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W.B. Yeats' Four Plays for Dancers: The Search for Unity

Denise Peter

Department of English
McGill University, Montreal
November 1995

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis proposes that Yeats found in certain conventions of the Noh drama a realization and defense of his idea of unity of culture, which his Noh-like Four Plays for Dancers illustrates. Yeats' use of recurrent imagery in the dance plays expresses his belief in a unity of culture defined and evoked by an image and stems in part from the pattern of images he discovered in the Pound-Fenollosa translations of the Noh. The imagery of the poetic text reappears in symbolic visual designs or is coordinated with music and dance in the production of the plays. The importance of the spoken word above all determined the basis of the association of arts with which Yeats characterized unity of culture and shaped his adaptation and occasional misconception of the staging techniques of the Noh. A common love of vivid, allusive words joined the audience for whom the dance plays were written. When Yeats stated that they were modelled on the audience of the Noh, his perception was colored, as usual, by his own priorities and experience.

Résumé

Il est proposé dans la présente thèse que Yeats a su reconnaître dans certaines conventions du Nô la réalisation de sa conception de l'unité de la culture ainsi que les arguments en faveur de cette conception, dont les Four Plays for Dancers servent d'illustration. Les images souvent reprises par Yeats constituent les marques de la foi qu'il avait en l'unité de la culture, celle-ci étant évoquée et définie par une image à laquelle est tributaire l'ensemble d'images apparentées que présente la traduction de Fenollosa et Pound du Nô. Dans la réalisation des pièces, les images du texte poétique trouvent leur correspondance tantôt dans les configurations visuelles symboliques, tantôt dans la juxtaposition avec la musique et la danse. L'importance primordiale qu'accordait Yeats à la parole formait la base de sa synthèse de l'expression artistique, synthèse qui lui servit à décrire l'unité de la culture et qui fut déterminant dans son adaptation de la technique de réalisation dramatique du Nô, de même que dans sa compréhension imparfaite de celle-ci. Les spectateurs pour lesquels ces pièces furent crées avaient pour les réunir le goût du discours vivant et suggestif. Pour Yeats, ce public avait été façonné sur le modèle de celui qui assista jadis au Nô. En cela, il appert que sa vision subissait l'influence habituelle de ses objectifs et son expérience particuliers.

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Introduction

Yeats stated that his dance plays were inspired by the Noh plays of Japan. His essay, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", published in the spring of 1916, explains at some length what he considered most important in Noh drama. At the end of the same year, in the preface to At the Hawk's Well, one of the Four Plays for Dancers, he wrote: "I have found my first model ... in the Noh stage of aristocratic Japan."[1]

These statements have stimulated numerous comparative studies of Four Plays for Dancers and Noh drama. When the influence of the Noh has not been misunderstood or exaggerated and used to explain the various particularities of the dance plays, it becomes clear that Yeats did not set out to copy the Noh to the letter. Rather, in examining the development of his dramatic theory and practice, more than one researcher has remarked that the Noh confirmed Yeats' ideas of the theatre. In W.B. Yeats: Dramatist of Vision, A.S. Knowland writes that Yeats "took from Noh drama what suited him."[2] Other studies adopt a similar position. In The Drama of W.B. Yeats, Richard Taylor concludes that "No was not so much a direct influence on Yeats as the source of a new point of departure for continued experimentation with established themes and aesthetic concerns."[3] Likewise, at the end of one of two chapters dealing with the "east-west relationship in Yeats' thought and art"[4] in The Double Perspective of Yeats's Aesthetic, Okimfumi Komesu states that Yeats, as was characteristic of him, "found in the Noh what he wanted to find".[5]

These studies invite us to ask what did Yeats want to find in the Noh? The present work proposes that Yeats sought in certain artistic conventions of the Noh a realization and defense of his conception of unity of culture, which Four Plays for Dancers illustrates. Classical Japanese drama appealed to him for three important reasons. He found in its texts a pattern of concrete and symbolic images of the natural world and of legendary landscapes in particular. He believed that the use of similar images or metaphors, charged with profound meaning and emotion, could inspire the attempt to bring together isolated or divided faculties, occupations, and classes. As an artist, Yeats perceived the fragmentation

of the modern world in terms of the independence of the arts. It is hardly surprising to discover his strong attraction to the stagecraft of Japanese drama that combined the arts of the poet, musician, singer, dancer and sculptor. The association of the arts, an important part of Yeats' vision of a unified culture, was based on shared and inherited knowledge and affections. These common attitudes joined various groups or classes of society. Yeats' idea of the close relation of Noh artist and audience contributed to his enthusiasm for Japanese drama. In stating, for example, that the patrons of the drama sometimes wrote and performed in the plays, he meant to show that audience and actor possessed one mind and heart. He saw their relation as a model of the community of fellow-artists and friends for whom he wrote the dance plays.

Chapter one of this study identifies the "rhythm of metaphor" that Yeats found in the Noh plays, "translated by Ernest Fenollosa and finished by Ezra Pound"[6], with his idea of unity of culture defined and evoked by an image or group of related images. It explores the significance of the dance plays' recurrent imagery and relates their meaning to his lifelong nationalist and philosophical interests. Whereas the first chapter focusses on the literary texts, chapter two examines the dramatic texts and productions of the dance plays, which combine the arts of the actor, painter, sculptor, musician, and dancer. The association of the arts is ruled by the spoken word and related by the common element of rhythm or its visual analogue, pattern. Yeats' literary priorities, which he consistently voiced throughout his career, shaped his perception or adaptation of the conventions of Noh drama. Unlike the literary element of Noh texts that lead up to and mainly serve to explain the dance, in the production of the dance plays music and dance are less valued in themselves than for their illumination of the meaning of the spoken text. Chapter three proposes that when the poet stated that he modelled his audience on the culturally unified audience of Noh drama, the reverse had actually occurred. The coterie Yeats found for the performance of his first dance play did not differ in kind but only in size from the clan he had repeatedly attempted to create in the past, especially as a founder of the Irish dramatic movement. Besides this long-held ideal, contemporary opinion and memories of his experience with inferior audiences shaped his perception of the audience of the Noh.

Notes

Introduction

1. R. K. Allspach (ed.), The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats, (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 415.

2. A. S. Knowland, W.B. Yeats: Dramatist of Vision, (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1983), p. 109.

3. Richard Taylor, The Drama of W.B. Yeats, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 161.

4. Okimfumi Komesu, The Double Perspective of Yeats's Aesthetic, (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Limited, 1984), p. 8.

5. Ibid, p. 142.

6. W. B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", (London: Macmillan, 1961), p. 151.

Chapter I: The Doctrine and Practice of Desolate Places

In a section of his Autobiography, whose publication in 1921 coincided with the year of publication of Four Plays for Dancers, Yeats wrote that unity of culture was defined and evoked by an image or bundle of related images.[1] By image he meant a concrete and particular form usually drawn from the natural world that corresponded to an unseen reality. "A landscape", he asserted, "was a symbol of a spiritual condition".[2] In looking at trees and mountains as manifestations of divine beings, he was convinced that he saw nature with the eyes of every hunter and fisher of ancient time. Typically, one of his essays - "The Celtic Element in Literature"(1903) - refutes Matthew Arnold's description of the love and worship of nature as unique and Celtic, arguing that the passions Arnold calls Celtic "mark all races just in so far as they preserve the qualities of the early races of the world."[3]

A natural, instinctive affection for the scenery of his childhood and youth awakened in Yeats an almost mystic and lasting sense of the correspondence between natural beauty and the spiritual world. He remembers, while walking down Kensington street, being so full of love for the fields and roads of Sligo that he longed for earth from a road there so that he could kiss it. The emotion evoked by beautiful and familiar places was intensified by the knowledge he acquired only later in life of the legends and folk tales with which they were connected in the popular imagination. He considered that his life would have been more complete had he known the stories of the Sidhe as a child:

> When I was a child, I had only to climb the hill behind the house to see long, blue ragged hills flowing along the southern horizon. What beauty was lost to me, what depth of emotion is still lacking in me because nobody told me, not even the merchant captains who knew everything that Cruachan of the Enchantments lay behind those long, blue ragged hills.[4]

Like the individuals within it, he believed that a nation derived its unity from symbolic images that joined it to rock and hill. In the essay entitled "Ireland and the Arts" (1901), he urged writers and craftsmen to master the events and legends associated with the mountains and the rivers closest to them[5] and create moving images in the people's minds and hearts. He believed that their work would bring Ireland an emotional and intellectual coherence.

Images of place and legend are valued mainly for their power of inspiring love of country in "Ireland and the Arts". The imagery of the dance plays, however, show a shift in the relationship of Yeats' avowed three main interests in Irish nationalism, philosophy and literature. The unifying imagery of the plays, composed fifteen to twenty years after "Ireland and the Arts", was invigorated by Yeats' preoccupation with uncovering the international or general human significance of his material and was inspired by the use of unifying imagery in the Noh plays that he read in highly individualistic translation.

Yeats' immediate interests intensified his appreciation of the Japanese plays' profound and lyrical expression of the relation of natural and supernatural worlds. When he was introduced to the Noh plays through Ezra Pound during the winters of 1913-16, he was annotating and writing two long essays - "Witches and Wizards and Irish Folklore" and "Swedenborg, Mediums and Desolate Places" - for the folklore collected in Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland. Whereas his intent in collecting the Irish rural people's stories with Lady Gregory in the nineties was "to find actual experience of the supernatural"[6], in resuming his work with her on the final drafts of the book in 1911, he combined his interest in Irish folklore about the supernatural with recent studies in spiritism and sought to show "that what we call Fairy Belief is exactly the same thing as English and American spiritism except that Fairy Belief is very much more charming."[7] He found a great part of the charm of folklore in certain characteristics of speech that showed "an impulse toward the definite and sensuous, and an indifference towards the

abstract and general."[8] Although the collection of folklore was not published until 1920, by June 1915 he was completing his notes to the book:

> I have also nearly finished my Notes for Lady Gregory's book, and that has laid the ghosts for me. I am free at last from the obsession of the supernatural, having got my thoughts in order and ranged on paper.[9]

Little did he realize, with A Vision still before him, that the supernatural had far from loosened its hold on his imagination.

By including comparative spiritism in his study of Irish folklore, he was searching for metaphors that could be attributed to a corporate memory or imagination. This attempt to coordinate his literary and philosophical interests with a form of nationalism that had its equivalent in many lands became further apparent with the publication of Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland under Lady Gregory's name only, although the book, as Allan Wade observes, "grew out of essays Yeats had contributed to several English reviews between 1897 and 1901"[10] and was the product of years of combined effort. Lady Gregory may have been surprised to find Irish legend and folklore correlated with the broad cross-cultural references Yeats makes in the two essays and notes he wrote for the book.

It is hardly surprising to find concerns and metaphors in Yeats' notes and essays for Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland repeated in his dramatization of the supernatural in the dance plays since he wrote the plays in the few years following the completion of his work on the book. In one long note in "Swedenborg, Mediums and Desolate Places" he compared and contrasted Irish folklore about ghosts and fairy bewitchment with the trances of mediums and two accounts of possession in China and Japan. These accounts suggested an analogy in the condition of people who are "taken", sometimes for a lifetime, by the Irish Sidhe with the state of the soul in dreams, possession, and trance described in many mythologies. He noted, however, that the Irish,

like the Norse and the Welsh and unlike the mediums of Soho or the possessed in China and Japan, did not recognize the duality of body and soul:

> The country people do not say that the soul is away and the body in the bed,... but that body and soul have been taken away and something put in their place.[11]

Their belief, he speculated, "arose at a very early age when men had not learned to distinguish between the body and the soul and was perhaps once universal."[12]

In closing his note, he retold the old Irish myth of Cuchulain of Muirthemne that he would adapt in At the Hawk's Well, the first of his dance plays which he completed in August 1915, and The Only Jealousy of Emer, begun in April 1916 but not completed until 1918. The "like experience" he discovered in stories of possession, trance, magical enchantment, sleep, dreams, and madness gave him several related terms for expressing the spiritual world in the dance plays where he was less concerned with historical consistency than with universality. Some form of possession in which conscious control of the body is surrendered overcomes all three characters in At the Hawk's Well: the Old Man succumbs to a sudden and mysterious sleep; Cuchulain drops his spear and wanders from the well when it fills "as if in a dream"; and the Guardian, in personality and appearance, becomes a hawk. The Old Man's description of her condition at the onset of her transformation - her heavy eyes, the unnatural cries issuing from her mouth, her ignorance of her condition on waking - may derive from Yeats' observation of the trances of mediums that he frequented in Connacht and Soho.

Unlike the elements of modern folklore that prevail in At the Hawk's Well, The Only Jealousy of Emer combines ancient folklore with the writings of mystical authors and the accounts of spiritism, possession and trance. The opening scene in which Cuchulain appears as two figures dramatizes both the division and identity of body and soul. His body, overcome by fighting the sea, lies on a curtained bed while his ghost crouches at its foot. Both figures, however, are identified by their exactly similar costumes

and masks. When a changeling is substituted in the seemingly dead hero's bed, the action evokes older folk belief. Emer displays in her words and deeds certain primitive ideas associated with changelings. She asserts that Cuchulain is not dead but has been "touched" and shows her familiarity with methods of driving away the changeling. She recognizes the danger of carrying her exorcism too far:

> I would throw it into the
> fire, but I dare not. They have Cuchulain for a
> hostage.[13]

As most of the Irish peasantry know, Yeats wrote, "you must only threaten, for whatever injury you did to the changeling the fairies would do to the living person they had carried away."[14] Before calling Cuchulain back from the sea, she stirs the fire because "all enchantments dread the hearth-fire"[15]. In an earlier collection of folklore, Yeats explained, "Fire is the greatest of enemies to every sort of phantom."[16] Finally, the penalty Emer ultimately pays to restore her husband's life by renouncing his love is consistent with numerous folk stories Yeats read of and heard from the rural Irish.

In The Only Jealousy of Emer, there is also a sustained use of the resemblance between dreams and the discarnate life of the dead. As Yeats pointed out later in A Vision (1925), the analogy was widespread:

> I am convinced that this ancient generalisation in so far as it sees an analogy between a "separated spirit" or phantom and dream of the night, once was a universal belief, for I find it, or some practice founded upon it, everywhere. Certainly I find it in old Irish literature, in modern Irish folklore, in Japanese plays, in Swedenborg, in the phenomena of spiritualism.[17]

One can gauge its importance to him by the exclusive and elaborate exposition it receives in his account of Swedenborg's writings and by its reappearance, sometimes in almost identical language, in three of the four dance plays.

There are specific ideas and images in The Only Jealousy of Emer that show Yeats shared Swedenborg's conception of the state of the soul after death. For one, the crouching position that the Ghost of Cuchulain takes at the front of the bed is a scene Yeats found in Swedenborg. In his essay, Yeats reports Swedenborg as saying that spirits attend the lifeless body and, by looking at it as they sit beside its head, communicate their thoughts. In addition, according to Yeats, Swedenborg stated that when the soul has separated from the body in death, it does not accept the body's death but goes on in its daily rounds. The same thought is expressed by one of the persons in the play:

> All that are taken from our sight, they say,
> Loiter amid the scenery of their lives
> For certain hours or days.[18]

In a later phase of its discarnate existence, a ghost relives intense experience in the imagination until it is fully understood and accepted. Yeats summarizes Swedenborg as having explained, "all our passionate events rush up about us"[19]. In the play, the idea is introduced to represent the remorse that fills the Ghost of Cuchulain when he remembers murdering his son and his infidelity to his wife.

In The Dreaming of the Bones , written in 1917, and Calvary, which first appears as a short scenario in a letter dated January 1918, the whole action is based on the purgatorial state of the dead. In the former play, the guilt of betrayal that torments the ghosts of Dermot and Dervorgilla is repeatedly presented as a dream. The metaphor is used in a similar sense to relate the lesser, because involuntary, crime of soldiers who relive the battle against their kin, followers of the Irish King of Thomond:

> Young Girl. They and their enemies of Thomond's party
> Mix in a brief dream-battle above their bones;[20]

The exact analogy had appeared in "Swedenborg, Mediums and the Desolate Places":

> those who have loved or fought see one another in the unfolding of a dream, believing that it may be that they wound one another, severing arms or hands, or that their lips are joined in a kiss.[21]

Repeated allusions to dreams appear in the choral lyrics before, between and after the action. When reference to dreams occurs in the dialogue, it serves as much as a means of characterization as a didactic exposition of an occult doctrine and a lyrical evocation of atmosphere:

> Young Man: My Grandam
> Would have it they did penance everywher;
> Some lived through their old lives again.
> Stranger: In a dream;[22]

Although the dreaming back of the dead provides the pretext for the action in Calvary, the idea is briefly mentioned and receives no exposition, probably because it had been laboriously advertised in The Dreaming of the Bones. In Calvary, the action is conceived as Christ's recurring dream of his passion:

> Good Friday's come,
> The day whereon Christ dreams his passion through.
> He climbs up hither but as a dreamer climbs.
> The cross that but exists because he dreams it[23]

As F. A. C. Wilson observes, Yeats developed the analogy to its logical limits[24]. Just as dreams of the night served to symbolize the suffering of the soul, dreamless sleep represented the condition of release. So it is said in The Only Jealousy of Emer:

> The dead move ever towards a dreamless youth
> And when they dream no more return no more.[25]

Sleep and dreams, like possession, trance and madness, served as elaborate and widely recognized analogies of otherwise inexpressible perception.

