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**The Double War: Yeats's Philosophy and
Sense of National Identity in Evolution,
from *John Sherman* through
“Meditations in Time of Civil War”**

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Social and Cultural Sciences

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**The Double War: Yeats's Philosophy and Sense of National Identity in Evolution,
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ITO, Yuki

Introduction.

1. The Nobel Prize and the "Double War"

The Anglo-Irish poet William Butler Yeats won the Nobel Prize for Literature during a violent period of Irish history, which included five significant events: the Easter Rising (1916), the Irish War of Independence (1919-21), foundation of the Northern Ireland Parliament (1921) the creation of the Irish Free State Government (1922), and the following Irish Civil War (1922-23). Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1923, the very year of the Irish Civil War. In his Nobel lecture, Yeats referred to the "disorder over the greater part of Ireland" as a situation in which "murder answered murder" (A, 411; abbreviated title-citations are listed in full, following the main text). Yeats further commented, "violence can remember the noblest beauty" (411). This last aphorism may sound strange to those unfamiliar with his philosophical stance, yet it represents a key notion of Yeatsian art, one which does not imply superficial praise of the heroic aspects of war. It rather represents a profound philosophical stance which focuses on the central clash of opposing powers as a vortex of creative energy: a philosophy of conflict. This dissertation will investigate Yeats's philosophy of conflict, revealing it to be an instrumental basis of his poetic thought, as well as a conceptual stance fundamental to Yeats's relationship with sociopolitical conflict.

The scope of Yeats's philosophy considers not only war in the material world but also the spiritual realm, in the sense that Yeats pondered "the perfection that is from a man's combat with himself and that which is from a combat with circumstance" (AVB,

8), and described this dual inner- and outer-conflict as “the double war” (*Myths*, 331).

As a member of the Anglo-Irish Protestant gentry and an activist in the Irish independence movement, Yeats had personally suffered from several major crises—of life, of identity and of nationality—especially during the series of wars mentioned above. Though he was listed on the hit-list of the Republican IRA under the heading of “vendetta on a national scale” (Foster *Life II*, 230), as he mentioned in his Nobel lecture, Yeats adamantly refused to remove himself from danger, remaining in “a little old tower” in the west of Ireland (A, 411). Here, throughout the battles of the civil war, Yeats composed some of his greatest works, until his tower-bridge was blown up by the Republican IRA, on August 19, 1922 (Foster *Life II*, 213-16). Yeats wrote that “porcelain is best made, a Japanese critic has said, where the conditions of life are hard” (*AVB*, 24). Indeed, Yeats lived in difficult conditions; as he wrote in a letter to Olivia Shakespeare dated October 9, 1922, “we are living in explosion” (L, 690). Living in his ancient tower, meditating in order to face his “own violence,” his “own ignorance and heaviness”; that is, in order to pursue his internal conflict (A, 412), Yeats sought to create “the noblest beauty.” Indeed, in such dual conditions of inner and outer conflict, a “double war,” he wrote several monumental works, including “Meditations in Time of Civil War” (1923), and *A Vision* (1925, 1937).

Scholars of Yeats tend to regard this expression of philosophy of conflict as limited to Yeats’s later works, such as *The Tower* (1928), which compiles those poems written throughout the series of the Irish wars, beginning in 1916. While Yeats’s philosophical thought certainly evolved during this violent era, this study will argue that the existence of Yeats’s philosophy of conflict is a lifelong theme, found as well in his early works; in particular, one of the most neglected works, *John Sherman* (1891). This study will also examine Yeats’s philosophy of conflict in the context of “double war,” illustrating the

two poles of inner- (psychological) conflict and outer (sociopolitical) conflict, via an investigation of Yeats's early works through to his later works, in order to shed new light on the evolution of Yeatsian philosophy, and concepts of national identity.

2. Philosophy of Self-Conflict and Nietzsche

The tower Yeats purchased in Ballylee, County Galway, in 1916 was an ancient Norman tower named Thoor Ballylee. Yeats began rebuilding it in 1917. During the civil war, remaining in this old tower amidst the flames of battle, Yeats wrote the major part of *A Vision* (1st ed. 1925, henceforth *AVA*; 2nd ed. 1937, henceforth *AVB*), in which he articulated his dialectic philosophy, utilizing idiosyncratic symbols and coinage, in expounding his self-mythology.

As Yeats presented in *A Vision*, in his philosophy all things are made, sustained and renewed via conflicts with their opposites: "all things are from antithesis" (*AVA*, 151). This philosophy thus posits conflict as creativity. The most significant aspect of Yeats's philosophical outlook is the poetic principle, in which the creation of art arises as antithesis: a "marshalling into a vast *antithetical* structure *antithetical* material" (*AVA*, 171; *AVB*, 296-97). That is, "all the gains of man come from conflict with the opposite of his true being" (*AVB*, 13); and therefore, "He [an artist] only can create the greatest imaginable beauty who has endured all imaginable pangs" (*Myth*, 332). In Yeats's philosophy, poetic truth is distilled from just such an agonistic crucible.

Numerous scholars have noted that Yeats's philosophy coincides remarkably well with the thought of Nietzsche. These include Harold Bloom (*Yeats*. 1970; also in *The Anxiety of Influence*. 1971), Dennis Donohue (*Yeats*. 1971), Otto Bohlman (*Yeats and Nietzsche*. 1982), and Frances Nesbitt Opper (*Mask and Tragedy*. 1987).

Bloom states: "Nietzsche is the prophet of the antithetical, and his *Genealogy of*

Morals is the profoundest study available to me of revisionary and ascetic strains in the aethetic temperament” (*The Anxiety of Influence*, 8), and calls Yeats “Nietzsche's disciple” (9). As Bloom paraphrases, Yeats uses the word *antithetical* as “a term to describe a kind of a man, a quester who seeks his own opposite” (*The Anxiety of Influence*, 65) rather than as an adjective. That is, one’s antithetical will embodies the will to self-realization—which is brought about in facing and fighting with one’s opposite—one’s “anti-self” (*Myth*, 331), or one’s ideal. The opposite of *antithetical* is termed *primary*—another of Yeats’s specialized terms; that is, the will to self-denial and the will to escape from one’s internal conflict (*AVA*, 13-15; *AVB*, 71-72).

Yeats’s dialectic of *antithetical* and *primary* corresponds well to Nietzsche’s *Herrenmoral* and *Sklavenmoral*. Concerning these two, Yeats accepted William Hausmann’s translation, of “noble morality” and “slave morality.” Noble morality discovers its anti-self, struggles with it, and attains self-realization resulting in an affirmation of joy in life—equatable with Yeats’s concept of the *antithetical*. Nietzsche’s noble morality “only seeks for its antithesis in order to say, still more thankfully, still more rejoicingly, Yea to itself” (*Genealogy of Morals*, 25)—a remarkably similar concept to Yeats’s “*antithetical*.”

Nietzsche’s concept of slave-morality is opposite of noble morality (and thus of Yeats’s concept of the *antithetical*). Nietzsche’s concept of slave-morality seeks not one’s inner self but the outer world, reacting to it passively, responding in the negative to one’s will or life (35). This is close to the notion which Yeats terms *primary*. Yeats’s *primary* is “presented to consciousness as opposed to consciousness of self, that is the object of perception or thought, the non-ego” (*AVA*, 14). Therefore, as Donohue writes, it is possible to say that “the most important philosophical influence and the crucial figure in Yeats's poetic life, if any single figure may be named, is Nietzsche” (48).

Nietzsche's influence on Yeats's philosophy is prominent, from his first reading of the philosopher, in 1902.

While connections to Nietzsche are evident in the studies mentioned, these remain limited in that when critics discuss Nietzsche's influence on Yeats, the tendency has been to focus only on inner-conflict. A critical viewpoint which investigates Yeats's philosophy in the context of the "double-war" is therefore needed. As such, this study addresses Yeatsian conflict from the dual perspective of "double war" (inner and outer conflict), in order to show Nietzschean influence vis-à-vis Yeats's evolving sense of national Anglo-Irish identity.

3. Dissertation Outline

This study will present the genealogy of Yeats's philosophy of "double war" from his early career. Chapter I explores Yeats's sociopolitical and psychological struggle to become an independent poet in colonial Ireland, as an Anglo-Irish writer. In particular, the topic of Yeats's political views will be addressed, as there is a longstanding critical theory that the early Yeats as a Celtic poet was politically naïve and escapist. (*Cf.* Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry*. 1932; Saddlemyer, "The Cult of the Celt: Pan-Celticism in the Nineties." 1965; MacNiece, *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats*. 1967; Coote, *W. B. Yeats*. 1997, and others). In this Chapter, the theory of "naïvety" will be challenged.

In Chapter II, Yeats's neglected work *John Sherman and Dhoya* (1891; which is as well the background text to "The Lake Isle of Innisfree") will be examined. In *John Sherman*, a critically neglected work, it will be shown that the germ of Yeats's dialectic of the *antithetical* and the *primary* is already emerging, more than a decade prior to his acquaintance with Nietzsche. As well, Yeats's prejudice against Irish Catholics and

Anglo-Irish Protestants will be investigated, and philosophical issues related to the formation of national identity in Yeats will be examined.

John Sherman (1891) was first published by Yeats under a pseudonym, and later deleted from his collected works (after 1908). As *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia* (1997) mentions, “[It] was excluded from the canon” (McCready 223). Even today, although major critics refer to *John Sherman* in biographical studies, the work remains largely unstudied (cf. Hone, *W. B. Yeats*. 1943; Ellmann, *Man and the Mask*. 1948; Jeffers, *Man and the Poet*. 1966; Murphy, “William Butler Yeats’s John Sherman.” 1979; Coote, *W. B. Yeats*. 1997, Foster, *Life I*. 1998, and others). By investigating this neglected work, new light will be cast on the early Yeats.

In Chapter III, Yeats’s development of philosophy of conflict as tragedy and its linkages with the Irish mythological hero, Nietzschean philosophy, and the Anglo-Irish will be discussed, from three perspectives: Yeats’s encounters with Lady Gregory, Cuchulain, and Nietzsche, in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In the process of this discussion, prevailing critical views of Yeats’s ideas on tragedy, especially the tragedies of Cuchulain, the Easter Rising, and WWI will be challenged.

Yeats’s notion of tragedy as the sublimation of “double war” will be discussed in Chapter IV. Facing the dual poles of outer and inner conflict in the Irish Civil War, Yeats crystalized the philosophy of conflict as his poetic notion of tragedy, connecting the Nietzschean philosophy of tragedy with the sociopolitical decline of the Anglo-Irish landlord class, and as a result embodied this integrated philosophical approach in his works as noble tragedy.

In this final Chapter, the notable poems in *The Tower* — especially the first section, “Ancestral Houses,” and the fourth section, ‘My Descendants’ in “Meditations in Time of Civil War” will be discussed from this viewpoint. These selections are

chosen as they well reflect Yeats's view of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in relation to his concept of noble tragedy. Creating a tragic vision of an Anglo-Irish nation and culture, during a time of colonial conflict in Ireland, Yeats asserted the joy of life existing within these conflicts, and also asserted his sense of Anglo-Irish national identity. Living life through the "double war," Yeats incarnated his philosophy as poetry, in asserting his conception of Anglo-Irish identity.

Chapter I.

Double War: Yeats's Development of Psychological Resistance in the Context of Irish Cultural Independence.

1. Challenging Critical Theory: Reframing Yeats's Concept of "Celtic Twilight"

In this Chapter, Yeats's sociopolitical and psychological struggle to become an independent poet and cultural innovator in colonial Ireland will be discussed, via an investigation of the historical background of the nineteenth century Celtic Revival movement. In the course of this investigation, a longstanding critical theory which considers the early Yeats, as a Celtic poet, to be politically naïve and escapist, will be challenged. Yeats lived through a turning point in contemporary Irish history, a period defined by a series of conflicts to attain the independence of Ireland. He began his career as a poet of the Celtic Revival, and as a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (also known as the IRB or the Fenians), and entered into both cultural and political Irish nationalism movements. Entering into the "double war" of internal and external conflicts, partly represented by these twofold independence movements, Yeats developed his poetic philosophy. Keeping a distance from persons and agencies attached to narrowly nationalistic views, he broke the new ground in Irish poetry composed in English.

1.1. "Celtic Twilight" and Mainstream Critical Theory

The basis of the "Celtic Twilight" theory regarding Yeats can be found in comments presented in F. R. Leavis's *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1933): "The imagery of the Celtic Twilight is heavily worked—'pale,' 'dim,' 'shadowy,' 'desolate,' 'cloud-pale,' 'dream-heavy'" in Yeats's early works" (36). The term "Celtic Twilight"

itself was taken from the title of Yeats's celebrated prose work, *The Celtic Twilight* (1893, 1902), which was adopted for the writing style of the "land of beautiful dreams" (MacNeice 46) of the Celts. Leavis goes on to denigrate Yeats's early work, regarding the early Yeats as "naïvely romantic"; his oeuvre being described as a "poetry of withdrawal" (32, 37). The longevity of Leavis's view can be seen as late as 1967. Louis MacNeice advocates a similar theory regarding Yeats's Celtic phase:

Yeats's own view of Ireland was not consistent throughout his life and was itself, it must be admitted, sometimes distorted or blurred by abstractions, by wishful thinking, by sentimentality, by partisanship. In his early days he tried to equate Ireland with Celtic Utopia – a land of beautiful dreams. . . . During this period his nationalism was orthodox and romantic. In his middle years some experience of public life and politics disillusioned him. (46)

From MacNeice's viewpoint, it was not until after 1916, in his fifties, that Yeats came to recognize "the creativity of violence" (49). "The creativity of violence" is an expression related to Yeats's dialectic philosophy of conflict. Here, as this study will show, MacNeice mistakenly limits Yeats's dialectic thought to his later career. Another critic, Ann Saddlemyer severely criticizes the early Yeats in her essay, "The Cult of the Celt: Pan-Celticism in the Nineties" (1965):

This "celtic [*sic.*] revival" of the last decade of the century was no new phenomenon in literature. It was essentially a re-naming and re-ordering of a family trait, the "folk spirit," marked by the heightened passions and superstitions common to all literature rising from the people. (19)

Saddlemyer's polemic labels Yeats's Celtic Revival movement as derivative, superficial and more controversially, superstitious. While the Celtic Revival movement may be accused of a certain romanticism based on "superstitions," the main aim of the movement

was to recover ethnic myth and history, in order to revalue Irish dignity and pride, with the goal of asserting capability. By resurrecting cultural memory, as descendents of ancient Celtic heroes, the Irish as a people could be reframed as an autonomous, independent society, able to govern its own nation. As Yeats's older friend, Standish O'Grady, anxiously predicted, the literary movement would foster the Irish people's cultural nationalism, and finally bring about "a military movement" for the independence of Ireland (A, 314). The Celtic Revival movement was therefore not based on romantic (i.e. culturally naive, powerless, mistaken) "superstition," but was on the contrary an influential literary movement.

This problematic theory, stemming from Leavis's analysis, has remained largely consistent through the decades as part of the generic critical understanding of the early Yeats. In the introduction of *W. B. Yeats: An Anthology of Recent Criticism* (1995), G. R. Taneja echoes this discourse:

Yeats's Irish obsession remained an integral and complex part of his personality during this early period. . . . But Yeats's theoretical distancing from contemporary Irish life and politics became hard to maintain. (14)

Taneja states that the early Yeats kept his "theoretical" distance "from contemporary Irish life and politics." This implies that Taneja likewise regards the early Yeats as a politically naive poet who was, to paraphrase, single-mindedly obsessed with Irish or Celtic motifs (Taneja, *ibid*).

It was not until as recently as 2006, in the Introduction to the *The Cambridge Companion to W. B. Yeats*, that Marjorie Howes indicated a long-term critical misunderstanding: "Critics sometimes label his early poems escapist, but this is somehow misleading" (3). In addition, in order to correct the distorted figure of Yeats, she offers a revised, or at least a less reductive, perception: "While [Yeats] often appeared to con-

temporaries as the impractical, otherworldly, Celtic poet, in many respects Yeats was a shrewd judge of people, events, and opportunities” (5). Howes in her notes further suggest that most critics regard Yeats in his early phase as an “impractical, otherworldly, Celtic poet.”

The opinions of Leavis, MacNeice, Saddlemyer, and Taneja given above offer some brief examples of the misinterpretations the early Yeats, widely disseminated by scholars. Even a work as recent as *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature* (2000) states that Yeats’s Celtic Twilight works are “obscure” (Welch 390). As can be seen, critical views which consider the early Yeats to be obscurantist, romantic and naïve have remained fairly consistent throughout the last eight decades. Although new questions have been raised, there have been no major studies to date which provide a comprehensive re-visioning of the prevalent, longstanding critical positions here outlined.

1.2. Reframing The Celtic Revival: Racism, Resistance and Ethnic Dignity

In contrast to pre-existing criticism, Yeats’s early Celtic Twilight style was not politically naïve, if it is understood that his main aim was to revive the, so to say, glorious culture of the Irish Celts, via literature. In his essay, “The Celtic Element in Literature” (1902), Yeats catalogues the names of the Celtic legends and folklore, writing: “The Celtic movement,’ as I understand, is principally the opening of this fountain [of Celtic legends and folklore]” (*E&I*, 186-87). This literary movement came to be known as the Celtic Revival, which was not in its inception designed as a romantic fondness for fantasy, but rather a program aimed at cultural revitalization.

During the colonialist period of Ireland, the recovery of the dignity of the Irish national culture of Ireland was an urgent theme. Discriminatory discourses against the

Irish thwarted the political liberty of Ireland—as can be seen in Yeats’s autobiography: “They say Ireland is not fit for self-government” (A, 122). There were not a few opposed to the Irish movement of self-government, due to racial discrimination, and Yeats directly opposed such people. Racism against the Irish follows stereotypical themes related to colonial repression and control: the Irish people were called barbarians without rational minds, “gorilla-like guerrillas” or “troglydites”—thus, were unable to govern themselves (Curtis, xxii). Physiognomy, phrenology, and pseudo-Darwinism were called into play as further proofs enforcing such racial discrimination. The nineteenth century anatomist and zoologist (and racial theorist) Robert Knox wrote in his influential book of racial theory, *The Races of Man* (1850), his “scientific” observation that:

[T]he Celtic race does not, and never could be made to comprehend the meaning of the word liberty. . . . I appeal to the Saxon men of all countries whether I am right or not in my estimate of the Celtic character. Furious fanaticism; a love of war and disorder; a hatred for order and patient industry; no accumulative habits; restless, treacherous, uncertain: look at Ireland.
(10-11)

This “scientific” observation lacked any consideration of the fact that the disorder in Ireland resulted from the colonial mis-administration of England. When this fallacious book was published, Ireland was suffering from the Great Famine (caused by the potato blight, 1845-49), an unprecedented tragedy, whose effects of which were felt into the 1850s.

According to Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh’s study, the famine caused approximately 800,000 deaths and 15,000,000 emigrations (204). Between 1845 and 1851 alone, the population of Ireland fell by almost two million. Throughout this time period, the British government “held to their laissez-faire economic theories and ships carried large

quantities of grain from the starving island” (Kiberd *Inventing Ireland*, 21). Due to the famine, Ireland lost 80% of its population, the major part of this loss being those Gaelic-speaking Irish peasants who preserved the authentic traditions of the Irish Celts (*ibid*).

It was in such circumstances, in 1848 (corresponding to the French Revolution of 1848), that the nationalist group named “Young Ireland” attempted armed rebellion; a small-scale act of insurrection in the village of Ballingarry, County Tipperary (the Tipperary Revolt) was quickly put down, the government quickly arresting many associated with the group. At the time, racist writers attributed the disorder in Ireland to the racial inferiority of the Irish. A contributor to *Punch*, C. H. Bretherton, called the victims of the Great Famine “the man-eaters of Kerry” (where the famine was particularly bad), and the Young Ireland rebels “the Troglodytes of Tipperary”:

The Irish as a race . . . have no care for material possessions; they are inefficient and untrustworthy in business; they resent stable government and hate the law. . . . Unfortunatery the man-eaters of Kerry and the Troglodytes of Tipperary are . . . completely Hibernian. . . . You have only to remember that the Hibernian proper has the slave-mentality. (qtd. in Curtis jr. 115)

Such discriminative discourses prevailed at the time—from a weekly magazine like *Punch* to “scientific” books such as Knox’s *The Races of Man*.

Knox’s purportedly scientific book on racial theory states: “As a race, the Celt has no literature, nor any printed books in his original language. . . . There never was any Celtic literature, nor science, nor arts” (118). This sort of discourse was prevalent, throughout the nineteenth century. Although the study of the Celtic art and literature had begun in the previous century, there were conservatives who denied the arts of the Celts existed, stating that both the arts and literature had “borrowed from the Roman and the

Greek” (*ibid*). As a result of such attacks and racism, Irish artists had to overturn such discriminative discourse in order to achieve a sense of dignity and freedom, both as a people and a nation. Thus, the Celtic Revival movement was undertaken in this context, and should be with hindsight re-conceived as a relatively sophisticated movement of resistance, via ethnic revival. Yeats joined this movement and became its flag bearer.

2. The Double War and Outer Struggle: Early Social Conflicts

Next will be examined the obverse side of the “double war,” the outer-conflict surrounding Yeats’s early career. A fact which cannot be overemphasized concerns what Yeats describes as his very first memory: the 1867 IRB bombing—a point neglected by scholars. From this paradigmatic seed, Yeats’s life was shadowed by political violence. According to Yeats’s autobiography, this first memory occurred at his parental home, located at 23 Fitzroy Road, London. Yeats was two years old (A, 41). He saw “a boy in uniform” from “an Irish window” of the house, and asked who the boy was. A servant replied: “he is going to blow the town up.” The two-year-old Yeats went “to sleep in terror” (*ibid*).

The celebrated critic Norman Jeffers describes this story as if it were the servant’s joke or foolishness, as the “boy in uniform” was in actuality, it seems, nothing but a telegraph boy (9). However, by consulting the time and place, it can be discovered that the campaign of the radical sect of the IRB occurred in this year. The group caused an explosion at Clerkenwell, a stone’s throw from Fitzroy Road, with 12 dead and 120 persons injured (Swift 174). The group’s aim was not to kill the citizens but to break the walls of a jail to rescue their imprisoned comrades, but the incident aroused terror among London citizens, producing fearful and exaggerated rumors (Quinlivan and Rose 95). As such, the association of a telegraph boy in uniform with the revolutionary garb

of the volunteer militants takes on an entirely different implication to that given by Jeffers. The servant's explanation and the baby Yeats's horror are reasonable to understand, given the context—and neither a joke nor foolish misadventure.

The picture shown below (Figure 1) shows the aftermath of the Clerkenwell Explosion. Scholars Patrick Quinlivan and Paul Rose added the caption: “Not Belfast 1981 but London 1867. Houses in Clerkenwell shattered by blast from the explosion of 13 December” (*ibid*, 81).



Not Belfast 1981 but London 1867. Houses in Clerkenwell shattered by blast from the explosion of 13 December. (Courtesy of Islington Public Library)

Fig.1. Clerkenwell Explosion 1867. 12 dead, 120 injured. Islington Public Library. rpt. in Patrick Quinlivan and Paul Rose, *The Fenianism in England 1865-1872: A Sense of Insecurity*. (London: John Calder, 1982; 81).

As discussed, during the Irish Civil War period, Yeats wrote: “we are living in explosion” (*L*, 690); This aphorism may be amended to indicate something primary in Yeats's psyche—that he had been “living in explosion” from birth (his first memory)—that is, from the beginning.

As the son of an Anglo-Irish Protestant landowner and shipowner, Yeats had not only to face the violence of the IRB but also the violence of Irish-Catholic peasants. In his autobiography, recalling his experience at age 14, Yeats wrote about the beginning of

the Land War in 1879: “[T]he Land League had been founded and the landlords had been shot . . . it is romantic to live in a dangerous country” (A, 61). Here, Yeats reveals his psychological penchant for the enjoyment of danger as something romantic.

Yeats’s father, John Butler Yeats, was a moderate supporter of the parliamentary movement to realize Irish Home Rule and self-government for the country. On the other hand, Yeats’s maternal relatives in Sligo, the Pollexfens and Middletons, were Unionists and anti-Home Rulers—though they had taught Irish folklore (such as fairy stories) to the poet in his childhood. Due in part to these factors, the relationship between his father and maternal family was tense (Foster *Life I*, 1-5). So, even within the family system, Yeats faced conflicts based on social concerns. Yeats’s childhood in Sligo was celebrated by the poet, but this was also a period of time in which he lived to among pro-British Unionists, who were threatened by anti-British violence. Within the family existed political disputes, which can be considered as yet another, socially intimate, aspect of Yeats’s “double war”—one through he became familiar with Irish folklore, and began preparation for the Celtic Twilight writings, soon to come.

