." In the explication of the symbolic system Yeats will use the hermetic adage, "As above, so below" to show the correspondences within the temporal life of the individual, but the basic impulse of this condensation is not to announce "the whole of Blake's teaching," so much as to express the essence of Yeats's aesthetic position as it is exemplified in Blake.

We can detect, even in this brief account, certain Yeatsian ideas which will become the signature of his own poetic identity in explicating Blake, and touchstones in his

critical prose. Here again is Yeats's use of the term "moods," a usage he consistently employs for the power of artistic creation.⁷¹ And in addition to the primacy of imagination as the true reality, there is the notion of a necessary "redemption" from nature which will be expanded in the fuller explanations of the symbolic system into a fully-developed theory of cyclical history, as we will see in the next chapter. Salvation through imagination is the only relief from the "perpetual war" which is the result of our shrinkage of consciousness. This "war" is the source of Yeats's dualisms, the contraries from which only imaginative power can save. Yeats, as we will see, is less concerned with an awakening to eternal life, in the sense of orthodox salvation, than he is interested in the ability to create art within this vegetable world. His is a poetic salvation.

The basic affiliation of Yeats and Blake was not that Yeats, attracted to Blake as a poet, proceeded to borrow elements of his system. Instead, he initially went looking for a poetic mentor, a creative artist who believed, as he did, in the primacy of imagination, and who had a system which was amenable to his own thought. Yeats did not so much borrow from Blake as emphasize those ideas in Blake which were his own as well. In Borges' terms, he created his own precursor.⁷² His Blake is not the total story, nor a totally objective assessment of his subject, but it is important for an understanding of the formation of Yeats's

thought. It shows the genesis of Yeats's central poetic concerns well before they become evident in his poetry and while they are but scattered comments in the rest of his critical prose.

The Ellis-Yeats Blake's insistence that there was a coherent, if mystic, system behind all of Blake's poetry reflects Yeats's belief in the need for a philosophic system as background for true art and indicates the advantage his occult studies gave him in discovering that system. Eventually he would have a comparable system of his own in A Vision, and, as we will see, Yeats's Blake is, in a sense, the first version of A Vision. But before exploring the particulars of the Ellis-Yeats Blake, we must become familiar with its lineaments--and limitations.⁷³

The Ellis-Yeats choice of The Four Zoas as the major prophecy of the entire system was, at least in part, dictated by very practical considerations. Ellis and Yeats were the first to print the manuscript and could therefore claim, as they did, that previous editors did not do Blake justice since they ignored this central text (E-Y, I, 229). But however pragmatic their initial motives, they were not wrong. The Four Zoas is a depiction of Blake's central theme of the fall of man caused by his mistaken belief in the substantiality of the phenomena.

More importantly, in emphasizing the Zoas the editors posited for the first time an artist whose poetic constructions involved multiple layers of meaning that

were not immediately apprehended by traditional poetic readings (E-Y, I, vii). Though the Ellis-Yeats edition had little effect in its time, it prepared an audience for the Prophecies by indicating how to read Blake, for "once the existence of the four zoas, the principle of fourfold meaning, the dialectical progression and the theory of symbol had been absorbed, the 'System' was open to addition, qualification, documentation, and comparative studies."⁷⁴ But the suppositions of the editors could not be substantiated until years of scholarly work solved the textual problems that Ellis and Yeats seem to have blithely ignored.

The first scholarly edition of Vala or The Four Zoas did not appear until 1926 (with The Prophetic Writings in two volumes edited by D.J. Sloss and J.P.R. Wallis). Their work on the manuscript indicated the editorial problems ignored by the Ellis-Yeats interpretation of all of Blake through the Zoas. Blake never engraved the poem, and the manuscript consisted of seventy loose sheets, only a few pages of which were numbered. Sequence alone was a difficult problem, not helped by the fact that the pages had been "worked over many times with pen, pencil, and crayon."⁷⁵ Both Sloss and Wallis and H.M. Margoliouth, who edited the Vala manuscript in 1956, despair of attempting any detailed interpretation from manuscript evidence alone.⁷⁶ Their accounts of the various technical problems posed by the state of the manuscript indicate how much was

supplemented by the earlier editor's knowledge of theosophy. Yeats declared that mysticism alone had enabled him to make out Blake's Prophetic Books, and that very reliance on mysticism accounts for the dense obscurity of much of Yeats's Blake explication as he switches from Blake to Blavatsky without indicating that fact to the reader, so sure is he that the systems are identical. As we have seen with "the laws of the numbers," Yeats was able to make out chapter and verse with little help from Blake.

On the other hand, the work of Sloss and Wallis and Margoliouth also indicates that Yeats was singularly fitted for his task. As Margoliouth comments, "to read Vala one needs not so much a systematic intelligence or a cross-word mind as an alert imagination,"⁷⁷ and Frye confirms that he sees The Four Zoas as "an imaginatively coherent account."⁷⁸ With the aid of his theosophical background, Yeats's own creative imagination was ample support for making out the myth.

Yeats's awareness of the meaning of the Zoas had been specifically cultivated by his practice of theosophy. As early as 1884 when he read Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism he would have encountered the principle which guided the Zoas.

On earth, man is dual--in the sense of being a thing of matter and a thing of spirit; hence the natural distinction made by his mind--the analyst of his physical sensations and spiritual perceptions--between an actuality and a fiction; though, even in this life the two groups of faculties are constantly equilibrating each other, each group when dominant seeing as fiction or delusion what the other believes to be most real.⁷⁹

Yeats's early personal affinity for psychological dualism⁸⁰ was thus extended by theosophy to an awareness of multiple states of consciousness, a fitting preparation for an understanding of the nature of the Zoas.

In addition, the theosophists were much concerned with establishing correspondences between the natural and spiritual worlds--"as above, so below." Yeats's journal, kept while a member of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society and simultaneously pursuing his study of Blake, reveals his interest in such correspondences, here based on the four seasons.⁸¹

Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Morning	Noon	Evening	Night
Youth	Adolescence	Manhood	Decay
Fire	Air	Water	Earth
East	South	West	North

The tabulation of the correspondence of the Zoas in Yeats's explication of the symbolic system (see below, Fig. 2., p.79) demonstrates how he transferred his theosophical knowledge and practice to his study of Blake. However, lest this seem more esoteric than accurate, I suggest that Frye's similar tabular method of explaining the Zoas⁸² shows the essential correctness of Yeats's method. As Yeats explained the significance of the Zoas to Blake's entire system in the Ellis-Yeats preface:

The foundation of Blake's symbolic system of speech is his conception of the Four-fold in Man, and the covering that concealed this system was a peculiar use of synonyms. The four portions of Humanity are divided under the names of the Four Zoas in the myth, and the reader who does not understand the relation of the Four Zoas to each other, and to each living man, has not

Urizen	Luvah	Tharmas	Urthona
Head	Heart	Loins	Loins
Eyes	Nostrils	Tongue	Ear
South	East	West	North
Height & depth	Length & breadth	Length & breadth	Height & depth
Fire	Air	Water	Earth
To the Zenith	To the centre	To the circumference	To the Nadir
Intellect	Love	Instinct	Procreation
Painting	Poetry	Music	Architecture
Eternal Science	Eternal enthusiasm	Eternal destruction	Temporal Science
Restriction	Sacrifice	Prohibition	Liberty
Negation of mind	Negation of mind	Negation of mind	Negation of the mind or prophecy

The sequence Head, Heart, Loins deserves to be noted, as every triad has appropriate relations with it, and with its connection with the Zoas.

Creation, Redemption, Judgment.

is the great triad; but even here the last member is double, and the first two change places in this world as Urizen and Luvah do. A few equivalents, written under each other, show the triad in various phases:--

Head	Heart	Lions	Lions
Creation	Redemption	Judgment	Regeneration
Male	Female	Sexual Sorrow	Sexual release
Desire of Love	Desire of Pride	Desire of Pleasure	Self-annihilation
Envy	Revenge	Cruelty of Law	Cruelty of indignation
Wrath	Pity	Concealment	Friendship

All these contain female portions within them, which are sometimes separate, and are seen in this mental world as:--

Cruel tears	Deceitful tears	Uncertain tears	Loving tears or blood
Whereas they ought to be:--			
Mid-day clouds	Morning dew	Evening dew	Oblivion or Lethe
They become:--			
Snow	Burning Lakes of Bitumen	Waves	Forge-water

Three of the four Zoas having ceased to fulfil their eternal functions of:--

Ploughman, Weaver, Shepherd, and Blacksmith,

become lawgivers in a bad sense--that is to say, they are that law which is the 'strength of sin' in the Bible, and that Accusation which is Satan. The fourth always restores the balance, and gets the best good out of worst evil.

Joy forbidding	Peace forbidding	Quiet forbidding	Forbidding of Prohibition
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The contrary of their natural character, as:--

Childhood	Manhood	Age	Gate of Heaven
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(E-Y, I, 347-48)

Fig. 2.--from Yeats's explication of the four Zoas

made even the first step towards understanding the Symbolic System which is the signature of Blake's genius and the guarantee of his sanity.
(E-Y, I, viii)

As I have indicated, this intention was not fulfilled. While Yeats's explanations of the symbolism might have restored Blake to sanity, they did nothing to restore Blake as poet. Indeed, like most correctives, the edition exaggerated in the opposite extreme. The Ellis-Yeats accounts of the shorter lyrics imply that the poems have value only as illustrations of principles expounded in the Prophecies; the measure of their importance is always the degree of their mysticism (E-Y, II, 9-15). Since Yeats was primarily interested in Blake the mystic, that was the direction of his explications. So in "The Necessity for Symbolism" when he explained how Blake was to be read, he used Swedenborg's theory of "discrete degrees" as an example of Blake's poetic method (E-Y, I, 236), an example which confuses rather than illuminates Blake for anyone except perhaps one of Yeats's fellow adepts.

In the third volume of the Ellis-Yeats Blake there is a vast chart facing page eight which attempts to put all the Prophecies under the jurisdiction of the Zoas. It is titled "Chart of the Symbolic Structure of the Poems," but the explanation of that chart is titled "The Symbolic Structure of the Mystical Writings" (E-Y, III, 3). Yeats's confusion as to whether he is dealing with poems or mystical writings accounts for a good deal of the obscurity of his explanations. Rather than restore Blake's

reputation as poet, Yeats confused him with the occult influences that were directing his own artistic life at the time.⁸³ His was still an incipient artistic career that would begin to flower only when he had resolved the confusion between mysticism and poetry. Both this confusion, and Yeats's attempt to establish his own aesthetic system, are apparent in the Ellis-Yeats Blake--our artist is, metaphorically, still a young man. What is important to note is that his philosophic (and therefore artistic) development consisted essentially in the refining of the aesthetic preoccupations of the Ellis-Yeats Blake, as we will see in the next chapter.

Notes

- 1 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 84.
- 2 Ibid., p. 63.
- 3 Dorfman, p. 135, notes that Swinburne mistakenly thought that "Ideas of Good and Evil" was meant by Blake to serve as a general title for manuscript poems. Yeats repeats Swinburne's mistake in his shorter Blake edition (p. 267), but he makes no reference to Swinburne.
- 4 W.B. Yeats, The Cutting of An Agate (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1919), p. 75.
- 5 Frayne, ed., Uncollected Prose, p. 30.
- 6 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 198.
- 7 Ibid., p. 234.
- 8 Ibid., p. 215.
- 9 Variorum Poems, p. 846.
- 10 Yeats, Mythologies, pp. 300-01.
- 11 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 172.
- 12 Ibid., p. 239.
- 13 Yeats was fond of quoting, "Goethe has said that the artist needs all philosophy;" see Chapter Four, note 5 below.
- 14 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 112. Italics mine.
- 15 Bloom, Yeats, p. 59.
- 16 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, pp. 226-27.
- 17 J.B. Yeats, Letters, ed. Hone, p. 274.

- 18 Bridge, ed., p. 64.
- 19 Ibid., p. 84. Italics mine.
- 20 Ibid., p. 66.
- 21 Letters, ed. Wake, p. 725.
- 22 Ibid., p. 379.
- 23 Ibid., p. 605.
- 24 Variorum Poems, p. 261.
- 25 Yeats, Autobiography, p. 51.
- 26 Thomas R. Whitaker, Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 15. Donald Torchiana, W.B. Yeats and Georgian Ireland (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. xiii-xiv, has a similar caveat:
- Quite simply, Yeats is not always accurate in his reading of Irish history. His interpretation is richly biased, highly imaginative, yet strangely fair. His history is a poet's history, more prejudiced and more objective than that of most historians.
- 27 J.B. Yeats, Letters, ed. Hone, p. 199. Italics mine.
- 28 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 44.
- 29 Yeats, The Cutting of An Agate, p. 49.
- 30 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 163.
- 31 Ibid., pp. 162-63.
- 32 Dorfman, pp. 64 and 228.
- 33 Ibid., p. 107 and Keynes, ed., Blake, p. viii.
- 34 Dorfman, pp. 116-17.
- 35 Ibid., p. 143.

- 36 W.B. Yeats, ed., Poems of William Blake, pp. 277-78.
- 37 Ibid., p. 255.
- 38 Keynes, ed., Blake, p. 917.
- 39 Swinburne, p. 177.
- 40 Dorfman, p. 192.
- 41 Dorfman, p. 199. Geoffrey Keynes notes that all nineteenth-century editors of Blake were similarly deficient: "His [Blake's] earlier editors tended to abuse their office by insufficient attention to accuracy of transcription or by actually falsifying the text" (Blake: Complete Writings, p. viii).
- 42 Edwin J. Ellis, The Real Blake (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1907), p. x.
- 43 Frayne, ed., Uncollected Prose, p. 120.
- 44 In his effort to determine the sources of Yeats's quotations in his critical prose, John Frayne has established that Yeats is frequently citing a secondary interpretation rather than the primary source; see Uncollected Prose, pp. 63, 121, 286.
- 45 Variorum Poems, p. 64. The error has been pointed out by Rudd, p. 137, who credits H.M. Margoliouth with the original discovery.
- 46 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 162. The following letters also mention the collaboration with Ellis and shed light on that partnership: pp. 125, 145, 150, 159, 167, 170, and 173.
- 47 Unpublished manuscript note; copy in the Berg Collection, NYPL.
- 48 Although it is an obvious example of his over-identification with Blake, Yeats's well-known designation of Blake as an Irishman is not as arbitrary as it appears. Blake's Irish ancestry was simply a story Yeats preferred to believe rather than question. As Dorfman notes, p. 205, the 8th ed. (1854) of the Encyclopaedia Britannica gives an inaccurate life of Blake and names Ireland as his birthplace.

Hazard Adams (Blake and Yeats, pp. 46-47) suggests that Yeats tried to substantiate the popular belief in Blake's Irish ancestry through correspondence with the supposed descendants and, although unable to find any corroboration, chose to print the story anyway. Yeats was more a poor editor than a fabricator of facts.

⁴⁹ Quoted by Adams, Yeats and Blake, p. 47. The inscription in Lady Gregory's copy now in the Berg Collection is substantially the same though several words are indecipherable.

⁵⁰ Ian Fletcher, "The Ellis-Yeats-Blake Manuscript Cluster," Book Collector 21 (1972), 94. Yeats always claimed sole authorship of "The Symbolic System" and, based on its general correlation with Yeats's other writings on Blake and the obvious occult knowledge of its author, it seems likely that it is entirely his own work. It will be my main text in examining "Yeats's Blake." My only other ascriptions of opinions to Yeats will be in those areas in which themes and images clearly are related to his own writings. For example, the interpretation of "Mary" may have originated with Ellis, but surely Yeats would have agreed enthusiastically since it follows the pattern he sees as the basis of Blake's system--the contraries which lead to progression--and supports his own opinion of the reality of psychological dualism.

⁵¹ Unpublished manuscript note in Lady Gregory's copy of the Ellis-Yeats Blake now in the Berg Collection, NYPL.

⁵² Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, pp. 214-15. Italics mine.

⁵³ Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, II. 407.

⁵⁴ Quoted by Moore, p. 166.

⁵⁵ Dorfman, p. 224.

⁵⁶ Geoffrey Keynes, A Bibliography of William Blake (New York: The Grolier Club of New York, 1921), p. 275.

⁵⁷ Dorfman, pp. 209-10.

⁵⁸ Quoted by Adams, Yeats and Blake, p. 47.

⁵⁹ Lionel Johnson, Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers, ed. Thomas Whittemore (1912; rpt. New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1968), p. 90. On Blake's mysticism cf. Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp. 431-32. Yeats uses the term "mystic" as synonymous with adept or visionary and not in its orthodox religious sense.

⁶⁰ Frayne, ed., Uncollected Prose, p. 403. Italics mine.

⁶¹ In 1955, when Hazard Adams compared the respective mythologies of Blake and Yeats, he overlooked the importance of Yeats's interpretations because he followed the critical tendency to deplore their inaccuracy. In his Yeats and Blake, p. 56, he criticizes the "false Yeatsian picture of Blake as mystic and magician" and presents his own account of the prophecies because Yeats's versions "are not trustworthy." However, in 1963, in his William Blake: A Reading of the Shorter Poems (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), pp. 28-29, Adams stresses the importance of Blake's "system," and adds that

only lately has Blake's symbolism been studied with the care and to the extent that it demands. The three-volume edition of Blake, edited with a commentary by Edwin J. Ellis and W.B. Yeats and published in 1893 included the first attempt at a symbolic reading. These volumes have been justly criticized for their many textual inaccuracies, and the interpretations have often been dismissed as hopelessly obscure; but the general approach to Blake suggested by Yeats's essay 'The Necessity for Symbolism' is very illuminating.

Adams' 1963 opinion reflects the change in attitude toward Yeats's work among Blakeans. Raine, Dorfman, and Keynes, as already noted, credit Yeats with being a pioneer Blake critic.

⁶² Yeats, ed., Poems of William Blake, p. xxvii.

⁶³ Dorfman, p. 218; Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, p. 28.

⁶⁴ Dorfman, p. 224.

⁶⁵ Alexander Gilchrist, Life of William Blake (London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Company, 1863), I, 16; William Michael Rossetti, ed., The Poetical Works of William Blake (London: George Bell and Sons, 1874), p. lxxx; and Swinburne, p. 150. W.M. Rossetti had even suggested in

a note (p. lxxxi) that "it would be interesting if some thoroughly competent writer, supplementing the masterly performance of Mr. Swinburne, would trace out the relations between the speculations of Blake and those of other mystics." Since Yeats concentrated most of his efforts on his long interpretive essay, "The Symbolic System," it is possible that Rossetti's footnote was the real impulse behind his contribution to the Ellis-Yeats Blake.

66 Sinnett, p. 72.

67 Denis Saurat, Blake and Modern Thought (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1929), p. 102.

68 Yeats, Memoirs, p. 281. Italics mine. "TS" is Theosophical Society and "HPB" is, of course, Madame Blavatsky.

69 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 173.

70 W.B. Yeats, comp., The Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892-1935 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. xxviii.

71 "Power" is perhaps the wrong word here, for we also note that Yeats's inspiration is essentially a passive process--inspiration "is sent bringing spirit to nature." This seems an incongruous description of Blake's notion of artistic creation as "mental fight," and Yeats's emphasis on passivity has been duly objected to as very un-Blakean (Bloom, p. 78; Dorfman, p. 219). But it is very revealing. The occult emphasis is on the practice of meditation for quieting the senses that the One may be revealed, indicating how theosophy may combine with Blake to form a Yeatsian system.

72 This subjective identification is, of course, very characteristic of Yeats as critic, and Torchiana's study of Yeats's later interest in Georgian Ireland shows the same process at work in his response to Swift:

These two channels of Swift's intensity--his prophetic isolation and his powerful devotion to justice--came to haunt Yeats most, probably, because they were foremost traits of his own (Torchiana, p. 125).

73 Dorfman, pp. 190-226, discusses the Ellis-Yeats Blake in great detail in relation to other nineteenth-century

studies of Blake. My comments are specifically relevant to my discussion of the Yeats-Blake affiliation, and I do not attempt either to duplicate or improve upon her work.

⁷⁴ Dorfman, p. 226.

⁷⁵ D.J. Sloss and J.P.R. Wallis, eds., The Prophetic Writings of William Blake (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), I, 136.

⁷⁶ Sloss and Wallis, eds., I, 143; and H.M. Margoliouth, William Blake's Vala (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. xi.

⁷⁷ Margoliouth, p. xviii.

⁷⁸ Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p. 309.

⁷⁹ Sinnett, p. 80.

⁸⁰ See Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, Chapter VI, pp. 70-85, for a perceptive discussion of Yeats's personal awareness of psychological dualism.

⁸¹ Journal entry given by Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, p. 26.

⁸² Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p. 277.

⁸³ Frye, Fables of Identity, p. 231, reports that the Ellis-Yeats Blake, "an over-schematized commentary full of false symmetries, which, itself more difficult to understand than Blake, is still further confused by centrifugal expositions of Boehme and Swedenborg."

Chapter Three

Blake's Disciple

Your words are idle--and you are far more
human than you think. You would be a
philosopher and are really a poet. . . .

1906 letter from J.B. Yeats
to his poet son

I am Blake's disciple, not Hegel's.

W.B. Yeats (1934)¹

While Yeats's conflation of art and mysticism obscures Blake's poetry for the common reader, the student of Yeats clearly sees the emergence of his own poetic concerns in the Longinian clinamen, the swerving from Blake which is apparent in Yeats's explications. Harold Bloom has detailed Yeats's "errors" in what he has called a "misguided attempt" to explicate Blake, ignoring his own basic thesis that such misreading is more valuable as an indication of the mind of the later artist asserting itself than as evidence of his ignorance of his subject. Yeats's divergence from Blake shows the formation of his basic poetic ideas that reach their final expression in A Vision.

One of the clearest examples of how Yeats's Blake was conditioned by the life and times of its author is seen in Yeats's continual use of his own word "moods" for Blake's "states," his insistence on "Immortal Mood" as synonymous with "Poetic Genius." Bloom's unhappiness with this formulation is based on the fact that Yeats

unnecessarily changed Blake's intellectual faculty to an emotional one.² However, the reader who follows Yeats's explication carefully will understand that this is a semantic rather than a conceptual adjustment, necessitated by Yeats's almost constitutional inability to ascribe imaginative powers to the intellect.

When writing of Blake in an early essay, Yeats clearly understands his use of intellect as he explains that "the treasures of heaven are not negations of passion but realities of intellect from which the passions emanate uncurbed in their eternal glory."³ But almost immediately he posits a correspondence between intellectual and emotional in his explication of the symbolic system: "As natural things correspond to intellect, so intellectual things correspond to emotional" (E-Y, I, 239). We can partly account for this substitution of the emotional for the intellectual by the fact that Yeats associated Blake with theosophy, and had learned from occult lore that the triad in man is body, soul, and spirit, with spirit having the divine essence. In addition, his father had always taught that intellectual powers must be subservient to the emotional faculty.⁴ But the paramount reason for Yeats's refusal to stress (or use) Blake's term "intellect" is that he regarded Blake as his Savior of Art who would restore the imaginative faculty to a poetry that he saw overcome with intellect, the inheritance of the contemporary Arnoldians. Yeats's concept of the moods is so central to his aesthetic

philosophy that he included a passage titled "The Moods" in Ideas of Good and Evil, even though the "essay" was only one paragraph from a review, "Irish National Literature," written eight years earlier.⁵ It is clear from Yeats's description that he opposes his "moods" to things intellectual in the literature of the day.

Literature differs from explanatory and scientific writing in being wrought about a mood, or a community of moods, as the body is wrought about an invisible soul; and if it uses argument, theory, erudition, observation, and seems to grow hot in assertion or denial, it does so merely to make us partakers at the banquet of the moods. It seems to me that these moods are the labourers and messengers of the Ruler of All, the gods of ancient days still dwelling on their secret Olympus, the angels of more modern days ascending and descending upon their shining ladder; and that argument, theory, erudition, observation, are merely what Blake called 'little devils who fight for themselves,' illusions of our visible passing life, who must be made to serve the moods, or we have no part in eternity. Everything that can be seen, touched, measured, explained, understood, argued over, is to the imaginative artist nothing more than a means, for he belongs to the invisible life, and delivers its ever new and ever ancient revelation. We hear much of his need for the restraints of reason, but the only restraint he can obey is the mysterious instinct that has made him an artist, and that teaches him to discover immortal moods in mortal desires, and undecaying hope in our trivial ambitions, a divine love in sexual passion.⁶

We can see that the same impulse that directed Yeats to Celtic folklore and theosophy inspired the poetic formulation known as the "moods," and that these "moods" are partakers in Blake's "Poetic Genius." Yeats must eschew the term "intellect" because of his own training and the

aesthetic problems with which he is attempting to deal. But although the connotations of Blake's use of the term "intellect" forced Yeats to choose another word for that faculty, Yeats is no Blakean heretic. Like all artists he views his predecessor through the dark glass of his own needs. As he significantly commented in his study of Blake, "we see the world through countless reflections of our own image" (E-Y, I, 276).

Once we understand Yeats's transposition of terms, we see how his study of Blake is directly related to his artistic development in the Nineties, that effort to change "longing and complaint" to "insight and knowledge." The Blakean idea of "states" (which he prefers to call "moods") gives him not only an aesthetic cosmology but symbolic technique as well. In writing of the Zoas Yeats explained that "these various personages are not to be considered as individuals in any sense. They can unite into one or divide into many. They may be taken as names for classes of human souls" (E-Y, I, 282), and this idea is the basis for his explication of Blake's poem "William Bond," in which the description of the character "Mary Green" is of just such a portion of an individual consciousness. She is "more than a personage disguised. She is a mood expressed, a State and, as such, of much more universal importance than an individual" (E-Y, II, 21). Yeats's attempt to achieve similar universal significance is reflected in the 1899 notes to The Wind Among the Reeds, which comment that

such characters as Red Hanrahan and Michael Robartes are used "more as principles of the mind than as actual personages."⁷ As we will see more fully in the next chapter, Yeats attempted to achieve universal significance in his Irish poems and stories by putting flesh and blood on the Zoas, as it were, and giving them a nationality. That this is an intentional corrective for the sterile realism of the day is apparent in this 1895 letter;

I, indeed, feel always that both Miss Lawless and Miss Barlow differ as yet from the greater Irish novelists in being only able to observe Irish character from without and not to create it from within. They have, perhaps, bowed to the fallacy of our time, which says that the fountain of art is observation, whereas it is almost wholly experience. The creations of a great writer are little more than the moods and passions of his own heart, given surnames and Christian names, and sent to walk the earth.⁸

This is as clear a statement of Yeats's artistic method during the Nineties as he ever expressed, and it reflects the beginnings of his idea of the mask. But that most fundamental Yeatsian notion is more fully developed and understood in relation to one of his most interesting "errors" in interpreting Blake, regarding the nature of the Covering Cherub.

In describing the Cherub Yeats explained that "it is the whole bulk of outer things when taken in its widest significance and upon it Blake pours out his most vehement hatred and his most tender love" (E-Y, I, 289). Yeats gave Blake a twofold attitude toward the Cherub because he attributed a dual nature to it, and Bloom objects to this

as a fundamental error since, he argues, Blake's Cherub has no positive aspect.⁹ But we must realize that Yeats's misunderstanding derives from his occult knowledge and is a significant indicator of his own aesthetic system. While Bloom is undeniably right in saying that Blake never actually praises the Cherub, Yeats was predisposed toward finding its duality. He had learned, via Blavatsky, that

one may believe in the dual nature of every object on Earth--in the spiritual and the material, the visible and the invisible nature, and that science virtually proves this, while denying its own demonstration.¹⁰

Furthermore, the principle of duality was commonly mentioned in theosophical texts with specific allusion to Ezekiel's Cherub.¹¹ Because of his occult studies Yeats was the first Blake commentator to note that the imagery of the Cherub comes from Ezekiel and that Blake identifies the Cherub with Swedenborg's system of Churches.¹² And Madame Blavatsky illustrated one of the basic tenets of occultism, that there is no malum in se, with a specific mention of Ezekiel's Cherub.¹³

This fundamental notion of the dual nature of all things is also the basis of the occult aphorism, Demon est Deus Inversus (DEDI), and so strong was Yeats's identification with that principle that he took DEDI as his symbolic name in the magical order. Blavatsky's The Secret Doctrine devotes an entire chapter to the explanation of the significance of that name, which becomes, as we will see, the basis for Yeats's understanding of the Cherub as dual

and also the foundation of his own theory of the Mask and Daimon. The theosophists teach that

one cannot claim God as the synthesis of the whole Universe, as Omnipresent and infinite, and then divorce him from evil. As there is far more evil than good in the world, it follows on logical grounds that either God must include evil or stand as the direct cause of it, or else surrender his claims to absoluteness. The ancients understood this so well that their philosophers--now followed by the Kabalists--defined evil as the lining of God or Good--Demon est Deus Inversus, being a very old adage. Indeed, evil is but an antagonizing blind force in nature; it is reaction, opposition, and contrast,--evil for some, good for others. There is no malum in se; only the shadow of light, without which light could have no existence even in our perceptions.¹⁴

Yeats applied this principle to his interpretations of Blake and wrote of good and evil in similar terms, adding that "much of Blake's system is but the history of their opposing lives differing from and yet completing one another, as love does wisdom--will, understanding,--substance, form" (E-Y, I, 240). Having initially recognized the source of Blake's Cherub from his knowledge of theosophy, it is understandable that Yeats applied an occult interpretation to it as well. He is sure that Blake worked totally within the same system, never realizing, of course, that Blake's sources were as varied as his own and that, like himself, Blake was an artist forging his own system rather than just transcribing those sources.

With his knowledge of the main tradition within which Blake worked, however, Yeats would have needed no gloss to comprehend that "without contraries there is no progression."

He had learned from Blavatsky that such opposites were not only a basic force but a salutary one--"everywhere the speculations of the Kabalists treat of Evil as a FORCE, which is antagonistic, but at the same time essential to Good, as giving it vitality and existence."¹⁵ Among the members of the Golden Dawn, the order to which Yeats was allied for some time, this same notion of the positive aspects of individual dualism was emphasized in both teachings and practice. To teach that "true Equilibrium is the basis of the Soul," the precepts admonished the adept:

Know then that as Man is born into this world amidst the darkness of Nature and the strife of contending forces, so must his first endeavour be to seek the Light through their reconciliation. Thus, thou who has trial and trouble of this life, rejoice because of them, for in them is strength, and by their means is a pathway opened unto that Light Divine.¹⁶

Yeats's personal interest in psychological dualism is apparent in his explication of Blake's symbolic system. Two chapters are called "Dual Aspects" (E-Y, I, 315-19) and "The Two Contraries of Humanity" (E-Y, I, 320-26), and in the latter chapter Yeats's concern with the principle is once again illustrated in tabular form.

The following table shows a few of the symbols habitually used by Blake in connection with the contraries viewed as sexes. They are not always understood to be at enmity. Neither is invariably seen in a good aspect. Neither is necessarily evil. Good and evil belong to positions of states, separateness, opposition, enmity, and dominion, as contrasted with unity and the mutual supplementing of each by the other.

MALE	FEMALE
Wrath	Pity
Desire	Reason
God	Satan
Christ	Mary
Imagination	Experience
Expansion	Restriction
The enlarged senses	The fine senses
Forgiveness	Law
Sublimity	Pathos
Eternity	Nature
Truth	Delusion
Light of mind-emotions	Light of bodily emotions
Morning	False morning
Day	Night
Lightning	Cloud
Nerves	Blood
Time	Space

(E-Y, I, 323)

Yeats continues this listing, extending the oppositions to geographical directions, topography, and all other aspects of the physical world as well as the dichotomies in art:

Visionary Art Imitative Art.

Note the resemblance in the physical setting of the Golden Dawn meeting room in which the two pillars on either side of the altar represent:

Active: The White Pillar on the South Side

Male
Adam
Pillar of Light & Fire
Right Kerub
Metatron (male Cherubim)

Passive: The Black Pillar on the North Side

Female
Eve
Pillar of Cloud
Left Kerub
Sandalphon (female Cherubim)¹⁷

Everything in Yeats's life, it seems, reinforced his personal awareness of psychological dualism. The theosophists emphasized in both teachings and ritual that temporal life

is basically the struggle between contraries and that these dualisms extend to the life of the individual man. From this notion of the opposing states within the individual and the positive nature of the tension between these states emerges the Yeatsian Mask. Its lineaments can be seen in the emphasis on salvation through reconciliation in the Ellis-Yeats Blake.

Both at the end of the biographical memoir (E-Y, I, 171) and at the end of the explication of the symbolic system which concludes the first volume, the same reference to Jerusalem is used to sum up the Blake doctrine. As a conclusion to his Blake explication Yeats wrote that

each man has a perfect right to know that he is by nature evil, and must be continually changed into his direct contrary, and that this is not restraint but self-annihilation and is the only gate of eternal life. (E-Y, I, 415)

This is, of course, an orthodox reading of Blake, who is reminding the Deists of original sin (K, 682), but in Yeats's mystical interpretation the salvific formula is grafted to his own interest in creating a Religion of Art based on psychological dualism and the tenets of theosophy, and forms the theory of the Mask. Blavatsky taught that "if he but exercise his WILL and call his deity to his help, man can transcend the powers of the angel,"¹⁸ and Yeats expressed this conviction poetically:

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.¹⁹

His emphasis as early as 1893 on the Blake dictum that man must be "continually changed into his direct contrary" is an indication that Yeats was working out his own system through his criticism. When the doctrine of the Mask was explicitly stated twenty-five years later in Per Amica Silentia Lunae, it was the developed and expanded principle of life that Yeats had clearly been aware of much earlier.

The Daimon comes not as like to like but seeking its own opposite, for man and Daimon feed the hunger in one another's hearts. Because the ghost is simple, the man heterogeneous and confused, they are but knit together when the man has found a mask whose lineaments permit the expression of all the man most lacks, and it may be dreads, and of that only.²⁰

In many ways the relation of Blake to Yeats was that of Daimon to man. Yeats unconsciously projected his own poetic concerns and image of the artist in an effort to clarify and temper his aesthetic system and finally to discover himself. Yeats's Blake was the first statement of its author's philosophic system, ancestor of Per Amica and A Vision. It enabled the insurgent artist to develop under the persona of critic.

While Blake was fundamentally concerned with the awakening of Albion to eternal life, Yeats always remained principally interested in temporal artistic concerns, dealing with the problems of imaginative creation within this

world of time and space. He wanted an awakening of the creative powers of the artist through a restoration of the primacy of imagination, and so his exposition associated art with Beulah--another error Bloom deploras.²¹ Eden has an other-worldly connotation clearly unappealing for Yeats, and once again the "error" is a significant indication of the mind of the later artist. Yeats's "misreading" here indicates a shift in emphasis which marks a divergence from his predecessor in formulating his aesthetic stance.

The evolutionary cycles of history propounded by the theosophists had taught Yeats that the manifestation of the divine man was no immediate possibility, and certainly not a reality on the individual level. For the individual the only union with the One was through contact with the Immortal (Yeats's mood, Blake's genius) within the self. Blake's Beulah is the state of "marriage," and Yeats knew from theosophy that marriage was the symbol of the soul's union with its divided self. Blavatsky wrote that "the soul cannot reach the abode of bliss unless she has received the 'holy kiss,' or the re-union of the soul with the substance from which she emanated--spirit,"²² and Mathers' Kabbalah Unveiled also explained that the lovers' kiss can symbolize "the union of the soul with the substance from which it emanated."²³ The "marriage" of the contraries within the soul through reunion with the anti-self became Yeats's way to Blakean self-annihilation.

This "marriage" was achieved through participation in the world of experience.

And having studied all that is to be learned about it [Nature] as a symbol, we come back to what is said of it doctrinally--namely that Nature is one of the things of which man has no right to deprive himself though it be evil. Man has no right to refrain and restrain himself from sin. An angel cannot become a prophet till he has been a devil. Restraint is self-murder. (E-Y, I, 414-15)

"Nothing can be sole or whole/That has not been rent" was not written for another forty years, but the need for experiential reality as a means of achieving contact with the anti-self is already a basic corollary with Yeats. He never tired of quoting Blake's "Everything that lives is holy," and, as always with Yeats, this was not a metaphysical position but an aesthetic doctrine. In both life and art salvation came through the world.²⁴

Four years after the publication of his Blake editions in his essay "William Blake and the Imagination," Yeats criticized the Blake who "spoke confusedly and obscurely because he spoke of things for whose speaking he could find no models in the world about him. He was a symbolist who had to invent his symbols."²⁵ As he had criticized Shelley for lacking sufficient "philosophy," he now criticizes Blake for having all philosophy--but no folklore.

He [Blake] was a man crying out for a mythology, and trying to make one because he could not find one to his hand. Had he been a Catholic of Dante's time he would have been well content with Mary and the angels; or had he been a scholar of our time he would have taken his symbols where Wagner took his, from Norse mythology. . .or

have gone to Ireland--he was probably an Irishman--and chosen for his symbols the sacred mountains, along whose sides the peasant still sees enchanted fires. . .and have been less obscure because a traditional mythology stood on the threshold of his meaning and on the margin of his sacred darkness.²⁶

Yeats's own "Marriage of Heaven and Hell" was, as he noted several years later, to combine in one man a Dickens and a Shelley²⁷ (not unlike Joyce's 1912 choice of Defoe and Blake), and his criticism of Blake is for failing to measure up to the Yeatsian criteria by lacking a sufficiently realistic mythology. His 1893 explication used Blake to confirm his own interest in the world of time and space.

The vast expanses of interplanetary ether so impressive to most minds had no attraction for Blake. He declared paradoxically to one man who had grown eloquent on the subject that he himself at the end of a dark lane touched the heavens with his stick. The natural limits of the imagination were the true world for him; beyond that you but peered further and further into the abstract and impersonal Ulro. What a man can see from his garden, that is his universe he declared in Milton, the rest is an illusion of reason. (E-Y, I, 278)

Yeats had also learned from Blavatsky that "a man can have no god that is not bound by his own human conceptions,"²⁸ and he used both Blake and Blavatsky to confirm his use of Irish folklore. He quoted a common occult aphorism to interpret Blake:

It must always be remembered that the Zoas exist in everything. Blake held the doctrine of the macrocosm, and microcosm, and would gladly have assented to the saying of Paracelsus: 'He who tastes a crust of bread tastes all the stars and all the heavens'. (E-Y, I, 260)

It is apparent how Blake is being used as a confirmation of

Yeats's own artistic position when we note that the same quotation from Paracelsus was used as an epigraph for Yeats's Poems of 1895 and quoted in the introduction to his 1891 Representative Irish Tales; confirmation for Yeats that he needs no subject but his native land, "all that he can see from his own garden."²⁹

Nor is Yeats's concern with the artist in this world rather than Eden so very un-Blakean. As Kathleen Raine has observed,

there is one state to which Blake attaches a special importance; this he calls 'self-annihilation.' It is not yet the perfect attainment of the 'supreme State' beyond the states, but it represents the last human condition before this release from Satan's kingdom. This state is symbolized for Blake not, as might have been the case in former ages or in other civilizations, by the monk or the ascetic but by the inspired poet who transcends, in the moment of inspiration, his human individuality; for true poetry begins where human personality ends.³⁰

Yeats's aesthetic philosophy is concerned with this same state of self-annihilation, for we find him emphasizing over and over the "moment of inspiration" in which the artist transcends his human individuality and is joined with the Divine. Although he insisted on the necessity for participation in the temporal world, Yeats also stressed Blake's explanation of the way in which the artist achieves Imagination.