It is evident that Yeats put his preoccupation with comparable experiences and metaphors for the unseen world, which he initially expressed in "Swedenborg, Mediums and Desolate Places", to didactic and lyrical use in the dance plays. While working on his essays and notes for Lady Gregory's book, Yeats had engaged Pound to transcribe his correspondence and "read ghosts" to him. Pound was also acting as literary executor of

Ernest Fenollosa's manuscripts on the Noh plays. He shared the results of his work with Yeats and writes in a letter dated December 1913:

> I have cribbed part of a Noh out of Fenollosa's notes. The Eagle (Yeats) calls it charming and says vers libre is prose. He has his nose kept down to his demons, for the sake of Lady Gregory's folklore.[26]

Although he was too preoccupied for the moment to manage more than a perfunctory response to the Noh, by October of the following year Yeats would cite the Noh of ghosts in "Swedenborg, Mediums and Desolate Places" and in the summer of 1915 would put into practice in his first dance play the "rhythm of metaphor" he discovered in the Pound-Fenollosa translations of the Noh plays.

Pound was chosen by Fenollosa's widow because she believed he would give the material a literary rather than, as had been given earlier translations of Japanese plays, an academic treatment. In the past, scholars had ignored the poetic conventions of the Japanese originals that were founded on rhythm only and had employed an alien iambic metre and rhyme in their English versions of the plays. Pound's disregard for rhymed and regular verse, in addition to his involvement with the Imagist movement, probably made him fit, in Mrs. Fenollosa's opinion, to finish her late husband's manuscripts. When asked in an interview in 1962, "How did Mrs. Fenollosa happen to hit upon you?", Pound replied:

> Well I met her at Sarojini Naidu's and she said that Fenollosa had been in oppposition to all the Profs. and academes, and she had seen some of my stuff and said I was the only person who could finish up these notes as Ernest would have wanted them done.[27]

The publication of a collection of short poems by Pound in Contemporania in April, 1913 was probably a factor that led Mrs. Fenollosa to entrust Pound with her late husband's literary remains.[28]

Among the poems was "In a Station of the Metro", the "textbook example" of Pound's "Doctrine of the Image", about whose brevity he had written:

> it struck me that in Japan, where a work of art is not estimated by its acreage and where sixteen syllables are counted enough for a poem if you arrange and punctuate them properly, one might make a very little poem.[29]

While his literary accomplishments may have made him a suitable translator, Pound had little understanding of the Noh stage and even less sympathy for the religious and metaphysical aspects of the plays. In an article written in 1940, he attributed his knowledge of Noh primarily to Fenollosa's fragmentary notes and to a "handful of very much over-civilized young men to whom the Noh was familiar."[30] He learned something of the singing and dancing of Noh drama from Tami Koumé who had been trained as a child by the Noh performer, Minoru Umewaka, and had performed in the theatre in his own father's house.

As Pound later stated, however, Tami Koumé could not help him in interpreting the plays' themes but Yeats could.

> But when it came to metaphysics he (Tami Koumé) could not answer questions which seemed to me essential to the meaning. Very probably the original author had left those meanings in the vague. There may not have been ten men in Europe who would have asked those particular questions, but it so happened that Yeats, in my company, had spent several winters trying to correlate Lady Gregory's folk-lore with the known traditions of various myths, psychologies, and religions.[31]

Pound later explicitly acknowledged Yeats' help when he wrote to a Japanese correspondent of literary translations: "Yeats and I collaborated voluntarily."[32] Various critics have noticed an interest in the spirit world in the Pound-Fenollosa translations that is strongly reminiscent of Yeats although the extent of Yeats' contributions is difficult to determine. There are obvious indications of collaboration in interpretative comments on the metaphysical aspect of the plays that can be attributed to him: "ghost psychology, the new doctrine of the suggestibility or hypnotizability of ghosts; astral body; séance; occult; supernatural manifestation; spiritist doctrines".[33]

An explicit indication of Yeats' reaction to the Noh is recorded in "Swedenborg Mediums and Desolate Places". He was struck by cultural correspondences in the plays' expression of discarnate life since it gave greater scope to the theme of his essay. He annexed the Noh of ghosts to the essay to support the "vast generalization" he had sought to obtain by comparing the writings of medieval mystics and psychical authors with the beliefs of medium and Irish peasant:

> Last winter Mr. Ezra Pound was editing the late Professor Fenollosa's translations of the Noh Drama of Japan and read me a great deal of what he was doing. Nearly all that my fat old woman in Soho learns from her familiars is there in an unsurpassed lyric poetry and in strange and poignant fables once danced or sung in the house of nobles.[34]

Yeats added a detailed summary and direct quotations from the Fennollosa-Pound version of the Noh play, Nishikigi, and Motomezuka, which he may have read in a translation by Marie Stopes, to the final section of his essay. He found a parallel in the folk sensibility of the Irish and Japanese and compared the plight of the ghost lovers in Nishikigi, who ask a wandering priest to marry them, to a story retold in Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland, of "lovers who come after death to the priest for marriage."[35]

Another discussion of Nishikigi appears in the introduction Yeats wrote to the first edition in book-form of four plays from the Pound-Fenollosa translations, Certain Noble Plays of Japan, published in 1916 by the Cuala Press in Dublin. In his essay, Yeats analysed the poetic structure of the play by tracing the references to grass that are repeated throughout the text. His opening remarks show, however, some uncertainty about the source of the recurrent metaphor:

> I wonder am I fanciful in discovering in the plays themselves (few examples have as yet been translated and I may be misled by accident or the idiosyncrasy of some poet) a playing upon a single metaphor[36]

Yeats' allusion to "the idiosyncrasy of some poet" suggests his familiarity with Pound's manifestoes and improvisational method of translating.

Pound's association from 1912 with the Imagist school may have made him only too eager to identify - with a phrase that probably frequently came up in his talks with Yeats - the plays' "Unity of Image", which he does more than once in his edition of Fenollosa's manuscripts. Although the brevity of early Imagist poetry had raised doubts about the possibility of writing a long poem on similar principles, these were dissolved when Pound discovered that a recurrent image served as a structural and organizing principle of the best plays. It produced a rhythm of metaphor that was as varied and irregular as the rhythm of free verse. He could not help but announce the breakthrough in a footnote:

> This intensification of the Image, this manner of construction, is very interesting to me personally, as an Imagiste, for we Imagistes knew nothing of these plays when we set out in our own manner. These plays are also an answer to a question that has several times been put to me: Can one do a long Imagiste poem, or even a long poem in vers libre?[37]

In his essay, "Vorticism", which appeared in the Fortnightly Review in 1914, Pound stated that a controlling image could give the long poem the intensity and unity of a haiku or a Noh play:

> I am often asked whether there can be a long imagiste or vorticist poem. The Japanese, who evolved hokku, evolved also the Noh plays. In the best Noh the whole play may consist of one image. I mean it is gathered about one image. Its unity consists in one image, enforced by movement and music. I see nothing against a long vorticist poem.[38]

Pound added to his insistence on the text's recurrent image that it be combined with the image on the stage. He cautions:

> The reader must remember the words are only one part of this art. The words are fused with the music and with the ceremonial dancing. One must read or examine these texts as if one were listening to music. One must build out of their indefiniteness a definite image. The plays are at their best, I think, an image; that is to say, their unity lies in the image.[39]

Still, he offered the reader little more than a reminder of the necessity of visualising the scene on stage although Fenollosa's fragmentary drafts contained extensive production notes.[40] He argued in Noh or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan(1916), the English publication of fourteen Noh plays, that "film... is the only medium capable of conveying any true idea of the whole art, unless one can see it properly done in Japan".[41]

On another occasion, he had recourse to the theatrical element of the Noh dance to explain an insubstantial text, which he suggested was compensated by the unity of emotion and image in the plays:

> When the text seems to go off into nothing at the end, the reader must remember that the vagueness or paleness of words is made good by the emotion of the final dance, for the Noh has its unity in emotion. It has also what we call Unity of Image. At least, the better plays are all built into the intensification of a single Image: the red maple leaves and the snow flurry in Nishikigi, the pines in Takasago, the blue grey waves and wave pattern in Suma Genji, the mantle of feathers in the play of that name Hagoromo.[42]

In his study of Pound's translations, Nobuko Tsuki remarks that Pound's comments on the Noh's unifying image best apply to Takasago, which is not included in Noh or Accomplishment, and Hagoromo.

In Takasago, the pine tree dominates the whole play as a physical and symbolical image. The setting is at the sea-shore of Takasago with its famous pine tree. The pine is also a symbol of eternity and constancy of vow between husband and wife, which are the themes of the play. The origin of the pine tree at Takasago and its symbolical meaning are explained in the dialogue. In the Japanese text of Takasago, Nobuko finds:

> the word pine tree (matsu) appears 33 times ... Sometimes the word is used simply to signify the pine tree as the physical object; several times it is used as a pun with a Japanese word matsu (to wait); and sometimes the word pine tree is used in a figurative sense as a symbol of eternity.[43]

In Hagoromo, the feather mantle of the angel is the central image. It is visible on the stage throughout the action and is the source of conflict between the angel and the fisherman.

In Nishikigi and Suma Genji, however, Nobuko asserts that Pound's comment needs some qualification:

> in these two plays, a single image does not dominate the whole play. Rather the playwrights use a single image effectively and impressively at a certain part or parts. Suma Genji uses the image of "the blue-grey waves and wave pattern" in its very last part. In Nishikigi "the red maple leaves" appear in the middle of the play and "the snow-flurry" toward the end.[44]

Nobuko's comparison of Pound's translations with their Japanese originals shows that Yeats was right to suspect the idiosyncrasy of Pound's method.

Although both poets generalized the use of a unifying image in the plays, the image Pound identified in Nishikigi is not the one Yeats analysed in his introduction to Certain Noble Plays of Japan. Yeats singled out the image of woven grass in Pound's translation. Pound, however, identified the unifying image with the crimson leaves which cover the opening of the burial cave represented on stage and the falling snowflakes that resemble the reconciled lovers' fluttering sleeves in the dance. Although these images are not structurally dominant in the literary text, they demonstrate Pound's implicit awareness of the image on stage. In contrast, Yeats' reading of the play's unifying image reflected and combined his own literary and philosophical interests to such an extent that one critic has suggested he may have "had a hand"[45] in Pound's translations of Nishikigi.

There is an obvious parallel in the recurrent metaphor of entanglement that appears in the Fenollosa-Pound translation of Nishikigi and the metaphor of a "knot of passion" that Yeats used to express the notion that individuals are bound to re-live some passionate deed or event of their past until it is purged from memory. This particular metaphor must have pleased him since he used it in The Only Jealousy of Emer and returned to it in his prose. In A Vision, he explained, "All that keeps the Spirit from its freedom may be compared to a knot that must be untied"[46]. The word "entanglement" cannot be found in other more literal translations of the plays nor are Fenollosa's manuscripts a likely source

of the comparison since his translation of the play closely follows its Japanese original. One researcher, Yoko Chiba, reports of Fenollosa's notes:

> Nishikigi is one of the few translations by Fenollosa in which he adopts a method of allotting three lines to each original line in the Noh text; in the first line he gives a romanized phonetic transcription of Japanese sounds; in the second line a word-for-word English translation with comments under (and sometimes above as well) each word when necessary; and in the third line a sentence thus derived.[47]

Given Pound's acknowledgement of his collaboration with Yeats in interpreting the metaphysical aspects of the plays, it is possible that Yeats supplied the metaphor which Pound worked into his version of the play.

While Pound found the spiritism in Noh an "irrelevant and extraneous" concern, Yeats combined the younger poet's grasp of the plays' unifying imagery with his own search for a vivid, concrete method of symbolizing the metaphysical world and its relation to physical existence in poetic drama. He found greater validation of his interest in traditional metaphors of discarnate life in Fenollosa's discussion of the Noh. In The Drama of W. B. Yeats, R. Taylor has commented that Yeats' and Fenollosa's philosophical and aesthetic outlooks were clearly compatible.[48] Both discovered in art the revelation of a correspondence between subjective human experience and the objective reality of nature. The similarity of both men's thought emerges most clearly in their discussions of a Swedenborgian "Doctrine of Correspondence", which asserts that the physical world reflects or symbolises the higher spiritual order.

To Yeats, Swedenborg's writings "affirmed for the modern world, as against the abstract reasoning of the learned, the doctrine and practice of desolate places"[49]. Swedenborg had described phases of a spirit's life after death in which it relived its experiences of pleasure and pain, marriage and war amidst a scenery that corresponded to the lineaments of its life: "Each spirit was surrounded by scenes and circumstances that were related to their nature and thought."[50] Desolate and rocky places were the dwellings of evil beings while the good lived "amid smooth grass and garden walks and the clear

sunlight of Claude Lorraine".[51] Swedenborg's writings gave Yeats authoritative support for his belief "that all lonely and lovely places were crowded with invisible beings."[52]

In Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art(1911), Fenollosa brought his readings of Swedenborg's theory of correspondence to bear on the doctrine of Zen Buddhism expressed in eastern art:

> Certainly the most aesthetic of all Buddhist creeds is this gentle Zen doctrine, which holds man and nature to be parallel sets of characteristic forms between which perfect sympathy prevails. In this respect, it is not unlike the Swedenborgian doctrine of Correspondences.[53]

There is little indication that Yeats had read Epochs. However, his introductory essay on the Noh plays quotes from and summarizes Fenollosa's discussion of the three-fold origin and historical development of the Noh as the unified and continuous expression of the Japanese love of nature.

As the prototype of Noh dance, ancient Shinto dance or pantomime reenacted the appearance of a spirit or god at a specific locale. Fenollosa writes in Noh or Accomplishment:

> Shintoism is spiritism, mild, nature-loving... A local spirit appeared to men in some characteristic phase. On the spot a Shinto temple was built, and yearly or monthly rites, including pantomime perpetuated the event in memory.[54]

In the ninth century, songs were added to the dance in imitation of the entertainment of cultured nobles of the Japanese court. These song-dances (kagura) of the Shinto temple, he continues, "were often lovely poems of nature, for, after all, the Shinto gods were a harmless kind of nature spirit clinging to grottoes, rivers, trees and mountains."[55] In the fifteenth century, besides excluding the heterogeneous and coordinating the best elements of the Shinto and courtly traditions, Zen Buddhist philosophy imbued the drama with an intensity of "spiritual meaning" and "divine purpose" "based upon contemplative and poetic insight into nature".[56]

Fenollosa's discussion of the love of nature the Japanese expressed in their art is corroborated by the action of several Noh plays that are founded on spots famous for their natural beauty and historical or legendary interest. In addition, references to place are an essential part of the structure of the plays. The introductory section ends with the lyrical travel-song (michi-yuki) in which the speaker, who is usually a travelling priest, describes the journey he is undertaking to a famous place. At the beginning of the next section, the protagonist's entrance song of his state and circumstances is usually associated with the place in which he appears. Lyrical descriptions of the scenery frequently include allusions to well-known poems as well as puns on place-names. Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1444), the master actor, playwright and theorist of Noh drama, especially favored the use of such poetic devices at the climax of the play. According to Zeami, the description of the beauty of the locale magnified through association with a well-known poem recited by the main character at the dance climax would have utmost emotional effect:

> It helps to give the audience a larger, more profound sense of the imaginative landscape being created, the essential effect of any No. Indeed, the need for the use of such legends on ancient sites in terms of artistic material to construct a play is related to the matter of creating this "larger view" in the minds of the audience.[57]

The Noh composer's use of beautiful and historical or legendary places for their emotional association reminded Yeats of the instinctive awe and love of place the Irish peasantry expressed in their rich and poignant folklore. As the scenery of three dance plays shows, it rekindled his desire to use a familiar landscape as a symbolic "model of the nation"[58]. Moreover, like the Noh plays in Noh or Accomplishment, each dance play derives its structural unity from varying patterns of related and recurrent images drawn from the natural world. These images symbolically express the play's metaphysical themes. The more than physical dimension of the play's imagery is defined negatively by suppressing any realistic representation. Instead, a chorus, whose "sunburned faces" Yeats

hoped would "suggest that they have wandered from village to village in some country of our dreams,"[59] evoke the scene or image in "the eye of the mind"[60].

The three dance plays that adapt events of Irish myth and history are closely associated with images of the landscape. The significance of images of place reflect a new complexity in Yeats' understanding of the relation of his interest in philosophy to nationalism as it was expressed in his art. From around the turn of the century, when his thought was quickened by tales of changelings that he interpreted as symbolic of the divided self, he began to work out a philosophy of the harmony or balance of opposites. By the time he wrote the dance plays, he had come to assert that unity was defined and evoked through anti-thetical images. These images were symbolical or evocative of a state of mind that is "of all states of mind not impossible, the most difficult to that man, race, or nation".[61] To Swedenborg's assertion of a univocal and ideal correspondence between physical and metaphysical worlds, Yeats gave particular significance to desolate landscapes as an image of the division within and between parallel levels of reality. He rejected Swedenborg's "Garden City mind" and agreed with Blake that Swedenborg "half felt, half saw, half tasted the kingdom of heaven"[62] through his simple moral understanding, "his habit of seeing but one element in everything"[63].

