

CHAPTER III

“MONUMENTS OF UNAGEING INTELLECT”

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- "Sailing to Byzantium"

This Chapter is devoted to the discussion of the poems from The Tower (1928) and The Winding stair and Other Poems. At the time of the publication of The Tower Yeats was on the right side of sixty, in his full maturity with all the practical and philosophical wisdom, to which the poems in the volume are a solid and sound testimony. By this time he had become a most successful public man with Nobel Prize for Poetry, the Irish Senatorship and the towering poetic achievement to his credit, whispering into his ears the prophecy of immortality. In the poems of this volume the aged poet is at work on the issues both personal and public - his emotional embitterment and horror at the Irish plight, the threat of death his ambitious desire to belong to "the artifice of eternity" and his past regrets mingled with the present longings. We have here the poet Yeats defying old age and thereby death and defending himself against the ravages of it, indeed advising himself, "Do not go gentle into that good night, / Old age should burn and rave at close of day; / ~~R~~Rage, rage against the dying of the light"¹, to borrow the lines addressed by Dylan Thomas to his dying father. Let us have a look at A. Norman Jeffares' summation of the volume

in the following passage :

Yeats's change of style and his maturity were probably not generally recognised until the publication of The Tower in 1928. This volume was a collection of poems which reflect the richness of his life : marriage, a family, Senatorship of the Irish Free State, the Nobel Prize for Poetry, AV (A Vision)... the discovery of his Anglo-Irish ancestry in politics and literature. There was also the sharpened apprehension, brought by Ireland's civil war, of approaching conflagration in the world and, by approaching age, of ruin and decay."²

We will now concentrate our attention on the theme of alienation as expressed in the following poems selected from The Tower - "Sailing to Byzantium", "The Tower", "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", "Meditations in Time of Civil War", "The New Faces", "Two Songs From a Play", "Owen Aherne and His Dancers", "A Man Young and Old", "The Three Monuments" and "All Soul's Night."

✓ "Sailing to Byzantium"³ (1926) is Yeats's mental peregrination from modern materialist Ireland to the historic city of Byzantium, (the old name for Constantinople), the centre of Roman Empire and the symbol of the unity of art and life, of the spiritual and the material. The poem contains four stanzas of eight lines each. Each stanza has a key idea - the first deals with the poet's dissatisfaction with sensual, pleasure-loving modern Irish people; the second with his paltry old age; the third with his invocation to the sages or artists standing in God's 'holy fire' to accept him

into the "artifice of eternity" and the last with his desire to be transformed into a new form of the golden bird.

This poem is greatly significant as far as the theme of alienation is concerned. The modern young Irish people, mindless of the sacrifices and sufferings of their countrymen, both dead and alive, have become pleasure-loving and pleasure-seeking people and have taken a primrose path to life. They are interested and hence engaged in physical acts to derive pleasure, which is just transitory. This orgy of sensual pleasure is so wide-spread that even birds, fish, and fowl are caught in it; and thus it adumbrates their deaths. The poet rightly complains about them that "all neglect/Monuments of unageing intellect." In their making wrong moral choices and in their forgetting their high goals, the young Irish people are alienated from themselves.

The opening line of the poem "That is no country for old men" is justified by the second stanza in which the poet speaks of his old age very scornfully and indignantly. He points out that if the soul of an aged man does not sing loud and clap its hands, he is just "a paltry thing, / A tattered coat upon a stick;" as he is a bony figure he looks like a scarecrow, without any substance. His alienation from the young people in Ireland intensifies his self-alienation in his old age and hence he is determined to go to Byzantium

where he may seek for the unity of his being by assuming some mask or anti-self there.

In the third stanza he is already (of course, mentally) in the city of Byzantium. He invokes in the Church of Santa Sophia to the "sages standing in God's holy fire" to

"Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity."