When Yeats learned “the pleasure of rhyme for the first time,” he had his first dream of the future (A, 47). The poetry he was reading at the time was the “Orange rhyme” of the Orange Order, the radical wing of the Irish-Protestant Unionist group, and his dream was “to die fighting the Fenians” (*ibid*). Yeats as a boy possessed a zealous passion for Protestant Unionism. However, as discussed above, when Yeats began meeting with the leader of the IRB, he came to have sympathy with the Fenians, and later joined O’Leary’s Fenian group.

In 1882, at age 17, Yeats began composing poetry (A, 34; *CLI*, 5-7). In the same year, two high-level officers of the colonial administration, the Chef-Secretary for Ireland and the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Ireland Office, were assassinated by the

radical wing of the IRB, named “The Invincibles,” at Phoenix Park, Dublin. As the poet’s sister Lily Yeats records, the Yeats’s family was intimately familiar with this incident.

According to Lily, her father, John Butler Yeats, rented a studio as a portrait painter, and the studio’s owner seemed suspicious of him—or so the painter thought. When the police came to search the premises near the studio, the owner’s wife became anxious and passed him a parcel, which it turned out contained a gun, in order to hide it. Soon after the police left he returned it to her. Probably, the studio-owning couple was not involved in a plot, but this anecdote thrilled Lily, and the budding poet Willie (William) Yeats (Alldritt 23; Foster *Life I.*, 31). This experience left a vivid impression on the young Yeats.

Three years after the assassinations, Yeats met with John O’Leary (the fifth President of the IRB). O’Leary had been previously arrested and accused of high treason for his anti-British writing in the newspaper, *The Irish People* for which he had editorship. This was in 1865 (coincidentally the year of Yeats’s birth). O’Leary returned to Ireland from exile when Yeats was 20 years old.

So it turns out the poet did not “die fighting the Fenians” as he had dreamed in his childhood. On the contrary, through studying Irish literature with O’Leary, Yeats did an about face, writing in his autobiography, “From O’Leary’s conversation, and from the Irish books he lent or gave me has come all I have set my hand to since” (A, 104). As a result of these events, conflicts and reversals, Yeats quit art school, deciding to become a professional writer, dealing with Irish themes.

2.1. A Celtic Poet Supported by the IRB: Yeats’s Tutelage and Emancipation

Right from the start of his poetic career, Yeats possessed an acute political sense:

he joined the Young Ireland Society (YIS; a nationalistic literary group), under the sixth President of the IRB (John O’Leary) in 1885, at the age of 20. Furthermore, he was initiated into the IRB under its leader around 1896 (Ellmann 111; Foster *Life I*, 112). The IRB, founded in 1858, was dedicated to establishing an independent democratic Irish republic, which it felt could only be accomplished by armed revolution. Yeats’s mentoring at O’Leary’s hand (himself a poet) was significant, as not only did he begin his poetic career under the influence the leader of the nationalist group, he learned the Irish ballads from the Fenian leader. A year later, Yeats quit the Metropolitan School of Art (Dublin), and in the following year, decided to become a professional writer. Yeats wrote: “It was through the old Fenian leader John O’Leary I found my theme” (*E&I*, 510). His theme was, of course, Ireland.

Here, it is important to discuss the stance of John O’Leary within the IRB. Although the image of the IRB is generally that of a violent, antisocial organization, in actuality the group was composed of “petit-bourgeois” (Eagleton *Scholars and Rebels*, 60). According to William Nollan’s study published in 2009, O’Leary had “‘landlord’ status” due to his large income from his real estate even though he was a Catholic (xix). Of course some radical sects which tried to resort to violence did exist, but the constitution of the IRB did not have any Articles on violence (Quinlivan and Rose 4). Moreover, as F. S. L. Lyons’s study shows, the aspect of “the ‘Brotherhood’” of the IRB “became predominant . . . no-one seems to have been clear whether the Brotherhood was to be described as Revolutionary or Republican” (125). In fact, as O’Leary’s autobiography *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism* (1896) reveals, the members of the IRB around O’Leary tended to use the phrase “Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood” (122-25). Indeed, O’Leary was not a republican, as he clearly specifies in his book: “I never took the oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic” (122). He dreamed of transforming the relationship

with England and Ireland into dual-monarchy like that of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or Ireland, which has its own parliament before the Act of Union of 1800. He states, “Let England cease to govern Ireland, and then I shall swear to be true to Ireland and the Queen or King of Ireland, even though that Queen or King should also happen to be Queen or King of England” (27). O’Leary’s vision was succeeded by Yeats. According to Foster’s study, “In old age he [Yeats] liked to say he was a Fenian ‘of the school of John O’Leary’” (*Life I*, 112). Indeed, in his senate speech dated June 11, 1925, Yeats celebrated the Irish state of Edmund Burke, Henry Grattan, and Jonathan Swift (*S*, 99) – in other words, his ideal was the Ireland before the Act of Union; that is, the Kingdom of Ireland, possessing its own parliament, under dual-monarchy. Therefore, Yeats’s adoration of aristocracy did not contradict his commitment to the Irish independence movement, because he envisioned an Ireland possessing a king or queen, and an aristocratic class.

In addition, the fact that the members of the IRB often called themselves “Fenian” is worth mentioning. The word “Fenian” is originally the term for the Celtic knights of the court of the ancient Irish king, Finn MacCool (*Fionn mac Cumhaill*), a legendary king like that of King Arthur. These legends about the king and his knights are known as the Fenian Cycle. As the name shows, originally the society had had an aspect of romantic nationalism—though such romanticism could be linked with violent acts at times (Quinlivan and Rose 1).

Yeats’s landmark work as a Celtic poet, *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889), could not have been published without the financial and intellectual support of O’Leary, who emphasized Irish cultural nationalism, rather than violent action, in fact attacking the bombing campaign of the IRB. In Yeats’s autobiography, O’Leary’s statements are seen to be impressed in his mind, as in the following exam-

ples: “there are things that a man must not do even to save a nation” (A, 101), and “‘I myself,’ he said, ‘do not approve of bombs, but I do not think that any Irishman should be discouraged’” (*ibid*, 103). In O’Leary’s opinion, in order to encourage the Irish people, it was fine literature rather than bombs that was needed. He taught Yeats that, “There no fine literature without nationality . . . there is no fine nationality without literature” (*LNI*, 12). O’Leary stressed the cultural independence of Ireland rather than the political independence of the nation through violence. His disciple Yeats absorbed this teaching. In his essay, “Poetry and Tradition” (1907), Yeats writes:

[T]hey [the Irish nationalists writers] hoped, John O’Leary especially, for an Irish literature of the greatest kind. . . . We sought to make more subtle rhyme, a more organic form, than that of the older Irish poets who wrote in English, but always to remember certain ardent ideas and high attitudes of mind which were the nation itself, to our belief, so far as a nation can be summarised in the intellect. (*E&I*, 247-48)

As O’Leary taught, Yeats aimed to achieve the cultural independence of Ireland via the creation of fine Irish literature, and in this task he largely succeeded.

2.1.1. Irish Cultural Independence—the Significance of Yeats’s Role

In the process of de-colonization, cultural movements possess an important role. Declan Kiberd, in *The Oxford History of Ireland* (1989), discusses Yeats’s significance to the history of Ireland as a flag bearer of Ireland’s cultural independence, referring to an Irish senator’s remark that “without the poetry of W. B. Yeats” the Irish revolutionaries “would not be representatives of an independent state.” Kiberd continues: “Ireland’s successful declaration of political separation occurred after, rather before, those [Yeats’s and his comrades’] assertions of cultural independence” (231).

A variety of scholars concur that Yeats's role in the cultural independence of Ireland was of substantial significance. For example, in his celebrated work, *National Identity* (1991), the theorist of nationalism, Anthony D. Smith, writes that Yeats's works "could suggest the nation's antiquity and continuity, its noble heritage and the drama of its ancient glory and regeneration" (92). Smith asserts that Yeats's works helped foster the sense of Irish national identity, both collectively and individually. He also writes, "Who, more than poets, musicians, painters, and sculptors, could bring the national ideal to life and disseminate it among the people?" (*ibid*). In Ireland, Yeats acted as the most influential national poet throughout the period of the Irish independence movement.

Prior to Yeats, the discourse of Ireland was represented as the "otherness" of England. Kiberd here relates an aspect of Yeats's accomplishment, in relation to "decolonization" and the "repossession of Irish culture:

Yeats's poetry had after all, entailed a repossession—a revision, in the sense of "seeing again"—of an authentically Irish landscape: and it is for this that he is celebrated throughout the world as one of the foremost poets of decolonization. ("Irish Literature and Irish History," 231)

Within the scope of Orientalism, Edward Said defines Ireland as a "land under Orientalism" (*cf. Culture and Imperialism*, 1994). In the same vein, the Irish landscape is represented as a desolate place where "a subhuman figure, a 'White Negro'" crawls (Hirsch, 1119). As a colonized nation, Irish culture was deprived of dignity and was, as has been seen, racially devalued. Yeats aimed to overturn and revise this discriminatory discourse, by "seeing again" the "authentically Irish landscape," via the creative power of literature (Kiberd, "Irish Literature and Irish History," 231). One of the ways Yeats accomplished this was by commemorating many Irish locales and historical sites in his verse. In his essay "Ireland and Arts" (1901), Yeats writes,

[In Ireland], there is no river or mountain that is not associated in the memory with some event or legend; while political reasons have made love of country, as I think, even greater among us than among them [the Greeks]. I would have our writers and craftsmen of many kinds master this history and these legends, and fix upon their memory appearance of mountains and rivers and make it all visible again in their arts, so that Irishmen, even though they had gone thousands of miles away, would still be in their own country. (*E&I*, 205-06)

Yeats thought that this was the best way to restore Irish dignity, to unite the Irish exiles, and to attain Irish freedom. Explicating the Celtic Revival, he brought about a deepened sense of national dignity to Ireland as a whole, opening the way to the de-colonization of Ireland. In these aims and accomplishments, Yeats can surely be considered sophisticated in his development and integration of a relevant, socially conscious national and cultural politics with his art.

2.1.2. The Conflict among the Inheritors of “Young Ireland”

O’Leary was in the lineage of romantic nationalism brewing in the Young Ireland movement—a movement often compared to Giuseppe Mazzini’s “Young Italy” movement, which helped bring about a modern, democratic Italian state. The Young Ireland group “desired a national movement which united all classes” in the process of seeking the cultural independence of Ireland (Eagleton, *Scholars and Rebels*, 136). The group “universalized the conflict in Ireland to one against colonialism in general,” and showed their sympathy with the colonial situation of India and Afghanistan (*Scholars and Rebels*, 133). O’Leary admired this group, consequently founding the Young Ireland Society in 1885. In 1891, it was reformed into the Young Ireland League.

Yeats joined both societies in turn, and became fascinated by the Irish rebel ballads of the Young Ireland poets. He wrote in his autobiography, *Reveries over Childhood and Youth* (1916): “some political verse by Thomas Davis [the leader of Young Ireland] gave me a conviction of how great might be the effect of verse, spoken by a man almost rhyme-drunk, at some moment of intensity, the apex of long-mounting thought” (A, 103). Terry Eagleton views the works of the Young Ireland movement as “political propaganda which ranks among some of the finest imaginative writing of the century”; the works were both political and poetic (*Scholars and Rebels*, 33). Yeats in his 20s was both absorbed by and highly influenced by such writings.

Yet again, here exists another conflict. Yeats was antagonistic to the veteran patriot (one of the founding members of Young Ireland), Charles Gavan Duffy, who had become a leading literary figure, editing *Ballad Poetry of Ireland* (1843). After the failure of the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848, Duffy was exiled to Australia and became the Eighth Premier (Prime Minister) of Victoria, later obtaining a knighthood, in 1873. When Duffy returned to Irish politics in 1880, he came to intervene in Yeats’s projects. Duffy of “76- years-old . . . [who] spent by far the greater part of every year in the South of France,” and thought that Yeats’s project “should be under the [his] control” (Alldritt 117).

In 1882, Yeats and his publisher T. Fisher Unwin had planned a project named “Library of Ireland.” The project aimed to publish a series of books on a bi-monthly schedule, “out-of-print Irish classics old and new books on Irish subjects,” and desired to distribute the books at a low cost for ordinary working people (*UPI*, 239; *Foster Life I*, 118). Yeats became the chief editor of the project, but Duffy intervened and took away the initiative. O’Leary took Yeats’s side in this conflict, but Duffy’s “famous name . . . was hard to deal with” (Ellmann 108).

For the “Library of Ireland,” Yeats had planned to compile “Irish love-songs” written by contemporary Irish poets, but Duffy selected mainly books of “Anglophobic extremism . . . of the radical nationalism of his Young Ireland youth” for the library (Foster *Life I*, 121). Furthermore, Duffy accused Yeats’s poetry of being “under English influence, perhaps of English-descended poets” (Jeffers 89-90). The upshot is that Duffy publicly accused Yeats of not being a true Irish poet, hence unsuitable to shepherd the “Library of Ireland” project. As an Anglo-Irish poet who owed his soul to English poetry, such an accusation must have hit Yeats hard, and aroused his inner-conflict concerning language, poetry and nationality.

The outcome of these machinations was that Yeats came to disagree with the propagandistic style of the Young Ireland works, feeling that they were insincere in utilizing literature as “a portion of the propaganda of a party” (*BIV*, xxv). In 1895, Yeats edited and published the anthology, *A Book of Irish Verse* (revised, 1899). This was Yeats’s version of the “Library of Ireland,” which included a number of Irish love-songs composed by contemporary Irish poets. This book compiled some of the Young Ireland poets, however it excluded the works of Duffy. In the Preface, Yeats attacks the “oratorical vehemence of Young Ireland” poems (xxiv), pointing out that the poems were not “judged by literary standard” but rather “judged . . . by [their] patriotism and . . . political effect” (xvii). Even though “the rhythms are mechanical, and the metaphors conventional” Yeats wrote, the poems were applauded if they were patriotic (xxv).

The leading poet of the Young Ireland movement was no exception: Yeats criticized this leading light: “Thomas Davis . . . is a little insincere and mechanical in his verse” (xxi). In fact, Davis’s most celebrated poem, sung to the tune, “Nation Once Again” (pub. in *The Spirit of the Nation*, 1843; 1845), contains these lines: “And righteous men must make our land / A NATION ONCE AGAIN!!” (27-28). These lines read

like a slogan rather than something of aesthetic value. Yeats vehemently disagreed with the poetry of “slogan,” even the word “slogan” itself—derived from the Gaelic word *sluagh ghairm* (battle cry). Yeats thus excluded this poem from his anthology, instead compiling some of Davis love-songs. Yeats wrote, “He [Davis] was, indeed, a poet of much tenderness in the simple love-songs” (*BIV*, xxii). Rejecting the narrow, propagandistic nationalism of the Young Ireland group, Yeats reconstructed the figure of the nationalist leader as a tender love-song singer. Via such tactics, Yeats was working to achieve what must be considered a sophisticated political aim: the reconstruction of the Irish poetic rebel-ballad into a humane tradition.

3. *The Celtic Twilight: Tactics of Propagandistic Resistance*

Yeats’s notable book, *The Celtic Twilight* (1893, 1902) was written and published during the conflict with, and in opposition to, the narrow nationalism of Duffy. In a sense, the writing style which has come to be known as Yeats’s “Celtic Twilight style” was a tactic through which he distanced himself from propagandistic modes of more overtly politically-oriented writing. Yeats composed his vision of a Celtic people—which included fairies, ghosts, witches, Druids, demigod heroes, and magic—quite apart from the bitterness of political argument. Although though the style seemed to be politically naïve (and has been so interpreted), the style and content were deliberately calculated.

Yeats collected Irish folktales, edited them, and celebrated the spirituality of Irish peasantry. In an essay within *The Celtic Twilight*, he wrote:

In Ireland this world and the world we go to after death are not far apart. . . .
Indeed there are times when the worlds are so near together that it seems as if our earthly chattels were no more than the shadows of things beyond.

(*Myth*, 98)

In another work, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888), Yeats mentions:

We have here the innermost heart of the Celt in the moments he has grown to love through years of persecution, when, cushioning himself about with dreams, and hearing fairy-songs in the twilight, he ponders on the soul and on the dead. Here is the Celt, only it is the Celt dreaming. (*FFI*, 7)

Yeats's Ireland connoted this mystical and dreamy mood, and seemed an obliquity, concerning the real world and society. This style has given readers and critics both, the impression that Yeats was a naïve romantic. However, at the same time, this approach enabled him to distance himself from the propagandistic writings of the Young Ireland poets. Moreover, the phrase quoted just above, “years of persecution” is significant: Yeats felt that “no people . . . have undergone greater persecution” than the Irish (*E&I*, 519). Emphasizing the fantasy-aspect of Celtic spirituality, Yeats remained insistent concerning the hardship of the Irish people—at the same time, this work represented an innovative expression of his own imaginative power. For these reasons, Yeats's Celtic Twilight style was both a clever and sophisticated tactic.

3.1. Irish or English? An Anglo-Irish Poet Lacking Gaelic

In discussing the cultural independence of Ireland and Yeats's evolving conception of Irish cultural dignity, an important issue should not be neglected: Yeats, throughout his career, was never able to compose poetry in Gaelic, the national language of Ireland, composing in English only. He was born into the oxymoronic “Anglo-Irish” class, and so was not exposed to Gaelic. Generally speaking, in Ireland, the Anglo-Irish were regarded as English. On the other hand, in England, such a person was considered to be (discriminated against as) Irish. In this sense, Yeats was neither “genuinely” Irish nor

“genuinely” English. A contemporary of Yeats described the agonistic situation of the Anglo-Irish in this manner:

Deserted by the Tories, insulted by the Whigs, threatened by the Radicals, hated by the Papist, and envied by the Dissenters, plundered in our country-seats, robbed in our town houses, driven abroad by violence, called back by humanity, and after all, told that we are neither English nor Irish, fish or flesh, but a peddling colony, a forlorn advanced guard . . . (qtd. in Eagleton *Scholars and Rebels*, 54)

This was the situation of the Anglo-Irish in the late nineteenth century. As an Anglo-Irish man, Yeats experienced a crisis of identity, as can be seen in his autobiographical novel, *John Sherman* (1891), where Yeats writes: “the sense of personal identity is shaken” (47) vis-à-vis England and Ireland. Yeats could be regarded as “neither English nor Irish,” but at the same time, he had sympathy with both cultures—yet without the sense of belonging to either. In the era of the conflicts between the English and Irish, to be Anglo-Irish was indicative, essentially, of self-conflict. Yeats’s identity crisis as a member of the Anglo-Irish class, and the germ of his dialectic philosophy, are both depicted in *John Sherman* (discussed further in Chapter II).

As a poet who had sympathy with the problems of Ireland, Yeats wrote, “Again and again I am asked why I do not write in Gaelic” (*E&I*, 519). While some of Yeats’s contemporaries undertook the task to write in Gaelic, Yeats determined to write Irish literature in English, and articulated his pragmatic position: “Gaelic is my national language, but not my mother tongue” (*E&I*, 520). In 1882, in opposition to a lecture on the Gaelic League’s policy of “De-Anglicising” the national language, he contributed an article to a newspaper, writing: “Can we not build up a national tradition, a national literature, which shall be none the less Irish in spirit from being English in language?”

(*UPI*, 255). Yeats believed that the essence of literature was beyond the gap of language differences or divisions, and believed in the possibility of the foundation of a national Irish literature in the English language. For Yeats to write in English was not a compromise, but rather the most efficacious way to express his world.

Maintaining this attitude, Yeats produced over 300 poems in English. In his use of language, it is interesting to note that throughout his career Yeats never once published free-verse poetry, unlike his close contemporaries Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. He is nonetheless included within a select group of foundational modernist poets. Considering the innovations of the free-verse style which swept the West in the early part of the twentieth century, it might be asked, why did Yeats resist this highly influential, indeed paradigm-changing poetic conception? Yeats indicates the reason in this passionate confession of his debt to major poetic influences:

I owe my soul to Shakespeare, to Spenser and to Blake, perhaps to William Morris, and to the English language in which I think, speak, and write, that everything I love has come to me through English; my hatred tortures me with love, my love with hate. (*E&I*, 519)

Although there may be, as Yeats indicates, a measure of universal truth in literature beyond language, it is not possible to articulate a concrete emotion without language; that is, it is impossible to identify or assert oneself without language. In a sense, as Yeats states above, language is an aspect of human soul.

Especially for a poet, the relationship between language and mind is significant. As Yeats composed poetry in his mother tongue, and anti-national language, English, his composition was possessed by an agonistic torture of “hatred torture[d] . . . with love . . . love with hate.” It is this fundamental crucible of psyche and mind, including its context and implications, which best describes the basis of Yeats’s “double war.”

Entering into agonistic conflict, Yeats had faith in what can be described as the magical power of poetic language. As well, Yeats respected those Gaelic bards who blessed and cursed in their poetry, finding in the power of rhyme and the stanza-forms of traditional English poetry aspects of the *poesis* he sought. He wrote that traditional English rhyme has the power,

[T]o prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance. (*E&I*, 159)

As a native speaker of English, Yeats realized that he could compose better metrics in traditional English forms than in Gaelic (*E&I*, 529). Therefore, his decision to stick to traditional English forms meant that he willfully chose to stand at the fulcrum of his inner-conflict: “my hatred tortures me with love, my love with hate.” This inner-conflict was thus central to his creative power. Writing in English, via the multiple oppositions above mentioned, Yeats aspired to create an innovative Irish poetics which articulated itself in novel modes of difference, with regard to (nationally) English poetic influences and approaches. This inner-conflict forced Yeats to pursue his new forms of expression in the English language.

3.1.1. Yeats’s Idiosyncratic Folkloric Poetry

Throughout his life, Yeats continued to seek his own poetic voice, and invented various styles to express his inner-conflict. An example of this sort of Anglo-Irish expression is his innovation of the ballad-form. In her book, *Our Secret Discipline* (2007), Helen Vendler mentions: “Yeats wrote ballads for over fifty years. They play a strong role in his work both early (in his nation-building phase) and late (in his old-age search

for the ‘primitive’” (111). Indeed, the ballad is the most common literary form among the Irish commoners, as the street ballad or broadside ballad. However, the literary form was brought in by settlers from England or Scotland, who spoke English, not Irish Gaelic. As a result, in Ireland, the form became the main vehicle of the voice of the Irish people.

In his early career, Yeats wrote ballads on the common Irish people, like “The Ballad of Father O’Hart” (1887), “The Ballad of Moll Magee” (1889), “The Ballad of the Foxhunter” (1889) and “The Ballad of Father Gilligan” (1890). In these ballads, he adopts Gaelic words and a Hiberno-English dialect. For instance, in “The Ballad of Moll Magee,” a poor woman who smothered her child was banished by her husband; Yeats uses the Gaelic term “*boreen*” (line 32. Ir. *bóithrín*, “little road, lane.” Yeats *P*, 629), and Hiberno-English sayings like “*childer*” (line 1, 17, 53. children), “*agin*” (line 42. again), and “*say*” (line 6. sea). Some example lines in this ballad are:

Pilin’ the wood or pilin’ the turf,
Or goin’ to the well,
I’m thinkin’ of my baby
And keenin’ to mysel’. (45-48)

As with the lines shown above, Yeats tried to write in the voice of Irish peasants. Concerning this poem, Yeats insists that he composed the lyrics based on “a sermon preached in the chapel at Howth if I remember rightly” (*P*, 629). Howth is a small fishing village located in Dublin County, where Yeats lived from 1881 to 1883. Although he was separated from the Irish peasant class as a member of the Anglo-Irish landlord class, he attempted through literature to be close to the voice of the people.

Moreover, Yeats invented an imaginary Gaelic bard named “Red Owen Hunrahan,” based on the actual bard, Owen Roe O’Sullivan [Ir. Eoghan Ruadh O’Sulleavhain]

(1748-1784) (Foster *Life I*, 162). Yeats used this imaginary poet as an ideal self (anti-self), or mask, and composing his poems through the mouth of Hanrahan.

Yeats published this idiosyncratic folklore in works such as “Devil’s Book” (1892), and books such as *The Secret Rose* (1897) and *The Stories of Red Hanrahan* (1904; 1907). In his folklore, Red Hanrahan speaks in a Hiberno-English dialect; for example, “It is a bad day indeed for Owen Hanrahan when a young girl with the blossom of May in her cheeks thinks him to be an old man” (*Myth*, 241), or “If there is any sorrow on you it is I myself should be well able to serve you” (*Myth*, 239).