One page in "The Symbolic System" is particularly relevant as both an accurate reading of Blake and an indication of the direction of Yeats's own poetic

interests. Explaining Blake's states and spaces, Yeats wrote:

Time only exists for us as a chain of states
passing from cradle to grave. The longer a
state lasts in physical life the further it is
removed by incarnation from the imaginative
source of all. The states of inspiration are
but flying seconds. (E-Y, I, 278)

He follows with a direct quotation from Milton:

Every time less than a pulsation of the artery
Is equal in its period and value to six thousand
years,
For in this period the poet's work is done, and
all the great
Events of time start forth and are conceived in
such a period
Within a moment, a pulsation of the artery.
(E-Y, I, 278)

He then applies the same rule to space, again quoting Milton:

For every space larger than a red globule of
man's blood
Is visionary and is created by the Hammer of Los,
And every space smaller than a red globule of man's
blood opens
Into Eternity, of which this vegetable Earth is but
a shadow. (E-Y, I, 278)

The timeless moment and the spaceless point in this changing world are clear symbols of the instant of poetic inspiration, and Yeats quoted these lines from Milton frequently. The image of space as a globule of blood is repeated in the Ellis-Yeats Blake explication five times in fewer than 150 pages,³¹ both quotations are isolated from the poem and included in the excerpts from the prophecies in Yeats's shorter edition of Blake,³² and they both appear in essays in Ideas of Good and Evil. They become touchstones in Yeats's own aesthetic philosophy. It is this Blakean moment that is referred to in Yeats's explanation of the

Mask.

I think that all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other self; that all joyous or creative life is a re-birth as something not oneself, something which has no memory and is created in a moment and perpetually renewed.³³

When Yeats's philosophy achieved a coherent form in Per Amica Silentia Lunae, the Blakean echo reveals the source of the image. He writes of the power of the Daimon: "it is the sudden lightning, for all his acts of power are instantaneous. We perceive in a pulsation of the artery, and after slowly decline."³⁴

Yeats and Blake substantially agree that "all things are written in Eden," although the artist's presence there is only momentary; the time of inspiration is not prolonged but repeated. The difference in their art is one of emphasis, of individual point of view or focus. Blake wrote from within the experience of the visionary moment, while Yeats was principally concerned with the artist's struggle to achieve it. Yeats's emphasis on Beulah must be understood, then, as not merely misreading, but the indication of the basis of his own system. For Yeats the nature of true art requires participation in the world of time and space; the artist and the saint are not identical.

If it be true that God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, the saint goes to the centre, the poet and artist to the ring where everything comes round again. The poet must not seek for what is still and fixed, for that has no life for him; and if he did, his style would become cold and monotonous, and his sense of beauty faint and

sickly. . . .Is it that all things are made by the struggle of the individual and the world, of the unchanging and the returning, and that the saint and the poet are over all, and that the poet has made his home in the Serpent's mouth?³⁵

Yeats's conception of the role of the artist within the world of time was conditioned by his awareness of the relation of man to the universe as a whole, an awareness acquired through his theosophical studies. His theories of history, too, are a product of his way of looking at the world throughout his life and do not spring to life suddenly in 1917 through his wife's experience of "automatic writing." All the elements of A Vision have their genesis during this formative period of Yeats's artistic development while he was ostensibly only studying Blake.

Even the famous automatic writing is, in a sense, a product of Yeats's identification with Blake as mystic master. In his early essay "Magic" Yeats wrote: "As Blake said of one of his poems, that the author was in eternity," adding, "in coming years I was to see and hear of many such vision."³⁶ In the Ellis-Yeats Blake there is also an emphasis on how the Prophecies came to Blake in "visions."

But the upshot of the whole thing, viewed as an experience, was that it was 'dictated,' and however this may be accounted for, the very appearance of Blake's manuscripts supports the assertion as fully as the matter of the work.
(E-Y, I, 95)

Whatever one may think about the reality of Yeats's "instructors," it is significant that in late 1917, just two months before his marriage and the first visit from the

beyond, Yeats wrote to Lady Gregory: "I am doing nothing but read Blake for my lecture--working at his philosophy again."³⁷ With A Vision Yeats had, in a sense, arrived as both poet and visionary. It is the culmination of his efforts to achieve a poetic system, an effort begun in the Nineties and most fully developed through his study of Blake. In a sense Bloom is right when he asserts that Yeats never stopped writing commentaries on Blake and that A Vision is another such commentary.³⁸ The influence of Blake on A Vision has often been suggested because felicitous comparisons are so obvious, but it is only when we trace the philosophy from Yeats's Blake that the true nature of the influence can be observed in the dominance of certain ideas which have their most complete Yeatsian expression in Yeats's later work but their birth in his early study of Blake. The source for A Vision is not "Blake" but "Yeats's Blake"--and this is more than just a semantic distinction.

The reader of Ellis-Yeats's "The Symbolic System" can readily see the hand of the author of A Vision in the effort to make a logical system out of an imaginative reality through charts and diagrams. Yeats's listing, tabulating, and diagramming, very un-Blakean, is extremely Yeatsian. But the reader of A Vision is immediately faced with Yeats's disclaimer of any influence from his earlier studies.

I had once known Blake as thoroughly as his unfinished confused Prophetic Books permitted, and I had read Swedenborg, Boehme, and my initiation into the 'Hermetic Students' had filled my head with Cabbalistic imagery, but there was nothing in Blake, Swedenborg, Boehme or the Cabbala to help me now.³⁹

As I will show, this is nothing more than a rather transparent attempt to assert the independence and reality of "my instructors," the supposed authors of the system. If we wish to believe in the reality of the instructors, we must assume that they read the Ellis-Yeats Blake very closely indeed.

George Mills Harper's studies have already demonstrated that A Vision is a "direct outgrowth of Yeats's experiences in the Golden Dawn,"⁴⁰ and the influence of his study of Blake is equally apparent. A Vision's principal concerns are the familiar poetic preoccupations characteristic of Yeats's prose throughout his life. The old firm is merely doing business under a new name--or mask. Ellmann's chapter on A Vision is very aptly titled "Esoteric Yeatsism"⁴¹ not because of the abstractness of the work, but because the philosophy is fundamentally an attempt to reformulate, through his own poetic vision, a comprehensive system of thought such as he had originally found at the age of nineteen in Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism.

Once again we find that Yeats's personal opinion of Blake reflects his own perspective. In 1893 Blake had seemed a profound mystic, perfectly intelligible to at least one of his nineteenth-century editors but basically incoherent

from lack of sufficient grounding in reality. Blake, unlike Yeats, had used no traditional folklore. Now, however, Yeats's objection is to Blake's failure to write anything comparable to A Vision. Although he admits that Blake was one of his predecessors in the work of imagination, Yeats argues that the poet "remains himself almost unintelligible," not for lack of folk background but because he wrote no philosophic work to clarify those "hard symbolic bones under the skin" of the poetry.⁴² Once again Yeats blames Blake for not being Yeats. (Very likely Blake would have responded to A Vision much as Joyce, who thought it regrettable that Yeats had not put all that effort into creative work,⁴³ for, as Yeats's criticism so clearly reflects, the artist judges all by himself and "no man can know any goodness or greatness but his own or the indication of his own."⁴⁴)

We can fully expect to meet all of Yeats's central poetic concerns in A Vision, for its patterns are, as he says, "stylistic arrangements of experiences" which have helped him "to hold in a single thought reality and justice."⁴⁵ For all of its complexities it is essentially the poet's attempt to synthesize his thoughts on the nature of art and the problem of its creation in relation to the world of time and eternity. It takes on such obscure lineaments because Yeats's cosmological concerns are directly referred to no established traditional systems--part of his effort to maintain the fiction that its "authors are in heaven."

Yeats knew about the wheel and the gyre, the central metaphors of A Vision, very early in his occult studies. Blavatsky taught that classical philosophy

divided the interminable periods of human existence on this planet into cycles, during each of which mankind gradually reached the culminating point of highest civilisation and gradually relapsed into abject barbarism.⁴⁶

Yeats applied this principle to art, and in his 1893 essay "Nationality and Literature" he could predict the restoration of greatness to Irish literature because of the cyclical nature of all literary history.⁴⁷ In his Blake explication Yeats put together his occult knowledge of cycles and his reading of Blake's poetry to explain how "The Heavens are the Cherub" (K, 529) using Swedenborg's system of churches and the theosophic method of charting all life according to the signs of the zodiac (see Fig. 3., p. 111 below).

We note, too, how in Yeats's explication of Blake the cycle is particularized down to individual men, much like the cycles of A Vision.⁴⁸

The story of the Bible is, according to the mystics, not merely a history of historic men and women, but of states of human life and stages of man's pilgrimage. Therefore the Bible and the history of religion are themselves types of nature, and of its relation to man upon one hand and to God upon the other. The Cherub is divided into twenty-seven heavens or churches, that is to say, into twenty-seven passive states through which man travels, and these heavens or churches are typified by twenty-seven great personages from Adam to Luther, by the initiation, progress, and close of a religious era; and after Luther, who preached 'private judgment,' Adam, its symbol,

is said to begin again 'in endless cycle,' one era closes, another commences. In these twenty-seven great personages, and in their lives as set forth in sacred and profane history, Blake found wrapped up in obscure symbolism, the whole story of man's life, and of the life of the moods, religions, ideas, and nations.

(E-Y, I, 290)

Substitute "Yeats" for "Blake" in the final sentence and the description applies very well to the genesis of A Vision. It is a product of Yeats's active poetic imagination working continually on the outlines of a system of life and art he had studied in the Nineties in Blake.

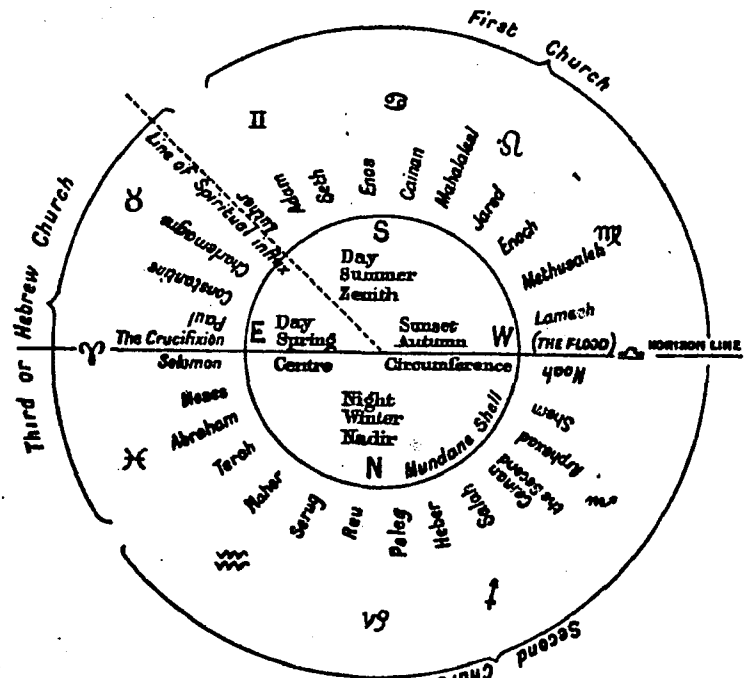


CHART OF THE TWENTY-SEVEN HEAVENS & OF THE MUNDANE SHELL.
(E-Y, I, 301)

Fig. 3.--Yeats's "Chart of the Twenty-Seven Heavens & of the Mundane Shell."

Furthermore, in his Blake explication Yeats not only describes a cyclical rotation but an attraction and repulsion between dualities. As Giorgio Melchiori has so ably documented, Yeats was familiar with both the spiral and the interpenetrating cones from his reading of Sinnett and Blavatsky.⁴⁹ Ellmann suggests that his early awareness of that pattern was clarified with Pound's founding of the Vorticist movement in 1916,⁵⁰ but note how as early as the Ellis-Yeats Blake the contrary movements are described and specifically termed "vortex."

The 'natural degree' is something more than a correspondence for the Holy Spirit, for in it also is the fallen substance of the mirror: the two between them making up the seeking and alluring, masculine and feminine, repulsive and attractive, of corporeal life; for when the lives become spectres or selfhoods, the mirror, in its turn, grows spectrous, and is changed into a 'vortex,' seeking to draw down and allure. It ceases to be a passive maternal power and becomes destroying. (E-Y, I, 249)

Although the Ellis-Yeats interpretation of "The Mental Traveller" (E-Y, II, 34-36) indicates that Yeats is correct when he claims in A Vision not to have fully understood the poem in 1893, it is clear from this explanation of the "masculine and feminine, repulsive and attractive" states that he understood the philosophic principles which governed "The Mental Traveller" as early as 1893. Melchiori has documented all of the various sources which were available to Yeats in formulating his own gyres,⁵¹ including the fact that Yeats's chart of "Descending and Ascending Reason" used in the Ellis-Yeats Blake to explain the progress

and fall of Urizen is perhaps Yeats's first use of the pattern. Clearly the gyre, whatever its specific source, had impressed him, for he "saw" Blake's mythology according to such a pattern. And there is evidence that well before A Vision Yeats attempted to work the gyre, based on his diagram of Urizen (Fig. 4., below), into a system of his own. Virginia Moore, after describing the Urizen spiral, notes that "on a small gray paper among Yeats's esoteric notes there is a Blakelike chart with Celtic names. At the high place from which Urizen fell is written 'the Danaan'--pristine man in Irish."⁵²

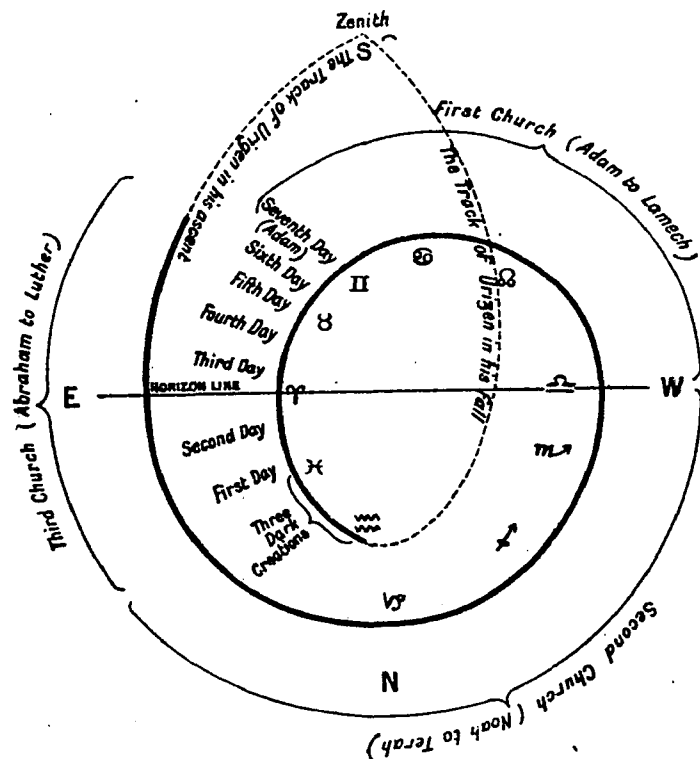


CHART OF THE DESCENDING & ASCENDING REASON (E-Y,I, 305)

Fig. 4.--Yeats's "Chart of the Descending and Ascending Reason."

Yeats's mentions of Blake's plate of Jacob's Ladder (E-Y, I, 318) indicate that he associated the spiral design with Blake; and possibly that graphic illustration, which Melchiori suggests as another source of the pattern, helped Yeats keep the theory in mind for the more than two decades that passed until the gyres became a part of his own philosophy.

The dualistic view of existence which is the basis of the gyre was also the basis of Yeats's explication of Blake, as we have seen. The contraries are, not surprisingly, a focus in A Vision--"it was a part of their [the instructors'] purpose to affirm that all the gains of man come from conflict with the opposite of his true being."⁵³ We have seen how this notion, basis of the Mask, was developed in Yeats's Blake criticism, and he confirmed the influence with his comment on the contraries in A Vision.

I had never read Hegel, but my mind had been full of Blake from boyhood up and I saw the world as conflict--Spectre and Emanation--and could distinguish between a contrary and a negation. 'Contraries are positive,' wrote Blake, 'a negation is not a contrary,' 'How great is the gulph between simplicity and insipidity', and again 'There is a place at the bottom of the grave where contraries are equally true.'⁵⁴

Yeats's explanation of the ubiquitous Four Zoas in Blake's cosmology is certainly the basis of his own development of the "Four Faculties" who rule the cycles of A Vision. But although this has become a critical commonplace, the real relation of the Zoas to Yeats's Faculties can only be seen in comparison with the Ellis-Yeats explications. In the

1925 original version of A Vision Yeats had diagrammed the Faculties on a wheel governed by "Head, Heart, and Loins."⁵⁵ These are, of course, the bodily portions which correspond with Blake's Zoas which Yeats had so graphically and carefully described in 1893 (see Fig. 2., p. 79 above). The Blakean Zoas were obviously consciously in the "instructors'" minds as they dictated to Yeats. When the system reached its final form in the second edition of A Vision, there is no mention of Blake's Zoas, but the source is clear.

The whole system is founded upon the belief that the ultimate reality, symbolised by the Sphere, falls in human consciousness, as Nicholas of Cusa was the first to demonstrate, into a series of antinomies.⁵⁶

Yeats may have learned of Nicholas of Cusa from his later reading in philosophy, but, as always, he was attracted to principles and patterns that fit in with his already formulated view of reality. There is no difference between this view of the "ultimate reality" as a series of antinomies and the Blakean cosmology as he described it in 1893.

And just as Yeats eschewed Eden in Blake's system, preferring the higher ranges of Beulah, we find his thirteenth sphere of transcendence explained only slightly because the "instructors, keeping as far as possible to the phenomenal world, have spent little time upon the sphere, which can be symbolized but cannot be known."⁵⁷ The instructors conveniently share Yeats's preference for the temporal world. The thirteenth sphere also springs from

the Ellis-Yeats Blake as Yeats describes it in imagery of the timeless moment that echoes the Blakean "pulsation of the artery" during which inspiration takes place.⁵⁸

The ultimate reality because neither one nor many, concord nor discord, is symbolized as a phaseless sphere, but as all things fall into a series of antinomies in human experience it becomes, the moment it is thought of, what I shall presently describe as the thirteenth cone. All things are present as an eternal instant to our Daimon (or Ghostly Self as it is called, when it inhabits the sphere), but that instant is of necessity unintelligible to all bound to the antinomies. . . we see what Blake called, 'the bright sculptures of Los's Hall'. We may describe them as the Passionate Body lifted out of time.⁵⁹

In Yeats's description of Blake's idea of the way in which man transcends the Churches, we clearly see the origin of this thirteenth cone. In the Ellis-Yeats Blake we read:

Not only did it [Blake's] mind widen the whole doctrine of the three Churches by tracing its relation to nature and all bodily and mental growth, but it deepened it by making it part of the inevitable rotation of all things. Blake dared to see that the serpent must always keep its tail in its mouth and creed follow creed, no matter how bitter be our longing for finality. Into this ever-revolving circle Christ only can descend and draw man upward out of nature into supernature, out of the 'wheel of birth' into the eternity of the uncreated.

(E-Y, I, 293-94; italics mine)

Working in a strictly nonreligious system, Yeats substituted Imagination for Christ (who was, he knew from his own preface, only a symbol of Imagination) and we get the "thirteenth cone."

This concept of creation through momentary transcendence is no mystical mystery. Yeats's description of the creative act is of an Eliotian impersonality--the only difference is

that Yeats's descent is into the Spiritus Mundi rather than literary tradition. As he explains creation in the Ellis-Yeats Blake:

The mood of the seer, no longer bound in by the particular experiences of his body, spreads out and enters into the particular experiences of an ever-widening circle of other lives. The circle of individuality will widen out until other individualities are contained within it, and their thoughts, and the persistent thought-symbols which are their spiritual or mental bodies, will grow visible to it. He who has thus passed into the impersonal portion of his own mind perceives that it is not a mind but all minds.

(E-Y, I, 244: italics mine)

Whether we call it Universal Mood or Poetic Genius, the neo-Platonic belief in a type of world-soul enabled Yeats to avoid mere deliberate purpose and yet escape from the solipsism of a self-reflexive aestheticism. Although Yeats was never able to totally dismiss the fictional background of A Vision, he came to realize that all of his art and philosophy was a form of self-projection.

I know now that revelation is from the self, but from that age-long memoried self, that shapes the elaborate shell of the mollusc and the child in the womb, that teaches the birds to make their nest; and that genius is a crisis that joins that buried self for certain moments to our trivial daily mind.⁶⁰

Both the focus of the Ellis-Yeats Blake on a coherent system and the principle of the Four Zoas as the basis of temporal life are inherent in the pattern of A Vision. And Yeats's "errors" in interpreting Blake clearly reveal the "bones" which underlie his own poetic system. A Vision is the culmination of Yeats's efforts to forge a system of

his own, an effort begun in the mid-Eighties when he declared himself a poet. In spite of his reading of philosophy to substantiate his instructors' ideas and his repudiation of his earlier knowledge, the basic concepts expressed in his explication of Blake in 1893 are the essential poetic principles of A Vision.

An interesting example of the process of influence is in Yeats's comment on this passage in A Vision:

In the symbolism the Celestial Body is said to age as the Passionate Body grows young, sometimes the Celestial Body is a prisoner in a tower rescued by the Spirit. Sometimes grown old, it becomes the personification of evil. It pursues, persecutes and imprisons the Daimon.⁶¹

The analogy to "The Mental Traveller" is so clear here that even Yeats feels obliged to account for it, which he does with a footnote advising the reader to "See Blake's Mental Traveller," adding that

the student of A Vision will understand it at once. Did Blake and my instructors draw upon some unknown historical source, some explanation perhaps of the lunar circuit?⁶²

A more likely explanation, in view of all the parallels between A Vision and Yeats's Blake, is that "The Mental Traveller" was a poem that Yeats had never fully understood and perhaps returned to when he worked on Blake's philosophy again in 1917. He had apprehended it imaginatively before he could explicate it logically (if indeed it can be logically explicated).⁶³

Much of the Blake influence is exerted in this type of gradual absorption of ideas and graphic images. In 1888

Yeats discovered a poet who saw the world in terms of a shared occult tradition and had many of his own poetic concerns. Their affiliation was inevitable. As he studied Blake, Yeats, in essence, studied himself, "Because I seek an image, not a book"--emphasizing and partially misreading until Yeats's Blake became A Vision. This basically philosophic affiliation should, I suggest, be important to a reading of Yeats's poetry only insofar as it provides a necessary background to our understanding of that poetry. That is the subject of the next chapter, where I will look at the specific use of Blake in Yeats's work to determine the limits of the affiliation.

Notes

- 1 Variorum Poems, p. 835.
- 2 Bloom, Yeats, p. 70.
- 3 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 213.
- 4 J.B. Yeats, Letters, ed. Hone. A 1906 letter to his son reminds W.B. Yeats of "the true idea which is to cherish that clairvoyant faculty which goes with personality," and concludes that "poetry is written not by Intellect but by the clairvoyant faculty" (p. 98). This anti-intellectual emphasis was a fundamental tenet throughout his life, as is illustrated by this letter to Dowden, written when his poet son was four years old, in 1869. It begins: "It seems to be that the intellect of man as man, and therefore of an artist, the most human of all, should obey no voice except that of emotion;" and concludes: "With you intellect is the first thing and last in education. With us, with me at any rate, and with everybody who understands the doctrine, emotion is the first thing and last" (p. 48).
- 5 Frayne, ed., Uncollected Prose, p. 373.
- 6 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, pp. 306-07.
- 7 Variorum Poems, p. 803.
- 8 Letters, ed. Wade, pp. 248-49. Italics mine.
- 9 Bloom, Yeats, p. 76.
- 10 H.P. Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy (London: The Theosophical Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888), I, 469.
- 11 Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, II, 492-93 and Isis Unveiled, II, 232. Yeats might also have gotten the information from the lady directly since marginal notes in his own copy of the Ellis-Yeats Blake indicate that she was the source for some of his mystical interpretations; noted by Rudd, p. 66.

- 12 Raine, I, 328.
- 13 Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, II, 232.
- 14 Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, I, 413. The same principle is mentioned in the following passages: I, 235; II, 389, 510; Isis Unveiled, II, 480.
- 15 Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, I, 413.
- 16 Israel Regardie, The Golden Dawn: An Account of the Teachings, Rites and Ceremonies of the Golden Dawn (Chicago: The Aries Press, 1937), I, 146. This conception of evil as a possible means to salvation also corresponds to the ancient Celtic religion, as Virginia Moore has noted, p. 55:
- The Celts thought of it [evil] as rising up from Annwoyn, the Underworld, Not-world, Abyss or Loveless Place, a sphere of ignorance at the other extreme from Gwynfyd, the highest sphere of existence. . . . Even today, the Irish liken the devil to a great black sow; but the Druids called an initiate a pig too--as elsewhere he was called dragon and serpent. Ugly useful creature, a pig. Herein lies the key. The symbol affirms again that evil has a double aspect, lower and higher; in a dualistic world, it contributes to the process of growth, having thus, a mission in the salvation of man--a Golden Dawn tenet.
- 17 Regardie, I, 122.
- 18 Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, II, 277.
- 19 "Ego Dominus Tuus," Variorum Poems, p. 371.
- 20 Yeats, Mythologies, p. 335.
- 21 Bloom, Yeats, p. 73.
- 22 Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, II, 281.
- 23 S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, comp., Kabbala Denudata: The Kabbalah Unveiled (London: G. Redway, 1887), p. 253.

²⁴ Adams, Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision, concludes his study of their respective mythic systems with the note that their basic difference was one of perspective or stance. Their relative positions in relation to this world were different. Where "Yeats dramatized the human conflict with himself as scapegoat--a creature trapped in the shell of time, space, and matter, aware of his plight but incapable of totally transcending it," Blake dramatized himself "as the artist who sees beyond the walls of the cavern hollowed out by fallen perceptual faculties" (p. 295).

²⁵ Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 173.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ W.B. Yeats, The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats, ed. Russell K. Alspach, assisted by Catharine C. Alspach (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), pp. 713 and 1295.

²⁸ Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, II, 567.

²⁹ In an 1892 letter in United Ireland Yeats advocated use of native subjects, using the same quotation from Paracelsus, adding, "and he who studies the legends, and history, and life of his own countryside may find there all the themes of art and song" (Frayne, ed. Uncollected Prose, p. 224). Clearly Yeats thought that Blake would have "gladly assented" to his own poetic practice; the emphasis in the Ellis-Yeats Blake was on those lines in Blake which also supported Yeats's developing aesthetic beliefs.

³⁰ Raine, II, 247.

³¹ E-Y, I, 269, 278, 281, 350, 401.

³² Yeats, ed., Poems of William Blake, pp. 234-35.

³³ Yeats, Autobiography, p. 306; italics mine. This phrase is repeated in Per Amica Silentia Lunae: "I find in an old diary: 'I think all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other life, on a re-birth as something not one's self, something created in a moment and perpetually renewed,'" Mythologies, p. 334.

³⁴ Yeats, Mythologies, p. 361; italics mine.

35 Yeats, The Cutting of An Agate, pp. 96-97. He also defined his poetic stance when he wrote in Per Amica:

The poet, because he may not stand within
the sacred house but lives amid the whirlwinds
that beset its threshold, may find his pardon.
(Mythologies, p. 333)

36 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, pp. 42-43.

37 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 630. According to another letter to Lady Gregory, p. 644, the lecture was not given until the spring of 1918, so that during the time when the "instructors" were initially active their pupil was also reviewing Blake's system.

38 Bloom, Yeats, p. 212.

39 W.B. Yeats, A Vision (1937; rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1966), p. 12. Cf. note 48 below.

40 Harper, ed., p. 6.

41 Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, Chapter XV, pp. 220-39.

42 Yeats, A Vision, p. 24.

43 Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 608.

44 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 326.

45 Yeats, A Vision, p. 25.

46 Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, I, 5.

47 Frayne, ed., Uncollected Prose, pp. 266-75.

48 In the first version of A Vision (London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., 1925), Yeats modified his "there was nothing to help me now" but still claimed that he had not been directly influenced by Blake:

What I have is nothing new, for I will show presently that Swedenborg and Blake and many before them knew that all things had their gyres; but Swedenborg and Blake preferred to explain them figuratively, and so I am the first to substitute for Biblical or mythological figures, historical movements and actual men and women.
(pp. xi-xii)

However, in an essay on Blake in Ideas of Good and Evil he had commented that

there are certain curious unfinished diagrams scattered here and there among the now separated pages of the sketch-book, and of these there is one which, had it all its concentric rings filled with names, would have been a systematic exposition of his Blake's animosities and of their various intensity. It represents Paradise, and in the midst, where Dante emerges from the earthly Paradise, is written 'Homer,' and in the next circle 'Swedenborg,' and on the margin these words: 'Everything in Dante's paradise shows that he has made the earth the foundation of all, and its goddess Nature, memory,' memory of sensations, not the Holy Ghost. . . . Round Purgatory is Paradise, and round Paradise vacuum. Home is the centre of all, I mean the poetry of the heathen.
(pp. 204-05)

With Yeats's fascination with charts and diagrams, this sketch most certainly made an impression (as his detailed description of it shows); he was aware that Blake had made a preliminary attempt at a personal cosmology. Yeats's protestations of originality, whether in 1925 or 1937, are always a pose--as his autobiography shows, he mythologized both life and art.

⁴⁹ Giorgio Melchiori, The Whole Mystery of Art: Pattern into Poetry in the Work of W.B. Yeats (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), pp. 262-63.

⁵⁰ Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, p. 156.

⁵¹ Melchiori, pp. 258-70.

⁵² Moore, p. 93.

⁵³ Yeats, A Vision (second edition) p. 13. All further citations of A Vision are to the second edition unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁴ Yeats, A Vision, p. 72. Note the importance Yeats gives to Blake's Spectre and Emanation as early as 1893. One of the ways in which he differed from D.G. Rossetti was in the title of the poem, "My Spectre around me night & day" which is untitled in the Note-book. Rossetti had called the poem "Broken Love," and in his own edition of Blake Yeats had changed that title with the following note:

Mr. Dante Rossetti read this as primarily a love poem, and was led by this mistake into calling it 'Broken Love.' Blake gives no title, but 'Spectre and Emanation' is his technical expression for reason and emotion, active and passive, masculine and feminine, past and future, body and soul, and all the other duads of his complex system.

(Yeats, ed., Poems of Wm. Blake, p. 275)

⁵⁵ Yeats, A Vision (1925 edition), p. 13.

⁵⁶ Yeats, A Vision, p. 187.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵⁸ The Blakean moment was certainly in Yeats's mind, for on p. 24 of A Vision specific reference is made to "what Blake called 'the pulsaters [sic] of an artery'."

⁵⁹ Yeats, A Vision, p. 193. The Ellis-Yeats Blake provides an analogue for this state. Yeats had described Los's Hall in his explication of Blake's symbolism with specific reference to the moment of inspiration:

When we lie between sleeping and waking at night and watch landscapes moving before us with all the vividness of nature, we are looking into these Halls, and there also are our dreams transacted.
(E-Y, I, 317-18)

Throughout his critical prose Yeats refers to the time between sleeping and waking as that of the artist's inspiration. He has quite clearly carried this notion through to A Vision, and even used the same Blakean image as he did in 1893.

⁶⁰ Yeats, Autobiography, p. 164; italics mine.

⁶¹ Yeats, A Vision, p. 189.

62 Yeats, A Vision, p. 189.

63 My view is supported by unpublished material in the Yeats Archives, SUNY at Stony Brook. In two separate envelopes (reel #24, vol. 3 and reel #23, vol. 10) there are holograph explications of "The Mental Traveller" which were never published by Yeats. Other material in these envelopes indicates that these notes were probably made for Yeats's 1893 editions. The fact that these explications were not included in either of Yeats's Blake editions indicates to me that Yeats had an early interest in "The Mental Traveller," but in 1893 he had not yet come to an interpretation which satisfied him.

Chapter Four

The Touch of the Poet

Let poets, by all means, touch on ideas, but
let it be only a 'touching' and a tentative
groping with the sensitive poetical fingers.
It is bad poetry which proclaims a definite
belief--because it is a sin against sincerity.

Letter of J.B. Yeats to his son¹

. . .for poetry is essentially a touch from
behind a curtain.

W.B. Yeats, John Sherman

Instances of Blake's presence in Yeats's poetry have been amply presented by all commentators, but the nature of Blake's influence has never been ascertained because no one has yet established (or questioned) the relevance of conventional source identification. My objection to this common critical procedure is that in addition to being almost purely speculative, it is for the most part irrelevant. The Yeats-Blake interaction was so complex that identifying "Blakeanisms" merely demonstrates that the critic has a retentive memory; it is a reductive and essentially misleading critical practice. Yeats's poetry depends much more on his own personal philosophic system than on "sources"--he is not T.S. Eliot, nor was meant to be. What Yeats "borrowed" from Blake were not simply quotable lines but personal touchstones which were gradually metamorphosed into his own philosophic system.

The final line of "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," for example, "Everything we look upon is blest," clearly echoes one of Yeats's favorite Blake aphorisms, "Everything that

lives is holy," but source identification here does not significantly aid our reading. The philosophy of the poem as a whole is distinctly Yeatsian, and the final line is obviously a personal resolution of the conflict rather than an allusion which the reader may identify. The principal "source" for Yeats's poetry is really, in Ellmann's apt title, "the identity of Yeats." The basic method of his poetic system as a whole, as in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," is to present "the imagination of a man," William Butler Yeats.

Often, in fact, the seemingly harmless practice of noting poetic analogues will obscure the accomplishment of the artist rather than serve to illuminate his work. Margaret Rudd's reading of "The Second Coming," for example, recalls to her mind "with startling clarity" the description of Urizen in Blake's Book of Urizen, and she confirmed this observation by speaking to Mrs. Yeats, who agreeably replied that "it almost surely must have been in his mind when he wrote."² While I can hardly deny that Blake's description of Urizen may have echoed in his mind, the accomplishment of Yeats's poem is largely in the non-specificity of his image of the "rough beast."³ Yeats's poetry is not designed to evoke literary analogues, and I think that authorial intention should be a factor in any attempt to clarify and interpret texts. Yeats's entire career was involved with a search for a tradition on which to base his art, and his achievement was in formulating a public poetry from an

essentially private vision through his synthesis and transformation of images he felt were common to the Spiritus Mundi. Note for example in his 1899 comment to The Wind Among the Reeds, his effort to find images which have universal rather than esoteric significance.

I use the wind as a symbol of vague desires and hopes, not merely because the Sidhe are in the wind, or because the wind bloweth as it listeth, but because wind and spirit and vague desire have been associated everywhere. A highland scholar tells me that his country people use the wind in their talk and in their proverbs as I use it in my poem.⁴

Insistent though Yeats was in advocating the importance of a poet's philosophy, he was equally concerned that the philosophy be kept in identifiable form out of the art. He was fond of remarking, "Goethe has said that the poet needs all philosophy, but that he must keep it out of his work."⁵ The industrious scholar can find scores of esoteric relationships between Yeats's occult knowledge and his poetry, but rarely are such correspondences needed to rescue the poetry from obscurity. In Virginia Moore's study of the rituals of the Golden Dawn, for example, she finds that one of the orders required the candidate to be tied in the attitude of a pseudo-crucifixion for some hours, and she concludes that such an experience was the source of the crucifixion imagery in Yeats's poetry.⁶ While such an experience undoubtedly made the image graphic for Yeats, it is equally certain that he chose the image for its universal rather than personal significance. Yeats's basic

criticism of Blake was for his failure to wed his vision to communicable traditional representations, and he was anxious not to err in the same fashion. He considered communication a prime requirement for any art form.

The relative unimportance of Yeatsian "source" identification can be illustrated with an image in "Sailing to Byzantium" which is readily identifiable as Blakean and has already been commented on--but with little poetic insight gained from that identification. Richard Ellmann and Hazard Adams both have pointed out that the image of the soul clapping hands probably refers to Blake's vision of the soul of his dead brother Robert ascending to heaven.⁷ The emphasis Yeats gives to this image in his Blake study confirms this idea, in my opinion, but the identification in itself does not significantly enrich our reading of the poem. What is needed is some indication of what this image meant to Yeats. In both the biographical memoir in the Ellis-Yeats Blake and in Yeats's own introduction to his shorter Blake edition, he mentions this incident as one of special significance in Blake's life. In his interpretation of Blake's symbolism we get some sense of the meaning Yeats attached to the vision when he cites the story once again.

When once a man has re-entered into this, his ancient state, he perceives all things as with the eyes of God. The thoughts of nature grow visible independent of their physical symbols. He sees when the body dies the soul still persisting and ascending, perhaps as Blake saw his brother Robert's clapping its hands with joy. He discovers by 'his enlarged and numerous senses' the 'spiritual causes' that are behind 'natural events.'

(E-Y, I, 244)

The image of the soul clapping its hands is symbolic of the vision of the true mystic (Blake's fourfold vision), and the simple identification of the source is less important than an awareness of how that thought fits into the poet's mind. What Yeats absorbs and uses from Blake are not simply attractive images but significant moments. Although the clapping-hands image in "Sailing to Byzantium" is identifiable as Blakean, it is also understandable solely with reference to Yeats's own system as one of those timeless moments that enable man to transcend the cycles and give life meaning. It is the thirteenth cone. The image, as used in the poem, is, I suggest, sufficiently clear in its context even without reference to "Yeats's Blake" for meaning. A general allusion to "Blake," the common critical practice, is even less useful. The need for private knowledge would be, from Yeats's artistic viewpoint, a diminishment of the poem.

One of Yeats's fundamental artistic tenets was that the poem must speak for itself. Writing about the construction of one of his plays, he explained:

My private philosophy is there but there must be no sign of it; all must be like an old faery tale. It guides me to certain conclusions and gives me precision but I do not write it.⁸

He expressed the same belief in the integrity of the work in his notes to The Winding Stair in 1929.

The tower is Thoor Ballylee, or Ballylee Castle, where I have written most of my poems of recent years. My poems attribute to it most of the meanings attributed in the past to the Tower--

whether watch tower or pharos, and its winding stair those attributed to gyre or whorl. What those meanings are let the poems say.⁹

This conviction, partially a heritage from his father, is the source of his comment that all poetry is "a touch from behind the curtain."¹⁰ A philosophy is needed to properly inform the poetry, but it can never be the substance of the art--merely the "bones under the skin" as he said in A Vision. His early dissatisfaction with Shelley was due to the poet's insufficient "philosophy" (actually his not having the specific theosophical background that Yeats favored); lack of the right "touch," as it were, and his disenchantment with Blake arose because he lacked a curtain--art and philosophy being too closely allied in Yeats's view.