The poet wants his heart to be consumed, to be purified from the dross in it, from the troubled carnal needs and desires. His whole personality is changed so much that he is unable to recognize himself. This is certainly the loss of identity on his part. On the liberation of his soul from his decayed body, he will not take "any bodily form from any natural thing" as it is subject to change, decay and death; but he will take the form of the golden bird fashioned by Greek artists to keep the emperor awake or to sing to the lords and ladies of Byzantium "Of what is past, or passing, or to come." The following passage from Harold Bloom's book, Yeats corroborates the foregoing comments:

The old poet of the old faith is doubly alienated, and this complex estrangement is the double root of the poem. As a poet, Yeats voyages to find a new faith; as a man, his quest is away-not from the body so much as from the decrepitude of the body. Byzantium is the state of being of "the thing become" as one of the drafts puts it, "and ageless beauty where age is living." In the final draft of the poem's first stanza, much of this richness of the quest-motive is gone, and age alone seems to impel the poet on his journey."⁴

Yeats purchased in 1916 the Norman tower, at Thoor Ballylee (Ballylee Castle) in Galway, near Lady Gregory's estate at Coole in Western Ireland. After his marriage he lived there for extended periods over several years. His emotional attachment to it meant a great deal to him later in his life. His stay at the tower enabled him to enjoy the benefit of Lady Gregory's company. Apart from the practical purposes behind the purchase of it and the material pleasures derived from it, Yeats had some spiritual purposes too in his mind. He wrote to Sturge Moore, who was designing the cover for The Tower volume :

"I am also sending you some photographs of the tower. I need not make any suggestions, except that 'The Tower' should not be too unlike the real object. I like to think of that building as a permanent symbol of my work plainly visible to the passer-by. As you know all my art theories depend upon just this - rooting of mythology in the earth."⁵

He also wrote of it to John Quinn on July 23, 1918 : " I am making a setting for my old age, a place to influence lawless youth, with its severity and antiquity."⁶ He wanted to make it a fitting 'monument' and 'symbol'. In the light of these remarks by the poet himself we come to know that the poet wanted his tower to give a meaningful message to the younger generations, he wanted it to be a symbol of solicitude, solitary intellect, asceticism, of his own height as a man in both private and public garbs.

The poem "The Tower"⁷ has close association with the tower, the poet's residence and with the poet's personal life. No journey to any Byzantium is needed now as he is more seriously prepared to journey into his selfhood in old age; here indeed he is sailing into himself for grave, philosophical self-examination. The poem has three sections of uneven length.

As in "Sailing to Byzantium" here in the first section of "The Tower" the poet speaks of his troubled heart, decrepitude of old age, his sharpened imagination and senses and his desire to make Plato and Plotinus' works his companions. In the second section while walking on the battlements of the tower his imagination brings forth the images of the past figures and events associated particularly with Mrs. French, the song about a beautiful peasant girl written by a blind poet which further recalls to him the blind Homer, who created beautiful Helen, the betrayer of so many human hearts. He is also reminded of his past tragic love affair with Maud Gonne, the modern counterpart of Helen, and of Hanarahan, his own creation in the prose story. He wants to invite these creatures in memory and ask them, "Did all old men and women, rich and poor, / Who trod upon these rocks or passed this door, / Whether in public or in secret rage / As I do now against old age?" The third section of the

poem is in a way his will and testament, by which he chooses young, strong, healthy daring men and declares that they will inherit his pride of a higher kind. Now in this section he hates the abstract philosophy of Plato and Plotius, whose books he look as his companions in the first section.

At the opening of the first section of the poem, the poet expresses the contrast between his ageing, decaying weak body and the peak of his sensuality never experienced before to that height. The harassing problems of old age intensified by the memories of the failure in love and by the excited, passionate imagination separate his youth from the present state. His old age ties him down to earth but his imagination takes him into the world of history, past philosophy and past literature. Thus his self is divided against itself. He feels that he is looking like a scarecrow, a caricature, an absurd creature, not a solid, meaningful personality as before. His opening question addressed to his troubled heart expresses his self-alienation.