As well, in this realm of idiosyncratic folklore, Red Hanrahan, sings as a bard in the style of *aisling*, which is a traditional style of Irish poetry. The Irish word “*aisling*” means “vision” or “dream.” In this tradition, a poet sings of Ireland, utilizing the metaphor of the country as a suffering woman in his vision or dream. In Irish legend, when the condition of the Irish nation is good, the woman (as personification) is young and beautiful. Yet when conditions are bad, she turns into the personification of an old and ugly hag. The woman is called as “Hag of Beare,” “Shan Van Vocht,” “Dark Rosaleen” or “Kathleen Ni Houlihan.” In the tradition of *aisling*, to redeem the ‘ugly hag’ figure of Ireland in poetry is the task of a bard. This poetic tradition could have originated as early as the ninth century, but it was mainly composed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Gaelic (Kiberd, “Irish Literature and Irish History,” 235-40). Yeats learned this style mainly from the Young Ireland poet and translator, James Clarence Mangan (A, 296). Mangan’s notable translation of “Dark Rosaleen” is shown below:

O my Dark Rosaleen,
 Do not sigh, do not weep!
 The priests are on the ocean green,
 They march along the deep.

There's wine from the royal hope,
 Upon the ocean green;
 And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
 My Dark Rosaleen!
 My own Rosaleen!
 Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
 Shall give you health, and help, and hope,
 My Dark Rosaleen!

(Mangan, "Dark Rosaleen," 1-12. qtd. in Yeats, *BIV* 18)

This translation of *aisling* in English won great fame. James Joyce praised it as "full of ecstasy of combat," in his lecture "James Clarence Mangan" given at University College, Dublin, in 1902 (57). Furthermore, a historian F. S. L. Lyons writes in his book on Irish history *Ireland Since the Famine* (1971): "an astonishing feat of exact, yet musical, translation from Irish into English" (228). It can be noted however that in this translation, Mangan uses many sentimental words such as "sigh" or "weep," and repeats the same word in the rhymes: "green," "hope," and "Rosaleen." As can be seen, the tone is one of nationalistic propaganda—especially Irish Catholic—for example, deliberately rhyming "hope" with "pope." As a result, the translation seems limited, reflecting the nationalism of the Young Ireland group.

Yeats learned this Gaelic bard tradition, and innovated in his sophisticated style. Plying the mask of Hanrahan, he writes *aisling* in English:

"Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland"

The old brown thorn-trees break in two high over Cummen Strand,
 Under a bitter black wind that blows from the left hand;
 Our courage breaks like an old tree in a black wind and dies,

But we have hidden in our hearts the flame out of the eyes

Of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan. (1-5)

In the ballad, “Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan” (i.e. Kathleen Ni Houlihan) is a personification of Ireland. In this poem, the appearance of Ireland as an old hag is expressed via the desolate landscape of the country. In the wilderness, the Irish people under persecution yet express an invincible aspiration of liberty for the nation: “we have hidden in our hearts the flame out of the eyes” of Ireland. In these lines, without any emotional bathos or language (see the Mangan translation, above), Yeats expresses the voice of the Irish people, presenting a redemptive image indicating the dignity of the country as a woman or as a mother goddess of the land, who flourishes or perishes according to the seasons of nature and politics.

Following this tradition, Yeats wrote the play, “Kathleen Ni Houlihan” (1902) for the Irish National Theatre. The play, as a staged *aisling*, won great popularity and praise in Ireland, yet at the same time, the meaning of *aisling* was interpreted as a prophecy of nationalistic rebellion. As a result, in his later years, Yeats expressed regret: “Did that play of mine send out / Certain men the English shot?” (“Man and the Echo” 11-12). Yeats’s wish is to redeem the beauty of Irish culture, but not to bring about armed rebellion.

4. Yeats’s Novel Celtic Wisdom Tradition: A Uniting of Opposites

As can be seen, Yeats’s “Twilight” was not a mere “dreamy” or “obscure” world, as some scholars have stated. It was the point where the opposites meet and blend: day and night, life and death, mortal and immortal, natural and supernatural. In Yeats’s idiosyncratic terminology, this was a “Rosa Alchemica,” a Rosicrucian alchemical crucible devised in order to create poetic power out of the conflict of opposites. He

wrote,

[F]or the nobleness of the arts is in the mingling of contraries, the extremity of sorrow, the extremity of joy, perfection of personality, the perfection of its surrender, overflowing turbulent energy, and marmorean stillness; and its red rose opens at the meeting of the two beams of the cross, and at the trysting place of mortal and immortal, time and eternity. (*E&I*, 255)

This is one of Yeats's confessions of belief concerning art, written within the context of an idiosyncratic version of Rosicrucianism. He understood the Celtic Twilight, at this time, as a psychic landscape where the opposites meet, begin conceived as a Rosicrucian issue. As a prominent member of the Rosicrucian-influenced society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn since his initiation in 1890, Yeats was drawing upon contemporary, Anglo-oriented ideas of western occultism. The Golden Dawn was led by S. L. MacGregor Mathers, an ardent Scottish Jacobite, and lover of Celtic mystical thought. According to Mathers, the most important teaching of mysticism was, "The equilibrium of contraries," or "The living synthesis of counterbalanced power" (Mathers, 15-16). It was in part via the teachings of the Golden Dawn that Yeats developed new perceptions of what may be termed a Celtic wisdom tradition.

Another sign of these influences was the 1899 publication of an essay on the Irish High Cross, the ancient stone cross with a circle, under the pseudonym "Rosicrux." In this essay, Yeats links the Rosicrucian symbol with the Celtic cross: "It was almost certainly a familiar symbol in the ancient Ireland" (*UP2*, 142-45). At this time, Yeats identified various secret traditions of western occultism, such as Rosicrucianism, alchemy and Kabbalah with Celtic mysticism, finally attempting to found a Celtic mystical order on his own, in 1896 (Ellmann *Man and the Mask*, 123-30; Jeffers *Man and the Poet*, 115, Foster *Life I*, 180). As he wrote in his autobiography, for the order, Yeats tried to

“buy or hire” an old castle as a place for meditation (A, 204). This plan failed, but he later succeeded in purchasing the old castle tower Thoor Ballylee for meditation, where he fostered his philosophy of conflict throughout the period of the Irish wars.

At first glance, Yeats’s plan to found his own mystical order might seem somewhat eccentric or escapist, but this is not the case. His idea had two merits: political and poetical. In the political sense, as Eagleton comments: “The [Celtic] Revival found it easy enough to move between republicanism and Rosicrucianism. And in the curious doubleness of nationalist time, the most obscure excavation of the past can turn out to be urgently contemporary” (*Scholars and Rebels*, 19). To create a mythology based on a national issue was seen as the very key necessary to organize a nation in a new form. Although the plan failed, and although the Celtic cross had nothing to do with the Rosicrucian symbol, the syllogism had staying power, and lent a spiritual glamour to the stone crosses found on many rural roads throughout Ireland. It was likewise a sensible tactic to distance or re-center certain source-points of Irish ethnic dignity away from the cant of narrow, propagandistic nationalism.

In explaining his failed plan or “dream” to found his own Celtic mystical order, Yeats confesses his belief that mystical philosophy and literature are intimately connected:

[F]or ten years to come my most impassioned thought was a vain attempt to find philosophy and to create ritual for that Order. I had an unshaken conviction . . . that this philosophy would find its manuals of devotion in all imaginative literature, and set before Irishmen for [a] special manual [of Druidic ritual] an Irish literature which, though made by many minds, would seem the work of single mind, and turn our places of beauty or legendary association into holy symbol. (A, 204-05)

Yeats's "holy symbol," in his early career, was the Rose, which "opens at the meeting of the two beams of the cross"—where opposites join.

In substantiation of this belief, Yeats published his early landmark poetic collection, *The Rose* (1893). Some scholars have criticized these poems, labeling them as naïve (as discussed), but this sort of interpretation does not bear close scrutiny. The poems compiled in *The Rose* present in various ways the conflict of opposites. Harold Bloom, notable for his writings on art and "agon" writes:

Current criticism has been unfair to the early Yeats, too kind to the middle Yeats, and mostly uncritically worshipful of the later Yeats. . . . No poem in *The Rose* is altogether a failure, and several are inevitable expressions of themes central to Yeats's imagination. (*Yeats*, 106)

Bloom, while indicating a fruitful direction for future Yeats studies, undervalues "the most renowned (and now deprecated) of Yeats's early lyrics, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," collected in *The Rose*, writing that it is "lacking the dialectic of nature and imagination, and the war between the sky and the mind" (112). This interpretation seems problematic. Here, Bloom emphasizes the intertextuality between poets as an "anxiety of influence," but overlooks another aspect of intertextuality in Yeats's works.

Concerning the poem, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (1888), there is an important background text, written prior to it, and later removed from Yeats's canon; this is the novella, *John Sherman* (1891). Reading the poem with the background context provided by *John Sherman* offers a new, deepened perspective for interpretation, including examples of Yeats's dialectic philosophy, within the poem itself. A reprint of *John Sherman* as a critical edition did not become available until as recently as 1969 (revised, 1991). As the publication date of Bloom's *Yeats* is 1970, it is unlikely he examined the 1969 edition. The following Chapter will provide an analysis of *John Sherman* and "The

Lake Isle of Innisfree,” presenting an early form of Yeats’s dialectic philosophy and sense of national identity, as exhibited in these works.

Chapter II.

Yeats's Dialectic Characterization and Sense of National Identity in *John Sherman*.

1. Challenging the Critical Valuation of *John Sherman*: Five Points

W. B. Yeats, though best known as a poet and dramatist, wrote prose fiction in his early career. During the years 1887 to 1888, he wrote the novella *John Sherman* (approx. 25,000 words), published in a single volume with *Dhoya* (an accompanying short story) as *John Sherman, and Dhoya* (1891), under the pseudonym Ganconagh, which is the name of an Irish fairy, meaning “love-talker.” This book sold well at the time; however it later virtually disappeared from view, partly due to the use of the unusual pseudonym, but more significantly because Yeats rejected the novella when compiling his *Collected Works*, after 1908. As mentioned in *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia* (1997), “It was excluded from the canon” (MacCready 204). As a result, this early work has been neglected, having received little literary-critical attention throughout the last century.

In fact, *John Sherman* presents the researcher with five significant aspects deserving of critical attention. First, this work was written at the time Yeats began his Celtic Revival period, and just prior to his encounters with Maud Gonne and Lady Gregory. Thus the work provides a glimpse of Yeats at an initial conceptual and philosophical starting point, in terms of his literary oeuvre.

Second, the work offers an indication of the writing process attendant to his renowned poem, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” (1888), as it is deeply linked with the poem—so it can be said that as the notions shown in both works are held in common, neither work is a unique exception. Analyzing *John Sherman* enables a new interpretive

light to be shown on “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” as well as other works.

Third, *John Sherman* reveals Yeats’s emerging notion of dialectic philosophy. In this work, connoted as the outer-conflict of “the double war,” his dialectic philosophy is expressed as a core juxtaposition of England and Ireland, and as well, inner-conflict; thus, his dialectic thought is illustrated via the juxtaposition between two realms: those of “change” and the “changeless.”

Fourth, this work is unique as it is a prose form—thus enabling readers, especially critical readers, to grasp the author’s conceptual thought overtly (in comparison to much of his poetry). For example, the novel clearly reveals Yeats’s internalized Anglo-Irish viewpoint as a colonized subject, as well as his discriminative notions pertaining to Irish Catholics. Upon later reflection, Yeats himself came to be aware of these defects, and in the process, came to more lucidly realize a sense of national identity.

A fifth point is the *John Sherman* has been critically neglected. As such, a new, a detailed analysis may be of benefit. In this Chapter, Yeats’s dialectic philosophy and sense of national identity in the early phase of his career will be shown in a new perspective, through an examination of this neglected work.

1.1. *John Sherman and Dhoya: Historical Context*

Prior to a close discussion of *John Sherman* itself, it is helpful to discuss the context to the work, due to its autobiographical aspects. In 1887, after dropping out of art school in Dublin, Yeats went to London to be a professional writer—there were at least two instrumental reasons for this move. At that time, literary societies in Dublin tended to be obsessed by a narrow nationalism, while their counterparts in London were relatively modest in this regard. In fact, hard-headed nationalists like Charles Gavan Duffy strongly insisted that the capital of Irish literature should be Dublin, but Yeats was op-

posed to such an idea (Foster *Life I*, 119). Nonetheless, even while in London, Yeats continued to maintain correspondence with the Irish literary societies of Dublin, including that of John O’Leary. This, in addition to commitments in London, such as with the Southwark Irish Literary Club (which became the Irish Literary Society, in 1891). As well, London offered Yeats the most sophisticated cultural nexus of the era. For instance, being in London allowed him to become associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, including William Morris, and *fin de siècle* writers, such as Oscar Wilde. For an artist, it was not a bad decision to go to London to cultivate oneself, at that time.

Notwithstanding, in his London days, Yeats suffered from several hardships. First and foremost was alienation. To the young Irishman who “had published only in Dublin,” the literary salon of London “seemed alien and hostile,” and Yeats felt “insignificant and out of place” (Ellmann 78). His fame in Dublin did not reach to London, and the capital of the British Empire was inhospitable to an Irish poet lacking in reputation. He confessed his feelings at the time: “I was like a man in nightmare who longs to move and cannot” (qtd. in Ellmann 78). Yeats aspired to success in the literary salons of London, but was unable to do so. As he confessed in an early draft of his autobiography, he once thought that he wanted to return to Dublin and become an art school student again, but rejected this temptation (*M*, 31).

Yeats knew that he should not return to Dublin. At the time, it was necessary to live in London, for the reasons above-mentioned. Further, in order to enlarge the Celtic Revival movement, success in London was necessary. If the writers of the Celtic Revival had acted only inside of Ireland, their voices would not have prevailed with power. Especially among the writers who wrote in English, like Yeats, publication in the capital of the Empire was needed in order to convey the voices of colonized Ireland and project them into the world—and Yeats knew this.

In his London days, as well as poetry Yeats wrote and published essays, reviews, and commentary. John P. Frayne, editor and collector of *Uncollected Prose, by W. B. Yeats* (vol. 1. 1970; vol. 2. 1975), refers to this activity as “Twilight Propaganda” (1970, 35). Frayne writes, “The Irish image had to be remolded in English as well as Irish opinion” (*ibid*). Frayne continues: “In other matters, Yeats was to find most of his literary enemies within the Irish camp itself. . . . [b]ecause sentimental patriotism was his worst enemy. . . the ‘Young Ireland’” (36). Yeats chose to live in the interstice between England and Ireland, from which the inspiration for *John Sherman* arose.

There are two male protagonists in *John Sherman*, opposite in character, who wander between England and Ireland. One section of *John Sherman* contains the origin of the most renowned poem of his early career, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree.” The dialectic philosophy found in *John Sherman*, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” and other works, is based upon the dialectics arising from Yeats’s identity crisis, as an alienated individual caught between England and Ireland. As outer-conflict, Yeats was forced to confront the differences between England and Ireland, almost as a matter of survival. As inner-conflict, he was forced to reflect upon himself as a youthful writer: To stay and labor in London with ambition; or to return to Ireland and find calm—that was the question. Here, he lived a “double war” once again.

Suffering from poverty and longing for success, Yeats wrote essays and reviews for journals, but his income as a freelance writer was quite small. According to Foster, his income of “a pound a week was a labourer’s wage” (*Life I*, 95). This situation could neither support his ambition, nor support his life and family—his wife had come to London and they lived together, but his mother “had a stroke” and “could not be moved” (Coote 57). As well, his father, a portrait painter, did not have a guaranteed income. And at this time, the family lost the major part of their ancestral land (Foster, *Life*

I 9). Therefore, the family was quite poor and even in desperate circumstances “in this dreadful London.”

It was during this time of poverty that Yeats was offered a sub-editorship of the journal *Manchester Courier* by his neighbor York Powel, but he declined the offer because “it was a Unionist paper” (*M*, 31): an example of Yeats’s principled commitment. In an early draft of his autobiography, Yeats writes:

I was greatly troubled because I was making no money. I should have gone to art schools, but with my memories of Dublin art schools I put off the day. I wanted to do something that would bring in money at once, for my people were poor and I saw my father sometimes sitting over the fire in great gloom, and yet I had no money-making faculty. (*M*, 31)

For the Yeats family, poverty alluded to the bankruptcy and suicide of their relative Robert Corbet of Sandymount Castle, Dublin, in 1870. The Great Famine of the 1840s and the succeeding agrarian conflicts, including the Land War, damaged his insurance company and he later committed suicide. The poet Yeats was born in Sandymount in 1865, and played in the castle during his childhood. The suicide of Robert Corbet likely shocked Yeats.

Furthermore, in 1873, his younger brother Robert Corbet Yeats (named after the relative), died of scarlet fever. During the 1870s, due to the agrarian crisis, his family’s annual income fell from 500 pounds to “nothing at all” (Foster *Life I*, 9). And by 1887 in London, Yeats’s father was “in great gloom” with his wife bedridden. Yeats was especially concerned, regarding his father’s “great gloom,” because he knew that his family shared the memory of the family tragedy.

During these London days, alienated and in poverty, Yeats pined for Sligo, the area of Western Ireland which he had come to love. In his autobiography, he writes: “I and

my sister had spoken together of our longing for Sligo and our hatred of London” (A, 58). In order to overcome this situation, his father advised Yeats to write a novel. In the early draft of his autobiography, Yeats writes:

My father suggested that I should write a story and, partly in London and partly in Sligo . . . I wrote *Dhoya*, a fantastic tale of the heroic age. My father was dissatisfied and said he meant a story with real people, and I began *John Sherman*, putting into it my memory of Sligo and my longing for it. While writing it I was going along the Strand and, passing a shop window where there was a little ball kept dancing by a jet of water, I remembered waters about Sligo and was moved to a sudden emotion that shaped itself into “The Lake Isle of Innisfree.” (M, 31)

This passage explains the genesis of all three works: *Dhoya*, *John Sherman*, and “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”; except for the last, these are neglected works today, but the passage reveals that the works are intimately connected. Though as Finneran points out, his explanation, “partly in London and partly in Sligo” accords with the compositional process of *John Sherman* and “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” but not *Dhoya*, because *it was* “apparently written entirely in Sligo” (J&D, x). This is an important fact, inasmuch as in both *John Sherman* and “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” the contrast between London and Sligo, the juxtaposition of England and Ireland is an essential, if not core feature.

In his November 19, 1888 letter to O’Leary, Yeats wrote that “the motif” of *John Sherman* was “hatred of London” (L, 94-95). Scholars like William M. Murphy seem to take Yeats’s words at face value, concluding that Yeats contrasted London and Sligo and finally chose Sligo (Murphy 93-94). However, the truth is neither so simple nor superficial.

2. *Dhoya* as Prequel: Early Evidence of Yeats's Dialectic Philosophy

Before examining *John Sherman* in detail, it is worth examining *Dhoya*, as a pre-text to *John Sherman*. *Dhoya* is a short story (approx. 3,600 words) of a liaison between a mortal, male giant named Dhoya and an unnamed, immortal, female fairy in the wilderness of Sligo, set in a mythological era of Ireland. Within, a dialectic of change with the changeless is shown: The giant Dhoya belongs to “change,” both physically and psychologically. The mortal giant grows and has changing emotions, such as anger and love.

On the other hand, the fairy woman belongs to the “changeless” realm. She does not grow or have emotions. In *Dhoya*, the dictum, “All things change save only the fear of change” is repeated (*J&D*, 86: 89). Due to a fear of change or a passion to be loved, the fairy woman comes to the giant Dhoya, asking him to love her, saying: “Only the changing, and moody, and angry, and weary can love” (*J&D*, 86). However, she herself cannot love him. In the end, their relationship is broken and the fairy woman is taken away by another fairy.

As the pre-text of *John Sherman*, Yeats's dialectic philosophy of mutability and permanency is expressed in *Dhoya*. The contrast between mutability and permanency is not as sophisticated as “*antithetical*” and “*primary*” in his later works, such as *A Vision*, but the connection with his later philosophy is evident in this early work. In the story, the giant Dhoya “rave[s] against . . . his own shadow” (*J&D*, 82). The giant's antithetical attitude—the fight or struggle against oneself—was shared by Yeats. Thus, is possible to say that this short fairy tale, *Dhoya* contains the germ of Yeats's dialectic philosophy, found in a more evolved fashion later on.

3. *John Sherman*: Overview, Critical Reception and the “Model Theory”

John Sherman is broadly autobiographical, “a story with real people,” based “partly in London and partly in Sligo.” In the work, the germ of Yeats’s dialectic philosophy is expressed more directly and strongly than in *Dhoya*. In this story juxtapositions of various opposites are presented: the two cities London and Sligo, the two nations of England and Ireland, mutability and permanence, cultivation and wilderness. It is within these various levels of contrastive juxtaposition that the three protagonists (two men and a woman) interact.

John Sherman is a middle-class man, born in the West Ireland town of Ballah (Yeats states that “Ballah . . . is Sligo” in the Preface to the second edition (*J&D*, 1). He loved Ballah very much, while his friend William Howard, a Ballah-born High Church curate, hated the town. John Sherman and William Howard are described as opposite characters: John Sherman was “a born loungeur” (*J&D*, 31) who dreamed to “marry money” (*J&D*, 9), while William Howard was an energetic religious thinker who studied metaphysical thought (*J&D*, 55). John Sherman did not want to leave the Irish town, but went to London, following his childhood sweetheart Mary Carton’s advice. In London, he falls in love with the rich London girl, Margaret Leland, and gets engaged. However, their relationship, it turns out, has an interesting twist. Margaret was a flirtatious and cultivated English girl, while Mary was a calm and religious Irish girl. In London everything was in flux, while in Ballah everything remained changeless. John Sherman vacillates between Margaret and Mary, Ballah and London, England and Ireland. Gradually, he comes to think about returning to Ballah—he dreams of the Lake Isle of Innisfree, while walking the streets of London. In order to break the engagement, he invites his friend William to London, and through various devices, causes him fall in love with fiancé Margaret. Consequently, William and Margaret fall in love. In the final scenes, John Sherman returns to Ballah, marries Mary Carton, and settles there.

This plot has not been popular among critics. For example, Louis MacNeice criticizes this as “flat and unconvincing” (141), and Norman Jeffers accuses of the immorality in this, “transfer of lovers” (63). Yeats himself was not satisfied with this novella. Indeed, following the publication of *Collected Works of Verse and Prose* (1908), Yeats never reprinted the work, though there were many opportunities. Yeats’s feelings are summarized by the following quotation: “[*John Sherman* was] written when I was young & knew no better” (qtd. in *J&D 1969*, 12). The work was not re-published until Finneran’s *John Sherman and Dhoya* (1969, 1991). Even with this republication in a critical edition, Finneran’s rediscovery did not make a mark; as *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia* (1997) puts it, major scholars continue to disregard the work as “it was excluded from the canon” (MacCready 204).

3.1. *John Sherman and Dhoya*, Publication and Accolades

Notwithstanding his later expurgation, *John Sherman, and Dhoya* was Yeats’s favorite work at the time. In a letter to friend and adviser Katharine Tynan (May 5, 1891), he wrote: “There in more of myself in it [i. e. *John Sherman*] than in anything I have done” (*L*, 165). In fact, it was greatly appreciated by the notable literary editor Edward Garnett (later to work with D. H. Lawrence and other esteemed writers), who recommended *John Sherman* to T. Fisher Unwin, as a book publishable in its Pseudonym Library series—shortly after, the book became a bestseller.

The Pseudonym Library series was the publisher’s “best-known and most successful series . . . which required all the authors to use pen names” (Bassett 144). As the antithesis of the Victorian fashion—the expensive three-volume novel—the Pseudonym Library series sold novelettes cheaply, and in a small enough size to fit “a woman’s reticule or a man’s coat pocket” for railway passengers (Bassett 145). In addition, the

strategy of publishing a pseudonym series stirred readers' interest to know who the actual authors were, and likewise enabled the publisher to discover and publish unknown young writers. In this way, T. Fisher Unwin gathered young artists with talent; for example, Joseph Conrad and William Somerset Maugham submitted their works to this series (Bassett 148), and young Aubrey Beardsley designed its poster (Bassett 148).

According to Finneran, the first edition of *John Sherman*, ran about 2,000 copies (1,644 paperback, 356 hardback), and was quickly reprinted into a third edition, in both the UK and America. This success gave about 30 pounds to Yeats in royalties (*J&D*, xix), a fairly large amount at the time. By comparison, Yeats's earlier (and latterly) renowned work, *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889) sold only 174 copies at the time, even though recommended by Oscar Wilde in his literary review; Yeats was forced to buy back the unsold stock, having to borrow money from O'Leary to do so (Foster *Life I*, 95). Yeats had been suffering from this debt to O'Leary, and thanks to the success of *John Sherman, and Dhoya*, he was able to erase the loan.

Literary success gave Yeats not only money but also built an important connection with T. Fisher Unwin, who became a regular publisher, throughout Yeats's early career. Moreover, the editor of *National Observer* William Ernest Henley asked him to write fairy tales similar to *Dhoya* for its journal. Accordingly, Yeats wrote a number of prose pieces on Irish folklore, which were to become the landmark works of the Celtic Revival, *The Celtic Twilight* (1893; 1902) and *The Secret Rose* (1897). Without the publication and success of *John Sherman, and Dhoya* in the Pseudonym Library, it is unlikely Yeats would have been able to publish his other poetic collections and prose works, and thus his career might have languished.

