Philosophical Differences and Yeats's Corroborative System in *A Vision*

by Matthew DeForrest

I

While Yeats was to use the philosophical systems of others extensively in the codification of his own system, his instructors initially forbid him from studying philosophy:

> They once told me not to speak of any part of the system, except of the incarnations which were almost fully expounded, because if I did the people I talked to would talk to other people and the communicators would mistake that misunderstanding for their own thought….
>
> For the same reason they asked me not to read philosophy until their exposition was complete, and this increased my difficulties. Apart from two or three of the principal Platonic Dialogues I knew no philosophy. (*AVB* 11-12)

This background, according to Yeats, somewhat misleadingly, might be taken to be all the philosophy that went into the structure of *A Vision: An Explanation of Life Founded Upon the Writings of Giraldus and Upon Certain Doctrines Attributed to Kusta Ben Luka* (1925), which was itself the antecedent of *A Vision* (1937). For the latter, however, he acknowledged drawing upon a much-expanded list of philosophers, including those brought to his attention by George Yeats:

> When the proof sheets came I felt myself relieved from my promise not to read philosophy and began with Berkeley because a young revolutionary soldier who was living a very dangerous life said, "All the philosophy a man needs is in Berkeley," and because Lennox Robinson, hearing me quote that sentence, bought me an old copy of Berkeley's works upon the Dublin quays. Then I took down from my wife a list of what she had read, two or three volumes of Wundt, part of Hegel's *Logic*, all of Thomas Taylor's *Plotinus*, a Latin work of Pico della Mirandola, and a great deal of mediaeval mysticism. . . . I read all MacKenna's incomparable translation of Plotinus, some of it several times, and went from Plotinus to his predecessors and successors whether upon her list or not. . . . Although the more I read the better did I understand what I had been taught, I found neither the

> geometrical symbolism nor anything that could have inspired it except the vortex of Empedocles. (*AV B* 19-20)

As with his mystical sources, Yeats attempted to provide his readers with both parallels to and support for his system by producing this list, even if some of his reading in philosophy actually preceded publication of *AV A*. By 1937, he had come to appreciate the logic that if external evidence could be shown to support the system, the more unlikely that it would be dismissed out of hand as the eccentric ramblings of a poet who would be a philosopher.

For one thing, we now know that Yeats's primary source for Pre-Socratic Greek philosophy was John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy* (London and Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1892; *YL* 308), an edition that he owned and read in the context of his wife's experiments in the Automatic Script, which figured as the precursor to *A Vision* (in both of its embodiments). It was from Burnet's book that he drew quotations from Empedocles, Heraclitus, Anaximander and Anaxagoras in support of his system, as is shown frequently in this paper and from sources in his reading traced in Wayne K. Chapman's "Authors in Eternity: Some Sources of Yeats's Creative Mysticism", to be published elsewhere in the near future.[1] In the revised *AV B*, where the influence of the Pre-Socratics is particularly acknowledged and evident, Yeats tends to use the philosophy attributed to these men in very broad and general terms. Moreover, as Chapman shows, Yeats's use of Burnet for translations of "Parmenides and Empedocles, but especially . . . Heraclitus," as cited in part II of "The Geometrical Foundation of the Wheel" in *AV A* (132), is evident, too, though fraught with scholarly errors, as George Harper and Walter Hood note in their critical edition (see notes "130, 9" through "135, 2-4" in *CV A* 32-4). In the 1937 edition, Yeats cites only the specific fragments of their work that apply to his thesis. For example, at one point he notes that

> that Great or Greatest Year was sometimes divided into lesser periods by the return of the sun and moon to some original position, by the return of a planet or of all the planets to some original position, or by their making an astrological aspect with that position. . . . I do not remember the brightening and darkening fortnights in any classical author, but they are in the Upanishads and in the Laws of Manu, for the Great Year and its Months pervaded the ancient world. Perhaps at the start a mere magnification of the natural year, it grew more complicated with the spread of Greek astronomy, but it is always the simpler, more symbolic form, with its conflict of light and dark, heat and cold, that concerns me most. (*AV B* 246)

This division of the world into opposed types of matter, noted by Yeats in his copy of *Early Greek Philosophy*, had been examined by philosopher-scientists and had once been thought to be caused by the condensing out of the heavier classical elements (earth, water, and air) from the lighter, generative element of fire:

> We see from this that when a portion of the Boundless had been separated off from the rest to form a world, it first of all differentiated itself into the

> two opposites, hot and cold. The hot appears as a sphere of flame surrounding the cold; the cold, as earth with air surrounding it. (*YL* 308: 68).

This investigation into the nature of matter, as Yeats observed in the above passage, was once, as now, tied to an investigation of astronomy. In addition, the ancient Greek elements are present in *A Vision*, but they are associated with the four quarters of the Great Wheel rather than permeating the entirety of the system (*AV B* 103).

Yeats is even more selective in his use of Heraclitus, whom he famously quotes to describe the action of the gyres: "Here the thought of Heraclitus dominates all: 'Dying each other's life, living each other's death'" (*AV B* 68; see *AV A* 130). Yeats, does not, however, quote Heraclitus here in full, any more than he acknowledged expropriating the quotation for his own use in describing, in 1925, "The Expanding and Contrasting Gyres": "It is as though the first act of being, after creating limit, was to divide itself into male and female, *each dying the other's life[,] living the other's death* (*AV A* 130; italics mine). In the passage which Yeats marked in Burnet (with a line drawn next to the passage), Heraclitus said: "Mortals are immortals and immortals are mortals, the one living the other's death and dying the other's life" (*YL* 308: 138).[2] The supposed quotation, expropriation, and Burnet's actual translation are close but significantly different in that Yeats generalizes, in 1937, Heraclitus's focused statement. He had marked passages where Burnet cited similar statements by Heraclitus in relation to the elements.[3] Thus, the discrepancy between the actual quotation in Burnet and the one found in *A Vision* might be explained as another case of Yeats's poor scholarship. Having remembered the general idea of the argument, he might have been content to trust his memory for the support of his system.

