

Praise Song

The Magical Theater of William Butler Yeats

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by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miranda Zent", located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

That motley drama--oh be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased forever more,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin
And Horror the soul of the plot.

--Edgar Allan Poe

If there is anything which human history demonstrates, it is the extreme slowness with which the ordinary academic and critical mind acknowledges facts to exist which present themselves as wild facts, with no stall or pigeonhole, or as facts which threaten to break up the accepted system.

--William James
What Psychological Research
Has Accomplished (1897)

In Memory of
Cora Lavinia Victoria Scott Hatch Daniels Tappan Richmond

A woman of many strengths, talents, and husbands.

Still the candle burns,
still the mystery,
still only a veiled
memory of knowledge
understood beyond the dream.

The night continues,
as night does
in darkness
cloaking the trembling earth
and the crumbling walls of the fortress
The howling wind
whispers the music of the sea,
singing sacred songs
of the primordial waters,
whispering vague secrets into weary ears.

The candle sears
a light of yellowed lace
onto those manuscripts
that cannot contain
the truth and beauty
of the question.

Shall I tell her,
the knowing spirit
outside her window questioned,
shall I tell her all of the things
she will not find
outside of herself.

She sat a while,
waiting in agitated stillness,
waiting for the night to come;
Waiting for the moon
the moon
the metallic moon
it seemed as if it never would.
And when it did finally
she was afraid
she was afraid
afraid of the darkness
But she heard music
she heard the music
she heard the music
and it frightened her

but still she heard it
and it wouldn't leave her
The nocturne without a coda
Without a lullaby
The music of silence.

Aleister Crowley describes the archetypal image of the fool as "every man, born into the world not in entire forgetfulness..." (Crowley 62). He is the initiate into those mysteries surrounding the mystical knowledge he has not completely forgotten, stumbling, as the tarot depicts, towards the edge of a curious cliff, and though an animal snaps at his wandering heels to warn him of the approaching abyss, his vision remains fixed with curiosity, and the depth of the canyon seems, if anything, irrelevant.

As the fool journeys on his path towards the understanding of the magician, he stumbles into a labyrinth of mysticism, containing journeys within journeys, each leading to an inexact center. Wandering the twisted passageways, he discovers such treasure rooms as ritual magic, the power of music, myth, and the unlimited potential of the human imagination. This journey of the fool describes the esoteric mystery that surrounds the work of the great Irish poet and playwright, William Butler Yeats.

Yeats' musician in The Only Jealousy of Emer calls this twisted path to adept understanding the "labyrinth of the mind." The song of the journey elicits the feeling of darkness and loss of control that accompany the initial steps into the labyrinth. She calls to the mind's eye the initial break into the darkened hallways, singing of a great storm, the onset of the fool's wanderings into a state of twilight, bordering the thin line between consciousness and unconsciousness, or the dream world and waking reality:

The storm arose and suddenly fell
 Amid the dark before day had broken.
 What death? What discipline?
 What bonds no man could unbind,
 Being imagined within the labyrinth of the mind,
 What pursuing or fleeing,
 What wounds, what bloody press
 Dragged into being this loveliness?

Regarding the labyrinth of the mind as the mythological labyrinth of King Minos provides a symbolic representation of the journey into the self. The minotaur conquered by Theseus in ancient Crete symbolize the obstacles that the initiate must overcome before harnessing the power of the self, described by Yeats as a great storm, the stripping and purification of the self. Conquering the minotaur grants the opportunity to achieve the "core element," symbolized by Ariadne, Minos' daughter and priestess of his kingdom. Theseus' achievement of Ariadne becomes the "loveliness" the musician describes, or the exalted understanding of Ariadne's priestly knowledge.

Thus, the student of Yeats searches the endless paths of this labyrinth just as if he is Theseus, clinging to the poet's writings as if clutching Ariadne's thread. He seeks to slay the minotaur within himself in hopes of marrying with the divine spirit of Ariadne, embodied within the work of the poet. Marrying with Ariadne implies an understanding of the emphatic soul of Yeats' work, nestled in the essence of mysticism, what Alan Watts calls, "the consciousness of union with God...not as an idea conceived, but as a reality experienced" (Flannery 20).

Therefore, as Robert Fagels describes, the initiate at the outset of the mystery of mysticism must, "suffer wanderings, exhausting rushing to and fro, and anxious, interminable journeys through the darkness; then, just before the consummation itself, all the terrors, shuddering, trembling, sweat and wonder" (Fagels 72). He suffers the terror of revelation in order to embody the compelling force behind Yeats' artistic vision, consequently finding himself "lost in mind's pondering" at the "marvelous thing" that consumed the poet throughout a lifetime of spiritual contemplation and magical practice.

Countless manuscripts have attempted to explain Yeats' work with mysticism, yet many

remain dry, void of the spirits Yeats gingerly summons in his poetic Vision. Kathleen Raine points out that perhaps a reason behind the difficulty of academically documenting Yeats' dogma lies in the fact that the faith towards which he aspired cannot be understood in academic terms (Raine 1). Therefore, academic documentation tends to adhere to technical explanation of Yeats' vision. (Flannery 16).

While the extreme complexity of his vision makes this technical analysis necessary, academic understanding of the technical work of Yeats only takes the initiate to a limited point of understanding. "Thought," says Yeats, "is nothing without action;" and if we confine ourselves to technical explanation of his vision, we fail to recognize an entire world of magic. It therefore becomes necessary, as Yeats states, to "master what is most abstract there and make it the foundation of our visions, (so that) the curtain may ring up on a new drama." (Vision, xi).

The heart of this project lay in a theatrical experiment aimed at discovering and practically applying this abstract foundation of Yeats' artistic vision, attempting to create an art form similar to his proposed "new drama." This involved applying those mystical elements of the Yeatsian labyrinth, including spiritualism, myth and magic, on palpable level to a production of one of the poet's most popular and powerful plays, The Only Jealousy of Emer.

I

DISCOVERY OF THE PORTAL

Stating the Problem

**She has held the key since her birth;
It was the keyhole that so perplexed her.**

Yeats masks the complexity of this mystical labyrinth with subtle poetry and deliberate simplicity in an effort to allow quintessential expression of what he calls the "core element," the essential goal of the mystic. Similar to greek theater, Yeats expresses this core element through a spiraled series of images, rather than a linear plot of events.

The production of imagistic theater requires an element of possession by a divine presence, stemming from the soul, manifested within the duality of what Nietzsche calls the Apollinian image and Dionysian intoxication.

These gods represent masks of the human imagination in its most divine sense, as will be explained in the following pages. This divine presence elevates the theater Yeats strove to create beyond a plane of entertainment or intellectual contemplation, creating a religious, spiritual experience that regards the art form as a sacrament, and the theater as a sacred temple. Thus, Yeats brings the theater back to its primitive, holy purpose as understood by the greeks, the "theatron," or the place where the gods are seen. (Brockett 36).

Western acting techniques, such as the acting system most popularly applied in the United States, The Method, fail to account for this element of divine possession. A briefly stated and greatly generalized description of The Method adheres to the basic premise that the actor may only realistically express a character through first hand experience of the character's situation.

This Method achieves powerful dramatic expression in naturalistic or realistic theater, such as the genius of Marlin Brando's performance in Tennessee William's Streetcar Named Desire.