As a representative reader who appreciated Yeats's works was Jane Wilde, the mother of Oscar, and a notable poet of the Young Ireland movement, who published

under the pseudonym, *Speranza*. In his letter to Katharine Tynan, dated December 2, 1891, Yeats wrote: “Lady Wilde has written me an absurd and enthusiastic letter about it [*John Sherman, and Dhoya*]. She is queer enough to prefer it to my poems” (*L*, 188). In this letter, Yeats reveals his embarrassment at Lady Wilde’s “enthusiastic” applause on the work; it can be seen that he wants to be treated as a poet rather than a novelist. The letter continues:

When you review it you might perhaps, if you think it is so, say that Sherman is an Irish type. I have an ambition to be taken as an Irish Novelist, not as an English or cosmopolitan one choosing Ireland as a background. I studied my characters in Ireland and described a typical Irish feeling in Sherman’s devotion to Ballah. (*L*, 187-88)

Here Yeats says that he wants to be treated as “an Irish Novelist.” As he wrote regarding Lady Wilde’s preference of his short fiction to his poetry, he primarily regarded himself as a poet, if having “an ambition to taken as an Irish Novelist.”

The important aspect of the novel in his mind has to do with “characters.” In a novel, an author expresses his thought through “characters.” Concerning the techniques and effects of characterization, epic poetry aside, the novel is a more suitable form than the poem. In *John Sherman*, Yeats wanted to express “a typical Irish feeling” via the creation of “an Irish type” character. In fact, during the writing of the novel, Yeats wrote that he was praised by the novelist Herbert Halliday Sparling for his characterization. And in a letter to Katharine Tynan, dated May 19, 1888, he said: “My story goes well the plot is laid mainly in Sligo. It deals more with character than incidents. Sparling praised it much, thinks my skill lies more in character drawing than incidents” (*L*, 73). Yeats had greater confidence regarding characterization than in the story’s plot.

Indeed, reviews at the time applauded the characterization of John Sherman as “an

Irish type.” For example, in a review by the *Irish Daily Independence* (January 4, 1892) wrote: “Mr. Yeats in creating ‘John Sherman’ has shown us a type Irish [*sic*] and pathetic which none of our other novelists has hit upon. Where in all the world but Ireland would you find John Sherman . . .” (*J&D*, xxiii). It can be seen that the public embraced the main protagonist of *John Sherman* as “an Irish type.” This fact was it seems the most significant reason for its success.

However, at the same time, these facts also mean that Yeats well-expressed an Irish stereotype, and it is the presence and characterization of the Irish stereotype in *John Sherman* which reveals Yeats’s internalized and biased colonized perspective, regarding the Irish. This is an important key, revealing Yeats’s sense of national identity in his early career, and the main reason why he deleted this work from his canon; two aspects of Yeats’s life and work which critics have neglected.

3.2. *John Sherman* and the “Model Theory”

As Richard J. Finnerann writes in his Introduction to the critical editions of *John Sherman and Dhoya*, the novella is to be regarded as Yeats’s autobiographical story (*J&D*, xxvii, *J&D 1969*, 25). On this point, almost all scholars agree—as Yeats himself admits this. The story was “all Sligo and Hammersmith” where he lived (*J&D*, xxvii), and Yeats used, in particular, the names of two places he was most connected to, Innisfree and Sligo. Accordingly, there has been a critical tendency to discuss this novella from the viewpoint of model theory (the prose characters are based, or modeled on, actual persons).

In 1943, Yeats’s acquaintance and his first biographer, Joseph Hone, wrote that “the original of John Sherman” was Henry Middleton, his mother’s cousin and “Willie’s playfellow” (21-22). This identification theory finds agreement among the following

scholars: Norman Jeffers (in *Man and the Poet*. 1966), W. M. Murphy (in “William Butler Yeats’s John Sherman: An Irish Poet’s Declaration of Independence.” 1979) and R. F. Foster (in *Life I*. 1997).

In his study, expanding the model theory, W. M. Murphy, identifies Margaret Leland, the flirtatious London girl in the fiction, with Laura Armstrong, who was Yeats’s first love (97-98), and the religious Irish girl Mary Carton (in the fiction) is identified with two women: Katharine Tynan, Yeats’s adviser (100), Esther Merick “the sexton’s daughter” (104). The High Church curate William Howard (in the fiction) is identified with these three men: the Reverend John Dowden, “elder brother of Professor Edward Dowden of Trinity College Dublin and a close friend of John Butter Yeats” (99), Edward Dowden, “the distinguished Professor of Literature at Trinity College Dublin” (105) and Charles Johnson “the early chess friend” of Yeats (105).

This model theory does not seem all that plausible: Murphy hastily identifies each given fictional character with Yeats’s acquaintances, based on supposed superficial traits of the fictional characters. For example, in this methodology, any woman who was rumored to be flirtatious could adequately fit the model-theory, concerning Margaret Leland, and any man who might have played chess with our hero could likewise be a suitable model for William Howard. Although the model theory possesses obvious critical weaknesses, the editor of the critical editions of *John Sherman* takes the theory at face value (*J&D*, xxiv-xxiv). As such, the model theory remains the prevalent established theory, concerning *John Sherman*.

3.3. An Alternative View: Dialectic Characterization in *John Sherman*

There exists a divergent theory of character interpretation, regarding *John Sherman*. In this theory, the fictional characters are regarded as being examples of personified,

dialectic characterization. In fact, the novella starts not with the two protagonists (John Sherman or William Howard) but with “the guest” of a country hotel. “The guest” seems to be William Howard, but the man is not named until he comes to the bridge. On the bridge, “the guest” comes to have “two feelings,” and it is at this moment that John Sherman and William Howard appear. Here below is recounted the meditation of “the guest” on the bridge:

The guest, having bought some cigarettes, had spread his waterproof on the parapet of the bridge and was now leaning his elbows upon it, looking at the river and feeling at last quite tranquil. His meditations, he repeated, to himself, were plated with silver by the stars. . . . Between these two feelings the unworldly and the worldly tossed a leaping wave of perfect enjoyment. How pleasantly conscious of his own identity it made him when he thought how he and not those whose birthright it was, felt most the beauty of these shadows and this river? To him who had read much, seen operas and plays, known religious experiences, and written verse . . . and not to those who dwelt upon its borders for their whole lives, did this river raise a tumult of images and wonders. What meaning it had for them he could not imagine. Some meaning surely it must have! (*J&D*, 6-7)

After this meditation, John Sherman comes out of the darkness as “a spot of red light moving in the air at the other end of the bridge” (*J&D*, 7). He appears as “a man and a cigar” (*J&D*, 7) like “[t]he guest, having bought some cigarettes.” It is only when John Sherman is addressed, and we read “Good evening, Howard,” that the guest becomes William Howard (*J&D*, 7). As Yeats writes, “Some meaning surely it must have!—the two characters can be read as the evoked symbolic images from the river, personified as characters, each possessing oppositional characteristics, with regard to the other. Here

also there is the symbolism of the river and bridge: the river reflects the image, and divides the two shores into “here” and “there.” A bridge connects the divided sides above the mirror/river. So the bridge crossing the river is a place of the meeting of opposites—and this is likewise the symbolism of the Rosicrucian cross. This symbolism, of dialectic characters talking on the bridge, is repeated in Yeats’s later works, for example in “Ego Donumus Tuus” (1917), as the talks between the oppositional characters on the on the tower-bridge, and again in “The Phases of the Moon” (1919).

Also within the novella, William Howard writes to his opposite, John Sherman, discussing persona as metaphor:

I have a better metaphor. Your mind and mine are two arrows. Yours has got no feathers, and mine has no metal on the point, I don’t know which is most needed for right conduct. I wonder where we are going strike earth. I suppose it will be all right some day when the world has gone by and they have collected all the arrows into one quiver. (*J&D*, 60)

In this passage, John Sherman, the Irish dreamer, has a certain power to pierce a target, but does not have the power to hit it. By contrast, William Howard, the cosmopolitan theologian, has the power to hit a target, but not to pierce it. Each alone is unable to attain their aim. It will not be until the metaphorical ending of the world (the end of linear, serial time) that these opposite characteristics shall merge as one. That is, each man—each opposite—alone, remains imperfect.

Reviewing former studies on dialectic characterization in *John Sherman*, the origin of this theory begins with Richard Ellmann’s, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (1949). Ellmann regards the pairing of John Sherman and William Howard as the germ of Yeats’s dialectic characterization of self and anti-self. Ellmann writes:

In John Sherman it is clear that his real subject-matter is himself, and that

he has cut himself into two parts. . . . The traits of two characters show the nature of the choice as it looked to Yeats at the end of 1888, when he was twenty-three. . . . Yeats is both characters. (82)

The 23 year-old Yeats was “painfully turned inwards, self-conscious and aware of the vast gulf between what he was in actually and what he was in his dreams” (78). In Ellmann’s theory, the young Yeats’s inner-conflict in “dreadful London” created the division in his mind and hence, the dialectic characterization found in the story. Ellmann summarizes:

The antithesis between Sherman and Howard was fairly completely worked out, though Yeats’s sympathies were obviously very much on Sherman’s side. . . . Sherman was rude and unconventional, while Howard is elegant and decorous; Sherman is vaguely heterodox, Howard is a High Church curate; Sherman is devious; Howard conscientious and candid; Sherman self-conscious, Howard self-possessed; Sherman escapist, Howard worldly. (78)

Accordingly, Sherman is not positive but passive. As Osamu Osaka points out, Ellmann’s theory is echoed by scholars (such as T. R. Henn in *The Lonely Tower*. 1950; Charles Berryman in *Design of Opposites*. 1967; Richard J. Finneran in *John Sherman and Dhoya*. 1969. 1991; Osamu Osaka “Yeats: ‘John Sherman’ Reconsidered I.” 1978). Notwithstanding, the interpretations in these studies seem limited, in that the dialectic is discussed as but an early and brief phase (being based on the Model Theory), unconnected with Yeats’s later dialectic philosophy. Osaka warns that such former studies of the novella lack close examination (Osaka 79). Indeed, these critics who ascribe to the Model Theory limit their reference to *John Sherman* to a small number of pages. These include: Norman Jeffers (*Man and the Poet*. 1966), W. M. Murphy (“William Butler

Yeats's 'John Sherman': An Irish Poets' Declaration of Independence." 1979), and R. F. Foster (*Life I*. 1997). As a neglected work, critics have tended to repeat former theories.

Another compositional pattern can be seen in the novella: two "types" of people, the "Shermans" and "Howards" are juxtaposed. The families are not described closely, in order to universalize their contrasts; Yeats discusses the families as collective things. William Howard says to John Sherman:

It is really a great pity, for you Shermans are a deep people, much deeper that we Howards, We are like moths or butterflies, or rather rapid rivulets, while you and yours are deep pools in the forest where the beasts go to drink. (*J&D*, 79)

The Shermans are "deep people," or "deep pools in the forest where the beasts go to drink," while "Howards are "like moths or butterflies, or rather rapid rivulets." In this context, the contrast of the realms of "change" and the "changeless" are once again juxtaposed: "Shermans" as "deep pools" are representations of the changeless, while Howards as "moth, butterflies, or rapid rivulets" represent change. The Sherman family belongs to the "rough and conventional" Irish town of Ballah, which is unchanging (*J&D*, 7), while the Howards move about, in resonance with cosmopolitan London life, where all is change. The Sherman's are provincial, while the Howards are cosmopolitan. And here, the judgment is that the Sherman's are "much deeper": Yeats takes the side of the changeless, provincial aspects of family, culture and place.

This contrast between "change" and "changeless" is likewise found in the personalities of John Sherman and William Howard. Like the giant Dhoya (written chronologically earlier), who raged against everything, Howard shows an irritation toward all sorts of things. The novella begins with his rage for things in Ballah. He rages against an accordion tune, the water at a hotel, a church choir, the politics in the town newspa-

per, the rain, etc. (*J&D*, 5-8). Howard says,

Sherman, how do you stand this place you who have thoughts above mere eating and sleeping and are not always grinding at the stubble mill? Here everybody lives in the eighteenth century the squalid century. Well, I am going to-morrow, you know. Thank Heaven, I am done with your grey streets and grey minds! (*J&D*, 8)

Howard leaves Ballah, and gets a parish in Glasgow. Even in Glasgow, he cannot remain, tending to express his eccentric theological ideas passionately until he is finally banished:

In the course of a short life he had lost many parishes. . . . He had a habit of getting his mind possessed with some strange opinions, or what seemed so to his parishioners, and of preaching it while the notion lasted in the most startling way. (*J&D*, 53)

Just as Sherman called Howard “medieval,” Yeats, in a similar mien, read many theological books of the Church Fathers, and tried to seek out the truth in church, and in ritual based on the European tradition, including Catholicism or Anglo-Catholicism—if eccentrically. As a High Church curate who cherished “Cardinal Newman” (*J&D*, 55), he was under the influence of the Oxford Movement, which aimed to reconsider the Anglican Church as a branch of Roman Catholicism. However, his interest in Catholicism aroused “one dread—popery,” among his Protestant parishioners, and he was banished from his parish again.

The impassioned curate was active and had physical strength; this is similar to the characterization of the giant Dhoya. He was also good at sport. When Sherman invited him to London in order to introduce and “transfer” Margaret Leland to him, he gave an excellent performance of tennis (*J&D*, 55). His sports performance and intellectual

conversation attracted Margaret Leland, and he changed her as a spiritual lady like “Saint Cecilia” (*J&D*, 61). Although she was flirtatious, she was cultivated as a wealthy lady and was ready to accept profound teachings of theology.

Contrasting with the flux in London, Ballah (Sligo) is described as a changeless place. William Howard says, “Here everybody lives in the eighteenth century” (*J&D*, 8): the people of Ballah preserved the traditional life of rural Ireland. There are 21 instances of the word “same” in *John Sherman*, and the word appears *only* in those scenes which take place in Ballah, or in discussions or descriptions of the town. Among the scenes of Ballah, the rector house where Sherman’s childhood sweetheart Mary Carton lived is described as the most changeless place. When Sherman left Ballah, and later revisited, and later still returned, Ballah is in each case described as virtually the same in character. As Sherman said, “You are the same as when I left, and this room is the same, too” (43). The passage goes:

Everything around him was as it had been some three years before. The table was covered with cups and the floor with crumbs. Perhaps the mouse pulling at a crumb under the table was the same mouse as on that other evening. . . . It was just the same feeling he had known as a child . . . (*J&D*, 44)

As Finneran mentions, the name of the town “Ballah” is not only used as a common name for an Irish town, but also echoes the word “Beulah” (*J&D*, xxxiv). The Hebrew word “Beulah” is written in the Scripture, Isaiah 62:4: “thy land [shalt be called] Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.” The word “Beulah” means both “married” and the promised land. This word is used in literary works such as John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and William Blake’s Prophetic Books, as a term indicating an earthy paradise (e.g. Eden).

In *John Sherman*, Ballah is described as a promised land where the hero John Sherman experiences marital bliss with his childhood sweetheart. According to S. Foster Damon's *A Blake Dictionary* (1988), Blake used the Biblical term "Beulah" as the location of "the source of poetic inspiration and of dreams," and the only place where "Contraries are equally True": the place where opposites meet, as the Hebrew term "marriage" indicates (42). Yeats was familiar with the Bible, Bunyan, and especially Blake, having edited Blake's works in three volumes, adding his commentary (this project taking four years to complete). In his edition of Blake, *The Works of William Blake* (1893), Yeats writes that Beulah is "a place of repose, ante-chamber of Inspiration, and dwelling of the muses" (*WWB*, 260). Like the sacred place Beulah, the town of Ballah is depicted as a changeless place of sanctuary. As Yeats wrote in a letter (previously qtd., December 2, 1891), he wanted to express "a typical Irish feeling in Sherman's devotion to Ballah." Sherman's devotion to Ireland as "a place of repose, ante-chamber of Inspiration, and dwelling of the muses" is also expressed in Yeats's celebrated poem, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree."

Like the changeless fairy in *Dhoya*, John Sherman, who belongs to Ballah, possesses a changeless quality, in realms both physical and psychological. Yeats however depicts him as lazy, which seems problematic. John Sherman was "a born loungeur" (*J&D*, 31), aged around thirty years old (*J&D*, 11). He lived in an eighteenth century-style house with his mother, aged 50, and a servant aged 70, and his father was probably dead (*ibid*). The family had a "two hundred pound" income, without the need for work, thus were members of the leisure-class (*ibid*). The townspeople "were angry" about Sherman who "had no profession" (*J&D*, 14). His mother spoiled him because "she was afraid of her son going away to seek his fortune – perhaps even in America" (*ibid*). His dream was to have a "country house" with "garden and the three gardeners"

(*J&D*, 36-37). To attain this dream, he tried to marry a rich woman, and repeatedly said things like: “I shall marry money” (*J&D*, 9). In the course of the story, he goes to London to help in his uncle’s office, but he does not work—he just kills time by counting flies on the ceiling of the office (*J&D*, 28). This excess of idleness notwithstanding, he receives 100 pounds per a year as his salary (*J&D*, 18). He does not exercise in mind or body, does not like reading books (*J&D*, 13), and is bad at sports like tennis (on the other hand, Howard is a good reader and tennis player) (*J&D*, 27). Indeed, Sherman is described as a very lazy person. If a reader were to overtly identify John Sherman with Yeats, one would certainly be in error, in considering Yeats himself to be naïvely romantic and escapist—this is, in a nutshell, the mainstream critical interpretation of the early Yeats.

In the psychological realm, Sherman is representative of the changeless, while Howard becomes angry even about his own shadow. But Sherman never becomes angry or jealous, even when his fiancé Margaret Leland flirts with another man (*J&D*, 35). Sherman’s absence of the sense of jealousy upsets her, and she finally says: “You have no feeling; you have no temperament. . . . I flirted all day with that young clerk? You should have nearly killed me with jealousy. You do not love me a bit!” (*ibid*). Like the fairy in Dhoya, who was unable to love anyone, Sherman was unable to passionately love either Margaret or Mary. Even at the climax of the novella, Sherman’s return to Mary (his sweetheart of Ballah) is associated with the maternal act of accepting a stray boy. The novella ends with the sentence: “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” (*J&D*, 78). Sherman accepted Mary’s—that is, Ireland’s—maternal hospitality in an entirely passive manner. It is possible to consider Mary as a goddess or personification of Ballah/Ireland (echoing the stylism of *aisling*

personification), which welcomes home exiles with maternal hospitality—as if it were Beulah, a promised land.

This characterization is developed and made more sophisticated in Yeats's later works, where Yeats composes characters that embody his philosophy of self and anti-self; in particular, this can be seen in Michael Robartes and Owen Aherne, who appear in poems such as "The Phases of the Moon" (1917), and in prose—especially in *A Vision* (1925, 1937). Robartes is an alchemist, while Aherne is a pious Catholic. Robartes tends to seek the truth in him, while Aherne does to seek it outside of him. In Yeats's idiosyncratic terminology, Robartes is *antithetical*, while Aherne is *primary*. The first edition of *A Vision* was published with this embedded structure. In the narrative, Robartes and Aherne discover an ancient manuscript which reveals the dialectic system of *antithetical* and *primary*, and they pass it on to Yeats. So, the two fictional characters personify and embody *antithetical* and *primary*. As such, Robartes and Aherne are important symbolic characters in Yeats's personal mythology.

In his study, *Man and the Mask*, Ellmann indicates that John Sherman and William Howard may be origin-points of the later dialectic characters Robartes and Aherne, but he gets the relationships wrong. Ellmann links John Sherman with the *antithetical* alchemist Robartes because they loved Ireland. In similar way, Ellmann connects William Howard with the *primary* person Owen Aherne because they both have pious Christian faith (Ellmann, 86). However, it is Sherman, the man who tries to seek his ideal outside of himself, the man with a passive tendency, belongs most closely to the *primary*. On the other hand, the man who seeks his ideal in internal meditation, possessing a positive attitude, belongs most closely to the *antithetical*. Ellmann seems to have found his link by basing the connection between William Howard and Owen Aherne in their mutual sympathy towards Catholicism. However, the link between John Sherman, Owen

Aherne and the *primary*, and likewise between William Howard, Michael Robartes and the *antithetical* seems more definitive.

4. *John Sherman*: Irish Representation and Yeats's Sense of National Identity

The contrast between the positive and mutative William Howard and the passive and changeless John Sherman proved effective as literary alchemy. This characterization is significant as well as the first representation of Yeats's emergent dialectic characterization. Yet there is a problem concerning Yeats's representation of the Irish. In his letter (previously qtd., December 2, 1891), he wrote that he intended to conceive of John Sherman as "an Irish type," in order to express "a typical Irish feeling."

However, the characterization of John Sherman as a passive, lazy man who never changes can be read as a negative Irish stereotype. In fact, in the novella, Yeats uses the appellation "barbarian" to describe the Irish, including John Sherman, numerous times (on pages 7, 34, 38, 52, and 61). This reveals Yeats's internalized colonized viewpoint or psychological bias, and is not a unique case for a writer in a colonial situation. Though Yeats made a conscious and successful attempt to conceive his Irish characters as different from the English, he seems to have unconsciously followed the prevailing discriminative discourse against the Irish. Exploring the literary form of the short novel, with which he was unfamiliar, his hidden bias is revealed. However, as his letters and journals tell, Yeats became aware of his failure. He wrote: "[t]he hero [John Sherman] turned out a bad character" (*L*, 123). Yeats reflected and criticized *John Sherman*, reforming his own sense of nationality via this reflection. It is possible that one reason for Yeats's exclusion of this novella from his oeuvre is his realization of this problem. As such, *John Sherman* provides some unique clues concerning Yeats's sense of national identity at this stage of his life.

In *John Sherman*, Yeats describes the Protestant world of Ireland. Almost all of the characters in this story are Protestant: John Sherman is a middle-class Protestant, William Howard is a High Church curate, and Mary Carton is the daughter of a rector. Margaret Leland says she was once an agnostic (*J&D*, 52), but she is now a Protestant (*J&D*, 62). Not only the main characters but also for others—for example, in the scene about Howard’ sermon on the topic of Anglo-Catholicism, the narrator says:

Gradually the anger of his parishioners would increase. The rector, the washerwoman, the labourers, the squire, the doctor, the school-teachers, the local journalist, the master of the hound, the innkeeper, the veterinary surgeon, the magistrate, the children making mud pies, all would be filled with one dread –popery. (*J&D*, 53)

Here, all sorts of people from higher- to lower-class are mentioned, and all are Protestants “filled with one dread –popery.” It seems natural, in the description of this parish, that most are not Catholic. Even so, it seems that the word “popery” is a strong word for an Irish novel written by the direct disciple of John O’Leary, as the President of the IRB is Catholic and the organization has many Catholic activists.

As an example of a measure of common sense which John Sherman learned in Ballah, the narrator says: “Russia is bounded on the north by the Arctic Sea, and on the west by the Baltic Ocean, and that Vienna is situated on the Danube, and that William the Third came to the throne in the year 1688” (*J&D*, 60). Russia and Vienna, are merely objective geographic facts, but the last example is one of the most sensitive historical issues of Ireland, hence difficult to treat in an objective way.

In England, the historical incidents which included James II’s abdication and William of Orange’s coronation as the British king William III, occurred in 1688, and is known as the Glorious Revolution. Yet in Ireland, “the Glorious Revolution” did not

end peacefully. The Catholics and the Jacobites regarded the event of “William the Third [coming] to the throne in the year 1688” as an invalid coronation. The Catholic king James II organized the Catholic army with the Irish Catholics and the French volunteers, and the war between Catholics and Protestants broke out in Ireland.

On July 12, 1690, at the Battle of Boyne, the Catholic army of James II was defeated by the Protestant army led by William III, and the supremacy of Protestants in Ireland was then established. Since the defeat of the Battle of Boyne, the Irish Catholics were relegated to the status of second-class citizens, and discriminated against under the Penal Law, until Daniel O’Connell’s Catholic Emancipation, in 1829.

Even today, each year on July 12, on the anniversary of the Battle of Boyne, there are riots and conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. The Protestant society of Ireland maintains a hawkish tendency, while the Orange Order, named after William of Orange (later William III) is active, even today—especially in Northern Ireland. Concerning the sensitive quality of this historical incident, Yeats writes this novella apparently from the viewpoint of the victors of the Battle of Boyne, the Protestants. Most of the characters are Protestant, but there is one Irish Catholic. The Sherman family’s servant aged 70. When John Sherman is moving to London, the Catholic servant cannot understand what is going on:

[John Sherman’s mother] went to tell the servant that as soon as she had finished the week’s washing they must pack up everything, for they were going to London.