However, this supposition would seem to be incorrect. For instance, in the final moments of Yeats's play *The Resurrection* (1931),[4] the Greek refers to Heraclitus on being confronted with the risen Christ. This time, Yeats places the mortal and immortal in contrary positions:

> *The Greek*. O Athens, Alexandria, Rome, something has come to destroy you. The heart of a phantom is beating. Man has begun to die. Your words are clear at last, O Heraclitus. God and man *die each other's life, live each other's death*. (*VPl* 931: 401-5; emphasis added)

Here, Yeats effectively applies Heraclitus's theory to the story of Christ. Through Christ's death, mankind is saved from the stain of original sin and is granted eternal life. Thus, mankind lives Christ's death. In order to obtain eternal life, however, the individual must die after living a life patterned by the teachings of Christ. Thus, Christ lives mankind's death. As demonstrated in this play, which Yeats had begun writing by 1925 or 1926, Yeats clearly knew the entirety of Heraclitus's quotation because he had marked a corresponding passage in his copy of Burnet (*YL* 308: 136-7). Why, then, would he intentionally remove the reference to mortals and immortals twice in the revised edition of *A Vision* (*AV B* 68, 197)?

While Yeats has, in removing the original subject of the quotation, changed the wording of the quotation, he has, nevertheless, preserved its actual meaning. Heraclitus's system of belief is based on the supposition that opposites or, in Yeats's terms, "contraries",

are nothing more than two aspects of the same thing, as can be seen in the extant fragments of Heraclitus's teachings:

> (45) Men do not know how that which is drawn in different directions harmonises with itself. The harmonious structure of the world depends upon opposite tension, like that of the bow and lyre.
> . . .
> (50) The straight and the crooked path of the fuller's comb is one and the same.
> . . .
> (52) The sea is the purest and the impurest water. Fish can drink it, and it is good for them; to men it is undrinkable and destructive.
> . . .
> (57) Good and ill are the same.
> . . .
> (59) You must couple together things whole and things not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant. The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one.
> . . .
> (61) Men themselves have made a law for themselves, not knowing what they made it about; but the gods have ordered the nature of all things. Now the arrangements which men have made are never constant. Neither when they are right nor when they are wrong; but all the arrangements which the gods have made are always right, both when they are right and when they are wrong; so great is the difference. (*YL* 308: 136-7)

Thus, if all things are a portion of the whole, nothing can truly be negated. It only shifts its state, as is seen in another passage marked by Yeats:

> (78) The quick and the dead, the waking and the sleeping, the young and the old, are the same; the former are changed and become the latter, and the latter in turn are changed into the former. (*YL* 308: 139)

In a footnote in a later edition, Burnet likened this movement to a playing piece "from one . . . division of the draught-board to another."[5] Thus, in order to maintain the balance of the whole, the immortal part of creation must die into mortality in some way so that it may have its own life. When that mortal part of itself dies, however, it returns its life energy to the immortal whole.

Yeats was aware of Heraclitus's holistic approach to reality, as is seen in Yeats's distillation of the philosophies of three pre-Socratic philosophers during his discussion of the Great Year:

> Anaximander, a pre-Socratic philosopher, thought there were two infinities, one of co-existence where nothing ages, the other of succession and

> mortality, world coming after world and lasting always the same number of years. Empedocles and Heraclitus thought that the universe had first one form and then its opposite in perpetual alternation, meaning, as it seems, that all things were consumed with fire when all the planets so stood in the sign of Cancer that a line could be drawn through all their centres and the centre of the earth, destroyed by water when all stood in Capricorn; a fire that is not what we call fire but "the fire of heaven," "the fire where all the universe returns to its seed," a water that is not what we call water but a "lunar water" that is Nature. Love and Discord, Fire and Water, dominate in turn, Love making all things One, Discord separating all, but Love no more than Discord the changeless eternity. (*AV B* 246-7)

Yeats here is obviously alluding to his own system in his selections—the two realities of Anaximander parallel the division between the world of the gyres and the world of the Thirteenth Cone, while the solar and lunar division of Heraclitus and Empedocles parallel the primary and antithetical tinctures. Yeats thus uses the theories of a physical universe in support of his own theory on the workings of the non-physical universe. More importantly, however, these examples posit a perfect balance between two aspects of the same whole, just as Heraclitus constructs a reality which shifts its energy between balanced contraries.

This shifting of energy from one section of the whole to the other precisely describes the movement of the Faculties as they move through the gyres. The energy of the dominant Faculty of one cone slowly shifts into the passive Faculty of the other cone as it is weakened by the Faculty with which it shares its cone. Thus, as the Will approaches Phase 15, it contaminates the Creative Mind and, following Phase 8, begins purifying itself from the contamination of the Creative Mind. Meanwhile, the power of the Mask has been weakening in direct proportion to the Will's progress through the phases. The Body of Fate, gaining strength from the Creative Mind, increasingly challenges the Will as it first contaminates the Mask, then purifies itself of the Mask's influence. Once Phase 15 is passed, however, the energy gained by the Will begins to flow back into the Mask as the Creative Mind begins to contaminate the pure Will. This balance is not only found in the relative strength of the Faculties to one another; it is also present in the geometrical representation of the system:

> As *Will* approaches the utmost expansion of its *antithetical* cone it drags *Creative Mind* with it— thought is more and more dominated by will—but *Creative Mind* remains at the same distance from its cone's narrow end that *Will* is from the broad end of the *antithetical cone*. (*AV B* 74)

In this way, both the movement and energy contained in the Faculties remain, as in Heraclitus's cosmology, a shifting constant.

In addition, if Yeats left the reference to immortals when quoting Heraclitus, he ran the risk of confusing the readers of *A Vision*. Only by extracting the division between mortals and gods is Yeats able to apply this description to his system, which describes the way the natural world works. A reference to immortals would imply that the division includes the Teaching Spirits of the Thirteenth Cone, who are the only figures in Yeats's

system who could be described as fitting the common concept of immortality.[6] The relationship between the Teaching Spirits and the beings of the mundane world is not ruled by the gyres which Yeats attempts to describe when quoting Heraclitus. Although they interact during the afterlife, the Teaching Spirits are not bound by the motion of the gyres, as are the Daimons. Rather, the Teaching Spirits gain sustenance from the purgation of the soul (*AV B* 229-30).[7]

Having determined that Yeats had specific reasons for altering the passages he had found in Burnet, one must address the issue of Yeats's scholarship. When quoting these pre-Socratic philosophers, Yeats does not cite specific coordinates in Burnet, as he does those of other sources—for example, when citing passages in Plotinus (at *AV B* 70) or Pierre Duhem's *Le Système du monde* (at *AV B* 67). He refers to Burnet's book but does not cite him as the source of the quotation. Instead, Burnet is called upon to provide a gloss on a text of Empedocles (at *AV B* 67). Therefore, the passages which he has changed are, in effect, his own interpretation of the material rather than his misquotation of Burnet. *Early Greek Philosophy*, like Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902), is used by Yeats as a crib in the production of his own rendition of material. Thus, when examining the quotations of pre-Socratic philosophers found in *A Vision*, he cannot be accused of poor scholarship based on the theory that he has misquoted Burnet. Instead, Yeats's rough translation should be compared with Burnet's literal one in order to determine what Yeats drew from these philosophers to support the system of *A Vision*.