Since Blake was primarily a philosopher and mystic for Yeats and was used as a source for much of Yeats's own system, what may seem to be an allusion to Blake in Yeats's poetry is, in most cases, the identification of one of the points of agreement between the two poets. The clapping hands image in "Sailing to Byzantium," for example, is an expression of the achieved moment of vision and reflects Yeats's concern with the idea of Blake's timeless moment, the "pulsation of an artery." Because Blake is a philosophic rather than literary source, sometimes a Blakean analogy will be possible even though there is a specific source other than Blake. When Whitaker quotes Yeats's

A shudder in the loins engenders there
 The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
 And Agamemnon dead

he suggests that Yeats's sense of historical simultaneity is the moment which, in Blake's phrase, "Is equal in its period & value to Six Thousand Years."¹¹ And when he relates the refrain of "Long-legged Fly" to the same Blakean concept¹² he is also undoubtedly correct, even though a passage in Biographia Literaria has recently been pointed out as a more immediate source for the controlling image of the poem.¹³ The image may have come from Coleridge, but the philosophy came from A Vision--via Blake. By the time Yeats had, like Los, created his own system, the images and associations he derived from Blake had ceased to be Blakean and become Yeatsian.¹⁴

Blake's influence was not in the actual writing of Yeats's poetry but in the formation of the philosophy that remained behind the curtain. From his study of Irish folklore, occultism, and Blake, Yeats formed a weltanschauung which was less a coherent system than a number of philosophic touchstones, usually expressed in terms of graphic images. These images occur repeatedly in the poetry because they were particles in that receptacle, the creative mind of the poet. Whatever images were derived in part from his study of Blake are available to the student for source identification, but such identification, in view of the complexity involved in the formation of Yeats's philosophy is, at best, a

rather reductive exercise in ingenuity. Yeats evolved over the years a rather elaborate and complex mythic system. The influence of Blake was in the formation of that myth, as we have seen in Chapter Three, and the myth then informed the art. Blake and Yeats, poets operating within basically the same occult traditions, cannot help having many points of similarity, especially when the later poet formed his aesthetic system principally through a long study of his predecessor. But in spite of the temptation to find analogues, Yeats's own system seems complex enough, I think, without unnecessary reference to another, more obscure, poet for elucidation. Yeats's artistic career clearly shows that he had no such allusive intentions.

Just as Yeats gradually refined his own aesthetic system while working out his version of the lineaments of Blake's, emphasizing points which attracted him and gradually transferring themes and images into his own philosophy, he worked Blake out of his art as well. His was not the complex allusive manner. Yeats remained always an intensely personal poet whose art was informed by associations of his own mythology. Part of the reason why his early career makes so many critics unhappy (including W.B. Yeats) is that he had not yet totally forged his own system and worked out a viable poetic practice from that system. The "bones" protrude as it were.

The works which are most specifically Blakean are, not

coincidentally I suggest, no longer a part of Yeats's canon. His composition of the play Where There Is Nothing and his novelette John Sherman, and his eventual abandonment of them, illustrate the way in which he dissociated himself from any possible "influence" of his predecessor and worked to make the philosophy the background rather than the central concern of his art.

The prominence of specific Blakean allusion in Where There Is Nothing might be due to the particular circumstances of the play's origin. In his autobiography Yeats claimed that he was forced to write the play in a fortnight to preserve his right to the plot.¹⁵ Because of the pressure of time Yeats wrote quickly and the play's hero, Paul Ruttledge, speaks at times pure Blake--and is somewhat patterned on Yeats's conception of Blake too, I think, although this apostle of uncompromising literalism was more likely inspired by Ibsen's Brand. Like Brand, Ruttledge is an enthuasaist who is able to see beyond the veil, as it were. He rejects the hypocrisy of society and joins a band of tinkers to merge his life with that of the common man--of whom he has a rather idealized view:

Did you ever think that the roads are the only things that are endless; that one can walk on and on and on, and never be stopped by a gate or a wall? They are the serpent of eternity. I wonder they have never been worshipped. What are the stars beside them? They never meet one another. The roads are the only things that are infinite. They are all endless.¹⁶

But he proceeds to corrupt the earthy men by buying free

drinks which keep them happily but unprofitably drunk. When challenged, he replies that "some poet has written that exuberance is beauty and that the roadway of excess leads to the palace of wisdom."¹⁷ But the life of the road proves to be too physically exhausting for Paul, and the tinkers leave him at a monastery to recuperate.

The play continues five years later with our hero now Brother Paul and taking Blake too literally in the opposite sense. (Actually I should insist on Yeats's Blake here because his use of the "law of the numbers" is, as we have seen, Yeats's distinctly personal contribution to Blake.) Paul attracts followers among the friars by teaching that

if a man can only keep his mind on the one high thought he gets out of time into eternity, and learns the truth for itself. He calls that getting above law and number, and becoming king and priest in one's own house.¹⁸

Paul declares that "the Christian's business is not reformation but revelation, and the only labours he can put his hand to can never be accomplished in Time. He must live that all things shall pass away."¹⁹ From this anarchic position comes the play's title--"We must destroy the World; we must destroy everything that has Law and Number, for where there is nothing, there is God."²⁰ Paul is about to form an army to put his heretical views into practice when he suddenly realizes the basic error in his literal reading of Blake:

To organize--that is to bring in law and number.

Organize--organize--that is how all the mischief has been done. I was forgetting we cannot destroy the world with armies, it is inside our minds that it must be destroyed, it must be consumed in a moment inside our minds.²¹

The play's dramatic flaws help obscure its author's intentions, but Yeats obviously condemns both extremes, licentiousness and anarchy, though he fundamentally approves of the poet Rutledge quotes so literally. The play is, in one sense, a rejection of the other-worldliness which requires a complete negation of this world. In an early letter to John Quinn Yeats explained the reason for the two locales, the road and the monastery.

People love Paul because they find in him a certain strength, a certain abundance. This abundance comes from him in the first three acts with a kind of hard passion, but his five years in the monastery as I understand him fills him with dreams, mad reverie, and detaches him from the things about which men are passionate.²²

Here is also the basis for both Yeats's admiration of, and divergence from, William Blake--as he saw Blake's message. If the choice must be made between life in the world or in trances, Yeats's preference for the sea of time and space is apparent. We can see how his direct criticism of Blake the artist as early as 1897 reflects his preference for the real over the ideal.

The limitation of his [Blake's] view was from the very intensity of his vision; he was a too literal realist of imagination, as others are of nature; and because he believed that the figures seen by the mind's eye, when exalted by inspiration, were eternal existences, symbols of divine essences, he hated every grace of style that might obscure their lineaments.²³

In spite of his overidentification with Blake, Yeats never considered him an awe-inspiring giant. Where There Is Nothing uses Blakean allusion not in praise of Blake, but as a kind of philosophic shorthand to express Yeats's own ideas. The mystic Ruttledge is, like Brand, too uncompromising to be humanly appealing.

Yeats's involvement with occult societies makes it easy for us to overemphasize the visionary and mystical quality of his aesthetic ideas, forgetting that the saving grace of his art was his insistence on the serpent with its tail in its mouth. In Where There Is Nothing he was attempting to show the futility of extremist positions, once again opting for the via media necessary for effective art. As he explained in a 1908 note about his collaboration with Lady Gregory which turned the play into The Unicorn from the Stars, the basic philosophy expressed was his own, and once again reflected his concern with the polarities of art in his day.

I feel indeed that my best share in it [the play] is that idea, which I have been capable of expressing in my criticism alone, of bringing together the rough life of the road and the frenzy that the poets have found in their ancient cellar,--a prophecy, as it were, of the time when it will be once again possible for a Dickens and a Shelley to be born in the one body.²⁴

Yeats's interest in both Irish folklore and Blakean mysticism was, as he wrote in notes to The Unicorn from the Stars, an attempt to create "a Marriage of Heaven and Hell"²⁵ with a literary rather than social basis.

Contraries might be necessary for life in this world, but

Yeats insisted on synthesis for art. The other-worldly Rutledge is modelled on the Blake who Yeats saw as a "too literal realist of the imagination." Blake was still acknowledged as a mentor as late as "Under Ben Bulben," where he is listed among those who "prepared a rest for the people of God,"²⁶ but he was never, even in the Nineties, admired unreservedly by Yeats, who saw his own role (and in that the role of all artists) as necessarily bound to temporal concerns.

Most of the changes from Where There Is Nothing to The Unicorn from the Stars were for improvement of the dramatic effect, but what is particularly interesting is that the specific use of Blake entirely disappears. Even when the substance of a speech remains Blakean, the direct quotation or allusion is deleted. When Paul Rutledge realized his error, the emphasis in Where There Is Nothing was on his mistake about the "law of the number." Not only is that Yeats-Blakean phrase totally omitted in the later play, but the emphasis of the speech is now on the idea of the apocalyptic moment transcending time and space which is such an integral part of Yeats's own poetic imagery and will eventually become his thirteenth cone.

I was mistaken when I set out to destroy Church and Law. The battle we have to fight is fought out in our own mind. There is a fiery moment, perhaps once in a lifetime, and in that moment we see the only thing that matters. It is in that moment the great battles are lost and won, for in that moment we are a part of the host of Heaven.²⁷

Between Where There Is Nothing and The Unicorn from the Stars there is no philosophic shift. Lady Gregory, as the notes to the play make clear, helped solve some of the dramatic problems with additional minor characters, but the main line of the play remained Yeats's.²⁸ The change is in the complete absorption of Blake into Yeats's own developing system so that within five years not only are Blake's words absent from the later play, but the theme is also more directly referable to Yeats's own system. Blake, though a source, is not needed to gloss the action. Yeats's elimination of Blake is not a repudiation of his ideas--for the basic philosophic theme remains the same--so much as his consciousness of the necessity for creating a work referable to nothing but his own thought. In the later play both the dialogue and the theme are more completely Yeats's. The change from Where There Is Nothing to The Unicorn from the Stars is paradigmatic of the absorption of Blakean ideas from "The Symbolic System" in the Ellis-Yeats Blake to A Vision.

On the other hand, Yeats's novella John Sherman was abandoned rather than developed any further, and the clue to its author's dissatisfaction is, I suggest, in the specifically Blakean symbolism which is integral to its plot. The story has been recently edited, and certain Blakean allusions noted, but the importance of the philosophic background has remained obscure because of

lack of knowledge of Yeats's Blake.

Ostensibly John Sherman is a simple romance with Yeats's love for Sligo the dominant motif. The title character is a rather impecunious gentleman determined to marry for money. In spite of his preference for his home in Ballah (fictional Sligo), he travels to London to work for a rich uncle from whom he has expectations. Leaving Ballah, he also leaves Mary Carton, the local girl with whom he has had a sincere but platonic friendship since she is poor and, from his viewpoint, therefore unmarriageable. In London he meets Margaret Leland, a very wealthy and worldly young woman (his mother warns him that she uses belladonna on her eyes) and they become engaged. When he returns to Ballah to announce his engagement to his old friend Mary, he discovers that he really loves her but is faced with a dilemma because of his commitment to Margaret. He solves this problem by inviting his friend William Howard (a distinct opposite of Sherman) to London and giving Howard and Margaret ample opportunity to fall in love. The story eventually ends with both couples properly paired.

Yeats began John Sherman at about the time when he "discovered" Blake in Ellis' studio. The story was written, at his father's suggestion, to obviate the need for a regular job, and composed of "real people" at J.B. Yeats's insistence.²⁹ In November 1888 Yeats wrote of working at the story and said that Ellis had offered alterations.

Because Yeats declared that John Sherman had "more of myself in it than in anything I have done,"³⁰ the story has always been interpreted as autobiographical with the love of "Ballah" and hatred of London reflecting its author's feelings. But I think that the composition of the story at the time when he was working on Blake's "philosophy," and the fact that he discussed it with his Blake collaborator, combined with the predominance of specific Blakean allusion in the story, suggest that while the Sligo-London motif may have come from his own feelings, the basic plot is, in fact, derived from his emerging philosophic system. Once we know the lineaments of Yeats's Blake, we find John Sherman a working-out of one of the central features of Yeats's explication, the story of Vala.

There is no reason to expect John Sherman to be a simple romance or a realistic narrative. Although Yeats never really mastered the art of prose fiction, his criticism clearly indicates that he had definite standards for its composition and disdained "mere storytelling."

All Art that is not mere storytelling, or mere portraiture, is symbolic, and has the purpose of those symbolic talismans which mediaeval magicians made with complex colours and forms, and bade their patients ponder over daily, and guard with holy secrecy; for it entangles, in complex colours and forms, a part of the Divine Essence.³¹

In 1889, while compiling his Representative Irish Tales, he objected to one story for being "a tale and not also a

little loophole for looking at Irish life through."³²

And his eventual appreciation of Joyce's art was based on the latter's ability to achieve the symbolic mode in prose. He wrote that "James Joyce differs from Arnold Bennett and Galsworthy, let us say, because he can isolate the human mind and its vices as if in eternity."³³ Yeats was also particularly sensitive to the fiction of Blake's narrative poems as symbolic readings of reality.

Figures were his [Blake's] speech. Persons represented the states of mind which they typified, and thus served for adjectives and substantives at the same time, while their actions replaced verbs, and their groups prepositions. (E-Y, I, 114)

It is not surprising, then, that Yeats complained that his difficulty with John Sherman was in keeping his characters "from turning into Eastern symbolic monsters of some sort."³⁴ The story is, as I will show, very much modelled on Yeats's conception of Blake's narrative practice.

A clue to Yeats's intentions is found in his distaste for the dominant fashions in prose--realism and naturalism.

Some limiting environment or idiosyncrasy is displayed; man is studied as an individual fact, and not as that energy which seems measureless and hates all that is not itself. It is powerful but prosaic art, celebrating the 'fall into division' not the 'resurrection into unity.'³⁵

As we know, the Ellis-Yeats Blake proposed Vala or The Four Zoas as the centre of Blake's mythic system, and that prophecy is, in symbolic terms, the story of the soul's "resurrection to unity" told in the form of a love story.³⁶ The Blakean elements in John Sherman

have never been fully appreciated because they revolve around a symbolism explicit in the Ellis-Yeats Blake but never given the same prominence in Yeats's own system. The story has always been considered an indication of Yeats's developing philosophy because of the obvious dualism between the male protagonists. Sherman and Howard are, like Robartes and Aherne, the Self and Anti-Self. But little notice has been taken of the role of the females in the story, although the plot revolves around Sherman's problems in finding the right mate. to understand fully the symbolic dimensions of the narrative, we must first comprehend the symbolism of the sexes as Yeats expressed it in his Blake explication.

All the Zoas go through similar experiences. Their story is that of man. They begin by containing a female element. This passes outside of them and is seen by them. They desire its love. But it desires dominion. A struggle occurs. The female is cast down and wounded. Then the male falls. He becomes mere selfishness and ambition, and this exaggerates the faults of the female. Finally they are re-united. They enter eternity where there is no marriage, and therefore no contest and no destruction.

(E-Y, I, 349)

Yeats viewed all of Blake's poetry as "the contest of the male and female, active and passive tendencies, or as he preferred to call it, of spectre and emanation" (E-Y, I, 254). When we understand the action of a state (masculine or "John") separated from its space (female element or "Mary"), the role of Margaret Leland becomes clear, and the symbolism fits her character in the story.

the spectre having parted from its emanation is said to have none, but it may steal and clothe itself with the emanation of another Sometimes the term 'vortex' is applied to the emanation separate from its spectre because in its turn it seeks to overcome him. This is done by meeting his repulsive power with its attractive and absorbative power As the spectres seek the emanations of others, so the separated emanations or 'shadows' seek to be united to states other than those from which they were radiated. Hence Blake applied to them the term harlots, and even snatches of verse like--

The harlot's cry from street to street
Shall weave old England's winding sheet

--refer far more to them than to their embodied types. (E-Y, I, 277)³⁷

Hence when John Sherman, engaged to Margaret, travels to Ballah to tell Mary of his impending marriage, he has "a confused sense of having lost his way"³⁸ and we find him "at one of those dangerous moments when the sense of personal identity is shaken."³⁹ But when he has finally returned to marry Mary, he is "more perfectly happy than he had been for many a day. . . . All nature seemed full of a Divine fulfillment. Everything fulfilled its law. . . . He would live that his law might be fulfilled."⁴⁰ And we find him experiencing the Yeatsian apocalyptic moment of moments that signifies Unity of Being, though expressed in a specifically Blakean allusion to "Auguries of Innocence."

Now, was he sure of this truth--the saints on one hand, the animals on the other, live in the moment as it passes. Thitherward had his days brought him. This was the one grain they had ground. To grind one grain is sufficient for a lifetime.⁴¹

Margaret and Howard, too, are now correctly "matched."

"She would not pretend that she had not often been in love,

but never had any heart rung back to her the true note,"⁴²
and Howard experiences a moment of Edenic awareness
replete with Blakean imagery.

The exulting flame of life seemed spreading
from her to the other things in the room.
To Howard's eyes it seemed as though the
bright pots and stuffed birds and plush
curtains began to flow with a light not of
this world--to glimmer like the strange and
chaotic colours the mystic Blake imagined
upon the scaled serpent of Eden. The light
seemed gradually to dim his past and future,
and to make pale his good resolves. Was it
not in itself that which all men are seeking,
and for which all else exists?⁴³

The sense of the union of lovers as a return to Eden (or
a "resurrection to unity") is also found in the John-Mary
relationship. When he returns to Ballah she initially
refuses him, and John has a moment of "vision" with clear
Blakean overtones.

An hour before the air had been full of singing
and peace that was resonant like joy. Now he saw
standing before his Eden the angel with the
flaming sword. All the hope he had ever
gathered about him had taken itself off, and the
naked soul shivered.⁴⁴

Yeats makes specific reference to Blake's Cherub as symbolic
of the imminence of entrance to Eden, the "resurrection to
unity."

When man ascends wholly out of 'the wheel of
birth' into 'the imagination that liveth for ever,'
a last judgment is said to pass over him. He is
done with the opacity of corporeal existence and
has attained that state which Blake announced
or rather summoned in 'The Marriage of Heaven and
Hell' with the words 'The Cherub with his
flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his
guard at the tree of life, and when he does,
the whole creation will be consumed and appear
infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite
and corrupt.'
(E-Y, I, 298)

John's vision of the Cherub blocking his entrance to Eden clearly indicates that Yeats's is a symbolic love story.

Even without knowledge of Yeats's Blake, Richard Finneran suggests that Sligo was fictionalized as "Ballah" because of its similarity to Blake's Beulah.⁴⁵ Ballah is Beulah, however, not only because it means "marriage" and because at the end of the story John Sherman is united with his true love, but also because Beulah is the road to Eden and unity, and the story is symbolically of the soul's resurrection to unity.

Generation is the symbol of division as marriage is of unity. Therefore, marriage--Beulah--is in the South, and by it is reached the upward and inward world of Unity from which division falls, and where it must return and cease.

(E-Y, I, 399)

So central did the editors hold this sexual symbolism of soul and body as lovers whose union was the true resurrection to unity that the Ellis-Yeats Blake had Blake's plate "Reunion of the Soul and Body" engraved on the cover of each of its three volumes as an illustration of the poet's central theme (see Fig. 5., p. 148 below).

Another aspect of John Sherman which points to its symbolic Blakean structure is the source of the character "Mary Carton." Finneran, although able to provide possible biographical sources for the male characters in John Sherman, admits that he has been unable to find a satisfactory source for Mary.⁴⁶

Interestingly, the Blake character that Yeats saw as a



REUNION OF THE SOUL AND BODY.

Fig. 5.--Blake's plate "Reunion of the Soul and Body."

similar symbol of the anima was Mary, from the poem of that name in the Pickering Ms. and also the character "Mary Green" in "William Bond." In fact, Blake's "William Bond," as interpreted by Ellis and Yeats, is an interesting possibility as a source for the plot of John Sherman.

William is symbolically ill in the poem because while there is some unnamed "understanding" between him and Mary Green, he has been attracted to "another." John Sherman is similarly bound to his Mary through shared interests but is attracted to Margaret Leland. And Margaret, who wishes to inspire jealousy rather than love, is a type of the Blakean harlot (as is the "other" in the poem). Blake's Mary Green solves William's dilemma by granting him his freedom, and Yeats's Mary Carton demonstrates similar altruism when John announces his engagement. Both male figures recognize their proper mates through the generosity of the female. That the sexual is symbolic is clear in the resolution to "William Bond" as he learns that true love is agape not eros:

Seek Love in the Pity of others'Woe,
 In the gentle relief of another's care,
 In the darkness of night & winter's snow,
 In the naked & outcase, Seek Love there! (K, 436)

The Ellis-Yeats interpretation stressed that "William Bond" was an autobiographical poem and that Mary, rather than a representation of Mrs. Blake, was, in fact, "a phase" of Blake's own soul (E-Y, II, 21).

I think it is significant that in trying to determine the source of Mary Carton, Finneran was reminded of Maud Gonne--but had to note that Yeats had not yet met her when he originally composed his story, though he later apparently considered dedicating the story to her.⁴⁷ In a sense Maud Gonne became for Yeats a type of Mary. Yeats's occult interests had led him to apply the male-female dichotomy to his own relationships. His remarks about the women in his life reflect this conception of the "right" woman as the man's completer and another aspect of himself. He wrote that Olivia Shakespeare "seemed a part of myself,"⁴⁸ and his identification with Maud Gonne always involved a sense of their complementary natures.

My outer nature was passive--but for her I should never perhaps have left my desk--but I knew my spiritual nature was passionate, even violent. In her all this was reversed.⁴⁹

The clearest expression of Yeats's notion of woman as a symbolic type of the anti-self is in a note in his diary for 1909.

There is an astrological sense in which a man's wife or sweetheart is always an Eve made from a rib of his body. She is drawn to him because she represents a group of stellar influences on the radical horoscope. These influences also create an element in his character and his destiny, in things apart from love or marriage. Whether this element be good or evil she is therefore its external expression. The happiest have such horoscopes as enable them to find what is good and happy in themselves in their wives, others must find what is evil, or a man may have both affinities.⁵⁰

In a 1914 essay, the sexual divisions become formulated into a theory of the Mask; the anti-self is the female

element.

Every man has many loves, but still they all have reference to his ruling love and make one with it or together compose it, and our surrender to that love, as to supreme good, is no new thought, for Villiers de l'Isle-Adam quotes Thomas Aquinas as having said, 'Eternity is the possession of one's self, as in a single moment.' During the fusing and rending man flits, as it were, from one flock of the dead to another, seeking always those who are like himself, for as he puts off disguise he becomes unable to endure what is unrelated to his love, even becoming insane among things that are too fine for him.⁵¹

By the time the theory of the Mask is fully formulated in Per Amica Silentia Lunae the specifically sexual associations are refined into a generalized Self and Anti-Self. Similarly, the revised 1936 A Vision shows a definite attempt to temper the dominant sexual theme of "The Mental Traveller," which was more prominent in the 1925 edition. Yeats never reprinted John Sherman after 1908 because, I suggest, not only does the story have the very specific Blakean allusions which he wished to eliminate from his work, but unlike the more Yeatsian expression of Where There Is Nothing, the entire structure of the narrative is based upon Blakean symbolism, the reconciliation of the soul told symbolically as a love story. In spite of Yeats's great passion for revision he chose not to rewrite John Sherman. "When ever I remake a song." Yeats wrote, "It is myself that I remake,"⁵² and John Sherman was not a sufficient portion of that "self" to be redeemed by revision. It was a philosophic story told

by an intensely personal artist, and Yeats rightly considered it extraneous to his canon.

In neither the mythic background of A Vision nor in his poetry is Yeats dependent on Blake for meaning. While Yeats's Blake is integral to the growth of the "symbolic bones under the skin" of his poetry, one of the results of the artist's development was to render the affiliation, in terms of simply noting unmetamorphosed sources or analogues, irrelevant. In Yeats's art Blake remained (and belongs) "behind the curtain."

Yeats's Blake has additional literary importance, however. James Joyce, who avidly read all of Yeats's prose and poetry while a Dublin university student at the turn of the century, not surprisingly developed a like enthusiasm for Blake. The Blake-Joyce affiliation, much noted in criticism, has never been adequately explored because of the critical ignorance of Yeats's Blake interpretations. These interpretations, however idiosyncratic, were the matrix of Joyce's Blake knowledge, and the Blake-Joyce affiliation can be properly explored only in their light.

Notes

- ¹ J.B. Yeats, Letters, ed. Hone, p. 221.
- ² Rudd, p. 118.
- ³ Steinmann and Hall, eds., The Permanance of Yeats, p. 4, discuss the achievement of Yeats's absorption of his esoteric material and make their point with specific reference to "The Second Coming."
- ⁴ Variorum Poems, p. 806. Frye, Fables of Identity, pp. 222-23, suggests that Yeats looked for a mythological pattern which "though not that of traditional Christianity, would be reconcilable with it, in the sense of being another illustration of the same totaly imaginative apprehension of reality."
- ⁵ Letters, ed. Wade, p. 917. Also quoted in the 1921 preface to Michael Robartes and The Dancer, Variorum Poems, p. 853.
- ⁶ Moore, p. 179.
- ⁷ Adams, Blake and Yeats, p. 10; Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 254.
- ⁸ Letters, ed. Wade, pp. 917-18. In a 1909 letter to his father (p. 533) Yeats wrote in a similar vein:
- Side by side with my play I am writing a second series of Discoveries. I find that my philosophical tendency spoils my playwriting if I have not a separate channel for it.
- ⁹ Variorum Poems, p. 830. Italics mine.
- ¹⁰ W.B. Yeats, John Sherman and Dhoya, ed. Richard J. Finneran (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), p. 89. This idea can be noted in J.B. Yeats's letters to his son (ed. Hone, pp. 91, 168, 193, and 208) and in a fragment of a letter not in Hone but quoted by Ellmann, Yeats: The Man and the Masks, p. 201.
- ¹¹ Whitaker, p. 108.

¹² Whitaker, p. 120.

¹³ Mario D'Avanzo, "Yeats' Long-Legged Fly," The Explicator 34 (November, 1975), item 23.

¹⁴ Raine, I, 310 and 316, makes an excellent study of the similarities between Blake's "The Mental Traveller" and two of the songs from Yeats's The Resurrection. But since the play was written during the same period as A Vision, the analogous ideas may be a product of Yeats's concentration on themes common to A Vision and Blake's poem, rather than a specific use of "The Mental Traveller" as a basis for his songs. Yeats principally formed his philosophy, not his poetry, directly from his study of Blake.

¹⁵ Yeats, Autobiography, pp. 274-75. Yeats claimed that he told George Moore a fantastic plot for a play and suggested collaboration, and they discussed the project. Moore later withdrew from the Irish Literary Theatre and Yeats wrote to him regretting that he would have to do the play without his help. Moore did not answer. Sometime later Yeats received a wire from Moore: "I have written a novel on that scenario we composed together. Will get an injunction if you use it." Yeats quickly replied that, using nothing of Moore's, he would write the play. He went to Coole where, with the help of Lady Gregory and an unnamed friend, he wrote the play in a fortnight and quickly published it.

¹⁶ Variorum Plays, p. 1081.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 1111.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 1127.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 1139.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 1140.

²¹ Ibid., p. 1158.

²² Ibid., p. 1167.

²³ Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 182.

- 24 Variorum Plays, p. 1296.
- 25 Ibid., p. 713.
- 26 Variorum Poems, p. 639.
- 27 Variorum Plays, pp. 704-05; italics mine.
- 28 Ibid., pp. 712 and 1296.
- 29 Yeats, Memoirs, p. 31.
- 30 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 165.
- 31 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, pp. 230-31.
- 32 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 143.
- 33 Yeats, Explorations, p. 333.
- 34 Letters, ed. Wade, p. 92. In another letter, p. 93, Yeats mentions that Ellis offered "alterations" for the story.
- 35 Yeats, Autobiography, p. 305.
- 36 Note, e.g., Raine, I, 182: "Vala's story is, throughout the poem that bears her name, the story of the soul's relationship with her divine lover, called her 'maker' and her 'creator.' For the first time the story of the soul takes the form of a love story."
- 37 F.A.C. Wilson's attempt to discover the symbolic significance of the harlot image in Yeats's poetry and plays is hampered by the critical tendency to ignore Yeats's Blake. Wilson makes no mention whatever of Yeats's discussion of the harlot image in Blake, even though he suggests that the image is principally a Blakean "influence." Wilson, Yeats and Tradition (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 175-85.
- 38 W.B. Yeats, John Sherman and Dhoya, ed. Finneran, p. 80.

³⁹ W.B. Yeats, John Sherman and Dhoya, ed. Finneran, p. 82.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 102.

⁴¹ Ibid., Finneran sees an allusion to Blake's "To see the world in a grain of sand" in the last line. While I agree, I think it is more significant that this is one more expression of the "moment of moments" that transcends the cycles.

⁴² Ibid., p. 97.

⁴³ Ibid. The illustration referred to is Blake's Paradise Lost illustration of Adam and Eve in Eden (Finneran, p. 135).

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 109.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Yeats, Memoirs, p. 86.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 124. Note also that Yeats says of these male-female elements in Blake: "They are grown up from eternity, but in their divided state they become children. They are also one another's parents" (E-Y, I, 349). This is perhaps the symbolic principle he has in mind when he writes of Maud Gonne: "I am in continual terror of some entanglement parting us, and all the while I know that she made me and I her. She is my innocence and I her wisdom. Of old she was a phoenix and I feared her, but now she is my child more than my sweetheart" (Yeats's unpublished 1909 journal, quoted by Moore, p. 202). And it may explain the final line of John Sherman as well when Yeats concludes Mary's and John's reconciliation with the comment: "She looked upon him whom she loved as full of a helplessness that needed protection, a reverberation of the feeling of the mother for the child at the breast" (p. 111).

⁵⁰ Yeats, Memoirs, p. 165.

51 Yeats, Explorations, p. 37.

52 Variorum Poems, p. 778.

Chapter Five

In Doubblinnbbayyates

"This is doubblinnbbayyates" (FW, 303)¹

But I must not accounted be
 One of that mumming company--
 With him who hies him to appease
 His giddy dames' frivolities
 While they console him when he whinges
 With gold-embriodered Celtic fringes--

"The Holy Office" (CW, 150)

James Joyce's last six years in Dublin, from his matriculation at University College in 1898 to his self-exile in 1904, were a time of literary apprenticeship comparable to Yeats's forging of his own artistic consciousness from 1884 through the Nineties. This initial commitment to Art has been principally discussed in relation to Joyce's abandonment of Church and homeland--perhaps as a result of his own emphasis in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. But another important part of that commitment was the need for a new calendar of saints to serve the new allegiance. Joyce's years at University College were spent principally in the National Library, reading not the authors prescribed by the Jesuit curriculum but those writers to whom his genius drew him. William Blake was one of the artists to whom Joyce was drawn, but to understand the attraction of Blake for Joyce we must take a more factual than fictional look at our artist as a young man.

Yeats was the dominant artistic presence in Ireland during Joyce's college years. His decade of periodical essay publication may not have captured the Muse as he had hoped, but it had made Yeats the most prominent Irish artist Dublin had to offer an insurgent apprentice. He was both literary model and precursor against whom the incipient Irish artist might measure himself. Stanislaus Joyce reports that his brother avidly read "everything Yeats had written in prose or verse, so far as it was procurable,"² and Joyce's earliest essays and reviews reveal a more than casual acquaintance with Yeats's prose and aesthetic ideas.³ There was a natural affinity between the two writers because in spite of Yeats's seventeen years' seniority and literary prominence, he was notoriously a late-bloomer and was still developing his own artistic identity within the morass of the current artistic world just as the better educated and more purposeful Joyce was doing. Unlike Yeats, who remade his poetry according to gradually-acquired aesthetic beliefs, Joyce demonstrates an almost immediate perception of the nature of his own talent and the requirements of his art.

The single most revealing text of Joyce's artistic principles is his 1900 lecture "Drama and Life" (which, as Stephen Dedalus decides, should actually be called "Art and Life" since it so explicitly deals with "securing the foundations" of his art [SH, 85]). In this essay Joyce establishes his aesthetic position in relation

to the current literary fashions and discusses his own conception of the nature of true art. One common ground between Joyce and Yeats revealed here was their shared disdain for the contemporary descendents of Arnold and Swinburne, two groups Joyce dismisses by concluding that "Art is marred by such mistaken insistence on its religious, its moral, its beautiful, its idealizing tendencies" (CW, 44).⁴ But Yeats's aesthetic practices are also criticized, as Joyce declares: "Life we must accept as we see it before our eyes, men and women as we meet them in the real world, not as we apprehend them in the world of faery" (CW, 45; italics mine). Joyce was not opposed to Yeats's intent but to his method, for in the same essay he uses the common hermetic image of the tree Igrasil to establish the purpose of true art in words that echo Yeats's own aesthetic preoccupation with universal principles.

The forms of things, as the earth's crust,
are changed. . . . But the deathless passions,
the human verities which so found a passion then,
are indeed deathless, in the heroic cycle, or in
the scientific age, Lohengrin, the drama of which
unfolds itself in a scene of seclusion, amid
half-lights, is not an Antwerp legend but a world
drama. Ghosts, the action of which passes in a
common parlour, is of universal import--a deepset
branch on the tree Igrasil, whose roots are
stuck in earth, but through whose higher leafage
the stars of heaven are glowing and astir.
(CW, 45)⁵

Joyce, more dogmatic than the timorous Yeats by both temperament and training, had essentially established the polarities of his own art at the age of eighteen with this

image of Igrasil, as he would similarly do in more literary terms twelve years later with his choice of Defoe and Blake as representatives of "versimo ed idealismo nella letteratura inglese" (CW, 214).

Yeats's constant emphasis in the Nineties had been on the necessity for true imaginative impulse, an aspect of his work that Joyce always respected,⁶ and, in a sense, Joyce did not have to fight that battle. His own emphasis on realism must be seen not as a denial of the ideal but as a corrective to the 1900 Yeats, who was still very much the poet of "fairyland." Joyce's proposal in "Drama and Life" is for an art as well grounded in realism as in imagination. He wanted, as the subject matter of art, "the great human comedy in which each has share" (CW, 45) rather than the world of the folk emphasized by Yeats and Lady Gregory. According to his own definition, Joyce intended "drama" to include all forms of art which deal with both the physical world and the eternal verities.

Human society is the embodiment of changeless laws which the whimsicalities and circumstances of men and women involve and overwrap. The realm of literature is the realm of those accidental manners and humours--a spacious realm; and the true literary artist concerns himself mainly with them. Drama has to do with the underlying laws first, in all their nakedness and divine severity, and only secondarily with the motley agents who bear them out. (CW, 40)

By his own definition, then, Joyce, who wrote but one (unsuccessful) play, was a dramatist.

Joyce's personal abandonment of Catholicism necessitated

a search for other expressions of the "changeless laws" of human life to serve as support for his art. Mere history would not suffice. For Joyce history was not the expression of "reality," but a linear progression of events without significance--"history or the denial of reality" as he expressed it in his 1902 essay on James Clarence Mangan (CW, 81). Joyce's need for a mythology divorced from orthodox Catholicism first brought him to theosophy, the current enthusiasm of the Dublin literati. While he was never a practicing adept like Yeats, Joyce's occult reading was nevertheless his first serious exposure to metaphysics outside Roman Catholic doctrine. And there is evidence that this early reading had lasting results in his art. We know, for example, that like Yeats (and perhaps because of Yeats, who was a leading proponent of theosophy in Dublin) Joyce read Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism and the works of Madame Blavatsky. Stuart Gilbert, who wrote his study of Ulysses with Joyce's aid and advice pays particular attention to the texts of Sinnett and Blavatsky in delineating the macrocosmic world of the novel, and, as Clive Hart has shown, the basic structural elements of Finnegans Wake are principally derived from those authors. As I will show in Chapter Seven, Joyce's reading of both Blake and theosophy affected all his creative work from his early attempts at poetry through the Wake.

While Joyce may have been initially attracted to hermetic texts because of the vogue initiated by George

Russell and Yeats, his personal affinity for hermetic teaching is apparent. Blavatsky's emphasis on occult cosmology as more ancient than contemporary orthodox religions and less corrupted by secular practices would certainly have appealed to Joyce, whose rejection of Catholicism was strongly influenced by the "soul-destroying" customs and practices of the Irish Church. Theosophy also provided a system in which the individual, not the institution, was the primary determinant of both belief and practice. A text Joyce actually owned during this period was H.S. Olcott's A Buddhist Catechism, which is signed by Joyce and dated May 7, 1901.⁷ It provides an interesting example of Joyce's particular interest in Eastern thought. Olcott's presentation is according to the catechetical mode common in the Catholic texts of Joyce's youth and later important in his novels as well. Unlike the cosmic scope of Sinnett and Blavatsky, Olcott's emphasis is on the development of the individual. He stresses the autonomy of each individual, and in answer to the question, "What striking contrasts are there between Buddhism and what may be properly called 'religions'?" he offers what we might term in retrospect an eminently Joycean answer.

Among others, these: It teaches the highest goodness without a God; a continued existence without what goes by the name of 'soul': a happiness without an objective Heaven; a method of salvation without a vicarious Saviour; a redemption by oneself as the Redeemer, and without rites, prayers, penances, priests or

intercessory saints; and a summum bonum attainable in this life and in this world.⁸

The spirit of the Olcott catechism was certainly attractive to the young artist who composed as his first and only dedication:

To
My own Soul I
dedicate the first
true work of my
life.⁹

While Joyce never published such a dedication, his personality must have reflected its expression of individual self-determination, for when George Russell wrote to Yeats in 1902 to introduce Joyce, he remarked that "he is an extremely clever boy who belongs to your clan more than to mine and still more to himself."¹⁰ Russell seems to be aware that Joyce, like Yeats, is more artist than adept, but he also recognizes that the young man is no abject disciple. The accounts of the subsequent first meeting between the two artists indicate that Joyce made that fact clear to Yeats as well.

In theosophy Joyce, unlike the early Yeats, was not primarily looking for a personal philosophy but for a mythology to inform his art. Joyce always subordinated all his interests to the demands of his talent, and in dealing with any of his supposedly extra-literary interests it is well to keep in mind his 1926 letter explaining the relation of the theories of Vico and Bruno of Nola to Finnegans Wake. He warns, "I would not pay overmuch attention to these

theories, beyond using them for all they are worth, but they have gradually forced themselves on me through circumstances of my own life" (SL, 314). Joyce's abandonment of religion in his commitment to art necessitated the acquisition of some philosophic system to provide the eternal verities inherent in the doctrine he had rejected. Theosophy provided dogma without requiring faith, principles without the need of assent; and he could adopt, adapt, or parody the theosophists at will, as he proceeded to do throughout his career.

The most prominent theosophist in Dublin was also a leading authority on William Blake, and Blake's name consistently recurred in all of Yeats's prose that Joyce was so avidly reading. It was natural for Joyce to make the Ellis-Yeats Blake a part of his extracurricular education, and his knowledge of theosophy made him perhaps the ideal reader of that hermetically biased interpretation of Blake's mythology. Both Stanislaus Joyce and James's university classmate Constantine Curran confirm that Joyce studied the Ellis-Yeats edition of Blake's works.¹¹

Joyce had a particular affinity for Yeats's idiosyncratic presentation of Blake. Writing of his brother's religious revolt Stanislaus Joyce remarked:

He [James] felt it was imperative that he should save his real spiritual life from being overlaid and crushed by a false one that he had outgrown. He believed that poets in the measure of their gifts and personality were the repositories of the genuine spiritual life of their race, and that priests were usurpers.¹²

If Joyce did not actually acquire that belief from the Ellis-Yeats Blake, he certainly found his ideas confirmed by the preface, which announces that

as the language of spiritual utterance ceases to be theological and becomes literary and poetic, the great truths have to be spoken afresh; and Blake came into the world to speak them, and to announce the new epoch in which poets and poetic thinkers should be once more, as they were in the days of the Hebrew Prophets, the Spiritual leaders of the race. (E-Y, I, xi)

Yeats's Blake not only provided Joyce with a system which incorporated the lineaments of his new-found occult philosophy, but, as for Yeats before him, Blakean mythology supplied an imaginative presentation of reality. I think that the situation is analogous to one Joyce himself described in 1936 when asked if he believed in the Scienza Nuova. He responded, "I don't believe in any science, but my imagination grows when I read Vico as it doesn't when I read Freud or Jung."¹³ I do not suggest that Joyce ever believed in theosophy, but it has been shown that he used esoteric thought in the structure of his novels. Yeats's Blake was not only compatible with Joyce's own artistic and psychological preoccupations, but it also provided him with a poetic rather than philosophic model.¹⁴

Given Joyce's personal and artistic need to find a predecessor worthy of his allegiance, it is not surprising that his first comments about Blake present the poet as supreme artist. In his 1902 Mangan essay Joyce writes of "the most enlightened of Western poets" (CW, 74-75), and

Stanislaus Joyce's identification of that poet as Blake is supported by the other references to and quotations from Blake within the text. It has not previously been observed that one Blake allusion in the Mangan essay is an example of Yeats's influence on Joyce's critical prose. Not only did Joyce read and study the Ellis-Yeats Blake, but his reading of Yeats's critical essays contributed significantly to both his knowledge and use of Blake in his own work. For example, in this 1902 essay Joyce refers to lines from Blake's Milton without either quotation marks or any other indication that he is alluding to Blake. He uses almost the same phrasing in his 1912 Blake lecture where, although the reference to Blake is clear, there are again no quotation marks. Significantly, Joyce is using the same images which Yeats favors--time as the pulsation of an artery and space as a globule of blood--with almost the exact phrasing employed by Yeats in an 1897 essay.