However, a great problem surfaces when an actor is faced with a character beyond the realm of human experience, such as Ariel or Prospero in Shakespeare's The Tempest, a witch of Macbeth, or the mythological figures of magic found in greek tragedy and Yeatsian drama. Such characters embody more than earthly human experience, existing within a spiritual realm beyond material existence. The actor therefore cannot experience such a magical character on a strictly material level, as the Method dictates. Rather, he must work **from** this spiritual realm, expressing himself as both dramatist and poet, as Nietzsche describes,

"let anyone have the ability to behold continually a vivid play and to live constantly surrounded by hosts of spirits, and he will be a poet; let anyone feel the urge to transform himself and to speak out of other bodies and souls, and he will be a dramatist." (Nietzsche 64).

Expression from the spiritual realm implies a possession, a ceremonial expression of the divine imagination, the creator of the spirits Nietzsche describes...or, as the greeks understood it, the manifestation of the god. This manifestation of the god elevates the theater to a divine plane, divulging the magic and fascination behind theatrical expression.

II

WHAT WAS WRITTEN ON THE WALLS

Divine Theater

O Dulchis, O Pica O Jesu Fille Maria
Spiritus Sanctus
Breathe the sweet song
Tethered through the boiling sea
Exultate
Exultate
Exultate

The great power of art lies in its ability to elevate the spirit to a plane of exaltation, creating the wind that breathes under the wings of the soul. Pure artistic expression springs from intoxication, a Dionysian ecstasy that fuses the conscious mind with what Yeats calls the Anima Mundi, the primordial being, or the "soul of the world." (Conner 150). Nietzsche augments a description of this primordial being in his essay, The Birth of Tragedy calling it a "raging desire for existence and joy...in view of the exuberant fertility of the universal will." (Nietzsche 104). Great art encapsulates a certain truth and beauty that elevates the Anima Mundi and the creative mind to enlightened understanding of each other, if only for a moment; and this is the value of art.

The artist finds divinity within the use of his imagination in the act of quintessential creation: bringing the abstract vision of the primordial being into conscious reality. Yeats writes A Vision as a system of tapping into this divinity within the self. The system, Yeats writes, seeks to leave the imagination "free to create as it chose(s) and make all that it create(s), or could create, part of the one history, and that the soul's" (Vision xi).

The artist's creation from this single history, then, springs from the source of the soul. Yeats regards the soul as the Anima Mundi, that realm of the psyche harboring the primitive wisdom, primitive meaning first, that created the universe. Psychologist Carl Jung describes this primitive knowledge as the Collective Unconscious, a memory common to the human race, or "representations collectives which underlie the slogan, the catchword, and on a higher level, the language of the poet and mystic." These collective representations make up the archetype, which Jung describes as the "mythological motif or primordial image." (Jung 39).

Within the Collective unconscious, Jung argues, lies the "deposit of mankind's whole ancestral experience...rich in emotional imagery of the magic personality, exalting a group of archetypes into the supreme regualting principles of...life...in unconscious recognition of their tremendous psychic power." (Jung 43).

Individual speculation defines the line between Collective Unconscious and the soul. If we may speculate for a moment that the soul exists as the nucleus of the Collective Unconscious, the soul may be seen as the keeper of divine primordial wisdom. George Bernard Shaw describes this wisdom of the soul as the divine essence of God, existing not within the macrocosm, but the microcosm. Artistic expression springs from this divine center as a way of linking the divine wisdom of the soul with the conscious mind, presenting this wisdom in the form of an apparition or image, which may manifest itself in sight, sound, or intuitive/spiritual presence.

These images are created through an imaginative process. Therefore, the imagination becomes a conduit between the divine wisdom of the Anima Mundi and the conscious mind, providing waking recognition of the soul. Thus, as Shaw proposes, the imagination becomes the

divine voice of God, insofar as it expresses the divinity within the self. (Saint Joan 16)

Possession, then, is the possession of oneself, the reconciliation of the conscious, waking, individual self with the primordial wisdom of the Anima Mundi, when manifested in the images created by the divine imagination.

Nietzsche describes the need to reach this wisdom of the Anima Mundi as an essential element of the universal will: the constant, necessary drive to create before destruction and resurrection.

The creation inspired by the universal will stems from the primordial source of the Anima Mundi. Therefore, great art must express the truth and purity of this primordial being, the soul. This expression of truth requires the creation of a "dream image" from the uncontrolled "will" of the primordial being, which, like a dream, links conscious thought with an image manifested from the unconscious. This creative process plays a key role in the ceremonial possession of ritual theater. (Nietzsche 64).

The dramatist achieves possession through a Dionysian intoxication of the self inspired by exalted music, frenzied dance, and Apollinian contemplation divorced from analytical or conceptual thought. This intoxication provides an avenue for the manifestation and worship of the divine presence incarnated in ceremonial possession. Nietzsche describes this possession as "the dramatic proto-phenomenon: to see oneself transformed before one's own eyes and to begin to act as if one had actually entered into another body, another character."

According to Nietzsche, "dramatic proto-phenomenon" requires a "magical transformation...in which the Dionysian reveler...beholds another vision outside himself, as the Apollinian complement of his own state." (Nietzsche 63-64).

Nietzsche also argues that the great power of Greek tragedy lies in its presence of the primordial being, contacted through the intoxicated frenzy of the god Dionysus. The actor requires communion with Dionysus to achieve the intoxicated state necessary for negation of the self, an essential element of possession.

Once the actor shrugs his conscious sense of self, he opens himself to embodiment of Nietzsche's proposed vision outside of the self, an alternate identity, or a character. Therefore, Nietzsche terms the character the "Apollinian image" or the "dream image...not a whole he has composed out of particular traits, picked up here and there, but an obtrusively alive person before (the actor's) very eyes..." (Nietzsche 63).

The Apollinian image becomes a second facet of the self, ideally springing from the primordial being. The actor in a sense divides himself, becoming the Dionysian reveler while at the same time beholding a second image of himself, residing outside of his own being. In performance, the dramatist possesses this Apollinian image while in the intoxicated state of Dionysus, reconciling these two divine facets of the self. (Nietzsche 92). Therefore, in its most profound sense, possession becomes Thomas Aquinas' conception of Eternity: "the possession of oneself, as in a single moment."

Nietzsche further describes the effectiveness of this possession as "capable of communicating the artistic gift to a multitude, so they can see themselves surrounded by such a host of spirits while knowing themselves to be essentially one with them." (Nietzsche 64).

This ritual of possession sanctimoniously grants to the theater what Yeats calls "theatrical magic...something close to pure music...a stage that allows the energies of dance, speech and music to free the arts from imitation" (Explorations 55).

This theatrical magic illuminates the beauty of theater in its holiest sense, expounding the purity and light of the Holy Ghost, the divine wisdom of Ariadne, and the brief glimpses of Enlightenment into the forever complex journey towards the understanding of the self: in essence, magic.

III

THE PROMISE OF ARIADNE

Magic

She spoke to me briefly as I played.
 She said I should not understand
 What I needed,
 For the essence of it would blind me,
 Like looking directly into the center of the sun.
 Your eyes are accustomed to the darkness,
 They are accustomed to the loneliness
 Of the passageways.

She spoke, feel the music
 She said, feel the anger and the hatred and the confusion
 And the love for it
 Like some masochistic child at play
 With the bloody dolls of his own hand.