“Yes, we must pack up,” said the old peasant; she did not stop peeling the onion in her hand –she had not comprehended. In the middle of the night she suddenly started up in bed with a pale face and a prayer to the Virgin whose image hung over her head –she had now comprehended. (*J&D*, 21)

Here, the Irish Catholic servant is indicated by the epithet “the old peasant.” The term “peasant” is not meant here to indicate a tenant farmer, but rather one of the county folk of the lower class—and the term is discriminative. The servant is represented as a foolish person who cannot comprehend the new information. In addition, her worship to the Virgin Mary tells readers that she is Catholic. This description of an Irish Catholic seems problematic. Many of the notable reviewers who applauded *John Sherman* at the time, including Katharine Tynan (an Irish writer and Yeats’s advisor), John O’Leary (the leader of the IRB and Yeats’s mentor), and Father Matthew Russell (a Catholic priest), were Catholic, yet interestingly, this work includes discriminative discourse against Irish Catholics. Even though this novella has these issues, in the *Irish Monthly* of December 1891, the Catholic priest Father Russell writes:

The descriptions both of scenery and character [*sic.*] are full of quaint little touches of very subtle observation. The style is perhaps most remarkable for a dainty simplicity, lit up now and then by a striking thought and even a brilliant aphorism. (qtd. in *J&D*, xxiii)

The phrase “quaint little touches” can be read as a bit ironical, but generally speaking, Irish Catholics accepted the descriptions in *John Sherman*, at the time.

Next, the passage on Sherman’s dream to go to the small island—the lake isle of Innisfree—which exists in Ballah (Sligo), is given below. The poem, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” consists of twelve lines, but in the novella the section dealing with Sherman’s dream of Innisfree is a good-sized paragraph (of 376 words). Yeats wrote his dream of Innisfree as a background commentary in his autobiography and other texts, but the depiction here presented is the most detailed commentary.

Sherman grew shabbier and shabbier, and at the same time more and more cheerful. . . . All this while the mind of Sherman was clucking continually

over its brooding of thoughts. Ballah was being constantly suggested to him. . . . Delayed by a crush in the Strand, he heard a faint trickling of water near by; it came from a shop window where a little water-jet balanced a wooded ball upon its point. The sound suggested a cataract with a long Gaelic name, that leaped crying into the Gate of the Winds at Ballah. . . . He was set dreaming a whole day by walking down one Sunday morning to the border of the Themes –a few hundred yards from his house –and looking at the osier-covered Chiswick eyot. It made him remember an old day-dream of his. The source of the river that passed his garden at home was a certain wood-boarded and islanded lake, whither in childhood he had often gone blackberry-gathering. At further end was a little islet called Innisfree. (my underlines. *J&D*, 56-57)

The waters of London evoked Sherman's memory of the waterside of Ballah, especially the islet of Innisfree. The water-jet reminded Sherman of "a cataract with a long Gaelic name" (probably "*stuth-in-agahaidh-an-aird*," which means "the stream against the height" Yeats *P*, 657) in Ballah (Sligo), while the Themes river reminded him of the Garavogue river of Ballah (Sligo), and the osier-covered Chiswick eyot, of the lake isle of Innisfree.

As "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" shows, the island in the lake is a symbolic Celtic site, not dissimilar to King Arthur's Avalon, or the island of Ireland itself. According to R. F. Foster, the poet's dream to go to the lake isle in the poem is read as an "emigrant's return" (*Life I*, 79). Just as the poem became famous among Irish emigrants, it was natural that this discount-book dealing with an Irishman's devotion to Ireland, including the symbolic lake isle, sold well both in London and America, especially within the Irish emigrant community.

However, here again there is a problem arising from Yeats's internally-colonized viewpoint. In this section, the more Sherman aspires toward Ireland, the more shabby he becomes: "Sherman grew shabbier and shabbier, and at the same time more and more cheerful" (*J&D*, 56). His aspiration toward Ireland is linked to his degeneration—Sherman becomes a shabby "barbarian." Why should the Irishman become shabby in direct relation with his desire to return to Ireland, and why should the shabby Irishman be called "barbarian"?

This representation of the Irishman can be associated with a dangerous discourse which prevailed in the era. After the Great Famine, there were a lot of so to say "shabby" Irish emigrants who had arrived in England. According to Roger Swift's study, *Irish Migrants in Britain, 1815-1914* (2002), by the 1860s, the number of Irish seasonal migrants in Britain reached almost 100,000 (9). Yeats's representation of John Sherman can be linked a discourse demanding that these emigrants should be return to Ireland, on the part of British conservatives. In fact, British conservatives managed to force a great number of impoverished Irish emigrants to return to Ireland via the Poor Laws (Swift, 73-80).

As a flag bearer of the Celtic Revival, Yeats aimed to overturn the discriminative discourse against the Irish, which blocked the way to Irish self-government. However, ironically, he published a work which can be seen to support the discriminatory position against the Irish. At the same time, the Irish emigrants welcomed this story. This tableau represents the paradox of the colonial situation, and Yeats came to be aware of this problem. In his letter to Katharine Tynan (December 2, 1891), he writes:

I studied my characters in Ireland and described a typical Irish feeling in Sherman's devotion to Ballah. A West of Ireland feeling, I might almost say, for, like that of Allingham for Ballyshannon, it is West rather than National.

Sherman belonged like Allingham to the small gentry who, in the West at any rate, love their native places without perhaps loving Ireland. They do not travel and are shut off from England by the whole breadth of Ireland, with result of that they are forced to make their town their world. (*L*, 187)

Here, criticizing the Anglo-Irish poet William Allingham, Yeats also criticizes himself and his own work, writing that John Sherman's aspiration toward his own country town Ballah is the same as William Allingham affection toward his own town, Ballyshannon. Allingham was notable not only as a poet who depicted fairies in his poems but also as a stubborn Unionist. Yeats admits that Sherman represents "the small gentry who, in the West at any rate, love their native places without perhaps loving Ireland." Although Yeats suffered from poverty at the time, he also came from the same class as Sherman—and Allingham.

In *John Sherman*, William Howard says about Ballah: "one chats with the whole world in a day's walk, for every man one meets is a class" (*J&D*, 9). But this is true only if one remains within one's class. The characters in the novella, the early Yeats, and Allingham, are all people who remained in their own class. However, this limited attitude creates, as Yeats puts it: "West rather than National." In other words, the created thing is limited to the provincial.

In another article, "The Poet of Ballyshannon" (1888), comparing William Allingham with Thomas Davis, the original leader of the Young Ireland, Yeats writes: "Allingham, though always Irish, is no way national" (*LNI*, 168). The phrase "though always Irish, is no way national," means being Irish, but not national—in other words, being "West" but not national. This is the ambiguity which Yeats experienced at the time. When one does not regard the Irish people as a nation, it is safe to say that one's attitude is Irish, but not national. Here, Yeats did not regard Ireland as but a (colonial)

part of the British Empire—as a Unionist like Allingham did—as he had rejected the offer of the sub-editorship of a Unionist journal, and choosing instead to write *John Sherman*.

Here, it is helpful to think of the definition of “nation.” In the French Revolution, the origin of the modern nation state, “nation” represented the ideal notion of a community to unite all the classes and religions that belong to the country. The Young Ireland movement, an Irish nationalist group inherited this idea of nation, which had linkage with the French Revolution of 1848. The leader of the movement, Thomas Davis states: “We love our country and strive for its freedom. To that end we seek union among all sects and parties at home –Protestant as well as Catholic, Presbyterian and Quaker, Conservative and Democrat. All are welcome to our ranks” (qtd. in *Thomas Davis and Young Ireland*, 12). The phrase “our ranks” sounds militaristic, but Davis’s basic idea is to unite all the people with the power of a national Irish culture.

As discussed, Yeats was influenced by the notion of the nation and of a national culture, but kept his distance from the narrow nationalism of a branch of the group. As well, though admitting the significance of Davis’s ideal, Yeats is aware of a basic problem in its orientation. In his journal Yeats writes:

Allingham and Davis are two different kinds of love of Ireland. In Allingham I found the entire emotion for the place one grew up in which I felt as a child and which I sometimes hear of from people of my own class. Davis was possessed on the other hand with ideas of Ireland, with conscious patriotism. His Ireland was artificial, an idea built up in a couple of generations by a few commonplace men. (*M*, 153)

Allingham expresses his affection toward the land via his own experience, but he remains within one class. On the other hand, Davis tries to go beyond the border of

class, in the name of the nation. However, his works, as they are based upon his ideal of community and of nation, are artificial—separated or even alienated from his own experience with reality. Such “ideas of Ireland, with conscious patriotism” can be dangerous in a political sense, and this seems indicated by Yeats’s statements.

Consequently, in *John Sherman*, Yeats presents an unconsciously internally-colonized viewpoint or bias, much like the Unionist poet Allingham: “West rather than National.” Yet he realized his failure, and thereby deleted *John Sherman* from his canon. During a period of reflection, consequent to publication, Yeats re-organized his sense of national identity. He could be neither Allingham nor Davis. Though as he admits, he is more similar to Allingham (as a member of the Anglo-Irish gentry) than Davis.

4.1. New Directions

Reflecting on his attitude, Yeats begins to seek out new models which might accord with his changing sense of national identity. Soon after the publication of *John Sherman*, he encounters the Anglo-Irish aristocrat, Lady Augusta Gregory, the Irish mythological hero Cuchulain and also encounters Nietzsche’s philosophical notion of nobility—both of these events will have a profound and lasting effect on his life and work.

Yeats begins to connect the nobleness of the Anglo-Irish aristocrat and of the legendary hero with Nietzschean philosophy, and developed his idea of tragedy as a noble thing. In Chapter III, Yeats’s evolution in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and in Chapter IV, his sublimation in the time-period of the Irish Civil War, a moment of history which is the denouement of the fall of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, will be discussed.

Chapter III.

Noble, Hero, and Philosopher: Yeats's Encounters with Lady Gregory, Cuchulain and Nietzsche.

1. The Irish Sociopolitical Situation After the Publication of *John Sherman and Dhoya*

In this Chapter, Yeats's development of his philosophy of the "double war" and his perception of national identity consequent to his encounter with Lady Gregory, Cuchulain, and Nietzsche will be examined. Before proceeding, it is helpful to discuss the sociopolitical background of Ireland at the time and its effect on Yeats. In 1891, the year *John Sherman and Dhoya* was published, the sociopolitical situation was greatly changed, as in the same year occurred the portentous and unexpected death of Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish political leader of the parliamentary movement to establish home rule in Ireland. As a result, the Irish nationalists lost their foothold in the parliamentary movement, and sought places of activity outside of parliament—particularly in the realms of culture and the military. As Yeats stated in his 1923 Nobel Lecture, "when Parnell fell from power in 1891 . . . the modern literature of Ireland, and indeed all that stir of thought which prepared for the Anglo-Irish war [began]" (A, 410). After the fall of Parnell and collapse of the parliamentary movement, many Irish-nationalist societies were founded, including Irish Literary Society (1892), the Gaelic League (1893), the Irish Literary Theatre (1899; later the Abbey Theatre, 1904), and the Sinn Fein Party (1905). Yeats returned to Dublin; he was a member of the Irish Literary Society and the Irish Literary Theatre, and acted as the leading figure of the Irish literary movement. This is the background context to the three relationships next discussed.

2. Yeats's Encounter with Lady Gregory

For Yeats in the post-Parnellite era, one of the most significant persons in his life was Lady Isabella Augusta Gregory (nee Persse), widow of the Protestant Ascendancy class of Galway, in the west of Ireland. In the year following of the death of Parnell and the publication of *John Sherman*, her husband William Henry Gregory died, and Lady Gregory was left as the sole owner of the Big House, with some 360 hectares in area attached, these grounds known as Coole Park. From this time Lady Gregory began to engage in literary activities (without the limitations of paternal control), and gradually became interested in Irish issues, first meeting with Yeats in 1896.

As R. F. Foster writes:

[W]idowhood liberated her [Lady Gregory] too. She had subsequently discovered, like others, an interest in “Celtic” folklore; when WBY [William Butler Yeats] met her at Tillyra [in 1896], she had begun to learn Irish. Within a year she would begin to publish articles on fairy traditions, folk-tales. . . . Her rapid friendship with WBY created suspicion among her old imperialist friends . . . and her political views would (with characteristic independence) change throughout her life, tending more and more to separatist nationalism. (*Life I*, 169)

As her husband had been a colonizer, as a Governor of Ceylon, she had been surrounded by an “imperialist” atmosphere, without “an interest in ‘Celtic’ things.” She was originally a Unionist—in fact, she published a pamphlet against the Irish Home Rule movement, entitled *A Phantom's Pilgrimage, or Home Ruin* (1893). However, soon after encountering Yeats, she became a modest Irish nationalist. The critic Daniel Murphy writes:

She was immediately absorbed in all the movements then swirling through Ireland: agricultural cooperatives, land banks, the Irish Ireland movement, and the Gaelic League. She established a Gaelic class in the lodge, and she began to take Yeats around the neighbourhood collecting folk tales. (7)

Possessing a new vision “to restore dignity of Ireland,” she joined the Celtic Revival movement (Torchiana 70), and became an important figure in Irish literature.

Here, there is a remarkable point: Lady Gregory became Yeats’s new mentor and role model almost immediately after John O’Leary. In his poem “Beautiful Lofty Things” (1938), Lady Gregory is commemorated along with O’Leary (lines 7-10). She offered Coole Park as a place for Yeats to write, and became a patron.

At this time, Yeats reflected on the notion of an ideal Ireland, as presented by the nationalist Thomas Davis (O’Leary’s mentor), as “artificial” and abstract because this ideal was separated from real experience; he also reflected the notion of the Unionist poet William Allingham, who wrote Irish poetry, though through the lens of prejudice, as he had been a landlord. Yeats commented: “Allingham, though always Irish, is no way national” (*LNI*, 168). As has been discussed, Yeats rejected both views, though he showed some sympathy for Allingham, accepting that the viewpoint of the Anglo-Irish gentry was necessarily limited. At this point in time, Lady Gregory offered new possibilities as a role model.

3. The Abbey Theatre and the Violent Public Reaction

The first major opportunity afforded Yeats through Lady Gregory was the opportunity to found an Irish national theatre. In 1889, Yeats, Lady Gregory, and their friend Edward Martyn founded the Irish Literary Theatre to convey the beauty of modern Irish arts to ordinary people. This became the Abbey Theatre in 1904. The Theatre enabled

Yeats and his comrades to stage their experimental dramas, including controversial works. Some of these aroused not only controversy but also violence and riots: Yeats's *Countess Cathleen* (1899), Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* (1907), and John Middleton Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) are some examples. Yeats faced for the first time the violent reaction of the mob. These three plays are referred to in Yeats's Nobel Lecture, which is dedicated to Lady Gregory and Synge. In the Lecture, Yeats states that his *Countess Cathleen* was denounced by Cardinal Logue as a heretical play" because, in the play, the heroine sells her soul to the demon soul-merchant to save the starving Irish people (A, 415). Before the first performance of the play, Yeats was blackmailed (A, 308-09). Therefore, he presented his play with "police protection" of "twenty or thirty" (A, 309). According to his Nobel Lecture, Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* "could not be performed for two years because of political hostility" and Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* "was violently attacked" until there was a riot (A, 414). On these controversies of the Theatre, Richard Ellmann writes:

Yeats fought every fight, sometimes by public speeches, sometimes by letters to newspapers and articles, sometimes by private persuasion, and with his supporters succeeded in stemming the tide. He became a terrible man in combat, who could compel by sheer force of personality, or, as he would have put it, by power of his mask, a jeering crowd into silence. (179)

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Yeats faced the audience riots at the Abbey Theatre, believing in the validity of beauty and power of their arts.

As Ellmann says, it is possible that the bitterness of the fights with the Irish audience at the Theatre is linked to the later Yeats's contempt for the mob and his inclination toward the cultivated elite class (180). It is likely, as Yeats himself writes in his diary on March 7, 1909, at the aftermath "the 'Playboy debate'" (A, 359):

Ireland has grown sterile, because power has passed to men who lack the training which requires a certain amount of wealth to ensure continuity from generation to generation, and to free the mind in part from other tasks. A gentleman is a man whose principal ideas are not connected with his personal needs and his personal success. In old days he was a clerk or a noble, that is to say, he had freedom because of inherited wealth and position, or because of a personal renunciation. . . . Culture is the sanctity of the intellect. (A, 361)

Yeats's idea is not democratic, but rather, elitist and aristocratic. His role model for the Irish aristocrat is Lady Gregory. From this point, Yeats's sense of national identity tilts towards the aristocratic landlord class of the Anglo-Irish more and more strongly.

Even so, Yeats continued to face the public and continued to run the Theatre, right through the battles fought in the series of the Irish wars after 1916. In his Nobel Lecture, he comments: "We are burdened with debt, for we have come through war and civil war and audiences grow thin when there is firing in the street" (A, 418). Even though Yeats became an admirer of aristocracy, it is likewise true that Yeats continued to stand in front of the Irish people.

4. Yeats's Encounter with *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*

In the nineteenth century, Yeats's favorite hero in Irish mythology was Oisín, the poet and warrior who went to the fairyland of immortality called *Tír na nÓg* [The Land of Youth]. Yeats wrote and published the narrative poem *The Wanderings of Oisín* with the support of O'Leary in 1889, and gained in reputation. However, in the twentieth century, Yeats did not write Oisín stories, instead focusing on a new hero, Cuchulain. Cuchulain appears in the Irish mythological epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge* [The Cattle Raid of

Cooley] and other tales. He is the strongest warrior of Ireland, but as a Druid foretold that “his name will be greater than any other name in Ireland . . . [b]ut his span of life will be short” (Gregory *Cuchulain*, 28). He dies at a young age, like Achilles. At the moment of death, his body is bounded by an upright stone. So, even in death, he does not fall. Yeats knew about Cuchulain from his reading of Standish O’Grady’s translation and wrote an early poem, “Cuchulain’s Fight with the Sea” (1890), but he did not show any special inclination towards the hero. However, in 1902, he read Lady Gregory’s translation of Cuchulain tales, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster Arranged and Put into English by Lady Gregory*. After this encounter, he began to write poems and plays featuring this hero. At the first performance of the Irish National Theatre as the Abbey Theatre in 1904, he presented his Cuchulain play, *On Baile’s Strand*. After this play, and a farce, *The Green Helmet* (1908), he composed many Cuchulain plays, adapting the technique of the traditional Japanese Noh: *At the Hawk’s Well* (1916), *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919), and one of his deathbed works, *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939). He also composed the death of the hero as his own deathbed poem, “Cuchulain Comforted” (1939):

A man that had six mortal wounds, a man
Violent and famous, strode among the dead;
Eyes stared out of the branches and were gone. (1-3)

He wrote in the poetic form of *terza rima*, the form of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and memorialized the Irish hero Cuchulain, at the same time identifying with him. As he wrote in his Noh play, *At the Hawk’s Well*, Cuchulain lived the “double war” under the curse: “always to mix hatred in the love” (*CP*, 215). Indeed, Yeats himself writes that “I owe my soul . . . to the English language in which I think, speak, and write, that everything I love has come to me through English; my hatred tortures me with love, my love

with hate” (*E&I*, 519). Cuchulain’s curse corresponds to Yeats’s curse as an Anglo-Irish writer who writes (only) in English, to live and die in the “double war.”

There are perhaps two reasons for Yeats’s fascination with Cuchulain. The first is the innovative aspect of Lady Gregory’s translation which is a synthesis of English and Irish. The other is the heroic aspect of the man who fights the “double war” in an ideal way.

4.1. “Kiltartanese”: The Synthesis of the Gaelic and the Anglo-Irish Languages

Lady Gregory’s *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* was an innovative work. It offered a new possibility, via the example of her skillful and creative translation from Gaelic, for the writing of Irish in the English language. Lady Gregory first travelled among the Irish peasants of Kiltartan district then collected and retold the Gaelic folk tales in a unique form of English, known as “Kiltartanese . . . the dialect of the peasant of Kiltartan, which is in part an idiomatic translation from Irish, and in part the traditional Elizabethan manner of speech” (D. Murray 8). With “Kiltartanese,” she translated the Irish mythological sagas of Cuchulain tales, publishing them as above mentioned.

Her “Kiltartanese” is the integration of the earthy Gaelic voice of the Irish Catholic peasants and the lofty English voice of the Anglo-Irish landlords who came to settle after the Elizabethan period. It was a great surprise to Yeats and he wrote an enthusiastic book review:

I think this book is the best that has come out of Ireland in my time. Perhaps I should say that it is the best book that has ever come out of Ireland; for the stories which it tells are a chief part of Ireland’s gift to the imagination of the world –and it tells them perfectly for the first time. Translators from the Irish have hitherto retold one story or the other from some one

version, and not often with any fine understanding of English, of those changes of rhythm for instance that are changes of the sense. (*Ex*, 3)

Yeats begins his review with praise, and criticism and mentions that the translations of Irish stories prior to Lady Gregory are poor as they tend to be without “any fine understanding of English.” He continues:

Some years ago I wrote some stories of medieval Irish life, and as I wrote I was sometimes made wretched by the thought that I knew of no kind of English that fitted them. . . . I knew of no language to write about Ireland in but raw modern English; but now Lady Gregory has discovered a speech . . . a living speech into the bargain. As she moved among her people she learned to love the beautiful speech of those people who think in Irish, and to understand that is as true a dialect of English. (*Ex*, 2-3)

Yeats reveals here that he has contemplated his writing style as regards ways of best expressing his vision of Ireland. He finds his ideal style in Lady Gregory’s “Kiltartanese”:

It is some hundreds of years old, and age gives a language authority. We find in it the vocabulary of the translators of the Bible, joined to an idiom which makes it tender, compassionate, and complaisant, like the Irish language itself. It is certainly well suited to clothe a literature which never ceased to be folk-lore even when it was recited in the Courts of Kings. (*Ex*, 3)

Yeats then compares Lady Gregory’s language with that of the King James Bible (one of the fruits of the English Renaissance). In the period of the English Renaissance, English Protestants colonized and settled in Ireland, so this language is in a sense ancestral for the Anglo-Irish.

In the same year of the publication of *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902), Yeats stu-

died Edmund Spenser and wrote the essay “Edmund Spenser.” Yeats remarked: “I owe my soul to Shakespeare, to Spenser . . . to the English language in which I think, speak, and write, that everything I love has come to me through English; my hatred tortures me with love, my love with hate” (*E&I*, 519). Yeats cherished the works of Spenser, yet developed mixed feelings of love and hate towards him. As well, he knew the language of this poet and colonizer was imbued with the influence of aristocratic Anglo-Irish settlers. As Yeats admits, the Elizabethan (and Jacobean) periods include not only the Renaissance in England but also the “wars of extermination” in Ireland (*E&I*, 519). In “Edmund Spenser,” while praising Spenser, Yeats also quotes his controversial text, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (circa 1596): “[Y]et sure, in all that warre [war] there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremitie [extremity] of famine” (Spenser, qtd. in Yeats, *E&I*, 374). This passage is frequently quoted; it is reported that Spenser recommended the scorched earth strategy to suppress the Irish rebellion. Edward Said accuses “the great sixteenth-century poet Edmund Spenser” of “his blood-thirsty plan for Ireland, where he imagined a British army virtually exterminating the native inhabitants” (*Culture and Imperialism*, 7). In the same context, Said criticizes numerous men of letters who do not tend to discuss this fact, along with Spenser’s “poetic achievement” (*Culture and Imperialism*, 7). Yeats esteems both sides of the poet, writing: “His *View of the Present State of Ireland* commends indeed the beauty of the hills and woods where they did their shepherding, in that powerful and subtle language of his which I sometimes think more full of youthful energy than even the language of the great playwright” (*E&I*, 373). Yeats also values Spenser’s sophisticated use of Elizabethan English, which described the landscape of Ireland:

When Spenser wrote of Ireland he wrote as an official, and out of thoughts and emotions that had been organised by the State. He was the first of many

Englishmen to see nothing but what he was desired to see. Could he have gone there as a poet merely, he might have found among its poets more wonderful imaginations than even those islands of Phaedria and Acrasia. He would have found among wandering story-tellers, not indeed his own power of rich, sustained description, for that belongs to lettered ease, but certainly all the kingdom of Faerie, still unfaded, of which his own poetry was often but a troubled image. (*E&I*, 372)

Yeats imagines if Spenser were to have become acquainted with “wandering story-tellers” of Ireland, he would have learned much about “the kingdom of Faerie.” Here it is possible to say that Yeats has in mind the conception of a writer who expresses the Celtic world via Elizabethan English, and the language of the “wandering story-tellers” of Kiltartan; that is, in a word, Lady Gregory. Her language thus represents a new possibility, which has the effect of enforcing Yeats’s national Anglo-Irish identity and identification.