In his essay, "William Blake and His Illustrations to The Divine Comedy" (which was reprinted in 1903 in Ideas of Good and Evil) Yeats quoted lines from Milton, telescoping phrases which are fifteen lines apart in Blake's poem.

'Every space smaller than a globule of man's blood,' he [Blake] write, 'opens into eternity of which this vegetable earth is but a shadow.' And again, 'Every time less than a pulsation of the artery is equal' in its tenor and value 'to six thousand years, for in this period the poet's work is done, and all the great events of time start forth, and are conceived: in such a period, within a moment, a pulsation of the artery.'¹⁵

Joyce condenses Milton in his 1912 lecture with striking similarity.

To him [Blake], each moment shorter than a pulse-beat was equivalent in its duration to six thousand years, because in such an infinitely short instant the work of the poet is conceived and born. To him, all space larger than a red globule of human blood was visionary, created by the hammer of Los, while in a space smaller than a globule of blood we approach eternity, of which this vegetable world is but a shadow.
(CW, 222)

I suggest that both here and in the earlier Mangan essay it is the memory of Yeats's essay rather than Blake's actual text which is primarily responsible for Joyce's allusion to Blake. This probability would also account for the absence of quotation marks, which Joyce customarily employed in his critical prose. Joyce may simply not be sure where they belong. That is, working from memory--which was his usual practice as it was Yeats's--he substantially recalls Yeats's essay but, quite understandably, not its precise punctuation.

The importance of Yeats as the primary source for Joyce's knowledge of Blake cannot be overemphasized. Knowledge of this source provides a symbolic dimension which has never before been noted to Joyce's use of Blakean allusion in his novels. In addition, it helps explain both the wide range of Joyce's allusions and their inexactness. Joyce studied the Ellis-Yeats Blake during his college days and briefly returned to Blake in 1912 to prepare his lecture for the Università Popolare Triestina, but he certainly did not have

Yeats's familiarity with Blake's canon. However, since Yeats tends to quote his personal philosophic touchstones repeatedly, Joyce could not only have acquired a basic understanding of the main tenets of Blake's system without actually studying the poetry intensively, but he was also provided with a "garner of slender quotations," to paraphrase Stephen Dedalus. And, without exception, all of Joyce's specific allusions to Blake in his novels are, not coincidentally I suggest, prominently featured by Ellis and Yeats.¹⁶

What remains of Joyce's 1912 Blake lecture indicates that he returned to his original sources, Ellis and Yeats, to prepare his essay, and this hypothesis helps to account for certain Blakean allusions in Ulysses which are particularly obscure. Mason and Ellmann note that the biographical facts in this lecture are culled, errors included, from E.J. Ellis' The Real Blake, a biography published in 1907 (CW, 217). The three-volume Ellis-Yeats edition was probably unavailable in Trieste, but we know that Joyce loyally relied on Ellis and Yeats, since another error in the lecture indicates that he also used Yeats's shorter 1893 edition of Blake's poems which had been reprinted in 1905 and 1910. Joyce quotes from "Auguries of Innocence," but calls the poem "Proverbs" (CW, 219). Yeats deliberately printed most of "Auguries of Innocence" under the title "Proverbs" in his independent Blake edition, and he was the only editor to do so.¹⁷ In Joyce's novels his only exact quotations from Blake are the lines from

"William Bond; that Stephen recalls in A Portrait and the "harlot's cry from street to street" which he remembers in Ulysses. Joyce could easily have checked the lines for A Portrait in 1912, since he was then in the process of doing revisions of that book. The inexact phrasing of the other Blakean allusions which have been identified in Ulysses indicate that he worked elsewhere from memory.

Joyce is not known to have owned a copy of Blake's poems, so the possibility that the preparation for his 1912 lecture was his last contact with the text may account for other allusions which have been traced to Blake, and in which, as Weldon Thornton puts it, Joyce seems to "telescope" thoughts and phrases from several separate works.¹⁸ It may also explain why "thud of Blake's wings of excess" (U, 24) has been so difficult to allusion hunters to trace. Joyce may either have been mistaken in the exact wording of his reference, or he may have been working from a description of a Blakean concept rather than from the poetry itself.¹⁹ What may seem to be Joyce's deliberate attempt to be obscure is more likely the result of a rather limited knowledge of Blake. Frank Budgen, who knew Joyce in later years, implied that Joyce's knowledge of Blake was essentially derivative. He reported: "I never heard Joyce pretend to be a Blake adept, but I know that he was familiar with the interpretations of the Blakean mysteries of Yeats and his circle."²⁰ Budgen's remark also suggests another important aspect of our awareness that Joyce's knowledge of Blake was filtered

through Yeats; an allusion to Blake in Joyce's work may not be simply to a Blake poem or prose passage but to the specific meaning Yeats assigned to that quotation in his idiosyncratic interpretation of Blake's symbolic system.

It is also important to emphasize that the affiliation between Blake and Joyce, although influenced by Yeats's interpretations, was established principally according to Joyce's own artistic temperament. Joyce read Yeats's explications, but like every true artist he fashioned his conception of Blake according to his own basic preoccupations. Other than specific Blakean allusion in Joyce's novels, we have only his scant critical writings as evidence of "Joyce's Blake," but these essays are revealing.

Joyce, as I have mentioned, paid little attention to philosophy except insofar as he used its principles in his art. His criticism of Yeats for separating A Vision from his creative work suggests Joyce's own "system" of putting everything which came his way into the service of his art. Accordingly, we would not expect Joyce to identify with Yeats's notion of Blake the philosopher or mystic, but to be principally concerned with "Blake the penman."²¹ In his 1902 Mangan essay Joyce separates the philosophic mind from that of the artist, and Blake is accorded a high place in the latter group.

The philosophic mind inclines always to an elaborate life--the life of Goethe or of Leonardo da Vinci; but the life of the poet

is intense--the life of Blake or of Dante--
 taking into its centre the life that surrounds
 it and flinging it abroad again amid planetary
 music. (CW, 82)²²

Ten years later in his Blake essay Joyce still considers the poet to be a great artist who in addition now bears a striking resemblance to James Augustine Joyce.

Joyce was always searching for likenesses between himself and other people, especially his literary precursors,²³ and a large portion of the extant manuscript of the Blake lecture is concerned with Blake's wife, whose relationship with the poet bears a notable resemblance to Nora Barnacle's alliance with Joyce.

Like many other men of great genius, Blake was not attracted to cultured and refined women. Either he preferred to drawing-room graces and an easy and broad culture (if you will allow me to borrow a commonplace from theatrical jargon) the simple women, of hazy and sensual mentality, or, in his unlimited egoism, he wanted the soul of his beloved to be entirely a slow and painful creation of his own. (CW, 217)

As the editors of Joyce's Critical Writings note, in Act II of Exiles Robert Hand echoes this notion of the marital relationship when he tells Richard Rowan: "You love this woman. I remember all you told me long ago. She is yours, your work," and "You have made her all that she is" (CW, 217). Joyce's emphasis on the Blakes' marriage is clearly a projection of his own personal preoccupation with his domestic circumstances. The analogy with the Blake household, of course, enables Joyce to include himself with "many other men of great genius."

Another lineament of Joyce's personal portrait of Blake is the distinction he makes between artist and mystic, a separation Yeats never considered because in his aesthetic system they were complementary roles. Joyce's own view is that the artist is superior, and in his own careful categories Blake is always preeminently the Artist.

To determine what position Blake must be assigned in the hierarchy of occidental mystics goes beyond the scope of this lecture. It seems to me that Blake is not a great mystic. . . . Blake is probably less inspired by Indian mysticism than Paracelsus, Jacob Behmen, or Swedenborg; at any rate he is less objectionable. In him, the visionary faculty is directly connected with the artistic faculty. One must be, in the first place, well-disposed to mysticism, and in the second place, endowed with the patience of a saint to get an idea of what Paracelsus and Behmen mean by their cosmic exposition of the involution and evolution of mercury, salt, sulphur, body, soul and spirit. Blake naturally belongs to another category, that of artists, and in this category he occupies, in my opinion, a unique position, because he unites keenness of intellect with mystical feeling. (CW, 220-21)

Not only did Joyce revise Yeats's portrait of Blake to bear more of a resemblance to James Joyce, but he altered Blake's words as well to fit into his own artistic system. For example, Yeats continually cites Blake's phrase from "A Vision of the Last Judgment" about the "daughters of memory." It is quoted three times in the Ellis-Yeats Blake (E-Y, I, 7, 307, 393), but Joyce would most likely have remembered it from the essay "Symbolism in Painting" which was originally part of Yeats's preface to William Horton's A Book of Images, a volume Joyce bought in 1901.²⁴

Yeats very accurately recorded:

William Blake has written, 'vision or imagination'-- meaning symbolism by these words--'is a representation of what actually exists really or unchangeably. Fable or Allegory is formed by the daughters of Memory.'²⁵

When Joyce uses Blake's phrase in his 1902 Mangan lecture, however, the tension is between poetry and history, which are his own preoccupations, rather than either Blake's or Yeats's.

Poetry, even when apparently most fantastic, is always a revolt against artifice, a revolt, in a sense, against actuality. It speaks of what seems fantastic and unreal to those who have lost the simple intuitions which are the tests of reality; and, as it is often found at war with its age, so it makes no account of history, which is fabled by the daughters of memory.
(CW, 81)

Thus, Stephen Dedalus recalls: "Fabled by the daughters of memory" (U, 24) quite appropriately in a chapter of Ulysses devoted to history, since Joyce's Blakean daughters are the authors of history. The allusion is less to "A Vision of the Last Judgment" or even to Yeats's essay than to Joyce's 1902 paraphrase of Blake. The Ulysses allusion repeats the exact phrasing of the Mangan lecture. One of the main reasons for what Wayne Booth has called "the problem of distance"²⁶ in all of Joyce's works is this tendency to be so reflexively allusive. (We will see this more fully in Chapter Seven in considering the nature of allusion in Finnegans Wake.) What is interesting to note is that from his earliest works it was always Joyce's tendency to make allusions which are most fully understood

with reference to their author's psyche rather than to any shared body of knowledge among readers.

It is not merely the tracing of all of Joyce's Blake allusions to Yeats's interpretations which seems important to me, but the possibility that these interpretations contribute to a specific symbolic reading of Joyce's work. While it is generally agreed that A Portrait and Ulysses are novels rather than autobiography, much criticism concentrates on their correspondence with Joyce's own experiences. Like Yeats, Joyce spent his life writing the book of himself, but unlike Yeats's the book was confined to his creative works. If, however, Joyce is more than mere "neurosis nailed to the cross of his own fiction,"²⁷ he must have provided within his narrative some basis for considering Stephen Dedalus as not merely an artist but as the artist. One of the ways in which this is done is through Blakean allusions, which have never been fully understood because of our failure to consider the source of Joyce's knowledge.²⁸ For example, the presentation of Blake in Joyce's early essays is principally as an artist of great vision who bears some resemblance to James Joyce. The specific allusions to Blake in A Portrait and Ulysses occur only in Stephen's consciousness, and he is presented as a developing artist. The Ellis-Yeats Blake, Joyce's principal source, deals specifically with Blake's symbology as the story of the development of Art. I suggest that

through the indirection of Blakean allusion the apparently autobiographical Stephen is also presented as the archetypal artist.

The added dimension that knowledge of Yeats's Blake gives to Joyce's references can be illustrated by examining the one specific allusion to Blake in A Portrait when, in the final chapter, Stephen recalls two lines from "William Bond." On the purely literal level Stephen would logically be aware of Blake. Not only is he a university student interested in poetry and theories of artistic creation, but he is Joyce's alter ego, and Joyce himself knew Blake. Yet while the particular phrases which Stephen recalls fit the literal sense of the narrative, Joyce actually achieves more significance if the reader is aware of the Ellis-Yeats interpretation. Ellmann has observed that "inspired cribbing was always part of Joyce's talent. His gift was for transforming material, not originating it."²⁹ Joyce's use of Blake citation is an interesting illustration of that aspect of his talent.

Stephen recalls:

Blake wrote:

I wonder if William Bond will die
For assuredly he is very ill. (P, 249-50)

This reference has received scant critical attention, perhaps because ostensibly Blake's poem tells the simple story of a conflict between a pair of lovers and, since

Stephen is suffering from his own lady's lack of response, the quotation here seems easily explained. Edmund Epstein offers what seems to be the critical consensus: "the William Bond of the Blake poem is suffering from love-sickness. . . William Bond, like Stephen, is torn by the problem of sex, whether his beloved should be bright and pure or dark and human."³⁰ However, had Epstein (or any of the critics who have commented on Joyce and Blake) consulted Joyce's source, he would have discovered that Ellis-Yeats offers a unique interpretation of the poem. What is particularly interesting is how much of the Ellis-Yeats interpretation is clearly applicable to Stephen and to A Portrait as a whole, and how much more is suggested by Joyce's use of the poem.

In the Ellis-Yeats interpretation William Bond is seen as the alter ego of William Blake (much as Stephen is Joyce's), and he is dying in a spiritual sense, not simply because he can't decide which girl to marry, but because "Urizen-like" he is "in danger of being good for morality's sake and not for love's sake--and this is death" (E-Y, II, 19). In the poem William is betrothed to Mary Green but is attracted by "another." His dilemma is that if he is faithful to Mary for the sake of convention, he is violating his own "passion," but to abandon Mary means to violate the precepts of the society in which he lives. comparable to this is Stephen's actual wish to be kind to his mother, coupled with his inability to violate what

Then my verse I dishonor, my pictures despise,
 My person degrade and my temper chastise;
 And the pen is my terror, the pencil my shame;
 All my talents I bury, and dead is my fame.

I am either too low or too highlypris'd
 When elate I'm envied; when meek I'm dispis'd.
 (E-Y, II, 20)

Ellis and Yeats then conclude that Mary and Mary Green not only are both the same person, they are both actually William Blake. That is, "Mary" is "a phase of Blake's own personality" (E-Y, II, 21). This interpretation of "William Bond" as an expression of divided consciousness is reinforced when, on the very next page of A Portrait, Stephen recalls Michael Robartes (P, 251), half of Yeats's own dichotomized self.

In his reading of Ellis' The Real Blake in preparation for his 1912 lecture (and while also working on A Portrait) Joyce would have had the Ellis-Yeats interpretation reinforced, since Ellis has an entire chapter titled "Mary" in which he interprets both poems as "rhymed reminiscence, thinly veiled" because "Mary is, in these poems, not merely Blake's wife, but the lyrical and emotional side of his genius."³¹ Joyce would, of course, have been attracted to this interpretation, since we know that he was always interested in the idea of androgyny.³² In addition, in the Ellis-Yeats explication William Bond's lovesickness corresponds with Blake's artistic depression at his inability to create because of "others." In A Portrait this feeling encompasses not only Stephen's problems with his mother and E.C., but the rancor he

feels for Cranly and his central concern, his inability to create because of the "nets" of homeland, family, and Church. Only with the Ellis-Yeats interpretation of "William Bond" in mind do we fully appreciate the ramifications of Joyce's use of allusion here.

At the beginning of Stephen's diary entry for March 24th, the one in which he recalls "William Bond," he writes,

Began with a discussion with my mother.
 Subject: B.V.M. Handicapped by my sex and youth. To escape held up relations between Jesus and Papa against those between Mary and her son. (P, 248)

In this statement Stephen summarizes the dual conflict which pervades his experience throughout A Portrait and Ulysses-- both father and mother, male and female elements threaten the young artist. There is the fundamental Blakean antagonism between Orc and Urizen in which rational age seeks to destroy imaginative, revolutionary youth, and there is the necessity for the imagination to free itself from the delusions of this "vegetable world" personified by the female. "External nature, in its ultimate symbolic form, is called Satan. In its sexual appearance it is the Female" (E-Y, I, 413). Since, as we know, Yeats made Vala or The Four Zoas the focal point of his explication of Blake's symbolism Joyce was very much aware of Albion, the Eternal Man, and "His fall into Division & his resurrection to Unity./His fall into the generation of decay and death & his/Regeneration by the resurrection from the dead" (E-Y, III, Vala, i).

Ellis and Yeats consider the conflict among the Zoas "a hieroglyphic for human life" (E-Y, I, 272), and the basic element of that conflict is the struggle between Art and Nature which is summarized in their preface.

Nature, he [Blake] tells (or rather he reminds) us, is merely a name for one form of mental existence. Art is another and a higher form. But that art may rise to its true place, it must be set free from memory that binds it to Nature. (E-Y, I, xii)

The Ellis-Yeats interpretation offered Joyce a symbolic account of the development of Art to color his presentation of his artist Stephen Dedalus with universal significance.

Critical interest in the literary relationship between James Joyce and William Blake has been limited generally to tracing Joyce's various allusions to their specific sources in Blake's work, but the nature and purpose of these allusions have been neglected since the common critical method has been to use the best Blake edition available. Joyce's Blakean knowledge, however, was, as I have shown, derived from Yeats's particularly idiosyncratic and hermetically colored interpretations, and the source of Joyce's knowledge is crucial to our understanding of his use of allusion. As we have seen, for example, the Ellis-Yeats Blake presents William Bond as a lightly disguised William Blake, and the editors interpret the poem as an allegorical representation of the conflict within the artistic personality. This notion of the poet creating

a persona to resolve symbolically the struggle between art and nature is, of course, particularly applicable to Joyce's novelistic method in A Portrait, but we must know the particular interpretation of "William Bond" Joyce has in mind before we can fully appreciate his polysemous allusion to Blake's poem. All the specific Blakean allusions in A Portrait and Ulysses, when read in light of the Ellis-Yeats description of Blake's symbology, show a distinct progression and are, I suggest, intended by Joyce to serve as a symbolic substratum for his narratives. Since the use of specific allusion suggests some deliberate Blakean perspective operative in these novels, I will examine A Portrait and Ulysses before discussing the Blakean structures implicit in Joyce's other works.

In placing the emphasis on the two earlier novels I differ with most commentators on Joyce and Blake, who have concentrated on Finnegans Wake. While I agree that the Wake offers the fullest expression of the Blake-Joyce affiliation, the nature of both allusion and language in that work demands, I suggest, a knowledge of Joyce's prior use of Blakean material. Finnegans Wake is a culmination of a narrative impulse and can be best understood in relation to the work which preceded it. In addition, studies which have demonstrated analogues between Finnegans Wake and Blake's work have done so mainly in terms of broad conceptual outlines which may not

necessarily be specifically Blakean. The question of "influence" is best resolved by a close examination of Joyce's knowledge and specific use of Blake throughout his oeuvre rather than through critical speculation.

Notes

¹ References to Joyce's works will be to the standard texts and will be cited parenthetically according to the abbreviations listed below:

- CW James Joyce, The Critical Writings of James Joyce, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1959).
- D James Joyce, Dubliners, ed. Robert Scholes in consultation with Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1967).
- E James Joyce Exiles (New York: Viking Press, 1951).
- FW James Joyce, Finnegans Wake (New York: Viking Press, 1939).
- P James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. The definitive text corrected from the Dublin Holograph by Chester G. Anderson and edited by Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1968).
- SH James Joyce, Stephen Hero (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969).
- SL James Joyce. Selected Letters of James Joyce, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1975).
- U James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: Random House, 1934 ed., reset and corrected 1961).

² Stanislaus Joyce, My Brother's Keeper (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 98.

³ Yeatsian echoes have been noted by Mason and Ellmann (CW, 83, 89, 101, 105). And in Ellmann's James Joyce (p.86) he notes the influence of Yeats on Joyce's earliest attempts at poetry. George L. Geckle, "Stephen Dedalus and W.B. Yeats: The Making of the Villanelle," Modern Fiction Studies, 15 (Spring 1969), 94-95, notes the Yeatsian characteristics of Stephen's villanelle in A Portrait and argues that the theory of "artistic conception, gestation, and reproduction" in the novel demonstrates an underlying aesthetic which derives from Yeats, especially Yeats's early poetry and his essay "The Symbolism of Poetry."

⁴ Cf. SH, p. 84: "Chief among these profanities [of art] Stephen set the antique principle that the end of art is to instruct, to elevate, and to amuse."

⁵ Joyce probably learned of the tree Igdrasil from his reading of Blavatsky, but whatever his source, he has clearly simplified the image to make his basically artistic point that true art should deal with both the real and the ideal. In the hermetic image of the mundane tree there are really three roots:

This tree is the symbol of the universal life, organic as well as inorganic; its emanations represent the spirit which vivifies every form of creation; and of its three roots, one extends to heaven, the second to the dwelling of the magicians--giants, inhabitants of the lofty mountains--and at the third, under which is the spring Hvergelmir, gnaws the niddhogg, who constantly leads mankind into evil.

(Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, I, 152)

There are many mentions of the macrocosmic tree in Blavatsky's writing (e.g., Isis, I, 154; The Secret Doctrine, II, 97, 406), and the dominant use of the image is to show the connecting link between spirit and matter, heaven and earth. Joyce is clearly less interested in the specific details of the image than in the explanation of man's existence for which it provides a symbol. He knew (or learned) the details, however, for in Finnegans Wake we read of "eggdrazzles" and "her trilateral roots" (504-05).

⁶ Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 673.

⁷ John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon, A Bibliography of James Joyce (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 177.

⁸ H.S. Olcott, A Buddhist Catechism (London: Theosophical Publication Society, n.d.), p. 128.

⁹ Quoted by Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 81.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

¹¹ Stanislaus Joyce, p. 99. Constantine P. Curran, James Joyce Remembered (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 35.

¹² Stanislaus Joyce, p. 107.

¹³ Quoted by Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 706.

¹⁴ In spite of his occult knowledge, there is evidence that even Joyce was unable to disentangle theosophy and Blake in Yeats's explication. For example, in Stephen Hero, p. 37, we read:

He [Stephen] read Blake and Rimbaud on the values of letters and even permuted and combined the five vowels to construct cries for primitive emotions. To none of his former fervours had he given himself with such a whole heart as to this fervour, the monk now seemed to him no more than half the artist.

I suggest that this allusion is not to Blake, who nowhere writes of "the values of letters," but to Yeats's chapter "The Names" (E-Y, I, 327-40) which begins with an esoteric explanation of "sound symbols" as "the most natural expressions of the emotional nature or 'genius'" (p. 327) and proceeds to link such symbols with the letters of the alphabet.

The symbolic meaning of the words is, however, a question of greater importance. It is possible to discover in them a symbolic alphabet such as could hardly help suggesting itself to a student of Boehmen and his 'language of nature,' and which may be compared with the alphabet of sound symbols in use among Kabalists at the present day. (p. 329)

Yeats goes on to provide explanations of Blake's characters' names based on the qualities of the sound symbols of their letters and concludes with a chart of such values (p. 339), which may be what Stephen uses "to construct cries for primitive emotions."

¹⁵ W.B. Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 209.

¹⁶ Joyce's seeming to know more than he does is the result of wide reading and an unusually retentive memory rather than intensive study. In his edition of A Portrait (London: 1965, p. 249, n. 152), James Atherton has observed that all the quotations from Newman derive not from Newman's works themselves but from a one-volume anthology, Characteristics from the Writings of John Newman (London, 1875). Joyce has a similarly derivative knowledge of Blake from Yeats's interpretations.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Keynes, A Bibliography of William Blake, p. 275.

¹⁸ Weldon Thornton, Allusions in Ulysses (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), pp. 27-28.

¹⁹ My own candidate for this phrase is Joyce's memory of Yeats's essay "William Blake and the Imagination" which was originally published in 1897 and reprinted in Ideas of Good and Evil in 1903. Yeats gives an excellent synopsis of Blake's thought in this essay, and in the conclusion of one paragraph there are distinct echoes of Joyce's "thud of Blake's wings of excess." The subject of both the paragraph and the essay as a whole, Imagination, is, of course, the Blakean opposite of "Memory," and memory is the subject of the preceding line in Ulysses, which also has Blakean overtones. Of Blake's Imagination Yeats wrote:

He [Blake] had learned from Jacob Boehme and from old alchemist writers that imagination was the first emanation of divinity, 'the body of God,' 'the Divine members,' and he drew the deduction, which they did not draw, that the imaginative arts were therefore the greatest of Divine revelations, and that the sympathy with all living things, sinful and righteous alike, which the imaginative arts awaken, is that forgiveness of sins commanded by Christ. The reason, and by reason he meant deductions from the observations of the senses, binds us to mortality because it binds us to the senses, and divides us from each other by showing us our clashing interests; but imagination divides us from mortality by the immortality of beauty, and binds us to each other by opening the secret doors of all hearts. He cried again and again that everything that lives is holy, and that nothing is unholy except things that do not live--lethargies and cruelties, and timidities, and that denial of imagination which is the root they grew from in old times. Passions, because most living are most holy--and this was a scandalous paradox in his time--and man shall enter eternity borne upon their wings.

(Ideas of Good and Evil, pp.170-71)

If this particular passage is the source of Joyce's allusion in the Nestor episode, not only is he commenting on Stephen's artistic dilemma but also giving a clue to his eventual salvation at the end of the novel--as is clear in my tracing of the Blakean pattern of Stephen's development in Chapter Six.

²⁰ Frank Budgen, James Joyce and the Making of "Ulysses" (1934; rpt. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 310.

²¹ Interestingly, the phrase "Blake the penman" actually occurs in Ellis-Yeats (I, 24) and it would be pleasant to claim this as the source of "Shem the Penman" in Finnegans Wake. But there are other claims to the title's source (see Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 562). However, as I will show in Chapter Seven, "Blake the penman" was certainly one of the models for Joyce's treatment of Shem.

²² In Stephen Hero (p. 85) the poet is described in an analogous image:

The poet is the intense centre of the life of his age to which he stands in a relation than which none can be more vital. He alone is capable of absorbing in himself the life that surrounds him and of flinging it abroad again amid planetary music.

Stephen is describing himself, and Joyce, though ostensibly writing about Mangan, is, of course, really writing of his personal artistic criteria and citing Dante and Blake as mentors who illustrate the Joycean idea of artistic genius.

²³ Ellmann (James Joyce, p. 634) comments on Joyce's constant search for likenesses between himself and other people. Among Joseph Prescott's notes to Joyce's Defoe lecture is the comment that Joyce could "hardly have failed to recognize parallels between Defoe's career and his own" (James Joyce, Daniel Defoe, ed. & trans. Joseph Prescott [Buffalo: State University of NY: 1964], p. 11). I suggest that such parallels dominate the lecture because of Joyce's predilection to identify with his subject. All of Joyce's comments about other writers are principally self-reflexive. See also his essay on Ibsen, CW, 65.

²⁴ Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 79.

²⁵ Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 227.

²⁶ Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 323.

²⁷ James Joyce, Scribbledehobble: The Ur-Workbook for Finnegans Wake, ed. Thomas E. Connolly (n.p.: Northwestern

University Press, 1961), p. 88. The phrase appears in the Wake, p. 192, as "O, you were excruciated, in honour bound to the cross of your own cruelfiction!"

28 Joyce himself seems to have initiated this critical problem. When he advised Stuart Gilbert of the importance of Blake in Ulysses he apparently never mentioned his source, for Gilbert cites S. Foster Damon's admirable study, which was not published until 1924 (Stuart Gilbert, James Joyce's Ulysses [1930;rpt. New York: Vintage, 1952], pp. 29, 132). Subsequent critics have not noted the importance of the fact that Joyce's knowledge of Blake was acquired before the advent of objective Blake scholarship in the twentieth century. As I have shown, Ellis and Yeats, like other nineteenth-century interpreters, presented their Blake to readers.

29 Ellmann, introduction to Stanislaus Joyce, My Brother's Keeper, p. xv.

30 Edmund Epstein, The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus: The Conflict of Generations in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), pp. 151-52.

31 Edwin J. Ellis, The Real Blake, p. 92.

32 See, for example, Ellmann, James Joyce, pp. 52, 477.

Chapter Six

Golgonooza on the Liffey

he winged away on a wildgoup's chase across
 the kathartic ocean and made synthetic ink
 and sensitive paper for his own end out of
 his wit's waste. You ask, in Sam Hill, how?
 (FW, 185)

If Joyce postulates a Blakean paradigm for the experiences of Stephen Dedalus, its existence should be demonstrable through images and motifs which will symbolically present the growth of the artist in terms of the conflict among the four Zoas struggling for supremacy within the sleeping Albion. Yeats reminds us that "all the Zoas go through similar experiences" and "their story is that of man" (E-Y, I, 349). This controlling idea is possibly the reason why Joyce at about the time of the publication of "Lestrygonians" remarked to Frank Budgen that Stephen's character no longer interested him because "he has a shape that can't be changed."¹ If it is following a Blakean pattern, Stephen's development is clearly prescribed, whereas Bloom who parallels, as I will show, a rather one-dimensional symbol in the drama of Albion, is a more pliable character and gives his creator greater artistic freedom. Since Art, in the Ellis-Yeats explication, is a form of mental existence, its story can be fittingly told in terms of the Zoas, who are not characters but mental states or spirits (E-Y, I, 255). Hence, although Joyce creates fully realized characters on the literal

level, symbolically many of them can also be aspects of one self as the four Zoas are a part of the one man, Albion. We know that Joyce had a particular interest in Yeats's stories The Tables of the Law and The Adoration of the Magi, so he would be familiar with the "clothing of the Zoas,"² since both stories focus on Michael Robartes and Owen Aherne as two aspects of the artistic personality.

The relationship among the Zoas is principally explicated by Yeats as a dual antagonism between male and female elements.³ All growth in Blake is the result of the interaction of contraries, and these male-female elements are the sexual personifications of the basic contrary states within the individual in the world of experience, as the Ellis-Yeats interpretation of "William Bond" so aptly illustrates. The somewhat ambiguous relationship among the Zoas oscillates between the polarities of good and evil--neither is invariably good nor necessarily evil (E-Y, I, 323). Such a controlling Blakean substructure explains, for example, on the non-literal level, how Stephen's mother can be associated with warmth and goodness in the early stages of A Portrait, be a source of conflict as Stephen grows older, and become the haunting spectre in Ulysses.

In three areas Stephen's development follows the story of the growth of Art according to Yeats's interpretation of Blake:

- (1) the role of the female--Tirzah & Rahab, both

- inherent attractiveness and seduction and danger;
- (2) the repressive Urizenic quality of male authority;
 - (3) the development of history (both of men and nations)
in a series of epochs called "churches."

Aspects of these elements have been previously noted in Joyce criticism, but without specific allusion to the Blakean symbol system.⁴ Drawing upon the images and motifs with which Yeats presents Blake's cosmology, I will show how Stephen's story follows that of the development of Art. For verisimilitude Stephen may not be able actually to quote Blake until he becomes a university student near the end of A Portrait, but his Blakean development has been carefully drawn throughout the book.

I. The Creation of the Natural Man & His Division into Male and Female⁵

Ellis and Yeats stress that Eternity is gained through experience, not by an evasion of reality. The "fall" is, for Blake, a fact of nature, although his terminology differs from the orthodox Judeo-Christian presentation. The Ellis-Yeats dictum that Art "must be set free from memory that binds it to Nature," suggests that the growth of Art is dependent upon its emergence from an inherent bondage to Nature. Art, in its initial state of existence, is in a post-lapsarian world dominated by "memory that binds it to Nature," and A Portrait very noticeably begins in the "memory" of its incipient artist--"Once upon a time

and a very good time it was. . . ."

The Ellis-Yeats preface goes on to explain the details of the Blakean "fall."

Nature,--or creation,--is a result of the shrinkage of consciousness,--originally clairvoyant,--under the rule of the five senses, and of argument and law. Such consciousness is the result of the divided portions of the Universal Mind obtaining perception of one another.

(E-Y, I, xii)

The opening page of A Portrait refers to all five senses, and while this arrangement could literally present the growing consciousness of the individual, on the Blakean symbolic level it also represents his fall into division. And immediately Ireland is divided into the two brushes of Dante, green and maroon--Davitt vs. Parnell (P, 7). The "fall" progresses further.

The divisions of mind began to produce matter (as one of its divided moods is called), as soon as it produced contraction (Adam) and opacity (Satan), but its fatal tendency to division had further effects. Contraction, or divided into male and female,--mental and emotional egotism. This was the 'fall.' Perpetual war is the result. Morality wars on Passion, Reason on Hope, Memory on Inspiration, Matter on Love. (E-Y, I, xii)

Although Edmund Epstein calls Stephen's "ordeal" the "conflict of generations," noting that all male authority figures ultimately embody the paternal, threatening role, he fails to account adequately for the fact that the very first, and extremely vivid, threat to Stephen--"the eagles will come and pull out his eyes" (P, 8)--is voiced by an old woman. In fact, when this experience was originally

recorded in one of the early Epiphanies, it was Mr. Vance, Eileen's father, who made this threat,⁶ but in A Portrait the tormentor is Dante, Mrs. Riordan. Mr. Vance would have functioned well in the role of oppressive male authority, but Epstein suggests that the switch to Dante was made to evoke both the image of the Italian poet and a reference to eyes.⁷ However, to obtain this reference (if that, indeed, was Joyce's intention) it would not have been necessary to make Dante a persecutor.

I suggest that the change was made in response to Joyce's memory of a distinctly Blakean situation. As both Clive Hart and Northrop Frye have noted, Joyce's knowledge of Blake's "The Mental Traveller" is apparent from the structure of Finnegans Wake.⁸ No one has observed that the poem is implicit in the conflicts of A Portrait. In "The Mental Traveller" the oppressor of youth is always the aged female who immediately persecutes the male child at his birth, as Dante threatens young Stephen on the second page of Joyce's novel.

And if the Babe is born a boy
 He's given to a woman old
 Who nails him down upon a rock,
 Catches his shrieks in cups of gold.
(E-Y, II, 31)

Symbolically, the aged female, according to Yeats's explication, initiates the "fall," since ". . .an aged female form opens an atom of Space into a Centre, into Beulah" (E-Y, I, 403).

Thus, in the early pages of A Portrait, both male and female elements embody the first "church" of the Blakean historical cycle--the repression of the spectral lives "setting their cold against the warmth of Eden" (E-Y, I, 303). The physical color of this state in Yeats's schema is white, which is considered the coldest of colors, and, more specifically, the white of flesh (E-Y, I, 314). Hence, Stephen's introduction to the world of experience at Clongowes Wood College is presented with the motif of white and cold. The very air is "pale and chilly" (P, 8). He is shouldered into a ditch, and the water is "cold" and "slimy" (P, 10), and "the air in the corridor chilled him too" (P, 11). In the refectory he wonders whether the scullion's apron is damp and "whether all white things were cold and damp" (P, 13), and the prefect has a "cold damp" hand (P, 22), clearly associating white and cold with white flesh. The "warmth of Eden" is being threatened for Stephen.

The white cold of the outside world is juxtaposed against the warmth of home and mother. "Mother was sitting at the fire with Dante waiting for Brigid to bring in the tea. She had her feet on the fender and her jewelly slippers were so hot and they had such a lovely warm smell!" (P, 10). And when Stephen returns home for Christmas, color and warmth counteract the cold whiteness of school. "A great fire, banked high and red, flamed in the grate and under the ivy twined branches of the chandelier the Christmas

table was spread" (P, 27).

But if this is truly a Blakean mental existence then the conflict must revolve around both male and female in some way. For Yeats explains that "the Female in his Blake's poems is always the great Mother whose shadow is Nature and whose light is Pity and Love. The Male was always the great Father, whose shadow is Division and whose light is Unity" (E-Y, I, 360). A parallel between the dangers of both male and female can be seen in the similar imagery with which they are presented in the early pages of A Portrait. Father Dolan, who with his pandybat is the epitome of the oppressor, is presented with the pale whiteness which characterizes all of the college atmosphere.

Stephen lifted his eyes in wonder and saw for a moment Father Dolan's whitegrey not young face, his baldy whitegrey head with a fluff at the sides of it, the steel rims of his spectacles and his nocoloured eyes looking through the glasses. (P, 50)

And, although Eileen Vance (his young Protestant neighbor) has an inherent attractiveness for Stephen, she is characterized most specifically with the physical color of repression--the white of flesh and coldness.

Eileen had long white hands. One evening when playing tig she had put her hands over his eyes: long and white and thin and cold and soft. That was ivory; a cold white thing. That was the meaning of Tower of Ivory. (P, 36)

It is evident, too, that Eileen embodies both the positive and negative aspects of the female, showing that Joyce is

aware of Yeats's insistence on the possibility of both light and shadow in the same element.* Her long white hands can temporarily blind Stephen, but they can also reveal to him the meaning of the phrase "Tower of Ivory" which he has been unable to understand.⁹

Yeats explains the result of this male-female division in man.

Division means creation, redemption, judgment,--
the whole world's history, reached through the
Female, whose ultimate sexual symbol is division.
It leads to all the Selfhoods, and to Satan,
the great Self. (E-Y, I, 360)

The imagery of A Portrait leads to a characterization of Stephen as Satan, and that imagery is developed through the motif of the delusive female. Satan in Yeat's Blakean interpretation is not evil, but the extreme of Urizenic opacity. Stephen's development in A Portrait, ostensibly toward art and life, is, if read symbolically, actually away from true imaginative life in the Blakean sense. This accounts for the melancholy Stephen, still dominated by memory, in Ulysses. His dilemma has not been brought about by any traumatic experience in Paris, but is the natural extension of his deluded development in A Portrait.

The female in A Portrait contributes significantly to the symbolic presentation of the developing artist. The delusive female is, of course, integral to Blake's

*See Chapter Three, pp. 94-95 above.

mythology, and both "The Crystal Cabinet" (a poem Joyce cites in his 1912 lecture, CW, pp. 218-19) and "The Mental Traveller" emphasize the female as the enemy of imaginative growth. As Yeats had stressed in his explication of Blake's mythology, once the aged female has introduced the state of Beulah, she grows younger as her male counterpart ages, and she continues to delude in the form of "a sexual and marriageable creature" (E-Y, I, 403). And all the females in A Portrait, at some level, assumed this antagonistic sexual role. For example, at Blackrock the very young Stephen imaginatively recalls the Mercedes of Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo with the phrase, "Madam, I never eat muscatel grapes" (P, 63). This phrase is spoken by Dumas' hero, Edmund Dantes, because his Mercedes has married his enemy, and Dantes will not eat or drink anything in her house lest he be indebted to his enemy.¹⁰ Stephen imaginatively creates an antagonistic female as he "broods" upon the image of Mercedes and "a strange unrest crept into his blood" (P, 64). He has mentally formed an image of the female as betrayer just as he will imagine Cranly, Mulligan, and Lynch in that role later in his life.