"In order for magic to occur," said Yeats, "the imagination must have a will of its own"
 (Explorations 105).

Magic necessarily exists in the abstract, and therefore cannot be described in conceptual
 terms. Rather, we must look to image and metaphor for its description.

Magic springs from a divine center, which may be seen as the bubbling water of a
 mountain spring. This spring represents what alchemists call the aqua permanens, the primordial
 waters, the seas across which the Spiritus Mundi, the spirit, or breath of the world, whispered
 the song of the Creator in the Beginning (Conner 160). It is, as Yeats describes, the blood-pool
 of Achilles, containing the terror and wonder of the of the primordial being, or the soul
 (Explorations 366). The ritual of dipping a chalice into this spring and drinking from it results

in embodying the creative power of the aqua permanens, breathing the Spiritus Mundi, adorning the power the adept calls magic.

The Apollinian image is a creation of the imagination, which expresses the voice of the primordial being through a magical transformation. The belief in the reality of this image as an entity outside of the self personifies the imagination that it may, as Yeats says, speak as it chooses. If the imagination is a conduit between the primordial being and the conscious mind, then freedom of the imagination allows expression of the soul to the conscious mind. Thus, the imagination develops, as Yeats proposes, a will of its own, opening a gateway for magical expression.

Magic inspires the imagination to create with the fevered drive of the universal will. The creations of the magical imagination embody the whole of human potential, inspiring a relationship with divinity, or the soul.

The study of magic requires practical application, for as Kathleen Raine reminds us,

"The merely academic study of magical symbolism may be likened to the analysis of musical scores by a student who does not know that the documents he meticulously annotates are merely indications for the evocation of music from instruments of whose very existence he is ignorant. Magic, in other words, is an art." (Raine 1).

Yeats likewise sought to bring this art, the magical creation, to the theater transforming the theater into a forum for magical practice. Therefore, magic surfaces as the ideal expression, or the core element, of Yeatsian theater. Direction of The Only Jealousy of Emer consequently focused on the production of an ideal theater, brimming with the art of magical expression.

Yeats provides an optimum structure for the presence of magic in The Only Jealousy of Emer, showing his mastery for magical practice as he layers the many complex forces at work in the piece in a brilliantly simplistic structure, a form required for magical expression.

IV

THE BOOK OF SPELLS

The Only Jealousy of Emer

O Emer, Emer, there we stand
Side by side hand in hand
Tread the threshold of the house
As when our parents married us

O my lost Emer

Yeats' understanding of magic and the holiness of the theatrical art form elevate his artistic vision beyond that of a world-class poet, divulging the understanding of an ancient priest. His words supply a carefully organized structure built around the evocation of magic. This structure, like the web of a spider, finds strength in its simplicity.

The Only Jealousy of Emer allows the uncontrolled will of magic to roar with fiery life throughout the piece, yet the structural integrity of the piece harnesses this magical power, just as the woman of the Strength in the tarot stills the untamed lion, with gentle, non-imposing music and light.

The characters represent symbolic figures from the Celtic epic, The Tain. Yeats' utilization of these mythological figures impregnates the script with the magical archetypes from which they are manifested. The piece ultimately embodies the magic of creation, expressed in the archetypal significance of dawn.

The image of dawn signifies an integral phase of creation: light, singing from the depths of darkness, ultimately rising in the glorified presence of Apollo, or Enlightenment.

The setting occurs in a suspended state of twilight, amid the last black of night and the red of dawn, pregnant with anticipation of the trembling need for the sun to rise out of the watery grave of the sea.

The play opens after Cuchulain, the fiery, unvanquishable warrior-king born of the Celtic god Lugh learns that he has murdered his only son in a duel. Grief stricken and mad with the terror of his talent to kill, Cuchulain frantically "fights the deathless sea," wading to his death in the torrential waters he allows to overcome him.

Applying this act to the dawn myth, Cuchulain represents the sun, melting into the waters of the sea at the closing of the day. As the sea swallows the sun, night curtains the earth. The death of Cuchulain inspires a great storm that slashes the sea, described in the opening song of the musician.

After the storm, the quiet light of Cuchulain silently shines from the floor of the sea, dancing on its waters, floating finally up to the heavens where it shimmers as the ghostly light of the moon.

As the play opens, Cuchulain's magical queen, Emer, finds the drowned body of Cuchulain on a deserted beach. With the intention of bringing her husband's spirit back from its purgatorial state, Emer takes his body to a fisherman's hut, a haven and sanctuary from the trembling air after the night storm.

In terms of the archetype, Emer represents the Mother-earth, in love with and dependent upon the sun for its warmth, light, and ability to give life. The Egyptian myth of creation describes the earth and sun existing in the Beginning under the sea. A mound of earth rises from the sea, becoming the first island, where grows a lotus blossom. From this lotus blossom sprang

the sun and moon, which flew to reside in the sky, no longer joined with earth. The jealousy of Emer may then be seen as the longing of the earth to again join with the sun, and the inability of the two to ever come together.

Emer, conscious of her inability to call her husband's spirit back from its watery grave, calls upon his mistress, Eithne Inguba, to lure him back from the sea, as her own voice no longer holds dear to him. Eithne Inguba then becomes the archetypal image of the morning star, a vision of beauty connected to the path of the sun.

The two women perform a spiritualist ritual aimed at calling Cuchulain's spirit back to them, "throwing the changeling (of death) out." Emer performs a fire ritual, using the healing magic of the hearth-fire to comfort Cuchulain's spirit away from the sea, while Eithne Inguba attempts to lure him with her beauty. Through the frenzied dance of the fire ritual, Emer brings herself to a state of Dionysian intoxication in order to perform the magic necessary to save her husband's life.

This ceremony results not in the return of Cuchulain, but in the manifestation of Bricriu, a mysterious faery from the "country under wave." Bricriu, the "maker of discord among gods and men" becomes representative of the death figure...a godless messenger of change, favoring neither good nor evil, residing between shore and ocean, existing continuously in the intermediate state between life and death.

The sight of Bricriu drives Eithne Inguba away from the fisherman's hut, an act Bricriu explains by stating, "I show my face and everything (Cuchulain) loves must fly away." Emer defies him with the steadfast resilience of the earth, claiming he is "full of lying speech and

mockery," and further questions the demands of the bargain Bricriu has come to strike for the safe return of her husband.

The faery informs her that her only hope of saving Cuchulain's life lies in renouncing her one hope, that her husband may love her again. Though Emer initially refuses, the affirmative outcome of Bricriu's proposal becomes inevitable, for the earth must release the sun to the sky in order for life to continue.

Bricriu confirms the necessity of this bargain as he grants her sight into the spiritual realm where the ghost of Cuchulain now resides. She sees her husband, once the brilliant light of the sun, now a weak, frail phantom of himself. Emer realizes the intense danger of Cuchulain's circumstance as a second faery, Fand, representative of the sea, emerges from the icy waters to stock the weakened spirit of Cuchulain, attempting to lure him into a state of oblivion, residing forever in the peaceful darkness of the ocean floor.

On an archetypal level, Fand wishes to return once again to the Beginning, when the sea covered the earth. Understanding this wish of Fand requires a brief explanation of her place on Yeats' "Phases of the Moon," a circular cycle of creation plotted to the changing faces of the moon, delineated in A Vision.

