

ABSTRACT

Subversive Pseudo-Dialogic:
W.B. Yeats's Use of the Dialogic to Present the Monologic

Molly V. Parris

Mentor: Richard R. Russell, Ph.D.

The application of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic provides unique insight into the poetry and plays of W.B. Yeats. Though this early twentieth century Irish writer favored poetry over the novel form on which Bakhtin based his studies, his compositions can be better understood and his intentions further elucidated in light of Bakhtin's explanations of dialogic and monologic writing. Yeats often employs the form of dialogue, but the external dialogic form conceals a monologic discourse that states a truth on which the author has already decided. The form nevertheless serves to strengthen the poet and playwright's words by endowing them with the rhetorical strength of a conclusive truth resulting from a true dialogic pursuit.

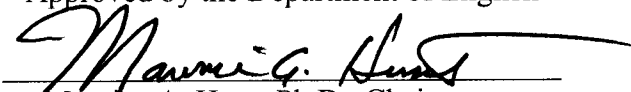
Subversive Pseudo-Dialogic:
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by

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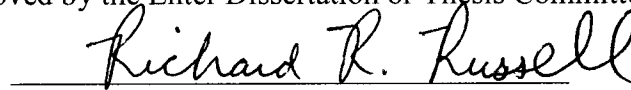
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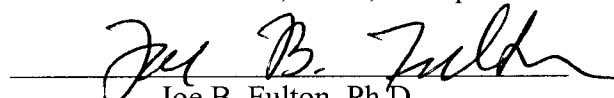
Approved by the Department of English



Maurice A. Hunt, Ph.D., Chairperson

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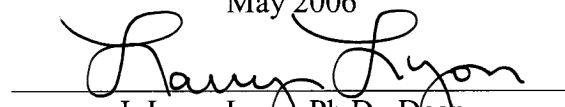
Approved by the Enter Dissertation or Thesis Committee


Richard R. Russell, Ph.D., Chairperson


Joe B. Fulton, Ph.D.


Marion D. Castleberry, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
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J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

W.B. Yeats (1865 – 1939) is an eminent figure in modern poetry not only in his native Ireland, but also around the world. Though Yeats composed prose and drama throughout his lifetime, his reputation was established based on the superlative quality of his poetic endeavors. His literary career continued to climb following his winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923, two years after the publication of *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, which further explored the esoteric beliefs Yeats had been exploring as he wrote the first edition of *A Vision* (1925).

Yeats made use of the indirect discourse of poetry and drama to articulate both mystical and political opinions; however, these ideas are typically cast in a dialogue format that distances them from the singular authority of his own voice. He perpetuates this subtle and somewhat deceptive discourse in part by regularly establishing a binary of characters who engage in a dialogue, whether overt or implied, about the issue on which he wishes to set forth a single opinion without claiming personal control of the victorious constituent in the purported dialectic. This subversive formula, modified over the course of his career, allows him to set forth personal opinions in a manner that engages readers, leading

them to believe that the triumphant side gained its position because of rhetorical and ideological superiority, not authorial control. The author may have personally engaged in dialogue about the issue, but the poem presents not a current dialectic but one that the author has already reconciled for himself.

The pseudo-dialogic format that was perfected in the genre of poetry is given new shape in *Purgatory* (1939), Yeats's final play. In both the dialogue poems and this play, Yeats declares his views through the distancing power of external speakers. These views appear to result from dialectic, yet they instead benefit from the full subversive thrust of the author's composition and formatting strategies. The dialogue form, whether in poem or play, is conducive to the declaration of ideals as well as the public purgation of controversial beliefs such as the eugenicist views embraced by the Old Man in *Purgatory* (1938).

Yeats was active in mystic spiritualism and politics throughout his lifetime, taking on a position of leadership as he acquired the authority of age and literary fame. The poet, who was a follower of Madame Blavatsky's hermeticism in the 1890s, established himself as a figure of not only authority but also vision in the 1920s and 1930s. Along with his wife, Georgie Hyde-Lees (1892 – 1968), Yeats voiced the messages of a higher realm. These messages were the result of a unique marital relationship, in which Georgie Yeats maintained the closeness of the connection to her husband by setting herself forth as an

automatic writer, providing her waiting husband with inspiration and wisdom from a multitude of spirits (Brown 252-8). The revelations from these sessions led to the driving ideology of Yeats's final years: the mystical system outlined in his *A Vision*. The cyclical depiction of personality and history in terms of lunar movements and opposing positions, first explicated in "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" (*The Wild Swans at Coole*, 1919), sustains an important role in Yeats's personal life and poetic compositions until his death in 1939, undergoing several significant revisions by the poet over the course of this period. Throughout this time Yeats used his poetry as a vehicle for articulating these concepts to a wider audience.

Yeats also infused in his poetry and plays many of his beliefs and concerns regarding Irish politics. During his lifetime, Ireland progressed from being a British colony, to an independent republic embroiled in controversy, to, at last, an autonomous nation. In early plays such as *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), Yeats calls for action political action from his fellow citizens, but in his later poetry such as "Man and the Echo" (*Last Poems*, 1938 – 1939), he questions the positive role of his own power, asking if "that play of mine [sent] out / Certain men the English shot?" (CP, 345-6) His writings are used both to define important political and spiritual ideals for his audience and to weigh the worth of his own role in these larger processes in front of the world.

Much like Yeats's evolution in the realm of mysticism, beginning as a follower and developing into a self-defined leader, as a political figure he progressed from dilettante, appearing to be interested in politics only because of the fervent beliefs of the admired Maude Gonne (1865 – 1953), to senator of the Irish Free State beginning in 1922, nominated by a leader who wished to sustain involvement by Anglo-Irish Protestants (Brown 287). Biographer Terence Brown explains Yeats's personal interpretation of this role:

Yeats nevertheless saw his appointment as a way of getting a few of his pet projects on the public agenda. He had been appointed as one of three senators qualified to advise on education, literature, and the arts. [...] There were few others among the membership who shared his concern for the cultural life of the country. (287)

The senatorial position at last gave Yeats a concrete position in the history of the nation, a position which he had otherwise sought to establish through literary enterprises with some success, but without promise of permanence. The ideals which he had often declared in poetry or plays were at last exercised and acted upon in a public forum. With this step, Yeats moved beyond the introspection of writing to the outward interaction of true involvement in public life. The pseudo-dialogic discourse found in *Purgatory* and in his dialogue poems was articulated and claimed by the author, though his more extreme views, such as his flirtation with fascism, remained in the lyrics in which he could sustain the distance of ostensible dialogue.

In this essay, Yeats's dialogue poetry and *Purgatory* are studied through the lens of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's theories. His writings, which include *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and the essay collection *The Dialogic Imagination*, focus on the central conception that the highest form of literature engages multiple voices in a genuine dialogic relationship. Bakhtin (1895 – 1975) valorizes fellow Russian Fyodor Dostoevsky's compositions because they represent to him the best of this respected form of discourse. For Bakhtin, novels epitomize the dialogism that is possible within this genre, and novels as a whole surpass poetry in essential quality because Bakhtin perceives poetry as intrinsically single-voiced and thus a lesser contribution to the larger realm of discourse. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin describes the limited scope of poetic discourse:

Poetic speech in the narrow sense requires a uniformity of all discourses, their reduction to a common denominator, although that denominator can either be discourse of the first type [direct, unmediated discourse directed exclusively toward its referential object], or can belong to certain weakened varieties of the other types [objectified or outwardly oriented discourse]. (200)

He finds in poetry an inevitable "reduction to a common denominator" that limits its scope due in part to the absence of explicit listener and response roles within the text. Bakhtin notes that poetry can attain an enervated form of stronger discourse, but he associates it most with discourse that is "an expression of the speaker's ultimate semantic authority" (199). The assertion of control

Bakhtin finds in poetry is absent in a truly dialogic novel because multiple voices are granted the opportunity to engage in a dialectic pursuit of truth.

Certain poetry, however, supersedes the automatic categorization assigned based on Bakhtin's genre-based delineation of dialogistic quality. He acknowledges the potential for some degree of dialogism in prosaic poetry: "Even in poetic speech works are possible that do not reduce their entire verbal material to a single common denominator [...]. [Not] until the twentieth century is there a drastic 'prosification' of the lyric" (200). The essential qualities which make literature great, however, are those qualities inherent to the novel form. Bakhtin contends that the unification of multiplicitous voices and expressions can only truly be achieved within the framework of the novel. The "plane of investigative discourse" on which this fusion takes place allows true dialogism to be engaged. The dialogistic quality that Bakhtin most values he defines in the parameters of the prose, primarily the novel: "The possibility of employing on the plane of a single work discourses of various types, with all their expressive capacities intact, without reducing them to a common denominator—this is one of the most fundamental characteristic features of prose" (200).

This integration of diverse discourses is listed as a characteristic of the prose form, yet the theories which Bakhtin establishes to explicate his conception of dialogism may be extended beyond the bounds of prose. His writings do

concentrate on the valuation of discourse within the novel; however, they provide keen insight for poetic interpretation within certain contexts. Though Bakhtin personally applied his conception of dialogic primarily to the novel¹, his readers have begun to stretch these limits so that the elucidatory benefits of his scholarship might also benefit the study of poetry. The connotative power of poetry gives it a richness well-suited to the dialogism Bakhtin denies to the genre. This application of Bakhtinian theory expands his critical scope as well as the understanding of the poetry submitted to his lens.