At the Hawk's Well was Yeats' first experiment in applying the concept of unity of image. Hawk, well and tree are the binding images in the play. As the spirit of the dry well and leafless tree, the fierce and savage qualities of the hawk match the place. No inner struggle divides the supernatural against itself but the main action concerns the antagonism that binds humanity to the supernatural and divides person from person. Being the human counterpart to the Hawk and Cuchulain's enemy, the Old Man is as clearly identified with the place as the Hawk-Woman. As he climbs the steep hill, his aged and bent body is compared to the twisted trees that he passes:

> He is all doubled up with age
> The old thorn trees are doubled so.[64]

His speech is as harsh and barren as the landscape. Because of the inhospitable greeting he receives from the Old Man, Cuchulain remarks,

> You must be native here, for that rough
> tongue
> Matches the barbarous spot.[65]

In attempting to drive Cuchulain away, the Old Man associates himself with the place:

> This place
> Belongs to me, that girl there, and those others
> Deceivers of men.[66]

Cuchulain is not deterred so he persists, saying

> leave the well to me, for it belongs
> To all that's old and withered.[67]

Having lived with the Sidhe in an uneasy peace, he knows the signs they give; but they are also his enemies and, helpless against their deception, he sinks into an unnatural sleep when the well fills. On waking, he cries with bitterness:

> The accursed shadows have deluded me,
> The stones are dark and yet the well is empty;
> The waters flowed and emptied while I slept.
> You have deluded me my whole life through,
> Accursed dancers, you have stolen my life.
> That there should be such evil in a shadow![68]

While the similarity and conflict of human and supernatural orders are distinct in the Old Man's life, they are inextricably linked in Cuchulain's fate since he discovers in his defeat his heroism. Although he is lured from the well when it fills and loses a life of happiness, the tragic experience shapes his heroic destiny and character. Hearing the clash of arms of a gathering army of the women of the Sidhe, he exultantly shoulders his spear and goes out to face them.

Yeats' vision of human and supernatural worlds that are related by antagonism and opposition recompose and invert the themes and imagery of two recognized sources of the play in which well and tree are used with traditional symbolic significance, The Well of the World's End by William Morris and the Noh drama, Yoro by Zeami. To Yeats, William Morris, like the fool of folklore or the "fat dreamer of the Middle Ages", lacked a vision of evil. His ignorance of the duality of all experience was embodied in the green tree and full well of his poem. Likewise, the setting in Yoro projected an image of undifferentiated harmony. The action unfolds in a peaceful and green land: the winds are calm and, under the quiet branches of the pines, a clear stream flows continuously. The water's supernatural power of health and longevity are underlined by miracles in the natural world - a shower of flower petals, light gleaming from the sky, a silent torrent and music in the air. Since he was intent on finding similarities amnong cultures when he wrote the dance plays, only years later would Yeats admit a fundamental difference between his art and the art of the east when he wrote to the English poet, Dorothy Wellesley, "the east has its solutions always and therefore knows nothing of tragedy. It is we, not the east, that must raise the tragic cry".[69] Well and tree had also appeared in accounts of Yeats' quest in the nineties for a philosophy and symbols, which he hoped would ultimately bring unity to Ireland. In its earlier form, the symbols were positive in aspect. Water filled the well and the ash tree was laden with berries. In addition, as Brigit Bjersby has noted, there was no hawk, "no evil or dangerous power" like the one associated with the Hawk-woman.[70] The striking difference in mood between his early conception of these symbols and their significance in the play underlines the change in his approach toward unity.

The pattern of recurring imagery in The Only Jealousy of Emer is not identical to its structure in At the Hawk's Well. Insistent repetition of the unifying imagery and its close connection with action, theme, and character make setting the dominant element in At the Hawk's Well; in the The Only Jealousy of Emer, the binding imagery is less

frequently and subtly woven into the text. While the chorus begins in At the Hawk's Well with a description of the scene, in the latter play the sea, as the binding image, is indirectly evoked in song by the associated and subordinate images of sea bird and sea shell. As was the practice in At the Hawk's Well, when the chorus sets the scene in prose, a few specific details suggest the immediate locale:

> a roof
> With cross-beams darkened by smoke
> A fisher's net hangs from the beam
> A long oar lies against the wall.[71]

The sea appears in the distant background:

> Beyond the open door the bitter sea
> The shining, bitter sea.[72]

The sea is an antagonistic presence that is mainly associated with the supernatural.

Overcome by his fight with the "deathless sea, Cuchulain lies "dead or swooning" on a bed. In her effort to awaken Cuchulain, his wife, Emer, states that she and Eithne Inguba, Cuchulain's mistress, "are but two women fighting with the sea."[73] She asserts that Cuchulain is not dead but "away" and a "sea-borne log"

> Or some stark horseman grown too old to ride
> Among the troops of Manaan, Son of the Sea[74]

has taken his likeness. To drive away the sea-spirits, Emer covers his face to hide him from the sea and stirs the fire, because

> all enchantments of the dreaming foam
> Dread the hearth-fire.[75]

When they attempt to revive Cuchulain, Bricru of the withered arm, a pagan divinity of discord, appears. He terrifies Eithne, who flees, and gives Emer second sight to see a strange woman approaching Cuchulain's ghost. He identifies her as the goddess Fand, who has come from the Country-under-Wave. She has

dreamed herself into that shape that he
May glitter in her basket; for the Sidhe
Are dexterous fishers and they fish for men
With dreams upon the hook.[76]

Emer, seeing Cuchulain mount Fand's chariot by the seashore, wins back his life at the cost of surrendering his love to "the cold moon, and the vague sea". As Cuchulain comes to consciousness through his wife's sacrifice, Eithne returns and cries,

it is I that won him from the sea.[77]

In the 1929 production of the prose version of The Only Jealousy of Emer, entitled Fighting the Waves, dance, costume and mask echoed the text's key image of the sea. The performance began with a dance representing Cuchulain fighting the waves and closed with a dance of the goddess mourning among the waves. In his notes, Yeats expressed his appreciation for "a mask with the silver glitter of a fish, for a dance with an eddy like that of water, for music that suggested, not the vagueness, but the rhythm of the sea."[78] He felt "that the sea was eternity and that they were all upon its edge."[79]

The idea that each of the characters in the supernatural and human worlds is in some sense caught between warring opposites is expressed in the play's unifying imagery. The "stormy sea", "vast troubled waters" and the "labouring crescent" of the moon are associated with the supernatural Fand and paralleled by the sea shell and sea-bird associated with the human Eithne Inguba. Quoting Castiglione, Yeats writes in his notes to the play that "the physical beauty of woman is the spoil or monument of the victory of the soul, for physical beauty ... is the result of emotional toil in past lives."[80] Fand is kept from achieving the completion of the full moon by her desire for Cuchulain and his rejection; while Eithne in possessing the fragility of the sea-shell or a sea-bird is unfit for the struggle into which she is thrown. She

drifts and dreams, and but knows
That waters are without end.[81]

The adaptation of the legend of Cuchulain and its close association with a pattern of unifying images in At the Hawk's Well and The Only Jealousy of Emer evoke a profound form of nationalism that Yeats imagined could apply to the experience of the race as a whole. It may be argued that the same cannot be said of the third dance play that he began writing. The Dreaming of the Bones conflates events in Irish history and contains several references to specific Irish places. It is clear, however, that the local material of the play had been naturalized in all but its mood, which was intensified by memories of the Easter Rising a year earlier. As Wilson has noted, the general narrative of The Dreaming of the Bones resembles Nishikigi, which Yeats praised for its beauty in "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places" and "Certain Noble Plays of Japan". In both plays a couple meet a traveller asking his way with many questions. They offer to guide him to a certain place. Recurrent references to particular details of the places they pass give symbolical significance to their journey. At the end of their travel, the couple reveal their real identity and request release from remorse and unfulfilled desire. The action culminates in a dance, which represents consummated love in Nishikigi but continued spiritual torment in The Dreaming of the Bones

The contrasting significance of the dance is one instance of the difference in mood between the dance plays and classical Japanese drama. Yeats also departed from his model by replacing the waki with a revolutionary, thereby shifting the centre of conflict. Whereas the waki in Nishikigi is an impartial participant in the couple's story of antagonism and reconciliation, in The Dreaming of the Bones the young revolutionary is not neutral but confronts his opposites in the couple he meets. Among other related differences in their character, the Young Man's love of country is pitted against spectres of national betrayal. The couple represent the anti-thetical mask of the Young Man and the nation that he represents. They lead him to a choice by tempting him to forgive their crime, which among choices "not impossible is the most difficult"[82] to him as it is to modern Ireland. His unwillingness to be reconciled with the past signifies a refusal to

assume the tragic mask that would lead individual, nation and race to a reconciliation or harmony with its opposite.

The central unifying imagery in the play involves birds of the day and night, although images of place are equally important since they define the similarity and difference between two types of characters, order the action and symbolically express its meaning. In the heightened language of their opening song, the chorus associates the dreams of the dead with the valley. It compares the outline of the valley and hills in the darkness to the shape of a cup of agate or jade which, as it overflows with wine, is like the rising passions of the dead in the hills. One of the chorus then delivers in speech a comparatively more prosaic description of the place. With the moon moving behind the clouds, darkness covers the little village and the white road that runs to the Abbey of Corcomroe. The hills "are like a circle of agate or of jade."[83] Into this landscape, which is now less a symbolic image than an actual place, a Young Man stumbles.

In his analysis of the chorus' opening song and speech, David Clark has observed that the setting of The Dreaming of the Bones gives "a validity of existence to both the subjective dream world of the dead and the objective world of the living"[84]. He finds, however, the "language of the play is not firm, sure, and consistent in the simultaneous communication of two levels of reality"[85], citing the chorus' contrasting ways of describing the hills in song and speech. The poet, he continues, exploits the weakness of variation in styles of speech "as though it were a virtue and makes it a successful part of the form"[86], especially by combining dramatic and poetic language at the climax of the play.

Clark is accurate in discerning the contrast in the chorus' allusion to the hills; in emphasizing the difference between dramatic and poetic language, however, he misses their shared allusion to the landscape. The surrounding hills of stone, the repeated elements of the simile, provide the juncture for metaphor and plain statement. Unlike the simple description in speech, in the lyric the stone is transformed by impassioned

perception into an artifact. Like the binding metaphors in At the Hawk's Well and The Only Jealousy of Emer, in The Dreaming of the Bones the image in song and speech serves not only to divide but also to relate imaginative and objective worlds.

Besides providing "a means by which the opposition of the characters is shown"[87], the setting is also used to define their relation. The condition of the desolate landscape stirs memories of the past in both the Young Man and the Stranger although they do not see the past in the present in the same way. The ghosts see the place subjectively and associate its broken stones with guilt like theirs, while the Young Man in looking only on people and things attributes its devastation to an external English enemy. Their difference in perception initially emerges in the memories that the hills evoke. The Stranger remembers the hiding places they offered him and his beloved from their betrayed race; the Young Man's thoughts, on the other hand, turn outward to the English whom he blames for the ruin of the land.

The ghost's temptation consists not in veiling the landscape in its present condition, as Clark asserts - more than once the Stranger speaks of the broken stones and fallen tombs among which the Abbey lies - but in revealing the tombs of those who continue to work out their penance, like his companion and himself, and obtain forgiveness by his revelation. For this reason, the Stranger, saying that he will not promise to defend the Young Man from the spirits of the dead, leads him up the hill.

Their physical and spiritual ascent is analogous to the filling of the wine cup which, Clark concedes, is now not so arbitrary an image. The symbolic significance of their ascent is suggested by repeated reference to particular features of the landscape, as at the choral opening of the play. The group leaves behind "the briar and thorn, and the scarce grass"[88] that make up the external world of sensory perception to approach the summit of subjective existence, represented by the head, heart and dreaming bones of the chorus' song.

When they reach the summit, there is no sudden climactic change in the Young Man's awareness of the place but a heightening of perception. Just as he had spoken earlier of the trees that had been cut down or burnt, so does he now talk of "toppled roof and gable" and torn "panelling from ancient rooms"[89]. On this occasion he does not simply blame the English, but also accuses members of his own race, Dermot and Dervorgilla. As he looks out from the summit, the present landscape evokes images of how it was and could have been and moves him to an impassioned rejection of the temptation to absolve the pair of their guilt. It is his intense feeling for the place, more than the conventional rhetoric of the words, "never, never / Shall Diarmuid and Dervorgilla be forgiven"[90], that gives validity to his refusal.

The setting in The Dreaming of the Bones has a determinate relation to the action. In contrast, the pattern of imagery involving birds and the anti-thesis between day and night simply reflect the opposition between subjective and objective worlds. When they are first mentioned in the chorus' opening speech, birds are associated with the loneliness of the place. In the hour before dawn, they "cry in their loneliness", wheel about and drop on the stones. During the journey to the mountain-top, the chorus' description in speech contains references to the owl, a night-bird nested among the tombs and a symbol of death, while their song alludes to the cock, the herald of dawn and of rebirth. The last song of the play is an affirmation of objective reality in which the terror of the night figured in the cries of the owl and the curlew resolves into dawn and the crowing of the cocks.

Since they are based on familiar events of Irish myth and history that evoke in Yeats' imagination "the colours of (his) own climate and scenery"[91], the unifying images of place in At the Hawk's Well, The Only Jealousy of Emer and The Dreaming of the Bones are closely associated with the action. Besides their central symbolic function, they possess an intrinsic dramatic value. Yeats also intended to give Calvary a local setting.

The earliest known record of his plans for the play, dated January 1918, shows that he first set the scene in modern Ireland:

> ... a Sinn Feiner will have a conversation with Judas in the streets of Dublin. Judas is looking for somebody to whom he may betray Christ in order that Christ may proclaim himself King of the Jews. The Sinn Feiner has just been persuading a young sculptor to leave his studio and shoulder a rifle.[92]

While Judas remains Christ's antagonist in the last version of the play, Yeats altered his early scenario because he thought that the analogy it suggested between the artist's renunciation of his art for politics and Judas's betrayal of Christ was "too opinionated"[93]. As a result of revisions that included replacing a familiar locale with one that was remote from his life, in Calvary Yeats does not use setting as a unifying image. The chorus' brief description of the place -

> The road to Calvary and I beside it
> Upon an ancient stone[94]

appears a concession to dramatic convention and the action's connection to Golgotha, the place of the skulls, is undeveloped. The binding image of the play has a subjective validity only and bears as much relation to the external world as an image in a dream. Its limited use can be justified by the action, which is completely relived in the mind as Christ's memory of his passion. The binding image mainly appears in the chorus' songs, a convention that has provided a means of lyrically evoking the theme and patterning the action.

Whereas the dominant image in the earlier plays served to express the dual nature of experience, the symbolic significance of the image in Calvary is simplified and univocal. In the lyrics that frame the action and separate its episodes, birds are used to represent subjective life. Each image that the singer evokes in which birds appear usually alone in water or floating on the air is contrasted with an abstract statement of its opposite. In the introductory song, one of the musicians describes a solitary heron staring in terror

at its image in a stream. Against the background of a vivid and flowing natural world, an alternate voice thrice delivers the terse abstraction of the refrain: "God has not died for the white heron"[95]. The manner in which the assertion is made emphasizes the idea that God has no part in the heron's world. Following the introductory song, the action unfolds as a series of confrontations between Christ and his opposites. The image of the heron and other solitary birds, which appears in the choral commentary interspersed between episodes and in the dialogue, increases the loneliness of Christ by contrast and intensifies his antagonists' solitude. In his encounter with Lazarus and Judas, Christ confronts an intellectual despair that he cannot share. Lazarus goes out to search for his god in desert places among solitary birds and Judas remembers that when he came as close to self-realization as was possible in planning to betray Christ, there was nothing near but a solitary heron. The comparison of the wailing women with the drifting and drowned feather of an eagle, swan or gull is elliptical as is the phrase, "Take but his love away"[96], that precedes it. It implies contrasting statements that represent opposite principles of subjectivity or objectivity. Were they deprived of his love or had they nothing but his love, they would recover or renounce their separate identity. In the closing lyrics, images of gull, eagle, and swan in alternation with a refrain that is similar to the one in the opening song reappear and repeat the idea that Christ's life and death were purposeless to those "who wait for none or for a different saviour"[97].

Calvary is the least popular of the dance plays. Every element of the drama, of which the chorus is most important, is made to serve an idea. The unifying imagery serves a more limited lyrical and structural use. It does not have a natural or conventional association with the action as do the images of places in the other plays, where they possess dramatic value as setting besides ordering the action and intensifying the theme. Had Yeats allowed himself the luxury of "being opinionated" and speaking his mind, his fourth dance play may have got some strength from connection to a "rooted" culture.

Notes

Chapter 1

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46. A Vision, p. 226.

47. Chiba, 131.

48. Taylor, p. 53.

49. "Swedenborg, Mediums and the Desolate Places" in Augusta Gregory, p. 312.

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53. Mary McNeil Fenollosa (ed.), Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art, (London: Heinemann, 1913), p. 4.

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62. Yeats, "Swedenborg, Mediums and the Desolate Places" in Augusta Gregory,, p. 319.

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73. Ibid, p. 541.

74. Ibid, p. 537.

75. Ibid, p. 539.

76. Ibid, p. 549.

77. Ibid, p. 561.

78. Ibid, p. 571.

79. Wade, p. 768.

80. Variorum Plays, p. 566.

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83. Variorum Plays, p.763.