Yeats describes Phase Fifteen of the lunar cycle as a "phase of complete beauty," where "Thought and Will are indistinguishable, effort and attainment are indistinguishable; and this is the consummation of a slow process; nothing is apparent but dreaming...the words musical, sensuous, are but descriptions of that converging process." It is a phase where "no human being may inhabit, only the intermediate spirit." This spirit experiences "terror of solitude, its forced, painful and slow acceptance, and a life haunted by terrible dreams." (Vision 69-71).

The Spirits at Fifteen "may only free themselves from terror by becoming entirely antithetical..." which may occur by giving what Yeats calls the "Kiss of Death" to the Spirit at Phase One, represented by Cuchulain, an "automatic" giver of the "Kiss of Life." (Vision 241-244). Looking to the image of the lunar cycle, the Spirit at Fifteen represents the full moon just before its waning, or destruction of its light. The Spirit at One symbolizes the new moon, coming from death, darkness, into life. Therefore, Fand requires the "Kiss of Life," bringing her back to the beginning, that she may experience the Creative Will again, escaping her terror, the death of the waning cycle of the moon. In essence, Fand wishes to be born again, escaping death, by trading places with Cuchulain, who, if the trade is complete, will exist in eternal oblivion.

Attempting to lure him into granting her the "Kiss of Life," she begins a sensual dance with Cuchulain, who now embodies the ghostly light of the moon. The dance imitates the scattered movement of the moon's reflection on the water of the sea.

Emer beholds this dance in turmoil, seeing the spirit of her husband lured away by the peaceful promise of the sea. Bricriu expresses the urgent need for her to save her husband, saying,

"Cry out that you renounce his love;
 make haste
 And cry that you renounce his love for ever...
 I am Fand's enemy come to thwart her will,
 And you stand gaping there. There is still time.
 Hear how the horses trample! She has mounted up.
 Cuchulain's not beside her in the chariot.
 There is still a moment left; cry out, cry out!"

In a flourish of brilliant strength and beauty, Emer renounces her love for Cuchulain, and his spirit once again returns to his body. He awakes in the arms of Eithne Inguba, the returning star of morning, crying, "Your arms, your arms, O Eithne Inguba, I have been in some strange place and am afraid." As Cuchulain and Eithne Inguba leave together, Emer senses dawn approaching, and responds simply, "Cuchulain wakes."

Thus, with the return of the sun to the sky, life returns to the earth. Emer's spirit becomes the resilient rose cracking through stone, life continuing from a nearly petrified earth.

Yeats weaves these elements together through the medium of music that resonates throughout the piece, from the songs of the musician to the lyrical heartbeat of the verse. The song of the musician becomes the invocation of the muse, the "call to the mind's eye." Her music sings the song of the sea, the love of the earth for the sun, and the longing inspired by their impossible rendezvous. She sings the anger of Cuchulain's weakness, the bitter laughter of death's necessity, the pain of truth, and finally, the exuberant joy, terror, and wonder of renewed life.

With so many delicate elements of magic at work in the piece, direction of The Only Jealousy of Emer required a theatrical model that embodied the same delicacy, simplicity, and power of Yeats' careful verse.

This model demanded a structure that would allow the element of magic necessary for Emer's presentation to become manifest in the theater. Direction, therefore, turned to a model inspired by Yeats' religion, Spiritualism.

"The Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and ah! bright wings.

--Gerard Manley Hopkins

V

ARIADNE'S PRAYER

Spiritualism as Theater

**"She calls to me
I can hear her songs and dancing..."**

--W.B. Yeats
The Land of Heart's Desire

Yeats age, the Victorian era, signified an age of religious uncertainty. With the discovery of so many new and unexplainable forces such as electricity, magnetism, the X-ray, radioactivity, and the then questionable science of human psychology, the eyes of society ceased looking heavenward for answers to questions unknown, focusing rather on an internal process of philosophical contemplation. The world came to be understood in the manner that philosophers such as Descartes theorized: a metaphorical clock, masterminded by a great Clock Worker (God) and then put into motion, its laws and mechanics discernable through a process of intellectual dissection. A movement of what many historians label "materialism" ensued, and in many respects, the new religion of Western society became science.

Even with materialism at its height, however, the eternal questions of the after life, man's purpose on earth, and the existence of God continued to plague the intellects of the era as they do today. An infant movement known as spiritualism found intellectual and emotional appeal by combining religion with scientific certainty. Utilizing the methods of materialist science, the spiritualist attempted to disprove the notion that anything supernatural, meaning unknowable until death, existed.

Spiritualists approached the world in a manner similar to the materialists in that they believed intellect could discover and understand the mysteries of the universe, especially the religious question of the afterlife (Owen 21). The spiritualists explored these religious questions using a process of what they called spiritual communications, dialogues with the dead. Through these spiritual interviews, the spiritualists sought affirmation of a cosmic order and explanation of a rational universal code. In essence, spiritualists intended to rationalize religion.

Ironically enough, in spite of their shared emphasis on the importance of science, spiritualism evolved into an effort to combat materialism. Because it was impossible to scientifically prove the existence and validity of spiritual communication, spiritualists relied on a certain amount of faith in the validity of their subject. This element of faith necessarily meant suspension of belief in the absolutism of material reality, which scraped against the central grain of materialist thought. The materialist dogma required scientific proof of existence prior to recognition of a newly discovered phenomena, much less consideration of its validity. Thus, a main objective of the spiritualists became presentation of an alternative to materialist methods of discovery, allowing faith to play a factor in answering questions of the world beyond.

The suspension of proof and acquisition of open-minded faith became a cohesive and absolutely essential element within spiritualist circles. As one historian described, "If they turned to spiritualism as refuge from bleak mechanism, emptiness, and despair, they did so as part of a widespread effort in this period to believe in **something**." (Oppenheim 27). This element of a desperate, diligent search for belief in a meaning of life beyond earthly bounds seems to illuminate the important role that spiritualism played in the structure and framework of Victorian society. In a sense, the spiritualists enhanced the quest for an all-encompassing scientific

knowledge to include knowledge of the metaphysical and unknown components of planes beyond materialism, reminding the world that believing did not solely consist of seeing.

SPIRITUALISM

In its most general sense, spiritualism adhered to the basic premise that the human spirit continues to exist after the death of the body, and that communication with the spirits beyond this world is possible (Cavendish 2656). Spiritual communication, or communication with the dead, occurred during a seance: the time, place and forum that the spirits could come in contact with earthly sitters.

Spiritual energy, the unseen force that moved physical objects such as tables or played musical instruments, was finally described in scientific circles by parapsychologist Karl, Baron von Reichenbach as an "imponderable force" or a force "without weight or extension but with measurable properties and observable physical effects" (Moore 30). In this age of discovery, spiritual energy shared equal attention as a scientific possibility with electromagnetism, the X-Ray, or radioactivity. Usually one gifted individual, the medium, conducted the seance, channeling spiritual communication and energy for the perception of the sitter.

The medium harbored the ability to communicate with, be possessed by, and in some cases, create physical manifestations of spirits desiring earthly contact during a seance. The medium usually spent the seance in a state of trance, often within the confines of a darkened cabinet located somewhere within the seance room. The cabinet's purpose lay within providing the absolute darkness that the medium claimed to require in order to achieve the profound state

of trance necessary for spiritual communication. Once entranced, the medium utilized a number of methods for communication with the dead.