4.2. Yeats’s Philosophy of the “Daimonic” Hero and Cuchulain

Lady Gregory presented Cuchulain’s figure in a new light, and for Yeats, as the Irish mythological hero who battled his own “double war.” In the mythology, Cuchulain fights against his best friend Ferdiad, and his own son Conlaoch, killing them both (*Gregory Cuchulain*, 185; 239). He is not a warrior without tears or blood; he is a passionate and maudlin man. Fighting and killing those near and dear to him, he powerfully expresses his emotions. As he kills Ferdiad, he “began to keen and to lament for Ferdiad there” (*Gregory Cuchulain*, 186). In Lady Gregory’s translation, Cuchulain’s song of lament for Ferdiad goes more than 1,200 words (*Gregory Cuchulain*, 186-88). And When he kills his own son, he becomes enraged and fights against the waves of the sea,

for three days and nights, until he loses energy and falls into the waves (Gregory *Cuchulain*, 241). In his poem, “The Circus Animals' Desertion” (1938), Yeats writes: “Cuchulain fought the ungovernable sea” (line 26). This attitude corresponds to Yeats’s philosophy of *antithetical*, which is to engage in conflict with that which cannot be conquered. “He only can create the greatest imaginable beauty who has endured all imaginable pangs” (*Myth*, 332). Even if he falls, it is also beautifully exquisite as a tragedy. It is necessary to maintain an attitude in which one is ever-ready to face adversity: “The poet, because he may not stand within the sacred house but lives amid the whirlwinds that beset its threshold, may find his pardon” (*Myth*, 332-33). Yeats finds his personified ideal in Cuchulain as representative of the antithetical, which engages in the “double war”—presented in the new light through the translation by Lady Gregory.

Furthermore, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* gave an opportunity for Yeats to recall the Greek mythological idea of “daemon” or “Daimon.” In the *Symposium*, Plato writes that the “daemon” is the divinity between mortals and immortals, and that the daemon exists among the “element[s]” (*Symposium*, 202d-203a. *Five Dialogues*, 55-6). In the Preface to *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, Yeats says that the Irish legends of Cuchulain “make us understand why the Greeks call myths the activities of the daemons. The great virtues, the great joys, the great privations come in the myths, and, as it were, take mankind between their naked arms, and without putting off their divinity” (*Ex*, 10). In his later works as *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* and *A Vision*, this idea is further developed. In Yeatsian philosophy, “daemon” or “Daimon” represents “the Daimon or ultimate self of the man” (83), an alternative self which can drive a person, which exists in an unconsciousness or spiritual realm (*AVB*, 22). He writes, “the Daemon comes not as like to like but seeking its own opposite, for man and Daemon feed the hunger in one another's hearts” (*Myth*, 335). Yeats also states that the “Daimon” is an “the anti-self or antitheti-

cal self” which engages “the quarrel with ourselves” (*Myth*, 331). To face the “Daimon” means to face “the anti-self or antithetical self”; in other words, to be *antithetical*. In fact, in *A Vision*, the most *antithetical* man is discussed as “the Daimonic Man” (*AVA*, 62-3; *AVB*, 140-41).

In *Myth*, Yeats comments on the “Daimon”:

I think it was Heraclitus who said: the Daemon is our destiny. When I think of life as a struggle with the Daemon who would ever set us to the hardest work among those not impossible, I understand why there is a deep enmity between a man and his destiny, and why a man loves nothing but his destiny. (336)

Here, the act of the “Daemon” is twofold: The “Daemon” drives a man towards difficult situations because the “Daemon” seeks “its own opposite.” That is to say, the “Daemon” seeks the greatest adversity for for the self, and drives one into it. One must then engage in outer-conflict. At the same time, the “Daemon” itself is his “anti-self.” Therefore, it can be said that to face the “Daemon” is to fight the “double war.” Furthermore, here Yeats asserts such a “double war” as a destiny. This idea corresponds to Nietzsche’s *amor fati*, love of fate. Indeed, soon after the publication of *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (and Yeats’s expressed enthusiasm for it, in March 1902), Yeats encountered Nietzsche via Lady Gregory and her lover at the time, John Quinn (in September 1902)

5. Yeats’s Encounter with Nietzsche

In September of 1902, Yeats was given the English versions of, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *The Case of Wagner*, *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, *The Twilight of the Idols*, and *A Genealogy of Morals* by Yeats’s American patron John Quinn (Bohlman¹; O’Shea 189-90). This encounter with Nietzsche greatly shocked Yeats. In his letter to Lady

Gregory dated September 26, 1902, Yeats wrote:

Dear Friend, I have written to you little and badly of late I am afraid, for the truth is you have a rival in Nietzsche, that strong enchanter. I have read him so much that I have made my eyes bad again. . . . I have not read anything with so much excitement.” (*L*, 379)

As this quotation shows, Yeats was absorbed in reading Nietzsche until his eyesight declined (he began to wear glasses around this year). One immediate result of Yeats’s encounter with Nietzsche was that within a few weeks he completed from start to finish the five-act play, *Where There Is Nothing* (completed in 1902; pub. 1903). The work is dedicated to Lady Gregory (*WTIN*, vii). The protagonist, Paul Ruttledge, “a Country Gentleman” is a Zarathustra-like hero, who cries out prophetic sayings such as “My wild beast is Laughter, the mightiest of the enemies of God” (*WTIN*, 46), or “We are going back to the joy of the green earth” (*WTIN*, 93). In this play, the hero expresses Nietzsche’s thesis “God is Dead” (*Zarathustra*, 5) in Yeatsian understanding: “[W]e must put out the light of the Sun and of the Moon, and all the light of the World and the World itself. We must destroy the World; we must destroy everything that has Law and Number, for where there is nothing, there is God” (*WTIN*, 98). After the destruction of the world as order, only Truth will remain—as Yeats understood Nietzsche’s maxim.

Although there are differences between Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* and Paul Ruttledge, the play was strongly influenced by it. This caused trouble: One of Yeats’s friends and a reader of Nietzsche, George Moore, who was writing his own Zarathustra play, nearly accused Yeats’s *Where There Is Nothing* of plagiarism (of borrowing from his unpublished Zarathustra play) (Yeats *L*, 379-81; Oppel 44). In fact, Yeats had not read the play in question—though he had read all the extant English versions of Nietzsche. Responding to Moore’s claim, he re-worked *Where There Is Nothing* into

The Unicorn from the Stars (1907), in collaboration with Lady Gregory. This controversy has had the side-effect of revealing Nietzsche's strong influence on Yeats.

such was Yeats's enthusiasm that in 1903 John Quinn gave him Thomas Common's anthology, *Nietzsche as Critic, Philosopher, Poet and Prophet*, and Lady Gregory gave him *The Dawn of Day*. Following this, Yeats himself found copies of *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Thoughts out of Season*, and *The Will to Power*—between 1909 and 1910 (O'Shea 189-90). Yeats's enthusiasm with Nietzsche remained continuous through his lifetime. In fact, even in his posthumous essay, *On the Boiler* (1939), the name of Nietzsche and his philosophy are shown, as "Nietzsche's 'transvaluation of all values'" (Ex, 433). Dennis Donohue's does not exaggerate: "the most important philosophical influence and the crucial figure in Yeats's poetic life, if any single figure may be named, is Nietzsche" (48).

5.1. Misreading and Mis-translation: Nietzsche's "*Herrenmoral*" as "Noble Morality"

Yeats misread Nietzsche's "*God is Dead*" in Bloom's sense, making several crucial, creative assumptions. The translations Yeats used are discussed by Edward O'Shea's study of Yeats Library (O'Shea 189-90). Among the versions, *A Genealogy of Morals* and *The Birth of Tragedy: or, Hellenism and Pessimism* are the translations of William Haussmann, who translated Nietzsche's "*Herrenmoral*" (the literal translation is "master-morality") into "noble morality." Yeats likely accepted "noble-morality" – the morality which "takes its rise from a triumphant Yea-saying to one's self" (Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 35) as the virtue of the nobles which Yeats envisaged, that is, of the Irish mythological heroes and of the Anglo-Irish.

In fact, Nietzsche's morality here is far from something related to the aristocratic

classes, which he denounces:

Verily, not that ye served a prince –of what concern are princes now? –or that ye have been a bulwark to that which standeth that it might stand the firmer! –Not that your kin hath grown a courtly in courts, and that ye long hours in shallow ponds, flamingo like, brightly appareled. (*Zarathustra*, 181)

Nietzsche further states: “Therefore, O my bretheren, it needeth a *new nobility* opposed to the rabble and to all tyrannies, to write anew on a new tables the word ‘noble’” (*ibid*). Nietzsche was opposed to the establishment of the modern world, and waited for an arrival of “a *new nobility*,” which could be the antithesis of the established noble class.

Yeats however misread this idea, connoting “noble morality” with the noble nature of the Irish people. In *A Genealogy of Morals* of Haussmann, Nietzsche advocates the “blond beast” (*Genealogy*, 41), meaning, that noble person who is “saying Yea to life with great vigor and power” (44). The “blond beast” lives in “the glorious, but likewise so awful, so violent world of Homer” (*Genealogy*, 42). In the same chapter, Nietzsche explains that the Celts are likewise a noble race, alongside the Homeric heroes. Nietzsche interprets the ancient Gaelic word “*Fin*” to be a legendary Celtic hero’s name (*Fin-Gal* or *Fionn mac Cumhail*): “[This] word characterizing nobility, denoting [the] ultimately good, the noble, the pure, originally the flaxen-haired man” (*Genealogy*, 25). The name of this Celtic hero was the origin of the IRB’s alternate name, the Fenians—the group Yeats once belonged to. Nietzsche concludes that, “The Celts . . . were throughout a blond race,” in other words, the “blond beast” (*ibid*). Nietzsche does not say anything about Cuchulain directly, but the hero Cuchulain seems to represent the noble beast in Yeats’s theory.

5.2. Yeats's Cuchulain Versus Nietzsche's "Will to be Tragic"

In order to discuss the Irish mythological heroes in a Nietzschean context, it is first worth noting the other work of Nietzsche translated by Hausmann: *The Birth of Tragedy*. This book was one of Yeats's favorites, as it introduced the twinned polar concepts of Apollinian and Dionysian. Out of these two, Nietzsche more strongly emphasized the Dionysian quality:

[T]ragic myth and the tragic hero, who, like a mighty Titan, takes the entire Dionysian world on his shoulders and disburdens us thereof; while, on the other hand, it is able by means of this same tragic myth, in the person of the tragic hero, to deliver us from the intense longing for this existence, and reminds us with warning hand of another existence and a higher joy, for which the struggling hero prepares himself presentiently by his destruction, not by his victories. (*Tragedy*, 159-60)

Nietzsche himself later criticized his concept above, as a joy of tragedy remains a Romantic ideal: "the metaphysical comfort" (*Tragedy*, 18). The tragic hero in this context faces "the entire Dionysian world," but does not express a joy of life in his tragic situation. Instead, his death would bring the "warning hand of another existence." This is not the attitude of *amor fati*, but rather a Schopenhauer-like idea which may be seen to denounce the world.

The Birth of Tragedy is the work of the early Nietzsche, who was at the time absorbed in Richard Wagner and Schopenhauer. Nietzsche later parted company with both, and became inclined to criticize their ideas. Upon reflection, Nietzsche wrote a new introduction to *The Birth of Tragedy*, titled "An Attempt at Self-Criticism." In it he rejected Schopenhauer's notion that "all tragedy . . . leads to *resignation*" (*Tragedy*, 11), and refuted Wagner's Romanticism as "[A] German's gravity and disinclination for

dialectics” (*Tragedy*, 5). As a prophet of life as existentialism, Nietzsche revised the (earlier) joy of tragedy into “the will *to be* tragic” (*Tragedy*, 7). He also added an aphorism: “Viewed through the optics of *life*, what is the meaning of – morality?” (*Tragedy*, 8). Nietzsche re-defined the joy of tragedy as a joy of life, a “noble morality.” This is the will to love a fate, the will to face a heroic self which drives one to one’s fatal end, as “the double war.” Moreover, it is the will to exist to affirm to exist. Haussmann translated this new introduction of *The Birth of Tragedy* with a detailed notes as an Appendix, so Yeats had ample context for his contemplations, and came to divine from it the following maxim: “[P]assive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies; in Greece the tragic chorus danced” (*OBMV*, xxxiv). Yeats calls this form of joy “tragic joy” (“Gyres,” 8).

In Yeats’s deathbed poem, “Cuchulain Comforted,” the dying hero Cuchulain faces his fate, sewing his own shroud:

A Shroud that seemed to have authority
 Among those bird-like things came, and let fall
 A bundle of linen. Shrouds by two and three

 Came creeping up because the man was still.
 And thereupon that linen-carrier said:
 “Your life can grow much sweeter if you will

 “Obey our ancient rule and make a shroud;
 Mainly because of what we only know
 The rattle of those arms makes us afraid.

“We thread the needles’ eyes, and all we do
 All must together do.” That done, the man
 Took up the nearest and began to sew. (7-18)

In *terza rima*, the form of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Cuchulain faces his fate, accepts it, and sews his own shroud. The saying of the linen-carrier [The Morrighu, the Irish Goddess of War], “Your life can grow much sweeter if you will / Obey our ancient rule and make a shroud,” is a gospel of “the will *to be* tragic,” as a gospel which tells of the will to exist—an affirmation of existence at the moment of his fatal end. To “Obey our ancient rule and make a shroud” is therefore not a slavish but heroic act. For the warrior, to sew a thing is the opposite of his business. To face existence and do the opposite thing is an antithetical attitude, in other words, “noble morality.” This is Yeats’s Cuchulain; by corollary, reckless brute courage is ignoble.

6. Critiquing Patrick Pearse’s Cuchulain: A Hero Who Is “*Hostile to Life*”

The poet is Patrick Pearse, was acquaintance and rival poet of Yeats. He was a strong admirer of Cuchulain, and a hawkish nationalist. Yeats and Pearse were not friendly. Indeed, Foster calls Pearse Yeats’s “old adversary” (*Life II*, 44). Pearse acted as the main leader and planner of the Easter Rising of 1916, reciting the Proclamation of the Irish Republic as the first President of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic, at the General Post Office (GPO), Dublin. The Easter Rising, a crucial turning point in the history of Ireland, was planned and carried out by Patrick Pearse.

Pearse designed the insurrection as a “tragic” play set up in order to stir the sense of nationalism among the Irish people. He made an abortive insurrection on Easter Week. The British army suppressed the insurrection by force, and the 16 leaders were executed (15 shot, one hanged). The suppression and executions spurred Irish national-

ism, and the Irish independent movement became violent, until the steep escalation of political tensions between the United Kingdom and Ireland brought about the Irish War of Independence from 1919 to 1921.

The estimation of The Easter Rising is diverse, but there is general agreement that this was an act of symbolic violence, set as a “tragedy.” The execution of the leaders of the uprising became martyrs of the nation, and the spirit of nationalism was resurrected. Moreover, this incident overlaps the image of Cuchulain, who fought against a great number of troops and died without falling. In a sense, this was a theatrical incident—a miracle play or tragedy. In 1934, a statue of Cuchulain was set at the place of the insurrection, by the GPO, in order to commemorate the event. This fact illustrates that the common connection between the mythological Irish hero, The Easter Rising and its executed leaders.

In *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia* (1997), McCready writes that Yeats “admired the rebels, especially Pearse” because of his action as the top leader of the Easter Rising as a follower of Cuchulain (McCready 305). This comment represents the general critical understanding. In fact, Yeats wrote the celebrated poem “Easter, 1916,” commemorating the leaders of the insurrection. However, the critical validity of Yeats’s appreciation of Pearse is questionable. I would suggest that Yeats disagrees with Pearse’s vision of Cuchulain—that is, as an anti-tragic figure who is unable to possess “the will *to be* tragic.” Pearse’s vision of Cuchulain was geared toward recommended sacrifice for the rising of a nation. Such an attitude is “*hostile to life*”—a notion which both Yeats and Nietzsche despise.

In his letter to Lady Gregory, May 11, 1916, Yeats called the Easter Rising “[t]he Dublin tragedy,” and composed the noted phrase “terrible beauty” in the same letter (*L*, 612-13). “Terrible beauty” is used in “Easter, 1916” as a refrain (lines 16, 40, 80).

Within, he commemorates the executed leaders:

I write it out in a verse —
 MacDonagh and MacBride
 And Connolly and Pearse
 Now and in time to be,
 Wherever green is worn,
 Are changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born. (74-80)

However, among the leaders, he does not seem to esteem Pearse. He disagreed with Pearse's extreme nationalism—evidence for this stance can be found in a letter Yeats wrote to his sister Lily just after the uprising, which Foster quotes (housed in the Princeton University Yeats Collection):

I know most of the Sinn Fein leaders [of the uprising] & the whole thing bewilders me for Connolly is an able man & Thomas MacDonough [*sic*] both able and cultivated. Pearse I have long looked upon a man made dangerous by the Vertigo of Self Sacrifice. (qtd. in Foster *Life II*, 46)

Yeats does not accuse all of the leaders of the uprising. James Connolly was the leader of the socialist movement of Ireland, and Thomas MacDonagh was an Irish poet who was not especially hawkish. As he was shocked their deaths, Yeats esteemed their values. Yet in the passage quoted above, he shows his disagreement with Pearse's notions and attitude. Yeats does not value "the Vertigo of Self Sacrifice."

In his letter to Lady Gregory (quoted above) Yeats also writes: "At the moment I feel that all the work of years has been overturned, all the bringing together of classes, all the freeing of Irish literature and criticism from politics" (*L*, 613). Here Yeats is lamenting the destruction of the Celtic Revival movement. The notion of the Celtic

Revival as “all the bringing together of classes” is Yeats’s creed, taken from O’Leary; Yeats further developed the notion with Lady Gregory, sharing the philosophy of Nietzsche—Yeats found his ideal hero Cuchulain, exemplar of the nobility of life in Irish mythology. Pearse on the other hand utilized the image of Cuchulain for a violent nationalism, as the preacher of martyrdom for the nation. In short, Pearse demaded the dignity of Cuchulain as an affirmer of life, presenting an altogether different image of the mythological hero. Moreover, Pearse’s works became the Irish canon after the uprising, as the poet/martyr for the Irish nation, and the first President of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic. Therefore, Yeats’s *agon* against Pearse’s Cuchulain, a battle to keep clear a space for his own creativity.

6.1. “Redemption by the Shedding of Blood”: Pearse’s Cuchulain and Militant Nationalism

Pearse had been canonized and treated as a martyr of the Irish nation for long enough that he became critically untouchable; in fact, there was a censorship incident as recent as 1966 in which a critical essay on Pearse was suspended, when Jesuit friar and critic Francis Shaw contributed an essay criticizing Pearse: “The Canon of Irish History – A Challenge” to *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review of Letters, Philosophy and Science*. After his death, and just after the Bloody Sunday incident of Northern Ireland in 1972, Shaw’s essay was belatedly published in *Studies* with an editor’s explanatory preface of two pages. Up to the time of the “Troubles,” it was difficult for Irish citizens to question Pearse’s militant nationalism.

Shaw warns:

The canon of history of which I speak stamps the generation of 1916 as nationally degenerate, a generation in need of redumption by the shedding

of blood. . . . In effect it teaches that only the Fenians and the separatists had the good of their country at heart, that all others were either deluded or in one degree or another sold to the enemy. This canon mould the broad course of Irish history to a narrow pre-conceived pattern: it tells a story which is false and without foundation. It asks us to praise in other what we do not esteem or accept in ourselves. It condemns as being anti-Irish all who did not profess extremist doctrine, though it never explains how it is possible to be judged to be against your own people. . . . This canon is more concerned with the labels and trappings of national politics than with the substance which wisely-used political action can bring. (117-19)

It is Pearse who insisted on the “need of redemption by the shedding of blood.” He called it “the gospel of Irish nationalism” (Shaw 121). After the Easter Rising and his death as a martyr of “the gospel,” many followed and imitated him as if they had been apostles of Irish independence. Indeed, Pearse’s followers’ struggle for Irish independence bore fruit. Therefore, such discourse of the Irish history became the national mythology of the foundation of the nation-state. As Anthony D. Smith points out, it is natural that “common myths and historical memories” are utilized in the formation of a modern nation-state (14). In such cases, religions and mythologies are used as tools to unite the people. In Ireland, Pearse used the image of Christ in combination with the Celtic hero Cuchulain plying his creation of a national myth:

The story of Cuchulainn [*sic*] I take to be the finest epic staff in the world. . . . the theme is as great as Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: Milton’s theme is fall, but the Irish theme is a redemption. For the story of Cuchulainn symbolizes the redemption of man by a sinless God. . . it is retelling (or is it foretelling?) of the story of Calvary. (qtd. in Shaw 124)

Here, Cuchulainn's death is strangely united with the image of Christ, as "the gospel of Irish nationalism," in other words, "redemption by the shedding of blood." Needless to say, Pearse's notion is distant from either Christianity or Celtic mythology.

As a man of letters, Pearse joined the Irish independence movement. Unlike Yeats, his attitude was not oriented towards cultural independence, but was on the other hand militaristic. He edited the nationalistic journal *An Claidheamh Soluis* [The Sword of Light], and ran the St. Enda School, in order to teach Irish culture via Irish language to children. In the school's foundation document, Pearse described the school's aim: "It will be attempted to inculcate in them the desire to spend their lives working hard and zealously for their fatherland and, if it should ever be necessary, to die for it" (qtd. in Edwards, 116). At the school gate, the motto was displayed along with the statue of Cuchulain: "I care not if I live but a day and a night, so long as my deeds live after me" (Kiberd "Irish Literature and Irish History," 241). This motto is from Cuchulain. Pearse repeatedly recommended that not only the children of Ireland, but also every Irish citizen die in battle as a blood sacrifice in order to redeem the "tragic dignity" of Ireland. Pearse was a member of the IRB, but his position was different from O'Leary, as expressed by his motto: "There are things a man must not do to save a nation."

Pearse wrote the following in a 1913 article:

I should like to see any and every body of Irish citizens armed. We must accustom ourselves to the thought of arms, to the sight of the arms, to the use of arms. . . . bloodshed is a cleansing and a sanctify thing. . . . There are many things more horrible than bloodshed; and slavery is one of them. (qtd. in Edwards 179)

In the next year, he also wrote: "The whole movement, the whole country, has been re-baptized by bloodshed for Ireland" (qtd. in Edwards 217). Indeed, the "bloodshed" of

the Easter Rising “rebaptized” the Irish citizens with the Spirit and Fire of nationalism. The young men raised in his school took up arms as elite fighters, and the war against the British Empire broke out. In this sense, Pearse achieved his aim.

6.2. Pearse’s Cuchulain Versus Nietzsche’s Critique of Martyrdom

As Nietzsche and Yeats know, martyrs are not intrinsically Nietzschean. In Chapter 53 of *The Antichrist*, martyrdom is severely attacked as the antithesis of Pearse’s aphorism, “bloodshed is a cleansing and a sanctifying thing,” Nietzsche states, “blood is the worst of all witness for truth; blood poisoneth even the purest teaching and turneth it into delusion and hatred of hearts” (*Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist*, 122). Nietzsche also attacks martyrdom’s aspect of agitation: “The martyr-deaths . . . have been a great misfortune in history: They have seduced. . . . The inference of all idiots, women and mob included. . . . The martyrs *injured* the truth” (*Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist*, 122). Here Nietzsche speaks through the mask of “the Antichrist.” As with Karl Barth or Paul Tillich, there are many theologians who esteem Nietzsche, who is attacking something deeply entwined with Christianity at the time: “the tendency *hostile to life*” (*Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist*, 122). Pearse’s notion of tragedy was not the revised edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*, but that of its first edition, which reflected the philosophy of Schopenhauer; the play which “reminds us with warning hand of another existence” due to the hero’s defeat. “Schopenhauer was “*hostile to life*” because he preached that tragedy lead people to resignation (*Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist*, 81). This is an abiding attitude of certain persons that Zarathustra hates: “Otherworldlings” (Lit. “behind-worldlings.” Gr. *Hinterweltlern*) (*Zarathustra*, 23). To aspire to the other world after death is not “the will *to be* tragic.” Moreover, to affirm death in tragedy is likewise not. To affirm to be, to exist at the moment of the tragic end,

to face that life that certainly exists at the moment of the tragic end, this is “the will *to be* tragic” and “noble morality.”

Martyrdom can be attempted not by self-will, but a result of the law of others—at least, an act limited to such meaning. For Yeats, such an attitude was not noble. In the introductory poem of his collection, *Responsibilities* (1914), Yeats writes: “Only the wasteful virtues earn the sun” (line 18). To comment, in the poem, his ancestor William Middleton is praised, as an “Old merchant skipper that leaped overboard / After a ragged hat in Biscay Bay” (lines 13-14). In Nietzsche’s sense, here “wasteful virtue” can be considered to be *spiel* [free play]. In Yeats’s philosophy, this type of martyrdom as a stage of a symbolical violence could not be wasteful virtue.