84. David Clark, W.B. Yeats and the Theatre of Desolate Reality, (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1965), p. 51.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid, p. 56.

88. Variorum Plays, p. 767-8.

89. Ibid, p.774.

90. Ibid, p.773, 775.

91. Essays and Introductions, "What is Popular Poetry" (1901), p. 5.

92. Wade, p. 645.

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94. Variorum Plays, p. 781.

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96. Ibid, p. 784.

97. Ibid, p. 790.

Chapter II: Unity of the Arts and the Living Voice

Yeats considered himself a dramatist. In a note to At the Hawk's Well, he protested his need for a theatre in which he could discover concrete means of evoking a shared experience of "lofty" thought and emotion among a roomful of people. He was convinced that "(w)e believe those thoughts which have been conceived not in the brain but in the whole body."[1] "Intellectual reflection", he stated elsewhere, "brings assent but belief comes from the concrete alone and leads to unity with the source of one's being."[2]

The concrete was characterized by rhythm in poetry and music as well as pattern, its counterpart in the visual arts. Yeats made an important if subtle distinction between the rhythmical and abstract in art. Being the deliberate and conscious creations of the artist, both eschewed imitation of nature and realism. However, abstract art was "incompatible with life" but "rhythm implied a living body, breasts to rise and fall, limbs that dance".[3] To illustrate these thoughts, which appear in a letter he wrote while rehearsing At the Hawk's Well in March 1916, he pointed to the element of pattern in Japanese paintings: "Everywhere there is a delight in form, repeated yet varied, in curious patterns of lines".[4]

Pattern and rhythm in traditional forms of some Japanese painting and most drama are fundamental principles of composition. While they also serve as structural features of Yeats' work, he particularly valued the regular or slightly varied repetition of sounds, visual and textual images, and actions because they conveyed intensity of thought and emotion in concrete and impersonal form. Whether these aims were shared by the artists of Japan did not prevent him from adapting their conventions to his own ends.

Four Plays for Dancers, published on October 28, 1921, contains some exposition of the method for the performance of the dance plays based on the only play performed by that time, At The Hawk's Well. The book includes six illustrations of the designs for costumes and masks, and the music for At The Hawk's Well preceded by "A Note on the Instruments".

These were the work of Edmund Dulac, the "distinguished illustrator of The Arabian Nights".[5] The unperformed music for Dreaming of the Bones and an acompanying note by the German composer and pianist, Walter Rummel, were also part of the volume. Yeats intended to make the edition of the four plays "interesting to people who are interested in the stage technically"[6] but recognized that there was much to discover since he was not always certain what he wanted, and when he was, his aims were only occasionally realized on stage.

His collaboration with Dulac in the production of his first dance play marked the beginning of his association with painter, sculptor, dancer, and musician in subsequent productions of At The Hawk's Well, The Dreaming of the Bones and The Only Jealousy of Emer. Calvary was never performed in his lifetime. The association of poetry with speech, music, painting and dance, which Yeats referred to in his Autobiography as "the applied arts of literature", constituted one of many attempts to evoke unity primarily through poetry[7]. To Yeats there was a hierarchical relation among the arts that was ruled by the spoken word. Significantly, when he later stated: "I would have all the arts draw together, recover their ancient asssociation, the painter painting what the poet has written, the musician setting the poet's words to simple airs"[8], the painter's and musician's arts were related to and dependent on the poetry. In placing speech above spectacle, he believed he had the sanction of tradition. The drama, he asserted at the end of the nineties, began in the chanted ode and "whenever it has been great it has been written ... to delight our ears more than our eyes."[9] For the precedence he gave words over music, he imagined that poetry was the older art. Melody was added to the spoken word for variety but gradually it became the chief preoccupation until speech died out in music.[10]

The unbalanced emotional or intellectual introversion of modern poetry, of which he judged his poetry of the nineteenth century a part, was closely connected in his mind with the lost relation of poetry to vivid and rhythmical speech. Having initiated the Irish dramatic movement, one of his first plans was to restore the art of regulated and passionate speaking. Its aims and methods are described in "Literature and the Living Voice", which he wrote immediately after the opening of the Abbey Theatre in 1904. It declared that Ireland was the

fitting centre for a theatre because the Irish peasantry were among the last people in the modern world who possessed a strong and vital oral tradition[11]. Irish poetry and stories, made to be spoken and sung, and years of political oratory had kept the people from forgetting, as had most of the modern world, how to sing and listen to serious words. That "Literature and the Living Voice" remained unpublished until 1906 suggested to Yeats that the Irish dramatic movement would never have the time to begin the theatre of speech of which he dreamed.

When he discovered a combination of the arts in the Noh, he seized the form as an eminently adaptable model of his kind of theatre. While he recognized that the use of music, an open space, masks, stylized movement and dance were powerful and evocative in themselves, he coordinated their expressive functions with the poetry. The priority he attempted to give the word among the arts emerges most clearly in the note he added to a later dance play, A Full Moon in March (1935), in which he praised "certain combinations of singing, acting, speaking, drum, gong, flute provided that some or all the words keep their natural passionate rhythm".[12]

The chorus, in particular, provided Yeats with a method for restoring the ancient theatre of "the living voice". He gave the chorus responsibility for narrative and lyrical delivery that he distinguished by speech and song. In speech, the chorus describes the setting, introduces character and narrates action. Song mainly serves to generalize the action and express or intensify a mood or emotion. The chorus' songs, which usually follow a shorter verse line than speech, is similar to the metre of the traditional ballad while its speech, like the speech of characters in the play, is delivered in blank verse. The alternation of lyric metres with blank verse, an innovation in Yeats' poetry, reflects the change he was attempting to make in his style. By combining traditional and contemporary forms, he endeavoured to fuse the qualities of permanence and impersonality he attributed to verse of the past with the passion and immediacy of the relatively modern iambic metre.

Song is usually, but not always, restricted to the chorus. At one moment of heightened interest in The Only Jealousy of Emer, a lyric measure is "wrought into the dialogue"[13]. The octosyllabic exchange in rhymed couplets between the Ghost of Cuchulain and Fand is one

of the dance plays' most striking fusions of impassioned speech and song. In this instance, dialogue becomes as much a means of defining and intensifying emotion as a method of characterization or conversation.

To distance deep emotion and give it breadth, the chorus occasionally speaks for one of the characters in its songs. This deflects attention away from the individual experiencing the emotion to the emotion itself.[14] The practice is from the Noh in which it is even more pronounced. In the Japanese drama, any one character, as well as the chorus, can complete another's thought. The Noh composer could also drop personal pronouns to remove the distinction between a third-person narrative and one delivered in the first person. The ambiguous use of pronouns in the dance plays prompted one critic to attempt to assign such choral lyrics to single characters alone.[15] In contrast, Yeats' object involved impersonalizing his characters to increase the resonance of their tragic experience and give the audience a glimpse of those "permanent and recurring things" that were vaster than the individual.

Conventional "symbolic language", such as the association of the heart with human emotion or "the most interior being" that appears most often in the chorus' songs, serves the same intent of intensifying and impersonalizing or "freezing" emotion. The heart is often struck with the terror that Yeats declared was an element of all profound human experience of supernatural or spiritual reality. The chorus' question in the opening song of The Dreaming of the Bones, "Why does my heart beat so? / Did not a shadow pass?"[16], directs the audience's response to the action and anticipates the fear the Young Man feels when he meets the strange couple on the mountainside. As the ghost-lovers lead the Young Man to the summit, the image is repeated in combination with the refrain to intensify emotion: "Why should the heart take fright? / What sets it beating so?"[17] Again, in the closing song the chorus remembers its racing heart: "My heart ran wild when it heard / The curlew cry before dawn".[18]

In Calvary, Christ's spirit trembles at the crowd's jibes: "O, but the mocker's cry / Makes my heart afraid".[19] The paradox of a passionate, beating heart within a supernatural being is more emphatically embodied in The Only Jealousy of Emer in Fand. Yeats revised an earlier version of the first line of the chorus' closing song, which read "What makes her

heart beat thus?", to address the listener directly: "What makes your heart beat thus?"[20] Since it possesses a mediating position between audience and character, the chorus appears to address the audience, Emer, and Cuchulain, who are all startled by having seen and heard a statue or unhuman being move and speak. In the penultimate stanza the chorus questions Fand directly and comments on her beating heart that has not achieved the ideal stillness of requited love.

The heart's divided nature is also the theme of the opening lyrics of At the Hawk's Well. One of the musicians sings: "The heart would be always awake, / The heart would turn to its rest"[21] and develops the same thought in similar images before the dialogue begins. In terms of the action, the singer's words anticipate the heart's equally compelling and opposite impulses that struggle within the Old Man, who falls asleep at the crucial moment after a fifty-year vigil beside the well of immortality; they also serve as a symbolic statement of the contrast between his character and the heroism of Cuchulain. While the heart is recognized in many mythologies as the source of emotion, Yeats attempted to revitalize its meaning in the dance plays much in the manner that he observed Chinese and Japanese artists recompose familiar images in their paintings "as though they were the letters of the alphabet, into great masterpieces, traditional and spontaneous".[22]

To illuminate the meaning and sound of his dramatic text, Yeats desired players who possessed, in place of professional experience, what he called "poetical culture". The phrase meant a delight in the sound of words and a learned understanding of their allusions and symbolism. While Zeami suggested that the actor study poetry to enable him to write plays which he could then perform according to their original conception, Yeats sought actors with little else but a sensitivity to beautiful words and their traditional meaning. "A man who loves verse," he declared, "has the advantage of the professional player."[23] When Ezra Pound, who had never acted on any stage, replaced the noted actor Henry Ainley during rehearsals of At the Hawk's Well, Yeats briefly heard the rhythmical speech he sought that charged personal emotion and thought with general meaning. Ezra Pound, he once remarked, had "the right sort of music for poetry ... it is more definitely music with strongly marked time and yet it is effective speech."[24]

The type of delivery Yeats desired and describes in his essay on the Noh shows that there was only a slight difference in his mind between speaking and singing: "My ears are only comfortable when the singer sings as if mere speech had taken fire, when he appears to have passed into song imperceptibly."[25] The musical element he understood by "song" was rhythm and not melody, which only turned language into so much "honey and oil".[26] When Yeats described the chorus as "singing or half-singing" during the dance at the climax of At the Hawk's Well, Dulac's score shows that he understood him to mean "speaking". It was also rhythm that distinguished ideal lyrical delivery from ordinary conversation. To Yeats' ears, the imperfection of modern recitation rested on its ignorance of this focal principle:

> Modern recitation has taught us to fix on the gross effect until we think gesture, and the intonation that copies the accidental surface of life, more important than rhythm; and yet we understand theoretically that it is precisely this rhythm that separates good writing from bad, that is the glimmer the fragrance the spirit of all intense literature.[27]

In his notes on the Noh, Fenollosa also distinguishes between sung verse and the less common spoken or "intoned" prose parts. As a student of Noh, Fenollosa's lessons consisted primarily in learning how to sing the texts. He emphasized the predominance of song in performance and identified it as the only mode of choral delivery. But Yeats, through his own bias for the sound and rhythm of "song" that was within the range of the speaking voice ignored Fenollosa's repeated references to the melodic quality of vocal delivery in Noh drama. Not to be confused with the facts, it pleased him to think that quarter tones in Japanese music make the difference between speech and song imperceptible.[28]

Although he remembered years later that he "asked the singers for no new method, did not speak to them upon the subject"[29], he transmitted his ideas on vocal delivery to Dulac. Besides composing the music for the play, Dulac, as First Musician and director of At the Hawk's Well, took responsibility for the delivery of most of the chorus' lines as well as for the direction of the musicians.

Introducing the Second and Third Musicians, whose experience was limited to the commercial theatres, to a new form of delivery was one of several probable reasons for

Yeats' silence on the matter. There was also his acknowledged inability to distinguish one note from another. In the preface to At the Hawk's Well, he wrote: "Music where there are no satisfying audible words bores me ... for I have no ear or only a primitive one."[30] His early attempts to combine music and verse provided little or no help. Since his experiments in setting words to music, which he conducted with the actress, Florence Farr, and the musician and instrument maker, Arnold Dolmetsch, at the turn of the century consisted mainly of short lyrics, he could only apply some of the discoveries he made to the delivery of dramatic verse. Even less useful were the Irish folk songs included in performances of his early plays. They were sung in the conventional way for their musical appeal and not as he had heard the traditional "singing" of Irish country-women or Farr who spoke their songs.

Dulac and Rummel's statements of their attempts to subordinate the music to the words suggests their closer collaboration with Yeats. The musical simplicity of Dulac's score preserves the verse's expressiveness as passionate speech rather than melodic song although it neither holds interest for the musician nor enhances the text. As a general principle, Dulac assigns one note to each syllable and allows the final syllable in a verse line greater duration. The former practice would work were it applied to slower notes than triplets. As it is, the words are hurriedly passed over and a rapid tempo created that hardly fits the tragic mood of the play.[31] Rummel's setting for the lyrics of The Dreaming of the Bones is also imperfect. He shows a disregard for the rhythm of the poetic line and falls painfully short of his intention of finding a "formula which will enhance and bring out a music underlying the words".[32] His setting consists in "superimposing regular musical phrases on irregular verbal phrases and misplacing stresses within phrases."[33]

These shortcomings in the musical scores and choral delivery may be explained in part by a certain contradiction in Yeats' attempt to combine music and poetry while refusing to allow their association on an equal basis. Not surprisingly, the professional musicians objected. The naiveté of the music and its dependence on the verse gave the musicians no chance to let loose. One of the chorus argued, "in the big London theatres the action is stopped from time to time to give the musician his turn".[34] Feuds between Dulac and the Second Musician drove Yeats to consider speaking the lyrics himself with "no singing and

no music."[35] In the note to Calvary written a few years after the first production of At The Hawk's Well, he conceded defeat. Although he gave the chorus songs, he believed the singers would "certainly make it impossible for the audience to know what the words were."[36] He resorted instead to the comments he appended to the dance plays to make the songs intelligible and resigned himself for the moment to the fate he had fought to escape, of writing for the reader's eye alone.

In 1929, his hope of finding a solution to the problem of uniting literature and music was renewed. It involved collaboration with the American composer and concert pianist, George Antheil, in the production of Fighting the Waves. Like his earlier work with Rummel, Yeats' collaboration with Antheil was initiated by Pound's promotion of the composer's ability to fit lyrics to music.[37] The results were discouraging. Antheil's setting for Fighting the Waves shows a complete disregard for intelligible articulation by dragging out vowel sounds unnaturally. In addition, although he promised to keep his instruments within the range of the Abbey, his score for a large orchestra made one lyric poet vow to write a dance play "for a tin whistle and a large concertina".[38] It was probably Antheil's music that finally made Yeats "go over to the enemy" and say to the musicians in The King of the Great Clock Tower (1935): "Lose my words in patterns of sound... the audience can find my words in a book if they are curious."[39]

While working with Antheil, Yeats was writing lyrics for a collection he called Words for Music Perhaps, which was published in 1932. "For Music", he admitted, "is only a name, nobody will sing them."[40] In 1935, however, he resumed the fight and issued in twelve numbers for two years a series of broadsides containing poems by living Irish and English poets and traditional ballads. These were all set to music for unaccompanied singing. An essay on Anglo-Irish ballads introduced one of the first numbers and announced, as did several poems in his last volume of verse, his study of the traditional ballad as a model of the relationship of verse to music. So that the new and old poems and ballads could be orally transmitted, he arranged for them to be sung on radio broadcasts, at banquets, and from the Abbey stage. He continued to denounce professionally trained singers, choosing poets, players, and other "disreputable", "unmusical" people. The second series of Broadsides

included a "manifesto" entitled "Music and Poetry" in which he demanded a return to "the ancient art of song". The singer of the concert platform, he argued, wronged the poets, "masticating their well-made words and turning them to spittle".[41] With the help of the Irish poet, F. R. Higgins, Yeats would have edited but for his death, a "book of a hundred Irish songs"[42] and a collection of essays by V.C. Clinton-Baddely, F.R. Higgins, an Abbey expert on verse speaking, and himself "dealing with the relation between speech and song".[43]

Yeats arrived at the position he adopted in "Music and Poetry" of allowing "no accompaniment" except for "flute or string, clapping hands, cracking fingers, or whistling mouth"[44] - and these only during dramatic pauses or breaks in the verse - through the same principle that motivated his selection of musical instruments for the dance plays. It was directly related to his concern with making the words clearly audible and comprehensible to the audience. An oriental sound and appearance, which Dulac wanted the drum and gong to possess, held an incidental interest. The soft sounds of harp, zither, and flute used to "deepen the emotion of the words"[45] could not muffle the voice while the louder rhythmic instruments provided accompaniment to movement and dance. Orchestral accompaniment, common in commercial theatres, pitted the voice against the loudest instrument and made it incapable of intelligible articulation. As Yeats stated in his essay on the Noh, "the voice must be freed from this competition and find itself among little instruments".[46]

The choice of a small playing space open on three sides brought the audience close enough to the player to hear every inflection of voice. The dance plays were never meant to be played on the public stage. Even the second production of At the Hawk's Well played on a platform stage set against the wall of a large drawing-room and surrounded on three sides by a few hundred people only "half-welcom(ed)" Yeats' muses. In the conventional theater, he writes, "(t)he stage-opening,...the number of feet between myself and the players have destroyed intimacy."[47] Bringing the actor and audience closer together restored to the speaking voice its power and range of wide and subtle expression and returned poetry to its place of importance. Such an innovation was not based on a misconception of the Japanese plays which were stage plays, as Yeats recognized; however, he must also have known, if

he needed the support of a precedent, that in Japan men of culture built Noh theatres in their own houses.