"What shall I do with this absurdity -
O heart, O troubled heart - this caricature,
Decrepit age that has been tied to me
As to a dog's tail ?"

In this section the poet wants to make the books of Plato and Plotinus his companions, but he changes this position in the third section and announces : "I mock Plotinus thought/And cry in Plato's teeth." This shift in his philosophical

position does speak for the disintegration of his mind. Towards the end of this section he feels an urgent need to shape his soul anew in such a way that it may be able to face the decay of body and blood, testy delirium, dull decrepitude and death. Here he admits that his present soul or self is powerless and inadequate.

"Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen"⁸ (1919) is one of the most remarkable and the most successful of Yeats's poems dealing with violence. It has both the Irish national and international background. The First World War had been just over in 1918 but very strangely and ironically the British forces caused a lot of violence in Ireland in 1919, when the world was crying and clamouring for peace. The promises of peace and the cessation of violent activities were broken. The First World War caused a lot of destruction of traditional faiths and values and of social institutions. As a poet Yeats was moved by the colossal tragedy the world was undergoing. The losses and destruction caused by the War put him into the mood of contemplation in which he saw the universal decay and agony, in the past, the present and the future because the adverse powerful winds have always blown and destroyed all that is standing upright in its natural state of pride and pleasure. The poet-observer of the world of his time comes to know that decay has been present in all civilizations.

The poem has six sections. The first stanza of the first section presents the decay of Greek civilization, particularly in its opening line "Many ingenious lovely things are gone" and in the concluding lines "And gone are Phidias' famous ivories/And all the golden grasshoppers and bees." He is then reminded in the second stanza of the losses in the life of his own generation -- all romantic dreams, cherished faiths, the golden things possessed and hankered after in youth are no more. In the third stanza the poet speaks of how all efforts to stop war had become an illusion because Ireland was again put in a violent and chaotic state. He says: "We pieced our thoughts into philosophy/And planned to bring the world under s rule,/Who are but weasels fighting in a hole." Against the background of death, dissolution and extermination of all kinds of achievements, the artists in general then felt severed from their own creations, though they had a solace in the fact that such a tragic scene has been man's eternal lot. The poet observes :

"He who can read the signs nor sink unmanned
Into the half-deceit of some intoxicant
From shallow wits; who knows no work can stand,
Whether health, wealth or peace of mind were spent
On master-work of intellect or hand,
No honour leave its mighty monument,
Has but one comfort left : all triumph would
But break upon his ghostly solitude."

At the opening of the third section Yeats admits that some moralist or mythological poet has used the swan as the symbol of a solitary soul. The swan, like the artist, has a capacity to give "An image of its state." The swan in its flight goes on with all his pride, facing the winds of its own destruction. The artist's solitary soul, too, with full awareness of its disintegration and even extinction, goes on creating his work in the face of dangers, difficulties and destruction, knowing even that its own creations will also be destroyed. The poet says that modern man in his secret meditation is lost in the labyrinth created by him in art or politics. The artist does not mind if his works perish with his last breath : in fact, that would be an ideal and lucky death for him, "For triumph can but mar our solitude." The poet is convinced in the present circumstances that his past dreams and attempts to mend the troubles of mankind have proved to be vain and meaningless. His severance from his artistic self is voiced in the concluding lines of the section :

"O but we dreamed to mend
Whatever mischief seemed
To afflict mankind, but now
That winds of winter blow
Learn that we were crack-pated when we dreamed."

In the fifth section the poet invites the readers to mock at the great, the wise, the good and even the mockers

themselves as they have been all deceived by themselves. What they thought and said did not come to be true. The self-alienation of the great people from the achievements of their hands and heads is plainly stated at the opening of this section :

"Come let us mock at the great
That had such burdens on the mind
And toiled so hard and late
To leave some monument behind,
Nor thought of the levelling wind."