Similarly, Yeats employed Heraclitus elsewhere in the 1937 version of *A Vision* to describe the motions of the Great Wheel:

> Man seeks his opposite or the opposite of his condition, attains his object so far as it is attainable, at Phase 15 and returns[*] to Phase 1 again.
>
> . . .
>
> [*]A similar circular movement fundamental in the works of Giovanni Gentile is, I read somewhere, the half-conscious foundation of the political thought of modern Italy. Individuals and classes complete their personality and then sink back to enrich the mass. Government must, it is held, because all good things have been created by class war, recognise that class war though it may be regulated must never end. It is the old saying of Heraclitus, "War is God of all, and Father of all, [*sic*] some it has made Gods and some men, some bond [*sic*] and some free," and the converse of Marxian Socialism. (*AV B* 81-2)

Again, Yeats has altered Burnet's translation of Heraclitus. The actual passage, not marked in his copy of Burnet, reads: "War is the father of all and the king of all; and some he has made gods and some men, some bound and some free" (*YL* 308: 136). Here, the difference in the words—and Yeats faithfully quoted (as early as 1909) Burnet's rendering elsewhere (see *Mem* 216 and *CV A*, "Notes" 32)—does not present a significant change in tone or meaning. Essentially, as a nearby passage in Burnet asserts, "We must know that war is the common and justice is strife, and that all things come into being and pass away through strife" (*YL* 308: 137). Apparent typographical errors appear in the *AV B* text (e.g., "," instead of ";" and "bond" for "bound") whereas the substantive alterations that occur are

Yeats's surgical removal of the word "king" and introduction of the word "God," perhaps both performed to assist in the contrast with "Marxian Socialism." This struggle is clearly seen in the movement of the Great Wheel, in which individuals struggle to obtain their goal at Phase 15 and, thus satisfied, "pass away," having fulfilled their desire and overcome the challenge of this phase.

The final parallel between Yeats's and Heraclitus's systems is found in the consequence of the individual's movement towards or away from Phase 15. The pursuit of the "object" and its concurrent perfection of the individual comes at the expense of the perfection of the soul, as is seen in the descriptions following Yeats's "Table of the Four Faculties":

> The Two Directions
> Phase 1 to Phase 15 is towards Nature.
> Phase 15 to Phase 1 is towards God. (*AV B* 104)

This contrast echoes Heraclitus's statement on the struggle between the heart's desire and development of the soul, again marked by Yeats in his own copy:

> (105-107) It is hard to fight with desire. Whatever it wishes to get, it purchases at the cost of soul. (*YL* 308: 140)

In a footnote, Burnet associates desire here with physical pleasure, using the example of drunkenness offered by Heraclitus: "The gratification of desire implies the exchange of dry soul fire . . . for moisture" (*YL* 308: 140). While the meaning of the "dry soul fire" has been muddled through time by a variety of interpretations by Greek philosophers commenting on Heraclitus, the meaning of moisture remains clearly defined by Heraclitus:

> (72) It is pleasure to souls to become moist.
> (73) A man, when he gets drunk, is led by a beardless lad, knowing not where he steps, having his soul moist.
> (74-6) The dry soul is the wisest and best. (*YL* 308: 138)

The image produced by Heraclitus is, to continue the metaphor, one of a soul saturated with the physical to the neglect of the sober, focused concerns of the spiritual.

Yeats's opening quotation of Empedocles, like his quotation of Heraclitus, has been slightly altered for use in the support of the system of *A Vision*:

> "When Discord," writes Empedocles, "has fallen into the lowest depths of the vortex"—the extreme bound, not the centre, Burnet points out—"Concord has reached the centre, into it do all things come together so as to be only one, not all at once but gradually from different quarters, and as they come Discord retires to the extreme boundary . . . in proportion as it runs out Concord in a soft immortal boundless stream runs in." And again: "Never will boundless time be emptied of that pair; and they prevail in turn as that circle comes round, and pass away before one another and increase

> their appointed turn." It was this Discord or War that Heraclitus called "God of all and Father of all, some it has made gods and some men, some bond and some free," and I recall that Love and War came from the eggs of Leda. (*AV B* 67)

Again, in the latter quotation, Yeats makes a simple alteration of the, albeit incomplete, quotation by substituting "never" for "nor ever" (*YL* 308: 223).[8] Yet the initial portion of this truncated quotation contains the significant alteration made by Yeats to the former quotation. He both marked this passage and sketched a set of gyres next to it:

> I have travelled before, drawing from my saying a new saying. When Strife was fallen to the lowest depth of the vortex,[*] and Love had reached to the centre of the whirl, in it do all things come together gradually each from different quarters; and, as they came together, Strife retired to the extreme boundary. Yet many things remained unmixed, altering with the things that were being mixed, namely, all that Strife not fallen yet that were being mixed, namely, all that Strife not fallen yet retained; for it had not yet altogether retired perfectly to the outermost boundaries of the circle. Some of its members still remained within, and some had passed out. But in proportion as it kept rushing out, a soft, immortal stream of blameless Love kept running in, and straightaway those things became mortal which had been immortal before, those things were mixed that had been unmixed, each changing its path. And, as they were scattered abroad endowed with all manner of forms, a wonder to behold.
>
> . . .
>
> [*]The "lowest depth" is not, as might be supposed, the centre; but is the same thing as the "extreme boundary" (v. 178). (*YL* 308: 226)

Both the figure of the intersecting gyres and the content of the Empedoclean passage on Strife and Love recall Yeats's first use of "Birkett" (an error for "Burnet"), in 1925, as a transition to speculations on Blake's "The Mental Traveller" and his apparent use of the gyres (see *AV A* 130-4).

Instead of referring to "Concord" and "Discord," Empedocles uses the terms "Love" and "Strife." "Discord," defined by Yeats as that which "tends to separate man from man" (*AV B* 72), matches Empedocles's description of "Strife." The match between "Concord" and "Love," however, is more problematic. Yeats remembered Burnet's terminology, as is seen in his use of the word "Love" as a synonym for "Concord" in his summary of Simplicius's commentary on Empedocles' belief (*AV B* 68) and in his discussion of the Great Year quoted above. His use of the word "Love" in these cases indicates that he did not disagree with its usage. In not choosing the term "Love," however, Yeats avoids the cyclopean challenge presented by the term as faced by Leopold Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922):

> —But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very

> opposite of that that is really life.
> —What? says Alf.
> —Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred. I must go now. . . .[9]

As is seen in the Burnet passage above, "Love," by its very nature, is subjective in that it resists definition. As Yeats associates the primary cone with the objective, he needed a term which matched the qualities of that gyre better than "Love."