There is no scenery in the playing space. In imitation of the travel song that ends the introductory section of the Noh play, the chorus gives a spoken description of the landscape. The setting is symbolized in the non-representative patterned screen placed against the wall before which the singer-musicians sit. The poet's description is substituted for the scene painter's "meretricious landscape" that Yeats denounced repeatedly in his critical prose and lectures. The poet, he believed, could not "evoke a picture in the mind's eye if a second-rate painter has set his imagination of it before the bodily eye."[48] The scenery must be of such "irrelevant magnificence" that it is forgotten the moment the actor has said, "It is dawn" or "It is raining" or "The wind is shaking the trees".[49] Yeats' perception of the incongruity of verse and realistic scene painting is characteristic of his consideration of the poetry first: "For passion and rhythm you must get rid of all realism. It is absurd if they talk passion in such a setting that you will say, People don't talk verse in real life."[50]

The few stage properties are either necessary to the action, such as the curtained bed bearing the body of Cuchulain and the cross on which Christ is crucified, or they are simplified representations that stimulate the imagination. At the Hawk's Well calls for a square blue cloth to represent a well. For its songs, the chorus folds and unfolds a black cloth decorated in the center with "a gold pattern suggesting a hawk"[51]. Yeats suggests the same cloth be used in The Only Jealousy of Emer in which the Hawk-woman reappears as Fand. The Dreaming of the Bones is played before a screen or a curtain "with a pattern of mountain and sky"[52]. Calvary contains no directions for the designs of the cloth or the backdrop.

The designs for backdrop and cloth present a visual counterpart in stylized images, recurrent lines and patterns to the recurrent imagery of the text. In At the Hawk's Well, the dominant metaphor of the hawk is repeated in the patterned illustration of the cloth. In the prose version of The Only Jealousy of Emer, images of the sea appear in the text and in stylized images on the stage backcloth. In The Dreaming of the Bones, the valley and

mountain setting figured in the design of the cloth evokes the image of the hills that recurs in song and speech.

Although the Noh stage contains neither backdrop nor cloth, it was easy for Yeats to transfer the principle of decorative design for the stage he had earlier found realized in Japanese painting and "the comparative realism" of Japanese prints of the Edo period (1603-1867) to his assimilation of the Noh drama of the preceding Muramachi era (1392-1603). Besides fusing arts of different historical periods, Yeats imported the visual arts of other places by working with Edmund Dulac whose art was allied to the art of the Pre-Raphaelites and inspired by an interest in the culture of the Middle East. Their collaboration was helped by compatible ideas since a connection also existed in Yeats' mind between the non-representational art of the Persians, symbolized by "a vine whose tendrils climb everywhere and display among their leaves all those strange images of bird and beast"[53], and the arabesque of leaves and imaginary birds and beasts in the art of a Pre-Raphaelite like William Morris. Elizabeth Bergman reminds us of "Dulac's connection to Pre-Raphaelitism"[54]. His use of pattern, concern for symbol, and preoccupation with evoking a dream world must have recommended itself to Yeats who had recently returned to the work of the Pre-Raphaelites with a new and deeper understanding and pleasure.

Decorative patterns of recurrent lines reappear with slight variations in the designs of the Guardian's and Young Man's masks and costumes. To Ito, the dancer from Japan who played the part of the Hawk-Woman, one of the masks Dulac made reminded him of the Egyptian art he had spent days admiring in the Louvre. Like Dulac, Yeats showed a certain indiscrimination in his synthesis of the arts of Japan with the Middle East and the Aesthetic movement.

But Yeats, for all the emotion that Pre-Rapaelite paintings stirred in him and the ancient philosophical meaning he imagined was hidden in the "winding and wandering vine" of Persian carpets, had come to seek an art that moved, not only the delighted senses or the disembodied intellect, but the whole person. No iconoclastic image decorated the faces and masks he had Dulac design, but they combined in shifting proportions a human image with symbols of a visionary world. The mask of Cuchulain, for example, its long eyes, broad nose

and cheeks, was topped by a headdress containing the painted, two-dimensional design of the hawk's eyes and a curved horn.

In addition to their strange half-human, half-supernatural aspect, the masks gained their power through their novelty and the closeness of the audience. Yeats expressed delight at the impression that masks and mask-like make-up made on the audience in the letter he wrote to Lady Gregory after the second performance of At The Hawk's Well: "masks wonderful. Nobody seemed to know who was masked and who was not on Tuesday. Those who were masked were made up to look as if they were. It was all very strange."[55]

The slight difference between masked and painted players, which depends on a difference in the degree of intensity of emotional expression, explains the alternatives the directions present for Emer and Eithne Inguba in The Only Jealousy of Emer and the Roman Soldiers in Calvary. These characters may be masked, or their faces made up to resemble masks. There is little in the plays to support one critic's claim of an essential and absolute division between mask and make-up. In The Tragic Drama of W.B. Yeats, Nathan proposes that the difference between those who wear masks and those whose faces are made to resemble masks indicates a distinction between those who are simplified "to some essential and intense quality that formulates itself in the tragic moment of choice"[56] and those who mediate between the human and the supernatural. While the Musicians' and the Guardian's painted faces may identify their intermediary role, and the mask or make-up that covers Emer's face may symbolize either her tragic or mediating function, the Roman Soldiers do not mediate between the two worlds nor do they choose their lots. In fact, they leave their fate to chance. However, a basic contrast exists between masked and umasked character. Unlike the legendary and mythical characters of the plays, the Young Man's unmasked face in The Dreaming of the Bones allows a greater element of the real world to enter the action.

By covering the vitality of the face, to which Yeats perjoratively attributed individual "character", the mask conveyed an indefinite and intense emotion impersonally. Its range of expression permitted its use in more than one play:

> The beautiful mask of Cuchulain may, I think, serve for Dervorgilla, and if I write plays and organize performances on any scale and with any

> system, I shall hope for a small number of typical masks each capable of use in several plays.[57]

Yeats imagined that the dramatist would find continuous inspiration in the masks of a skilled sculptor:

> If some great sculptor should create for my Calvary, for instance, the masks of Judas, of Lazarus and of Christ, would not this suggest other plays now, or many generations from now, and possess one cannot tell what philosophical virility.[58]

At a production of At the Hawk's Well at the Peacock Theatre in November 1930, he repeated the acclaim he had given Dulac's masks in his essay on the Noh and decided to dedicate his next volume of poetry, The Winding Stair (1933), to the artist. A similar enthusiasm at the opportunity of artistic collaboration inspired him to rewrite the The Only Jealousy of Emer for production with the masks of the sculptor Hildo Von Kropp. Von Kropp's masks enclosed the whole head and made it seem out of proportion to the body. While a more-than-human, supernatural image may have suited the Woman of the Sidhe, there were mixed reactions to the masks. To a couple of Yeats' friends they were "hideous"[59] and "needlessly grotesque".[60]

The "cold and passionate" emotion of the mask shifted the burden of expression to the voice, gesture and bodily movement. Although Yeats could compensate for the chorus' limitations by his notes, he found no substitute for his own ignorance about movement and dance but the rehearsal and performance of his plays. As Curtis Bradford's edition of the extant drafts of At the Hawk's Well shows, choreographed actions became clearly defined and expanded during rehearsals. In working out the musician's movements, a more elaborate ritualistic method of unfolding the cloth was discovered that involved adding a third member to the chorus. The rehearsal copy also shows some uncertainty about keeping the chorus' description of the Old Man as he climbs the mountainside to the well and of the stylized actions he performs of gathering dry leaves and sticks, then lighting a fire, since the singer's lines were excised, then restored. Yeats must have come to realize the effectiveness of the chorus' presentation of character and its association of character with landscape because he

subsequently repeats the practice in each dance play and achieves an inseparable interrelation of character and place through word and action.

A similar indecision about the action's connection to the poetic text can be seen in the great change the climactic dance of the draft undergoes from the prompt copy to its next and nearly final version. Although Yeats had decided in his initial prose draft that the chorus would describe the dance, its dance song first appears in the rehearsal script. A thrice-repeated refrain and another quatrain, both containing a description of the dance, were added, then cut from the rehearsal manuscript. In eliminating the mimetic element from the chorus' song and keeping an explanation of the dance's significance and its effect on the Young Man, the lyrics become more symbolic and less dependent on the movement in the dance.

In contrast, the dramatic text's relation to the pattern of movement and dance in The Dreaming of the Bones is determinate. The Young Man, Stranger and Young Girl's journey thrice around the stage copies in its own stylized idiom the chorus' three rounds of speech and song, which themselves achieve an effect of circularity through recurrent imagery, refrain, and incremental repetition. The play climaxes in a dance that is described with an attentiveness to details of bodily movements and gestures. Whether through plain description or symbolic statement, the dances in At the Hawk's Well and The Dreaming of the Bones are accompanied by the spoken word to which Yeats gave the greatest part of his thought. Fittingly, Ninette de Valois, who later danced in At the Hawk's Well, The Dreaming of the Bones and Fighting the Waves, remembers that Yeats "was searching for a style to suit his language".[61]

In Calvary, an explanation of the dance precedes rather than accompanies its occurrence. The most significant revision of the play from its first publication in Four Plays for Dancers to its following appearance in Plays and Controversies (1923) concerns the dance. Unwilling or unable to leave his meaning to performance, Yeats cut the stage directions that read "They dance round the cross, moving as if throwing dice"[62] and incorporated the lines in revised form into the dialogue. One of the Roman Soldiers is given more to say:

We quarrel for a while, but settle it
By throwing dice, and after that, being friends,
Join hand to hand and wheel about the cross.[63]

As a result, description and interpretative comment share the expressive function that had previously been left solely to the directions for the dance.

When Yeats leaves his meaning to the dance alone without comment from chorus or character, as he does in The Only Jealousy of Emer, the dance's significance, for all its stylization, is entirely clear in its context and needs neither explanation nor emphasis. In addition, Fand's dance does not occupy the strategic climactic moment of the play. The dance was not always appreciated for its own sake and it is not impossible to imagine that Yeats, like the Old Man in the Prologue to The Death of Cuchulain, may also have "wanted a dance because where there are less words there is less to spoil".[64]

Yeats' deprecation of the dance may be attributed to the problems, which are demonstrated by the drafts of his plays, of translating its symbolic meaning into movements and coordinating them with the spoken text. A frank acknowledgement of his ignorance about stylized movement and actions appears in the Preface to Four Plays for Dancers: "the dancing will give me most trouble for I know but vaguely what I want."[65] His doubts about the Lame Man's movement in the closing dance of The Cat and the Moon, which he initially intended to include with the four Noh-like plays, made him consider the play "unfinished" until it was staged. Unlike Pound who thought that the texts of some of the Noh plays he edited "seemed unfinished because the final scene depends more upon the dance than the words"[66], Yeats' drafts and final texts show that the dance was almost always accompanied by words and coordinated with them.

Zeami elucidates a parallel principle of "communication first by hearing, then by sight" in his discussion of the relation between words and action. He states:

> All the arts of role-playing are guided first by the words chanted on the stage and then by the actions that accompany them...the audience should first hear the chant, then see the appropriate gesture afterwards, so that when they see what they have already understood, the satisfying sensation of a genuine union between the two images will be created in the moment of transition from one to the other.[67]

Yeats, through his own ruling concern for the spoken word coupled with his ignorance of the dance, arrived at a conclusion similar to Zeami's about the way in which poetry and dance were combined.

Yeats' use of dance both resembles and departs from Noh convention. Although the dance that frequently occurs at the climactic moment of Yeats' plays copied a structural feature of Noh drama, it is unlikely that the style of the Guardian's dance in the production of At the Hawk's Well imitated traditional Japanese dance. The early critical opinion represented by Richard Ellmann that Michio Ito had acted in the Noh in Japan has been revised since the publication of Ito's autobiography in 1956. While Ito's Japanese origin may have lent an air of authenticity and exoticism to the dance, there was no similarity between Ito's modern manner of creative movement and Noh dance. Little is known about the style of dancing Ito learned from the Mizuki School of Japanese Dancing that authorized him to teach dance. Since he makes no mention of his early training in accounts of his collaboration with Yeats, it is unlikely that he drew on this style, whatever its resemblance to the Noh, in his dance of the Hawk. He had also studied Kabuki in Japan and on his arrival in America after performing in Yeats' play, he co-directed a Kabuki production. Before crossing the Atlantic, however, he studied dance at the Dalcroze Institute for Applied Rhythm near Dresden. The school's method encouraged the acquisition of sensitivity to rhythm that was translated into bodily movements and posture. As a result of his varied background in dance, it is probable that Ito's dance in At the Hawk's Well was neither purely western nor eastern, but something eclectic, distinctive and his own. Helen Caldwell, in her biography of Ito's life in Europe and America, describes the Hawk dance she watched Ito teach one of his students.

> The dance performed by the Hawklike Guardian was a modifed Noh dance - tense continuous movement with subtle variations on its monotony ... but its increase in tempo was more rapid than in genuine Noh and the arm movement was broad and smoothly dramatic.[68]

To give Pound and Yeats more help than he could offer them in their study of Noh, Ito introduced the poets to two artists from Japan, Nijuichi Kayano and Taminosuke Koumé.

Unlike Ito, Koumé had received training in Noh and Kyogen as a child. Koumé's skill as a Noh performer left a lasting impression on Pound who wrote years later:

> Tami Koumé had danced the Hagoromo before the Emperor, taking the Tennin part when he was, as I remember six years old. At twenty he still remembered the part and the movement of the tennin's wings, which as she returns to the upper heaven are the most beautiful movements I have ever seen on or off stage.[69]

Ito remembers that Kayano and Koumé gave Yeats and Pound "a recitation of Noh"[70]. To Yeats "the feeling between Noh and the new symbolic drama was exceedingly strong"[71]. Koumé also accompanied Ito to rehearsals of At the Hawk's Well. He writes on March 22, 1916 of "staing (sic) long time at Mr. Dulac's where we study some play".[72] Their "study" probably consisted in developing movements and gestures for the performance since Yeats mentions in a letter written four days later "going to Dulac's to go on working out gestures for Ainley"[73], who played Cuchulain.

Yeats' detailed description of Noh dance could not have simply come from Fenollosa's impressionistic notes nor from a book. It owes its detailed accuracy to the young Japanese artists' demonstrations. He writes:

> I have lately studied certain of these dances, with Japanese players, and notice that their ideal of beauty, unlike that of Greece and like that of pictures from Japan and China, makes them pause at moments of muscular tension. The interest is not in the human form but in the rhythm to which it moves, and the triumph of their art is to express the rhythm in its intensity. There are few swaying movements of arms and body such as make the beauty of our dancing. They move from the hip, keeping constantly the upper part of their body still, and seem to associate with every gesture or pose some definite thought. They cross the stage with a sliding movement, and one gets the impression not of undulation but of continuous straight lines.[74]

Noh dancing was suited to the stage but the type of dance Yeats desired was "something with a smaller gamut of expression, something more reserved, more self-controlled, as befits performers within arm's reach of their audience".[75] Ito's dance of the Hawk satisfied Yeats immensely. As Yeats remembers, his "minute intensity of movement" "so well suited our small room and private art."[76] For the adaptation of his movements to an open space, Ito

undoubtedly depended on his training at the Dalcroze Institute where there was no division between audience and performers.

In addition to small and restricted movements, Yeats wanted rhythmic actions that he compared to the movement of puppets. He describes the rhythm of the Old Man's entrance in At the Hawk's Well, made up of movement and pauses in movement and emphasized by drum beats, as puppet-like:

> He stands for a moment motionless by the side of the stage with bowed head. He lifts his head at the sound of a drum tap. He goes towards the front of the stage moving to the taps of the drum. He crouches and moves his hands as if making a fire. His movements, like those of other persons in the play suggest a marionette.[77]

In the The Only Jealousy of Emer, a fire is started with similar "artificial and formal" gestures. In addition to the accompanying rhythm of the drum, movements in The Dreaming of the Bones and Calvary are marked by alternating choral speech and song, which create a contrapuntal rhythm of their own. In his Preface to Four Plays For Dancers, Yeats prescribes that every player "move a little stiffly and gravely like a marionette".[78]

In his introductory essay on Noh drama, he asserted that he modelled the movement of his players on a Japanese theatrical convention: "I go to Asia ... for those movements of the body copied from the marionette shows of the fourteenth century".[79] Furthermore, he incorrectly traced the stylized movement of the Noh actors to the influence of the joruri, the puppet theatre of the Edo period (1603-1867):

> the (Noh) players found their movements upon those of puppets: the most famous of all Japanese dramatists composed entirely for puppets. A swift or a slow movement and a long or a short stillness, and then another movement.[80]

A similar fusion of the two Japanese theatrical forms must also have led him to place a 1919 newspaper cutting entitled "The doll-theatre of Japan" in his copy of Pound and Fenollosa's Noh or Accomplishment[81].

Joruri, or its modern designation - bunraku, is "a form of storytelling, recited to musical accompaniment, and embodied by puppets on a stage."[82] The most important of the

three component parts of a performance is the narrative text; the musician and the puppeteers take their cues from the chanter. The chanter's sole authority is the text and at the beginning of a performance, he lifts the text to his forehead to indicate respect.