The most common conduit of the beginning medium was automatic writing, in which the medium scribbled on blank sheets of paper until the hand was "seized" by a spiritual presence and a message written. Another method common to fledgling mediums were spiritual "rappings" or knocks on walls or tables within the seance room, usually deciphered by the medium and sitters using a coded system of communication, (such as one knock for yes, two for no, etc.). This limited system gradually evolved into a less restrictive system of communication which utilized the alphabet. Employing the alphabet system, the medium tediously repeated the alphabet until the spirit rapped at a letter, eventually spelling out a complete sentence. Various other tools were also implemented, such as the ouija board and even musical instruments.

But by far the most bizarre, unexplained, and controversial seance involved full-form materialization of a spirit. The entranced medium, usually concealed by the darkened cabinet, created a palpable, very solid physical form of a spirit, who walked with, talked with, hugged, kissed, physically abused, and even stole money from the sitters. Not surprisingly, a great deal of these materialist seances were found to be fraudulent, while at the same time, were prime examples of superb theater, as will be discussed in the following pages. However, some materializations were never proven to result from trickery, baffling even the most thorough scientific investigators. These accounts continue to mystify parapsychologists even today (Brandon 14).

Though the medium necessarily possessed a certain "gift" of clairvoyancy, spiritualists maintained that every individual had the power within him or her to become a medium, requiring

only the harnessing of that power and development to its full potential (Owen 40). Despite this conviction, however, Victorian society most commonly assumed that the most talented mediums were women. A number of reasons furthered this belief, each having to do with a woman's place in society.

The ideal Victorian woman innately possessed a "refined moral nature and predisposition to spiritual perfectibility" (Owen 29), or rather, spirituality was part of her femininity. This was not by any means a fresh revelation. Throughout the history of Western civilization, women stereotypically have existed as the guardians of morals and magic, (Nead 12-16) such as the greek goddess Hecate; whereas the male typified the chalice of wisdom and intellect, or Apollo. This stereotypical dichotomy placed the female medium into the forefront of spiritualist circles, where intellect found value in learning from spirituality, rather than ignoring it, discarding it, or placing it on a pedestal separate from rational or intellectual observation.

Just as a woman's femininity affected her status as a medium, so also did her place in Victorian society. The Victorians not only considered the ideal woman a guardian of morals, but a kind of sacred vessel of selflessness, who graciously sacrificed herself for the sake of those around her: her father, her husband, and the revered crux of her existence, her children (Nead 16-23). A sense of individuality, sexuality, or intellect for a woman was considered a disdainful display of unfeminine selfishness. This led to an imposed element of feminine self-abdication, which resulted in the makings of a talented medium, for it was this very element of negation of self that the spiritualists maintained made possible "possession by another." In other words, the most "feminine" woman's passivity granted her increased power as a medium.

Although a large portion of society found the mediums fascinating and appealing; another group adamantly opposed their profession, religious beliefs, or even their very existence. Likewise, though in many ways society created her, a large portion of it also attempted to shackle her and her fellow spiritualists as "incipently insane" (Owen 145).

The element of her womanhood caused the female spiritualist to fall under particular attack from the Victorian medical community, who considered the expected "passive temperament" of a woman and still somewhat mysterious female biology to produce a greater susceptibility to neurosis. Some members of the medical profession took the "hysteria" of entranced mediums as evidence of either masturbation, sexual excess, or suffering from such maladies as "uteromania," synonymous with "mediomania" (medium-mania). The "slightly off-balanced" womb of the woman afflicted with such a mania renders her susceptible to "embrace some strange ultra-ism, such as Mormonism, Mesmerism, Socialism, or often Spiritualism." According to an account by physician Frederic R. Marvin, she becomes

"possessed by the idea that she has some startling mission in the world. She forsakes her home, her children, and her duty, to mount the rostrum and proclaim the virtues of free-love, elective affinity, or the reincarnation of souls. Allow the order to advance and it becomes a chronic malady, and, alas! the once intelligent, cultivated, and pure woman sinks through a series of strange isms until she reaches the despicable level of the demi-monde." (Owen 149)

While this malady may seem almost farcical to modern-day investigators of spiritualism, at the time, the medical profession proposed a great threat to spiritualists, incarcerating hundreds in harrowing Victorian asylums because of their religious beliefs.

When not attacking her as a uteromaniac, society continued to besiege the medium with accusations of conducting "unsavory sexual practices." The close physical contact involved in the seance, such as hand holding and the hugging and kissing of the spiritual manifestations,

caused many circles of society to dismiss spiritual aspirations as nothing more than the medium's "heavily disguised venereal passions." (Owen 148)

In fact, some members of Victorian society considered the materialist seance nothing more than disguised pornography, whose theatrical and fantasized settings made possible the staging of desire. Considering that the medium's purpose was to submit, be seized, and possessed by another, the sexual connotations become clear. The fact that many of the most famous mediums were usually young, extremely feminine, and attractive adds to this fundamental argument. Opponents of spiritualism further objected to the ropes, straps, belts, and locks that secured the medium within the cabinet. Although the purpose of this fastening was to insure the immobility of the medium, and likewise quell suspicions of fraud; objections occurred on the grounds that the sitters derived sexual pleasure from the visual display of bondage (Owen 150).

Regardless of society's objections, however, the case may also be made that the spiritualist seance was, in actually, a type of magical art form, and likewise, some of the most sublime theater Western society has witnessed.

Polish director Jerzy Grotowski describes the ideal theater as existing within the relationship between actor and audience. This relationship becomes especially effective upon witnessing an actor's possession, or "seizure" by an emotional crisis, for the great power of this possession causes the audience to experience a similar emotional crisis within themselves (Osinski 13). The primary intention of the seance aimed at eliciting this seizure by a spirit, creating a setting for theatrical possession, or a possession of the self. Thus, the seance becomes a model for theatrical magic.

The seance relied on the spiritualist's suspension of belief in materialism, acquiring an open-minded faith in the spiritual forces at work around them. These forces may include the powers of the human imagination or unearthly spirits, but more than likely, the two are one in the same. Nevertheless, the shared convictions between audience(sitters) and actor(medium) in the forces around them bestowed a great power on mediumistic/theatrical ritual that made the dramatic moment real. This creation of a "real" dramatic moment epitomizes the ideal theater.

An identical suspension must be made when witnessing the magical theater Yeats strove to create. These "forces" surrounding the medium and sitters of the seance spring from the same source as magic; the images and spirits of the seance parallel the manifestations of the divine imagination. The shared belief of medium and sitter in the reality of the images from this divine imagination brings to the seance that element of magic Yeats sought to develop with his plays.

In fact, the seance became such great theater that the ultimate aim of many seance-attenders became an attempt to **prove** that the seance was, in fact, "theater," and not "reality," if such a differential exists.

The intense power of this belief in the reality of the seance and the dangers of misusing this power in the theater surface in the extraordinary phenomena of the popular public seance.

Perhaps the most blatant example of mediumship as theater, the public medium exploded onto the scene of Western civilization, creating a "new, thrilling, daring...and theatrical style...emphasizing visual spectacle and display." Identified as "star mediums," women such as Madam Blavatsky, Florence Cook, and Emma Hardinge Britten elevated themselves to famed

positions in society through tours, lectures and seances before what could be rooms of hundreds of spectators (Owen 33).