At least two critics have initiated the application of Bakhtin's theory to Yeats and his poetry: Helen Carr compares monologism to colonial thinking in her essay "Imagism and Empire," and Michael Burke expounds on the dialogic nature of Yeats's lyric poems, locating the dialogic in the shifting perspectives of poems such as "Leda and the Swan" (*The Tower*, 1928) in "Distant Voices: The Dynamism of Yeats' Dialogic Verse." Burke argues that though Bakhtin first and foremost wrote about prose, a dialogic nature can be found within poetry's stanzas. The present essay seeks to extend the customary confines of traditional Bakhtin studies to include the dialogism, both surface and internal, of dialogue poems. Though Bakhtin's theories do not refer exclusively to the dialogue of specific characterized voices, his ideas regarding this interchange of voices illuminate the position of authority and the subversion of its monopoly within

Yeats's *Purgatory* and his dialogue poems. Ironically, the genre that Bakhtin idealized—the novel—is the only literary form on which Yeats did not leave his distinct mark.

This study is applied specifically to Yeats because of the unique pattern of dialogue revealed over the course of his literary career. The poetic and dramatic discourse in which Yeats engages his subversive dialogue is comprised almost entirely of mystical and political exposition, reflecting on the interests which held his attention for so many years. In his poetry and plays, Yeats creates for himself a forum. In this forum, he establishes a simulacrum of dialogic which is both effective and false. Though Bakhtin would classify his literature as monologic not only because it is poetry, but also because it ultimately sets forth single ideals garbed in a semblance of dialogue, his conception of dialogic nevertheless illuminates the subversive pseudo-dialogic in some of the most important poems of Yeats's illustrious career.

NOTES

¹Bakhtin discusses poetry twice, in both instances addressing the same poem, Aleksandr Pushkin's "Parting" (1830). In *Toward a Philosophy of the Art* (1919 – 1921) and *Art and Answerability* (1919 – 1924), he explicates the "architectonic disposition" (*Toward* 65) of Pushkin's poem, noting the varied tonality and perspectives located in "Parting." Bakhtin does not explicitly apply his theories of monologism and dialogism; however, his elucidation of the interacting contexts within the poem and of the author's role coincides philosophically with his theory of the dialogic.

CHAPTER TWO

The Urge Toward Dialogue in Yeats's Early Dramatic Poetry

The interaction between the roles of poet and dramatist was at the center of both W.B. Yeats's writing and his personality. The dialectic between these opposing impulses motivated him to explore both genres, often, as James Flannery has noted¹, finding his best voice in the unity of their disparate influences. This duality of personality also brought about an oeuvre of dramatic poetry and lyric plays. Though Yeats is largely esteemed because of his poetic achievements, his experimentation with the boundary between poetry and drama is fundamental to his success in both genres. Flannery suggests that Yeats's dramatic greatness lies in the personal unification of these two struggling literary drives, yet certainly his dominant poetic endeavors are equally influenced by both his dramatic curiosity and the dialectic between the two.

The poetic-dramatic dialectic is analogous to Yeats's approach to personality and philosophy. The effort to resolve poetic and dramatic genres, introspection and extroversion, private and public man, was ultimately given structure in his theory of the self and the mask. Oscar Wilde introduced Yeats to the idea of a public persona that eventually evolved into Yeats's more complex and personal philosophy (Flannery 11-2). According to the theory of the mask,

the self strives to attain its opposite, and the confrontation between opposed ideas gives rise to unity of being. Flannery classifies Yeats's relationships with self, society, history, and theater as dialectical (15-6), stating that "reality, for Yeats, was to be found neither in the buried unconscious self which directed a man's life nor in its mask, the antithetical outward self, but in the product born of their dialectical struggle" (13-4). The endeavor to reconcile polarized beliefs, personalities, and societies is thus integral to Yeats's understanding of the world.

What Flannery describes as the dialectical recalls Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic classification of language and thought. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin designates both literary and personal voices as either the dialogic or the monologic. He argues, "The dialogical means of seeking the truth is counterposed to *official monologism*, which pretends to *possess a ready-made truth*" (110; all italics are Bakhtin's). Put more simply, dialogism pursues truth, while monologism states truth. Bakhtin further states that truth is "born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (110). Yeats internalized this dialogism, and his personal philosophical approach is far from monologic.

The colonial mindset of Ireland which surrounded Yeats during his lifetime, however, exemplifies the nature of monologism according to Helen Carr; it is "sufficient to itself, aware of other utterances, if at all, only as 'objects'

exterior to its internal commitments and concerns" (98). Despite Yeats's location in the midst of this *fin de siècle* colonial monologism, his individual mindset was incredibly assimilative. The poet's rejection of monologic thought parallels his refusal to accept the colonized state of his homeland. Instead, diverse concepts were encountered, investigated, and then integrated into his personal philosophy through a dialogic means of relating to and understanding the world. Both exterior and interior truths are sought out by means of dialectical engagement.

The convergence of Yeats's artistic dialectic and personal dialogic is revealed in much of his writing; however, the intense dialogic of his personal philosophy often is not fully engaged in poems and plays that otherwise feign dialogism. Yeats employs the dialogue structure in many of his poems², but conversational dialogue, as Bakhtin contends, does not necessitate ideological dialogism. Bakhtin maintains that writers at times use a dialogue frame to set forth ideas. He sees in Plato a final shift into single-voiced dialogue despite the surface multi-voiced dialogue of his writings:

We emphasize that Socratic notions of the dialogic nature of truth lay at the folk-carnivalistic base of the genre of Socratic dialogue, determining its *form*, but they did not by any means always find expression in the actual content of the individual dialogues. The content often assumed a monologic character that contradicted the form-shaping idea of the genre. (*Problems* 110)

Yeats's dialogue poems, though perhaps still rooted in his intense personal dialectic, are generally monologic in their imbalanced distribution of both speech

and power. I propose that several of Yeats's poems, "The Cloak, the Boat, and the Shoes" (1889), "Anashuya and Vijaya" (1889), "The Wanderings of Oisín" (1889), "Fergus and the Druid" (1893), "Adam's Curse" (1904), "Ego Dominus Tuus" (1919), "The Phases of the Moon" (1919), "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" (1921), "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" (1933), "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop" (1933), "Man and the Echo" (1938-39)ⁱ, and at least one play, *Purgatory* (1938), rely on a pseudo-dialogic form that gains rhetorical strength by rehearsing a dialogic pursuit of truth while in fact monologically stating a truth on which the author has already decided.

Yeats's vacillation between dialogic thinking and monologic expression distances his compositions from the expected qualities of their ostensible categorizations. By using multiple speakers, he introduces external perspectives in addition to the occasional entrance of a narrative speaker into poetry, which is typically purely lyrical and offers only one vision of the subject. He thus is able to contextualize emotions and increase dramatic effect. In "Orality, Literacy, and Their Discontents," Denis Donoghue explains the shifting manner in which Yeats approaches this melding of forms:

We know that in his poems and plays he liked to come upon a conflict and maintain it, if only for the energy produced by the conflicting forces. Like Bakhtin in his work on dialogism, Yeats longed to set voices astir, expressing different values, even in the world of print; though in the end, it may be, one voice emerges more authoritatively than any other. (156)

This definition illuminates one of the essential qualities of Yeats's pseudo-dialogic work: the imbalanced power between the two speakers. Though the poet utilizes diverse frameworks in his dialogue poems, most if not all of them either conclude with or maintain throughout an unevenly dominated conversational style that would have to be classified as a facilitated monologue. Whether the secondary voice only provides echoes or actually attempts to speak and is eventually subjugated by rhetorical force, the dialogue poem does not fully engage both voices in true dialectic. In Yeats's poems it is as Bakhtin found in Pushkin's "Parting": "The author's context is predominant" (*Toward* 69). When "one voice emerges more authoritatively than any other," the primary truth Yeats wishes to proclaim is declared, and the validity of the preceding dialogue is undermined, revealed in an already decided upon truth. For the reader, the poem is only pseudo-dialogic in retrospect because the surface exchange effectively engages the read. The success of Yeats's pseudo-dialogic lies in this ability to convince the reader that a true dialogue of ideas has taken place.

Yeats experimented with dialogue based poetry in his first collection, *Crossways*, and in the dramatic lyric "The Wanderings of Oisín," both published in 1889. At this early stage in his career the speech is more dramatic than that found in many of the later poems, yet these lyrics lay the groundwork for the

imbalanced dramatic pattern to which Yeats consistently returns in his writing. *Crossways* includes two dramatic poems: “The Cloak, the Boat, and the Shoes” and “Anashuya and Vijaya.” The first of these two anticipates the question and answer dialogue of “Fergus and the Druid” (*The Rose*, 1893), though the secondary speaker does move forward to new questions in this short poem, which evokes a rhyme for children and follows the folk style found in many of Yeats’s earliest poems: “‘What do you make so fair and bright?’ / [...] ‘What do you build with sails for flight?’ / [...] ‘What do you weave with wool so white?’” (CP 9-10, ll. 1-11)

The verse responses to these questions expound on the theme of sorrow. In each stanza the primary speaker is declaring that he will fashion a new craft for sorrow: the cloak, boat, and shoes of the title. The purposes of these gifts signify the purpose of the poem: the unnamed speaker is disguising, giving flight, giving secrecy to sorrow. His description of the first two gifts gives them purposes visible and connected to the world: the cloak will be “lovely to see in all men’s sight” (3), and the boat will sail “swift on the seas all day and night” (8). However, the third gift reflects sorrow’s hidden presence, contrasting the vivid presence of its cloak: “Soundless shall be the footfall light / In all men’s ears of Sorrow, / Sudden and light” (ll. 13-5). Each of these offerings to sorrow represent

a desire to appease and expel this dark emotion. The speaker facilitates sorrow's access to the rest of the world so that it might at last leave him behind.