In choosing to use the word "Concord," rather than "Love," in the introductory description of the gyres's natures, Yeats also blocks the personal biases of the reader. While it is more familiar and, perhaps, accessible than "Concord," the word "Love" is heavy with connotations. In order to maintain the universality of his system, Yeats could not afford to suggest additional meanings of "Love" into his discussion. Finally, the word "Concord" is more linguistically balanced with "Discord" than is "Love" with "Strife." The common root of "Concord" and "Discord" (*cordis*, "heart") is permuted into opposed aspects ("together" and "apart"). In addition, the most common antonym for "love" is, as pointed out by Joyce's Bloom, "hate." This contrast, however, presents an image of discrete opposites rather than a shift along a continuum. Thus, the use of these terms allows for a greater sense of unity and balance within the system of *A Vision.*

II

The overlap between the pre-Socratic philosophers and later Greek philosophers comes in Yeats's use of the Great Year. The length of a Great Year is, according to Yeats, "a convenient measure" based upon the length of time it would take an individual to pass through twenty-eight phases of the Great Wheel "…if no failure compels repetition of a phase…" (*AVB* 202). While a number of the Greek philosophers posited the existence of such a year, the exact length of time this would take has been a source of great disagreement:

> There was little agreement as to the length of the Great Year, every philosopher had a different calculation, but the majority divided it into 360 days or 365 days according to the prevailing view as to the number of days in the year. The Stoics of Cicero's time thought it was divided into 365 days of 15,000 years apiece. . . .
>
> In the second century before Christ, Hipparchus discovered that the Zodiacal constellations were moving, that in a certain number of years the sun would no longer rise at the Vernal Equinox in the constellation of Aries, but his discovery seems to have been little noticed until the third century after Christ when Ptolemy fixed the rate of movement at 100 years for each degree, that Aries might return to its original position every 36,000 years, the 360 incarnations of a Man of Ur. He named these 36,000 years the Platonic Year and by that name they were known henceforth. (*AVB* 251-2)

As Yeats points out, the actual movement of the Zodiac is "about one-third less, and

the whole precession takes some 26,000 years" (*AV B* 252), the length of time chosen by his instructors for the measurement of the Great Year (*AV B* 202). The precise length of time is, at a certain level, unimportant, as it is a symbolic measurement with more applications to historical epochs than to mankind (*AV B* 203-4). This analysis does, however, explain how an individual can live in a phase dominated by the tincture opposite to the current historical disposition:

> A Great Wheel of twenty-eight incarnations is considered to take, if no failure compels repetition of a phase, some two thousand odd years, and twelve such wheels or gyres constitute a single great cone or year of some twenty-six thousand years. But these twenty-six thousand years are but a norm, a convenient measure, much may shorten or lengthen the whole or some part of the whole. All men, it is assumed, once passed through their year at the same pace; . . . but gradually some fell behind, and some ran ahead, and now there is a year that ends when the life-period of the individual winds itself up, and a Great Year which is a norm or average struck among the individual years. (*AV B* 202)

Thus, as an individual's rate of movement through the Great Wheel shifts, he is no longer synchronized with the pace of the cosmos.

Like the other Pre-Socratic philosophers cited above, Plotinus's presence in *A Vision* is primarily illustrative in nature. He was cited several times at various points in the first edition (see *AV A* 135, 176, 189, 191, 215, and 226), where his arguments and theories were condensed into short, supportive statements by Yeats, much as we find in Plotinus's initial appearance in the revised edition of 1937:

> The double cone or vortex, as used by my instructors, is more complicated than that of Flaubert. A line is a movement without extension, and so symbolical of time—subjectivity—Berkeley's stream of ideas—in Plotinus it is apparently "sensation"—and a plane cutting it at right angles is symbolical of space or objectivity. (*AV B* 70)

At this point, the scholarship gains in documenting the intertextual indices it lacked in 1925.[10] Yeats cites Plotinus as if he had used the word "sensation" in "Ennead, vi. i. 8," as translated by Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page in 1930 (*AV B* 70; see *YL* 1593) although the word is not actually used in that section of the translation. Yeats, in using the word "sensation," is distilling for his reader Plotinus's difficult argument concerning the nature of the relationship between objects:

> Are we thus, then, to divide Relation, and thereby reject the notion of an identical common element in the different kinds of Relation, making it a universal rule that the relation takes a different character in either correlative? We must in this case recognise that in our distinction between productive and non-productive relations we are overlooking the equivocation involved in making the terms cover both action and passion, as though

> these two were one, and ignoring the fact that production takes a different form in the two correlatives. Take the case of equality, producing equals: nothing is equal without equality, nothing identical without identity. Greatness and smallness both entail a presence—the presence of greatness and smallness respectively. When we come to greater and smaller, the participants in these relations are greater and smaller only when greatness and smallness are actually observed in them. (*Ennead* VI, i, 8)

Thus, not only are all things relative, as in the case of seeing an object as either great or small, but all things are possessed with and informed by an idea that helps to define them. In this way, no two objects may be seen as being equal without there first being an idea of equality. This idea, be it equality, identity, or similarity, is perceived by an individual making a subjective judgment about its nature.

Plotinus is careful, however, to distinguish between the qualities possessed by an object and the measurement of an object earlier in this Tractate:

> So with the numbers themselves: how can they (in these circumstances) constitute the category of Quantity? They are measures; but how do measures come to be quantities or Quantity? Doubtless in that, existing as they do among the Existents and not being adapted to any of the other categories, they find their place under the influence of verbal suggestion and so are referred to the so-called category of Quantity. We see the unit may be off one measurement and then proceed to another; and number thus reveals the amount of a thing, and the mind measures by availing itself of the total figure.
>
> It follows that in measuring it is not measuring essence; it pronounces its "one" or "two," whatever the character of the objects, even summing contraries. It does not take count of condition—hot, handsome; it simply notes how many. Number then, whether regarded in itself or in the participant objects, belong to the category of Quantity, but the participant objects do not. "Three yards long" does not fall under the category of Quantity, but only the three. (*Ennead* VI, i, 4)

Hence, two groups comprised of five objects would be in Plotinus's system, two similarly measured groups rather than two equal groups. The numerical measurement, therefore, can be seen as an objective, or primary, observation. Thus, Plotinus's differentiation between the qualities of perceived objects illustrates the difference between Yeats's antinomies.