Stephen's major error in relation to the female soon becomes apparent. Instead of recognizing the delusory nature of the female, he dreams (like the male in "The Crystal Cabinet") of being united with her and being thereby transformed. He fails to recognize that, as

Blake taught, the only true imaginative growth is inward.

He did not want to play. He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld. He did not know where to seek it or how; but a premonition which led him on told him that this image would, without any overt act of his, encounter him. They would meet quietly as if they had known each other and had made their tryst, perhaps at one of the gates or in some secret place. They would be alone, surrounded by darkness and silence; and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him at that magic moment. (P, 65)

At a childhood party the basic nature of the female as temptress is again emphasized by Joyce. Going home on the tram, the girl tantalizingly comes up to his step, and his heart responds to her movements "like a cork upon a tide" (P, 69).

He heard what her eyes said to him from beneath their cowl and knew that in some dim past, whether in life or revery, he had heard their tale before. He saw her urge her vanities, her fine dress and sash and long black stockings, and knew that he had yielded to them a thousand times. (P, 69)

He remembers that Eileen Vance had once run coquettishly before him, and he links the two girls in his mind as one archetypal female.¹¹

-She too wants me to catch hold of her, he thought. That's why she came with me to the tram. I could easily catch hold of her when she comes up to my step: nobody is looking. I could hold her and kiss her. (P, 70)

But he doesn't "catch hold of her," and his expectations that somehow the female will complete him continue.

The idea of the female as both virgin and harlot, light and shadow, is even present in the silly couplet

uttered by Stephen's classmate at Balvedere: "As Tyson was riding into Jerusalem/He fell and hurt his Alec Kafoozelum" (P, 81). In identifying the source of these lines, Don Gifford notes that they refer to an anonymous ballad, "which has several variants, not all of them genteel." In the genteel version Kafoozelum is "the daughter of Jerusalem," whereas in the not-so-genteel version Kafoozelum is a harlot rather than the daughter.¹²

When Stephen finally encounters the Dublin harlot in A Portrait, it is apparent that she is, in a Blakean sense, the "shadow" of the female. In his mind he recalls Blackrock (Eileen), Mercedes, and the girl from his childhood party who had acted the seductress.

A tender premonition touched him of the tryst he had then looked forward to and, in spite of the horrible reality which lay between his hope of then and now, of the holy encounter he had then imagined at which weakness and timidity and inexperience were to fall from him. (P, 99)

It becomes increasingly apparent that it is not merely sexual satisfaction that Stephen is looking for. The sexual is analogous to the spiritual or mental. As he entered the brothel district he felt that "he was in another world: he had awakened from a slumber of centuries" (P, 100). This will prove to be an illusion, for in Ulysses Stephen is very much aware that history is a nightmare from which he is still trying to awaken. The notion of the female as a part of Stephen which has become exterior to him because of the "fall" is reinforced by his

references to his own soul as "she" (P, 150, 152).¹³ And when he rejects the offer of the priesthood, it is with the realization that "his soul was not there to hear and greet it and he knew now that the exhortation he had listened to had already fallen into an idle formal tale." (P, 162).

It is with this background in mind that we must approach Stephen's moment of epiphany with the girl on the beach. Given the possibility that the female will be either light or shadow, the Blakean meaning of this meeting must be ascertained from the motifs which surround it. Stephen ambiguously professes to welcome "life," implying thereby the opposite of the empty spirituality he has finally rejected. But the imagery suggests that this is simply another delusion. Stephen, in this moment of "vision," actually is deceived into committing himself to the Blakean delusion of external nature, a state into which he will grow progressively further.

His "vision" is prefaced by the loving repetition of a phrase, "--A day of dappled seaborne clouds--" (P, 166). With this allusion, which is typically obscure, Joyce attempts to distance himself from his young artist and indicate the actual state of Stephen's artistic development to the reader. For Blake, "external nature, in its ultimate symbolic form, is called Satan. In its sexual appearance it is the Female" (E-Y, I, 413), and the poetic and apparently innocuous phrase Stephen recalls is revealing when traced to its source.

The phrase, which Stephen (and Joyce) misquotes, is from Hugh Miller's The Testimony of the Rocks; or, Geology in its Bearing on the Two Theologies and is spoken in that work by Satan. As a key to the aging Orc in Stephen, it might be noted that "rock" is a Blakean symbol for Urizen. Gifford describes Miller's book as "an elaborate and poetic attempt to rationalize an accord between Biblical and geological accounts of the Creation."¹⁴ This is consistent with a type of reading Joyce actually pursued at this time in his life, but "rationalize" is a further indication of Urizen who, according to Yeats, is unprolific because he destroys all by rationalizing all (E-Y, I, 267). I think it is also significant that several pages earlier in Miller's work he makes a specific reference to the Irish people which also reflects on Stephen.

Miller, discussing the fallen state of man, cites the persecuted Irish as a case in point, as 'having been exposed to the worst effects of hunger and ignorance, the two great brutalities of the human race. . . those spectres of a people that were once well-grown, able-bodied, and comely, stalk abroad into the daylight of civilization, the animal apparition of Irish ugliness and Irish want.'¹⁵

The word "spectre" was used twice by Stephen in the immediately preceding pages of A Portrait to apply to the Jesuits (P, 155, 161). However, in a Blakean framework, it is Stephen, committed to external nature, who is in his "fallen state" and entering spectral life. For a spectre is a space (masculine) separated from its state (feminine), and it is the tendency of "Goddess Nature" to

divide perpetually the masculine from the feminine (E-Y, I, 275-76).

The girl on the beach seems to be an aspect of Stephen's own soul, his divided self, because the decision for "art" comes before the "vision," not after. Stephen mentally invests her with bird imagery--"like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird" (P, 171). Not "magic" but Stephen's own need for some "sign" to confirm his choice of art is responsible for the transformation of the girl, and once again his error is in looking outward, not inward, for self-confirmation.

The two paragraphs which precede the "vision" reinforce the notion that this bird-girl is an aspect of Stephen's own soul, still separated from him, and is a self-induced "vision" of eternity. When he rejected the priesthood he had felt that "his soul was not there to hear" (P, 162). Now he again feels separated from his female soul.

Where was his boyhood now? Where was the soul
that had hung back from her destiny, to brood
alone upon the shame of her wounds and in her
house of squalor and subterfuge to queen it
in faded cerements and in wreaths that withered
at the touch? Or where was he? (P, 171)

His answer is that "he was alone," and in the next passage a girl stands before him "alone and still, gazing out to sea" (P, 171).

The meaning of this encounter, I feel, is related to the stage of development Stephen has reached in the Blakean

schema. There are actually twenty-seven "churches" in Blake's historical cycle, but Yeats, mentioning that they are multiples of three, reduces the eras to three basic phases (E-Y, I, 291). The first had been oppression.

The next step away from God was to fall in love with this universe for its own sake, and prefer it to the life of their own minds, and by doing so render it opaque or non-mental; for, ceasing to love imagination, they no longer saw all things before them, but only recalled it in the memory. Men had now fallen into adultery with the great harlot Nature. . . . (E-Y, I, 310)

This is, I think, the underlying symbolic significance of Stephen's encounter with the girl on the beach. The possibilities she embodies are indicated, in one way, by the bird imagery. She is first described as a crane, the bird which is "sacred to Hermes, the messenger of the gods and patron of soothsaying, poetry, and the arts."¹⁶ However, Stephen ends his description with a comparison to "some darkplumaged dove" (P, 171). Later E.C. will betray Stephen by looking at a young priest "out of dove's eyes" (P, 220), and the "darkplumaged" clearly indicates that this is no traditional dove of purity. The wading girl is linked to Eileen Vance as well, since she is "softhued as ivory" (P, 171). And in the 1904 essay "Portrait," the phrase, "angel of mortal youth and beauty" which is here applied to the bird-girl, was used to describe a prostitute.¹⁷ While Gifford sees this phrase as an indirect allusion to Dante's description of a meeting with the ideal beauty Beatrice,¹⁸ applicable here also

is Barbara Seward's comment that the flower which unfolds for Stephen in the "languor of sleep" which follows this vision is red, as opposed to Dante's white rose of spiritual beauty.¹⁹ This color change, I suggest, enables Joyce to comment indirectly and ironically on the nature of Stephen's vision, an inverted conversion by which he is, in Seward's phrase, "converted from the worship of things divine to the worship of things earthly."²⁰

Following Stephen's vision is the languorous sleep in which he is introduced to some "new world," which is symbolized by a great unfolding flower. This flower image also indicates that the girl on the beach can be viewed as a type of the Blakean delusive goddess of nature. Although, as I have noted, Epstein identifies the basic male-female dualism which permeates both A Portrait and Ulysses, he proceeds to attribute positive values to the female as a messenger from "the dark warm Earth" simply because her darkness is the opposite of the white coldness which had repressed the creative artist earlier in the novel.²¹ However, since there is no textual support for an assertion that darkness is a positive image other than its opposition to white, and since the male symbol has gradually been replaced by the female, I suggest that this image of the female really indicates the Blakean system, in which Stephen has simply moved from the first "church" of Urizenic oppression to the second one, in which he is subject to the delusive goddess Nature. The female is not a creative agent

but a self-delusion. Though Epstein discusses the unfolding flower as a "straight" projection of budding artistic genius, I think it is, like the vision of the bird-girl, Stephen's self-induced "epiphany," which Joyce indicates through the indirection of symbolism. Of that flower Epstein comments:

Joyce's sources for this symbol are not difficult to find. Obvious sources are Dante's image of the universe turning to God like a rose (his rose was white, however) and Yeats's 'red-rose bordered hem' of his vision of beauty and his Rosicrucian roses upon the rood of time. Other sources with which Joyce may have been acquainted may be found in the poetry of Poliziano, Tasso, Ronsard, and DuBellay. Also possibly James Clarence Mangan.²²

The critical assumption is that Joyce is being artistically obscure and learned with this image, but I think that Joyce indicates the specific source in his text itself. In Stephen's aesthetic discussions at the university later in A Portrait, he speaks of the moment when the artist first conceives an aesthetic image in his imagination--"The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal" (P, 213). But Shelley, in "A Defence of Poetry," likens the mind to an unfolding flower as well, and a flower which changes colors as does Stephen's.

Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, 'I will compose poetry,' The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the color of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are

unprophetic either of its approach or its departure.²³

Joyce's obvious deviation from the white Dantean rose cannot be as lightly dismissed as it is in Epstein's parenthesis. Clearly, Stephen's rose, which is seen to be "breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than other" (P, 172), owes more to Shelley's image. In addition, Stephen has been shown to be very aware of Yeats, and Joyce himself is reported to have memorized Yeats's story "The Tables of the Law."²⁴ Stephen's image is of "some new world," and so his flower may also be indebted to Owen Aherne's description of his new world in that story.

I shall create a world where the whole lives of men shall be articulated and simplified as if seventy years were but one moment, or as they were the leaping of a fish or the opening of a flower.²⁵

Could it not be that Stephen, convinced of his artistic inspiration, has a self-induced vision of ecstasy furnished with images garnered from his provable reading about such moments? If the allusion is to Aherne, it would clearly be a negative reference, since Aherne represents only one part of the unintegrated artistic personality in Yeats's mythological fiction.

Although Joyce was notoriously anti-Freudian, he nevertheless demonstrated an interest both in dreams and

their interpretations and in the subconscious. In that formative 1900-02 period when Joyce was deeply interested in Yeats "there was much talk of dreams in Dublin. . . both Yeats and AE were writing theirs down."²⁶ Ellmann notes that Joyce's *Epiphanies* show an interest in the influence of dreams, and that "his source of inspiration was probably the poets rather than the psychologists."²⁷ In 1916 he kept a dream book in which he recorded Nora's dreams with his own interpretations, and Ellmann suggests that Joyce always disavowed psychoanalysis because he was so close to it at so many points.²⁸

'In Ulysses I have recorded, simultaneously, what a man says, sees, thinks, and what such seeing, thinking, saying does, to what you Freudians call the subconscious--but as for psychoanalysis,' he broke off, consistent in his prejudice, 'it's neither more nor less than blackmail.'²⁹

Since we learn later in A Portrait the apparently meaningless information that Stephen's bedroom is papered with a design of "great overblown scarlet flowers" (P, 221) it is possible that these red blossoms, Stephen's reading about the creative process (especially in Yeats, who set great store on the time between sleep and waking as the moment of inspiration), and his psychological need for confirmation of his artistic vocation inspire this "vision" of the unfolding flower. What has been pointed to as Stephen's conversion to art seems to me to be actually Joyce's parody, emphasizing his distance from true imaginative reality. Certainly the fact that Stephen does not soon

become the mature, or even inspired, artist tends to support this interpretation.

In addition, the vivid vaginal imagery of Stephen's opening flower cannot be overlooked. There has been, in Stephen's consciousness, some analogous relationship between the female and his art. Both are involved in "the holy encounter he had then imagined at which weakness and timidity and inexperience were to fall from him" (P,99). The assertion that Joyce is, in reality, indicating Stephen's progressive delusion and fall into Blake's state of division is also reinforced by the imagery which surrounds Stephen's only artistic creation, which is, significantly, "The Villanelle of the Temptress," again emphasizing the dominant role of the seductive female. Joyce links the female of Stephen's poem with the childhood girl who had flirted with him on the tram steps (and to all the other females in A Portrait to whom she is linked) and describes Stephen's ecstatic moment of creation.

Her nakedness yielded to him, radiant, warm,
odorous and lavishlimbed, enfolded him like a
shining cloud, enfolded him like water with a
liquid life; and like a cloud of vapour or like
waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters
of speech, symbols of the element of mystery,
flowed further over his brain. (P, 223)

From a Blakean perspective there are very definite negative connotations in this description. As Yeats had emphasized, in Blake's symbolic structure "anything that surrounds or winds round--a chain, a cup, a sepulchre, a veil, a snake,

a cloud, a female--is symbolic of external nature" (E-Y, I, 416). There are similarly negative associations in Stephen's earlier moment of artist conception. The passage has long interested critics because of the religious implications of the words "in the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh." However, the imagery which precedes this well-known line has particularly striking Blakean connotations.

The instant of inspiration seemed now to be reflected from all sides at once from a multitude of cloudy circumstance of what had happened or of what might have happened. The instant flashed forth like a point of light and now from cloud on cloud of vague circumstance confused form was veiling softly its afterglow. (P, 217)

Both the clouds and the veiling action are Blakean symbols of external nature, which in sexual form is the female. So later we are told that this light is sending forth a "roselike glow. . . rays from the rose that was her wilful heart" (P, 218; italics mine). The association of the female with other Blakean symbols of external nature indicates, I suggest, that Joyce is presenting woman as Blake's seductive, deluding "Goddess of Nature" and is, through symbolic indirection, presenting Stephen as an uncreative artist still involved in the "fall into division."

II. Of the sexual Nature and its Fall into Generation and Death

From a Blakean perspective, the final chapter of A Portrait is a prelude to Ulysses. Two Blakean themes

which will play an important part in the latter novel are developed. The first is Stephen's gradual progression to the "third church," the limit of the opaque, which must be experienced before it can be "cast off" and a new imaginative life begun:

. . .the mental history of Los is told under the name of Urizen. Los's loins and head are too far divided. The one is all Luvah, the other all Urizen. His heart is void, for he has fallen into selfhood, and here his mind erects an elaborate temple. (E-Y, I, 362)

This progression into a Urizenic state is presented in the final chapter of A Portrait by Stephen's increasing pride and self-enclosure, his reliance on memory (as opposed to imagination), and his rationalism.

Urizen. . .grows proud like his Biblical equivalent Lucifer, or to put it in a more Blake-like form, he enters the state pride or Satan, and rejects imagination, and resolves to govern his own life. . . . (E-Y, I, 267)

Stephen's emergence from the subservience of Orc to a Urizenic self-determination is carefully recorded by Joyce.

The university! So he had passed beyond the challenge of the sentries who had stood as guardians of his boyhood and had sought to keep him among them that he might be subject to them and serve their ends. Pride after satisfaction uplifted him like long slow waves. The end he had been born to serve yet did not see had led him to escape by an unseen path; and now it beckoned to him once more and a new adventure was about to be opened to him. (P, 164)

The hallmark of Urizen is his egotistical pride. There had been a Urizenic implication in the imagery of Stephen's "vision" of his vocation, but now the implicit becomes

explicit. MacCann accuses him, "-Dedalus, you're an antisocial being, wrapped up in yourself" (P, 177), and even the sympathetic Davin accuses him, "In your heart you are an Irishman but your pride is too powerful" (P, 203). And Joyce emphasizes Stephen's pride when he describes him looking at the English Jesuit "with the same eyes as the elder brother in the parable may have turned on the prodigal" (P, 188).

Stephen's moments of inspiration are characterized by a feeling that "the spirit of beauty had folded him round like a mantle and that, in reverie at least, he had been acquainted with nobility" (P, 177). Clearly, both the image of a "spirit" and of "folding him round" indicate the delusion of the Blakean corporeal world rather than "moments of inspiration." This "reverie" is important because in this chapter Stephen begins to live more and more in memory, in light of the antagonism between Blake's daughters of Memory and those of Inspiration another indication that Stephen's apparent aesthetic life is only a delusion. Also, in describing the second stage in the series of churches, Yeats remarks that it is characterized by the individual's operating from memory rather than vision (E-Y, I, 310), and Urizen is described as "falling into the chaos which is memory, because memory is the record of the merely egoistic experience, thus differing from inspiration, which is direct knowledge" (E-Y, I, 252).

An indication that the Blakean schema is operative in

this concentration on memory might be the fact that Stephen's remembrances most frequently involve the female.

The rainladen trees of the avenue evoked in him, as always, memories of the girls and women in the plays of Gerhart Hauptmann; and the memory of their pale sorrows and the fragrance falling from the wet branches mingled in a mood of quiet joy. (P, 176)

Even Stephen's musing on the word "ivory" (P, 179) recalls Eileen Vance, his first seductress. Later a vision of E.C. passes "across his memory as she had been that night at the carnival ball" (P, 219), and when he becomes angry with her "on all sides distorted reflections of her image" confront him "from his memory" (P, 220). He attempts to soothe himself with memory, allowing "his mind to summon back to itself the age of Dowland and Byrd and Nash" (P, 233), but his imagistic association is more erotic than aesthetic.

And he tasted in the language of memory ambered wines, dying fallings of sweet airs, the proud pavan: and saw with the eyes of memory kind gentlewomen in Covent Garden wooing from their balconies with sucking mouths and the poxfouled wenches of the taverns and young wives that, gaily yielding to their ravishers, clipped and clipped again. (P, 233)

This almost subconscious association of literature with an image of sexuality again reinforces the subjugation of Art to Nature.

Stephen, as artist, receives no solace from memory--as might be expected in a Blakean world. "The images he had summoned gave him no pleasure. They were secret and enflaming but her images was not entangled by them" (P, 233). Given the novel's correspondence between the sexual and

the artistic, Stephen, on the literal level, is attempting to satisfy his sexual desires with images from memory and finds them wanting.

He had not even remembered rightly Nash's line. All the images it had awakened were false. His mind bred vermin. His thoughts were lice born of the sweat of sloth. (P, 234)

Symbolically, Joyce's indication is that Stephen is not yet a true artist of inspiration but remains in subjugation to Blake's delusion of the corporeal.

Although this delusion, epitomized by the domination of the harlot aspect of the female, would seem, by the images of decadence with which it is associated, to be a dedication to the physical life of this world, it is not. The fully human, for Blake, is divine, as in the poem Yeats quotes to illustrate this point.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
Is God, our father dear;
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.³⁰

The state of Nature or "Satan" is characterized by the rationalism of Urizen, who is "unprolific, self-enclosed, all repelling" (E-Y, I, 267). And throughout A Portrait Stephen has been progressively alienated from the world of experience.

Nothing stirred within his soul but a cold and cruel and loveless lust. His childhood was dead or lost and with it his soul capable of simple joys and he was drifting amid life like the barren shell of the moon. (P, 95)

His schoolboy efforts to achieve some familial feeling are a failure, only emphasizing his alienation. "How foolish

his aim had been! He had tried to build a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tide of life without him" and "he saw clearly, too, his own futile isolation" (P, 98).

The life of the Church, as well, represents a failure to deal with experience. Stephen envisions himself "accomplishing the vague acts of the priesthood which pleased him by reason of their semblance of reality and of their distance from it" (P, 158). He may reject the priesthood and, seemingly, embrace art, but this, too, is characterized by Joyce as an escape from the reality of experience. His villanelle is composed in "the veiled windless hour" (P, 217) of dawn before, presumably, any significant human activity can encroach on the artist's perfect stasis. This alienation from reality is possibly a reason why, when cribbing his telegram from Meredith in Ulysses, Stephen omits the word "reality."³¹ By that time his isolation is so complete, perhaps, that the word no longer has any meaning for him.

Another indication of Blakean delusion is in Stephen's continued search for signs and portents. While he is watching some birds, his reflections show implicit associations with Blake, but also seem to belong more to the early pages of Ulysses than to A Portrait because of the haunting quality of his image of his mother and his apparent self-deprecation, uncharacteristic in A Portrait.

The inhuman clamour soothed his ears
 in which his mother's sobs and reproaches
 murmured insistently and the dark frail
 quivering bodies wheeling and fluttering
 and swerving round an airy temple of the
 tenuous sky soothed his eyes which still
 saw the image of his mother's face.

Why was he gazing upwards from the steps
 of the porch, hearing their shrill twofold
 cry, watching their flight? For an augury
 of good or evil? A phrase of Cornelius
 Agrippa flew through his mind and then there
 flew hither and thither shapeless thoughts
 from Swedenburg on the correspondence of
 birds to things of the intellect and of how
 the creatures of the air have their knowledge
 and know their times and seasons because they,
 unlike man, are in the order of their life
 and have not perverted that order by reason.
 (P, 224-25)

The true Blakean artist looks inward for inspiration;
 "Each man opens his own mind inwards into the field of
 Vision" (E-Y, I, 404). In addition, the notion of having
 perverted the order of life by reason is analogous to the
 actions of Blake's Urizen, whom Stephen is in the process
 of becoming. Two other references in this passage seem
 to indicate that Joyce has a Blakean situation in mind
 here. The "augury of good or evil" echoes "ideas of good
 and evil," the phrase from Blake's Note-book which Yeats
 printed as a title for the manuscript poems,³² and which
 he borrowed for the title of his own collection of essays.
 The mention of Swedenborg here may also indicate that
 Joyce has Blake in mind, since Yeats, thanks to his
 schooling in Blavatsky, was the first editor to link
 Swedenborg's historical theories to those of Blake (E-Y, I,
 291), and Joyce himself makes an association between

Swedenborg and Blake in his 1912 lecture (CW, 221-22).

But paramount in this final chapter is the image of the female who, having deluded, now seeks to dominate. The various female figures coalesce to personify Ireland for Stephen, and what is emphasized is his separation from her.³³ He does not reject her so much as feel that he has been rejected. Ireland may be "the old sow that eats her farrow" (P, 203), but she is also the harlot whose attentions are spent on others, inspiring a jealousy which further alienates Stephen from his fellow man.

Stephen is told of a peasant woman who had attempted a lightly-veiled seduction of his friend Davin, and in Stephen's mind the woman becomes a type of her race. But of Blakean significance is her dual nature, as a sort of virgin-seductress.

The last words of Davin's story sang in his memory and the figure of the woman in the story stood forth, reflected in other figures of the peasant women whom he had seen standing in the doorways at Clane as the college cars drove by, as a type of her race and of his own, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness and, through the eyes and voice and gesture of a woman without guile, calling the stranger to her bed. (P, 183)

This reverie is interrupted by a flower girl who also embodies, for Stephen, both aspects of the female will in Blake--virgin and harlot.

The blue flowers which she lifted towards him and her young blue eyes seemed to him at that instant images of a guilelessness; and he halted till the image had vanished and he saw only her ragged dress and damp coarse hair

and hoydenish face.

(P, 183)

Stephen is consciously rejecting the virgin image in the female, perhaps because he now relates totally to her dominating harlot aspect. He doesn't buy flowers from the girl and rushes away, strangely "fearing that her intimacy might turn to gibing and wishing to be out of the way before she offered her ware to another, a tourist from England or a student of Trinity" (P, 184). This girl is symbolically related to the old milkwoman in Ulysses who, to Stephen's displeasure, favors Mulligan and Haines over himself--"Stephen listened in scornful silence. She bows her old head to a voice that speaks to her loudly, her bonesetter, her medicineman; me she slights" (U, 14). What disturbs Stephen is not only his inability to achieve a satisfying relationship with the female, but her preference for others--the English (Haines), or Protestant (Trinity student), or the provincial Davin.

A woman had waited in the doorway as Davin had passed by at night and, offering him a cup of milk, had all but wooed him to her bed; for Davin had the mild eyes of one who could be secret. But him no woman's eyes had wooed.

(P, 238)

E.C., who is the final symbol of the female in A Portrait, becomes the flower girl in Stephen's imagination.

On all sides distorted reflections of her image started from his memory: the flower girl in the ragged dress with damp coarse hair and a hoyden's face who had called herself his own girl and begged his handsel. . . . (P, 220)

And, like the flower girl, she becomes an archetypal Irish

female in Stephen's imaginative reverie.

He had told himself bitterly as he walked through the streets that she was a figure of the womanhood of her country, a batlike soul waking to the consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness, tarrying awhile, loveless and sinless, with her mild lover and leaving him to whisper of innocent transgressions in the latticed ear of a priest. His anger against her found vent in coarse railing at her paramour, whose name and voice and features offended his baffled pride: a priested peasant, with a brother a policeman in Dublin and a brother a potboy in Moycullen.
(P, 221)

Ireland has become allied with the priesthood, and Stephen is again rejected for his "inferiors."

To him [the priest] she [E.C.] would unveil her soul's shy nakedness, to one who was but schooled in the discharging of a formal rite rather than to him, a priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the bread of experience into the radiant body of everlasting life.
(P, 221)

This humiliation further alienates Stephen when he imagines that Cranly has been betraying him with attentions to E.C. (P, 232). Symbolically, as the female separated self moves further away, the state of Nature deepens, and Stephen becomes progressively isolated from both the female who rejects him and the male of whom he is jealous. And Yeats explains the "great evil" of the conflict among the Zoas as the "separating of masculine from feminine, and both from man" (E-Y, I, 322; italics mine).

The suggestion that the female seeks to dominate, which is her eventual role in the Blakean system, is apparent in Stephen's analysis of Cranly as a "ladies' man."

His face was handsome; and his body was strong
and hard. He had spoken of a mother's love.
He felt then the sufferings of women, the
weakness of their bodies and souls; and would
shield them with a strong and resolute arm
and bow his mind to them.

(P, 245; italics mine)

The two lines which Stephen remembers from Blake's "William Bond" at this point are particularly appropriate to a symbolic reading of Stephen as having reached the Blakean limit of opacity, totally isolated and self-enclosed--"And I wonder if William Bond will die,/For assuredly he is very ill." Stephen is "dying" in the Blakean sense by falling into the "centre." He recalls only the third and fourth lines of the first quatrain, but the first two lines are certainly applicable to his mental situation--"I wonder whether the girls are mad,/And I wonder whether they mean to kill" (E-Y, III, 79). The Female Will ("the girls" of A Portrait) is driving Stephen further into Ulro.

Since Stephen's literal dilemma of being alone and spurned is experienced in the poem not by William Bond, but by Mary Green, it seems certain that Joyce had the Ellis-Yeats interpretation specifically in mind, for Mary and William are, in that reading, one person. This "Mary" is a positive, integrating force, and is represented in Ulysses by the ghost of Stephen's mother.

The relationship between Stephen and his mother has been gradually altered in A Portrait as Stephen has moved into negative Blakean areas. Initially, of course, she had

represented the warmth and security of Eden against the white coldness of the oppressive forces of Urizenic life. However, as Stephen became increasingly Urizen-like, their natures conflicted.

Yes, his mother was hostile [to the idea of his entering the university] as he had read from her listless silence. Yet her mistrust pricked him more keenly than his father's pride and he thought coldly how he had watched the faith which was fading down in his soul aging and strengthening in her eyes. A dim antagonism gathered force within him and darkened his mind as a cloud against her disloyalty; and when it passed, cloudlike, leaving his mind serene and dutiful towards her again, he was made aware dimly and without regret of a first noiseless sundering of their lives. (P, 164)

We note how this first antagonism is characterized by a "cloud" (Urizenic delusion), and how Stephen's thoughts are "cold" and more allied with his "father's pride." The idea of his mother's faith "aging and strengthening" while his "was fading down" begins to associate mother and son with the male-female counterparts in "The Mental Traveller," who are moving in opposing cycles--as one increases the other decreases. This was the relationship hinted at between Dante and the very young Stephen and now becomes associated with Stephen and his mother. This is another imaginative delusion indicating Stephen's progressive Blakean degeneration, for his mother is basically a positive force, an Enitharmon who will help bring redemption to the fallen artist. Her hope that Stephen may learn in his own life "what the heart is and what it feels" (P, 253) recalls the "solution" to

William Bond's dilemma.

Seek Love in the pity of others' woe,
 In the gentle relief of another's care,
 In the darkness of night & the winter's snow,
 In the naked & outcast,--seek Love there.
 (E-Y, III, 79)

The encyclopedic Ulysses, as Stephen's story, is basically his learning in his own life "what the heart is and what it feels." Yeats quotes Blake as saying; "Rent from Eternal Brotherhood we die and are no more (E-Y, I, 372). This is Stephen's situation at the end of A Portrait. But the story of the four Zoas is not only of Albion's "fall into Division," but also of his "resurrection to Unity." And this resurrection is the subject of Ulysses, as can be seen from an examination of the explicit and implicit Blakean allusions in that novel.

III. Resurrection to Unity

A Portrait of the Artist ends with Stephen divided, but the Ellis-Yeats synopsis of Blake's doctrine explains the regeneration which takes place within the individual with specific reference to the triumph of Art over Nature in the formation of the artist.

In Imagination only we find a Human Faculty that touches nature on one side, and spirit on the other. Imagination may be described as that which is sent bringing spirit to nature, entering into nature, and seemingly losing its spirit, that nature being revealed as symbol may lose its power to delude.

Imagination is thus the philosophic name of the Saviour, whose symbolic name is Christ, just as Nature is the philosophic name of Satan and

Adam. In saying that Christ redeems Adam
(and Eve) from becoming Satan, we say that
Imagination redeems Reason (and Passion) from
becoming Delusion,--or Nature. (E-Y, I, xii)

Symbolically, this regeneration is represented in Blake by the rescue of Urizen through "the labour of Los," who forms in him a compact personality (E-Y, I, 276). Joyce fashioned Stephen's resurrection, as he had charted his fall, according to a Blakean symbolic macrocosmic structure suggested in Ulysses through specific Blakean allusion and motifs.

In the opening pages of Ulysses Stephen is still far from redemption (or close to it in a Blakean sense, for it is only when the "limit of opacity" is reached that resurrection is possible). The Blakean imagery of the opening pages clearly presents Stephen as a divided self. The three elements which he rejected in A Portrait--Church, homeland, and family--reinforce the state of his soul. He is called onstage by Mulligan as the "fearful Jesuit," and Yeats emphasizes that "fear and spectral life are always associated in Blake" (E-Y, I, 297). Ireland, symbolized at the end of A Portrait by the female who offers "her ware" to others, returns as the old milkwoman who is impressed by Mulligan and Haines and slights Stephen. This deliberate use of a female image of Ireland is emphasized in Joyce's use of allusion by one reader's observation that the designation of Irish art as "the cracked lookingglass of a servant" is borrowed from Wilde;

but the phrase is slightly altered, and Stephen's original contribution is "the equation of Ireland with a serving-maid."³⁴ Once more Stephen's mental state colors reality, underscoring the fact that his "art" is still dominated by the many females in A Portrait, all of whom are ultimately Rahab, Blake's archetypal female will.

Family, in the presence of the ghost of his mother, also reflects the divided state of Stephen's soul. His mother is a type of Enitharmon who, in the form of Pity, revives Los, but divided from Enitharmon Los is "spectrous" (E-Y, I, 363). The redemptive aspects of motherhood are indicated by Stephen in the novel. He speaks of the nature of the female as "our mighty mother and mother most venerable" since,

. . .she hath. . .an almightiness of petition because she is the second Eve and she won us, saith Augustine too, whereas that other, our grandam, which we are all linked up with by successive anastomosis of navelcords sold us all, seed, breed and generation, for a penny pippin. (U, 391)³⁵

He continues, employing Dante's phrase about the Virgin, "vergine madre figlia di tuo figlio" (U, 391), and while this statement is true of the Virgin in orthodox Catholic theology, it is also applicable to Stephen's mother as an aspect of his own divided soul. For states, like the Zoas, "are also one another's parents" (E-Y, I, 349), and Stephen has, in effect, "fathered" his mother's ghost.³⁶ The fact that she is modelled on Blake's Enitharmon is reflected in Stephen's allusion on the same page to Blake's

"The ruins of Time build mansions in Eternity" which he paraphrases as "time's ruins build eternity's mansions. . ." (U, 391), for which the Ellis-Yeats interpretive memoir offers the following explanation;

Here is the kernal of Blake's religion. Imagination is a thing, or rather a region, in which real things exist, and of whose life they are made living. Not being of perishable material its inhabitants must needs be immortal. Whatever drives us to exercise this faculty, such as bereavement, which changes friendship and intercourse into dream and conjecture, actually tends to increase and nourish the indestructible soul.
(E-Y, I, 35)

The specific mention of bereavement as causing a change in mental condition suggests Stephen's remorse over his behavior at his mother's deathbed, which will challenge his Urizenic opacity and work toward a Blakean redemption.³⁷ "This is the postcreation," as Stephen announces here (U, 391).

Another indication of Stephen's continuance in the Urizenic rational world is his reliance on memory, which is the enemy of imagination. "Folded away in the memory of nature with her toys. Memories beset his brooding brain" (U, 10). And the memories of childhood and mother lead to a melancholy recognition of his own inanity. Feeling the cool smoothness of Mulligan's shaving basin, Stephen is reminded of his own days in subjugation to white cold.

He went over to it, held it in his hands awhile, feeling its coolness, smelling the clammy slaver of the lather in which the brush was stuck. So

I carried the boat of incense than at
 Clongowes, I am another now and yet the
 same. A servant too. A server of a servant.
 (U, 11)

In Yeats's explanation, Urizen "is eternally melancholy because he surveys all things but acts not, and because mind enclosed in matter must ever fear the future for 'accident and chance' dwell in corporeal life" (E-Y, I, 272).

The Reason 'the labourer of ages,' as it thinks and perceives, clothes itself with memory and experience, and so more and more loses spontaneity and inspiration; the 'chaos' of memory being always the contrary of imagination. Hence Blake's wrath against the Greek Myth for saying that the Muses were the daughters of Memory. (E-Y, I, 272)

Thus, while teaching history in Mr. Deasy's school, Stephen will recall Blake's daughters of memory (U, 24) and Joyce, by symbolic indirection, implies that it is Stephen's personal history which is subject to these daughters. It is this personal history, enclosed in matter, losing spontaneity and inspiration, and fearing the future, which is responsible for Stephen's assertion, later in this chapter, that history "is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (U, 34). This may be an indirect allusion to Blake's lines,

Each man is in his spectre's power,
 Until the arrival of that hour
 When his humanity awake,
 And cast his spectre into the lake; (E-Y, I, 316)

which Yeats quotes as the "history" of Albion and all men, significantly using the lines in his chapter "Dual

Aspects," which emphasizes the need for man to become reconciled with his divided self.

One reason why I feel that these lines are referred to is their correlation with the quotation from "Auguries of Innocence" which also appears in "Nestor," "The harlot's cry from street to street/ Shall weave old England's winding sheet" (U, 33). Yeats specifically uses these lines in his discussion of the symbolic spectres and emanations to refer to a situation which exactly parallels that being experienced by Stephen. That is, the female archetype, the Girl-Muse for example, is delusion, but one which, as I have shown, emanated from Stephen's own fallen nature. In preferring others--Davin, Cranly, Mulligan, or Haines--"the separated emanations or 'shadows' seek to be united to states other than those from which they were radiated. Hence Blake applies to them the term harlots" (E-Y, I, 277). Yeats continues by quoting the same two lines from "Auguries of Innocence" which Stephen recalls, noting that the term "harlots" refers "far more to them [separated states] than to their embodied types" (E-Y, I, 277). The harlot is also a sign of the final "church" in the Blakean historical cycle. We are to understand, in a symbolic reading, that "the harlot's cry from street to street" is actually weaving young Stephen's "winding sheet." She is a harlot of the mind.³⁸

In addition to the harlot, Yeats terms another symbol of this ultimate stage of delusion the "dragon" (E-Y, I, 293), and significantly, in this same episode Stephen recognizes the "dragon" nature of his female self, ". . .and in my mind's darkness a sloth of the underworld, reluctant, shy of brightness, shifting her dragon scaly folds" (U, 26; italics mine). We note, too, that Stephen, in mourning, is wearing unrelieved black, which in Yeats's Blakean cosmology is the color associated with the "limit of opacity," with the unimaginative, negation, and spiritual death (E-Y, I, 314).

One reader has interpreted Stephen's assertion to Mr. Deasy that God is "a shout in the street" (U, 34) as the artist's absorption in the world of phenomena.³⁹ This interpretation would correlate with a Blakean reading, since Stephen here is completely enmeshed in the corporeal world. Enclosed in his world of phenomena, he will naturally mock the Blakean insistence on the world of imagination as the real world.

Unsheathe your dagger definitions. Horseness
is the whatness of allhorse. Streams of tendency
and eons they worship. God: noise in the street;
very peripatetic. Space: what you damn well have
to see. Through spaces smaller than red globules
of man's blood they creepycrawl after Blake's
buttocks into eternity of which this vegetable
world is but a shadow. Hold to the now, the
here, through which all future plunges to the
past. (U, 186)⁴⁰

And Stephen's thought on the beach, "Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand?" (U, 37) is a parody of the assertion in Milton that Blake walked into eternity,

since at this stage Stephen believes totally in the existence of this corporeal world, "the now, the here."

In the course of Stephen's meanderings in "Proteus," there is again an indication that it is somehow through the elusive female that he must achieve a personal unity. He must learn "what the heart is and what it feels" through a symbolic union with that female portion of his nature from which he has been separated since A Portrait. He recalls a nameless girl, and since he remembers a conversation with someone who calls him "Stevie" and must therefore be Davin, this female is linked with the archetypal female, Ireland, whom Davin had encountered in A Portrait. Here again is the dual image of virgin and harlot.

She, she, she. What she? The virgin at
Hodges Figgis' window on Monday looking in
for one of the alphabet books you were going
to write. Keen glance you have her. Wrist
through the braided jess of her sunshade.
She lives in Leeson part, with a grief and
kickshaws, a lady of letters. Talk that to
someone else, Stevie: a pickneup. (U, 48-49)

His plea to this Irish female parallels his unarticulated longing in A Portrait, which inspired a jealousy of those whom "she" preferred.

Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand;
I am lonely here. O, touch me soon, now.
What is that word known to all men? I am
quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me.
(U, 49)

In the Blakean symbology, Universal Man does not achieve resurrection to unity by his own efforts. He must receive

that "touch."

Urizen having fallen as far as the limit of the opaque will permit him, is rescued from its abstraction by the labour of Los and formed into a compact personality on the centre as on an anvil. . . . (E-Y, I, 276-77)

Enter Leopold Bloom. It is apparent from the Blakean motifs with which Bloom is invested that Joyce intends him as a type of the redemptive Los.

As with the repetition in Ellis-Yeats of certain other Blakean phrases, that have been noted, the function of Los as the formative deity, "the moulder of personality," could hardly have escaped Joyce's notice since, in one forty-page section alone, Yeats repeats this idea five times.⁴¹ In addition, almost as a Homeric epithet, Los is always said to be facing toward the East--"this Los, always facing towards, though never actually in the centre or East. . ." (E-Y, I, 266). Bloom is a catalytic agent, demonstrating to Stephen the essential brotherliness which he lacks and helping him to become symbolically united with his female portion. And, as such, he is a type of Los, "the moulder of personality." And, like Yeats's Los, Bloom too seems to be "facing towards the East."

Somewhere in the east: early morning: set off at dawn, travel round in front of the sun, steal a day's march on him. Keep it up for ever never grow a day older technically. Walk along a strand, strange land, . . . Wander through awned streets. Turbaned faces going by. Dark caves of carpet shops, big man, Turko the terrible, seated crosslegged smoking a coiled pipe. (U, 57)

To purchase vast sandy tracts from Turkish government and plant with eucalyptus trees.

Excellent for shade, fuel and construction.
 Orangegroves and immense melonfields north
 of Jaffa. . . .Nothing doing. Still an idea
 behind it. (U, 60)

The far east. Lovely spot it must be; the
 garden of the world, big, lazy leaves to
 float about on, cactuses, flowery meads,
 snaky lianas they call them. Wonder it is
 like that. (U, 71)

Also, in Yeats's Blakean schema, it is the color red which
 brings back "beauty into the memory by outer suggestion"
 (E-Y, I, 311). Red is the color of passion and corporeal
 love (E-Y, I, 314), and in Ulysses red is Bloom's
 characteristic color which, Stuart Gilbert notes
 cryptically, is employed "for symbolic reasons."⁴² Most
 critics have seen Bloom as a type of spiritual father to
 Stephen; Yeats taught that Los is a father to Urizen
 (E-Y, I, 282). In addition, "Los is a portion of Christ"
 (E-Y, I, 373), and in Eumaeus Stephen recognizes Bloom as
 a type of Christ--"Christus or Bloom his name is" (U, 643).⁴³

In the awakening of Albion through the efforts of Los,
 however, Blake, Yeats, and possibly Joyce as well, run
 into difficulty. One possible reason why it is not clear
 how Bloom actually influences Stephen, although symbolically
 some effect is indicated, is that in The Four Zoas, as
 Northrop Frye has pointed out, the apocalyptic Ninth Night
 seems unconnected to the vision expressed in the rest of
 the poem.⁴⁴ That is, Universal Man is unquestionably
 redeemed, but it is not clear whether this salvation is
 the work of Los, or of a new Orc cycle which will, for

unexplained reasons, be the last. This vagueness might explain why the poem remained in manuscript and was never engraved by Blake; perhaps he himself recognized his inability to express precisely how this basically interior vision of eternity is achieved. Yeats tends to gloss over any inconsistencies in the Blake finale, but though his account of the resurrection of Albion or Universal Man may be unclear, he is Joyce's basic source for effecting Stephen's awakening as Albion or Los.⁴⁵

When Yeats quotes the lines about the moment when humanity awakes "and casts his spectre into the lake," he continues, "there to be transformed, like the angel who, in the 'Marriage of Heaven and Hell' 'stretched out his arms, embracing the flame of fire,' and was consumed and arose as Elijah" (E-Y, I, 316). In the Homeric Odyssey the place where men were "transformed" was Circe's palace, and in Joyce's Circe episode Bloom is "transformed," in a sense, and becomes "a finished example of the new womanly man" (U, 493). But it is Stephen, the emerging artist, who must achieve an awakening through transformation, and I suggest that this is done through the implicit symbolism of the Circe episode.

Blake's female will, Rahab, is a type of Homer's Circe and, continuing the parallel, of Bella Cohen as well. In Bella's "palace" Stephen experiences the ultimate form of delusion which must always be reached, in Blake's view, before any resurrection can occur. The "harlot" sign of

Blake's final church is very evident in Bella's house, and the Bella/Bello--Bloom/Ruby interlude reinforces the symbology, since Yeats specifically mentions the hermaphrodite as an indication that Ulro, or hell, has finally been reached (E-Y, I, 392-3). According to Yeats (and Blake) another change must then take place--either a return to the first church to begin the cycle again, or an entrance into Eternity through the expansion inward to Imagination. The Blakean allusions of this section of the novel, "Blakean" as interpreted by Yeats, indicate the latter for Stephen.

The indication of Stephen's mental triumph seems to me not to be the smashing of the chandelier, per se, but the events which follow, notably Stephen's confrontation with Privates Carr and Compton in an incident which parallels one which occurred to Blake in his own life. The soldier whom Blake encountered was named Schofield, but, in applying this incident to Stephen, Joyce uses the name of one of his own "enemies," a man named Carr. Morton Paley has attempted to explain the significance of this event.

Joyce's motive in creating a Private Carr was personal. But the end that Carr serves in Ulysses is an artistic one--through Stephen's encounter with him is crystallized the conflict between the artist and the brute power of the state, of empire.⁴⁶

While I agree that the purpose this incident serves is "an artistic one," Paley's explanation does little to elucidate the meaning of the encounter in the structure of

the novel as a whole. After all, Stephen is struck down. Does Joyce thereby mean that art will always be brutalized by the power of the state, or must remain subservient?

The meaning of this incident in Ulysses, like the novel's other Blake references, can be understood fully only in the light of Yeats's interpretation. In a Blakean reading of Ulysses, the central question must be whether or not Joyce is indicating Stephen's "resurrection to unity." Yeats explains Blake's belief in the unifying power of the brotherliness of Imagination as opposed to the egotism and isolation of Reason:

The one being Christ, the other Satan; the one having for its function and result, Forgiveness; the other Accusation. Each is endowed with a centre and a circumference. The centre of brotherhood, or its essence, is its quality of expansiveness. Each man opens his own mind inwards into the field of Vision and there, in this infinite realm, meets his brother man.
(E-Y, I, 404)

Yeats interprets Blake's altercation with the soldier Schofield as helping the poet achieve just such a moment of fraternal harmony. This incident is mentioned briefly in the biographical section of the first volume (E-Y, I, 55) as one which caused Blake "to feel a sudden and renewed affection for Hayley" (an enemy), but its importance is most fully explained later in the same volume as part of the explication of the symbol system, since Schofield appears as a character in Jerusalem.

The name of Schofield has been recognized by previous readers of Blake as that of a soldier who obtained access to his garden

without his authority, whom he forcibly ejected, and who attempted in consequence to have him judicially murdered by bringing against him a false accusation of treason.

(E-Y, I, 391)

Yeats continues by explaining that in Jerusalem Schofield appears apparently without any rancorous feeling on Blake's part, since "no mythic personage recognizable as Blake himself, wins a personal triumph over him and glories in it" (E-Y, I, 391). Yeats then interprets the symbolic significance of the use of this incident by Blake.

To Blake, Schofield the soldier served another purpose by teaching him to look kindly on Hayley for a while, notwithstanding what disappointment and oppression he had suffered from the enmity of Hayley to all his best loved artistic and mystic projects. Schofield appears, therefore, as one among the opposites of Christ, who is put off as we learn to put on mutual forgiveness. The incident of the garden is merely used as a symbol. . . .

(E-Y, I, 391)

Joyce too, I suggest, sees this incident as referring, not to the actual fact of Blake's conflict with authority of the state, or to his own problem with Carr, but to the moment of epiphany it engendered for Blake according to Yeats.⁴⁷ Stephen refuses his ashplant, seeing his conflict with Carr as the "feast of pure reason" (U, 601).

Symbolically Urizen is being slain.

Another allusion to Blake in this episode is relevant to support this idea that Joyce intends to present Stephen as entering the Blakean state of Imagination, which is synonymous with Eternity. Stephen says to Bloom, "But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king" as he

"taps his brow" (U, 589). Thornton gives three possible sources in Blake for Joyce's use of this line, but the only one which seems relevant at this point in the novel (and the one which Yeats repeatedly quotes) is Blake's letter to Cumberland, 12 April 1827. Again, Paley complicates analysis with his assertion that this phrase expresses "Blake's political philosophy in a nutshell"⁴⁸ without any explanation of what that has to do with Blake, Joyce, or Stephen at this moment in Ulysses. Instead, it should be emphasized that this phrase is interpreted by Yeats as representing the moment of imaginatively entering Eternity; that is, man entering within his own mind for strength.

Given the fact that Stephen has been subject to the delusion of external nature, the final paragraph of the letter, which Yeats quotes both in his essay "William Blake and his Illustrations to The Divine Comedy" and in the introduction to his shorter edition of Blake's poetry (which Joyce used to prepare his 1912 lecture), is applicable to Stephen's experience of self-knowledge.

'Flaxman is gone, and we must all soon follow, every one to his eternal home, leaving the delusions of the goddess Nature and her laws, to get into freedom from all the laws of the numbers,' the multiplicity of nature, 'into the mind in which every one is king and priest in his own house.'⁴⁹

Yeats goes on to explain that "the phrase about the king and priest is a memory of the crown and mitre set upon Dante's head before he entered Paradise."⁵⁰ In his

explication of Blake's symbol system Yeats also refers to this letter, again emphasizing that Blake's words are symbolic--"We enter God by passing into our own minds 'where every man is king and priest in his own house'" (E-Y, I, 286). However, Stephen's determination to "kill" the priest and king mentally is still not completely understood (aside from the obvious literal meaning of England and Church) unless we know that Blake's last "church" is epitomized by "war and religion--the power and the glory--king and priest" (E-Y, I, 293). Since the entrance into Eternity, for Blake, is a completely mental process--"each man opens his own mind inwards into the field of Vision"--Stephen's "in here" while tapping his brow seems an obvious Blakean association and one which implies that Stephen has finally reached some understanding of the imaginative process.

Quite possibly when Bloom amuses Joyce's readers by misunderstanding Stephen as he lies in the street murmuring Yeats's "Who Goes with Fergus?" he is being more prophetic than has been recognized.

Face reminds me of his poor mother. In the
shady wood. The deep white breast. Ferguson,
I think I caught. A girl. Some girl. Best
thing could happen him. . . . (U, 609)

This resemblance to his mother might symbolically indicate the peace which has been established between Stephen and his ghost-mother. Also, if Stephen has symbolically entered Eternity, this experience would be, in the Blakean view, internal, but likewise one to which Joyce has pointed

throughout both Ulysses and A Portrait in terms of Stephen's inability to achieve communion with any female. Indeed, as a symbolic unifying experience, "some girl" is the "best thing could happen him."⁵¹

There are definite suggestions in the final three chapters of Ulysses to indicate that Stephen's internal unification has occurred. Two readers of the novel have examined the celestial signs which absorb Stephen and Bloom in "Ithaca," particularly the one which "was by both simultaneously observed" (U, 703). Using the stars as symbols of the protagonists Stephen, Bloom, and Molly, they conclude that the astronomical meaning of the sign observed is that "a spiritual contact has been established between the two men--a contact that bypasses woman, beyond her, although somehow under her auspices."⁵² This sense of a spiritual contact between Bloom and Stephen is, I think, best demonstrated by Stephen's identification of Bloom as Christ (U, 643), which Thornton discovers is an allusion to Romans 9:3-5.⁵³ St. Paul, in these verses, is specifically emphasizing a brotherhood with the Jewish people, speaking of them as "my brethren who are my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites, who have the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the legislation and the worship and the promises; who have the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh." This is the brotherhood Yeats stresses as the essential Blakean unifying element. That Stephen

has achieved this inward expansiveness is again emphasized in Eumaeus in his meeting with Corley. Male companions in both A Portrait and Ulysses had been betrayers and ururpers--inspiring jealousy and suspicion.⁵⁴ Now, however, Stephen is magnanimous to Corley, although there is no apparent motivation in the literal narrative for this change of heart.⁵⁵

It is a critical commonplace that Joyce chose the name Stephen for his artist as an allusion to the Christian protomartyr. But that earlier Stephen was also granted the first New Testament "vision" of eternity at the moment of his death (which indidentally occurred by being "struck down").⁵⁶ By using the Blakean incident of a moment of imaginative "vision," Joyce suggests a parallel with St. Stephen but also emphasizes that the Christian tradition is merely one version of the basic "resurrection to unity" which must be accomplished within the life of each individual. The Saint is merely a type of the Artist. As Yeats had instructed Joyce, "Imagination is thus the philosophic name of the Saviour, whose symbolic name is Christ" (E-Y, I, xii, xiii). Joyce's (and Blake's) moment of vision is a prelude to life rather than to death.

Since, using Yeats's interpretation of The Four Zoas, it is evident that the development of the character of Stephen Dedalus is modelled somewhat on the experience of Universal Man to make him the artist, I suggest that,

in the ending of Ulysses, Joyce may very well have had Yeats's description of the conclusion of Blake's poem in mind.

From now all tyranny is cut off. All the regions are happy.
 Urizen, the Head, sows and reaps the seeds of joyous eternity, not the rocks and iceblocks.
 Luvah, the Heart, gives the wine of eternity, not the blood of mortality.
 Tharmas and Vala, of the loins, are happy with their sheep.
 The three regions of Los are at peace.
 (E-Y, I, 369)

As head, heart, and loins Stephen, Bloom, and Molly are similarly at peace.

Stephen has very clearly overcome the conflicts he had experienced in both A Portrait and Ulysses. Although there is no physical union with the female, it is indicated symbolically by Stephen's assertion that "Ireland is important because it belongs to me" (U, 645).⁵⁶ Since he no longer feels separated from and spurned by the female Ireland, he can feel fraternal toward contemporary males, as the incident with Corley shows. And he is no longer fearful, as was the deluded Urizen.

Which seemed to the host to be the predominant qualities of his guest?

Confidence in himself, an equal and opposite power of abandonment and recuperation. (U, 673)

He is able to refuse Bloom's offer of shelter and/or the favors of Molly, "promptly, inexplicably, with amicability" (U, 695). This refusal, in symbolic terms, is not difficult to understand. Stephen has broken out of the

cycle of male-female antagonism. He is able to recognize the deluding nature of the dominant female will and no longer needs to attempt to grasp her in the hope of experiencing some "holy encounter." He has learned the essential Blakean lesson, that true imaginative vision comes from within.

Bloom, as a type of Luvah, gives the "wine of eternity" to Stephen in the form of a cup of cocoa. In the Orc-Urizen tension of the early stages of A Portrait, all of Clongowes Wood College had been synonymous with repressive authority, but for some boys the Spartan atmosphere had been alleviated.

Nasty Roche and Saurin drank cocoa that their people sent them in tins. They said they could not drink the tea; that it was hogwash. Their fathers were magistrates, the fellows said.
(P, 13)

Stephen cannot drink the coffee in the cabmen's shelter, and Bloom symbolically provides him with the cocoa he had not had in childhood. Bloom, too, is at peace, as Joyce records that "he had not risked, he did not expect, he had not been disappointed, he was satisfied" (U, 676).

And Molly, as she ends her soliloquy, clearly echoes the pastoral simplicity with which Yeats characterizes the peaceful Vala.

I love flowers. Id love to have the whole place swimming in roses God of heaven theres nothing like nature the wild mountains then the sea and the waves rushing then the beautiful country with fields of oats and wheat and all kinds of things and all the fine cattle going about that would do your heart good to see

rivers and lakes and flowers all sorts of
 shapes and smells and colours springing up
 even out of the ditches primroses and
 violets. . . . (U, 781-82)

As Stephen finally leaves Bloom, his footsteps significantly reverberate "on the heavenborn earth" (U, 704) as another indication of his "resurrection to unity." Since he leaves at about 3:30 a.m., and dawn occurred at approximately that time on June 17, 1904,⁵⁸ Joyce may well have had the final scene of The Four Zoas in mind.

The sun has left his blackness and has found a
 fresher morning,
 And the mild moon rejoices in the clear and
 cloudless night,
 And Man walks forth from midst of fires: the
 evil is all consumed.
 His eyes behold the angelic spheres among the
 night and day;
 The stars consumed, like a lamp blown out,⁵⁹ and in
 their stead, behold!
 One earth--one sea beneath; nor erring globes
 wander, but stars
 Of fire rise up nightly from the ocean; and one
 sun
 Each morning, like a new born May, issues with
 songs of joy,
 Calling the ploughman to his labour, the shepherd
 to his rest.
 He wakes upon the eternal mountains, raising his
 heavenly voice
 Conversing with the animal forms of wisdom night
 and day,
 That, risen from the sea of fire, renewed--walk
 over the earth;
 For Tharmas brought his flocks upon the hills, and
 in the vales
 Around the Eternal Man's bright tent the little
 children play
 Among the woolly flocks. The hammer of Urthona
 sounds
 In the deep caves beneath, his limbs renewed; the
 lions roar
 Around the furnaces, and in the evening sport upon
 the plains.

They raise their faces from the earth, conversing
with the Man.
How is it we have walked through fire and yet
are not consumed?
How is it that all things are changed, even as
in ancient times?
The sun arises from his dewy bed, and the fresh
airs
Play in his smiling beams, giving the seeds of
life to grow.
And the fresh earth beams forth ten thousand
thousand springs of life.
Urthona is arisen in his strength; no longer now
Divided from Enitharmon--no longer the Spectre
of Los.
Where is the Spectre of prophecy? Where is the
deluded phantom?
Departed: and Urthona issues from the ruinous
walls,
In all his ancient strength, to form the golden
armour of science
For intellectual war--the war of swords departed
now,
In dark religions are departed--and sweet science
reigns.

End of the Dream (E-Y, III, Vala,
137-38; italics
mine)

The phrase "sweet science reigns" may not seem very
applicable to the triumph of Art over Nature in the person
of Stephen Dedalus, but once again, it is Yeats's
explanation of that phrase which is a particularly apt
description of Stephen, who has been freed from his bondage
to the "daughters of Memory."

Sweet science reigns; that is to say, the
fruit of the tree of Life, which is the
contemplation of Beauty is eaten, and the
fruit of the tree of knowledge, which was
vain remorse and useless strivings of conscience
is no longer needed for the guidance of man, and
has no power over him.

(E-Y, I, 369; italics mine)

Another indication that Joyce has the Blakean vision in

mind at the end of Ulysses is the final appearance of Bloom and Molly. In the cyclical form of "The Mental Traveller," the inability to achieve imaginative entrance into Eternity merely means a return to the cycle. In The Four Zoas Yeats describes this movement as a return to the first church or, as in the description of Vala, a return to innocence. Similarly, Joyce too implicitly indicates that Bloom and Molly are returning to the cycle which has just been completed in the life of Stephen Dedalus. In Yeats's interpretation this constant cyclical movement is illustrated by the Zoas' shifting geographical positions. As the resurrected Urizen moves into the East, Luvah slips into the place which has been vacated (E-Y, I, 269). And, just as Stephen's youth had been characterized by the coldness of Urizenic oppression, Bloom feels similar frigidity when Stephen has departed (presumably for the East and imaginative Eternity).

Alone, what did Bloom feel?
The cold of interstellar space, thousands of
degrees below freezing point or the absolute zero
of Fahrenheit, Centigrade or Réaumur; the
incipient intimations of proximate dawn. (U, 704)

In Blake's perpetually recurring cycle, "we die into the grave in the West or at evening, and passing through the womb of the North, are born once more at dawn in the East" (E-Y, I, 272). And, although Joyce's letters provide us with a homely and biographical source for the Blooms, unorthodox sleeping posture (SL, 139), another reader

reminds us that the sleeping Albion is always an inverted sleeper.⁶⁰ Indeed, in Joyce's final description of Bloom as "the childman weary, the manchild in the womb," (U, 737) he seems ready for a return to the repetitive cycle in which

each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity. (U, 731)

Although this description is ostensibly of the process of entering Molly's bed, the sexual has been analogous to the spiritual throughout both novels, and Joyce seems to be clearly indicating Blake's life cycle.

'These states,' Blake writes, 'exist now. Man passes one, but states remain for ever: he passes through them like a traveller, who may as well suppose the places he has passed through exist no more, as a man may suppose the states he has passed through exist no more. Everything is eternal.' (E-Y, I, 308)

Similarly, although Northrop Frye feels that "Blake, if he had read Ulysses, would have recoiled in horror from its celebration of the triumph of what he calls the 'female will,' the persistence of the sleep of externality,"⁶¹ I do not think that this was Joyce's intention in his final presentation of Molly. She encompasses the dual nature of the Blakean female since, undeniably earthy though she is, she still has the association with the Virgin whose birthday she shares--"mine was the 8th" (U, 747). But she

has expressed the pastoral simplicity of the peaceful Vala, and like Bloom she seems to be symbolically reborn as she returns imaginatively to her girlhood, growing young in her reminiscence.

O and the sea the sea crimson sometimes like
 fire and the glorious sunsets and the figtrees
 in the Alameda gardens yes and all the queer
 little streets and pink and blue and yellow
 houses and the rosegardens and the jessamine
 and geraniums and cactuses and Gibraltar as a
 girl where I was a Flower of the mountain yes
 when I put the rose in my hair like the
 Andalusian girls used. . . . (U, 783)

Molly's return to innocence is also apparent in her question, "whatll I wear" (U, 781) because her choice is "shall I wear a white rose"(U, 781) or "shall I wear a red" (U, 783). Throughout A Portrait the red and white roses symbolized Stephen's conflict between flesh and spirit,⁶² or, from a Blakean perspective, between Nature and Imagination. Molly's choice, then, symbolizes the perpetual nature of this conflict and implies the beginning of a new cycle with the new day.

I have given, of course, a limited view of the encyclopedic Ulysses, but I feel that an examination of the Blakean references in light of their source in Yeats's explication gives valuable insight into the structure of the novel as a whole which has not previously been recognized. It offers a view of the character of Stephen Dedalus as an archetypal rather than simply biographical artist by developing the symbolic dimensions of his character. And we get a hint of the future Finnegans

Wake from the final portrayal of Bloom and Molly. Clearly, Joyce is envisioning them as Blake's male-female archetypes, which will lead to HCE and ALP.

Though critics have ranged from seeing "broad conceptual resemblances"⁶³ between Blake and Joyce to asserting that "they operate in mutually exclusive spheres,"⁶⁴ I think that the Blakean allusions and motifs in A Portrait and Ulysses, interpreted in light of "Yeats's Blake," which was certainly the source of Joyce's knowledge, indicate that Joyce was seeking the symbolic vision which eventually resulted in Finnegans Wake, as I will show more fully in the next chapter. The biographical aspect of Joyce's art was not such much either a catharsis or a limitation as the basis of a personal symbolic vision, since Joyce had learned from his reading of Yeats that a man "can only make symbols out of the things that he loves."⁶⁵

Notes

¹ Budgen, p. 105.

² Yeats's practice of using characters more as principles of the mind than actual personages in his early fiction and poetry is discussed in Chapter Three, pp. 92-93 above.

³ See Chapter Three, pp. 96-97 above, for Yeats's chart of sexual dualities. This notion of all creation based on sexual bipolarity would have been reinforced by Joyce's reading in theosophy. For example, in Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled, I, 297, she recounts the story of the division of the originally androgynous man, the esoteric equivalent of Adam and Eve.

⁴ Richard Ellmann, Ulysses of the Liffey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 60. Ellmann lists "unstated propositions which declare themselves," adding that "the book [Ulysses] as image demands these glosses as registers of its meaning." Although he makes no connection with Blake, his first "proposition" is easily identified as the basic Orc-Urizen tension, and his second is very clearly the "Mental Traveller" cycle of sexual antagonism. In addition, Epstein, in The Ordeal of Stephen Dedalus, p. 11, mentions an important aspect of A Portrait "which is never developed explicitly by Joyce." The point made becomes the cornerstone of Epstein's book, and is again the basic Orc-Urizen conflict.

⁵ From Blake's uncompleted Bible manuscript. Ellis and Yeats comment on this manuscript, stressing that "the titles to these [chapters of Genesis] indicate Blake's belief that his own great myth was a sister story to the inspired Book itself" (E-Y, I, 168). Blake did not get beyond the first four chapters of Genesis, but the titles indicate that his "Bible" was a mythological explanation of the fall from an occult perspective. Joyce, whose own basic myth is of man's fall and resurrection, would have recognized the parallel between Blake's explanation of Genesis and the theosophists' cosmology. Blake's Genesis consisted of these four chapter headings:

- I. The creation of the Natural Man;
- II. The Natural Man divided into male and female, and the tree of Life and the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil;
- III. Of the Sexual Nature, and its fall into Generation & Death;

- IV. How Generation and Death took possession of the Natural Man. Of the Forgiveness of Sins written on the Murderer's forehead.
(E-Y, I, 169)

Stephen's development in A Portrait parallels this schema although, as I will show, Joyce has added a Blakean "resurrection to unity" in Ulysses.

⁶ Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain, eds., The Workshop of Daedalus (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 11.

⁷ Epstein, p. 121.

⁸ Northrop Frye, "Quest and Cycle in Finnegans Wake," James Joyce Review 1 (1957), 39-47; Clive Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake (n.p.: Northwestern University Press, 1962), pp. 66-69.

⁹ Lee T. Lemon, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Motif as Motivation and Structure," Twentieth-Century Interpretations of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, ed. William Schutte (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 50.

¹⁰ Don Gifford, Notes for Joyce (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1967), p. 105.

¹¹ The extant manuscript of Stephen Hero (p. 72) indicates that Joyce originally made Emma Clery the female companion of Stephen's youth in the tram scene. His adolescent difficulties might then be simply reduced to an inability to relate to one particular girl. The changes made in A Portrait, using several females coupled by the mental connections Stephen makes between them, clearly indicate the presence of some archetypal female element in all of Stephen's encounters with women.

¹² Gifford, p. 109. It is just this type of obscure, but richly allusive, reference that is most characteristic of Joyce's prose, showing that his description of his ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia is not limited to Finnegans Wake.

¹³ Since anima is feminine in Latin, Stephen would quite naturally think of his own soul in feminine terms. However, I think that the importance of the female in this section of A Portrait, and the other indications

of the female as separated self, show that Joyce uses the feminine pronoun to intensify his symbolic meaning.

14 Gifford, p. 166.

15 Ibid.

16 Ronald Bates, "The Correspondence of Birds to Things of the Intellect," James Joyce Quarterly, 2 (Summer 1965), 284.

17 Epstein, p. 99.

18 Gifford, p. 146.

19 Barbara Seward, "The Artist and the Rose," Twentieth-Century Interpretations of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, p. 58.

20 Ibid.

21 Epstein, p. 99.

22 Ibid., pp. 194-95.

23 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry," Poets on Poetry, ed. Charles Norman (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 206; italics mine. This passage was obviously one of Joyce's personal touchstones; he used it in his 1902 Mangan lecture (CW, 78), and Stephen recalls it again in Ulysses, p. 194.

24 Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 85.

25 William Butler Yeats, The Tables of the Law and The Adoration of the Magi (Stratford-Upon-Avon: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1914), p. 13.

26 Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 89.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., p. 450.

29 Ibid., p. 538.

30 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 207.

31 Thornton, p. 186.

32 The two poems Joyce specifically alludes to in his novels, "William Bond" and "Auguries of Innocence," and "The Crystal Cabinet," which he mentions in his 1912 lecture--together with "The Mental Traveller," which critics have suggested he must have been familiar with--are all manuscript poems which Yeats printed under the title "Ideas of Good and Evil."

33 Joyce almost certainly knew the Irish equivalent of Blake's Female Will, the Leanahaun Shee who provides a corollary for Stephen's dilemma with the female personified as Ireland. Scholes and Kain, p. 259, suggest that Joyce would have known such Celtic lore from his reading of Mangan and Yeats as well as from the Celtic revival, which was an important part of the intellectual atmosphere in Dublin during Joyce's university years. Yeats wrote about the Leanahuan Shee in his Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry (London, 1888), pp. 81, 146; and the association of the Shee with the artist is made clear in an 1889 periodical article as well:

The Leanhaun Shee (fairy mistress) seeks the love of men. If they refuse, she is their slave; if they consent, they are hers, and can only escape by finding one to take their place. Her lovers waste away, for she lives on their life. Most of the Gaelic poets, down to quite recent times, have had a Leanhaun Shee, for she gives inspiration to her slaves. She is the Gaelic muse, this malignant fairy. Her lovers, the Gaelic poets, died young. She grew restless and carried them away to other worlds, for death does not destroy her power. (Uncollected Prose, p. 136)

A less aesthetic approach to Stephen's problems with women is provided by Darcy O'Brien, The Conscience of James Joyce (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968). O'Brien sees Joyce himself obsessed by "virginal beauty and whorish allure" and suggests that from such contradictions and oppositions "he shaped the moral heart of his writing" (p. 35). While I cannot agree with O'Brien's reductive psychological approach to Joyce's fiction, it is clear that the artist is attracted to those themes and philosophies which reflect his own preoccupations. Clearly dualism in life was one of Joyce's central obsessions, and this fact again emphasizes why Yeats's emphasis on dualism in his presentation of Blake made Blake's talent seem

particularly like Joyce's own artistic predilections. Part of the problem in a facile assignment of "influence" is the failure to perceive the myriad ways in which the subject himself is the dominant influencing agent.

34 Robert Martin Adams, Surface and Symbol; The Consistency of James Joyce's Ulysses (New York; Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 124.

35 A clue to the redemptive role of Stephen's mother in the novel is the reference to St. Augustine, whose mother, St. Monica, is famous in Catholic tradition for having redeemed her profligate son by the power of her prayers for him.

36 Joyce would have known from Yeats's introduction to his shorter edition of Blake's poetry that ghosts were seen only by unredeemed man:

When he [Blake] was talking on the subject of ghosts. . . he was wont to say they did not appear much to imaginative men, but only to common minds who did not see the finer spirits. A ghost was a thing seen by the gross bodily eye, a vision by the mental. (p. xxxv)

37 Stephen's exaggerated remorse over this incident, and the changes that were made from the real-life scene seem to indicate that Joyce used this deathbed incident more for symbolic than for literal reasons. Robert Adams, p. 77, notes Joyce's tendency to do this with other apparently unmotivated events in Ulysses.

38 Stephen's mother appears to him in Ulysses in "loose graveclothes" which suggest this harlot aspect of the separated self which is weaving Stephen's "winding sheet." In Circe she is wearing a wreath of faded orange blossoms, and her image evokes the description of Stephen's soul in A Portrait, which "had hung back from her destiny, to brood alone. . . to queen it in faded cerements and in wreaths that withered at the touch" (P, 170), reinforcing the image of her as an aspect of his self which remains external to him in his "fallen" state.

39 John Killham, "Ineluctable Modality in Joyce's Ulysses," University of Toronto Quarterly, 34 (April 1965), 274.

⁴⁰ On the literal level of the narrative Joyce is here mocking not Blake's idealism but that of the Dublin Blakeans, principally Yeats and AE, whom he also mocks in his satirical broadside "The Holy Office" (CW, 149-52). Part of Joyce's development as an artist was accomplished with the integration of Blakean idealism with realism; he rejected all who totally neglected "the now, the here." This basically biographical event is also recounted in Finnegans Wake by the shooting of the Russian General in the Butt and Taff episode (see Chapter Seven, pp. 280-81 below).

⁴¹ E-Y, I, 266, 269, 276-77, 278, 306.

⁴² Gilbert, p. 126.

⁴³ Others have seen a redemptive Bloom, but what I find particularly striking is that many of Bloom's characteristics and associations, some of which seem arbitrary or gratuitous such as his attraction to the East, his association with the color red, or his action of wandering about Dublin, are all integral to his role in a Blakean framework. And although there are known sources in Joyce's life for the character of Leopold Bloom, his symbolic function in the novel is described in Yeats's presentation of Blake's character Reuben with striking aptness:

Among the different figures symbolic of states some are more entirely personifications than others. Some unite what we call the bodily with the mental by means of the passionate and emotional. Reuben is one of these states. He is a link between the Head and Loins. Being emotional and not naturally a destructive agent he belongs to the threefold, not to the fourfold, which are the best by nature and only the worst when deceived. The fourfold alone is truly mental. Reuben is the natural emotional impulse, ready to be enslaved by the passions, but desiring to be exalted by the thoughts. His story is essentially simple. (E-Y, I, 382)

Yeats adds that Reuben is identified with both Urizen and Los (pp. 383-84); on p. 385 we learn that "Reuben wanders," and on p. 386 we are told that his name means "behold ye a son." This closeness to Bloom may be coincidental, but the parallels in both the naturalistic and symbolic characterizations seem unmistakable.

⁴⁴ Frye, Fearful Symmetry, pp. 308-09.

⁴⁵ In Yeats's explication Los and Albion are frequently interchangeable. Los seems to be a type of spiritual alter ego for Albion. "They rise together, and are practically identified as portions of one another" (E-Y, I, 359). Thus, when Yeats quotes Blake's lines which speak of the resurrection of Man, he explains that "Los" is at peace (E-Y, I, 369). Los, like Albion, is also divided among the Zoas, so Stephen, who has been typified as Urizen, is also a type of Los because Urizen is the form under which Los's mental history is recalled. The resurrected Stephen could, therefore, be identified with either the awakened Albion or the redeemed Los.

⁴⁶ Morton D. Paley, "Blake in Nighttown," A James Joyce Miscellany, Third Series; ed. Marvin Magalaner (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), p. 182.

⁴⁷ This would have been reinforced in Joyce's 1912 reading of Ellis' The Real Blake. Ellis has an entire chapter titled "Schofield" in which he discusses the personal and symbolic meaning of the event in Blake's life. Blake's feeling of betrayal by Hayley, which is emphasized by both Yeats and Ellis, enables Joyce to use the incident to resolve Stephen's anger at the betrayals of his companions, Mulligan, Lynch, and even Cranly.

⁴⁸ Quoted by Thornton, p. 420.

⁴⁹ Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, pp. 214-15.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 215.

⁵¹ Ellis and Yeats used Blake's plate, "Reunion of the Soul and Body," the integration of the individual symbolized as embracing lovers, as the cover illustration for each of their three volumes (see Fig. 5., p. 148 above). The analogy of the sexual and the mental is a basic theme in Yeats's explication of the Blakean symbolic system, as it is in Joyce's presentation of the development of the artist Stephen Dedalus.

⁵² Mark E. Littmann and Charles A. Schweighauser, "Astronomical Allusions, Their Meaning and Purpose in Ulysses," James Joyce Quarterly 2 (Summer 1965), 242. Joyce's use of the celestial signs also has Yeats-Blakean occult associations since the basis for all correspondences is the hermetic aphorism "As above, so below."

53 Thornton, p. 445.

54 This theme is confirmed by the observations of Robert Adams, pp. 47-49. See above, note 47, for how the incident with the soldiers, from a Blakean perspective, resolves Stephen's conflict with his male companions as illustrated in the Corley incident.

55 Robert Adams, p. 48, makes the point with regard to Stephen's attitude towards Lynch that the idea of betrayal is unmotivated and appears almost "cosmically inevitable," indicating that Joyce had a symbolic motif in mind rather than a literal event. I find the same true of Stephen's generosity to Corley.

56 Acts 7: 54-60.

57 Cf. Yeats's statement:

It has been suggested that Los is simply the Latin Sol read backwards. Blake would have probably said that the Latin Sol is precisely the term for the story of Los, read backwards.
(E-Y, I, 332)

Although I do not suggest that Joyce is making any specific reference to this comment in E-Y, Stephen's remark is a similar expression of confidence in his own lights.

58 Littmann and Schweighauser, p. 246.

59 Perhaps the lamp Stephen smashes at the apocalyptic moment in Circe (U, 583).

60 John Clarke, "Joyce and the Blakean Vision," Criticism 5 (Spring 1963), 180.

61 Frye, "Quest and Cycle in Finnegans Wake," p. 44.

62 Seward, p. 57.

63 Paley, p. 175.

64 Clarke, p. 173.

65 W.T. Horton and W.B. Yeats, A Book of Images (London: Unicorn Press, 1898), p. 15.

Chapter Seven

In the Old Holmsted

Everything's going on the same or so it
appeals to all of us, in the old holmsted
here. (FW, .26)

By relating Blakean allusion in A Portrait and Ulysses to Yeats's interpretations, it becomes apparent that Stephen Dedalus' awareness of Blake is not only a naturalistic detail but also serves to enhance the symbolic dimensions of Joyce's narrative. Blakean images and situations help delineate the artist's development according to the archetypal pattern that the Ellis-Yeats edition presents as the basic conflict in all life, that between Art and Nature. I focused initially on the allusions in A Portrait and Ulysses because they are Joyce's most direct and specific use of Blakean material in his works; they also demonstrate how Blake's presence is felt on both the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels of the narrative. Although specific allusion draws attention to the use of Blake on those novels, Joyce's early study of Yeats's Blake had throughout his career implications in his art which have not previously been noted.

While I agree with Robert Gleckner that Finnegans Wake is "the most fruitful text" for understanding the Blake-Joyce affiliation,¹ I contend that an examination of that final work is illuminating only when the basic pattern of Joyce's use of Blake has been established throughout his

entire oeuvre. Unlike Gleckner, I will not attempt an exhaustive identification of each of the allusions, and possible allusions to Blake and his works in the Wake because, as the inconclusive listing of Gleckner's catalogue shows, this is ultimately something of a "wildgoup's chase"--little is revealed by identification alone. I will, instead, explore the specific nature of Blake's presence in Finnegans Wake, a pattern of allusion which reveals not only Joyce's allusive method but the role of the basic elements of the Wake's style as well.

Since the general method of Finnegans Wake was Joyce's attempt "to make all his knowledge and experience implicit in the microcosmic life of a single family,"² it is not surprising to find Blake in the text since, as I have shown, the study of Blake was an integral part of Joyce's artistic development. But Gleckner's careful and very helpful list of possible Blakean allusions merely leads to his conclusion that Blake was present in Joyce's consciousness as he wrote.³ It does not establish the function of the Blakean material in the novel or significantly aid our understanding of the nature of the affiliation between the two artists. To ascertain fully the significance of Blake's presence in the Wake, and thereby more completely understand Joyce's affiliation with his predecessor, we must trace "Joyce's Blake" throughout his career. Blake's presence in Joyce's final novel is, as I will show, consistent with his use of

Blakean material in all his prior works.

I am not alone in insisting on the essential unity of the Joyce canon. Joyce himself has been reported as saying "that there is room in a man's heart for one novel only (he hadn't even begun Ulysses at the time) and that the others are always the same one artificially masked under other words."⁴ Critics have consistently expressed a similar view. In one of the earliest defenses of the Wake, written with Joyce's blessing and guidance, Robert Sage commented:

The general bafflement caused by those portions of James Joyce's Work in Progress which have appeared in transition seems to me an indication that most readers have failed to realize that Joyce's writings, from Dubliners to the present book form an indivisible whole.⁵

Among contemporary critics, Ruth von Phul has attempted to present all of Joyce's work as a single extended autobiography,⁶ and Walton Litz's study of Joyce's stylistic development concludes that "there is a sense in which we can say that James Joyce wrote only one book, a continuous effort to endow his own life and the Dublin of his youth with universal significance."⁷ But there is more to be said. I think that the affiliation with Blake is at the center of Joyce's efforts to give his life "universal significance."