The last section of the poem is about the war situation, lust and violence which are rampant in the world. Here "The worst are full of passionate intensity/And mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

Three years after this violence, Ireland faced another tragic fact : the Civil War broke out in June 1922 and lasted until the end of May 1923. This was a great threat to the Irish unity as the country was divided into two major factions. The sensitive poet Yeats was so much perturbed and worried about Ireland's fate that he could do nothing but meditate on the situation. His father's death in 1922, his own partial blindness and the approaching deafness added to his troubles as a man and a poet. The darkened social, public life and the discouraging personal life stirred him to compose the seven-section poem "Meditations in Time of Civil War"⁹ (1922). Here the social and political life of Ireland

and the private life of the poet are juxtaposed with each other against the background of the turbulent conditions in Ireland. Two groups in Ireland, the Republican party and the National army were confronted with each other, menacing the life of the people. Houses, symbolic of traditions, security and promising the onward-going flow of life were destroyed by the people within the country!. The Big Houses were pulled down, totally forgetting their sacrifices for the national cause. Even the poet's Tower was under a constant threat and the poet was filled with uncertainty. Against the perspective of the loss, threat and disintegration, Yeats noticed that in the crevices of the loosening wall of his house some bird had built its nest where the mother birds fed their young ones. He, very helplessly, invited the bees (symbols of sweetness) to come and build in the empty house of the stare (a kind of bird). His invitation to the bees suggests that some 'domestic' life lived even by the birds was just not possible for the Irish people in their own houses. The poet's isolation from the others in society and the disintegration of his own self are properly given a vent in these lines of the sixth section :

"We are closed in, and the key is turned
On our uncertainty; somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned,
Yet no clear face to be discerned :
Come build in the empty house of the stare."

These lines are representative of the selfishness of the Irish people, their indifference to each other and their blindness to the Irish destiny. At the end of the section the poet highlights the self-alienation of the Irish people in general in this manner:

"We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love; O honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of the stare."

The last line of this quotation, which is the refrain in the section, rings in our ears the poet's message of building and rebuilding something out of the chaos and the rotten state of Ireland of that time.

In "The New Faces",¹⁰ addressed to Lady Gregory, Yeats thinks about what it is to be without her. He says to her, now grown old, that if she died before him, neither catalpa tree nor the scented lime would hear his living feet at her residence. He would not even tread where they "wrought that shall break the teeth of Time" (Yeats perhaps felt that he would die earlier than Lady Gregory). He does not bother about the reactions of the new generation as he is sure that "night can outbalance day." He remembers the moments spent in the company of Lady Gregory : "Our shadows rove the garden gravel still,/ The living seem more shadowy than they." The

living are deprived of real, true purposes in life; so they seem more shadowy than the shadows.

In the first song from "Two Songs from a Play"¹¹ the poet speaks of how Dionysus was born to Zeus and Persephone, how he was killed by the Titans at the instigation of Hera (Queen of Zeus) and how Athene was the cause of his resurrection and of the birth of the classical civilization which was later on terminated by Christianity as Virgin Mary brought forth Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. In the second song the poet points out that Christ, God and man in one, died a mortal death, the cause of a great confusion because it stressed the powerlessness of man before God. In the last stanza of this song the poet emphasizes the fact that man has always felt alienated from the things that he loves and esteems, as they last just for a moment. His love in youth vanishes soon, the artist's dreams are not all materialized, the great herald and the brave solidiers are deprived of their glory and might within no time. In general, man feels the sense of futility as he is everywhere convinced of the momentariness and mortality of all things :

"Everything that man esteems
Endures a moment or a day.
Love's pleasure drives his love away,
The painter's brush consumes his dreams;
The herald's cry, the soldier's tread
Exhaust his glory and his might:
Whatever flames upon the night
Man's own resinous heart has fed."