The melancholy tone is jettisoned in Yeats's second dramatic poem, "Anashuya and Vijaya" (10-3), which according to Yeats's notes on the poem was originally intended to be the opening of a play (Finneran 453). The overt interaction of the play format is conducive to dialogism because it provides distinct voices in a form that engages dialogue more clearly than poetry, drawing closer to the novelistic features Bakhtin endorses. Though Vijaya does have two longer singing and speaking parts, overall, the priestess Anashuya dominates the exchange in length and strength of words. The more complex philosophical implications explored in later poems are not yet present in this poem about Anashuya's desire to be the only love and desire in Vijaya's mind, but these lyrics written by a Yeats still in his twenties prefigure his penchant for shrouding the monologic in pseudodialogic guise. Though the truth woven in this poem is not depicted in a serious manner, Yeats nevertheless alludes to a singular message—that what calls itself love is sometimes vanity instead and that vanity is unavoidably selfish.

The lightheartedness of the interaction between Anashuya and Vijaya is abandoned in the epic dialogue of "The Wanderings of Oisín." This poem is structured as an extended conversation between Oisín, who represents ancient

Ireland, and St. Patrick, who introduced Christianity to Ireland and began the conversion of its people. Yeats's own mixed feelings about Christianity are revealed as he dramatizes an encounter between these two spiritually and politically opposed figures. One structural hint at this philosophical bias is the poet's imbalanced distribution of speech: Balachandra Rajan notes that the poem runs to 891 lines yet St. Patrick speaks for only twenty-one of those (118).

Because of this uneven vocal presentation, "Oisín" could certainly be categorized not as a dialogue but instead as a facilitated monologue emphasizing Oisín's point of view. The imbalance between Oisín and Patrick is represented by both the aforementioned structural imbalance of speech distribution and their philosophical distance, for which Rajan suggests that this poem could hardly be considered a dialogue because no apparent "exchange of views" transpires between the two speakers.

Rajan's reading of "Oisín" distinctly parallels Bakhtin's delineation of dialogic and monologic writing as observed by Anca Vlasopolos (166).

Vlasopolos proposes that "Oisín" exemplifies Yeats's early thoughts about the theory of the mask, though these ideas were not fully developed and formalized until years later (167). The speaker who articulates the ideas that Yeats holds, Oisín in this case, is given the principal role, while St. Patrick appears in the dialogue only to ask questions and further Oisín's discourse as a "paltry

antagonist to Yeatsian self-projection" (168). Oisín dominates his proximate listener far more than Anashuya did, but Vlasopolos calls into question the authority of this speaker who continues to rail against St. Patrick, a figure who in her opinion remains silent not as a concession of victory, but because of his confidence in the church's permanence. She further asserts that St. Patrick only interrupts Oisín when the dominant speaker's story "breaks out of the mold of fiction and threatens to become, once more, Irish history" (169).

Whether or not Oisín has rhetorically subjugated St. Patrick, he has clearly taken over the dialogue as he vocalizes the more Yeatsian side of the spiritual debate which favors the esoteric and mystical over the formal dogmatism of Catholicism. St. Patrick's "paltry" interjections hardly warrant a concession that the poem presents a dialogic investigation of the Irish struggle between native pagan spirituality and the recently introduced Catholic Christianity. However much personal spiritual debate Yeats might have entertained, "Oisín" is a monologic representation of the historical and spiritual concerns of the Ireland that continued to be torn between the traditions of its ancient past and the altering power of external forces, issues about which Yeats has clearly already made a decision in this volume written when his poetic career and his mystical pursuits were just beginning.

Though the Irish did not typically draw a distinct parallel between St. Patrick's Catholic invasion and the external control then exerted over Ireland as a colony under Britain, in "The Wanderings of Oisín" Yeats obliquely suggests that both of these outside forces altered the culture and history of Ireland for the worse. One distinct parallel to be elucidated between these two invasions of Ireland is in the role the people played in their own usurpation. In the poem, the Irish appear to be giving themselves up to the outside altering force of Catholicism, and in 1800, the Dublin Parliament signed away its autonomous powers to Great Britain (Moynahan 7). In both situations, the agent of cultural miscegenation is asked in because of fear, just as the curse-bringing fairy is asked in the door in Yeats's allegorical play *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894) for fear of its curse. The handing over of Irish control to the British was likely done because of the fear in the ruling Anglo-Irish Protestants that the Catholic majority would otherwise earn more extensive voting rights and greater control over the nation (9). Furthermore, the encroachment of British coercion made it difficult for Irish leaders to choose any other path.

Yeats is himself one of the Anglo-Irish, but he seems to alter the group with which he identifies in various situations. Though he values the cultural and social import of the Anglo-Irish Protestant society, he endows greater worth to the preservation of distinct cultures. Without desiring the end of his own social

caste, Yeats appears to argue both for the rights of the early Irish to sustain their ancient beliefs in the face of Catholicism and for the rights of contemporary Irish Catholics to live independent of British jurisdiction. The complex role of the Catholic people in these two situations—first invader, then invaded—can seem problematic, but it nonetheless represents the inherent value Yeats locates in preserving what may be preserved of Irish culture. Yeats may also have intended to convey to the Irish Catholics the importance of early Irish culture in terms they would understand, though the depiction of St. Patrick would at the same time distance this audience. Julian Moynahan contends in *Anglo-Irish* that “a historically oppressed people is never really seen by or known to its oppressors, and over time, over centuries, comes to be unknown even to itself” (202). If this is the case, then Yeats seems to be teasing out the nuances of Irish identity, whether that of the Irish Catholic or the linguistically and socially hyphenated Anglo-Irish.

The sense of the historical is further fostered in “The Wanderings of Oisín” through the invocation of the epic, which is emphasized by St. Patrick’s interruptions of Oisín’s speech. In his essay “Epic and the Novel,” Bakhtin contends that a true epic is about “memory, and not knowledge” (15), and thus when St. Patrick blocks the historicization of Oisín’s discourse, he sustains its location in the arena of memory and myth. The immediate motivation for this

epic inducement St. Patrick's desire to keep Oisín's story separate from history and reality. A fulfilled connection between story and truth would give Oisín's tale more force to bring about change and incite listeners; instead St. Patrick poisons Oisín's lyrics with the mystical air of a story that may be fiction and is certainly not imperative or relevant to the lives of listeners.

"Oisín" functions as Yeats's major contribution to the national epic. Furthermore, the epic form serves to negotiate the genre divide between the writings of Yeats and the critical theory of Bakhtin. Though Bakhtin typically demeans poetry as a monologic lesser form of expression than fiction, he sees in the epic the sources of the modern novel. He moreover notes that "the world of the epic is the national historical past" ("Epic and the Novel" 13), one in which the author is "infinitely far removed from discourse of a contemporary about a contemporary addressed to contemporaries" (13-4). Yeats's imbalanced but interrupted discourse sustains this distance from the contemporary, though the subject has certain relevance for the poet's contemporaries who are struggling with a different but similar battle: that between traditional Irish culture and the colonizing force of the British, politically and culturally. Though the political situation of Yeats's time corresponds with the religious and spiritual usurpation of "Oisín," Yeats dissociates his tale from direct metaphor or allegory by means of St. Patrick's brief but shrewdly timed interruptions.

By the time Yeats wrote “Fergus and the Druid,” collected in his next volume, *The Rose* (1893), he had amended his use of dialogue for a dramatic purpose distinct from that seen in the overt drama of “Oisín.” The essential form of “Oisín”—a dominant speech with interjected comments or questions—remains, in addition to the theme of spirituality, which is now revealed in a spiritual struggle of a very different nature from that of Oisín and Patrick. “Fergus and the Druid” displays Yeats’s evolving dialogue form as a pattern of narrative and inquiry dominated for the most part by Fergus’s enchanted ramblings. Any description provided is spoken by Fergus as an account of his experience and his surroundings. In the first half of the poem, the Druid speaks only in the form of questions, repeating various forms of the same question: “What would you, Fergus?” (CP 32, l.21) This continued inquisition serves both as a part of the enchantment because of its incantatory quality and as an encouragement to Fergus to continue speaking. The Druid’s final two statements are responses to Fergus’s dreamy requests. This poem could essentially be a brief scene from a lyric play of Yeats’s Cuchulain cycle: nothing about the poem informs the reader that this work is a poem instead of an excerpted play.

In “Fergus and the Druid,” the power distribution is not in accord with what the dialogic form initially suggests. Though Fergus, the former king tricked into initiating his own dethroning, maintains the narrative discourse with

only promptings from the Druid, he has not fully taken control of the exchange. The dialogue contains an imbalance that does not parallel the balance of rhetorical control. The Druid's mystical power is more subtly and obliquely established. Fergus appears to force the Druid to release him from the weight of his own memories because the Druid's manipulation takes the form of silent enchantment. When the Druid does speak, he addresses Fergus as though he is in control—"Take, if you must, this little bag of dreams" (l. 29)—to maintain the illusion of subjugation. The Druid's character is equally sympathetic, pathetic, and in control, thus furthering his incantatory power over both Fergus and the reader. Standard dialogic categorizations are defied by the unspoken force that strengthens the Druid's role and induces Fergus's request. The dialogue of Fergus and the Druid is unique to Yeats's canon, evoking the response patterns of Christian catechism as it embraces mystical concepts.