The immense popularity of the public seance attracted mediums for a number of reasons. The public seance circuit was a great money making opportunity, not to mention one of the few possible ladders of class elevation in Victorian society. This becomes evident especially in light of cases such as working-class medium Florence Cook who found fame, fortune and acceptance in elitist circles because of her mediumistic powers (Owen 168).

In the same vein, mediumship became one of the first possibilities for a woman to obtain professional status. As society gradually came to accept women in the theater, many mediums turned to acting as a more secure means of artistic expression. In this respect, mediumship may arguably be marked as the pilot of social acceptance of women in theater.

Most public mediums no doubt harbored superb acting capabilities, either in terms of Nietzsche's interpretation, or in the flagrant exploitation of theater for fraudulent purposes. A number of the spiritual manifestations produced in the public seance proved to be as entertaining as any side-show theatrical display.

The "spirits" evoked in many of the public seances appealed to the whims of the large crowds they attracted. As one historian observed, "such dignified and saintly spirits as George Washington and Jesus Christ proved in the long run to be less frequent guests at the public seances than the rambunctious ones" (Moore 17). The crowds drawn to these "rambunctious" spirits eventually became more enthralled by the solidity of the spiritual manifestation and the show they could perform, rather than the unearthly knowledge they could bestow to the sitters.

Though the immense attraction of the public medium initially encouraged the spiritualists, they soon noted that the public seance had degraded into something less than what they had originally intended. Rather than a sacred forum for discovering the mystical elements of the world beyond, the public seance became more or less an afternoon's entertainment for the large crowds it attracted. Similarly, the public medium ceased to aspire heavenward for answers to questions unknown, seeking instead to entice the spirits to earth in order that they may put on a show for awe-struck spectators. The public seance had tainted and undermined the spiritualist cause.

The schism that formed between the true believers of spiritualism versus the corrupted craft of the individual who performed to please the public has occurred in countless artistic circles, but perhaps no where so prevalently as the theater. The promise of fame and fortune that had lured the medium from a revered implementation of her talent within spiritualist circles into a polluted performance for the delight of the public continues to plague the theatrical artists of today in the form of sit-coms, soap-operas, and Box-office Hollywood. When the artist's vision becomes clouded by the public eye, he suffers the plight of spiritualism, falling from the grace his talent at one time granted him, communion with the gods.

It was this lack of original sacredness that Yeats objected to in his contemporary theater. Thus, if we look to spiritualism as an ideal model for theater, we must look only to the original, pure intentions of the spiritualist cause: to develop a mystical awareness through spiritual communications.

Yeats regarded these spiritual communications as projections of the divine imagination, stating,

"I consider it certain that every voice that speaks, every form that appears, is first of all a secondary personality or dramatisation created by, in, or through the medium." (Explorations 364)

Thus, Yeats implies that the spirit is a manifestation of the divine imagination.

He states further that "mediumship is dramatisation," and the aim of spiritual communication "is to enter at last into their own archetype, or into all being: into that which is there always" (Explorations 365-6). A medium's dramatisation, then, becomes nothing short of magic. Therefore, the practical application of spiritualism to the production of The Only Jealousy of Emer became the ideal inspiration for a model of theatrical possession, necessary for the presentation of Yeatsian theater.

VI

ARIADNE'S THREAD

Theatrical Model
For Possession of the Self

**Sing out the song; sing to the end, and sing
The strange reward of all that discipline.**

--W.B. Yeats
A Vision

The actual production of The Only Jealousy of Emer sought to combine mediumistic ritual, Nietzschean theory, and magic to create an art form as close to Yeats' conception of the ideal theater as possible. The practical application of these elements inspired a working model for theatrical possession, containing three basic components: the Self, the Intoxicative Element, and the Spirit.

The Self embodies the psyche as a whole, including the conscious, unconscious, and collective unconscious. For purposes of the model, the Self represents the actor, his individuality, his talent, and his persona, containing the unlimited potential of the human imagination, and the power of magic.

The Intoxicative Element exists initially outside of the Self, such as within a script or musical score. The power of the Intoxicative Element lies in its ability to disturb the Self. Usually, this Intoxicative Element touches on an emotional disturbance already within the Self, unveiling an invisible dragon which the Self must recognize and confront. This disturbance shakes the structure of the Self in such a manner that it requires a structural reorganization. The Self must reorganize its structure to reconcile with the emotional crisis elicited by the Intoxicative

Element. Discovering and creating this new structure involves entering the "labyrinth of the mind," wandering the complex passageways of the Self until the minotaur may be found, confronted, and controlled.

The third entity represented in the model involves the Spirit, the guide through the labyrinth of the Self, or Ariadne's magical Thread. The source of the actor's inspiration, the Spirit provides a comforting hand of guidance, speaking the voice of his soul, relaying the messages of his dreams. The actor finds communion with this Spirit by trusting and following his intuition and instinct.

These three components combine to create theatrical magic, or Possession of the Self, a circular cycle around which Yeats wrote The Only Jealousy of Emer. This cycle of Possession reoccurs in a spiral pattern, increasing in circumference and power with each cycle as the spiral progresses linearly.

Each phase focuses on two main areas of acting: the spiritual and the physical. The phases are represented in image, both within the tarot and in examples from The Only Jealousy of Emer.

POSSESSION OF THE SELF**Phase 1: CONTEMPLATION**

**A thousand creatures of the night
kept him
Staring with knowing eyes
Passionate
Contemplative
Eyes,
Accustomed to the darkness**

Spiritual:

In this initial phase of possession, the actor makes the conscious decision to strip his identity, readying himself for communion with the spiritual forces around him. He strips his personal defenses, exposing himself to the Intoxicative Element, calling upon Dionysus. Metaphorically, the actor imbibes the absinthe, opening himself to the visions evoked by the Intoxicative Element, treading the sacred earth surrounding the aqua permanens.

Physical:

Actor relaxes physically, taking deep breaths, each relaxing him further. Visually, he beholds a fading light, as he makes the decision to relinquish his earthly sight, relying instead upon the sight of the "mind's eye." He hears the rhythms of the physical world slow, as if to match his own heartbeat.

Tarot Image: Son of Cups

The actor enters into the state of being represented by the Son of Cups, depicted in the Haindl tarot deck by the image of Parsival, who, "like Christ, wakes to the divine reality that will lead to his own crucifixion" (Haindl Tarot 19).

Emer experiences this phase during the opening sequence of The Only Jealousy of Emer as she opens herself to the music of the sea, recognizing a voice of intoxicating magic: the Spiritus Mundi, breathed across the aqua permanens. As she hears this song of the sea, she opens herself to its comforting wisdom, readying herself for the ritual magic necessary for Cuchulain's resurrection.



Son of Cups in the North
Prince of Cups

Phase 2: Intoxication

**The Flames of his dying embers
Did not surprise them
Nor did the shrieking of his ghost**

Spiritual:

Following the contemplative decision of the actor to open himself to intoxication, the Intoxicative Element enters the Self, seizing the actor's senses. The actor assumes a state that allows possession by Dionysus, beginning to shrug his sense of Self, feeling only an emotional darkness, void of image.

Physical:

The actor's relaxation increases to the point that he experiences a loss of bodily control. Breathing slows further, and his face loses expression as he shrugs his identity. Rhythmically, he hears a steady increase of tempo, as if driven by anticipatory fear.