In addition to using Plotinus to illustrate the difference between the primary and antithetical tinctures, Yeats also calls upon Plotinus when describing the Shiftings:

> At the end of the second state, the events of the past life are a whole and can be dismissed; the emotional and moral life, however, is but a whole according to the code accepted during life. The *Spirit* is still unsatisfied, until after the third state . . . called the *Shiftings*, where the *Spirit* is purified of good and evil. In so far as the man did good without knowing evil, or

> evil without knowing good, his nature is reversed until that knowledge is obtained. The *Spirit* lives—I quote the automatic script—"The best possible life in the worst possible surroundings" or the contrary of this; yet there is no suffering: "For in a state of equilibrium there is neither emotion nor sensation". . . . I remember MacKenna's translation of the most beautiful of the *Ennead*, "The Impassivity of the Dis-Embodied." (*AVB* 231-2)

"The Impassivity of the Unembodied" is the sixth Tractate of the third *Ennead* and "is concerned with impassivity . . . in two connexions, first as regards to the soul . . . and then as regards Matter." This argument, that emotion is caused by the influence of matter, supports Yeats's image of a state following death when, finally separated from the influence of matter—the attachment to corporeal life—the individual begins to perceive without emotions, matching the "Melodic Principle" of Plotinus's metaphor:

> The nature of an Ideal-form is to be, of itself, an activity; it operates by its mere presence: it is as if a Melody itself plucked the strings. The affective phase of the Soul or Mind will be the operative cause of all affection; it originates the movement either under the stimulus of some sense-presentment or independently—and it is a question to be examined whether the judgment leading to the movement operates from above or not—but the affective phase itself remains unmoved like Melody dictating music. The causes originating the movement may be likened to the musician; what is moved is like the strings of his instrument, and, once more, the Melodic principle itself is not affected, but only the strings, though, however much the musician desired it, he could not pluck the strings except under dictation from the principle of Melody. (*Ennead* III, vi, 4)

Yeats's most specific use of Plotinus, however, comes in his attempt to describe the relationship between the Faculties and Principles as seen from outside this existence:

> My instructors, keeping as far as possible to the phenomenal world, have spent little time upon the sphere, which can be symbolised but cannot be known, though certain chance phrases show that they have all the necessary symbols. When I try to imagine the *Four Principles* in the sphere, with some hesitation I identify the *Celestial Body* with the First Authentic Existant of Plotinus, *Spirit* with his Second Authentic Existant, which holds the First in its moveless circle; the discarnate *Daimons*, or *Ghostly Selves*, with his Third Authentic Existant or soul of the world (the Holy Ghost of Christianity), which holds the Second in its moving circle. Plotinus has a fourth condition which is the Third Authentic Existant reflected first as sensation and its object (our *Husk* and *Passionate Body*), then as discursive reason (almost our *Faculties*). The *Husk* as part of the sphere merges in *The Ghostly Self*.
>
> . . .

> But this diagram [see *AV B* 194, where it is figured between these two paragraphs] implies a descent from *Principle* to *Principle*, a fall of water from ledge to ledge, whereas a system symbolising the phenomenal world as irrational because a series of unresolved antinomies, must find its representation in a perpetual return to the starting-point. The resolved antinomy appears not in a lofty source but in the whirlpool's motionless centre, or beyond its edge.[*]
> . . .
> [*] The whirlpool is an *antithetical* symbol, the descending water a *primary*. (*AV B* 193-5)

Yeats's purpose in using Plotinus here is twofold. First, he is again attempting to validate his system by providing examples of comparable systems in Greek philosophy. With this specific example, he is able to illustrate the contrast between an "antithetical" and "primary" symbol through an examination of comparable material.

III

In making such comparisons of and in illustrating the differences between his system and others, Yeats follows the advice of Benedetto Croce, in *Logic as the Science of the Pure Concept* (trans. Douglas Ainslie [London: Macmillan, 1917]; *YL* 444), regarding the demonstration of the possession of knowledge and understanding:

> If we wish to submit the effective possession of a concept to a first test, we can employ the experiment which was advised on a previous occasion:—whoever asserts that he possesses a concept, should be invited to expound it in words, and with other means of expression (graphic symbols and the like). If he refuse to do so, and say that his concept is so profound that words cannot avail to render it, we can be sure, either that he is under the illusion of possessing a concept, when he possesses only turbid fancies and morsels of ideas; or that he has a presentiment of the profound concept, that it is in process of formation, and will be, but is not yet, possessed. (*YL* 444: 40-1)

While Croce's assertion was not Yeats's reason for setting his system down, the concept behind them, that an idea is fully grasped when it has been explained, is the motivation behind the re-writing of *A Vision:*

> And then, though I had mastered nothing but the twenty-eight phases and the historical scheme, I was told that I must write, that I must seize the moment between ripe and rotten—there was a metaphor of apples about to fall and just fallen. (*AV B* 18)

Croce, even more than the Greek philosophers discussed above, who had been

recognized in *A Vision* (1925), had a profound influence upon the ordering, if not the content, of *A Vision* (1937). Yeats's reading of Croce's works, as Torchiana has determined from the evidence of Yeats's library, occurred between, approximately, 1924 and 1928.[11] In *Logic as the Science of Pure Concept* (1917; *YL* 444), for example, Yeats was able to find parallels with the Principles and Croce's distinction between the Concrete and Universal in relation to the "characteristics of the pure concept" (*YL* 444: 40). There, Croce defines the Universal as "the whole, into which that single enters with all the singles" (*YL* 444: 41) and the Concrete as that which is "immanent in the single, and therefore in all representations" (*YL* 444: 43). Yeats relates the concrete with the Celestial Body and the universal with the Spirit in his marginal comments to Croce's *Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and General Linguistic* (trans. Douglas Ainslie [London: Macmillan, 1922]; *YL* 440: 60) and in Yeats's description of these Principles as they relate to the Daimon:

> The *Spirit*, upon the other hand, is the *Daimon's* knowledge, for in the *Spirit* it knows all other *Daimons* as the Divine Ideas in their unity. They are one in the *Celestial Body*. (*AV B* 189)

In Croce's terms, therefore, the Spirit's awareness and knowledge of "the Daimons in their divine unity" marks it as having access to the universal, in which all singles are combined. The Celestial Body, on the other hand, maintains its unity and identity, like Croce's concept of Concreteness. In addition, these two Principles are arranged facing one another on the Great Wheel. As such, their geometrical arrangement parallels Croce's descriptions even further, in that the descriptions are inversions of one another.