Joyce's initial study of Blake was undertaken at a time when, as his essay "Drama and Life" reveals, his basic aesthetic concerns were already formulated. The Ellis-

Yeats Blake with its occult bias provided Joyce with a high priest of imagination who had a poetic mythology that corresponded to his own interest in the process of gestation. He read there that Blake's basic story of the birth and development of the world and the individual

is to be found in every one of the mystical books and was applied by Blake to all mental growth without exception. The complete exposition must be sought in the books themselves and in the line-to-line comment. It is told over and over again from numberless points of view. (E-Y, I, 298)

Joyce's works are similarly redundant.⁸ When in Stephen Hero, for example, he has young Dedalus toy with "a theory of dualism which would symbolise the twin eternities of spirit and nature in the twin eternities of male and female" (SH, 215), he is, as Edmund Epstein has observed, "writing a prospectus for all his future work."⁹

Joyce's reading of Yeats's Blake helped establish this pattern of dualism in his mind. It offered him a non-Judeo-Christian approach to "male and female created He them." Because of Yeats's own personal interest in psychological dualism, he stressed the male-female dichotomy in Blake*, and from Yeats's explication Joyce learned that

Blake's great object in writing was far above a mere desire to poetise or symbolize the struggle between the higher or lower natures in himself, or between the impulses of his temperament and the claims of his wife. The

* See Chapter Three, pp. 96-97 above.

Female in his poems is always the great Mother whose shadow is Nature and whose light is Pity and Love. The Male was always the great Father, whose shadow is Division and whose light is Unity.

Division means creation, redemption, judgment,-- the whole world's history reached through the Female, whose ultimate sexual symbol is division. It leads to all the Selfhoods, and to Satan, the great Self. But Unity means Regeneration, the mingling of all bodily experience into one great mental experience which is free from the imputation of sex, and survives all mortality.

How small a part of this great Male & Female was found at home by Blake need hardly be said. Yet, when he comes to speak of every sub-division, he does so with the impartial emphasis of a mind to whom nothing small is therefore contemptible, who laid down the law that he who would do good must do it in minute particulars, and who even claimed no less for the most minute than that it always contained the most grand.

(E-Y, I, 359)¹⁰

The reading we know Joyce did in Sinnett and Blavatsky would have reinforced this notion of an inherent natural dualism, since the occultists viewed division as the basis of all life. Sinnett's explanation that

on earth, man is dual--in the sense of being a thing of matter and a thing of spirit; hence the natural distinction made by his mind--the analyst of his physical sensations and spiritual perceptions--between an actuality and a fiction; though, even in this life the two groups of faculties are constantly equilibrating each other, each group when dominant seeing as fiction or delusion what the other believes to be most real¹¹

is an apt description of the activities of Shem and Shaun. And Blavatsky's interpretation of the male and female principles of life certainly leads directly to the Earwicker family.

In every religious system the gods were made to merge their functions as Father, Son, and Husband, into one, and the goddesses were identified as 'Wife, Mother and Sister' of the male God; the former synthesizing the human attributes as the 'Sun, the giver of Life,' the latter merging all the other titles in the grand synthesis known as Maia, Maya, Maria, etc., a generic name. Maia, in its forced derivation, has come to mean with the Greeks, 'mother,' from the root ma (nurse), and even gave its name to the month of May, which was sacred to all those goddesses before it became consecrated to Mary.¹²

As with the conflation of occultism and Blake in Yeats's "philosophy," it is not easy to identify the Blakean "influences" in Joyce. He read many of the theosophical texts which Yeats had used as a basis for his esoteric explication of Blake, so that Joyce's own "source" is not readily apparent--nor need it be. As Samuel Beckett has reminded us, "literary criticism is not book-keeping."¹³ Like Yeats, Joyce was an independent artist who ordered the chaos of existence into the framework of his own consciousness. His Blake, though strongly influenced by Yeats and the Dublin Theosophists, was not an identical conception of the poet, but a portrait of the artist that was conditioned by his own mind and art.

Joyce's earliest poetic efforts, circa 1897, were collected under the title Moods, which, as Ellmann notes, suggests Yeats's influence.¹⁴ But by early 1903 Joyce had ordered his material to achieve larger significance through a basically Blakean pattern. Both a card and a letter indicate that he planned to divide his poems into two parts, "the first being relatively simple and innocent,

the second more complicated and experienced" (SL, 13). This arrangement was not followed, perhaps because Joyce recognized it as too obvious an imitation of Blake's arrangement of lyrics, but the ordering of the Epiphanies shows that his prose fragments followed a pattern that was neither chronological nor biographical, but creative.¹⁵ Joyce's artistic efforts were always toward "converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own."¹⁶

In Dubliners, Joyce's first mature work, there is a definite mark of the influence of Yeats's Blake that has not been previously observed. The Ellis-Yeats preface stressed the fact that the impetus for their study was Ellis' curiosity as to whether or not Blake used London as a graphic image corresponding to the senses in the individual and the elements in nature (E-Y, I, ix), and the early pages of the memoir declared that "London is used by him [Blake] as a type of humanity" (E-Y, I, 45). Yeats, because of his own interest in Irish subjects, continually stressed that through correspondences the artist can encapsulate the universal; "What a man can see from his garden, that is his universe" (E-Y, I, 278). Yeats's emphasis on the Blakean "world in a grain of sand" prepared our artist for his later attempt to put "Allspace in a Notshall."¹⁷

It must always be remembered that the Zoas exist in everything. Blake held the doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm, and would gladly

have assented to the saying of Paracelsus:
 'He who tastes a crust of bread tastes all
 the stars and all the heavens'. (E-Y, I, 260)

And when Joyce declared that in Dubliners he tried to present the city "under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life" (SL, 83), the immediate inspiration for that design may well have been his knowledge of Yeats's table of correspondences which stresses the "natural character of the four Zoas as aspects of childhood, manhood, age" (see Fig. 2.; above p. 79). The macrocosm of Dublin provides a symbolic aspect for Joyce's stories, enabling him to highlight those eternal verities so central to his art. He makes the city both "urban and orbal" (FW, 601).

The writing of "The Dead" followed the inspiration for the basic organization of the stories, and in that final story Joyce intensified the symbolic dimensions of his narrative with a technique that makes "The Dead" a stylistic transition between Dubliners and the novels. The patterning of the relationship between Gretta, Gabriel, and Michael is not unlike Joyce's later triangles Bertha, Richard, and Robert or Bloom, Molly, and Stephen. Stuart Gilbert has suggested the occult possibility of the latter group.

In Ulysses, as in certain ancient cults, the third person is the female element. 'The trinity of the Egyptians and that of the mythological Greeks', H.P. Blavatsky observed in Isis Unveiled, 'were alike representations of the first triple emanation containing two male principles and one female. It is the union of the male Logos, or wisdom, the revealed Deity, with the female

Aura or Anima Mundi--the 'holy Pneuma', which is the Sephira of the Kabalists and the Sophia of the refined Gnostics--that produced all things visible and invisible.¹⁸

While Gretta remains fairly one-dimensional in "The Dead," and is, at best, a rather pallid female principle, I think that Joyce was attempting the same type of universalization among his protagonists which we can see in the naming of his males "Michael" and "Gabriel." While they seem clearly meant to evoke their angelic counterparts, the characters do not at all fit the Christian traditional designation of Michael, the defender against Satan, and Gabriel, the messenger of the Annunciation. However, the angels were an occult commonplace as "mental states," and Yeats specifically mentions their correspondence with Blake's Zoas.

These four kinds of mental states and their corresponding physical symbols are called the four Zoas, or 'Lifes,' from the Greek word zwa, life. They are identical with the wheels of Ezekiel and with the four beasts of the Apocalypse, and resemble closely Raphael, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, the Kabalistic regents of the cardinal points, and like them preside over psychic and bodily affairs. They are the mighty beings Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, Urthona, whose deeds and words fill page after page of 'The Mystical Writings.' (E-Y, I, 251)

Joyce's own use of the angels as types or states in his 1912 Blake lecture shows that he was well aware of the esoteric designation of the angels.

The influence of Swedenborg, who died in exile in London when Blake was beginning to write and draw, is seen in the glorified humanity with which all of Blake's work is stamped. Swedenborg, who frequented all of the invisible

worlds for several years, sees in the image of man heaven itself and Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel, who, according to him, are not three angels, but three angelic choirs.

(CW, 221; italics mine)

All this reinforces and helps explain the perceptions of Florence Walzl, who sees Gabriel and Michael at the end of "The Dead" as "larger than life" and "archetypes" and concludes that "Gabriel is the central everyman figure of Dubliners" or "Man."¹⁹ Not only does the Blakean perspective reinforce this reading, but it also serves to clarify the somewhat ambiguous ending in which Gabriel's quasi-mystical meeting with the dead Michael results in his imaginative journey westward. From Yeats's Blake Joyce had learned that "to the West lies Eden. . .the region of Love" (E-Y, I, 406). The merging of the repressed Gabriel with the romantic Michael is, I suggest, the pattern of the meeting of Stephen and Bloom in Ulysses; the same basically Yeats-Blakean principle of the reunion of contraries resulting in the resurrection to life underlies each encounter.

Since Joyce came to the decision to rewrite Stephen Hero as A Portrait of the Artist while completing "The Dead,"²⁰ it is very possible that meditating on the Blakean structure of Dubliners as a whole, and the male protagonists of "The Dead" in particular, showed him the possibility of patterning Stephen's development as archetypal artist according to the Yeats-Blakean schema of the progress of Art.²¹ Joyce's choice of Defoe and Blake as subjects for

his Italian lectures while at work on A Portrait may point not only to what we conceive in retrospect as the polarities of his art, but what he at that time felt were the dual influences on his novel--Defoe's realism and Blake's symbolism.

We know, as well, not only that Stephen's development in A Portrait and Ulysses follows a Blakean pattern and that the relationship among Stephen, Bloom, and Molly is meant to reflect an occult trinity, but that the text of Ulysses, the structure of the work as a whole, is clearly meant to reflect the giant man Albion who will one day be Finnegan. The Dublin of Dubliners is being carried a symbolic step forward. Writing to Carlo Linati, Joyce explained his design:

I have given only 'Schlagworte' in my scheme but I think you will understand it all the same. It is the epic of two races (Israel-Ireland) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life). (SL,271)

And, commenting on the correspondences of the organs of the body to the individual chapters in Ulysses, Stuart Gilbert points out:

Together these compose the whole body, which is thus a symbol of the structure of Ulysses, a living organism, and of the natural interdependence of the parts between themselves. Blake uses a like symbolism in Jerusalem.²²

The reference to Blake, in view of Gilbert's personal association with Joyce while preparing his study, suggests that Joyce was consciously using symbolic patterns specifically modelled on his knowledge of Blake's

mythopoeic technique. In fact, the use of the Ulysses myth itself may very well have been at least partially suggested by Joyce's association with Yeats and the Dublin Blakeans.

Blake's "Ulysses" painting, the 1821 "The Sea of Time & Space," was not discovered until 1949, and so was unknown to both Yeats and Joyce. However, in discussing the symbolic elements of the painting, Kathleen Raine points out that all of the details are derived from either the Odyssey or from basic neo-Platonic sources. Ulysses as Everyman was a Platonic commonplace, and she quotes Thomas Taylor's description:

The person of Ulysses, in the Odyssey, represents to us a man, who passes in a regular manner, over the dark and stormy sea of generation; and thus, at length, arrives at that region where tempests and seas are unknown. . . .Indeed, he who is conscious of the delusions of the present life, and the enchantments of this material house, in which his soul is detained, like Ulysses in the irriguous cavern of Calypso, will, like him, continually bewail his captivity, and only pine for a return to his native country.²³

Joyce, who we know dabbled in the Dublin occult and discussed both theosophy and art with AE and Yeats, may very well have known this tradition either from his own reading or from conversation. It seems to have been known to Yeats who, in an 1898 essay calling for a renewal of the arts, specifically calls for a retelling of the story of Ulysses in the modern manner.

I think that we will learn again how to describe at great length an old man wandering among enchanted islands, his return home at last, his slow-gathering vengeance, a flitting shape of a goddess, and a flight of arrows, and yet to

make all of these so different things 'take light by mutual reflection, like an actual trail of fire over precious stones,' and become 'an entire word,' the signature and symbol of a mood of the divine imagination as imponderable as 'the horror of the forest or the silent thunder in the leaves.'²⁴

Whether or not Joyce knew the occult interpretation of *Ulysses*, he read Yeats's critical prose avidly and so most certainly knew this essay.

The Gilbert study of *Ulysses* written under Joyce's detached but very real direction, stresses Sinnett, Blavatsky, and Blake as sources for the universalization of Joyce's account of a day in Dublin. The topicality of Joyce's choice of universalizing agent is, I think, the reason why this aspect of the novel has been largely ignored in subsequent criticism. In *A Portrait* the Christian elements and the recurrent motifs in that severely epiphanized work carry the symbolic thread even when the Blakean development is unnoticed, and two levels of narrative are adequately sustained. In the more encyclopedic *Ulysses*, on the other hand, the plethora of details and allusions requires a more dominant symbolic structure. Clive Hart has suggested that the two levels of narrative in *Ulysses* are ultimately unsuccessful because "the two views that Joyce takes of his Dublin--the naturalistic and the symbolic--are never entirely fused. . .and Joyce frequently allows the symbolic overtones to fade away."²⁵ I suggest rather that the symbolism chosen is simply too limited to be universal.

Joyce replaced many of the Christian elements with their occult counterparts, a Platonic Trinity for example, making his symbolic narrative largely dependent on the reader's acquaintance with the au courant ideas of the Dublin theosophists. Joyce seems unable to distinguish between his own knowledge and that he can reasonably expect from his audience. His use of Blake is paradigmatic of this problem. Joyce simply assumed that his Blake was an understanding of the poet which his readers shared. While in the earlier works this aspect of Joyce's use of allusion is not crucial to a basic understanding of the text, it contributes significantly to the obscurity of Finnegans Wake. Joyce's use of his Blakean knowledge in his final work not only illuminates the affiliation between the two writers, but it also aids us in understanding the nature of allusion in the Wake and its specific limitations.

Clive Hart has effectively summed up the critical problems in dealing with the Wake and noted the range of responses among critics.²⁶ It is not my purpose to dwell on these but to examine to what extent Joyce's knowledge of Blake is necessary--or even useful--to a reading of the novel and what the presence (or absence) of Blake in the book means in relation to our understanding of "Joyce's Blake." But this will necessarily involve some judgments about the Wake; just as particulars contain the universal, an examination of the Blake-Joyce affiliation highlights certain important aspects of Joyce's narrative art.

Prior to the Wake Blake's overt presence in Joyce's creative work is confined to the consciousness of the artist Stephen Dedalus. And because of his preoccupation with the nature and role of the artist, Joyce consistently emphasized "Blake the penman" in his critical writings. In 1902 Blake appears, with Dante, as a type of the true artist (CW, 82), and Joyce's 1912 Blake lecture not only emphasizes the superiority of the artist in Blake but clearly separates the poet in him from the cosmologist (CW, 220-21). Joyce's preference for the artist rather than the philosopher enabled him to keep separate the two roles Yeats assigned to Blake. Joyce's own reading in theosophy had led him to the occult sources of many of the salient features of Blake's mythology. In his lecture, for example, he not only notes the derivation of Albion,²⁷ but also links esoteric philosophy with both literature and Scripture. His is an increasingly personal understanding of Blake.

The influence of Swedenborg, who died in exile in London when Blake was beginning to write and draw, is seen in the glorified humanity with which all of Blake's work is stamped. . . .Eternity, which had appeared to the beloved disciple and to Alighieri as a heavenly rose, appeared to the Swedish mystic in the likeness of a heavenly man, animated in all his limbs by a fluid angelic life that forever leaves and re-enters, systole and diastole of love and wisdom. (CW, 221-22)

Joyce's reading helps explain why seemingly Blakean structural elements in his novels cannot really be specifically ascribed to the "influence" of Blake. His

structural sources are really the various occult compendiums, principally Blavatsky, that he read during his university days in Dublin while he also studied Yeats's Blake, an interpretation of the poet which is, as I have shown, an esoteric conflation of Blake, Blavatsky, and Yeats. Thus, in A Portrait and Ulysses direct allusion to Blake is always specifically limited to the development of Stephen Dedalus as artist, while the macrocosmic structures of the novels have a more generalized philosophic ancestry. Just as Yeats formulated his personal philosophy through reading that served to corroborate his basically Blakean preoccupations, Joyce was attracted to Bruno of Nola, Vico, and others because their systems complemented his own understanding of universal principles, an understanding partially formed through his early study of Yeats's Blake and the theosophists.²⁸ In Finnegans Wake Joyce again separates Blake the artist from his Dublin interpreters' more philosophic concerns, but what I find particularly interesting and valuable there is the portrait of the Blake-Joyce affiliation which the Wake provides and what that portrait reveals about the nature of allusion in Joyce's novel.

My reading of Finnegans Wake shows that Joyce's handling of his Blakean material is consistent with his use of allusion in his earlier works and with what we know of his early study of Blake. Looking at the Blakean elements in the light of Joyce's entire canon also reconciles

seemingly contradictory critical viewpoints. James Atherton, who suspects no direct Blake influence on the Wake²⁹ and Robert Gleckner, who concludes that "Blake was seldom out of Joyce's thoughts when writing Finnegans Wake"³⁰ are both, paradoxically, correct. The contradictions among critics basically result from their limiting their analysis to the Wake when, as I will show, awareness of the sources of Joyce's knowledge and his prior use of Blakean material is essential to a full understanding of the ways in which allusions to Blake function in Finnegans Wake.

Blake's presence manifests itself in the Wake in a variety of ways. He appears in person as a type of the artist-hero, and Blakean elements and references are found in the basic structural elements of the text, in its author's verbal pyrotechnics, and, most significantly, I believe, in autobiographical references and allusions to other works by Joyce. Given the prose of the Wake, it is not always easy to separate allusion by function. In fact, the multiple implications of a single allusion is the principal reason for the reverberations and echoes that lend a sense of simultaneity to the reading.

Direct allusion to Blake by name would seem to be an easy matter of identification since, as both Atherton and Glasheen note, there is only one such reference in the entire book.³¹ But we cannot fully understand the nature of even that single allusion without the valuable

hint Robert Gleckner has provided in his analysis of the word "blake" in the English language.

The clue to Joyce's usage of Blake's name rests in the etymology of the name itself. According to the OED, blake is the direct phonetic descendent of OE. blac, pale, so that the word has immediately twin associations, black and white. This is supported by the etymological association of these words with ME. bleche, the origin of bleach. Further, black in ME. is blak (German blak) which is in turn derived from a word meaning ink. Thus Chaucer uses the word blake to mean black writing or ink (Troilus, II 1320). There is a connection here too between ME. and German blak and Dutch blaken, to burn or scorch (cf. Chaucer's Monk's Tale, 3321); and Skeat suggests that this is related in turn to bleak. Bleak of course formerly meant pale, pallid, wan, to ally it on the one hand with white, but at the same time with a very slight brogue bleak becomes blake and hence black. Indeed blake is used to mean bare, naked, bleak in A Mirror for Magistrates.³²

Blake's "twin associations, black and white" will remind every reader of Finnegans Wake of those contrary brothers Shem and Shaun, "the fine frank fairhaired fellow of the fairytales, who wrestles for tophole with the bold bad bleak boy" (FW, 22). This information about the derivation of "blake" must have delighted Joyce, who certainly saw the happy coincidence of form and content in learning that Blake's very name reflected his dualistic system; and the textual evidence shows that Joyce consciously used the association. I have italicized the relevant words surrounding the one specific use of Blake's name in Finnegans Wake.

He will be quite within the pale with lordbeeron
 brow he vows him so tosset to be of the sir Blake
 tribes bleak while through life's unblest he
 rodes backs of bannars. Are you not somewhat
 bulgar with your bowels? Whatever do you mean
 with bleak? With pale blake I write tintingface.
 O, you do? And with steel white and blackmail
 I ha'scint for my sweet an anemone's letter
 with a gold of my bridest hair betied. (FW, 563)

Not only is this Joyce's most specific use of Blake's name,
 but it is also his most revealing reference to the poet.
 Within these lines is an expression of the essence of
 Joyce's Blake--his view of his predecessor and how he
 related the poet to his own art--as well as a paradigm
 of the way in which allusion functions in the Wake.³³

Lord Byron coupled with "sir Blake" suggests the
 nobility of the artist-hero motif, and also recalls the
 adolescent Stephen's preference for Byron which had put
 him outside the "pale," as it were, in the altercation with
 his schoolfellows in A Portrait when he was persecuted for
 asserting Byron's superiority to Tennyson (P, 80-82). This
 aesthetic heresy is compounded by his later allegiance to
 Blake, committing his art to "life's unblest." But his
 association with Blake also put him "within the pake," the
 inner circle of Dublin literati who were Blake enthusiasts.
 The "pale" is also the geographic designation for the area
 around Dublin under English rule,³⁴ so the use of "pale"
 not only refers to the etymology of Blake's name but also
 to his practice of patterning life geographically as Joyce
 had learned from Ellis and Yeats. The Dublin Blakeans,
 "sir Blake tribes," are "bleak" because, as Stephen mocks

them in Ulysses, "they creepycrawl after Blake's buttocks into eternity" (U, 186), and Joyce derides them in "The Holy Office" for their insistence on the ethereal--"But all these men of whom I speak/Make me the sewer of their clique/That they may dream their dreamy dreams" (CW, 151). Joyce consistently makes this separation between Blake the artist, whom he identifies with and respects, and his occult interpreters, whom he freely satirizes. That Joyce himself followed Blake in art is made clear with the question, "Whatever do you mean with bleak?" which, given the correspondence between words, asks what purpose Blake has in Joyce's art. The answer, "With pale blake I write tintingface" I think sums up Joyce's use of Blakean material. His awareness of Blake's mythopoeic vision provided Joyce with a symbolic dimension to add to his own realistic narratives to "color" them with universal significance, much as Blake himself colored his plates. Implicit as well is the association of Blake's name with "ink," the medium of the novelist. Joyce the Penman writes literally with ink and symbolically with "Blake."

This correspondence between Blake the artist, his Dublin interpreters' various "systems," the practice of writing, and Joyce's artistic aims is implicit in an earlier passage if the reader is familiar with the facts of the Blake-Joyce affiliation via Yeats.

. . .and the first till last alshemist wrote
 over every square inch of the only foolscap
 available, his own body, till by its corrosive

sublimation one continuous present tense
 integument slowly unfolded all marryvoising
 moodmoulded cyclewheeling history (thereby,
 he said reflecting from his own individual
 person life unlivable, transaccidented
 through the slow fires of consciousness into
 a dividual chaos, perilous, potent, common
 to allflesh, human only, mortal) but with
 each word that would not pass away the
 squidsself which he had squirtscreened from
 the crystalline world waned chagreenold and
 doriangrayer in its dudhud. (FW, 185-86)

Here is the image of the artist as "alshemist" who is
 variously Blake, whose method of engraving is clearly
 being alluded to (another felicitous combination of
 etymology, "to burn or scorch," and personality) and
 who was a student of alchemists, as Joyce knew from Yeats;^{*}
 Shem, of course, and Yeats as well, who frequently used
 the figure of the alchemist/artist and also constructed
 the "moodmoulded cyclewheeling history." In his 1897
 story "Rosa Alchemica," (which Joyce certainly knew and
 must have identified with because its artist-narrator
 expresses the Joycean aim of transmuting life into art)
 the narrator explains how he has learned the secret of
 the alchemists.

I had discovered, early in my researches, that
 their doctrine was no merely chemical phantasy,
 but a philosophy they applied to the world, to
 the elements and to man himself; and that they
 sought to fashion gold out of common metals
 merely as part of an universal transmutation
 of all things into some divine and imperishable
 substance; and this enabled me to make my little
 book a fanciful reverie over the transmutation
 of life into art.³⁵

^{*} See passage quoted in note 19, Chapter Five, p. 187
 above.

And Yeats wrote in the preface to his 1906 collected poems:

All art is in the last analysis an endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapour of the world an image of human perfection, and for its own and not for the art's sake, and that is why the labour of the alchemists, who were called artists in their day, is a befitting comparison for all deliberate change of style.³⁶

The "alshemist" reference is not only to a theory of art but to the practice of using the self as subject--"the only foolscap available, his own body." This was stressed as Blake's method by both Ellis and Yeats and is a point of similarity with his own practice that Joyce would have noted. The "alshemist" is, then, Blake, Yeats, and Shem/Joyce or, more precisely, a portrait of the artist as he sees himself.³⁷ Even the conflation of Blake's method of engraving with Joyce's writing is significant. It emphasizes, I suggest, a similarity of technique that is apparent in the effect of the prose rather than in the method of its production. Yeats had described Blake's technique in his explication of the symbolic system:

Things we have to give in succession in our explanatory prose are set forth simultaneously in Blake's verse. From this arises the greater part of the obscurity of the symbolic books. The surface is perpetually, as it were, giving way before one, and revealing another surface below it, and that again dissolves when we try to study it. (E-Y, I, 287)

Had Yeats ever read Finnegans Wake he could have substituted "Joyce's prose" at the end of his first sentence for a very accurate description of the style of the Wake. In these lines Joyce refers, therefore, not

only to his basic practice of using the self as subject, but to the revolutionary nature of the Wake's style, coupling his self-portrait with the names of the two writers who provided his primary schooling in the uses of imagination, Yeats and Blake.

It is apparent that simply listing Blakean (or possibly Blakean) allusions in the text as Robert Gleckner has done is less important to an understanding of the Wake than knowing the basis of the Blake-Joyce affiliation. Because of the evocative nature of the text, Blake is often a factor in passages in which he is not named at all. What is clear from the passages I have quoted is that there is a subtle "fourfold" use of allusion, which Joyce employs throughout Finnegans Wake. The analogy with Blake's fourfold vision is, I think, relevant. Joyce's aim is to reproduce, through prose, the effect of simultaneity in the visionary moment, whether it be Blake's fourfold vision, Yeats's thirteenth cone, or Eliot's still point in the turning world. One of the significant ways in which this is achieved is through the reverberations of a single allusion. In the one specific mention of Blake's name in the lines about "sir Blake tribes bleak" we note that Blake is:

- (1) the artist. Joyce's close personal identification with Blake is clearly evident in his 1912 lecture, and he consistently associated his artist Stephen Dedalus with Blakean allusion in A Portrait and

Ulysses. In the Wake, therefore, Blake is used as part of a motif, the artist-hero, and joins the catalogue of Joycean saints with Ibsen and Swift.³⁸

- (2) a structural principle. That is, the dark/light root of the word "blake" becomes the twin motif expressing dualism, and therefore associates the structure of the book as a whole with Blake's mythopoeic vision.
- (3) an autobiographical allusion. Blake was a writer Joyce studied in his early years in Dublin. The Wake is, on one level, another contribution to Joyce's basic book of himself, and echoes of early experiences contribute to the simultaneity of the prose as the reader is presented with a cinematic version of Joyce's life and oeuvre.
- (4) a reference to the nature of the Wake's language. "With pale blake I write" encapsulates the history of the word's associations with light, dark, and ink at the same time that it comments on the nature of the affiliation between the two writers. This correspondence of form with content is another reason for the stylistic effect of simultaneous rather than sequential presentation.

As in A Portrait and Ulysses, allusions to Blake consistently refer either to the artist or to the process of writing. Although the structural principles which

underlie the novel can be (and have been) seen as "Blakean," Joyce associates cosmology with Blake's occult interpreters, principally with Yeats. One other mention of Blake's name in the text, for example, specifically alludes to the cycles of life,³⁹ and I think it is significant that it is "MacBlakes"--the "sons of Blake"--who are indicated (FW, 409). These are Blake's Dublin interpreters whom Joyce mocked in both Ulysses and "The Holy Office" for their uncompromising idealism. While Joyce initially studied their tenets--"they were improving me" (FW, 409)--an important part of his development as artist was the recognition and integration of the Blake/Defoe polarities in his art against the idealists' rejection of the physical world. This personal development is explicitly described, I think, in Joyce/Shem's slaying of the occultists in the Butt and Taff episode. Although the textual allusion to Blake is vague (blackseer), and seems negative, once again the reader must be aware of the complexity of Joyce's association with both Blake and Blakeans to appreciate the references.

Taff is initially described (FW, 338) as "looking through the roof towards a relevation of the karmalife order." For "karmalife" the reader notes, of course, "Carmelite" as well, and the two early influences on Joyce's thought, Roman Catholic and Eastern mystical, are simultaneously suggested. The Carmelites are one of the most austere of the Roman Catholic religious orders, and

so both imply a spirituality untainted with the physical. Taff is also described as a "blackseer" (FW, 340) which applies to the Yeats group of Blakeans--mystics rather than artists. And it is clear that the enactment of the shooting of the Russian General by Butt here is an annihilation of the Rosicrucians, the dominant "karmalife order" of the day, as Butt shoots "the frustate fourstar Russkakruscam, Dom Allaf O'Khorwan, connundurumchuff" (FW, 352). The command to fire, "Sparro" (FW, 353) is followed by an apocalyptic moment similar to that initiated by Stephen's breaking of the lamp in Ulysses (and here incorporating a Blakean allusion to Bowlahoola), and Butt and Taff are significantly "now one and the same person" (FW, 354). They are, I suggest, like their counterparts Shem and Shaun, Joyce's Robartes and Aherne, and ultimately derive from the same source as Yeats's fictional alter egos --a personal awareness of internal dualism. In the Wake the Blakean dimension, though not explicit, is, I suggest, integral to the relationship between the twins and is implicit in the light/dark motif assigned to them.

Clive Hart suggests that "duality of being is perhaps the most important of all the basic structural concepts in Finnegans Wake,⁴⁰ and the text clearly invites us to "byhold at ones what is main and why tis twain" (FW, 143). There is a critical tendency to assign the twins and their avatars to Joyce's interest in the philosophy of Bruno of Nola,⁴¹ but, as Joyce's 1925 letter to Harriet Weaver shows,

he saw Bruno's philosophy as a system which is little different from Yeats's Blake--"a kind of dualism--every power in nature must evolve an opposite in order to realise itself and opposition brings reunion, etc. etc." (SL, 305-6). Where Joyce originally discovered this principle is a chicken-egg argument we need not pursue, but its dominance in his work indicates how he, like Yeats, consistently sought philosophic principles to reinforce his own basic preoccupations. Hart, in fact, tends to play down the importance of Joyce's hints at his sources because of Joyce's "notorious habit of uttering half truths about his books,"⁴² yet Hart's study of the text indicates that "chief among the non-Viconian cycles which help to mould the lines of Finnegans Wake are the world-ages of Indian philosophy and the opposed gyres of Yeats's A Vision and Blake's 'The Mental Traveller'."⁴³ Since Ellmann maintains that Joyce did not know A Vision until its second edition in 1937,⁴⁴ that work clearly could not have influenced the structure of the Wake from its inception. Joyce's basic source was, however, the same as the basic source of A Vision, Yeats's Blake, a critical interpretation which conflates "Indian philosophy" (via theosophy) with the principles inherent in "The Mental Traveller." Much of the patterning of Shem and Shaun, for example, is clearly analogous to Joyce's Blake-occult sources.

Two readers' perceptions about the nature of the twins lead directly to the theories of Yeats and Blavatsky. Bernard Benstock, for example, notes that the common opinion of Shem and Shaun as mere antagonists

dismisses various important layers of significance in Joyce's scheme in the Wake, two of which are probably as significant as the Bruno theme: the overthrow of the father figure and the cyclical evolution of historical patterns.⁴⁵

If, however, we think of Shem and Shaun as Blakean dualities (à la Yeats) we can see how all three themes would be interconnected in Joyce's consciousness as archetypal patterns--the contraries which lead to progression (reconciliation in Yeats's interpretation), the Orc-Urizen struggle, the cycle of the Churches--and all three were evident in the structure of the basic Joycean story of the development of the artist Stephen Dedalus in A Portrait and Ulysses. In Yeats's interpretations of Blake's mythology we can find basic structural principles which underlie Joyce's entire oeuvre.

Clive Hart also insists on the necessity for looking at the twins as more than simple opposites, and he associates their life principle with occult thought.

There is a hint that Shem may not really be the Devil himself, but only his envoy--that even his Satanic nature may be partly a sham. To a true Kabbalist the genuine co-eternal Satan is as ineffable as the unmanifest godhead so that any apprehensible Satan-figure must be something less than reality.⁴⁶

The principle which guides the twins is mainly, I suggest, that of the Demon Est Deus Inversus which Yeats adopted as his own pseudonym in the Order of the Golden Dawn. Even if (which is unlikely) Joyce did not know of Yeats's specific preference for this title, the principle of DEDI, though unstated, controls Yeats's interpretation of Blake,* and one commentator on the Wake, though unable to find any allusion to DEDI, has noted that the title is "beautifully Joycean,"⁴⁷ again emphasizing how amenable Yeats's Blake was to Joyce's own apprehension of the world.

In addition, Joyce read Blavatsky, who consistently emphasizes the forces of dualism as the basic life principle. In Isis Unveiled Joyce would have read that

the centripetal and centrifugal forces, as symbols of Good and Evil, Spirit and Matter, Life and Death, are also those of the Creator and the Destroyer,--Adam and Eve, or God and the Devil, as they say in common parlance.⁴⁸

Much of Blavatsky's attempt to reconcile divergent systems of thought to occult universal principles lay in showing the various names by which these systems have been known throughout history--"her untitled mamafesta memorializing the Mosthighest has gone by many names at disjointed times" (FW, 104). Her description of the favorite Yeatsian adage, DEDI, directly bears on Joyce's Earwicker twins since it emphasizes the dark/light contrast, the basic motif of Shem and Shaun throughout the Wake.

* See Chapter Three, pp. 93-95 above.

As an 'adversary,' the opposing Power required by the equilibrium and harmony of things in Nature--like Shadow to throw off still brighter the Light, like Night to bring into greater relief the Day, and like cold to make one appreciate the comfort of heat--SATAN has ever existed.⁴⁹

Joyce's discovery that the name "Blake" has etymological associations with both light and dark, black and white, must have pleased him since his structural principle of dualism was inherently Blakean as well--or so he thought from Yeats's explication. He had read of the contraries in Ellis-Yeats and learned that

much of Blake's system is but the history of their opposing lives differing from and yet completing one another, as love does wisdom--will, understanding,--substance, form.
(E-Y, I, 240)

I cannot agree with Gleckner that "most, if not all" occurrences of black and white in the Wake are allusions to Blake,⁵⁰ but I do think that such references are always fundamentally Blakean in concept as they allude to the dual nature of existence "throughout the book of Doublends Jined" (FW, 20).

I think, however, that the greatest possibility of confusion occurs when speaking of the structural principles of the Wake as "Blakean." Joyce's basic preoccupations were continual, and Finnegans Wake is a further display of basic concerns he reflected throughout his career. As he significantly remarked to Harriet Weaver about the writing of the first words of his final work, "il lupo perde il pelo ma non il visio, the Italians say. The wolf

may lose his skin but not his vice or the leopard cannot change his spots."⁵¹ Hart's admirable explication of the basic structural elements in the Wake shows how influential Joyce's early reading of both Blake and Blavatsky was in forming his conception of the workings of the universe, but in the "narrative" itself Joyce carefully distinguishes between art and philosophy--the former is reserved for Blake while the latter pertains to the Blakeans, notably Yeats.

This is most evident in Book II, Chapter 2, a section concerned with both pedagogy and cosmology in which Joyce clearly parodies Yeats's historical schema. The references to Yeats and theosophy here are particularly revealing and show the involved history of the "Blakean" structures of the text. Allusions to Yeats and the occult are never widely separated, and one passage specifically suggests that Yeats is the basic exponent of occult thought for Joyce.

The tasks above are as the flasks below,
saith the emerald canticle of Hermes and all's
loth and please stir, are we told, on excellent
inkbottle authority, solar systemised, serial-
cosmically, in a more and more almightily
expanding universe under one, there is rhymeless
reason to believe, original sun. (FW, 263)

The common hermetic aphorism, "as above, so below," a favorite of Yeats's, suggests that he is the "excellent inkbottle authority." Since "ink" is also associated with Blake, Yeats's position as paramount Blake authority--at least in Dublin--is also alluded to. "Rhymeless reason"

suggests Yeats's critical or non-poetic writings, the most ambitious of which was his explication of Blake. The "one original sun" is clearly meant to echo "original sin" because this chapter of the lessons of the children is correspondingly about the lessons of the young Joyce, and his schooling in esoteric lore provided an important part of his artistic education. In this light, I suggest that Gleckner's identification of "Backlane University" in this chapter (FW, 287) as an anagram for "Blakean University" is revealing,⁵² since my examination of the Blake-Joyce affiliation indicates that the association was an important part of Joyce's initial non-Christian philosophic education (thanks to Yeats, who de-Christianized Blake in his occult presentation).

Specific allusions to Yeats later in the chapter indicate once again that he is the "inkbottle authority" who is being parodied and that his diagrammatic inclinations are the butt of the illustration on p. 293 of the Wake. The double triangles, "Solomon's Seal," are a common occult symbol--"whyse Salmonson set he seel on a hexengown" (FW, 297)--but Joyce has added distinct Yeatsian allusions on that page and those following:

as a poor soul is
between shift and
shift ere the death
he has lived through
becomes the life he is
to die: into (293)

echoes "die each other's life,
live each other's death"

in the lazily eye of
his lapis (293)

a reference to the poem
"Lapis Lazuli"?

The Vortex (293)

One recalls
Byzantium (294)

not the poem, I think, but
the reference in A Vision to
Byzantium as an ideal culture

Lucihere! I feel
where you mea. The
dubleviewed seeds
(295-96)

a mention of doubling which
recalls both Joyce's twins
and Yeats's Mask.

Not only are the gyres mentioned, but they are given a
distinctly sexual coloration that is in accord with their
"Mental Traveller" presentation in A Vision:

Gyre, O, gyre O, gyrotundo! Hop lala! As
umpty herum as you seat! O, dear me, that was
very nesse! Very nace indeed! And makes us a
daintical pair of accomplasses! You, allus for
the junst and me for omething with handel to it.
Beve! Now, as will pressantly be felt, there's
tew ticklesome poinds where our twain of doubling
bicirculars, mating approximately in their suit
poi and poi, dunloop into each ocher. (295)

The cyclic process is similarly referred to again on p.298:

everto circumflickstent searchlbers never film
in the elopsities of their gyribouts those
fickers which are returnally reproductive of
themselves.

I don't know is it
your spicetre or my
omination but I'm
glad you dimentioned
it! (299)

a reference to Blake's Spectre
and Emanation which, in light
of the surrounding allusions,
is certainly a reference to
Yeats's use of the principle
in A Vision.

And on p. 303 Joyce announces that "this is Doublinn-
bbayates" with a reference to "his autocratic writings."