The message purveyed in this imbalanced dialogue is magnified by the significant role of structure in Yeats's poem; conversely, the message itself is not as weighty as the resulting effect of the poem as a whole. The remarkable merging of form and content overshadow the independent quality of the simple fable reimagined in these stanzas. Essentially, a still young Yeats overtly mourns the disempowerment of old age as he more subtly commemorates the enchanting power of mysticism and mythology. The potency of story in general and Irish

legend in particular are celebrated in this retelling of a tale about the loss of authority and control. The marked difference between surface and actual power in "Fergus and the Druid" signifies the centrality of this tension and its importance for both the form and content of the poem.

The disparity in voice and power corresponds with an ability to assimilate the wisdom or perspective of the opposing party. Rajan proposes that "it is the pseudo-dramatic incitements of the dialogue, the rudimentary needs for characterization and a 'story,' which obscure attainment of the real drama of self-discovery" in "Fergus and the Druid" (119). Though Rajan does not directly invoke Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic, his analysis suggests that Yeats's dialogism is obfuscated, if not obscured completely, when it is forced into the contrived format of this early dramatic-poetic exchange. Compared to his use of dialogism in later poems, Yeats is using a more dramatic form to convey a less weighty insight. Perhaps the realization of posed drama's enervating effect on a poetic message led Yeats towards a dialogue that was less conversational and more dialectical.

NOTES

¹Flannery, James W. "Drama as a Dialectic of Opposites." *W.B. Yeats and the Idea of a Theater*.

²The following list gives Yeats's 44 multi-voiced poems, by collection. B. Rajan uses much stricter definitions to arrive at a total of fourteen collected dialogue poems, fifteen with the original version of "Fool by Roadside" (117). Even with his more limited delineation, Rajan feels the need to state that "not all of Yeats's dialogue poems deserve to live." Perhaps a study of the larger body of works I place in this category would increase appreciation for the use of the form throughout Yeats's work. Rajan appears to categorize poems as dialogue only if they are set up in clear dramatic dialogue form with speakers marked, however, clarifying his rules is difficult since he mentions but does not include "Fergus and the Druid" (*The Rose*, 1893), stating that there are no dialogue-poems between *Crossways* and *The Wind Among the Reeds*. I include any poem that contains a dialogue of voices or a distinct multivoicedness. I think my thesis is further elucidated by both the number and the nature of the less explicitly dialogue-based poems. (Asterisks indicate poems included in my discussion, and # indicates poems described as dialogue by Rajan.)

Crossways (1889)

*"The Cloak, the Boat, and the Shoes"

* # "Anashuya and Vijaya"

"The Indian upon God"

The Rose (1893)

*"Fergus and the Druid"

"Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea"

The Wind Among the Reeds (1899)

(none)

In the Seven Woods (1904)

"The Folly of Being Comforted"

*"Adam's Curse"

"The Players ask for a Blessing on the Psalteries and on Themselves"

The Green Helmet and Other Poems (1910)

"The Mask"

"Brown Penny"

Responsibilities (1914)

"The Three Beggars"

"The Three Hermits"

"The Hour Before Dawn"

The Wild Swans at Coole (1919)

"Solomon to Sheba"

"Shepherd and Goatherd"

"The Hawk"

"The People"

* # "Ego Dominus Tuus"

* # "Phases of the Moon"

"The Saint and the Hunchback"

Michael Robartes and the Dancer (1921)

* # "Michael Robartes and the Dancer"

"Solomon and the Witch"

"An Image from a Past Life"

The Tower (1928)

"The Fool by the Roadside" (originally a dialogue; Yeats revised it to this non-dialogue form)

"Owen Aherne and his Dancers"

The Winding Stair and Other Poems (1933)

* # "A Dialogue of Self and Soul"

"The Seven Sages"

"Vacillation" part VII

"Words for Music Perhaps" I. "Crazy Jane and the Bishop"

III. "Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgment"

* IV. "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"

IX. "Young Man's Song"

XV. "Three Things"

"A Woman Young and Old" VII. "Parting"

X. "Meeting"

Parnell's Funeral and Other Poems (1935)

(none)

New Poems (1938)

"The Three Bushes"

"The Wild Old Wicked Men"

"Colonel Martin"

Last Poems (1938-1939)

* # "Man and the Echo"

Narrative and Dramatic

"The Wanderings of Oisín" (1889)

"The Old Age of Queen Maeve" (1903)

"Baile and Aillinn" (1903)

"The Shadowy Waters: A Dramatic Poem" (1906)

"The Two Kings" (1914)

"The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid" (1923)

CHAPTER THREE

Dialogism in Yeats's Later Poems

"Adam's Curse" (*In the Seven Woods*, 1904) more fully integrates the competing poetic and dramatic instincts which frame Yeats's content. This poem combines lyric exposition with dramatic dialogue and the setting of a scene. A distinct narrative thread flows throughout the poem, connecting the stanzas as they alternate between poet's description and dramatist's speech. Whereas "Fergus and the Druid" and "Anashuya and Vijaya" could be read as scenes from plays, "Adam's Curse" recalls a poignant moment in the midst of a personal prose narrative. Speech and description are cast in definite lyric form, yet the diversity of the poem's parts magnifies its effect. It exemplifies what the dialectic between poet and playwright can achieve. In "Adam's Curse," Yeats successfully brings together his best skills to create a meta-poem that surpasses his previous forays into fully dramatic lyric.

Just as structure and the tension between structure and story established Yeats's purpose and success in "Fergus and the Druid," the considerably more complicated framing of "Adam's Curse" — alternating not only voice but also manner of discourse — signifies both the skill of his craftsmanship and the importance of his content. Though the content of "Fergus and the Druid" was

given power by its structure, in “Adam’s Curse” Yeats locates the poetic force inextricably in structure, words, *and* ideas. In the juxtaposition of narrative and vocalization in the first stanza, the poet establishes the setting, the central voice, and the overarching theme:

We sat together at one summer’s end,
That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
And you and I, and talked of poetry.
I said, “A line will take us hours maybe,
Yet if it does not seem a moment’s thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.”
(CP 80, ll. 1-6)

The three speaker/characters of this poem—Yeats, Maude Gonne, and her sister Kathleen Pilcher—are introduced and placed in a languid late summer scene. Interestingly, the primary speaker provides compliments not for the adored Gonne whom he is addressing directly in the narrative, but for her sister. This unvoiced compliment sets the stage for the argument about a very different type of labor with which Pilcher responds in the second stanza.

Whereas the narrative portion of the initial stanza informs the reader and hints at the characters and their relationships, the discourse swiftly sets forth the controversy of the poem: labor must seem effortless, despite the exertion involved. The first speaker—the Yeats figure—originates this theme in the context of his own composition of poetry. He furthers the claim that his carefully crafted poetry will

have no life if it does not seem to have been easily wrought with a grievance, depicting the contradictory appreciation the “noisy set” (l.12) has for visible labor. As a poet he must struggle to create something that appears effortless so that it will be valued, yet if he succeeds, he must also face a world which views him as “an idler” (l. 12).

Both the conversation and the narrative furthermore merge to effect the dialogical control within “Adam’s Curse.” The male primary speaker dominates the first stanza of the poem, philosophizing in lines four through fourteen before allowing narrative or external speech to interrupt his self-establishing, self-defending thoughts. The female companion, “that beautiful mild woman” (l. 15), cleverly and concisely voices her contention about work: “To be born woman is to know— / Although they do not talk of it at school— / That we must labor to be beautiful” (ll. 18-20). The speaker clearly hears and incorporates her statement into the overall argument about beauty, love, and the labor unavoidably at the center of both, as is evidenced by the shift to “Adam’s fall” (l.22), yet this woman’s speech serves a dialogic role that still resembles St. Patrick’s or the Druid’s. While the central speaker sets forth Yeats’s ideas in an autobiographical form, the female speaker, Kathleen Pilcher, serves to facilitate the development of his case instead of engaging him in a dialogical pursuit of truth.

The narrative, particularly in lines 28 through 33, further contributes to the primary speaker's domination of the poetic thesis about labor. The poet appears to be speaking quite directly through both the central figure and the narrative, drawing the reader into the dramatic setting of the poem. The poet/speaker's control of the poem's perspective is evidenced by the use of first person narrative, particularly in the final stanza: "I had a thought for no one's but your ears" (l. 34). Vocalized speech, undirected narrative, and this concluding private message are interchanged to produce a layered poem that is multi-voiced as much because of the poet's multiple outlets as because of the woman's interjection. The variegated structure and voice of "Adam's Curse" build line upon line to establish the resulting monologic declaration that labor underlies all human endeavors, whether literary, aesthetic, or amatory. R.B. Kershner notes that the syntax of the poem necessitates that the "information must be processed additively and linearly rather than in the hierarchical way in which we can read sentences of ordinary prose" (185). This method of reading seems particularly relevant to the layered structure of "Adam's Curse."