The etymology of the word "joruri" gives some indication of the primacy of the literary text. It comes from the name of the heroine in the fifteenth century romance, "The Tale in Twelve Episodes of Joruri", and was used at the turn of the seventeenth century to refer to rhythmical chanting combined with puppetry. At the beginning of their association, the puppets' movements "were not intended to embody the meaning of the texts but to create pleasing visual effects complementary to the action."[83] Even as their movements gradually became more realistic and reflective of the story during the later part of the seventeenth century, the chanted text remained the most important element. At this time, the outstanding achievements of the collaboration between the tragic dramatist of puppet plays, Chikamatsu (1653-1725) and the renowned chanter, Takemoto Gidayu (1651-1714) gained wide recognition. When joruri became known as bunraku in the nineteenth century through the success of the puppeteer, Bunraken, the chanter's authority among the combined elements of the performance was firmly and traditionally established.

The uncertainty Ezra Pound shows in interpreting Fenollosa's brief and passing notes about the puppet plays, which seemed to Pound to be dated either 1184 or 1596[84], may account for Yeats' misinterpretation of the history of the puppet theatre although it cannot explain the muddle he makes of its connection to the Noh. His confusion, however, is not as deep as it initially seems since the puppets in the joruri plays did inspire the players' movements in another later form of Japanese drama, the kabuki.[85]

Before hearing about Fenollosa's comments on Japanese theatre from Pound, Yeats had already developed more than one image of puppet movements. Their movements had been copied in French drama and theatre of the late nineteenth century. When Lugne-Poe founded his Theatre de L'Oeuvre in 1893, he intended it to be a puppet theater. Lugne-Poe had achieved recognition as leading man in Maeterlinck's early dramas called "Drames pour Marionettes". In 1896, Le Theatre de L'Oeuvre produced Jarry's Ubu trilogy which had originally been written for puppets. Even though actors, not puppets, were used for

Maeterlinck's drama as well as for the first performance of Ubu Roi, both plays required the actors to take on the qualities of the marionette. Aside from the distinctive emphasis Yeats placed on rhythm, his players' movements parallel more closely the somnabulistic action, frozen facial expression and slow and stiff movements of actors in Maeterlinck's plays than the unsubtle grand guignol slapstick of Jarry's characters who, he thought, hopped in jerks around the stage like wooden frogs.

Yeats attended the production of Ubu Roi with Arthur Symons who provided him with a vital link to the French Symbolists and the modern theatre movement Jarry's play heralded. Symons' book, The Symbolist Movement in Literature(1899), dedicated to Yeats, was largely responsible for introducing the French Symbolist movement to the English. In his chapter on Maeterlinck, Symons discussed the use of puppets instead of actors. He later opened his collection of essays on the theater, Plays, Acting and Music: A Book of Theory (1903), with a discussion entitled "An Apology for Puppets". His introduction praises puppets for their fidelity to the work's inner meaning because they, unlike human actors, have no temperamental or individual character of their own but express essential human emotions that are the same all over the world. He states that "their gesture is the equivalent of rhythm in verse, and can convey, as a perfect rhythm should, not a little of the inner meaning of words".[86] The reasons Symons gives for his appreciation of puppet movement parallels Yeats' own views.

In the following years and until writing his first dance play, Yeats was in direct contact with Gordon Craig, who showed an intense interest in puppets. While the puppet was not more than a metaphor in the Symbolist vocabulary, it became a monumental figure, the ancestor of the actor and a "descendent of the Idols" in Craig's theoretical and historical writings on the theatre. Craig's principal mouthpiece was The Mask, a usually quarterly theatrical journal that ran articles under his numerous pseudonymns from 1908 to 1929. One of its first issues contained the ground-breaking and controversial essay, "The Actor and the Ueber-Marionette", in which Craig proposed that the actor's speech, facial expression, and movements - being at the mercy of his emotions - were utterly useless in the theatre because art works only by design. In the actor's stead, he presented the marionette, a figure "in

trance" whose body and voice were materials under the impersonal control of the invisible and all-powerful stage-director.

Some of the subsequent issues of The Mask contained discussions of parallels Craig discovered between his theories and the theatres of the Orient. A 1910 volume dealt at length with the Noh. The Japanese drama's emphasis on symbolical gesture and its subordination of accidental traits of "character" to "essential passion" served as model and sanction for the uebermarionette.[87] In volumes 3, 4, 6 and 7 of The Mask, published between the years 1911 to 1914, Craig began to relate his theories to aspects of the Japanese puppet theatre. The article, "Puppets in Japan" (V.6, 1913-14), which deals mainly with the impersonality of the puppeteer and the chanter, is indirectly representative of Craig's theory of acting. It discusses the skill of the puppet manipulator who shows "no hint of self" and, although unmasked, is "able to obliterate all traces of personality"[88]. The chanter's individuality is also minimized by the various roles and voices he is required to assume in quick succession. The puppet theatre's impersonal, even non-human, method which uses wooden figures that leap or hang in the air in an artificial world of their own, earned Craig's unqualified admiration.

Between 1918 and 1919, he issued yet another publication in twelve monthly numbers entitled The Marionette. The fifth edition contained the article,"Japanese Marionette Plays", that suggested a widening in Craig's appreciation of the puppet theatre. It treated the development of the drama as a literary and lyrical form in terms of its best-known chanters and playwrights and offered as an example of the singer's importance the chanter Gidayu whose name, passing into the common vocabulary, became synonymous with recitative. Its description of the lyrical nature of the puppet theatre of Japan would have attracted Yeats greatly:

> The imagination of the spectator must of course supplement the conventions of the marionette stage, but the very fact that it affords little to attract the eye lends force to both word and action. The natural consequence was that the text became more and more important and recitation the main thing.[89]

In February 1921, The Chapbook, a monthly continuation of Poetry and Drama (ed. Harold Munro), devoted an entire issue to a collection of articles by Gordon Craig. Its title, "Puppets

and Poets", was inspired by the close and productive association of lyrical drama and the doll theatre in Japan.

In their discussions of the help Craig gave Yeats, both James Flannery and Karen Dorn have credited Craig's theoretical writings and scenic designs with inspiring Yeats to create a style of stage movement that was to reemerge in Yeats' "Noh" plays.[90] Yeats learned a great deal about the practical aspects of scene design from seeing Craig's productions of the dance-dramas, Dido and Aeneas (1900) and The Masque of Love (1901).[91] But his initial infatuation with Craig's designs gave way to the characteristic bias of a poet. After attending Craig's production of The Vikings (1903), for which he wrote some unused verse, Yeats declared: "Craig's scenery is amazing but rather distracts one's thoughts from the words".[92] He formulated a statement of his position in Samhain, the Abbey's annual publication, a year later:

> I have been the advocate of the poetry as against the actor, but I am the advocate of the actor as against the scenery... The actor and the words put into his mouth are the one (sic) thing that matters.[93]

In Craig's theatrical hierarchy, in contrast, the stage-director possessed total control over the elements of action, words, music and lighting and ensured the production's unity of conception and execution. His dialogue of "The Art of the Theatre" (1905), which was based on principles that had developed out of his early productions, asserted that the stage director is an artist in his own right as are the musician, dancer, painter and dramatic poet. Craig drew a distinction between the "dramatic poet" who works with words and the dramatist who works "either in poetry or prose, but always in action: in poetic action which is dance or in prose action which is gesture".[94]

Despite this fundamental difference in their aesthetics, Yeats and Craig showed a mutual admiration for one another's art. Their most productive collaboration shortly followed the first appearance in print of Craig's related theories on masks and marionettes. From 1909 to 1912, Craig designed the scenery, costumes and mask of leather for the Fool, which no one was found to make, for the revised version of The Hour Glass. Although there was no further collaboration between Craig and Yeats in the years that followed, despite at

least one attempt on Yeats' part, a letter from Craig conjecturally dated 1913 expresses suspicion that Yeats was "operating one of the 1st London parodies of the wondrous and difficult art of the marionette."[95]

Ezra Pound was the first to note the similarity in both artists' emphasis on the related concepts of mask and marionette-movement as expressions of intense, impersonal human emotion.[96] But Yeats distinguished his idea of puppet movement by finding in it an effective means of matching movement with word and giving both rhythm. It is likely that his selective awareness of the importance of the lyrical element in joruri plays that he saw epitomized in the tragic drama of Chikamatsu, who was dubbed in the west "the Shakespeare of Japan", and its influence on the actor's movements shaped his misinterpretation of the influence of the puppet stage on Noh dance.

Yeats' concern for the spoken word above all ordered his combination of the arts in the dance plays and his perception or his application of the conventions of the Noh. The importance of the chorus' role in Calvary suggests that his preoccupation with the literary nature of his drama increased from the first to the last dance play he composed. In Calvary, the chorus is given as many lines as all the characters, they narrate imaginary events that are not presented on stage, and their lyrical comments provide the structural framework for the main action of Christ's meetings with Lazarus and Judas. Of the four dance plays, Calvary appears to be more a literary text and an exposition of Yeats' metaphysical theories than a play meant for performance. Despite repeated setbacks and disappointment in the staging of his work, Yeats did not reject the theatre in essence, but his disaffection was circumstantial and linked to his difficulty in finding fit collaborators to design and make masks and costumes, compose and perform the music, "sing" the lines and dance in his plays. Forming a "fit audience" was equally difficult.

Notes

Chapter 2

1. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 235.

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3. Wade, p. 608.

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5. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 221.

6. Wade, p. 645.

7. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 221.

8. Essays and Introductions, "Introduction" (1937), p. ix.

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13. Variorum Plays, p. 1296.

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27. Essays and Introductions, "Speaking to the Psaltery" (1902), p. 18.

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38. Variorum Plays, p. 1308.

39. Variorum Plays, p. 1010.

40. Wade, p. 769.

41. Broadsides, np.

42. Wade, p. 894.

43. Ibid, p. 919.

44. Broadsides, np.

45. Variorum Plays, p. 1304.

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77. Variorum Plays, p. 401.

78. Ibid, p. 1304.

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Chapter III: Theatre for a Few: A Compensating Dream of Unity of Culture

"A poet is justified", Yeats wrote, "not by the expression of himself but by the audience he finds or creates".[1] Yeats believed that he had found his natural audience in the small circle of friends who gathered to watch the first performance of At the Hawk's Well. The audience consisted of "forty or fifty readers of poetry", no more than a few score "personal friends" and "people of good taste"[2] whose "delight in verse"[3] gave him the freedom to have his own way. They had "learning" and "a rich memory", which enabled them to appreciate poetry that was rooted in tradition. They acquired these qualities in "leisure and contemplation", by which Yeats meant a disinterest in passing opinions or personal success.[4] These "lovers of literature" were not only members of an urban aristocracy but they also were people "with little means or they lived far from big towns."[5]

In writing the dance plays for a combination of two different classes of people, Yeats described an audience that possessed unity of culture. He symbolized unity of culture in social terms as the harmonious relation of distinct classes.[6] In spite of differences in their interest or position, his audience was drawn together on the basis of their common and inherited knowledge and affections. When he wrote these plays, however, he had come to realize that a society posssessing unity of culture was an imaginary ideal, although he had to believe in its real existence for his work. He states in a note to The Only Jealousy of Emer:

> All my life I have longed for such a country, and always found it quite impossible to write without having as much belief in its real existence as a child has in that of the wooden birds, beasts and persons of his toy Noah's ark.[7]

A sense of the remoteness Yeats felt of realizing his dream of unity emerges in the fact that he looked as far as medieval Japan for a satisfactory model of his audience. In a lecture he delivered at the University of Toronto in 1920, he revealed that he modelled the select audience of the plays on the aristocratic patrons and performers of the Noh. He described the "Theatre for the Cultivated Few" as "an intensely subjective drama" "appealing to small groups of fifty people. The new movement was an imitation of the Noe drama of Japan ... It appealed solely to the few highly cultivated."[8]

He identified a cultivated audience by its ability to understand allusion. To him, the word "Noh" that the Japanophile, Francis Brinkley, had translated as "accomplishment", referred specifically to the accomplishment of the Noh players and a "few highly-cultivated people who understand literary and mythological allusions and the ancient lyrics quoted in speech and chorus"[9]. In one chapter on the "Refinements and Pastimes of the Miltary Epoch" from his book, Japan and China: Their History, Arts and Literature, Brinkley had given an account of the courtly practice of "listening to incense". This game, he explained, "was not merely a question of smelling incense: it was a literary pursuit, designed in great part for testing the players' knowledge of classical poetry and their ability to apply the knowledge."[10] "To each incense a literary name had to be given... and by the erudition and ideality displayed in choosing names the contest was ultimately decided."[11]

To Yeats, who was unaware that Brinkley had misread the ideogram for "smelling" as "listening", the Japanese soldiers' acute sensitivity and learning, their "vivid and subtle discrimination of sense and the invention of images more powerful than sense",[12] evoked a sensibility with which he and his friends were familiar He pointed out the coincidence of cultures in his introduction to Certain Noble Plays of Japan :

> When I remember that curious game which the Japanese called, with a confusion of the senses that had seemed typical of our age, "listening to incense", I know that some would have understood the prose of Walter Pater, the paintings of Puvis de Chavannes, and the poetry of Mallarme and Verlaine.[13]

He did not need to add that such an audience would also have understood the dance plays.

Yeats was not alone in subscribing to Brinkley's high opinion of the pastimes of the military. Brinkley's translation of the word "Noh" as "accomplishment" gave Ezra Pound the title of his edition of the fourteen plays from Fenollsa's drafts. Pound was also impressed by Brinkley's account of the Japanese court's recondite entertainment of "listening to incense". In his introduction to Noh or Accomplishment, a Study of the Classical Stage of Japan (1916), he explained:

> the game was not merely to know which (incense) was which, but to give each one of them a beautiful and allusive name, to recall by the title some strange event of history or some passage of romance or legend.[14]

But Yeats and Pound's focal interest was Noh drama. The exercise of "listening to incense" intensified the refinement and learning that the Japanese nobility brought to the Noh. According to Brinkley, the plays were designed for "princes, nobles and high officials" who "did not cease to study it assiduously, and were prepared at any moment to organise performances or to take part in them."[15] "The drama (No) and its associated farce (Kyogen) were essentially a pastime of the upper classes".[16] In contrast,

> (c)ommon folks in the Military epoch had no opportunity of witnessing a histrionic performance unless a drama of the No type was put upon one of the religious stages for purposes of charity, and even then a certain measure of selection was applied to the audience.[17]

Yeats found his attribution of cultivated taste and refinement to an exclusive few confirmed in Brinkley's discussion of the pastimes of the Japanese. He shared some of the vocabulary for his description of the aristocratic and popular forms of Japanese theatre with Pound. Pound was probably paraphrasing Yeats when he observed in Noh or Accomplishment that the "art of allusion is at the root of the Noh. These plays, or eclogues, were made only for the few; for the nobles trained to catch the allusion."[18] The common theatre, on the other hand, copied the external world for the ordinary, unremembering citizen. Like Yeats who considered the popular theatre of Japan "a place of mimicry and naturalism"[19], Pound referred to "the common theater" as "the place of mimicry and direct imitation of life" and added that it "has always been looked down upon in Japan."[20]

When writers like Brinkley, Yeats and Pound described Noh performers and audiences as aristocratic, they presented the patronage that the drama had received from the Shogun ruler and his warriors until the latter half of the nineteenth century as typical. Such a perception of the Noh as a theatre for the social elite was current in Europe and Japan with few exceptions, notably Arthur Waley. Historically, however, soldiers and nobles were not the sole patrons of Noh drama. Its dance and song were once popular folk arts and its players "mere mendicants".[21] As part of religious rituals at Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, the Noh was performed for the general public. Country performances were attended by farmers and peasants and admittance to fund-raising festivals was gained, not by favor as to the dance plays, but by the purchase of a ticket. Only when the Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu extended his patronage to the art in 1374, did private performances become more frequent and favoured, until the art eventually became "enshrined and petrified as the official court ceremonial music"[22] in the Edo period (1603-1867). At this time the general public could only attend Noh plays when they were held as charity events.

It is generally accepted that Noh drama reached perfection during Yoshimitsu's reign through the dramatic genius of Zeami Motokiyo. Zeami's treatises preserve an historical record of the audience of Noh drama during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They testify that Noh performances were not solely for the entertainment of the leisured nobility, although the span of almost half a century that Zeami's writings cover shows that the Noh was being shaped by the tastes and preferences of the upper classes even as early as the fifteenth century.[23]

Zeami's first treatise on Noh drama, the Kadensho (1402), deals with the training of Noh actors. To Zeami, the actor's central aim is to obtain the respect of diverse groups of people. He wrote:

> When one thinks over the real purposes of our art, a player who can truly bring happiness to his audiences is one who can without censure bring his art to all, from the nobility to audiences in mountain temples, the countryside, the far-off provinces, and the various shrine festivals.[24]

Zeami defined and measured the actor's achievement in function of a wide audience's praise. The key concept of the flower or "hana" is used as a metaphor for the range of styles the actor must possess to match the "season", which was determined in large part by the audience.