7. The Will to be Tragic and Noble Morality: “An Irish Airman” as Yeats’s Ideal Anglo-Irish Hero

In opposition to Cuchulain as the hero who died as a martyr for militant nationalism, Yeats presents his ideal image of hero, who possesses and embodies noble “wasteful virtue” as a tragic phase of life. Yeats’s heroic figure is found in his “An Irish Airman,” based upon the Anglo-Irish man Robert Gregory, only son of Lady Gregory. In WWI Robert Gregory was killed on the North Italian front, on January 23, 1918. As an irony of war, his plane was shot down by the friendly fire of an Italian pilot. Admiring his all-round skills Yeats describes Robert Gregory as a “painter, classical scholar, scholar in painting and in modern literature, boxer, horseman, airman — he [won] the Military Cross and the Legion d’Honneur” (*UP2*, 429). In Colin Smythe’s monograph, *Robert Gregory 1881-1918: A Centenary Tribute with a Forward by His Children*, his many achievements are catalogued. Among them, a short biographic profile is given: he was educated at Harrow, then at Oxford and at the Slade School of Art. He became a painter

and designed the stage for plays at the Abbey Theatre. He was also good at a number of sports, especially shooting, riding, cricket, and boxing. He was especially good at cricket and belonged to the Phoenix Cricket Club, Dublin. As a talented boxer, he was selected for the Oxford boxing team and the Amateur Championship of France (Smythe 9-10). During the war, although there was no compulsory recruitment in Ireland, he discarded his fortunate life to enter the aerial battlefield, joining the Royal Flying Corps, and exhibiting great flying ability. “He was awarded the Military Cross ‘for having invariably displayed the highest courage and skill,’ and the Legion d’Honneur for ‘many acts of conspicuous bravery’” (Smythe 5).

Yeats idealized Robert Gregory as a Renaissance man, as “[o]ur Sidney and our perfect man” (“In Memory Of Major Robert Gregory” 47). The figure of Gregory in Yeats’s poetry is a projection of Yeats’s ideal vision, as an Anglo-Irish hero possessing “noble morality.” After his death, Yeats wrote the commemorative poem, which is regarded as one of Yeats’s finest: “An Irish Airman Foresees His Death” (1918). Here, Yeats connects the Nietzschean idea of “noble morality” not only with Lady Gregory, but with her son. In this poem, a nobleness is expressed which is in evident opposition to Pearse’s notion of the tragic hero. Below is the poem in full:

“An Irish Airman Foresees His Death”

I know that I shall meet my fate
 Somewhere among the clouds above;
 Those that I fight I do not hate
 Those that I guard I do not love;
 My country is Kiltartan Cross,
 My countrymen Kiltartan’s poor,
 No likely end could bring them loss

Or leave them happier than before.
 Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
 Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
 A lonely impulse of delight
 Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
 I balanced all, brought all to mind,
 The years to come seemed waste of breath,
 A waste of breath the years behind
 In balance with this life, this death.

This poem has the universal quality, as its heroic figure is not limited in scope to Robert Gregory. In this poem, Yeats's ideal attitude of "the will *to be* tragic" is expressed. The speaker "I," as an Irish airman continues to face his own fate. As the title shows, an Irish airman predicts his own death. The word "predict" is not completely suitable, as he "foresees" his own death, reflecting on his own life. The word "foresee" (fore+see) indicates the airman *looks into* his fate as an aim, with open eyes (or mind's eye), rather than having a premonition. He will not close his eyes even as he looks into the abyss. Borrowing from another Yeats poem, he has "the lidless eyes love that the sun" as a "sweet laughing eagle" with "high laughter, loveliness, and ease" ("Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation," 4-12). Yeats uses the eagle here as a heroic symbol; likewise Zarathustra calls this bird "[t]he proudest creature beneath the sun" (*Zarathustra*, 15).

The airman says: "I know that I shall meet my fate / Somewhere among the clouds above." Because he says "the clouds above," at that moment, he is on the ground just prior to taking off. But in line 12, he says "in the clouds." So, in the poem, the airman rises into the clouds. Having the notion of elevation, he confesses, "I know that I shall

meet my fate.” However, here there is no negative emotion. He is prepared to meet his fate and embrace it, as an *amor fati*.

This airman fights but he “do[es] not hate” for the people he “do[es] not love.” If so, why does he fight? Readers are perhaps encouraged to seek their own answer. The airman himself is however free from such questions. His mind freed from the bounds of the State, which Zarathustra terms “the new idol” (*Zarathustra*, 42):

To *you* also it will give all if ye worship it, this new idol. . . . With you will it bait its hook foe the Mach-too-Many! . . . Yea, then was devised the death of many, a death that vaunteth itself as life: verily, a welcome service to all the preachers of death! . . . What I call the State is where all are poison-drinkers. . . . What I call the State is where all lose themselves. . . . What I call the State is where the slow suicide of all men is called “life.”
(*Zarathustra*, 41-42)

In war, the State impels a citizen to worship it and die for it; the product is death. In peace, the State impels a citizen to live a life as “the slow suicide.” In both situations, the State effectively suppresses a citizen’s individuality. In this poem however, the Irish airman never loses his individuality (as an Anglo-Irish man).

This Irish airman is not bound by the State, but nevertheless has affection toward his native country’s villages and villagers: “My country is Kiltartan Cross, / My countrymen Kiltartan’s poor.” Kiltartan is the village near the estate of the Gregory family. However, he continues: “No likely end could bring them loss / Or leave them happier than before.” He shows his affection for his homeland, but is not attached to the place or people. He knows he shall meet his fate in the clouds, thinking whether his death “could bring them loss / Or leave them happier than before.” Then, he confirms his notion that his death will not change anything in his country. He seems to be detached from the

place and people. Having affection for them, he casts a cold eye on his coming death in the sky as well as the years of life he spent in his homeland.

The airman flies in the cloudy sky of aerial combat without any reason linked with the State. Indeed, in the time of the First World War, even though there was no law for compulsory military service in Ireland, some Irish people fought for the British Empire against the Central Powers, mainly Germany, as “Those that I fight I do not hate, / Those that I guard I do not love” or “Nor law, nor duty bade me fight, / Nor public men, nor cheering crowds.” However, this is “An Irish Airman,” who was the created figure by Yeats, who was inspired by the death of Robert Gregory. He was Yeats’s expression of his vision of his ideal hero, not the real Robert Gregory. Fran Breton suggests that Robert Gregory probably have a “pro-Empire political stance” (56). It is possible that the Irish airman’s individualistic attitude is linked with Yeats’s stance rather than real Robert Gregory’s.

He does not fight for the State, or his homeland or his people, or his life. If so, what brought the airman into the air fight, into “this tumult in the clouds”? He says, “Nor law, nor duty bade me fight, / Nor public men, nor cheering crowds” drove him into the fight. Instead of these, “A lonely impulse of delight / Drove to this tumult in the clouds.” This “A lonely impulse of delight” is “the will *to be* tragic.” Rejecting “passive suffering,” the Irish airman faces his own fate, as Yeats insists, “tragedy is a joy to the man who dies; in Greece the tragic chorus danced.”

As the Greek chorus danced, the airplane of the hero spins and dances in its fall. The lines of the poem goes:

I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind

In balance with this life, this death. (13-16)

In this part, the word “balance” appears twice, as if a balance of a two opposite. The airman balances his past and his possible future, and balances life and death. Ironically, in this situation, his airplane probably lost its balance in the “tumult in the clouds.” His airplane would be falling, and the airman sees his vision of life and death as it was a magic lantern. He regards his life in the past and possible future as “waste of breath,” but he does not take any side of life and death. He does not attach life and death both. At the same time, he does not look away from life and death. This Irish airman’s attitude correspond to the last lines of Yeats’s poem “Under Ben Bulbin” (1938), which is written for his famous epitaph:

No marble, no conventional phrase;

On limestone quarried near the spot

By his command these words are cut:

Cast a cold eye

On life, on death.

Horseman, pass by! (89-94)

The “Horseman” is the figure of Yeats’s ideal hero like Cuchulain. The “cold eye” suggest that the hero is free from “passive suffering” or *resentment*. To cast a cold eye on life and death both is a heroic act to love own fate. The Irish airman does the same act. This act to look at life and death both without “passive suffering” is the act to face the fate. This is “the will *to be* tragic,” “noble morality,” Yeats’s *antithetical* attitude to fight “the double war.”

7.1. “An Irish Airman” in the Sociopolitical Context of Ireland in WWI

Here, it is worth paying attention on the situation of Ireland in the wartime, in or-

der to examine “the double war” in the poem “An Irish Airman Foresees His Death” much deeper. As it is mentioned before, this poem was written by Yeats for commemoration of Robert Gregory, the son of Lady Gregory. This is Yeats’s famous WWI poem, however, such Yeats’s attitude of hero-worship of the First World War is often accused as politically naïve or inappropriate, or, at least out of fashion. It is a general understanding that the Great War shattered a mankind’s dream of hero. There were massive killing without human dignity. For example, the war poets like Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg and Robert Graves expressed the destruction of humanism in the trenches, which is far from heroism. However, Yeats disagreed with the war poets. Indeed, as Foster tells, it is the fact that Yeats excluded the works of the war poets like Wilfred Owen from *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, which Yeats edited (Foster *Life II*, 552-58). In fact, in the preface of the book, he writes the following passage with his maxim:

I have a distaste for certain poems written in the midst of the great war. . . .
 I have rejected these poems. . . passive suffering is not a theme for poetry.
 In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies; in Greece
 the tragic chorus danced. (*OBMV*, xxxiv)

Foster accuses Yeats’s maxim on tragedy, which excluded the war poets, as “notorious” aphorism because it lacks the sense of sympathy (Foster *Life II*, 558). Indeed, Yeats’s attitude to reject sympathy seems to be cruel.

However, Fran Breaton insists in his work *The Great War in Irish Poetry* (2000): “Irish memory of the Great War is not the same as English memory, and to assume that eradication of any war repression in Irish memory will reveal something rather similar to English memory is hardly reasonable” (49). Then, he continues to say that Yeats’s “refusal to privilege such poetry [of the war poets like Owen] strikes at the heart of

English cultural memory of ‘literary’ Great War” (51). In fact, there are many difference of the discourse on the war between England and Ireland.

In Ireland, to discuss the Great War has been a challengeable act. Here, Kiberd reveals astonishing fact about it:

For decades after independence [of Ireland], the 150,000 Irish who fought in the Great War. . . had been officially extirpated from the record. No government representative [of Ireland] attended their annual commemoration ceremonies in Christ Church: and none publicly sported a poppy. Such amnesia was weird, given the large number of families whose men were involved, but also considering the manifest links of mood and mentality between the Easter rebels and the battlers of the Somme. (*Inventing Ireland*, 239)

Why had the Irish government officially extirpated the memory of the war? Here, it is worth paying attention on the situation of Ireland in the wartime. As Elizabeth Cullingford points out, “The protector of ‘little Belgium’ was oppressor of Ireland, and Home Rule still hung in the balance” (87). The British Empire stated that it had responsibility to protect “little Belgium” (a Catholic nation) against Germany, it entered into the war in 1914. However, at the same time, it suspended the Irish Home Rule Bill, which was introduced in 1912 and passed with Royal Assent in 1914, due to the break out of the war. Even so, in a sense, there was a reason: the controversy on the Irish Home Rule had grown intense, and a civil war between the Ulster Volunteers (Unionist) and the Irish Volunteers (Republican) was at hand in 1914 (Fitzpatrick 193). In fact, on July 26, 1914, an armed clash between the Republicans and the Unionist (with the British troops) happened in Dublin (Swift 220-21). *The Times* alarmed the possibility of civil war in Ireland (Swift 220-21). However, only two days later of the collision, the

First World War broke out, and the Home Rule Bill was suspended.

This English policy on the Irish Home Rule evaded the crisis of the civil war at the time, but it prolonged the problem. The Republicans' frustration with the suspension of the Home Rule brought the Easter Rising and the succeeding wars. On the other hand, the crisis in Ulster became intense, then, the Irish Home Rule was changed to exclude Ulster from the territory of Ireland. Then, in 1922, the 26 counties of the Southern Ireland as the Irish Free State was founded under the British Crown, and the Northern Ireland remained as the British territory. This is one of the great causes of the Northern Ireland Troubles.

While the Irish Republicans glorify the Easter Rising as the martyrdom for the nation's independence, the Ulster Unionists do memorize the soldiers who fought in the Great War, especially the Battle of the Somme happened in the same year. In the historical viewpoint of the Ulster Unionists, the Northern Ireland is protected from so-called "Rome Rule" of the Southern Ireland, making large sacrifices in the war for the Empire. In order to commemorate the dead of the Battle of the Somme of 1916, the Ulster Tower was founded in the Northern Ireland at the almost same time of the foundation of the Southern Ireland as the Irish Free State.

However, of course, not only the Ulster Unionists died in the Great War. North and South, Catholic and Protestant both fought and died in the war. In fact, as David Fitzpatrick writes, "the bare majority of recruits were Catholic" because they had to join the army due to "economics rather than politics or religion" (195). Even so, the Irish officials neglected the death of the war partly because it could shake the martyrdom of the Easter Rising as the national history of Ireland. On the other hand, emphasizing the dead of the Great War, the impact of the Easter Rising would be little, and the death of the nameless soldiers would be utilized as the martyrdom for Ulster.

Peter MacDonald accuses Yeats, saying the following: “the most catastrophic event in Irish history in the year 1916 [is] ignored by Yeats. . .[T]he dead from the Irish and Ulster divisions at the Somme are silent in [his] writing” (184). It may be correct. However, if Yeats took his pen for writing on the Battle of the Somme, could he write soldier’s “passive suffering” like Owen or other war poets? In the sociopolitical situation of Ireland at the time, write poetry of “passive suffering” could be linked with the worship of the martyrdom – of a side of the two. It worth writing poetry on the hardship of war, but there is a possibility that “passive suffering” can be utilized as propaganda, especially in the discourse of the Great War in Ireland.

Yeats understood the danger. Therefore, he rejected “passive suffering” in his war poetry. Yeats’s “An Irish Airman” is the expression of his ideal hero, as the sublimation of “the double war” of the inner (philosophical-psychological) and outer (sociopolitical) conflict. His tragic attitude affirms the dignity of humanity as a heroic figure who loves his own fate, as “noble morality.”

The isolation of the Anglo-Irish of the Southern Ireland (like Yeats, Lady Gregory and her son Robert), which is separated from the main streams of the Irish Republicans, of the Ulster Unionists and of the English politician, enabled Yeats to compose this poem with the high heroic ideal in the twentieth century.

Even so, Robert’s death in the Great War is the beginning of the tragic situation of the Gregories, Yeats’s ideal Anglo-Irish landlord class. The aftermath of the Easter Rising brought the Irish War of Independence (a. k. a. Anglo-Irish War), the foundation of the Northern Ireland Parliament, and the Irish Civil War. In the season of the serial guerrilla wars, Yeats faced the fate of the Anglo-Irish landlord class as the Protestant Ascendancy. In the serial wartime, the Anglo-Irish was attacked by the Irish and the British both, and the estates and Big Houses of them were burned. For the house of the

Gregories, the loss of the only son as a possible inheritor was the omen of the destruction to come.

In such situation, within the extreme psychological condition of the “double war,” with his notions of dialectic philosophy and the pride of the Anglo-Irish, and enforced by Nietzschean philosophy, Yeats creates his masterpiece, “Meditations in Time of Civil War” (1920-22). This poem which will be more closely examined, in the following Chapter.

Chapter IV

Meditations on the Anglo-Irish Past and Future, in Time of Civil War

1. The Sociopolitical Context of Ireland: Easter Rising to the Irish Civil War

Before proceeding with an examination of Yeats's poetic series, "Meditations in Time of Civil War, it is helpful to discuss the sociopolitical background of Ireland at the time and its effect on Yeats. After the Easter Rising of 1916, the independence movement came to be led by violent paramilitary groups. Moreover, in the general election of 1918, the Sinn Fein Party gained 73 out of the 105 Irish seats in the Westminster parliament, and made their own parliament in Ireland, named Dáil Éireann. Consequently, a guerilla war between Ireland and the United Kingdom (the Irish War of Independence, or Anglo-Irish war) broke out (1919-21). In the ceasefire treaty, the right of self-government under the crown of the British monarch was allowed for 26 counties of Ireland (the Irish Free State), while six counties remained British territory: Northern Ireland. The treaty caused great controversy, and on June 28, 1922, the Irish Civil War between the Irish Free State and "the Irish Republic" broke out (1922-23).

1.2. "Weasels Fighting in a Hole": The Violence of the Guerrilla War

In the violent era after the Easter Rising of 1916, Yeats bought the ruined tower, Thoor Ballylee, near Lady Gregory's estate. In 1917 rebuilding began. Around this time, applying his dialectic philosophy, Yeats began to compose the tower poems. In the tower, surrounded by the battleflames of the Irish wars, he produced masterpieces, such as the poetic series, "Meditations in Time of Civil War" (1920-21), his autobiography, *The Tremblings of the Veil* (1922), and the major part of *A Vision* (1st ed., 1925).

The western area of Ireland around the tower was dangerous because the war between Ireland and the UK was a guerilla war; one in which “murder answered murder,” as Yeats mentions in his Nobel Lecture (A, 411). The major force of Ireland was the Irish Republican Army (the Original IRA), while the British force was not a regular army but composed of “the English auxiliary police” (*ibid*). They were the infamous guerilla force known as the Auxiliary Division: the Black and Tans. Ironically, some of the members of the groups were Irish who had fought in WWI. In his Nobel Lecture, Yeats comments that in guerilla war that even non-combatants were “shown no mercy.” For example, on 21 November 1920, as revenge for the assassination of British intelligence agents by the IRA, the Black and Tans fired at random in a Football stadium, killing 12 and injuring 60 civilians (Lyons 419). This was “The Bloody Sunday of 1920” incident (*ibid*).

Yeats gives another example of such violence: in his poem compiled in *The Tower* (1928), “Thoughts upon the Present State of the World” (1921; renamed “Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen”), he writes of an atrocity committed by the Black and Tans near the tower:

Now days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare
 Rides upon sleep: a drunken soldiery
 Can leave the mother, murdered at her door
 To crawl in her own blood, and go scot-free. (26-28)

This incident is recorded by Yeats’s close friend and patron, Lady Augusta Gregory, in her journal. On November 5, 1920, a few miles from Yeats’s tower, Ellen Quinn, a young woman who had three children and was pregnant, was “shot dead . . . with her child in her arms” by the Black and Tans (Gregory *Journals Vol I*, 197). As Yeats wrote, they left her “at her [cottage] door / To crawl in her own blood,” and went “scot-free.”

According to Foster, “the killing was utterly random. After a huge funeral and angry demonstrations, an official ‘inquiry’ applied some unconvincing whitewash” (*Life II*, 181). Yeats became very upset over the incident, but Lady Gregory calmed him (*ibid*, 183). The fourth stanza (Section I, of VI) ends like this:

The night can sweat with terror as before
 We pieced our thoughts into philosophy,
 And planned to bring the world under a rule,
 Who are but weasels fighting in a hole. (29-32)

Here, one line shows the dreadful atmosphere of the guerrilla war: “The night can sweat with terror.” At the same time, this stanza states: “We . . . are but weasels fighting in a hole.” This technique of subtle allusion is effective in giving a new perspective for readers to view nature of the war. Like “weasels fighting in a hole”: there is no side except the naked violence of internal squabble. In addition, this situation is one of repetition: “as before.” Yeats’s point here is that when human beings bind plural “thoughts” into a singular “philosophy . . . to bring the world under a rule,” wars tend to be the result.

1.3. The Independence of the Irish State and the Fall of the Anglo-Irish

Yeats shows sympathy with Irish victims of the guerilla war, regarding the war as an internal dispute. Here, it is important to note that the series of the Irish wars, from 1919 to 1923, had a special meaning for members of the Anglo-Irish class like Yeats. Wars for the “independence of the Irish people” implies the destruction of the privilege, culture, and lives of the Anglo-Irish Protestants—especially the aristocratic landlords, known as the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. As quoted above, in his Nobel Lecture, Yeats calls the war between England and Ireland “the Anglo-Irish war” (A, 410). Ironically,

the word Anglo-Irish also includes his own class. During the war, the Anglo-Irish were attacked by the Irish Republican as enemies, the violence against the Anglo-Irish continuing throughout the series of the Irish wars. Many of the Big Houses (aristocratic houses of Anglo-Irish landlords) were destroyed. According to Terence Brown's study, "Between 6 December 1921 and 22 March 1923, 192 Big Houses were burnt by incendiaries as reported in the *Morning Post* of 9 April 1923" (110). Lady Gregory's house was also burned. Roxborough House, her birthplace (2,400 hectares) was destroyed on November 1922, during the Irish civil war. On the other hand, Coole Park, some 360 hectares in area, remained. Yeats mentions these facts in his Nobel Lecture:

Her own house [Lady Gregory's Big House, Coole Park] has been protected by her presence, but the house where she was born [Roxborough House] was burned down by incendiaries some few months ago; and there has been like disorder over the greater part of Ireland. (A, 411)

At the time, for those of Anglo-Irish descent, circumstances were quite precarious. After pointing out that many left Ireland for the UK, Brown states: "The period 1911-1926 saw indeed a striking decline of about one-third in the Protestant population of the south of Ireland as a whole (in the same period the Catholic population declined by 2.2 percent)" (116). Although he had at least one good opportunity to leave the country, Yeats remained. On July 9, 1919, he received an offer from Keio University, Tokyo, "to lecture there for two years, with accommodation provided" (Foster *Life II*, 145). Yeats was attracted to Japan, and had previously composed a play inspired by Japanese Noh drama. In fact, he wrote that he was "about to move to the Far East" in his essay, "If I Were Four-and Twenty" (1919). According to Foster, "by the end of July," he was committed to going (*Life II*, 145), but the trip never happened.

1.4. The *Antithetical* Attitude of the Poet in the Tower

Yeats wrote the section on the *antithetical* and *primary*, in *A Vision*, at the tower, during time of the Irish Civil War. At the end, there are the lines: “Finished at Thoor Ballylee, 1922, in a time of Civil War” (AVA, 94; AVB, 184). This indicates a strong relationship between the philosophy of “the double war,” expressed in *A Vision*, and the tower in the midst of battle. In *A Vision*, the *antithetical* alchemist Michael Robartes says: “Love war because of its horror, that belief may be changed, civilisation renewed. We desire belief and lack it. Belief comes from shock and is not desired. . . . Belief is renewed continually in the ordeal of death” (AVB, 52-53). Expressing this *antithetical* attitude, Yeats remained in Ireland to face “the double war”—exposed to the violence from both Irish and British sides, deepening his inner-conflict.

In fact, Yeats often visited the tower and surrounding area, but his real settlement in the tower was on April 1922, when the Republican IRA occupied the Four Courts of Dublin to show their disagreement with the treaty to found the Irish Free State of the southern 26 counties, under the British monarchy (Lyons 454-55), as he writes in his letter to Olivia Shakespear (*L*, 680): “The Black and Tans flogged young men and then tied them to their lorries by the heels and dragged them along the road till their bodies torn in pieces” (*ibid*). And in the same letter: “While I was there [at Coole Park, near the tower], the I. R. A. [probably, the IRA on the side of the Irish Free State] arrived” (*ibid*). Thus Yeats began his days in the tower. In another letter, to T. Sturge Moore, on August 15, 1922, he wrote: “All is uncertain here. Last night I heard two explosions at 4.a.m. and now there are no trains for the two bridges have been blown up. . . . I spend on a series [*sic*] of poems about this Tower and the civil war at which I look” (*C*, 46). The “series” of poems about the Tower and the civil war at which I look” is “Meditations in Time of Civil War.” Borrowing Foster’s saying, it is “the writing which would im-

mortalize this summer” of 1922, (*Life II*, 217). In the poetic series, he distilled his experience of “the double war, by which he was possessed.

2. Anglo-Irish ValueS in “Meditations in Time of Civil War”

In the course of the Irish wars to gain independence, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy was attacked by both the Irish and the British. This group was not however simply a victim of sectarian conflict. According to Terry Eagleton, “a matter of conscience” or “a bad conscience” (*Scholars and Rebels*, 42) existed—a sense of guilt concerning their settlements in Ireland taken with bloodshed and their privilege over the Irish Catholic population. Eagleton continues, “all Ascendancy’s attempts at spiritual and political leadership . . . [were] self-serving and self-sacrificial at the same time. It was a heroic phase of a historical doom project, which sought, impossibility, to refurbish a ruling class on the brink of being accused of genocide by placing it in the van of a national culture revival” (58). As a descendant of the settlers who usurped the land from Irish natives by force, Yeats had to face these problems.

In this case, Yeats acted according to his own philosophy (influenced by Nietzsche) rejecting “a bad conscience” as resentment (*Genealogy of Morals*, 101). He states that a “bad conscience . . . violates reality or psychology” (*ibid*). Such a “mental-reaction” can destroy a person’s “private desires,” which can engender “self-humiliation” (*ibid*). It opposes the “most unconscious of all artists . . . terrible artist-egotism” (*Genealogy of Morals*, 109).