"Owen Aherne and His Dancers"¹², which concerns Iseult Gonne, the adopted daughter of Maud Gonne, was written within a weeks time after Yeats's marriage on October 21, 1917. It is a dialogue between Yeats, the regretful poet and his triumphant heart. Yeats in the first section of the poem, regrets that he was wrong in rejecting the love offered to him by Iseult Gonne (who was fifteen or so at that time) but his heart is unsympathetic and unrepentant because it thinks that it was right in advising the poet to reject her love and proposal. We have here a conflict between the poet's intellect and his heart which clearly suggests his self-division. The poet argues that his heart could not bear the burden of the unsought love (offered by Iseult Gonne) and hence it went mad. The winds blowing from the south, the east, the west and the north brought to it longing, despair, pity and fear respectively. It did not want to be hurt by love or give hurt to it and so it went mad. Then the poet ran away from his love.

In the second section of the poem the heart feels touchy at the poet's calling it mad and contends that it was right in dissuading the poet, fifty years old, from the love of a young girl because it thinks : "Let the cage bird and the cage bird mate and the wild bird mate in the wild." Then the poet raves at it and says : "I did not find in any cage

the woman at my side." Thus the conflict between the poet's intellect and his heart and the two opposite attitudes towards love represented by them speak volumes for the poet's inner division.

A series of poems brought under the caption "A Man Young and Old"¹³ (1926-1927), in eleven parts, presents the contrast between the poet's attitudes towards love in his youth and in his old age. The first four poems are about his love in his youth and the pangs suffered by him. The three of them (I,II and IV) concern Maud Gonne and the third concerns Diana Vernon. The first two entitled "First Love" and "Human Dignity" deal with the poet's frustrated love for Maud Gonne and its terrifying and petrifying effects on him. In "First Love" the poet says that Maud Gonne came into his life as "nurtured like the sailing moon/In beauty's murderous brood." Then he thought that her body bore flesh and blood, but he was mistaken. When he touched her heart he found that it was "a heart of stone." Since then, he says,

"I have attempted many things
And not a thing is done,
For every hand is lunatic
That travels on the moon."

In "Human Dignity", as Richard Ellmann says, "the emotion is represented rather than expressed; we look at a picture of a man's heart rather than at the heart itself."¹⁴ Here the poet says that her kindness was like that of the

moon - cold, fickle, and distant, and unable to distinguish between man and man :

"So like a bit of stone I lie
Under a broken tree
I could recover if I shrieked
My heart's agony
To passing bird, but I am dumb
From human dignity."

If we consider these two parts of the poem together, what we come across is that the images of the moon and stone amply illustrate the poet's mood and also the nature of his love. Both the lover and the loved one are petrified, are turned into hard personalities - Maud Gonne in her indifference and unkindness to him and he as the victim of her fickleness and coldness. Thus both are the self-alienated people. The poet's self-alienation has another side in that he is now dumb from human dignity, is aware that his thoughts are empty and emotions all dry.

II

After having discussed the poems from The Tower, we will now discuss, in this section, some poems from its companion volume The Winding Stair and other Poems. It was the Foundation Press that published The Winding Stair first in 1929. Later on in 1933 Macmillan published it, including in it the poems of Words for Music Perhaps, under the title

The Winding Stair and Other Poems. The Tower and the winding stair that leads up to it have so great a significance in Yeats's poetry as they had in his personal life. Richard Ellmann says :

"In 1922 he made several poems about the castle where with his family, which now included a son and daughter, he lived. The tower and many of its furnishings took on deep significance. For example, the winding stair which leads up the tower was an emblem of the spiritual ascent, with some side reference to the visionary gyres, which could be conceived of as the antinomy of spirit and matter or of heaven and earth. A sword given him by a Japanese named Sato was a symbol of life, its silk-embroidered sheath a symbol of beauty; while outside in the garden flowered 'the symbolic rose.' The Yeats touch turned all to symbol."¹⁵

Ellmann also says that

"In verse, as in prose, Yeats was searching to find adequate expression for the contest of self and soul, and the transcendence or equilibration of this contest. His winding stair, which suggests the tortuous path of life, has a tower around it to suggest fixity; these symbols are parallel to the gyres and sphere, and priority is impossible to assign."¹⁶

Yeats has developed the theme of the conflict between the spiritual and the material directly in two of his major poems - "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" and "Vacillation" in addition to which two other poems are selected from the volume under discussion to probe the theme of self-alienation in them - "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz" and "Byzantium."