Zeami writes that the Kadensho is based on the secret instructions of his father, Kannami, who performed mainly for the common people and priests rather than warriors or nobles. It is possible that Zeami simply transmits his father's views in sanctioning the wide appeal of the Noh. He assigned the ultimate level of artistry to Kannami who was able to perform in all styles, "from high to low". Kannami, he remembered, could take on a role of the lowest level and perform "in a popular style for the sake of the ordinary public"[25]. Because of the range of his skills, Kannami earned the praise of both aristocrat and commoner at his last performance.

Unlike the haughty indifference to the applause of "knave or dolt" that Yeats so strongly expressed in The Green Helmet and Other Poems (1910), Zeami showed a positive attitude toward an inferior audience. He emphasized that the actor's proficency depended on pleasing both the vulgar and the sophisticated:

> while it is true that an untutored audience may not be able to grasp the elements that make a performer good, and thereby learn to appreciate him, nevertheless a truly gifted player, if he really makes use of all his artistic skill, should be able to move even an undiscriminating audience.[26]

When he considered the problem of mixed audiences, Zeami offered explicit advice on obtaining the approval of the wealthy and influential nobility in practical deference to the social order. The nobility's arrival modified the starting time of a performance, their lateness influenced its rhythm, and their position in the theatre determined the blocking of an actor's position and movements. At their request, the number of plays in a programme was altered.

The nobility, however, did not only influence the practical aspects of Noh performance but they also shaped its aesthetic development. Besides wanting to secure the future of the troupe that he managed, as an artist Zeami recognized powers of observation and discrimination in the nobility which they did not initially possess and which he did not find in the commoner. In treatises written about twenty years after the Kadensho, Zeami affirms that the elegance and refinement that the nobility expected was the true end of Noh. His statement reflects the transition the drama was undergoing from a popular to a noble art form. In one instance, he compares the simple audience's preference for the Changing Flower, the novel and transient beauty of a low acting style, to a spectator of breeding who "when seeing such a performance will find

what he sees attractive but, although he will appreciate it, he will not confuse it with the true, the Changeless Flower."[27] "The nobility's eyes", he says, "are highly skilled and so have come to observe the slightest fault so that if a presentation is not as elegant as a polished gem or a bouquet of flowers, it cannot meet the expectation of a cultured group of listeners."[28]

Zeami's use of the nobility's taste as an aesthetic standard emerges most clearly in his definition of the ideal of yugen or Grace. Yugen describes a certain quality in the actor's speech and conduct that Zeami finds best represented in the character of the nobility:

> their dignified and mild appearance represent the essence of grace. Therefore, the stage appearance of Grace is best indicated by their refined and elegant carriage. If an actor examines closely the nobility's beautiful way of speaking and studies the words and habitual means of expression that such persons use, even to observing their tasteful choice of language when saying the smallest things, such can be taken to represent the Grace of speech.[29]

The upper classes of warriors and nobles influenced and best appreciated the increasing stylization and refinement of Noh performances.

There was general interest in the subject of the drama, however, which represented a typical emotion or human relation in song and dance. In his discussion of the composition of the plays in the treatise, Sando (1423), whose brevity gives some indication of the relatively slight importance of the story in Noh drama, Zeami suggested that the subject of the play be based on traditional sources. This material was widely familiar, providing the subject of other popular forms of entertainment. Blind minstrels, for example, recited stories of military exploits and folklore at popular shrines and temples, giving the aristocracy and the people a cultural coherence that would have widened Yeats' admiration of medieval Japan. The ai-kyogen interludes, which were an established part of a full Noh program in Zeami's day, provided further narrative exposition. Since a local person of the lower class appeared before the main character's second appearance "to explain the circumstances and the plot of the play"[30] in colloquial language, Donald Keene hypothesizes that the ai-kyogen interludes helped the illiterate to understand the plays.[31] But the interludes did not simply give the background of the action to the uninformed. They served the equally important purpose of "addressing the audience in such a way that they would feel that the local person has actually seen and heard the events he describes".[32] His story, which had been

related moments ago by a mysterious figure who strangely vanishes, would have added a realistic dimension to the action of the play and anticipated the figure's reappearance in its true form.

Furthermore, knowledge of traditional stories, myths and legends was not the most important element in appreciation of the drama. In keeping with his insistence that the source material be conducive to the arts of song and dance, which were the basic components of the Noh, Zeami advised that such material not be slavishly copied but its action altered to expand and intensify its significance and theatrical effect.[33] As one Noh musician has aptly observed, "The story is little more than an excuse for the song and the dance."[34]

Traditional material served more in the creation of the play's poetic texture than in its slender narrative thread. The Noh composer's liberal use of allusion, known as honka-dori, makes the script seem to some little more than "a brocade woven of brilliant bits of silk".[35] Instead of the "rich memory" and "subtle ear" that Yeats demands of his audience who "must notice slight variations upon old cadences and customary words"[36], Zeami suggested that composers choose well-known material from the classics, old poetry, and waka for the literary embellishment of their plays.[37] He states, "If the phrase chosen is too complex, the audience will not be able to comprehend it quickly enough. Such difficult phrases are more appropriately enjoyable when read."[38] In his introduction to the English translation of The No Plays of Japan (1920), Arthur Waley corroborates Zeami's position in maintaining that "almost all the Japanese poems and Chinese couplets quoted were familiar as songs".[39] "Buddhist quotations", he states, "consisted of the most well-worn Amidist tags"[40].

It was mainly through his consideration of the Noh as theatre that Zeami allowed the study of the art of poetry as the one exception to the actor's training in music and dance. He believed that the best performance of a play came from the actor who had written his own text. Such an actor was also less likely to dawdle over the words simply for their "poetic bloom".

Because the Noh has been so little considered as literature in Japan, it took Yeats' observation of the pattern of images in certain plays (noted by Donald Keene in his book Japanese Literature) for Japanese scholars to examine the imagery of Zeami's work and comment that its recurrence distinguishes his writing from the work of other Noh composers.[41] Certainly, the dispatch with which Zeami discusses the composition of the plays belies the care he took with the

poetic effects of his texts. While Zeami and Yeats share an interest in the lyrical expression of emotion, Zeami's down-to-earth concern with pleasing all types of audiences contrasts with the dismissive and occasionally hostile attitude Yeats shows toward the general public and the "aristocratic" audience he chose for the dance plays.

Yeats was not unaware that the Japanese drama was once "popular" in one sense of the word, having "come from the people". As he stated, "The Noh theatre of Japan became popular at the close of the fourteenth century, gathering into itself dances performed at Shinto shrines in honour of spirits and gods".[42] He was pleased in his reading of the Japanese plays to be reminded of Irish stories of ghosts and gods that he still heard among the rural people. However, to him, great literature was founded on the raw material of folklore that had undergone the refining influences of culture and learning. In a conversation with the Japanese poet, Yone Noguchi, he made the statement, "The folk element is, in my opinion, alone worthy of poetry", which he proceeded to explain: "by that I mean that the true literature should be a folk literature invigorated, not weakened by the cultured elements."[43] While he distinguished traces of the folk in the song and dance of the Noh, his writings do not show an awareness that the plays were performed at one time for the people. Had his mood and perspective been different, Yeats would have found an image of unity of culture in the combined audience of peasant and aristocrat in Japan around the turn of the fifteenth century. Wrenching the Noh theatre out of historical context and assigning it an aristocratic audience, however, served as a sanctioned precedent for the audience he found for his own plays. In addition, the Japanese nobility's contempt for the common stage confirmed his own perception of the most cultured people in England, who scorned the modern theatre and hated its inferior public.[44]

Yeats defined the audience of the plays as much by negation as by the model he proposed of the noble audience of Noh drama. Like the Noh players he described as despising the popular theatre, he mocked the "mob" in letter, poem, essay and preface written while composing Four Plays for Dancers. A large part of his Notes to At the Hawk's Well expresses his dissatisfaction with the "common taste". He recalls sitting behind a bored and yawning man at the performance of one of his plays at the Court Theatre and remembers the ironical chirruping with which the gallery of the Lyceum received the love speeches in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. "(T)hose who preferred

light amusement or have no ear for verse", he continues, "are the wrong people" for poetic drama. A few years later, in the note he wrote to The Only Jealousy of Emer when it was published as one of the Four Plays for Dancers, he did not refrain from insult, scorning the "stupidity of an ordinary audience"[45].

There was little new in his search for an "aristocratic" audience but a growing intensity and directness in his rejection of contemporary audiences. He had long despised the public who come to the theatre merely "to digest their dinners". In 1890, when John Todhunter, Irish dramatist and poet, wrote a pastoral drama in verse Yeats persuaded him to stage the play in the small theatre of the Bedford Park clubhouse. The production drew "everyone who loved poetry" - "artists, men of letters and students from all over London"[46] - and ran for twice the number of intended performances. Its success, in Yeats' mind, stemmed from Farr's impassioned and rhythmical delivery as well as from the audience's ear for verse. Their appreciation of poetic drama set them apart from the "regular" public whose seats remained empty when the play was later revived at a well-known theatre. Having to help hunt up people to fill the vacant places confirmed his premature fear that poetic drama would not be fit for the crowd.

At the turn of the century, he had made a renewed attempt to establish a "Theatre of Beauty" in London with the support of a group of authors, painters, musicians, critics and skilled speakers of verse like Farr. That its cultivated audience resembled the audience of the dance plays suggests the persistence of Yeats' ideas and efforts. In the essay, "Speaking to the Psaltery"(1901), which described the dramatic principles of the proposed theatre, he stated that players would go "wherever they could find a score or two of poetical-minded people in a big room". He expressed an interest in getting "a homogeneous audience somewhere, even if it is only some thirty of one's friends"[47] and in gradually building from that foundation a public appreciative of verse drama. Despite the small audience it sought, the theatre society dissolved a few years later. To one of its organizers, the society failed because "poetic drama is not yet enjoyed in England."[48]

To explain the unpopularity of his kind of art, Yeats adopted the congenial view of the poet and critic, Arthur Hallam. Although Hallam ignored the erudition that Yeats considered all great art required, he differentiated "popular" and "aesthetic" art by the demands they make on

the audience's sensibility. Aesthetic art, the work of artists whose "fine organs have trembled into emotion at colours, and sounds, and movements"[49] depended on an audience with similar temperaments. The delicacy of sense required in the pastimes of the Japanese soldier would have confirmed Hallam's analysis for Yeats. In an essay on "spiritual art", Yeats had written that art that was not an "observation of life" but the "revelation of a hidden life" could never be easy to appreciate. "Dull temperaments shrink from or are incapable of the patient sympathy and exaltation of feeling needful of its understanding."[50] Popular writing, in contrast, was mixed up with fashionable moral and political opinions and this impurity ensured its success. It attracted crowds because it required "the least degree of exertion" and allowed "a luxurious passiveness".[51]

In mixing current opinions into their art, writers showed a consideration for their audience before their craft.[52] In the article, "The Intellectual Movement in Ireland" (1899), Yeats attributed the popularity of Nationalist and Unionist writers of verse in Ireland, who copied their Victorian contemporaries, to their preoccupation with the political and economic concerns of the good citizen, "the enemies of the poet and his audience".[53] These writers

> lived at the moment when the middle class had brought to perfection its ideal of the good citizen, and of a politics and a philosophy and a literature which would help him on his way;...They took their style from Scott and Campbell and Macaulay, and that "universally popular" poetry which is the poetry of the middle class.[54]

Yeats found most typical expression of the popular art of the middle class in Longfellow. "Longfellow has his popularity ... because he tells his story so that one needs nothing but his verses to understand it." To the poet, a middle class audience were primarily those "who have unlearned the unwritten tradition which binds the unlettered ... and who have not learned the written tradition which has been established upon the unwritten."

When he began denouncing Irish imitators of Victorian authors and their public in social terms around the turn of the century, he used the term "middle class" as he used the word "aristocrat" - to describe an "attitude of mind more than an accident of birth"[55]. While the work of the poets of Young Ireland was conditioned by the ideal of a unified nation that he admired and would always admire - "they were not separated individual men; they spoke or tried to speak out of a people to a people; behind them stretched the generations"[56] - their style had been corrupted by

naive and abstract moral and political opinions. "To be preoccupied with public conduct", he asserted in a review of Sir Charles Duffy's Young Ireland, "is to be preoccupied with ideas and emotions which the average man understands and can be made to understand".[57]

In 1899 he co-founded the Irish Literary Theatre with three other writers. On the basis of his past experience, in the theatre's first playbill he predicted the unpopularity of the literary principle which would guide the production of plays:

> By the word "literary" is meant productions which - however much it (sic) may fall short of its aim - will at least be inspired by ideas uninfluenced by the purposes which under present conditions govern the production of plays on the regular stage, that of achieving an immediate commercial success.[58]

The Irish Literary Theatre gave its first performance in a small hall in the Antient Concert Rooms in Dublin. Whereas the use of an ordinary theatre meant appealing to the tastes of the "average" person to meet its expense, Yeats believed that giving their plays in the Concert Room would allow the three-year experiment to pay for itself and attract only the "exceptional" or the rare and eminent person "who reads and who loves the old Irish legends".[59] Instead of drawing-room drama, which the commercial stage produced for the urban middle class, the theatre chose to produce poetic drama "where every man can see his own image"[60] and plays about artisans and rural people for the "people" and the few members of the leisured class who were interested in a traditional Irish subject matter. The Irish Literary Theatre's opening program included The Countess Cathleen, a verse drama based on an old folk tale that Yeats believed had come from the west of Ireland. As the glossary he provided in the programme to the play's many allusions to Celtic legends shows, he was patiently trying to form the type of audience that he would find ready to his hand for the performances of the dance plays.

Except for a few simple people, the audience he sought for the literary theatre were the fellow artists and friends he would later invite to the dance plays. He wrote, "We must make a theatre for ourselves and our friends and for a few simple people who understand from sheer simplicity what we understand from scholarship and thought."[61] There was a likeness in his mind between writing for a clan of people and a coterie of friends since both groups remembered the traditional language of poetry. "There is only one kind of good poetry", he wrote,

> for the poetry of the coteries, which presupposes the written tradition, does not differ in kind from the true poetry of the people, which presupposes the unwritten tradition.[62]

The theatre, a powerful and public medium, was Yeats' key to national unity. He hoped, quoting Victor Hugo more than once that "in the theatre the mob becomes a people"[63], "to do for Ireland what Hugo's Legendes des Siècles had done for France."[64] Unlike the ordinary and popular theatres whose audiences had "no binding interest, no great passion or bias" that the dramatist could awaken, an Irish theatre would bring together a few but a single people through a national literature. The harmonious relation of artist and audience was based on their common knowledge and affections:

> One wants to write for one's people who come to the playhouse with a knowledge of one's subject and with hearts ready to be moved... I suppose it was some thought of this kind that made Keats's lines telling how Homer left great verses to a little clan seem to my imagination when I was a boy a description of the happiest fate that could come to a poet.[65]

In the nineties, he had deliberately set out to school an audience for literary drama by founding societies in Dublin and London. The societies were formed to reawaken the Irish in small rural towns and the English-speaking world to the old and new literature, folklore and history of Ireland. The Dublin branch planned the opening of small libraries that would carry a select collection of Irish books, the delivery of lectures, and the performance of plays on Irish subjects by a small travelling theatre. By these projects, he intended to replace the divisive passion of politics with the unifying influence of art and make "possible a literature that finding its subject matter all ready in men's minds, would be ... the possession of a people."[66]

At the inception of the Irish dramatic movement, there was a clear distinction in Yeats' mind between the "mob" of the popular theatre that "knows neither art nor literature"[67] and the "people" of the national theatre. While the "universally popular" art of the "mob" was predominantly the art of middle class, the audience the dramatic movement attracted was small but "drawn from all classes and all political sections".[68] He hoped that their enthusiasm meant that Irish folk life, literature, and history - formerly limited to a few educated people and the peasantry - was about to become a "part of the thought of Ireland."[69]

He was wrong. By having "no propaganda" but that of literature and refusing to cater to the special interests of the Church or to the political coteries, which he disparagingly labelled the "clubs and leagues", the theatre became the target of repeated attacks from Catholics and nationalists. Instead of engaging in intelligent discussion, Yeats found that he was wasting his time defending the plays against the stupidity of priest, politician and newspaper propagandist,[70] a minority of influential extremists that he identified as "the voices of the mob".[71] Thirteen years later, in turning a newspaper photographer out of a performance of At the Hawk's Well, he gave vent to the deep resentment toward the press and the public guided by the press that controversies in Ireland had exacerbated. When they should have encouraged an exacting criticism and appreciation of art, newspaper owners, editors and journalists had fueled public ignorance and intolerance.