Yeats cites Croce again in his description of the Will and the Faculties:

> The *Will* is very much the Will described by Croce.[*] When not affected by the other *Faculties* it has neither emotion, morality nor intellectual interest, but knows how things are done, how windows open and shut, how roads are crossed, everything that we call utility. It seeks its own continuance.
>
> . . .
>
> [*]The *Four Faculties* somewhat resemble the four moments to which Croce has dedicated four books; that the resemblance is not closer is because Croce makes little use of antithesis and antinomy. (*AV B* 82-3)

Yeats ties the Faculties to Croce's philosophy in a number of marginal notations to the latter author's works. In the revised edition of *Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and General Linguistic* (1922; *YL* 440), Yeats found in Croce's description ("Matter, in its abstraction, is mechanism") a correlative to the Body of Fate (*YL* 440: 6). In his notes on Croce's *Logic as the Science of Pure Concept*, Yeats draws parallels between his entire system of the Faculties and, in the following passage, Croce's description of "[t]he individual judgment as ultimate form of knowledge":

> There is no other cognitive fact to know, beyond perception or individual judgment. In this, the ultimate and the most perfect of cognitive facts, the

> circle of knowledge is completed. Obscure sensibility, having become clear intuition, and then having made itself thought of the universal, in the individual judgment is logically thought, and is, henceforward, knowledge of fact or of event, that is of effectual reality. The individual judgment, or perception, is fully adequate to reality. (*YL* 444: 157-8)

In a marginal space (at *YL* 444: 158), Yeats incorporates this series of concepts with that of the Faculties, noting:

obscure sensibility	= "Will"	Alone creative
clear intuition	= "Mask"	
thought of universal	= "C.M."	reflex
knowledge of event	= "B.F."	

This scheme glosses a passage of Croce that Yeats understood as follows (the ellipses indicate unscored text):

> *obscure sensibility . . . become clear intuition . . . then . . . thought of the universal. . . the individual judgment . . . henceforward, knowledge of fact or of event, that is, of effectual reality. . . .* (*YL* 444: 158)

According to Yeats's marginalia, Croce's system mirrors the division between the active and passive Faculties (*AV B* 73). In addition, this arrangement eventually became the description of the Faculties as seen in relation to the Daimon:

> All such abstract statements are, however, misleading, for we are dealing always with a particular man, the man of Phase 13 or Phase 17[,] let us say. The *Four Faculties* are not the abstract categories of philosophy, being the result of the four memories of the *Daimon* or ultimate self of that man. His *Body of Fate*, the series of events forced upon him from without, is shaped out of the *Daimon's* memory of the events of his past incarnations; his *Mask* or object of desire or idea of the good, out of its memory of the moments of exaltation in his past lives; his *Will* or normal ego out of its memory of all the events of his present life, whether consciously remembered or not; his *Creative Mind* from its memory of ideas—or universals—displayed by actual men in past lives, or their spirits between lives. (*AV B* 83)

Even so, in spite of the obvious influence of Croce, Yeats distances himself somewhat from "abstract categories of philosophy," maintaining that his own system is grounded in the phenomenal world. He especially disagreed with Croce's dismissal of non-logical forms of knowing, as is seen in Yeats's extensive reaction to Croce's statement that

"This is logical thought, as distinct from representation or intuition, which offers things not by reasons, individuality but not universality" (*YL* 444: 106-7).[12] Yeats responded to this assertion in one of the longer inscriptions in his copy of this book. He wrote:

> He [i.e., Croce] does not account for the ancient / pairs of opposites, [sigil for Fire] & [sigil for Water] [sigil for Air] & [sigil for Earth] & their spiritual equivalents, from / which the Four Moments descend. / If they are not opposites, what is the experience which makes us so / name them? It is true that if A sees himself as [sigil for Fire] the [sigil for Water] will be his / mere negation, and if he ~~sees~~ desire to / become B (his beloved) he may see her / as [sigil for Water] & his [sigil for Fire] as negation, but to C[,] A is [sigil for Fire] and B is [sigil for Water]. (*YL* 444: 107)

Given such quarreling in the margins of the books that he read, we see once again that Yeats, as in his dealing with his metaphysical sources, was not afraid to disagree with those authorities he invoked to support his system. Moreover, while he did disagree with his authorities in some respects, he relied on them heavily in the arrangement and codification of both editions of *A Vision*, especially the later one. In relying on them as corroborating influences, he sought not only to give a greater degree of credibility to his difficult system but to help clarify and illustrate many of its philosophical points; for it was to provide for the readers of his poetry and the audience of his plays a greater understanding of the symbolism he commanded in those works.

NOTES

1. Thanks to Wayne Chapman for his research into the contents of Yeats's library—both for confirmation of some of my assertions and for providing information well beyond that reported in *YL*. Look for his work in a future issue of *Yeats Annual*. Thanks also to Charis Chapman and Heather Hicks for checking quotations in editions unavailable to me. See Charis Chapman's personal essay "Across the Atlantic: Impressions of England, Ireland, and Anne Yeats" (above) on the manner in which some of these editions were checked. Abbreviations used in this paper are standard in Yeats studies and include the following: *AV A* for *A Vision: An Explanation of Life Founded upon the Writings of Giraldus and upon certain Doctrines attributed to Kusta Ben Luka* (London: privately printed by T. Werner Laurie, 1925); *AV B* for *A Vision* (London: Macmillan, 1962); *CV A* for *A Critical Edition of Yeats's* A Vision *(1925)*, ed. George Mills Harper and Walter Kelly Hood (London: Macmillan, 1978); *Mem* for *Memoirs: Autobiography—First Draft: Journal*, ed. Denis Donoghue (London: Macmillan, 1972; New York: Macmillan, 1973); *VPl for The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (New York: Macmillan, 1957; 3rd printing of 1966); and *YL* for Edward O'Shea*, A Descriptive Catalog of W. B. Yeats's Library* (New York and London: Garland, 1985).
2. The number assigned to this sentence in the fragments is "67."
3. "Fire lives the death of air, and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of earth, earth that of water" (*YL* 308: 135).
4. I am indebted to the notes in W. B. Yeats *A Vision and Related Writings*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares (London: Arena 1990) 394, for pointing out this use of Heraclitus outside of the two texts of *A Vision*.
5. John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1930) 139.
6. Strictly speaking, all beings are seen as immortal in the system of *A Vision*, as the soul does not cease to exist but is reincarnated and, eventually, ascends into the Thirteenth Cone. It is only in the Thirteenth Cone, however, that the being ceases to change, as it does in its movement through the incarnations of the Great Wheel.