By the time Yeats wrote "Ego Dominus Tuus" for *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), he had moved beyond the subtle layering of voices found in "Adam's Curse" and established the theories of self and anti-self, or mask, that are at the

center of his *Vision* philosophy. Rajan notes that the dialogue form suddenly seems “designed to embody” this binary system of belief (119). Yeats dramatizes a discussion between Ille and Hic, self and anti-self, and in the course of their debate—entrenched in the ideas of Yeats’s *Vision*—these two personae elucidate both their own roles and the role of the artist. Yeats is yet again venturing into the meta-poetic by poeticizing a discussion of poets:

And should they paint or write, still it is action:
 The struggle of the fly in marmalade.
 The rhetorician would deceive his neighbors,
 The sentimentalist himself. (*CP* 161, ll. 44-8)

This idea is set forth by Ille—the Self—who dominates the dialogue as one would expect. Yeats believed that one achieved unity through the assimilation of one’s anti-self. Rajan describes this dialectic between self and mask: “But to know itself the mind must defend itself, and to discover itself fully through its defence it must find that true enemy which is ultimately its ally” (119). A true understanding of one’s self must thus result from knowing not only the self, but also that which opposes it. Kershner suggests that the “self erects an oppositional ‘anti-self’ against which it stands in tension” (171). Yeats and Bakhtin exhibit a notable congruence of philosophy on the topic of conflict: both feel that “conflict or opposition is the central principle of selfhood, as it is of history” (Kershner 170).

The importance of conflict which is realized in personal identity must certainly carry over into one's creative endeavors as well. In *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, Yeats famously contends that "we make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry" (21). This turning in represents both the disengagement from external distractions and the all-important engagement with one's own self and mask. The internal dialectic implicit in Yeats's assertion necessitates a type of personal dialogic which is key to the understanding of both Yeats's mystical philosophy and the pseudo-dialogism of his poetry. Yeats presents in these poems a reenactment of a prior internal quarrel, rehearsed as a posed dialogic though Yeats has already drawn his own conclusion and established his rhetoric accordingly when he personally engaged the issue.

Internal conflict is palpably poeticized in "Ego Dominus Tuus." In this exchange, the self as voiced through Ille sustains control of the poetic dialogue. Though Hic commences the discussion, he cannot withstand or suppress Ille's rhetorical control. Hic initially attempts to defend his stance with the example of Dante, hollow-faced from self-realization (ll. 17-22), but he is met with Ille's sound rejoinder about the source of his hunger. Ille maintains control over the direction of the discourse by contradicting the statements of Hic, the anti-self—"Or was the hunger that had made it hollow / A hunger for the apple on the bough / Most out

of reach?" (ll. 22-5)—and by sheer volume of words. Hic's interjections grow shorter and, though Hic continues to defend himself, Rajan suggests his statements reveal an air of defeat (120). Instead of truly exhibiting qualities of winning or defeat, Hic and Ille seem to be speaking to each other without hearing the other's words, and this non-dialogue reveals dueling monologists.

Denis Donoghue's reading of Bakhtin's theories proposes that "monologism does not mean the mere recourse to the forms of monologue, but rather the refusal of the acknowledgements implicit in dialogic" ("Bakhtin" 123). The achievement of dialogic between Hic and Ille is impeded by the lack of exchange in conversation. Even as their arguments conclude with the close of the poem, they still do not listen. Hic's questions retain the air of one who does not fully comprehend his partner in discourse:

Why should you leave the lamp
 Burning alone beside an open book
 And trace these characters upon the sands?
 A style is found by sedentary toil
 And by the imitation of the masters. (ll. 62-6)

Conversely, Ille responds to Hic without incorporating any possible lessons or ideas gained from this exchange: "Because I seek an image, not a book. / Those men that in their writings are most wise / Own nothing but their blind, stupefied hearts" (ll. 67-9). The self, Ille, integrates the anti-self only so far as Hic might

serve to inspire his own creative impulses. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin suggests that the realization of the self, as opposed to the realization of the other, is monologic (14), and Yeats's poetic illustration of the process confirms that realization, despite the reliance of his personal theories on dialogic thinking.

Yeats uses the dialogue form for a similar purpose in another poem from *The Wild Swans at Coole*, "The Phases of the Moon," in which Hic and Ille have been replaced with Owen Aherne and Michael Robartes. Yeats created Robartes so that he could attribute to him the central ideas of *A Vision*, and he fills that role in this particular poem. The ostensible conversation between Aherne and Robartes becomes instead a vehicle for introducing readers to Yeats's theories on personality and the phases of the moon. Robartes delineates the various phases and their accompanying traits in his extended discourse, which is only occasionally interrupted by brief encouraging statements from Aherne. He does not struggle with Robartes as Hic did with Ille, but motivates him to speak:

Why should not you
 Who know it all ring at his door, and speak
 Just truth enough to show that his whole life
 Will scarcely find for him a broken crust
 Of all those truths that are your daily bread [...] ?
 (CP 163 ll. 20-4)

Aherne is more explicitly a facilitator in this dialogue than are Yeats's other secondary speakers. When Robartes stops without completing the explanation of the cycle, Aherne quickly prompts him to continue, "But the escape; the song's not finished yet" (l. 117). After Robartes proceeds to conclude his account of the phases, Aherne has his longest speech of the poem, which he uses to reiterate the value of Robartes' words and the importance of sharing them with the unhearing third party, saying that he would

stand and mutter there until he caught
 'Hunchback and Saint and Fool', and that they came
 Under the three last crescents of the moon,
 And then I'd stagger out. (*CP* 167 ll. 131-4)

Yeats acknowledges that "The Phases of the Moon" and two similar poems, "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" (*The Wilde Swans at Coole*) and "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," the title poem from the following volume (1921), had more than poetic purposes. In his notes for the poems, Yeats affirms that "to some extent I wrote these poems as a text for exposition" (Finneran 459).

Though his theories are not presented dialogically, at least one aspect of their promulgation would please Bakhtin: the presence of the third person. Bakhtin had a "suspicion of thinking in terms of binary oppositions, as the Russian Formalists tended to do" (Morson and Emerson 266). This skepticism does not

contradict the concept of the dialogic as one might think; dynamic dialogism pursues truth, while binary opposites tend to instead negate each other. Anca Vlasopolos provides a clarifying summary of the difference between dialogic and dialectical or binary thought: "Dialogism recognizes the impossibility of synthesis or of resolution in most dialogues and separates that open-endedness from the completion and coherence imposed upon what Bakhtin calls 'the material of identification,' the material used for artistic production" (167).

The use of a third person in the midst of dialogic fosters the desire to pursue truth instead of falling back on inherent oppositions. Morson and Emerson describe Bakhtin's concept of the third person as a way of introducing "new opening and new complexity," not "resolution" (266). Bakhtin uses 'third person' to describe several diverse figures, including the "superaddressee," the topic itself, the author, and the reader (266-7). In "The Phases of the Moon," the third figure, the man in the tower whom Robartes and Aherne observe writing through the night (ll. 11-20), functions much like a superaddressee, or perfect listener. Robartes and Aherne do not address him directly, but the exposition of the poem is directed at him and at the reader: Aherne clearly knows already what Robartes has to say and states explicitly that the man in the tower needs to hear Robartes' message. The man in the tower actually accords with Bakhtin's idea of the third person in

two ways because he additionally represents the author's location within the poem; furthermore, the presence of a figure writing in a tower overwhelmingly suggests that the man being mocked whom they intend to educate is in fact Yeats himself. Though the presence of a third speaker can frequently aid in the mediation of heated dialectic, the dialogic implications grow hazy when the two central figures sustaining the dialogue are not opposed to each other, but to the author, who actually embraces the ideas with which he is here presented in contrast. Once again Yeats has established an artificially staged dialogue controlled by the poet with a monologic truth already in mind.

Robartes continues his dialogic dominance with a much firmer, more assertive voice in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer." The dancer's brief questions and interrogatory statements function much as the Druid's comments did for Fergus, providing the chief speaker with provocation to continue speaking. Robartes again plays the role of wise authority figure as he imparts his advice on thought and beauty to the dancer. Though his statements could easily be read as sexist, they represent more so the valuation of elemental beauty and wisdom. "The Double Vision of Michael Robartes" provides a context that makes the central idea of "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" more obvious. In "The Double Vision,"

Yeats describes a girl playing between a Sphinx and a Buddha, surpassing the needs of the mind through the fulfillment of the body:

So she had outdanced thought.
 Body perfection brought,
 For what but eye and ear silence the mind
 With the minute particular of mankind? (*CP* 171, ll. 39-42)

In both poems Yeats is using Robartes to celebrate the fundamental perfection of purely physical action, untainted by quotidian concerns. This dancer indeed seems to be achieving a higher form of thought, paradoxically through physicality. By later advising the dancer in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer" to forsake education, Robartes is encouraging her to strive for a purer existence, both introspective and interactive, that is free from societal strictures.

In Robartes's final passage in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," he notes that beauty represents "uncomposite blessedness" (*CP* 176, l. 46), which sets an ideal for others to follow. This concluding goal unifies the poem with a thoroughly monologic perspective that is intolerant of dialogic or external influence. Robartes' diction at times, however, suggests that the poet does not fully embrace all of the ideas that Robartes advocates. His references to a "mere book" (l. 20) seems uncharacteristic, then the later ironic use of "mere body" (l. 40) elucidates the poet's intent and reinforces the fallibility of fully identifying the

speaker with the poet, even in expository poems. Yeats seems to be positioning himself again as he did in "Ego Dominus Tuus": theories that he appears to personally approve of dominate the poem, but his own relation to the material is obfuscated by the layered voices and perspectives.