When forty young men howled down Synge's masterpiece, The Playboy of the Western World, in 1907, Yeats realized that the moral and political suspicion the extremist National party newspaper had aroused against Synge since 1903 had "prepared for this hour."[72] He took great pains to point out that the notorious controversy over Synge's play was created by a fanatic minority and not the people who formed part of the theatre's regular audience. He identified his opponents with the middle class mob although they were not all "clerks and shopkeepers", some possessing riches and rank that did not represent the middle class in the conventional sense. In Ireland, Yeats observed, power had passed to "men who had risen above the traditions of the countryman, without learning those of cultivated life or even educating themselves."[73]

Yeats' fight for The Playboy was furthered by the knowledge that it was not, as Synge explained, "a play with a purpose in the modern sense of the word".[74] "A play with a purpose, or a moral", Yeats wrote in his diary, "is as much a part of social organization as a newspaper or a speech."[75] Because there was no clear argument in The Playboy, "no condescension to knave or dolt, no impoverishment of the common thought to make it serviceable and easy"[76], the Irish mob was antagonised According to Yeats, they expected "to understand the main tendency of a play, to follow its argument."[77] Through his capricious imagination and lack of interest in politics, Synge was least able to meet their expectations. In Yeats' words, Synge was the "pure artist" who "creates out of no anxiety for sympathy or obedience".[78] Although Synge was much shaken by the

riots, Yeats observed that "it made no difference" in his work. "He neither exaggerated out of defiance nor softened out of timidity. He wrote on as if nothing had happened."[79]

Yeats likely chose 1909 to mark the rise of the realist dramatists of the Abbey Theatre to coincide with Synge's death and the approaching end of the subsidy that ensured the theatre's freedom from commercialism and the inferior tastes of the public he was to mock in "At the Abbey Theatre"(1911). That year, in the privacy of his Diary, he had begun to note a deterioration of taste in the public's enthusiastic reception of "problem" plays and unexceptional work. In one note he contrasted reactions to two plays which were staged on the same evening at the Abbey: Time, a "passing phantasy" and Cross-roads, a thesis-play. The first drama showed a posturing artist and his neglected beloved meeting the old man Time at a well. In his Journal Yeats considered the play full of suggestion, "which alone is the foundation of literature." He observed that such a play would only succeed with an audience of "rich leisurely minds..., lovers of Father Time"[80], which reviewers for the local papers were not. They ignored or criticised the work, deriding the "passing phantasy" because it didn't "pass quick enough"[81]. In contrast, Crossroads received warm praise. The play dramatizes the failure of a country girl to improve the conditions of life in rural Ireland. She rejects a city suitor out of patriotism to marry a farmer who quickly becomes a brutal drunkard. Fortunately for the writer's popularity, the newspapers misunderstood the play's argument and stated that "the heroine's failure was her husband's fault"[82]. Yeats feared that the taste the press represented would "more and more make the work vulgar, for the average town mind in Ireland ... will by many channels, private and public force work of this kind upon us."[83]

In the open letter he wrote to Lady Gregory ten years later, which he entitled "A People's Theatre"(1919), he reconsidered the distinction he had previously made between the "mob" and the "people". The people, he observed, had acquired a preference for a realistic imitation of "things of the world" that the ordinary public shared. As the popular theatre found its theme in copying the lives of the wealthy for the envy and admiration of the working class, the people's theatre discovered its audience as well as its artists and audience in office clerks, shopkeepers, and slum-dwellers. When he presented Four Plays for Dancers in the closing sections of "The People's Theatre" as an attempt to create "an unpopular theatre and an audience like a secret society where

admission is by favour and never to many",[84] his rejection of the mob was compounded by his growing discouragement with the people. He realized that "the dream of my early manhood that a modern nation can return to unity of culture is false; though it may be we can achieve it for some small circle of men and women."[85] One detects a new weariness and frustration in his thoughts of Ireland. In closing his Noh essay he expresses the hope that "Perhaps some day a play in the form I am adapting for European purposes may excite once more, whether in Gaelic or English, under the slope of Slieve-na-mon or Croagh Patrick, ancient memories" but adds, "Yet I know that I only amuse myself with a fancy".[86]

If "Ireland was not forgotten"[87], as Richard Ellmann remarks in referring to the closing of Yeats' letter to Lady Gregory, it was not the nation he consciously set out to shape in the nineties. Henceforth, he would write not for a clan but for an imaginary individual. In "The Fisherman", written a year before he composed his first dance play, he rehearses the results of his struggle to "write for my own race":

> The living men that I hate
> The dead man that I loved
> The craven man in his seat
> The insolent unreproved
> And no knave brought to book
> Who has won a drunken cheer,
> The witty man and his joke
> Aimed at the commonest ear,
> The clever man who cries the catch-cries of the clown[88]

The "reality" of the audience he won is seen through the filter of the one he set out to make. Instead of creating a theatre "for ourselves and our friends", he lost the man he loved for a public made of his enemies. Witty and clever men renounced their privileges of "scholarship and thought" to humour and cajole the crowd. Having not found "a few simple people", he creates a "wise and simple" person who is but an hypothesis. Besides the disparity between his past hopes and the actual present, there is an ironic inversion of ordinary values so that he sees insolence unreproved, folly praised and wisdom and great Art overcome. Before giving a radio broadcast reading of the poem in 1931, he explained:

> I do not write for these people who attack everything I value, nor for those who are lukewarm friends, I am writing for a man I've never seen. I built up in my mind a picture of a man who lived in the country where I lived, who fished in the mountain streams where I had fished. I said to myself I do not know whether he has been born yet, but born or unborn it is for him I write.[89]

Irish productions of the dance plays indicate that poet and people had reached divergent and irreversible attitudes toward art.

After the Irish Civil War, perceiving that politicians were free to turn their thoughts to art and artists ready to meet politicians, Yeats judged that the moment had come to reunite aesthetic and practical life, without which unity of culture was impossible. In March 1924, At the Hawk's Well was performed for the first time in Dublin, where he had taken up residence through "indolence and hatred of travel". It was not staged for the public but produced in the privacy of the poet's house. Among its audience were members of the Dublin Drama League who were committed to the production of "unpopular" plays of contemporary world drama.[90] Sean O'Casey, whose play about the slums of Dublin was drawing crowds to the Abbey Theatre, gave his impressions of the performance in his autobiographical Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well. He sat among an audience "dressed in their evening best, the men immaculate in shiny sober black, the women gay and glittering in silk sonorous, and brilliant brocade"[91], feeling uncomfortably like a "tenement dweller in their midst"[92]. O'Casey admits that he did not understand the play. His remarks show, as Liam Miller has noted, that Yeats' idea of a poetic theatre was too unlike the Abbey's performances to be understood and appreciated:

> No, the people's theatre can never be successfully turned into a poetical conventicle. A play poetical to be worthy of the theatre must be able to withstand the terror of Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay, as a blue sky, or an apple tree in bloom, withstands any ugliness around or beneath them.[93]

A conviction that neither the "mob" nor the "people" of modern Ireland were fit audiences of the dance plays led Yeats to revise The Only Jealousy of Emer when it was produced for the general public at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in August, 1929. He simplified the story by retelling it in plain, matter-of-fact prose and by substituting its symbolic language with a dance. His explanation for leaving the opening and closing lyrics unchanged is given with tongue-in-cheek.

"Sung to modern music in the modern way", he says, "they suggest strange patterns to the ear without obtruding their difficult, irrelevant words".[94] He considered Fighting the Waves in "itself nothing, a mere occasion for sculptor and dancer, for the exciting dramatic music of George Antheil."[95] A letter to Olivia Shakespeare, friend and fellow-poet, shows that the play's enthusiastic reception in Dublin left him cold:

> My Fighting the Waves has been my greatest success on the stage since Kathleen Ni Houlihan, and its production was a great event here, the politicians and the governor general and the American minister present...I regret, as I often do when we are more than usually spirited at the Abbey that you could not be here. One writes and works for one's friends, and those who read, or at any rate those who listen, are people about whom one cares nothing - that seems the general rule at any rate.[96]

In alluding to "those who listen", Yeats referred to the Irish who were characterized, not only in his writing but in the prose of Irish writers of the nineteenth century, as a listening and not a reading people.

To escape controversy, he deliberately withheld The Dreaming of the Bones from production in 1917 because he feared that the play, which was connected to the Rising of 1916 , was "too powerful politically." The play is, on one level, an indictment of the cultural deprivation of modern Ireland. The guilty love of Dermot and Dervorgilla that began the cultural despoilment from which Yeats argues Ireland has not recovered is figured in the waste landscape of unroofed and ungabled great houses. The Dreaming of the Bones received a single performance on a Sunday night in December 1931.[97] It was produced at the small Peacock Theatre, which Yeats had opened "to make experiments for which the popular audience of the larger theatre is not ready."[98]

Yeats continued to denounce contemporary audiences in favor of an aristocracy of cultured people in the prologue of his last play. The Death of Cuchulain is related to At the Hawk's Well and The Only Jealousy of Emer in action, character and imagery, and to Calvary in theme, while its combination of music, dance, and song copies with some variation the symbolic stagecraft of the dance plays. Yeats puts what he expects and despairs of finding in his audience into the mouth of the Old Man who delivers the prologue of the play:

> I wanted an audience of fifty or a hundred, and if there are more, I beg them not to shuffle their feet or talk when the actors are speaking. I am sure that as I am

> producing a play for people I like, it is not probable, in this vile age, that they will be more than those who listened to the first performance of Milton's Comus. On the present occasion they must know the old epics and Mr. Yeats' plays about them; such people, however poor, have libraries of their own. If there are more than a hundred I won't be able to escape people who are educating themselves out of Book Societies and the like, sciolists all, pickpockets and opinionated bitches.[29]

Yeats pursued the ideal of unity of culture in hope and frustration throughout his career. The difference between his ideal and reality shaped his attitude toward the types of audience he encountered in theatres in England and Ireland and influenced his interpretation of the public of the Noh of Japan. When he wrote the dance plays for an exclusive audience, he had come to realize that cultural coherence in the modern world was more a private than a public and national goal.

Notes

Chapter 3

1. Essays and Introductions, "Introduction", p. x.

2. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 221-222.

3. W.B. Yeats, Prefaces and Introductions. ed. William H. O'Donnell, (New York: Macmillan, 1989), p. 128.

4. Memoirs, p. 178.

5. Explorations, "A People's Theatre", p. 255.

6.. Autobiography, p. 129.

7. Variorum Plays, p. 566.

8. "Providing plays for the People: W. B. Yeats, Irish Poet Speaks of Non-Professional Stage", Mail and Empire,(Toronto) 3 Feb. 1920, p. 7.

9. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Nobie Plays of Japan", p. 229.

10. Captain F. Brinkley, Japan: Its History Arts and Literature, (Boston: J.B. Millet Company: 1901), vol 3: p. 1-2.

11. Ibid, p. 3-4.

12. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 236.

13. Ibid, p. 236.

14. Pound and Fenollosa, p. 4.

15. Brinkley, p. 29.

16. Ibid, p. 50.

17. Ibid, p. 29.

18. Pound and Fenollosa, p. 4.

19. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 229.

20. Pound and Fenollosa, p. 9.

21. Arthur Waley, The Noh Plays of Japan, (New York: Grove Press, 1957), p. 19.

22. Donald Keene (ed.), Twenty Plays of the Noh Theater, (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 8.

23. Waley, p. 41.

24. Rimer and Yamazaki, p. 41.

25. Ibid, p. 179.

26. Ibid, p. 40.

27. Ibid, p. 131.

28. Ibid, p. 72.

29. Ibid, p. 93.

30. Ibid, p. 170.

31. Keene, No and Bunraku, p. 49.

32. Kunio Komparu, The Noh Theater: Principles and Perspectives, (New York: Weatherhill, 1983), p. 55.

33. Rimer and Yamazaki, p. 217.

34. Komparu, p. 150.

35. Keene, No and Bunraku, p. 46.

36. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 227.

37. Rimer and Yamazaki, p. 43 and p. 48.

38. Ibid, p. 221.

39. Waley, p. 40.

40. Ibid, p. 41.

41. Keene, Twenty Plays of the No Theater, pp. 5,6, and 16.

42. Essays and Introductions, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan". p. 228.

43. Yone Noguchi, "A Japanese Poet on W.B. Yeats", The Bookman, 43 (June 1916), p. 431.

44. Wade, p. 311.

45. Variorum Plays, p. 566.

46. Autobiography, p. 80.

47. Quoted in Ronald Schuchard, "W.B. Yeats and the London Theatre Societies 1901-1904", Review of English Studies, Vol. 29, No. 116 (1978), p. 431.

48. Ibid, p. 445.

49. Arthur Hallam, Poems, together with his essay on the lyrical poems of Alfred Tennyson, "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson", (London: E. Mathews and J. Lane, 1893), p. 93-4.

50. Frayne and Johnson, "John Eglinton and Spiritual Art" (1898), p. 130.

51. John P. Frayne (ed.), Uncollected Prose, vol. 1, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1970), "A Bundle of Poets" (1893), p. 277.

52. Ibid, "The Silenced Sister" (1893), p. 307.

53. Memoirs, p. 140.

54. Frayne and Johnson, "The Literary Movement in Ireland" (1899), p. 185.

55. Ibid, "Irish Language and Irish Literature" (1900), p. 241.

56. Essays and Introductions, "A General Introduction for my Work" (1937), p. 510.

57. Frayne and Johnson, "Young Ireland" (1897), p. 34.

58. Playbill for Beltaine Number one, quoted in Flannery, p. 135.

59. Frayne and Johnson, "Irish Literary Theatre" (1899), p. 154.

60. Explorations, "Samhain: 1902), p. 96.

61. Essays and Introductions, "The Theatre" (1899), p. 166.

62. Essays and Introductions, "What is Popular Poetry" (1901), p. 10.

63. Frayne and Johnson, "The Irish Literary Theatre"(1899), p.141; "The Acting at St. Teresa's Hall" (1902), p. 286.

64. Richard Ellmann, The Identity of Yeats, (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), p. 17.

65. Wade, p. 406.

66. Essays and Introductions, "J.M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time" (1910), p. 318.

67. Wade, p. 356.

68. Frayne and Johnson, "The Literary Movement in Ireland" (1899), p. 184.

69. Ibid.

70. Frayne and Johnson, "The Irish National Theatre and Three sorts of Ignorance" (1903), p. 307.

71. Explorations, "Samhain: 1903", p. 112.

72. Essays and Introductions, "Synge and the Ireland of his Time", p. 307.

73. Essays and Introductions, "Poetry and Tradition" (1907), p. 259.

74. David H. Greene and Edward M. Stephens, J. M. Synge (New York: New York University Press, 1989), p. 262.

75. Memoirs, p. 168.

76. Essays and Introductions, "Synge and the Ireland of his Time", p. 341.

77. Robert Hogan and James Kilroy, The Abbey Theatre: The Years of Synge, (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1978), p. 295.

78. Essays and Introductions, "J. M. Synge and the Ireland of his Time", p. 323.

79. Ibid, p. 329.

80. Memoirs, p. 210.

81. Robert Hogan and James Kilroy (ed), The Abbey Theatre: The Years of Synge, (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1978), p. 62.

82. Memoirs, p. 168.

83. Ibid.

84. Explorations, "A People's Theatre", p. 254.

85. Autobiography, p. 181.

86. Essays and Introductions, " Certain Noble Plays of Japan", p. 236.

87. Ellmann, The Man and the Masks, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), p. 218.

88. W.B. Yeats, The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats, (London: Picador, 1990), p. 166.

89. Frayne and Johnson, "The Growth of a Poet" (1931), p. 498.

90. Robert Hogan and Richard Burnham, The Art of the Amateur: 1916-1920, (Portlaoise: Dolmen Press, 1984), p. 155.

91. Sean O'Casey, autobiographies II, (London, Macmillan, 1963), p. 232-33.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Essays and Introductions, "Fighting the Waves" (1935), p. 370.

95. Ibid, p. 371.

96. Wade, p. 767-8.

97. Hugh Hunt, The Abbey 1904-1978 (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1979), p. 141.

98. Bridges, p. 110.

99. Variorum Plays, p. 1051.

Conclusion

When Yeats adapted his ideas of Noh drama in Four Plays for Dancers, he was formulating a literary doctrine of unity of culture. Since the general movement in life and art towards fragmentation and abstraction had nearly reached its climax, it seemed to him the moment for literature to herald the opposite movement, which would restore a vital relationship among individuals and distinct worlds. In reading Noh or Accomplishment, he discovered a "rhythm of metaphor" that served to structure a play like a poem and lyrically evoke the theme. He made the method his own by fusing his use of a pattern of imagery with his intellectual and national interests, which were constant and connected elements in his work. The attempt to create a more complex model of his nation gave the literary imagery of the dance plays its tragic significance and distinguished his art most clearly from its Japanese model.

In the production of the plays, the visual arts symbolically recompose the unifying image of the text in their own idiom whenever possible. The stylized designs for cloth and backdrop, mask or make-up and costume, as well as movement and dance reflect or are coordinated with the dominant imagery of the literary text. Like the arts of the painter, sculptor and dancer, the art of the musician served the art of the poet. Yeats' hierarchical ordering of the arts in the staging of the plays, his distorted interpretations of the convention of speech in the origin and development of theatre in the west, and his adaptation of the theatrical conventions of Noh drama demonstrate his biased perception of the supreme importance of the spoken word as the means of expressing common values.

The audience for whom the dance plays were written shared a love of vivid and allusive speech. Helped by contemporary opinion, represented by the writer Francis Brinkley, Yeats extended this quality to the aristocratic patrons of the Noh. They provided

a sanctioned precedent for the audience of the dance plays and justified his defiance of parvenus, journalists, and members of the middle class, while revealing his skewed perception of the historical development of Japanese theatre. Given his literary and poetic priorities, it is not surprising to find that Yeats coloured with his own values the social terms he used to distinguish the audience he found from the one he rejected. His increasing anger at inferior taste, to which he gave vent in prefaces to two of the dance plays, reveals the disappointment and defeat of similar and repeated attempts to evoke a spirit of community through art, in Ireland in particular, without surrendering the prerogatives of his craft to the public.

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