Death is certain to all living beings. Time's cruel hand can spare none. Yeats' attitudes to and reactions against Time and Death have been expressed in several of his poems; he was of opinion that they can be conquered by a full acceptance of life as something holy and precious. Yeats speaks of the cruel effects of Time on the beautiful and lovely in his poem "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz."¹⁷ These two sisters were once young and beautiful but now "Withered old and skeleton-gaunt." Our awareness that Time is going to put an end to all our achievements creates in us a sense of isolation and of self-alienation which is expressed in this poem in these lines : "The innocent and the beautiful / Have no enemy but time." This sense of severance from one's glorious and significant achievements is so strong in the poet that he wants to set time itself flame so that this destroyer of all may be destroyed and thus humanity may be delivered from its relentless hands. The poet says: "Arise and bid me strike a match / And strike another till time catch."

"A Dialogue of Self and Soul"¹⁸ (1927) is Yeats's solid statement on the affirmation of life. It reminds one of Andrew Marvell's "A Dialogue between the Soul and the Body" and Tennyson's poem "The Two Voices." The poem is a contest between Self and Soul which is given in the first section of the poem. The section opens with the speech of the Soul which

allures the Self to come" upon the steep ascent" by climbing up the winding stair. This journey, the soul promises, leads one to the atmosphere spiritual vision and glory, of the pure air and of the darkness which is illuminating. The Soul promises the Self eternal life - the deliverance from "the crime of death and birth." In short, the renunciation of the earthly life is imperative for the attainment of the heavenly life. But the Self remains firm and clings to the life of aspirations on this earth and praises the glamour and glitter and glory of human life symbolized by Sato's ancient sword. But the soul is so adamant that it does not listen to the Self and says :

"Such fullness in that quarter overflows
And falls into the basin of the mind
That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
For intellect no longer knows
Is from the Ought, or Knower from the Known-
That is to say, ascends to Heaven;
Only the dead can be forgiven;
But when I think of that my tongue's a stone."

In that spiritual state one achieves the unity of being but that unity itself implies self-sacrifice and the loss of one's identify. Man's being found deaf, dumb and blind in that highest spiritual state speaks for his severance from his self; the failure of the intellect to distinguish "Is" from "Ought" and the "Knower" from the "Known" enhances his self-alienation.

"Byzantium"¹⁹ 1930 is apparently a sequel to "Sailing to Byzantium", already discussed earlier in this chapter. The poem is divided into five stanzas, each stanza consisting of eight lines.

In the first stanza the poet describes the present state of Byzantium, the capital of the Eastern Section of the Holy Roman empire. He says that it is now night time in Byzantium when the drunken soldiers of the Emperor have gone to sleep, and the light women have also stopped their activities after the midnight bell of Santa Sophia. All ugly and unpurified things and persons recede and fade away, at midnight, the time of disintegration, and also of spiritual meditation and divine revelations. After that we have the dome at Byzantium which is contemptuous of material and human life:

"All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins."