7. Yeats did mark a section of Heraclitus which does parallel the role of the Teaching Spirits: "(123.) . . . that they rise up and become the guardians of the hosts of the quick and the dead" (*YL* 308: 141).
8. Yeats makes many small changes to this passage, which he had marked in his edition and was quoted, in part, above: "For, of a truth, they (i.e., Love and Strife) were aforetime and shall be; nor ever, methinks, will boundless time be emptied of that pair. And they prevail in turn as the circle comes round, and pass away before one another, and increase in their appointed turn" (*YL* 308: 223).
9. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922; London: Penguin Books, 1986) 273.
10. For the best general treatment of Yeats and Plotinus and the influence of Plotinus on *AV A* and *AV B*, see Brian Arkins, *Builders of My Soul: Greek and Roman Themes in Yeats* (Gerrards Cross, UK: Colin Smythe, 1990).
11. Donald T. Torchina, "Yeats and Croce," *YA* 4 (1986): 3-11.
12. "But what else does seeking the sufficient reason of things mean but thinking them in their truth, conceiving them in their universality, and stating their concept?" (*YL* 444: 106-7).

CON-FUSION: CON MELODY'S IDENTITY CRISIS

by Madeline Smith and Richard Eaton

When Eugene O'Neill essayed his magnum opus, the eleven-play cycle encompassing the whole of American history, he read widely among popular works on his subject. O'Neill may have been a quick study, but he also took copious notes and delved deeply into his subject before venturing to write about it. We know that he read voraciously in American and European history as he prepared for *A Touch of the Poet*, a play that treats the latter at least peripherally in Con Melody's reminiscences on the subject of the Napoleonic Wars and on the Battle of Talavera in particular.

However, while O'Neill's sources have always been of interest to his critics and while O'Neillians have devoted volumes to the literary and philosophical influences on the playwright's canon, rather less has been said of the historical sources which impacted on the cycle. We suggest that one need look no further than a popular Literary Guild selection to find *A Touch of the Poet's* principal source, Philip Guedalla's *Wellington*, and, we argue, that not only did the work supply the playwright with the facts of the event but also provided an inspiration for the fiction. We contend, ultimately, that Con Melody, the play's central character, was based on the Iron Duke himself.

The physical description of Con Melody is certainly consistent with the numerous illustrations of the handsome Wellington that Guedalla's book includes. Con's face is that of "an embittered Byronic hero, with a finely chiseled nose over a domineering, sensual mouth set in disdain, pale, hollow-cheeked, framed by thick, curly iron-gray hair" (O'Neill 34). The portrait of Wellington hanging at Apsley House, and attributed to John Simpson, circa 1835, shows a mature subject—still attractive with high and prominent cheekbones, a pronounced yet finely chiseled nose, the face of a patrician, framed by graying curly hair. Of Con Melody, O'Neill writes: "His bloodshot gray eyes have an insulting cold stare that anticipates insult. His manner is that of a polished gentleman. Too much so. He overdoes it and one soon feels that he is overplaying a role which has become more real than his real self to him. But in spite of this, there is something formidable and impressive about him. He is dressed in expensive, finely tailored clothes of an antique style—the style worn by English

aristocrats in Peninsula War days" (34). Could O'Neill have been looking at the 1815 painting of Wellington by Sir Thomas Lawrence—also included in Guedalla's book—showing the Duke in full military regalia, arms akimbo and face fixed in an icy and condescending stare? And was this portrait of Wellington in his scarlet uniform the inspiration behind O'Neill's description, in Act II, of Con Melody's dramatic entrance?

> Wearing the brilliant scarlet full-dress uniform of a major in one of Wellington's dragoon regiments, he looks extraordinarily handsome and distinguished—a startling, romantic figure, possessing a genuine quality he has not had before, the quality of the formidably strong, disdainfully fearless cavalry officer he really had been. (88)

An Anglo-Irishman, born in Dublin (Merrion Street) and to a country estate (Dangan Castle), Wellington himself, his place of birth, and, in part, his provenance may recall Con's own. The ambiguity of the role as Ascendancy lord of Irish estates—distrusted by the Irish and disdained by the English establishment—made for an unresolved social standing, according to Guedalla.

> The visitor from England might stare at occasional crudities—at oxen roasted whole, at fourteen meat dishes for dinner, at a host who sat before his claret half the day and all night long, lord of "vast but unproductive" acres, dispensing in a mansion "spacious but dilapidated" hospitality that was "lavish but inelegant." (3)

If the social standing of the Anglo-Irish gentry was somewhat ambiguous, so too is Melody's. As member of the Irish gentry, he feels superior to Nora and Sara, whom he disparages as "two scheming peasants" (60) plotting to entrap Simon Harford. It is clear that, having felt himself trapped into marriage by Nora, Melody is identifying with his Yankee establishment visitor. Con Melody, among his entourage of Irish peasant freeloaders, is also regarded with ambivalence, looked up to for his lineage and looked down upon for his pretensions. The uncertainty of Con's social standing is again made manifest in his relationships with the women in the play—not only as he condescends to his wife but as Deborah Harford condescends to him.

Although Con Melody's background is considerably less elevated than Wellington's—according to Jamie Cregan, Con's "father wasn't of the quality of Galway like he makes out, but a thievin' shebeen keeper who got rich by moneylendin' and squeezin' tenants and every manner of trick. And when he'd enough he married, and bought an estate and set up as one of the gentry" (11)— it is clear that Melody Sr. affects the pretensions of the Anglo-Irish landlord and that Con Melody claims this patrimony for his own. As Melody reminisces of his youth, his description of his birthplace might call to mind the Wesley/ Wellesley/Wellington country estate:

> Ah, that brings it back clear as life! Melody Castle in the days that's gone! A wind from the south, and a sky gray with clouds—good weather for the hounds. A true Irish hunter under me that knows and loves me and would

> raise to a jump over hell if I gave the word! To hell with men, I say!—and women, too! . . . . Give me a horse to love and I'll cry quits to men! And then away, with hounds in full cry, and after them! Off with divil a care for your neck, over ditches and streams and stone walls and fences, the fox doubling up the mountainside through furze and the heather—! (102-3)

Wellington's own love of horses (though certainly not to the exclusion of the ladies!) and hunting was well published. How often does the name of the horse survive as does Copenhagen's, except, perhaps, when its owner was inordinately attached to it? Wellington's other passion—for hunting—provided him respite from the Peninsula Wars, according to Guedalla:

> Those quiet morning hours served to dispose of his enormous correspondence with incredible punctuality; for "my rule always was to do the business of the day in the day." Then he breakfasted and transacted military business with the Staff. This lasted all morning, except on hunting days when a gleeful Quartermaster General records that he "could get almost anything done, for Lord Wellington stands whip in hand ready to start, and soon despatches all business." Those were the days that the startled Portuguese on lonely hillsides beheld an unprecedented cavalry, heard view-halloos and the strident note of the hounds, and marvelled at the stange proceedings of their incomprehensible allies. . . . Such was the impressive apparatus with which Lord Wellington tones his nerves in winter-quarters. (207)

O'Neill's protagonist has fallen on hard times, his ancestral home gone and even the modest inn mortgaged to the hilt. Just so with Wellington's family, who experienced financial reverses after the death of Arthur's father. With her brood to raise, the Countess of Mornington was forced to mortgage Dangan Castle, which ultimately passed to outsiders.