"Michael Robartes and the Dancer" could stand alone as Robartes's lyric, yet the Dancer's presence is nonetheless important. She is not only proximate listener, but also symbol, ever present to remind the reader of physical beauty in the midst of an arrangement of words much like what Robartes is warning the dancer to avoid. The poem does not rely on her verbal contribution as much as her physical presence, thus reinforcing Robartes' argument and negating some of the irony that is inescapable in a written work that admonishes the listener and the reader to avoid a "mere book." Though Yeats's perspective is complexly posited, his poem returns with renewed force to the monologic presentation of a singular stance that privileges bodily knowledge over mental and academic.

Yeats progresses to a more balanced and competitive interaction of voices in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" (*The Winding Stair*, 1933), though the parity is not sustained for the course of the poem¹. As Rajan notes, the poet establishes the expectation of symmetry and then violates it (124), which is a significant part of the reason why Rajan considers it Yeats's "highest achievement in a form the resources

of which he himself had worked out and deepened" (123). "My Self" and "My Soul" correspond somewhat to Ille and Hic, and, as one would by now expect, Self proceeds to usurp rhetorical control and dominate the poetic exchange (CP 234-6). The first half of the poem consists of a dialogue that is balanced in speech distribution, if not in power; the second half, however, consists entirely of Self's monologic response to the exchange.

The idea that conflict is necessary to breed unity also resurfaces from "Ego Dominus Tuus." The internal conflict in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" concentrates on more intense, more personal issues, and the two parties in dispute are more interactively engaged, though only temporarily. Kershner proposes that Yeats uses dialogue to "give voice to each of the mutually exclusive positions that he wished to embrace" (179). Self and Soul verbalize the poet's divergent interests in physicality and spirituality; this binary perhaps parallels his appreciation of the all-encompassing, all-obscuring personalities or historical periods that the moon represents when either full or new.

Furthermore, as the role of power shifts between the contradictory interests of Self and Soul, Yeats establishes a pattern reflective of the waxing and waning lunar cycles explicated in *A Vision*. No one can live under either of the diametrically opposed pure phases of the moon, full or new, yet Yeats bestows

them both with an air of idyllic and elemental purity. The Self creates a permanent place for himself by first valuing emblems of permanence, then taking over the dialogue and making himself like “Sato’s ancient blade, still as it was” (235, l. 10) by embracing reincarnation.

The sword, first referenced in the third section of “Meditations in Times of Civil War”: “My Table” (*The Tower*, 1928), represents qualities the poet both idealized and feared. This initial incarnation of the sword indicates the valued qualities in the poet’s referent:

Two heavy trestles, and a board
 Where Sato’s gift, a changeless sword,
 By pen and paper lies,
 That it may moralise
 My days out of their aimlessness.
 [...]
 Chaucer had not drawn breath
 When it was forged. In Sato’s house,
 Curved like new moon, moon-luminous,
 It lay five hundred years.
 Yet if no change appears
 No moon; only an aching heart
 Conceives a changeless work of art. (CP 202, ll. 1-14)

The sword was presented to Yeats by Junzo Sato in March 1920 (CP 494). This ancient gift represents the unchanging beauty that is so different from the “pen and paper” poetry Yeats himself crafts. The “changeless sword” signifies both a goal to attain and a curse to avoid: the beauty never changes, but neither does it

breathe or grow. A reincarnation in such a form, as the Self proposes in “A Dialogue of Self and Soul,” would be a birth into a life of cold beauty unappealing to the passions of the Soul.

Rajan argues that this exchange between Self and Soul should not be classified as a “debate,” but instead as a “confrontation” because the “intensified statement calls forth an intensified response” (125). Consequently, the poem could not be considered truly dialogic: dialogic requires the acknowledgement and assimilation of opposing ideas, unlike the previously discussed binary that Bakhtin definitively mistrusted. Instead Soul celebrates the breath of life while Self venerates the power of permanence, and neither concedes or even listens to the points set forth by the opposing side.

When the Self takes over the poem, part of Bakhtin’s abstract theory suddenly seems to be concretized. The criteria of true dialogic are not met, but “A Dialogue of Self and Soul” does unintentionally bring Bakhtin’s ideas to fruition. In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin asserts that a “fundamental open-endedness” is present in a purely dialogic or “polyphonic” novel that necessitates a monologic conclusion to the matters at hand (39-40). This theoretical contention is embodied in Yeats’s poetic repositioning from dialogue to monologue. True resolution cannot be found as long as the dialogue continues; thus one party must

overwhelm the other and take control to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion. Rajan inadvertently confirms the presence of this very quality in the poem³:

Poetry of confrontation cannot admit a negotiated compromise. One of the principles must prevail and prevail by taking over the poem in its name. But the prevailing principle ought to be able to find itself in combat and to proclaim itself more fully and inclusively because of the challenge that is made to its being. (125)

The success of the poem relies on the interdependence between the dialogic and the monologic. By presenting his ideas in dialogic form, Yeats illustrates that they can withstand debate; by concluding in monologic, he preemptively asserts and celebrates their success.

In "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," also from *The Winding Stair*, Yeats returns to the use of realistic encounter and dialogue to frame his argument about physically embodied knowledge, first adumbrated in "Michael Robartes and the Dancer." The first two lines are the only non-dialogue in the poem, and they inform the reader of the circumstance for the conversation that ensues when the bishop and Crazy Jane meet in the road. The bishop's censure of Jane's lifestyle completes the first stanza; the following two stanzas are taken over by Jane's response to the bishop. The only descriptive aspect of this poem occurs early, in the bishop's only speech, a crude reminder to Jane of her waning beauty:

“Those breasts are flat and fallen now
 Those veins must soon be dry;
 Live in a heavenly mansion,
 Not in some foul sty.” (*CP* 259 ll. 3-6)

Jane’s response is impudent, but it has the weight of personal, experiential truth, indirectly acknowledging her own appearance and position in life as it asserts her independence from the bishop’s control:

“A woman can be proud and stiff
 When on love intent;
 But Love has pitched his mansion in
 The place of excrement;
 For nothing can be sole or whole
 That has not been rent” (ll. 13-8)

Yeats did not choose to write a lyric description of Crazy Jane, replete with the image of her fallen looks and lifestyle. He instead provides insight into the motivations of Jane’s character, which is quite a theatrical frame for a short poem. By moving from lyric description to dialogue, Yeats is able to more completely inform the reader of the characters’ apparently diverse perspectives. Both the individuated voices and the reaction, or absence thereof, of one character to another establish the multidimensional quality of the poem as a whole.

The employment of the pseudo-dialogic structure in the poem provides emphasis and introduces a hint of counterargument into a literary form that is typically driven by a single speaker, with the myopic perspective which that

dominance entails. Although other “Crazy Jane” poems in *The Winding Stair* supplement these few directly stated details of both her image and her perspective, “Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop” conveys an ample portrait of her through the bishop’s lecture and her reaction. The use of dialogue counteracts the inherent suspicion of narrative, which is more blatantly biased by the author’s voice. The use of dialogue in this poem to depict both the personality of its speakers and the theory of its author gives the words an appearance of truth or, at any rate, truth of perspective, despite the poem’s predominant monologism.

“Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop” is barely dialogue, let alone dialogic: each speaker takes one turn, thus no exchange, pursuit of agreement, or resolution occurs. Neither Crazy Jane nor the Bishop appears to have any intent of acknowledging the other’s speech, yet despite the absence of protracted interaction, Yeats makes his point as he succinctly delves into religion, beauty, and love, celebrating the full experience of the emotions and the physical experiences of immediate life. This poem in fact accords with Bakhtin’s theory of carnival far more than his definition of dialogic.

According to Bakhtin, carnival represents the ritual of temporarily suspending societal rules and standards of behavior, as with Mardi Gras, resulting in “crudely familiar contact with [...] contemporaries” (*Problems* 108) and parody

of the usual constraints of the society (106-9). Crazy Jane represents both parody—as she mocks the Bishop’s rude reproof—and the suspension of social standards—because she lives as she wishes to. Kershner states, “But in [...] the ‘Crazy Jane’ poems, rude sexuality rears its butting head in carnivalesque response to the life-denying spirituality represented in a process that precisely parallels the dialogics Bakhtin finds in Rabelais” (170). The employment of the “carnavalesque” actually brings this poem closer to the realm of dialogics by engaging the power that resides therein; furthermore, carnival is typically associated with the multiplicity of dialogism, while monologism corresponds with the rules and regularity carnival rebels against. Nevertheless, I would have to disagree with Kershner if he wishes to imply that Bakhtin would consider the poem dialogical. Bakhtin states that “the carnival sense of the world possesses a mighty life-creating and transforming power, an indestructible vivacity” (107), and Jane’s immutable vivacity indeed lends the poem its rhetorical and polemical potency.

The carnivalesque celebration of the physical locates “Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop” in metadialogue with “Michael Robartes and the Dancer”: Crazy Jane elevates bodily experience and knowledge above mental or spiritual knowledge as did the dancer. Michael Robartes’ valorization of the mental parallels the sacrilegious advocating of asceticism by the Bishop: each figure denies the

essential value of physical experience in favor of higher minded ideals. The Bishop has responded to an argument from Crazy Jane that is uniquely—though indirectly—Christian with a riposte that denies the very qualities he as a messenger of the church should defend. In Yeats's depiction the regulations of the church have overtaken the original spirit of the church. When Crazy Jane quarrels with the Bishop by lauding physical existence and experience, she is not only claiming the personal importance of her own physical life, coarse though it may have been, but also invoking the incarnational existence of Christ on earth. Though the Bishop purports to save Crazy Jane from her own sinful experiences, he instead commits the Gnostic heresy of denying the importance of Christ's incarnation.