Tarot Image: The Fool

The tarot image of the Fool represents this second phase of intoxication. Haindl depicts the Fool in the image of a court jester, the "speaker of truths," touching the exposed heart of a white bird, a symbol of spirit. This exchange causes the bird to reel as if in an intoxicated state of pain, pleasure, or chaos as it is flooded at once with the divine wisdom of the Fool.

Emer experiences this intoxicated state as Bricriu, the Fool, seizes Emer's hand, bringing her to his bed. The bed of Bricriu represents the spiritual realm where the faery exists. As Bricriu

pulls Emer to the bed, he pulls her into a realm of spirit, so that he may "touch her eyes and give her sight" into what he, the Fool, sees and understands. Thus, Bricriu becomes the Intoxicative Element, bringing Emer to a state that she may experience the "sight" of the "mind's eye," or the Truth as it is only understood by the Fool.



The Fool

Phase 3: Crisis of Intoxication

They stayed there,
 Accustomed to the darkness
 While he,
 Amid the turmoil of the swords
 Fought the deathless sea
 The deathless soul
 The creature of a thousand eyes
 Lost
 Amid the piercing fragments
 Of his treachery
 Locked
 A Phantom
 That can neither hear
 Nor see
 Nor speak
 Only stare in all the directions
 tossed by currents of the salty sea
 haunted, solemn eyes
 Waiting for light
 Or Death

Spiritual:

The actor has completely lost his sense of identity, and so experiences confusion, losing his sense of balance and self control. He becomes lost in a torrent of chaos, and demands a reorganization of the Self, a new identity that will accommodate the Intoxicative Element. He therefore attempts to create a new structure of Self that may accommodate the Intoxicative Element; using the divine power of the imagination.

Vague images begin to appear as his further descent into emotional darkness accelerates to a frenzied pace. He begins to see visions, as if he were tumbling down a spiral staircase of images and emotion.

Physical:

The actor's spiritual loss of balance causes a parallel physical response, and the body becomes inoperative. The actor experiences a hypnotic relaxation: the physical action of trance. He feels the heat of chaos, as if a fire has overcome him. Rhythmically, he experiences the fevered, frenzied music of Dionysus.

Tarot Image: Wheel of Fortune

Haindl illustrates the Wheel of Fortune spinning within the cosmos, where "all things become lost in the turning of time." As the wheel spins, vague images from the remembrance of the Collective Unconscious, or Anima Mundi, arbitrarily appear in flashes before the mind's eye. The arbitrary appearance of these images represents the visions of chaos.

Emer experiences this chaotic vision of the Crisis of Intoxication as Bricriu grants her "sight" into the spiritual realm where Cuchulain is suspended. She experiences a turmoil, a fevered rush of falling, heard in the Dionysian music ringing in her ears; which is channeled and played by the musician.



The Wheel of Fortune

Phase 4: Bridge Across the Abyss

**I don't want worship,
She said,
I want understanding.
I don't want it I
Don't
Want
It
I don't want
you
Can you help me
she asked
Can you help me
I'm drowning
Take me away from this
Take me away
I am lost
And I cannot take myself
Away
From this place
This death
this darkness.**

Spiritual:

The third component of the model, Spirit, has thus far played a somewhat passive role in the actor's development, guiding the actor only with whispering suggestions. During Phase 4, however, the Self demands relief from its turmoil, and, because the individual identity of the actor has been weakened or stripped through intoxication, the Spirit must actively direct the Self from the terror and confusion of the Crisis of Intoxication to the next Phase.

The Self recognizes the Spirit as its intuition, or instinct, a Divine Voice stemming from the magical source of the soul. Therefore, the critical jump of Phase 4 requires the actor to trust and work from his own intuition.

Physical:

Fear lessens as the self senses the comfort of the Spirit. Rhythm remains steady, but the actor no longer fears the loss of himself.

Tarot Image: The High Priestess

Haindl describes the High Priestess as the "divine life principle," a keeper of "intuition and feeling" (Haindl 4). She is a Woman of Spirit, using her magical power to guide and protect a crystalline sphere, representative of the Self.

The musician represented this element of Spirit in Emer. The musician composed her music on the spot, improvised to the sounds of the actor's own spiritual guide. Thus, her music sprang from this realm of Spirit, or intuition, the source of the Spiritus Mundi. Likewise, the music of the musician sang the voice the Spirit to the characters of The Only Jealousy of Emer, becoming the medium through which the characters found their magic



The High Priestess

Phase 5: Divided Self

He looked blankly, the phantom, the face,
 Now a thousand faces, a thousand eyes
 Agape from loss of breath
 One eye beheld anger
 The wrenching of his wife
 The frail lovely keeper of magic
 A white, delicate rose
 An inspiration to the sun.
 He saw her
 Saw death wrench her to the ground
 And he sought to kill it,
 To smash it with the thousand swords
 That floated before him
 In the torrent of the sea.
 A second eye saw her,
 She
 The lovely, pure, magical rose
 He screamed
 I
 have hurt you
 so much
 That you will save me from the floors of the sea

Spiritual:

The Spirit calls upon the force of the divine imagination to manifest the Intoxicative Element into an image outside of the Self. This image becomes the Apollinian image, a Second Self, or Ghost. The Ghost embodies the emotions stirred by the Intoxicative Element, strengthening and refining its characteristics now perceptible to the conscious mind.

The Spirit remains an intuitive guide to the Self in Phase 5, guiding the Self to a state that it may confront and possess the Ghost, an action necessary for the survival of the Self, now completely stripped of its former structure.

Physical:

The actor experiences silence. His once intense feeling of heat turns to a cold blanket that shrouds his body. He feels a lightness of spirit, which Nietzsche describes as "resting in the calm sea of Apollinian contemplation" (Nietzsche 55). This lightness is the physical reaction to the complete negation of Self and recognition of the alternate entity to be possessed. In a very real sense, the actor experiences flight, as the Spirit breathes under the wings of his soul, guiding the Self to the protective state that will allow possession of the alternate entity.

Tarot Image: Princess of Wands

The ghost image becomes Haindl's depiction of Radha, the "power of wands translated into music" (Haindl 18). This "translation" represents a divine manifestation from the soul, the source of the Ghost, into music, the primordial voice.

This phase occurs in the interaction between Emer and the musician in The Only Jealousy of Emer. As the musician places her roses into Emer's hair in the final sequence of the play, she becomes the Spirit, guiding Emer to the realization of her Second Self. This Second Self radiates a vision of beauty inspired by life's renewal, the brilliance of dawn, and the wonder of birth.



Daughter of Wands in the East
Princess of Wands

Phase 6: Crisis of Possession

Another eye
Filled with the salt of the sea
And he cried
He cried for the pain of death,
The change
The godless messenger
Mourning for that part of him
He has left behind

He cried bitter tears
Disfiguring his face
That had never before felt
The salty brine of a wept tear

His pain of loss
For the life he left behind him
Was so great
He wept an ocean,
His sighs
So great
To create the wind of a hurricane
The torrid screams of the wind
His bewailing for the loss of himself.

The pale shadow of the moon
Reminded him of himself,
A ghost of the man he once was

Touch me, light, touch me
I shall die from the cold
The loneliness

Sleep,
She said,
Sleep, my love,
Dream the phantoms away
Back into the sea.