Although most of these allusion are to A Vision, and
Ellmann insists that Joyce never knew the first edition
and added the references after 1937, I suggest that the
diagram on p. 293 of Finnegans Wake is a specific allusion

to the diagrammatic practices of both Yeats and Blavatsky (whose writings are full of similar patterns). The appearance of A Vision gave Joyce more topical parodic fuel, but the added allusions also indicate that he recognized the essential unity of all of Yeats's philosophic endeavors. I also think that the mention of both Ellis and Blake on p. 294 is revealing. Blake here is "Blake-Roche," which suggests Blackrock, especially since it is coupled with Kingston as a place name. But it also suggests a basis for Yeats's cosmology, which is the subject of this section. Joyce once remarked that since "the Holy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church was built on a pun" it was good enough for him as a method in the Wake.⁵³ I think that "Blake-Roche" is a similar pun--Yeats's "philosophy" is built on the "rock" of Blake.

At the end of this chapter Joyce is leaving for Paris with diction which parodies the end of A Portrait, "Forge away, Sunny Sim" (FW, 305). In a sense he has recounted a portion of his own intellectual history here as in the Butt and Taff Episode. Joyce's university days were primarily spent exploring universal principles divorced from orthodox Catholic doctrine, and Yeats's Blake and the writings of the theosophists were an important part of that education, not at University College but at "Backlane University." This interpretation is underscored by Atherton's conclusions about the diagram in the Wake.

Kenner (Dublin's Joyce, p. 327) pointed out solemnly that this design is 'strikingly like the alchemical formula quoted by Jung' and that 'all the secrets of the universe are extracted from it.' Joyce intended his readers to make such comparisons and could doubtless have suggested many other parallels such as the diagrams in Yeats's A Vision and the Yeats & Ellis edition of Blake's Works, and so on, back to the diagrams in Bruno's philosophical works and Nicholas of Cusa's attempts to square the circle.⁵⁴

In the light of the present study, note the significance of Kenner's suggestion of Jung as "source" and of A Vision and the Ellis-Yeats Blake among Atherton's counter-proposals. All are within the same mythographic tradition, as are Bruno and Nicholas of Cusa--and Finnegans Wake.

Although all the macrocosmic structures of the Wake are, like its principle of dualism, ultimately also a part of Yeats's Blake, there is no reason to believe that Joyce had Blake specifically in mind when planning his final work. Even during his university days in Dublin he had read enough of Yeats's own theosophical sources to recognize the occult basis of Blake's cosmology. Hence it is possible to assert, as Hazard Adams has done, that "an understanding of Blake is probably as useful as any other single thing to an understanding of Joyce's epic"⁵⁵ without there being any direct influence of Blake, as James Atherton has suggested is the case. The principal source for Joyce's structures is Yeats's interpretation, not Blake's poetry, and the allusions in the Wake to both Yeats and Blake support this distinction; Blake is always the artist, Yeats the philosopher.

Joyce's reading of Yeats's Blake led him to other theories of the universe that he fitted into the pattern of thought he had already established. For example, Michael Begnal has analyzed Chapter 4 of Book II of the Wake as "the presentation of a conflict in which youth supplants age."⁵⁶ This is the same principle that Epstein sees as the structure for A Portrait, "the conflict of generations," and which I suggest is basically Blake's struggle between Orc and Urizen. A later discovery of this principle by Joyce is the Swiss Sechseläuten festival, celebrating the victory of Spring over Winter, which he added as a motif throughout Finnegans Wake.⁵⁷ Likewise Hart has delineated a type of structural counterpoint in the Wake which he says Joyce has taken over "virtually unchanged" from Yeats and Blake, particularly "The Mental Traveller." The basic themes of "The Mental Traveller," the conflict between youth and age coupled with a sexual antagonism between male and female protagonists, were, however, basic principles in Yeats's Blake explications and were, as I have shown in Chapter Six, inherent in the structure of Stephen's development in A Portrait and Ulysses. The dominance of these themes is, I suggest, less indicative of a direct "influence" than an indication of a weltanschauung which Joyce found in Blake's mythology (as explained by Yeats) and for personal and artistic reasons adopted as his own.⁵⁹

The presence of Blake in Finnegans Wake, both directly

as a type of the artist-hero and indirectly in the source of the structural elements of the book, is consistent with Joyce's use of Blake in his prior works. However, a third aspect of the Blakean allusions in the Wake initially seems unlike Joyce's previous use of such material--the frequency of allusions to Blake's works. Gleckner's list of allusions is by no means exhaustive but certainly establishes his point that Blake was constantly in Joyce's mind during the composition of Finnegans Wake. But I feel that it is essential to add "along with everything else Joyce ever knew." That is, Joyce undeniably had an unusually retentive memory and little that he remembered escaped the pages of Finnegans Wake, but statistical incidence is not influence. In addition, the prose of the Wake, with its permutations of English and other languages, offers many possibilities for the ingenious reader other than those the author may have intended. Although, for example, there clearly are allusions to Blake's Los (and such allusions would be expected, since he is one of Stephen/Joyce's counterparts in art) I cannot share Gleckner's enthusiasm for any word in which the letters l, o, s, appear in consecutive (or inverted) order.⁶⁰

There is also the problem of the nature of the Wake's language as "embroidery." As all analysts of Joyce's style agree, his development progressed toward achieving simultaneity of effects, and the Wake represents the

fullest extension of his method of reworking passages through accretions and additions.⁶¹ Often this is done through allusions which, if noted by the reader, are delightfully appropriate but serve primarily to entertain rather than extend the sense of the passage. If Gleckner is correct and "loovahgloovah" (FW, 369) is a reference to the Irish novelist Charles Lover disguised as Blake's Luvah, the Zoa associated with love,⁶² the allusive pun would delight Blakeans rather than offer any particular significance to the text. Similarly, since much of the linguistic virtuosity of the book is a part of Joyce's effort to conquer time and space, Blake's time and space, personified as Los and Enitharmon, join Joyce's catalogue of verbal allusions to space and time in a variety of situations. Many of the Blakean items sprinkled throughout the text are no more than this type of enrichment of the prose which exercises the imagination of the reader and shows why Joyce's ideal reader is "suffering from an ideal insomnia." But, as Samuel Beckett warned in his early and seminal essay on the Wake, "the danger is in the neatness of identifications."⁶³ Allusion, as such, is not always as significant as it may appear.

There is, I suggest, a previously unexplored and more significant aspect of the Blakean allusion in Finnegans Wake. The earliest defenses of the Wake concentrated on the nature of its language, insisting that it required different perceptions from the reader than did previous

works of fiction.

So much as he [Joyce] is dealing with prose for the evocative capacities which it possesses his psychology and mythology are the renderings of his subconscious in the hope of reaching an audience that responds pleasurably to the implications of his involved orchestral theme.⁶⁴

The Wake began, as it were, in Joyce's past works. He made his earliest notes in a notebook divided into forty-seven sections, each section headed by a title drawn from one of his previous works, beginning with Chamber Music and ending with the various parts of Ulysses.⁶⁵ The Wake's prose was designed to sound echoes in the reader's consciousness (Joyce may well be the unacknowledged founder of reader-response criticism), and since the book is "the seim anew"--all of Joyce's previous experience retold from a new perspective--a part of its use of Blake is in Joyce's own understanding and prior use of Blakean material; "Joyce's Blake" is the real Blakean element in the Wake. For example, a reference to "priest and king" in light of Yeats's frequent use and Joyce's allusion to the phrase in Ulysses has, in the following passage, Blakean overtones which contribute to our understanding of the implications of the lines.

His Thing Mod have undone him: and his madthing has done him man. His beneficiaries are legion in the part he created: they number up his years. Greatwheel Dunlop was the name on him: behung, all we are his bisaacles. As hollyday in his house so was he priest and king to that, ulvy came, envy saw, ivy conquered. Lou! Lou! They have waved his green boughs o'er him as they have torn him limb from lamb. (FW, 58)

The passage presents a Christological archetype with Parnell as ostensible subject but with echoes in "hollyday in his house" which suggest the Christmas dinner scene in A Portrait during which Parnell was also the subject. The suffering hero is victorious, for "ivy conquered" and he is "priest and king to that." A Blake allusion here is appropriate because in Joyce's private calendar of saints Blake is, with Parnell, one of the misunderstood, persecuted heroes. In the next paragraph we hear the bells of Sechseläute, recalling the victory of Spring over Winter which, in Blakean terms, is that of Orc over Urizen, the perpetual struggle of revolutionary youth throughout history. Thus the passage is about neither Christ, Parnell, Blake, Stephen, or Joyce, but presents, through Joycean evocation and suggestion, the archetypal pattern of the persecuted revolutionary in both politics and art.

Although "priest and king" is the only verbatim Blakean allusion in the lines, Blake's presence is signalled by allusions throughout the chapter. No one allusion exists independently in the Wake. The reader is continually "cued" by the context so that he is, in a sense, reading through textual clues much as one reads a foreign language when it is difficult to perceive the nuances of words. In this chapter Blakean references help direct the reader's attention to "priest and king" as a moment of triumph.

(52) time and space
"in a quiet English
garden"

Los and Enitharmon

(54)"Losdoor onleft
mladies, cue"

possibly a reference to the entrance to the "halls of Los" which Yeats emphasizes as the place where our dreams are transacted and imagination is dominant.

(56)"our Traveller
remote, unfriended,
from van Demon's Land"

Blake's "Mental Traveller"?

(57)"They answer from
their Zoans; Hear the
four of them!"

note the association of the Zoas with geographic division (zones), a particular emphasis of the Ellis-Yeats Blake

(57)"watching bland
sol slithe dodgsomely
into the nethermore
a globule of
maugdleness"

although this is also clearly connected with Lewis Carroll, I agree with Gleckner that it is an allusion to the "globule of blood" that is an entrance to eternity

(58) three tommix,
soldiers free. . .
walking, in Montgomery
Street

this is clearly a reference to the Carr episode in Ulysses and reinforces the "priest and king" allusion

By telescoping the Stephen of A Portrait (the Christmas dinner scene) with the Stephen of Ulysses (the priest and king reference) imaginatively triumphant in Circe, Joyce achieves the simultaneity of time he desires.

Other verbal choices throughout the Wake clearly echo in the mind of the Joycean reader, and while they cannot be considered "allusions" in a provable sense, they are, I suggest, a significant indication both of Blake's presence and of the way in which Joyce's prose is meant to function in Finnegans Wake. In the same chapter as the Blakeanisms

just cited, we read, "Be these meer marchant taylor's fablings of a race referend with oddman rex? Is now all seenheard then forgotten?" (FW, 61). The question concerns the meaning of history--a primary concern of Stephen in "Nestor"--and "fablings" reads as an allusion to Ulysses through its association with Joyce's emphasis on that word in his paraphrase of Blake--"fabled by the Daughters of Memory. And yet it was in some way if not as memory fabled it" (U, 24; italics mine--a phrasing Joyce had used twenty years earlier in his Mangan essay, CW, 81). And when we read several pages later, "Now by memory inspired, turn the wheel again to the whole of the wall" (FW, 68), we know that it is a return to the cycles because to be inspired by the "Daughters of Memory" is a failure of Imagination.⁶⁶

As Walton Litz has pointed out, the materials for the construction of the Wake had been accumulating in Joyce's imagination since childhood,⁶⁷ and it is Joyce's personal understanding of and affinity with Blake which is the basis for Blakean allusions and/or situations in this final work. There are even allusions which reflect Joyce's source of knowledge. Once we know that his "Blake-Roche" was Ellis-Yeats, the line "And the map of the souls' groupography rose in relief within their quarterings" (FW, 476) recalls not only Blake's Zoas, but the Ellis-Yeats preface which stresses that the impetus of their study was Ellis' speculation that Blake had used the four quarters of

London as cardinal points to correspond with qualities of the mind (E-Y, I, ix). Both Atherton and Glasheen have shown that "Blake" is present in the Wake only in one clearly identifiable reference, but "Joyce's Blake" accounts for the plethora of allusions Gleckner and I find throughout the text.

Joyce's effort to evoke response through allusion rather than narrative is not in itself the major reason for the Wake's notorious obscurity. In the book's defense Frank Budgen has argued that every writer's work has always presupposed a necessary religious and mythical knowledge on the part of his readers,⁶⁸ but I suggest that the problem with Joyce's use of allusion in Finnegans Wake is that too often the references are to Joyce's personal experience rather than to any body of knowledge shared by his readers. As the confessor tells Shem, "you have reared your disunited kingdom on the vacuum of your own most intensely doubtful soul" (FW, 188). Although all of Joyce's works can be seen as exercises in catharsis, I think that an underlying premise of the Wake's style, directly related to Joyce's early occult experiences, makes this the least accessible of his novels.

The phantasmagoria of the book is at least partially based on the occult belief in a world soul, expressed by Yeats most often as the anima mundi--a concept of which Joyce was aware as early as 1902 (CW, 83). Frank Budgen, who got most of his information from conversations with

Joyce, indicates that Joyce had Yeatsian-occult principles specifically in mind. In defense of the much-criticized technique of the Wake, Budgen wrote:

With regard to the language used by Joyce, particularly in Finnegans Wake, it is sometimes forgotten that in his early years in Dublin Joyce lived among the believers and adepts in magic gathered round the poet Yeats. Yeats held that the borders of our minds are always shifting, tending to become part of the universal mind, and that the borders of our memory also shift and form part of the universal memory. The universal mind and memory could be evoked by symbols. When telling me this Joyce added that in his own work he never used the recognized symbols, preferring instead to use trivial and quadrivial words and local geographic allusions. The intention of magical evocation, however, remained the same.⁶⁹

The information Joyce gave Budgen is astonishingly similar, both in content and phrasing, to Yeats's 1901 essay "Magic" which was reprinted in Ideas of Good and Evil.

I believe in three doctrines, which have, as I think, been handed down from early times, and been the foundations of nearly all magical practices. These doctrines are--

- (1) That the borders of our minds are ever shifting and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
- (2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
- (3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols.⁷⁰

The important clue to the Wake's obscurity is not the presence or absence of a belief in the anima mundi in itself, but in the fact that "Joyce added that in his own

work he never used the recognized symbols." Litz has explained the failure of Finnegans Wake with a comparison to A Vision, arguing that Yeats's ability to keep his "confused concepts" separate from his creative work makes him the better artist.⁷¹ But the problem eventually turns on each author's conception of what constitutes art. Joyce's remarks on A Vision indicate that he thought Yeats should have put those "confused concepts" into an artistic work.⁷² A basic difference between Yeats and Joyce is in the former's insistence that the shared experience of poet and reader must involve some communicable image or symbol. The effort of Yeats's poetry, despite his esoteric preoccupations, was always to find the proper image in folklore or tradition to communicate his private vision. Joyce, however, expects his readers, in effect, to share his own consciousness. Although he always denied allegiance to any form of philosophy, Joyce seems to have believed in the anima mundi far more literally than Yeats ever did.

There is an interesting early prophecy of the problem with Finnegans Wake. Joyce met Yeats for the first time in 1902, and Yeats later wrote a recollection of their conversation. He was annoyed that Joyce insisted that his art "owed nothing to anything but his own mind which was much nearer to God than folklore" and Yeats added:

I felt exasperated and puzzled and walked up and down explaining the dependence of all good are on popular tradition. I said, 'The artist,

when he has lived for a long time in his own mind with the example of other artists as deliberate as himself, gets into a world of ideas pure and simple. He becomes very highly individualized and at last by sheer pursuit of perfection becomes sterile.⁷³

Yeats appears to have been more prophetic than he ever realized. The Wake may be replete with graphic details but they have lost the verismo that Joyce admired in Defoe and that was a salient feature of both A Portrait and Ulysses. As Litz has pointed out, "We feel that these details have been separated from the reality of his early experiences and are counters in a vast linguistic experiment."⁷⁴ Finnegans Wake was, however, as Yeats's early remarks show, the natural result of Joyce's artistic intentions literally followed. His personal conception of the nature of the artist as aloof and independent was a strong factor in his identification with Blake, but another part of their affinity, which Joyce probably never recognized, was the concomitant tendency toward obscurity. Kathleen Raine has described her perception of Blake's major artistic vice.

He [Blake] constantly introduces from his reading phrases and images so precise that it is impossible to doubt that he intended this to evoke, like quotations, this or that body of knowledge, and to give scope and resonance of a certain kind in a particular context. This has been the normal practice of poets at all times, including our own, and needs no justification. The only grounds for complaint against Blake might be that no one has read the works to which he alludes.⁷⁵

Perceiving Joyce's Blakean intentions in A Portrait and

Ulysses presents the same problem. Much of the allusive power of Joyce's references is lost unless the reader is aware of Yeats's Blake. With Finnegans Wake comes the added problem that Joyce expects not only a shared awareness of Blake from his readers, but an understanding of his own early study of the poet as well as a knowledge of his prior use of Blakean allusion. Clearly these are demands beyond those the writer can expect from even the un-common reader, and this fact helps explain why the Wake has become more of an artifact in literary criticism than a novel, which, if not by definition at least by tradition, presupposes a reading audience.

My examination of the way in which Blakean allusion functions in the Wake shows that the book is clearly "not a miseffectual whyancinthinous riot of blots and blurs and bars and balls and hoops and wriggles and juxtaposed jottings linked by spurts of speed" (FW, 118). But though it may be "the greatest product of human ingenuity since Benjamin Franklin invented lightning" as one reader claims,⁷⁶ as a work of art its basic assumptions are questionable--in view of our general understanding of what constitutes a "novel." The "problem of distance" which Booth perceived as the basic authorial flaw in A Portrait has been so magnified that its author alone seems the ideal reader of Finnegans Wake.

Notes

¹ Robert F. Gleckner, "Joyce and Blake," A James Joyce Miscellany, Third Series, p. 188.

² A. Walton Litz, The Art of James Joyce: Method and Design in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 97.

³ Gleckner, p. 222. Gleckner acknowledges that his listing is only a prolegomenon to future study of Blake and Joyce since he can only show that "the alliance [between the two artists] is as close as it is complex and difficult--and eminently worthy of continued study and exploration."

⁴ Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 571.

⁵ Robert Sage, "Before Ulysses--and After," Our Examination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, Samuel Beckett, et. al. (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1929), p. 149.

⁶ Ruth von Phul, "Circling the Square: A Study of Structure," A James Joyce Miscellany, Third Series, pp. 239-77.

⁷ Litz, p. 121.

⁸ Litz, p. 123, agrees that Joyce's technique involves the "constant re-working of the same basic situations" and "what we are confronted with in Joyce's total work is repeated treatment of the same body of experience by a variety of modern techniques."

⁹ Epstein, p. 23.

¹⁰ Two other rather "Joycean" aspects of the Ellis-Yeats presentation of Blake are present here and certainly provided areas of affinity between the two artists. Joyce learned that Blake's art was "found at home." That is, both Ellis and Yeats constantly stress the biographical element in Blake's mythology, e.g.:

But Los, though in the myth he stands for Time,
and other abstractions, is Blake, the author,
considered in respect of his poetic inspiration,
as is explained in the poem called 'Milton'.

(E-Y, I, 12)

The editors also emphasize that Blake used himself quite literally as a model for Los, and they point to the plate of Los at the forge in Jerusalem as a Blake self-portrait (E-Y, I, 16). Joyce's own predilection for self-portraiture is, of course, evident throughout his canon.

Secondly, since it was a part of his own art, Yeats consistently emphasizes the particular as gateway to the universal, and Joyce would have found confirmation for his own artistic method in this emphasis. His reported conversation with Arthur Power on this aspect of his art certainly has clear Blakean overtones:

For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal.
(Quoted by Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 520)

11 Sinnett, p. 80.

12 Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, I, 396. Such knowledge would have helped Joyce transfer his early symbolic attachment to the image of the Virgin Mary to a more generalized female principle (see his letter to Nora, SL, 165) and must also have helped him see Blake's "Mary" as the archetypal female principle of the Ellis-Yeats explication.

13 Samuel Beckett, "Dante. . . Bruno. Vico. . Joyce," Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, p. 4.

14 Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 51.

15 Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain, eds., The Workshop of Daedalus, p. 31. The creative arrangement of material is the basis of the Wake's break with linear narrative, and, as the Epiphanies show, this was always a part of Joyce's artistic impulse.

16 Stanislaus Joyce, p. 104.

17 In Stuart Gilbert's explanation of the micro-macrocosm in Ulysses he refers on one page (p. 47) to Blake's "grain of sand," quotes the hermetic adage, "That which is below is as that which is above," and in a note alludes to "Blake's view that 'Everything that lives

is holy'." Since Gilbert got much of his information from Joyce, the examples may certainly be Joyce's, especially since they correspond so closely to Yeats's favorite adages.

¹⁸ Gilbert, p. 61.

¹⁹ Florence L. Walzl, "Gabriel and Michael: The Conclusion of 'The Dead,'" James Joyce Quarterly 4 (Fall 1966), 25-26.

²⁰ Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 274.

²¹ Stuart Gilbert reports, p. 62, that "the personality of Stephen, it may be noted, fits better the Blakean than the orthodox conception of the Second Person of the Trinity."

²² Gilbert, p. 29. Gilbert also comments on the influence of Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism on the structure of Ulysses, (p. 53). The conflation of Blake with Yeats's own occult sources of information suggests that Joyce was well acquainted with the philosophy expounded by the Ellis-Yeats Blake, and that work seems to be the matrix of his interest in esoteric philosophy.

²³ Quoted by Raine, I, 396.

²⁴ Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 304.

²⁵ Clive Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake (n.p.: Northwestern University Press, 1966), p. 110.

²⁶ Clive Hart, "Finnegans Wake in Perspective," James Joyce Today: Essays on the Major Works (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966), pp. 135-65.

²⁷ Joyce probably acquired this information from his 1912 reading of Ellis' The Real Blake, p. 341.

²⁸ This intellectual-artistic development is a factor in the education of the artist in Joyce's 1904 essay "A Portrait of the Artist," as Ellmann's analysis suggests:

He [Joyce's hero] is sharply differentiated from silly fellow-students and from worldly Jesuit masters; against both groups Joyce poses the

artist's holy office, which the young man accepts in two stages. In the first he searches for 'an arduous good,' and his mind, like that of Yeats's alchemical heroes, is 'ever trembling toward its ecstasy.' Over his soul 'the image of beauty had fallen as a mantle,' and he leaves the church through the gates of Assisi to find in art an unworldly bliss.

Searching for sanctions he studies not St. Francis but the heresiarchs Joachim Abbas, Bruno, and Michael Sendivogius. . . .The plan has Yeats, the Theosophists, and Blake behind it. . . . (James Joyce, p. 151; italics mine)

29 James S. Atherton, The Books at the Wake (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1959), p. 235.

30 Gleckner, p. 222.

31 Atherton, p. 235; Adaline Glasheen, A Census of Finnegans Wake (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), p. 15.

32 Gleckner, p. 192.

33 Although he confines himself to identifying the Blake allusions, Gleckner too sees this page of the Wake as "a major text for understanding both the significance of the Blake allusions in Finnegans Wake and Joyce's technique in making those allusions," p. 206.

34 Frances M. Boldereff, Reading Finnegans Wake (Woodward, Pa: Classic Nonfiction Library, 1959), p. 42.

35 Yeats, Mythologies, p. 267.

36 Yeats, Variorum Poems, p. 849.

37 As Gleckner has noted, p. 197, Blake also appears in the Feenichts Playhouse production in Book II, pp. 219-24 as Glugg, so that Blake the artist is in the Wake as Jerry ("sir Blake tribes bleak"), Shem (as "alshemist"), and Glugg. Although there is always a problem deciding "Who is Who When Everybody is Somebody Else," as Glasheen has phrased it, there is clearly a consistency in Joyce's use of Blake the artist. He is a portion of the artist principle in the Wake, the "satiety of arthurs" (FW, 229),

all of whom, "reading off his fleshskin and writing with his quillbone" (FW, 229), are ultimately Joyce himself.

38 Note that Blake, Ibsen, and Swift are heroic not only in their creative work but in their personal lives. Cf. Joyce's 1905 letter to his brother (SL, 54):

I am sure however that the whole structure of heroism is, and always was, a damned lie and that there cannot be any substitute for the individual passion as the motive power of everything--art and philosophy included.

For Joyce's conception of Ibsen's heroism see his 1901 letter to Ibsen (SL, 7). Yeats's emphasis on the correspondence between Blake's fiery personality and the intensity and passion of his mythic vision made him one of Joyce's earliest choices as archetypal artist-hero.

39 Shaun is complaining that he is "now becoming about fed up be going circulating about them new hikler's highways like them nameless souls, ercked and skorned and grizzild all over, till it's rusty October in this bleak forest. . . ." (FW, 410). The mention of "bleak forest" indicates a Blakean system, and one of Shaun's possible solutions, "to isolate i from my multiple Mes" is a definitely Yeats-Blakean way of transcending the cycles.

40 Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake, p.153.

41 Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 61.

42 Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake, p.47.

43 Ibid.

44 Ellmann, Eminent Domain, p. 51.

45 Bernard Benstock, Joyce-Again's Wake: An Analysis of Finnegans Wake (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1965), p. 21.

46 Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake, p. 124.

47 M.J.C. Hodgart, "Music and the Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies," A Conceptual Guide to Finnegans Wake, ed. Michael H. Begnal and Fritz Senn (University Park and London:

The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1974), p. 85.

48 Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, II, 463.

49 Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, I, 411.

50 Gleckner, p. 192. On the basis of his limited investigation Gleckner wisely does not assert, but suggests, that such is the case.

51 Quoted by Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 563.

52 Gleckner, p. 198.

53 Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 559. And, of course, "thuartpeatrick" is a motif in the Wake; Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake, p. 223.

54 Atherton, p. 65.

55 Hazard Adams, "Blake and the Postmodern," in William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), p. 6.

56 Michael Begnal, "Love that Dares to Speak its Name," A Conceptual Guide to Finnegans Wake, p. 141.

57 Hart, Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake, p. 214.

58 Ibid., pp. 66-69.

59 Hart's study of the basic elements in the Wake supports my view. His conclusion is that "most of this knowledge was acquired very early, in the days when Joyce liked to parade his learning in unusual and obscure fields, but it was not until Finnegans Wake that he fully developed all the potentialities of the correspondence as a literary device" (Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake, p. 150). Litz, p. 77, also says that the materials of FW "had been accumulating in his [Joyce's] imagination since childhood."

60 Gleckner, pp. 209-15.

61 See, e.g. Elliot Paul, "Mr Joyce's Treatment of Plot," Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, p. 132; Litz, p. 124.

62 Gleckner, p. 217.

63 Beckett, p. 3.

64 Robert McAlmon, "Mr. Joyce Directs an Irish Word Ballet," Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, p. 110.

65 Thomas E. Connolly, ed. Scribbledehobble: The Ur-Workbook for Finnegans Wake (n.p.: Northwestern University Press, 1961), p. viii.

66. References to the return to the cycles in the Wake, the basic movement of the text, indicate that Joyce had the Blakean vision in mind. This confirms Hart's supposition about the pattern of "The Mental Traveller," and, I think, confirms my suggestion that Joyce had a Blakean scene in mind at the end of Ulysses. There are five references to the return to the cycles in which the Blakean echo is distinct.

and all that has been done has yet to be done
and done again, when's day's woe, and lo, you're
doomed, joyday dawns and, la, you dominate
(FW, 194)

The diction and imagery suggests "The Mental Traveller," and I think "joyday" is a reference to Blake's famous "Glad Day," which is mentioned twice later in the Wake (387:35; 470:17). The antagonism between youth and age is also suggested in the description of the progression of life on p. 336 of the Wake:

And then. Be old. The next thing is. We
are once amore as babes awondering in a wold
made fresh where with the hen in the
storyabout we start from scratch.

The Blakean vision as analogous to, yet independent of, the Bible is suggested by "a wold made fresh."

. . .and we are recurrently meeting em. . .
in cycloannalism, from space to space, time
after time, in various phases of scripture
as in various poses of sepulture. (FW, 254)

Space and time suggest Los and Enitharmon, and "various phases of scripture" again recalls both Yeats's emphasis on Blake's paralleling his myth with the book of Genesis and Blavatsky's emphasis on esoteric philosophy as the fundamental truth of all religions. "Poses of sepulture" suggests the sleeping couples of Joyce's works who are preparing for both a new day and, possibly, a new life, Gretta and Gabriel, Bloom and Molly, and the Earwickers.

But Jumbluffer, begdad, sir, yond would be
 for a once over our all honoured christmastyde
 easteredman. Fourth position of solution.
 How johnny! Finest view from horizon. Tableau
 final. Two me see. Male and female unmask we
 hem. Begum by gunne! Who now broothes old-
 brawn. Dawn! (FW, 590)

This is very close to the Blakean finale of Ulysses. Yeats emphasized the rotation of the Zoas, and the "fourth position of solution" and "tableau final" suggest the Ninth Night and the end of the process. It is a new life, a new creation; "Male and female unmask we hem" paraphrases the creation in Genesis. It is "Dawn!" the morning after the Ninth Night of the Zoas and possibly the morning of 17 June 1904 as well. I think Joyce's awareness of The Four Zoas is also reflected in, "Tick up on time. Howday you doom? That rising day sinks rosing in a night of nine week's wonder" (FW, 517).

67 Litz., p. 77.

68 Frank Budgen, "James Joyce's Work in Progress and old Norse Poetry," Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, p. 41.

69 Budgen, James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses, p. 325; italics mine.

70 Yeats, Ideas of Good and Evil, p. 29. Joyce almost certainly would have read Yeats's essay during his university days in Dublin, and his 1912 reading of Ellis' The Real Blake would have brought the essay to his attention again. In a chapter titled "Blake, Swedenborg, and Nature" Ellis makes a specific reference to Yeats's belief in the anima mundi and to the essay "Magic."

In an article of Magic published in a volume of meditations, called by the Blakean title Ideas of Good and Evil, by a former collaborator of the present writer, Mr. W.B. Yeats, all who are interested in it may find an account of certain

experiences that caused Mr. Yeats to form a belief in the objective existence of a general memory, which is not that of any individual, which exists as it were in the air, and on which, by means of magical invocations or symbols, we can draw at will. Events are recorded in the air, not the respirable air, the astral, and magic gives us ingress to that reservoir of unspoken history.

Blake's theory went further. He held that all imaginations are accompanied by a movement of an unknown something that never forgets its own movements, and unites us to one another. (The Real Blake, p.27)

Thanks to Ellis, Joyce may have associated "Magic" and its belief in a world soul with Blake.

71 Litz, p. 125.

72 Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 608.

73 Quoted by Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 107.

74 Litz, p. 124.

75 Raine, I, xxxi.

76 J. Mitchell Morse, "Where Terms Begin," A Conceptual Guide to Finnegans Wake, p. 17.

Epilogue

Every Man's Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individuality.

William Blake, Milton

The complex affiliation among Blake, Yeats, and Joyce is no singular anomaly in literary history. It is paradigmatic of the way in which all true artists relate to their predecessors and shows the need for a revision of our critical attitude toward relationships among writers. My use of the term "affiliation" rather than "influence" is a procedural rather than semantic distinction. In literary study "influence" is a term which covers a multitude of critical presumptions. Too often such studies are basically comparison/contrast essays which illuminate the mind of the critic more than they offer any information about the actual interrelationship between the authors involved. Because of this casual use of the term "influence" to denote any discernible presence of one artist in another's work, we have no clear methodology for examining the ways in which writers actually relate to one another.

Etymologically "influence" has both a meaning and a connotation that are the opposite of the actual process of artistic development. From its original meaning as "emanation from the stars," the designation of the influencing agent as paramount has remained and even affected the secondary meaning to denote "ascendancy,

sway, control." But in the development of a true artist the action is reversed. The individual who remains under the "control" of a predecessor is an imitator rather than a creator. The artist must, as Blake has so declaim, "Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's." The problem is that an artist's "system," however original, properly develops in relation to what has preceded. A part of the adolescence of the artist's development is his preference for "one or two private admirations."¹ This sort of thing is apparent in Yeats's interest in Shelley, for example, and Joyce's passion for Ibsen. But such affinities are, as I have shown, always under the "ascendancy" of the later writer. It is his conception of his predecessor's life and art which initiates the affiliation and his reading of the earlier artist's works which determines their meaning for him.

When we speak of the influence or effect of one writer on another, therefore, our analysis must follow what is known about the ways in which literary tradition is actually transmitted. It is imperative first that the later artist's disposition toward his predecessor be established. We must know, for example, the extent of "Yeats's Blake" and "Joyce's Blake" before we can properly ascertain the meaning and importance of Blake's presence in Yeats's and Joyce's creative work. "Influence" is exerted principally not from past to present but from present to past. It is, in Auden's very helpful phrase,

"a literary transference,"² in which the later artist never surrenders his autonomy but strengthens and develops his artistic identity.

Yeats once wrote that "the excitement at the first reading of the great poets. . . should be a sort of violent imaginative puberty."³ For both Yeats and Joyce the affiliation with Blake was a part of such a literary adolescence. It was grounded in their search for a tradition in which to write and was part of their attempt to solve the aesthetic problems they faced in their own time. For both of them Blake was only half of what they considered the artistic ideal. Yeats's desire to fuse a Shelley and a Dickens in one artist is comparable to Joyce's choice of Defoe and Blake as expressions of the polarities of English literature. Each searched for predecessors principally in self-reflexive terms; the writer's identification with other artists is always an indicator of his own particular artistic identity.

Both Yeats and Joyce began their association with Blake early, during their artistic apprenticeship, as it were; both returned to Blake later to prepare public lectures, and Blake's presence has been often noted in their creative work; but the precise nature of their affiliation with Blake has never before been analyzed. I feel that this critical oversight is partially due to the generally-held connotation of "influenced by" as an inferior sort of development, suggesting that a

writer is indeed enslaved by another's system. Clearly this is not true of either Yeats or Joyce, nor of any true artist. But although "Every thing in Eternity shines by its own Internal light" as Blake tells us in Milton (K, 491), no artist of any merit actually exists sui generis; "his significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists."⁴ The study of affiliation makes such appreciation truly possible. It proceeds from the later artist's own imaginative creation of his predecessor and focuses on the effect of that relationship on the work of the later artist. By admitting distortion of the past we can better understand the present.

This notion of the artist's "re-creation" of the past has been the chief critical stumbling block to the proper study of affiliation. In spite of the "map of misreading" with which Harold Bloom has attempted to overlay literary topography, admitting that he had critical bias or "error" is most often considered a denigration of the artist--as Bloom himself shows in his study of Yeats, whose "misguided" work on Blake he deplors for its inaccuracies. As students of literature, we should instead applaud this artistic bias, for it provides entrance to the writer's personal vision. Thomas Hardy has observed that "a writer who is not a mere imitator looks upon the world with his personal yes, and in his peculiar moods; thence grows up his style."⁵ We must understand that the writer looks

upon the past with a similar personal bias which is equally constructive. In the area of my study of affiliation it is clear that what Blake meant is ultimately far less important than what Yeats and Joyce thought he meant. But critics never tire of noting and disparaging the "errors" of interpretation among artists. Writing of Blake in the twentieth century one commentator has noted:

Other writers have seen a different Blake or found useful different elements in him. In D.H. Lawrence it is the sexual ethic and the revolt against reason, but they are sentimentalized. Absent in Lawrence is the rationality with which Blake attacked reason. In Dylan Thomas, it is the bardic voice, the rhetorical lament plus the symbolism of descent and cycle. The beat poets of the fifties were attracted to Blake's 'simplicity' but did not understand its deceptiveness. They insisted on the same innocent wildness in Blake that Eliot attempted to put down. This was an unfortunate distortion indeed, since it reveals so clearly the limitations of these poets.⁶

I contend that any aspect of a writer's view which "reveals so clearly" either his talents or limitations cannot be called an "unfortunate distortion." "Hirp, Hirp, for their Missed Understandings! chirps the Ballad of Perce-Oreille" in Finnegans Wake (175), and the literary scholar must be equally sanguine about the "missed understandings" of his subject, for they help reveal the artist's "personal yes," the basis of his art.

T.S. Eliot is reported to have planned a book to be called The Fruitfulness of Misunderstanding, considering, among other affiliations, his own misreading of the French

Symbolists.⁷ Not every creative artist can achieve the distance from his own work and private admirations needed to perform such self-criticism, but certainly such dispassionate objectivity should be expected from the literary scholar. For it is only after the pattern of affiliation between authors has been established that any fruitful notion of the "meaningfulness" of a predecessor's presence in an artist's work can be ascertained.

After exploring the specific details of Yeats's association with Blake as I have done, it becomes clear that the common critical practice of noting Blakean parallels in Yeats's poetry is somewhat reductive and often misleading. Yeats's art cannot be equated with the cut and paste method that the simple observance of similarities most often suggests. By establishing the basic facts of the Blake-Yeats affiliation, however, and exploring Yeats's use of Blake in his creative work as I have done, we get a microcosmic view of Yeats's entire development as an artist. Affiliation is one of those particulars which illuminates the whole and is especially useful in studying the work of a very complex artist.

Joyce's affiliation with Blake is equally illuminating. Our awareness of the source of Joyce's knowledge of Blake offers an entrance to his use of Blakean allusion in his novels. The polysemous nature of these allusions, revealed by our understanding of "Joyce's Blake," highlights not

only Joyce's affiliation with Blake but his use of source material in his novels in general and the particular nature of his use of allusion throughout his oeuvre. Once again the particular contains the universal.

Furthermore, such a focused study also enables us to generalize. Although my emphasis has been on the individual relationships of Yeats and Joyce to their predecessor, their common artistic concerns are apparent. If we look at the lineaments of their use of Blake's mythic system, it is clear that Yeats and Joyce ultimately have more in common with each other than with Blake. The Four Zoas with its apocalyptic "resurrection to unity" influenced both Joyce and Yeats in their search for personal integration; it was the structural basis both of Stephen's development as artist and Yeats's concept of the Mask. But "The Mental Traveller" was the pattern each adopted for his final cosmic vision. Yeats's footnote in A Vision expressing astonishment that his cosmology bears such a close resemblance to Blake's poem may reflect genuine surprise,⁸ and there is little evidence that Joyce consciously realized how closely the pattern of Finnegans Wake followed Blake's poem. Both artists' final epic statements were not "influenced" by "The Mental Traveller," but were the modern artist's response to his world, constructed within a similar mythographic tradition. As Northrop Frye suggests, "most of the epics and epic actions of the twentieth century are ironic, and it is

The Mental Traveller, not Prometheus Unbound or Jerusalem, that is nearest in form to them. . .the only paradise it can reach is a lost paradise."⁹ The final epic statements of Yeats and Joyce reveal just this aspect of modernity. Each artist formed his personal myth on a notion of the possibility of paradise regained but ended with a fundamentally ironic depiction of cyclic life. Modern man does not achieve hope--he outgrows its delusion. The similar pattern in the affiliation of both Yeats and Joyce with Blake shows the domination of his own time in an artist's work; his relationship to the past is always in terms of the present.

The proper study of literary affiliation is, then, not simply an accumulation of sterile facts but is, as any literary study should be, a way of entering the personal vision of the artist and understanding the unique way in which "Every Man's Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individuality."

Notes

¹ T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot, p. 39.

² W.H. Auden, "A Literary Transference," Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Albert J. Guerard (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 135.

³ Yeats, The Cutting of an Agate, pp. 135-36.

⁴ Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot, p. 38.

⁵ Thomas Hardy, Life and Art, coll. and intro. Ernest Brennecke, Jr. (1925; rpt. Freeport: N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1968), p. 71.

⁶ Hazard Adams, "Blake and the Postmodern," in William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon, p. 6.

⁷ Joseph H. Summers, The Heirs of Donne and Jonson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 128-29.

⁸ Yeats, A Vision, p. 189.

⁹ Frye, Fables of Identity, p. 263.

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