These lines are a very terse and harsh comment on human life in general. Man is nothing but a bundle of contradictions, conflicts and confusions which make him an unhappy creature, alienated from his true self. By using the word 'mire', the poet points out the impurity of the body of man that is subject to births and deaths. The fury and the mire

constitute the complexities of the earthly life Harold Bloom has beautifully exposed the theme of this poem in the following passage :

"Byzantium is, among much else, an elegy for the poetic self, and appears to have been at least partly elegiac in its genesis. As Shelley's Adonais is more Shelley's elegy for himself than one for Keats, so Byzantium is a vision granted to Yeats to help warm him back into life after a loss of being, but consciously for a little time only. Like Adonais, Byzantium is a high song of poetic self-recognition in the shadow of mortality, and is deliberately purgatorial and Dantesque in its situation and imagery."²⁰

In the second stanza the poet's confusion becomes more prominent as he is just unable to identify the form before him. Actually it is the figure of a man, but he identifies it with a shade, a form. It is, to him, the spirit from Hades, the land of shadows and of the dead. He sees a ghost which had been once a man, now purified. The poet calls it "death-in-life and life-in-death." The poet's inability to identify the figure of a man in clear-cut terms is suggestive of his self-alienation which can be seen in the entire second stanza:

"Before me floats an image, man or shade,
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
May unwind the winding path;
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
Breathless mouths may summon;
I hail the superhuman;
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death."

In the third stanza the bird of miracle, like the dome of Santa Sophia, "Scorn aloud/In glory of changeless metal/Common bird or petal/And all complexities of mire or blood." It is scornful of the conflicting emotions and passions of the human heart which remind us of man's self-alienation in the first stanza. The dancing images of the fourth stanza beget the fresh images in the last stanza and the "marbles of the dancing floor" "Break bitter furies of complexity." Man wavers between the claims of the flesh and of the spirit, between "That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea."

In an eight-section poem "Vacillation"²¹ (1931-32), as the title indicates, we have Yeats oscillating between the claims of the Self and of the Soul without any reconciliation between them or his firm and final commitment to either. Man, in general, is always divided between the opposites of things; he does not know whether he should fully prefer body or mind, Self or Soul, Soul or Heart. The first section begins thus: "Between extremities/Man runs his course." In the second section the poet speaks of the mystic tree which "Is half all glittering flame and half all green", symbolizing the spiritual and the physical aspects of man's life. The real joy perhaps lies in the fusion of the two. The fourth section opens with the poet's announcement that "My

fiftieth year had come and gone,/I sat, a solitary man,/In a crowded London shop,/An open book and empty cup/On the marble table-top." The fact that now he is on the wrong side of fifty intensifies his awareness of death and thereby increases his sense of self-alienation. He is 'solitary', with "an open book" and an "empty cup" which have all symbolic meanings. The poet perhaps thinks that his life, thus far, is just blank and empty, of course, in a spiritual sense. This awareness itself speaks for his self-alienation at a more serious and higher level. In the fifth section he is indifferent to the summers' sunlight and the winter's moonlight, since "Responsibility so weighs me down." His self-alienation is described by him in the following lines :

"Things said or done long years ago,
Or things I did not do or say
But thought that I might say or do,
Weigh me down, and not a day
But something is recalled,
My conscience or my vanity appalled."

In the sixth section the poet with the memories of the past remorse, humiliation and alarm, says that as his heart is perishable his songs will not last long. Hence what is imbibed on us is "Let all things pass away." The seventh section is a brief dialogue between the Soul and the Heart. As in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" here, too, the Soul urges the Heart to give up the earthly things in favour of the

heavenly ones. But the Heart differs from the Soul and asserts that its choice must fall on the earthly things which provide the poet with the themes for his poetry; it does want to remain dumb in the simplicity of divine fire and glory. This brief dialogue comprising the conflict between the Soul and the Heart betrays the two halves of the poet's personality and hence it is quoted here in its entirety:

"The Soul. Seek out reality, leave things that seem.
The Heart. What, be a singer born and lack a theme?
The Soul. Isaiah's coal, what more can man desire?
The Heart. Struck dumb in the simplicity of fire!
The Soul. Look on that fire, salvation walks within.
The Heart. What theme had Homer but original sin?"

In continuation of his argument, the poet, in the last section, prefers Homer to Von Hügel : "Homer is my example and his unchristened heart;" his choice here implies the continuation of his self-alienation.

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