The same poetic message unites the diverse dialogues of Crazy Jane with the Bishop and Michael Robartes with the dancer: though the beauty and grace of the dancer has given way to the bawdy physicality of Crazy Jane, the importance of the body is emphasized. In fact, the value of physical knowledge is increased in its extension to the unbeautiful experience. Whereas the beauty of the dance is easily appreciated, the worth of Crazy Jane's physicality is not readily apparent. Through these two poems Yeats conveys a personal celebration of bodily knowledge. This valuation appears ironic in the voice of a poet and thinker who

rarely engaged in the physical world, but even as a child he had great respect for those who engaged in the beauty of physicality, an elemental experience at which he never succeeded (Flannery 2-3).

The dialogue that is so important in “Michael Robartes” and the “Crazy Jane” poems is only employed in one of Yeats’s *Last Poems* (1938-39), “Man and the Echo”; this poem exhibits a manipulation of the structure that is at the same time both unique and characteristic of Yeats’s ongoing experimentation with dialogic. Rajan notes that many of the poems in Yeats’s final volume include refrains (128), and the conversation in this particular poem seems to be as much an alternation between speech and refrain as it is a dialogue. The only interjections from the Echo are ominous repetitions of Man’s last words when his otherwise unheard speech pauses (CP 345-6).

In his 1941 study, *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats*, Louis MacNeice addresses the perception of refrains held by Yeats’s contemporaries, as well as the transitional usage of the form within the poet’s evolving creative enterprises. Despite popular disdain for the form, Yeats uses it in two distinct phases of his poetic career. Many of his earliest poems relied on the traditional incarnation of the refrain, such as that found in the rhyming, song-like refrains of “The Stolen Child” (*Crossways* 1889). This refrain—“Come away, O human child! / To the waters and the wild /

With a faery, hand in hand" (CP 18, ll. 9-11)—evokes the Irish ballads Yeats's so admired. As he matured as a poet, he shifted away from the conventional forms of his earlier years in favor of more complex and innovative poetics; however, after this departure, he returns in his final years to a new form of refrain. Its only occurrence in the intervening years was as a haunting single line contrasting with a stanza in poems, such as an example noted by MacNeice, the haunting "Beggar to beggar cried, being frenzy-struck" (CP 114, l. 3) of "Beggar to Beggar Cried" (*Responsibilities*, 1914).

By the time of the Crazy Jane poems (*The Winding Stair*, 1933), Yeats returned to the refrain with a new stratagem. The refrain takes the role either of a secondary speaker—"Crazy Jane on the Day of Judgment" (257)—or reflects the role seen in the single lines which dominate their verses in *Responsibilities*—"Crazy Jane on God" (258-9) or "Crazy Jane Grown Old Looks at the Dancers" (260). In "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," Yeats chooses an actual dialogue form over that of the dialogue-refrain, though the imbalance of the dialogue clearly suggests the refrain concept.

The brief but forceful refrains continue in *Last Poems* (1938-39), particularly in the refrain of "Long-legged Fly" (339)—"Like a long-legged fly upon the stream / His mind moves upon silence" (ll. 9-10); however, "Man and the Echo"

represents the third implementation of the refrain, not song chorus and not fully a single-line dominating force, but a dialogue-refrain that while not dominating the poem, nevertheless has a significant effect on its overall direction. The Man's exposition is interjected with two repetitions by the Echo of what the Man has just finished saying. The echo effect establishes these two phrases as refrains, a title far more appropriate for them than dialogue.

The conversationality of this interaction relies on whether the Man chose when to cease his discourse, thus allowing him to hear the echo. Though Rajan considers this a "formal dialogue" (128), that title is hardly appropriate. "Man and the Echo" could be considered the culmination of Yeats's personalization of the dialogue poem, which for the most part has grown progressively less realistic and more esoteric. The poet no longer even maintains that two true speakers exist other than in the formatting of the lines; this supposed dialogue has one speaker who voices both parts and, conversely, hears both parts. Yeats previously presented internal dialogues, such as in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" or "Ego Dominus Tuus," yet those poems still contained interaction between two personified parts of an individual—self and anti-self or self and soul. The success of the Self in earlier dialogue poems is celebrated in "Man and the Echo" with the

use of a single speaker: man, unified yet unhappy. The voices of Hic and Soul are subjugated, but they are heard as a part of the whole in Man's desperation.

Man expresses the angst of being "old and ill" (345, l. 7) because the physical and emotional effects of a lifetime of decisions are weighing heavily upon him. He cries out as Yeats, "Did that play of mine send out / Certain men the English shot?" (ll. 11-2). In this manner, the speaker both mourns the potential for damage Yeats's early play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* might have had and calls upon himself greater importance by indicating that his words were capable of inspiring such action. The first stanza questions not only that action but also other actions that might have affected a friend in psychological turmoil (ll. 13-4) or things undone which might have saved Lady Gregory's Coole Park (ll. 15-6). The questions wrestled with in "Dialogue of Self and Soul" are resurrected in a reweighing of flesh and intellect:

Waking he thanks the Lord that he
Has body and its stupidity,
But body gone he sleeps no more
And till his intellect grows sure
That all's arranged in one clear view
Pursues the thoughts that I pursue,
Then stands in judgment on his soul. (CP 346, ll. 27-33)

The self-important anguish of Man's questions and his repetition of the debate between body and soul are consistent with the ravages of age and fame, entities

which leave Man ever questioning, ever defending in his predominantly monologic stanzas.

Though Yeats's individual poems are not dialogic, his body of work as a whole suits that designation. The imbalanced interaction of fragmented voices and perspectives in the poet's earlier works are at last unified in this late poem as divergent ideologies are melded almost completely into a single voice, coherent and forceful though as yet continuing to struggle. Complete resolution does not occur because complete integration of the diametrically opposed forces of self and mask is impossible in the span of earthly life.

NOTES

¹Despite the obvious correspondences, major philosophical and poetic differences separate Yeats's poem from Andrew Marvell's "A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body." Whereas Yeats's Self and Soul focus on their own strengths and symbols thereof as they compete rhetorically for superiority, Marvell's Soul and Body expound on why each should be able to escape the other, but cannot. Yeats in a sense replaces Marvell's argument of offense with one of defense. Additionally, Marvell's two speakers maintain a balance both in rhetorical power and speech length not found in Yeats's "Dialogue," in which the Self completely dominates the second half of the poem. Rajan notes that "while Marvell is certainly instructive in telling us how to read Yeats, his poems are less 'embattled' than Yeats's 'Dialogue,'" observing that this embattlement recalls Milton more so than Marvell (124).

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³Rajan's essay, "The Poetry of Confrontation: Yeats and the Dialogue Poem," employs many ideas that distinctly parallel those of Bakhtin, yet he makes no acknowledgement of having utilized or even read Bakhtin's theories. He writes in his conclusion that "the end of the dialogue's process is the monologue" (128), which makes it quite difficult to believe that he was not familiar with Bakhtin's conception of dialogic and monologic.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dialogism in *Purgatory*

The poetic incarnation of Man crying out and hearing only his own voice in “Man and the Echo” was written during the last year of Yeats’s life, when he was also working on a play that reveals the same sense of desolation, *Purgatory* (1938). The genre creates a more palpable connection to the dialogic than that in poetry: the explicit interaction between characters establishes the concept of dialogue, whether the discourse itself is truly dialogic or not. In the play, the Old Man brings his unlistening son back to the deserted home where all the events that he feels led to his unhappiness occurred. Though a secondary figure is present in the form of the man’s son, the Boy ignores much of what his father has to say. Their interaction is a great deal like that seen in the pseudo-dialogic poems: the father speaks, hoping to be heard, and the son occasionally interjects, barely acknowledging his father’s words. Despite the dramatic format, the Old Man’s discourse proceeds for the most part as monologue¹. When his son does speak, the Old Man ironically ignores him, distracted by his own search for a listener. The son’s role is “that of listener rather than interlocutor” (Parkin 150), although he scarcely fills that role either. The Old Man and the Boy “interact” much like Hic and Ille, who spoke at each other without any true listening or exchanging of views. The boy is in part a Hic or anti-self figure

for the Old Man; instead of assimilating his opposite, the man desires only to purge what he sees as the worst of himself because their interaction is selfish and aggressive, thus denying both parties any of the benefits of a dialogic exchange. Once again, Yeats is presenting figures that are in binary opposition: they may exclaim loudly, but, as Bakhtin would contend, such opposites cannot learn anything from each other.

The depiction of the Old Man is to some extent a characterization of Yeats, yet his portrayals of men of his own age often reveal this sort of oblique view of himself. As with the dialogue poems, the Old Man as primary speaker presents more Yeatsian views—in this case the author's feelings about modern Ireland. The Old Man rails against the corruption of his mother's proud family bloodline (*Collected Plays* 539), thus implicitly denouncing the changes in Ireland that brought about a perceived corresponding societal degeneration. The employment of the pseudo-dialogic structure emphasizes the Old Man's socio-political contentions and lends a sense of dramatic urgency to these ideas that would otherwise be explored with such heightened fervor only in the prose of *On the Boiler* (1938).

The degeneration that inspires such ire in the Old Man is indicative of the eugenic line of thought that caught Yeats's interest in his later years. This philosophy of social intervention—and potential discrimination—appealed to the

poet-playwright's preexisting conception of race, nationality, and genetics. Terence Brown interprets Yeats as arguing in *Purgatory* that "in both dimensions there can be no escape from the consequences a crime of miscegenation has wrought" (372).