Yeats also had to face the violent origin of his class. As Nietzsche shows, “the origin of the ‘state’ on the earth” is “an act of violence, *ipso facto* only be accomplished by a whole series of violence” (*Genealogy of Morals*, 108-09), Yeats faced the violent origin of Protestant Ireland. As Yeats writes, the Protestant army’s conquest of Ireland

“during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries . . . became wars of extermination” for the natives of Ireland (*E&I*, 518-19). This can be termed “genocide,” as Eagleton writes.

Experiencing a crisis of his own national identity, Yeats sought to understand the value of the Anglo-Irish class. He connected the philosophy of Nietzsche’s noble morality (*Herrenmoral*; and Yeats’s *antithetical*), with the value of the Anglo-Irish landlord class, as inner-conflict. Moreover, he linked Nietzsche’s idea of tragedy with the fall of the Anglo-Irish in the time of the civil war, as outer-conflict. Possessing such dual philosophical approach as “the double war,” he best-expressed the sublimity of the Anglo-Irish class in the poetic series, “Meditations in Time of Civil War.”

Here, Yeats’s philosophical stance will be clarified, first through an examination of his two civil war poems, “Ancestral Houses” and “My Descendants.” Both deal with his views on the past and future of Anglo-Irish society. Here, it is helpful to quote Zarathustra’s sermon: “I love him which justifieth future generations and redeemth past generations: for he willeth to perish by the present generation” (8). This prophecy of Zarathustra probably affirmed Yeats’s understanding of the value of the Anglo-Irish class. Yeats would bless the future of this class, even if it were rapidly declining throughout the series of wars.

Second, by investigating Yeats’s biographical materials—particularly his margin notes to his copy of Nietzsche’s *The Dawn of Day* (1903, given by Lady Gregory)—Yeats’s reading of certain aspects of Nietzschean philosophy will next be discussed.

2.1. Analysis of “Ancestral Houses”: “Redeemth Past Generations”

The poem, “Ancestral Houses” is presented below. The verse is metered in well-ordered rhyming stanzas of *ottava rima*, an iambic pentameter with an “*abababcc*” rhyme structure. Note that the poem begins with the intensifying adverb “surely”:

I. Ancestral Houses

Surely among a rich man's flowering lawns,
Amid the rustle of his planted hills,
Life overflows without ambitious pains;
And rains down life until the basin spills,
And mounts more dizzy high the more it rains
As though to choose whatever shape it will
And never stoop to a mechanical
Or servile shape, at others' beck and call.

Mere dreams, mere dreams! Yet Homer had not sung
Had he not found it certain beyond dreams
That out of life's own self-delight had sprung
The abounding glittering jet; though now it seems
As if some marvellous empty sea-shell flung
Out of the obscure dark of the rich streams,
And not a fountain, were the symbol which
Shadows the inherited glory of the rich.

Some violent bitter man, some powerful man
Called architect and artist in, that they,
Bitter and violent men, might rear in stone
The sweetness that all longed for night and day,
The gentleness none there had ever known;
But when the master's buried mice can play.

And maybe the great-grandson of that house,
 For all its bronze and marble,'s but a mouse.

O what if gardens where the peacock strays
 With delicate feet upon old terraces,
 Or else all Juno from an urn displays
 Before the indifferent garden deities;
 O what if levelled lawns and gravelled ways
 Where slippered Contemplation finds his ease
 And Childhood a delight for every sense,
 But take our greatness with our violence?

What if the glory of escutcheoned doors,
 And buildings that a haughtier age designed,
 The pacing to and fro on polished floors
 Amid great chambers and long galleries, lined
 With famous portraits of our ancestors;
 What if those things the greatest of mankind
 Consider most to magnify, or to bless,
 But take our greatness with our bitterness?

The scene depicted in the first stanza is that of “a rich man’s” life. The “flowering lawns” and “planted hills” are not wild fields but rather the tamed and well-ordered parklands of an aristocrat. As Donald Torchiana points out, the style of the park is that of the Georgian Big House—a stately home in the same style as Lady Gregory’s Coole Park (311). R. F. Foster also states that the house in the poem seems to be an Irish coun-

try house similar to that of Lady Gregory's, which is "rooted deep in Irish history" (*Life II*, 311).

Yeats idealizes "a rich man's" Georgian style park as if it were Arcadia, while rejecting mass materialism as "a mechanical / or servile shape, at others' beck and call." In the ideal park, the opposite value is described: "life overflows without ambitious pains." In this sense, ambition is equal to resentment, which evolves from one's strong emotion to overcome something superior to him or her. This emotion is linked with a sense of vengeance. Therefore, a moralistic person suffers from "ambitious pains." However, in the ideal "rich man's" park, "a life" is "surely" free from such pains of resentment. The owner of the park, a "rich man," does not suffer from moralistic pains of resentment. That is, the "rich man" is self-possessed. The self-possession of the "rich man" is also supported by Terry Eagleton's idea of "Byronic license." The libertinism seen in an aristocratic society (*Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, 69). Just as the adventures of Byron himself and his heroes are secured by aristocratic sociopolitical circumstances, aristocratic society in this case can allow its members to take bold action. This is Eagleton's "Byronic license"—also seen in the society of the Ascendancy.

In the concept of Byronic license, an aristocrat's life and the will to adventure are combined. In fact, the *ottava rima* rhyming style used in the verse is the same as that of Byron's *Don Juan*, thus seeming to echo this value. Although Yeats rejects such an aristocratic notion as "mere dreams," in "Ancestral Houses" he attempts to justify the ideal of aristocratic life, later referring to Homer. The individualistic lives of the Homeric heroes support Byronic license, which asserts "life's own self-delight."

It is worth noticing that by the time of Yeats's writing, after WW I, the golden age of the aristocracy was over. The poet laments that "the inherited glory of the rich" has become obscured: the water of aristocratic life is "shadow[ed]" and "dark" in the mod-

ern era, and “life’s own self-delight” has become “the obscure dark of the rich streams.”

In Homer's era, and in the golden age of the aristocracy, an “empty sea-shell” is a “marvellous” and valuable thing because of its permanent quality, equivalent to a precious stone, “the abounding glittering jet.” It is however a product originated by nature, not art. Yeats esteems those arts in which such a permanent quality inheres, in contrast to the raw, natural product.

In the following (third) stanza, art and stone architecture are described. “Some violent bitter man, some powerful man,” the master of the house, enjoins the “architect and artist” to make art or architecture in stone. The values which might be contained by “all its bronze and marble” are “the sweetness that all longed for night and day,” and “the gentleness none there had ever known.” Such “sweetness” and “gentleness” are posited as aristocratic virtues. These virtues are opposite to those of “violence” and “bitterness.” This theme is further developed in the following two stanzas: that “greatness” requires “violence” and “bitterness.”

This thought finds its bedrock in Nietzschean philosophy. In *A Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche articulates the significance of “nobleness.” As previously mentioned, one of the best exemplars of his view is found in the phrase: the “blond beast” (*Genealogy of Morals*, 41), “the glorious, but likewise so awful, so violent world of Homer” (42). The “blond beast” is that noble person who is “saying Yea to life with great vigor and power” (*Genealogy of Morals*, 44). One of the most significant Nietzschean influences on Yeats has to do with this recognition of nobleness.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche develops his idea of nobility and the “blond beast” into what he termed noble morality (*Herrenmoral*; in John Grey’s translation, “noble morality” and “Master-Morality” in Thomas Common’s translation) and describes its opposite, “slave morality” (*Sklavenmoral*). As mentioned, Yeats’s idiosyn-

cratic terms, *antithetical* and *primary*, correspond to noble morality and slave morality (Bohlmann 25-39; Oppel 92-101). Thus, it can be seen that Yeats accepts noble morality as an ideal Anglo-Irish noble value (with Robert Gregory and Lady Gregory as representatives).

Concerning *Beyond Good and Evil*, Yeats read only the few selected passages present in the anthology compiled by Thomas Common, *Nietzsche as Critic, Philosopher, Poet and Prophet: Choice Selections from His Works* (1901). Selective though it is, this anthology includes an important section from *Beyond Good and Evil*: “Master-Morality and Slave-Morality.” The passage shown below definitively connects Nietzschean philosophy with Yeats's “life’s own self-delight” of “a rich man”:

The noble type of man regards himself as the determiner of worth . . . he is a creator of worth. . . . his morality [Master-Morality] is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of plentitude and power which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of riches which would fain give and bestow. (110)

This philosophical stance is similar to Yeats’s notion of the ideal aristocrat’s life, which he expresses in the first and second stanzas of “Ancestral Houses.” Nietzsche goes on: “The noble man honours the powerful one in himself, and also him who has self-command, who knows how to speak and keep silence, who joyfully exercises strictness and severity over himself, and reverence all is strict and severe” (*ibid*).

Nietzschean noble morality is related to the ideal state of aristocratic wealth which Yeats expresses in his poem. The “greatness” just spoken of in “Meditations...” is Nietzschean noble morality. The nobility of such morality thus stands in direct opposition to an attitude in which one would “stoop to a mechanical / or servile shape, at others’ beck and call”— slave morality, in a word.

For Yeats, Nietzschean nobility and the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy are combined. In 1903, Lady Gregory gave Nietzsche's *The Dawn of Day* to Yeats, with her signature. Yeats left a bookmark in the copy (now housed in the Yeats Library, National Library of Ireland collection, which this author visited in 2006). Examining page 93 (photocopied by Roger N. Parisious), the following aphorism by Nietzsche appears:

Aphorism 198

How to lend prestige to one's country. — A wealth of great inward experience and reposeful calm watching over with an intellectual eye, constitute the men of culture, who lend prestige to their country. In France and Italy this was the task of the nobility. . . . (*The Dawn of Day: Yeats Manuscript Collection*. Ms. 40,568/163. Envelope. 1209. National Library of Ireland, Dublin. The title page contains Lady Gregory's signature. Annotated page qtd. from Nietzsche *The Dawn of Day*, 93).

That Yeats paid especial critical attention to this aphorism suggests that he regards the Anglo-Irish to be those very Nietzschean nobles who will lend prestige to Ireland. And this was the aim of the Irish Literary Renaissance from the nineteenth century on, the movement mainly led by Anglo-Irish groups. Among these, the most influential aristocratic figure was Lady Gregory. Nietzsche's aphorism above describes just such a person.

Nonetheless, the noble status of the Anglo-Irish was in decline by the early twentieth century. In the third stanza of the verse, the fall of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy is pictured in an ironic manner. After the death of the master of the house even though "all its bronze and marble" remains, yet "the great-grandson of that house" declines in stature to "but a mouse."

The Anglo-Irish Ascendancy had been the ruling class of Ireland from the seven-

tieth century to the early nineteenth century, due to both the power of the Anglican Church of Ireland and their vast land holdings. According to Eagleton, in the early nineteenth century, “The collective rental income of the class, about ten million pounds, was more than the public revenue of Ireland, and greater than the United Kingdom’s central expenditure on civil government and the royal navy.” (Eagleton *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, 64).

From the late nineteenth century on the landlord class began its decline, owing to both land reformation and Irish independence movements. The Irish Land League united the “Boycott” tenant movement with the parliamentary movement, promoting land redistribution. After the outbreak of WW I, the independence movement became violent and brought about the Easter Rising, the Irish war of Independence, the Irish civil war, and a climactic end of the hegemony of this landlord class which Yeats celebrated.

At that time, many Anglo-Irish Ascendancy families lost property due to the land retribution process. As well, due to their loyalty to the British crown, many of their sons fought and died in WW I. And after the war, their houses were burned by incendiaries. It was mainly for these reasons that there was an exodus of emigration from Ireland.

In this sense, the fate of Lady Gregory was typical of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, except that she did not leave—she suffered three great losses: her lands, the death of her only son in WW I, and the destruction of the house in which she was born. Throughout the era, Anglo-Irish landlords faced their “tragic” fate of decline and fall.

Nietzsche does not view such a fate in a sentimentalist fashion. Zarathustra teaches *Untergang* (down-going, falling, perishing) as good news, as *Untergang* is the noble virtue of the sun. Concerning the nuance of the German word, the version that Yeats read includes the translator Alexander Tille’s note; a section of this translation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in which Zarathustra preaches the good news of *Untergang*:

Man is great in that he is a bridge and not a goal: man can be loved in that he is a transition and perishing [the translator's note is also inserted here: it shows that the original German phrase of “a transition and perishing” is *Übergang unt untergang*] . . . I love him which loves his virtue: for virtue is the will to down-going, and an arrow of longing. . . . I love him which justifieth future generations and past generations: for he willeth to perish by the present generation. . . . I love him whose soul is over-full so that he forgetteth himself, and all things are within him: thus all things become his downfall. . . . I love them all which are as heavy rain-drops falling one by one from the dark cloud that lowerth over mankind: they herald the coming of the lightning, and they perish as herald. (8)

The good news of *Untergang* is found in the Nietzschean notion of tragedy. That is, “the will to be tragic” in *The Birth of Tragedy*. This virtue represents active suffering. In Nietzschean philosophy: only active suffering confers noble beauty upon the world, because “the existence of the world is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon” (*Tragedy*, 8).

This notion corresponds well with Yeats’s philosophy of conflict. Yeats writes, “He only can create the greatest beauty who has endured all imaginable pangs” (*Myth*, 332). This form of suffering is “the infinite pain of self-realisation” (*Myth*, 334).

Moreover, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the virtue of active suffering is described: “owing to well-being, to exuberant health, to fullness of existence” (74). The notion of “fullness” here is related to “life's own self-delight” of “a rich man” possessing property and power. As the aphorism which Yeats has left bookmarked states, “to lend prestige to one's country” is “the task of the nobility.”

Lady Gregory provided via her own person an example of the virtue of Nietz-

schean tragedy, throughout the Irish conflicts. In 1922, her tenants attempted to take over Coole Park, and one of them threatened and then later attempted to kill her. As she writes in her diary, she “showed how easy it would be to shoot me [her] through the unshattered window if he wanted to use violence” (Gregory 337). Yeats depicts this incident in his poem, “Beautiful Lofty Things”:

Augusta Gregory seated at her great ormolu table
 Her eightieth winter approaching; ‘Yesterday he threatened my life,
 I told him that nightly from six to seven I sat at this table
 The blinds drawn up;’ (7-10)

Lady Gregory faced this imminent danger to her life with “the will to be tragic.” With a sense of formal dignity as well as personal bravery she saved Coole Park.

Yeats embraces this philosophy of tragedy. During the Anglo-Irish war and the Irish civil war, he serializes the article outlining his tragic theory, as “A People’s Theatre,” in the *Irish Statesman*. In the serial essay, in order “to create a true ‘People’s Theatre,’” he demonstrates how his tragic theory is influenced by Nietzsche, and explains in his own words the Nietzschean notion of Eternal Recurrence (*ewige Wiederkunft*; *Ex*, 247, 249).

As well, in the same essay, he comments on the ideal audience who witnessed Shakespeare’s tragedies, who can perceive the great and deep sense of tragedy as a Dionysian union, just “as Swedenborg said of the marriage of angels, [it] is a conflagration of the whole being” (*Ex*, 247). Moreover, it seems certain that Yeats recognized tragedy as a singularly great art for the educated elite; that is, for the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy.

Yeats expresses this notion of tragedy throughout his life; a famous motto of Yeats can be quoted: “Passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all the great tragedies,

tragedy is a joy to the man who dies; in Greece the tragic chorus danced” (*Ox*, xxxiv).

In the years after 1909, when Yeats read *The Birth of Tragedy*, he repeated this saying in the following essays: “J. M. Synge and the Ireland of His Time” (1909); “Pages from a Diary in 1930” (1930), and “A General Introduction for My Work” (1937). (*E&I*, 336, 523; *Ex*, 333). In the last essay, Yeats mentions that this quotation was first used by Lady Gregory, and that he applied it.

So it can be said that Yeats's notion of tragedy undoubtedly springs from Nietzsche, who advanced the virtue of active suffering. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche writes of an exemplary hero who faces a tragic fate with a positive attitude: “The will to be tragic” is *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles. In this play, Oedipus willingly accepts his death and becomes the guardian spirit of the city of Colonus at the end of his long, fateful journey. According to Nietzsche, Oedipus in the play confronts the fate of decline and fall with “his highest activity,” so he can be considered to be “the noble man” (*Nietzsche Tragedy*, 73-74).

Yeats was inspired by Nietzsche's recommendation, as a result translating and re-writing the Greek tragedy for the modern theater, which he titled, *Sophocles's Oedipus at Colonus*. Yeats compiled the song for the chorus in the play in *The Tower* (1928), which compiles his “Meditations...” In *A Vision*, Yeats describes the characterization of Oedipus in the play as “a man of Homer’s kind,” and defines him as a typical man of antithetical tincture; that is, one who embodies noble tragedy (*AVB*, 27-28).

2.2. Analysis of “My Descendants”: “Justifieth the Future Generations”

In summary, Yeats is able to face the tragic mutability of the fate of the Anglo-Irish via an application of Nietzsche's philosophy of noble tragedy. In the fourth verse of “Meditations...” he casts a cold eye on the tragic future of Anglo-Irish culture:

IV. My Descendants

Having inherited a vigorous mind
From my old fathers, I must nourish dreams
And leave a woman and a man behind
As vigorous of mind, and yet it seems
Life scarce can cast a fragrance on the wind,
Scarce spread a glory to the morning beams,
But the torn petals strew the garden plot;
And there's but common greenness after that.

And what if my descendants lose the flower
Through natural declension of the soul,
Through too much business with the passing hour,
Through too much play, or marriage with a fool?
May this laborious stair and this stark tower
Become a roofless ruin that the owl
May build in the cracked masonry and cry
Her desolation to the desolate sky.

The Primum Mobile that fashioned us
Has made the very owls in circles move;
And I, that count myself most prosperous,
Seeing that love and friendship are enough,
For an old neighbour's friendship chose the house

And decked and altered it for a girl's love,
 And know whatever flourish and decline
 These stones remain their monument and mine.

Yeats writes of the fall of the Anglo-Irish in *ottava rima*, the same rhyme scheme as that of "Ancestral Houses." He regards the fall as something noble. The word "dreams" in the first stanza represents the ideal "rich man's" self-sufficient life. The speaker "nourish[es] dreams" by "a vigorous mind" from his "old fathers"; in other words, from the ideal aristocrat. He "leave[s] a woman and a man behind"—his daughter and son—they seem to represent Yeats's own children, Anne and Michael, left as a legacy of the inherited "vigorous mind." However, "life" of today is different from that of the "rich man's," as "life" does not "overflow" in the garden, but rather shows signs of decline.

In this violent era, a tragic period for the Anglo-Irish class, Yeats attempts to identify himself with the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy rather than with Irish Catholics. He writes: "for an old neighbour's friendship chose the house." Here, "an old neighbour" is Lady Gregory. In fact, Thoor Ballylee was her property from 1903 to 1916. Yeats shows his loyalty to this Lady of the class. In any case, Yeats's attitude in describing the fall is one of self-possession. He does not become the guardian spirit of the place, as Oedipus does in the play, but rather finds solace in the permanence of the tower's stones.

This poem expresses Yeats's calm acceptance of the fall with a sense of positive suffering. The tower may one day become "a roofless ruin again." When it becomes so, the owl may build her nest in the ruin of the tower. Although the bird "owl" appears for the first time in "My Descendants," Yeats uses the definite article for the bird. Moreover, in the next stanza of the poem, he writes "the very owls" in plural form. These facts reveal his intention to treat the bird as a symbol. As a nocturnal bird of prey with sharp claws, the owl is suitable to the description of the desolate scene portrayed. However, an

important aspect of the bird symbolism also relates to the divine bird of Athena or Minerva, as a symbol of wisdom. Yeats's wish is for the owl to build its nest in the ruin of the tower, as the symbol of the hope for the growth of a new future generation possessing power and wisdom. The new generation is, in Nietzsche's aphorism, "a new nobility" (*Zarathustra*, 181). In Yeats's poetic phraseology, the owls may be "dear predatory birds" that "love war because of its horror" and renew their belief "continually in the ordeal of death." (*AVB*, 52-53).

In "My Descendants," Yeats writes that both owls and human beings are "fashioned" by "the Primum Mobile." All living things are in the circle of the flux of the world. In the Yeatsian mythological system, the history of this world is contained in the gyres of Anima Mundi; and the history of "flourish and decline" is also contained in the cyclical movement of said gyres. These are the vicissitudes of the cosmic law of the world. Although the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy falls, the stones of the tower remain as a monument to its achievements, Yeats envisioning that from this monument (though itself a ruin) a new noble generation will spring forth. This is the poet's hope in facing the demise of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. In this final image, seen through the vehicle of noble tragedy, Yeats links the values and traditions of an Anglo-Irish past to a vision of their renewed future.

Conclusion

As an Anglo-Irish poet, W. B. Yeats was committed to the Irish independence movement, and was intimately involved with the violent tumult of Irish insurrections, including the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War. He regarded the world as a place of conflict, and this viewpoint seems a primary source of his creative energy. In Yeats's philosophy, all things arise from the conflict of opposites. To date, this philosophy of conflict has generally been thought to exist only in his later works, especially dated from *The Tower* (1928) or later, from *The Winding Stair and the Other Poems* (1933); this present study has attempted to expand the world of Yeats's philosophy of conflict by positing an much earlier origin point, arguing that the longstanding view of the early Yeats as a politically naïve, fairy-following poet of dream-like moods must to be revised. In demonstrating the conception of "early origin," an analysis of Yeats's neglected early novella, *John Sherman* as critical evidence challenging the prevailing image of the early Yeats as a naïve poet lacking a philosophy of conflict.

From his early career (and from first memory) Yeats lived through situations instigating a "double war": dual inner- and outer- conflict. Living through such a "double war," Yeats envisaged a dialectic philosophy, beginning in his early literary career, and developed it—contemporaneously with Ireland's deepening sociopolitical conflict.

Yeats's later work, "Meditations in Time of Civil War" was examined in order to present a new relationship between Yeats's philosophy of conflict and sense of national identity as a member of the Anglo-Irish class. From this discussion, it was shown that Yeats's notion of noble tragedy, and in particular his positive view of the fall of the Anglo-Irish class, is deeply connected with his creative misreading of Nietzsche's philosophy of tragedy.

Focusing on Yeats's concept of the "double war," Yeats's philosophy of conflict and sense of national identity, have been shown to have been a consistently related theme in Yeats's life, from his entire career. Throughout his lifetime, Yeats pursued a poetic beauty out of the agonistic crucible of his dialectic philosophy, and affirmed his sense of nationality as a member of the Anglo-Irish class within the tragic situation of "the double war."

Yeats's attitude, which embodies his philosophy of conflict, presents an example of a poet who pursued 'the sense of the human' in extraordinary challenging circumstances—a theme which retains its relevance, especially for contemporary Irish poets. In his lecture, "The Makings of Music," Seamus Heaney comments, "Padraic Colum once spoke of Yeats's poems having to be handled as carefully as a blade" (72). This statement seems to reflect the anxiety of influence. Indeed, Yeats is one of the strongest and most influential poets of modernity, whose poetry is bountiful in the creative energy which arises out of conflict. As a sword forged in the furnace of the "double war," Yeats's poetry cut into reality, thereby instigating a new vision and new direction for the literature of Ireland.

Further thought on Yeats are found in another Heaney lecture, entitled "Yeats as an Example?":

What is finally admirable is the way his life and his works are not separate but make a continuum, the way courage of his vision did not confine itself to rhetoric but issued in actions. . . . His poetry was not just a matter of printed books making their way in a world of literate readers and critics; it was rather the fine flower of his effort to live as forthrightly as he could in the world of illiterates and politicians. (100)

It can be said that Yeats somehow embodied the Ireland of his age. Indeed, Yeats's lifetime (1865-1939) overlaps with the critical period of the history of the country, Ireland being the oldest British colony. Even today, after the Belfast Agreement of 1998, the Troubles of Northern Ireland remain unsolved. Ireland represents an epitome: it is perhaps a prototypical example of the relationship between literature and questions concerning (post-)colonization, imperialism, nationalism, orientalism, ethnicity, religion, the partitioning of a country (and its community), terrorism, and humanity.

Thinking about Ireland, its recent history and the life and work of Yeats (especially his evolving sense of philosophic conflict and sense national identity) seems relevant in this context.

In order to further explore the relevance of Irish literature, future research may propitiously include a comparative study of Yeats and other Irish writers of differing backgrounds, including contemporary authors. Concerning issues of philosophy and national identity, another direction for future study may be to investigate Alice L. Milligan, an Irish nationalist, feminist, human rights campaigner and above all, a poet and contemporary of Yeats was born in Omagh in 1866. Milligan was a member of the Celtic Revival, who also contributed works to the Abbey Theatre. One critical outcome of this dissertation has been an increasing interest in performing a comparative study of Yeats and Milligan, with the hope of shedding new light on modern Irish literature.

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Abbreviations of the Titles of W. B. Yeats's Works

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