Melody is no stranger to duels, as Maloy and Cregan's conversation makes clear early in *A Touch of the Poet* (12). In killing the husband of his Spanish mistress in a duel to defend his honor, ironically, Melody brings on disgrace. Though Wellington was not sensitive to insult and quick to avenge his honor, he did once seek to repair the assault on his integrity by challenging a peer to a duel. Lord Winchilsea, impugning Wellington's political motives, was summarily challenged. With the appropriate fanfare, the opponents met, aimed, fired, and agreed to miss. The matter was satisfactorily resolved when Winchilsea issued a written apology. Though such matches were not to Wellington's taste, he lived in an ambiance where duels abounded, that according to his biographer. Among Irish patricians, duels for honor's sake were frequent. Even while Arthur was being born, says Guedalla, "Fine gentlemen fought duels . . . and wits rhymed" (8).

Like the Anglo-Irish, for whom horse-breeding and horse-racing were indulgent pastimes, Con insists upon keeping the mare, which serves as a reminder of his former glory. Sara complains that there is not enough provision for the family, let alone the horse, but keep the mare Con must. And the mounting debts as Sara must beg more credit from Neilan? All in keeping with the Anglo-Irish aristocracy's bookkeeping, borrowing was always easy, says

Guedalla, and debts were the norm.

And then there's Con Melody's glowing military record, which, confirms Cregan, was only blemished by the duel. "If it wasn't for his fine record for bravery in battle, they'd have court-martialed him," the Major's cousin confides to Maloy (12). Con himself bemoans the fact that he shed his blood for a country that "thanked" him "with disgrace" (40), and, though one might cast a skeptical eye on Melody's own claims of prowess, his cousin's presence at the military actions lends support to his assertions. "You was worth any ten men in the army that day!" Cregan says of Melody at Talavera (93). Despite his reckless bravery, Melody escaped unharmed, though a stray bullet had pierced his coat. The Duke himself incurred a slight injury under similar circumstances at Talavera, as he fearlessly oversaw his troops. "Once a spent bullet bruised his chest. But the day faded, and the French attacks died down" (187). Con Melody attests to the ferocity of the battle: "I'll never forget the blast of death from the French squares. And then their chasseurs and lancers were on us! By God, it's a miracle any of us came though! (99). It is a description which coincides with Wellington's own account: "The days of July 27-28, 1809," he wrote, were "two days of the hardest fighting I have ever been party to" (187).

Perhaps one of the most telling indications that Guedalla was O'Neill's principal source is found in both the historian's and the playwright's frequent reference in their works to the poetry of Lord Byron. In *A Touch of the Poet*, the lusty Lord Byron and his work are featured prominently, Con quoting throughout a passage from *Childe Harold*, "I have not loved the World," etc., and resembling, we are told, the Byronic hero. Melody makes clear that he identifies with the Romantic poet he quotes: "'Among them, but not of them.' By the Eternal, that expresses it! Thank God for you, Lord Byron—poet and nobleman who made of his disdain immortal music! " (44). The lines are spoken as if to himself as Melody stares at his reflection in the glass. And while Byron's poem was known to the youthful O'Neill and oft quoted by him before his Princeton colleagues, as Louis Sheaffer notes (449), Guedalla's book would certainly have refreshed O'Neill's recollections of the poem and the poet as O'Neill prepared his American history cycle manuscript.

It might also be observed that Con Melody's relationship with his long-suffering wife, Nora, is not unlike that of the Duke and his long-sufferring wife, Kitty Pakenham. We witness Con's dismissal of Nora and hear of (or see first-hand) his penchant for married women—the Spanish countess, Deborah Harford—so we aware of just how thoughtless and faithless a husband Con is. While Guedalla attempts to be circumspect, he quotes one of Wellington's cohorts as saying that the colonel had a "very susceptible heart, particularly towards, I am sorry to say, married ladies" (101). Although not married at the time his fellow officer made the observation, Wellington found his subsequent betrothal no impediment to his pleasures. Once married, he and his bride were parted for long intervals, but such separations were no cause for repining. "When England dropped below the horizon, Kitty, one feels, dropped with it. His fancy was unvisited by images of Kitty" (181). If Wellington had been popular with the ladies before Waterloo, he was besieged thereafter. "And what is a Beau without his due accompaniment of belles?" Guedalla asks subtly and rhetorically (286). What's more, just as O'Neill depicts Nora as unworldly, uneducated, unsophisticated, so Guedalla describes Kitty: "Poor Kitty was not clever, though; she never knew what Arthur meant; and it was more than doubtful how far home would disappoint him" (316).

Of interest too are the ambivalent attitudes of Wellington, a Protestant, and

Melody, presumably raised Catholic, on the "one true faith." Deluding himself that he has been entrapped by priests into marrying Nora, Melody is discernibly hostile toward religion throughout the play. Maloy says that Melody "hates priests" (14), and, in the Major's conversations with Nora, it is clear that he associates her with religious superstition. When Nora refers to her "sin" with Melody, he retaliates: "Damn your priests' prating about your sin" (61). One might expect Wellington to be unsympathetic toward Catholic Emancipation, but, rather, he was in fact ambivalent. Though he supported extending the benefits of the constitution to the Irish Roman Catholics, "there were plainly limits; and a Parliament of Papists seemed to exceed them" (35). And so, in his speech before the Irish House of Commons in 1793, he spoke out against the measure that would give them political office. However, later in life, at age 60, Wellington campaigned vigorously for Catholic Emancipation, for, as Guedalla observes, "he was always more anxious to be right than to be consistent" (386).

In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, James Tyrone chauvinistically proclaims that Wellington was an Irish Catholic. Perhaps Tyrone's statement is not quite true, but we might suspect that the Duke was at least the inspiration for the Irish Catholic Con Melody in *A Touch of the Poet*. In his autobiographical works, O'Neill drew heavily, if not derivatively, from youthful acquaintances. His inspirations for character in the history plays are, we contend, more researched, more remote, and less recognizable by comparison.

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