Regarding the extremity of these social views, Brown writes,

The fact that he chose in *On the Boiler* to represent his own ideas as the ravings of a mad ship's carpenter of his Sligo boyhood tells us that he knew he was espousing a vicious elitism in his polemic, which even some of his correspondents in the eugenics movement would find shocking. (366)

Moynahan defends Yeats somewhat in his contention that in *Purgatory* he both "present[s] and refute[s] the case for eugenics" (229), though he also argues that readers of this play must acknowledge the darkness within its message: "The house of Anglo-Irish culture is down and native brutishness, in combination with 'low' female tastes, are to blame" (229).

As the Old Man in *Purgatory* tries to correct the wrong caused by the offensive miscegenation of his bloodline, he appeals to his son, who does not listen, and to his mother, who cannot hear. He then kills his son in an act of desperation because as he watches his mother's shade reenact the bittersweet night of his own conception, he has convinced himself that the cessation of the family line will set her spirit free (543). The Old Man continues to speak after he has committed this horrific act, which was performed with the same knife that he used to kill the father

on whom he blamed the corruption of the family. He speaks to his mother with hope—“Dear mother, the window is dark again / But you are in the light because / I finished all that consequence” (ll. 201-3)—though she could never hear him, and her presence within the play even as a shade is debatable. By killing his son, the Old Man destroyed the one potential listener that he had, though that can be reconciled with his overwhelming desire to be heard because the son, though present, would not listen to him. In an attempt to find a listener, he lashes out to induce some form of reaction that will prove he has been heard. Anthony Roche’s analysis of both the Old Man in Yeats’s *At the Hawk’s Well* (1917) and Winnie in Samuel Beckett’s *Happy Days* (1961) accords with the position of the Old Man in *Purgatory* as well: these characters “require [...] the suggestion of a listener, to give them the illusion that they exist” (26).

The role of the proximate listener in *Purgatory* and *At the Hawk’s Well* is dramatically minimal yet thematically significant. Both old men are trapped by circumstances that they themselves in part created; both live in anticipation of the supernatural event, the Noh-influenced conclusion, that might end their suffering, but Yeats’s manipulation of the Noh form provides them with no such relief. With the son dead and the shade of the mother yet unhearing, the Old Man is left with

neither the anticipated release nor a listener with whom he can share his story, other than the unanswering God who hears his prayerful cry:

O God!
 Release my mother's soul from its dream!
 Mankind can do no more. Appease
 The misery of the living and the remorse of the dead.
 (144, ll. 219-22)

The Old Man's personal isolation represents a solipsistic severance from the social realm, on which Bakhtin bases his celebration of dialogic exchange. Donoghue notes that according to Bakhtin "we are social by virtue of being verbal," which is diametrically opposed to Freud's stance ("Bakhtin" 122). Therefore from a Bakhtinian perspective the Old Man is only left with speech and the subsequent desire for that speech to be heard after being ostracized by his society. The Old Man embodies not only the desires specific to his society and story, but also the desperation that ensues when the innate need for our verbalization to proceed to socialization is suppressed.

Margaret Soenser Breen finds the basis of the Old Man's yearning to be heard in his mother's absence: "*Purgatory* provides an example of the twofold nature of Oedipal expression. The Old Man's narration cannot be divorced from the silence of his mother's auditory role" (44). She further asserts that by identifying with his mother's best qualities, the Old Man is also restricted "to the roles of auditor and

mimic" (45). Breen attributes these roles to him because of the mother's gender and culture, yet they more clearly parallel his mother's apparent purgative actions. The Old Man describes the cycle of afterlife to his son as he imagines it, stating that souls must:

Re-live
 Their transgressions, and that not once
 But many times; they know at last
 The consequences of those transgressions
 Whether upon others, or upon themselves;
 Upon others, others may bring help
 For when the consequence is at an end
 The dream must end; upon themselves,
 There is no help but in themselves
 And in the mercy of God. (538, ll. 32-41)

He sees his mother constantly reliving the night she consummated her ill-fated affair in the hollows of their old home, receiving neither change, relief, nor forgiveness.

The mother furthermore fills an analogous position to that of the writer in the tower in "The Phases of the Moon." Although imagined, she truly is the Old Man's superaddressee, "the perfectly understanding listener to which every utterance is oriented. This orientation is constitutive of the utterance, just as a real [...] listener is" (Morson and Emerson 266). Indeed, the mother is more superaddressee than she is listener, particularly according to this definition. Her presence within the play, whether as a shade in purgatory or as a figment of the Old Man's imagination, is

debatable, yet he directs all of his words to her: her existence is defined by the fact that she is spoken to. The Old Man seems more sensitive to the presence of her unhearing shade than to that of God, a superaddressee whom he calls out to in panicked prayer; he seems less confident in a response from God than he was when addressing his mother. He nevertheless appeals to these two intangible parties in hopes of garnering successful listening or even dialogue. Morson and Emerson describe an analogous need in their explication of Bakhtin's concept of the superaddressee:

There is nothing more terrible than a situation in which one becomes convinced that there can be no such listener [a superaddressee], even conceptually, for then discourse, even to oneself, is sensed as frustrated in its very shaping. Such a situation, according to Bakhtin, is hell, "the absolute absence of a third person." (266)

The Old Man evades dialogic by favoring a superaddressee who cannot respond over a present but unwilling listener; because his mother does not respond rudely as does his son, he can pretend that she listens readily. Despite his delusions, the silence continues to frustrate his hopes: "As the turmoil of warfare in the mind subsides, we hear the sound of silence and realize that silence is the last antagonist" (Rajan 128).

Both *Purgatory* and the pseudo-dialogic poems rely more on being overheard than heard². Yeats wrote that poetry was begotten "of the quarrel with ourselves"

(*Per Amica* 21), and the recording of an internal “quarrel” implies both the poet’s inclusion of the reader and his corresponding *Purgatory*-like need to be heard. The reader is entangled by the dialogic format, then educated with a monologic ideal—perhaps not what Bakhtin intended when he suggested that the reader’s conscience underwent an “*active broadening*” when reading dialogical works (*Problems* 68).

Bakhtin proposes that a dialogical format allows the reader to take in new ideas with reduced resistance, and Yeats has used this process to propagate personal theories in the midst of his poems. Furthermore, Helen Carr explains that “Bakhtin does recognise that monologic discourse is associated with centralising power” (106); thus the pseudo-dialogic medium, whether poetic or dramatic, facilitates the presentation of a statement of truth that instead appears to the reader as an exploration or pursuit of the truth. Donoghue expands this understanding of the pseudo-dialogic with his contention that

a monologicistic artistic world is one which is controlled at every point by the artist who has projected it. In such a world, every thought is a function of the artist’s consciousness: it either gravitates to him and becomes a sign of his power, or it is admitted only so that it can be degraded and repudiated. (“Bakhtin” 123)

This definition supports the labeling of Yeats as a pseudo-dialogic author, but he does transcend these terms.

Despite the audacity that seems inherent to the use of the pseudo-dialogic format to present personal beliefs and theories, it also represents audacity's mask: trepidation. Yeats spent years striving for some sort of immortality through his literature, yet this very literature conveys a sense that with old age he needed to know that it was being read, that he was being heard. While the illusion of literary or mystical immortality could alleviate some of the fears inherent to aging, the need to be heard—and to be heard clearly and completely—seems to have too much of an immediacy for the intangible hope of remembrance to afford satisfactory relief.

The similarity between the form of *Purgatory* and the dialogue poems elucidates a vital connection: the pseudo-dialogic structure is perfectly suited to purgative expository. Yeats provides himself with an immediate listener, the secondary figure in the poem, and an external listener, the reader. The presence of the primary listener insistently reminds the reader that these ideas must be heard, even as the frequent depiction of that figure's disregard of the speaker mourns the fallibility of the whole process. To the author's personal regret and despite the speaker's attempts, the speakers in these poems do not necessarily succeed at convincing either the reader or, more accurately, themselves³. Yeats is presenting the theories that are central to his philosophy, and the polarized nature of these self and mask concepts is problematic for poetic presentation: often both speakers are

presenting ideas that are absorbed in Yeats's system of belief, yet one is primary, the other secondary.

By assimilating both an idea and its opposition into a monologic presentation, Yeats accepts, like Bakhtin, that a unified resolution is impossible. The pseudo-dialogic is not unsuccessful dialogic; it is a personalized form that admits both the author's varied beliefs and that these different beliefs cannot be completely resolved. In a sense Yeats and Bakhtin chose similar paths by suggesting that conflict can *be* unity, though it might not necessarily *breed* unity. Yeats does not choose to fully engage his own philosophical dialogic in his pseudo-dialogic works, but he nonetheless mines the depths of the theories and emotions that resulted from that process and presents them in the hope that they might be heard. The dramatic dialogue is subverted and the poetic monologue is transcended in a form that mediates the diverse desires of the poet/dramatist/mystic.

NOTES

¹Margaret Soenser Breen proposes this reading of the play in “The Feminine Position of Auditor in Yeats’s *Purgatory*” (51).

²Rajan relates Yeats’s dialogue poems to “Mills’s remark that rhetoric is heard but poetry overheard” (119).

³Vlasopolos hints at this idea in reference to St. Patrick’s quiet power in “The Wanderings of Oisín” (168).

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