Spiritual:

The Self possesses the Ghost, stepping into and embodying the character, the Apollinian image, speaking from its body and soul. The actor now embodies both the Spirit and the Ghost within the Self, pushing and expanding the boundaries and limitations of the prior self.

Physical:

The actor experiences a bitter-sweet mourning for the loss of himself, accompanied by the sweet music of the soul, which expresses its light, wisdom and understanding; embodied by the Ghost. This understanding simultaneously elicits a renunciation and death of a former facet of the Self, that part of the Self that opposed or could not accept the Intoxicative Element. He feels the great terror of solitude, experiencing a death of his former Self, this piece of the Self petrifies and crumbles away, allowing for the renewed, expanded structure of the Self in Phase Seven.

Tarot Image: Alchemy

The image of Alchemy in the Haindl deck illustrates two faces of the Self converging at a central plane, separated by a diagonal division, bordering "an exchange of energies" (Haindl 8). A skeletal figure becomes a symbol of a dying element of the Self. This death allows its complementary image of a clown, representative of the Fool, to fill the void left by death.

Emer experiences this Possession as she summons the power in herself to renounce her husband's love. She becomes seized by a great rush of strength as she possesses that part of herself that

will allow this renunciation. Thus, as Eithne Inguba and Cuchulain exit together to return to the morning sky, Emer is able to tread a new path, no longer longing for a life with the sun, but a life with a renewed relationship with her Self.



Alchemy

Phase 7: Hierography

**She played the music
She said
I have come back
Like Lazarus from the dead
And I do not mean to leave you again.**

**Hold me, like you have before
I will frighten you,
But only that you may understand the sun
The sun
Too much light, Apollo,
My Lord, I am too much in the sun
Give me sanctuary.
Give me sanctuary.**

Spiritual:

The Self experiences a reorganization, an expanded version of the former Self. The Self has now accommodated the Intoxicative Element, gaining wisdom through conscious recognition of the soul, learned from the possession of the Ghost. Thus, the actor develops a renewed understanding of the Self, which has developed a new structure, abounding with the enlightenment of the soul, marrying with the prize of the labyrinth, Ariadne.

Physical:

Music flows about the Self in the exalted glory of Enlightenment. He sees the shining light of Apollo, becoming Oedipus at Colonus, embodying a divine wisdom earned by his journey through darkness. The actor assumes a stance and presence of absolute strength and confidence in his own being.

Tarot Image: The Sun

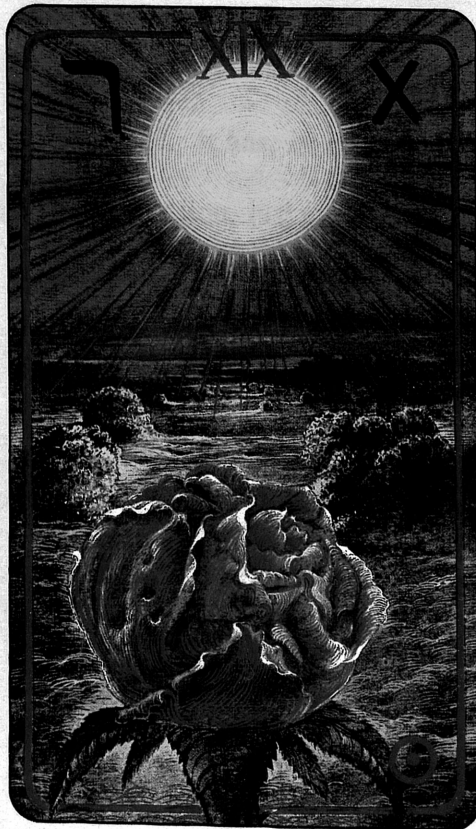
Haindl depicts a brilliant rose, cracking the earth and basking in the golden rays of the sun. "The Sun," as Haindl describes, "is a labyrinth of spirals, the trees line up with an order never found in nature...we have not returned to the ordinary world, but have moved to a higher level..." (Haindl 8).

Emer experiences this final Hieroglyphical phase as she turns to face the rays of the morning sun, creating a vision of intense beauty, such as that found in the strength of solitude. She is adorned with the flowers of the musician, who sings the final song of Emer's journey:

"Why does your heart beat thus?
Plain to be understood
I have met in a man's house
A statue of solitude.
Moving there and walking
Its strange heart beating fast
For all our talking
O still that heart at last

O bitter reward for many a tragic tomb
And we though astonished are dumb
Or give but a sigh or a word
A passing word."

Thus, Emer experiences a strength of astonishing proportions, illustrating the brilliant radiance of the soul and its magical expression.



The Sun

VII

THE FESTIVAL OF THESEUS AND ARIADNE

A Closing Hymn of Praise

**I laughed to think that what seemed so hard
Could be so simple,
And yet I still misunderstood completely.**

The central goal of this project lay in the creation, recognition, and expression of magic, the power of conscious recognition of the soul. Experiencing and documenting the magic of Yeatsian theater, the spirit that sings throughout his plays, has not only aided in understanding Yeats' vision, but in an understanding of the self, the talent of the artist, and the proper utilization of the artist's divine talent.

This study has confirmed, augmented, and explained the necessity for the artist to create and express the divine gift of his talent. It has, in many senses, unveiled the holy path of the actor, who cannot escape creative expression, just as the sacred monk cannot escape the solitary relationship he shares with God and the Holy Spirit.

It has set the path to be tread in future artistic work, following the sacred journey of the Fool to Magician. For, as Yeats states,

"It is by sorrow and labor, by love of all living things, and by a heart that humbles itself before the Ancestral Light, and by a mind, its power and beauty and quiet flow through without end, that men come to Adeptship; and not by the multiplication of petty formulae."

From this love, this sorrow, this labor, the artist sings; and the music resounds from the halls of the theatrical temple. The magnitude of the Ancestral Light humbles him, and he may only

As she was about to continue,
 A wrenching sob choked her,
 Filled her throat,
 The wind breathed through the nape of her neck
 And the music once again flowed.

She became that same dumb creature conduit of the gods
 They used her

Take it
 Take it again
 Make them hear you

They demanded,

Take it again.

Never

mind
 you.

There are other worlds.

Play.
 Play.
 PLAY.

And so she played
 And so it came

the music
 the music

It is not a curse,
 More a blessing
 But how do I
 Remember
 Myself.

What
 of
 myself.

Never mind you,
she said again,
There are other worlds

you
are
chosen

Understand.

You are chosen.

You may not have him.
You may not have it.
You may have
us

The beatific vision
of the hanged man
Lost in a torrential sea

the sight
the love

Will they follow me?
No.
I am no Hamlet, nor was I meant to be.

Leave me
Leave me to the loss of my innocence.
Leave me to the inspiration of the moon.
Look to the night.

I am lonely.

Give me sanctuary.

And out the lights
And out the lights
And out the lights

Acknowledgement for Excellence

How can I ever thank the wise, gentle eyes that guided me through that preliminary, most harrowing bit of my self. The music now and forever sings bits of your spirit, the magical soul who insisted I discover my limitations that I may learn from them, that wizened hermit who taught me to teach myself, who unveiled to me the resilience of unlimited potential, and the humility required to harness it. Eternal gratitude, love, and indebtedness to Dr. Oscar Giner, my great mentor, my guide, my friend.

And to Astensia Sophia, the sweet angel of music, for your inspiration, and for your beauty. To you who could express my thanks with such eloquence; I am happy we have met again.

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