

Chapter 1 : BL57 W. B. Yeats, Yeats's Vision Papers

This web site is dedicated to the work of the Irish poet W. B. Yeats (), specifically to the strange, esoteric system which he and his wife, George, created, and which he expounded in A Vision.

Reassessing the Poetry of W. The Poetry Student summaries put the mainstream view admirably: The woods of Arcady are dead, And over is their antique joy; Of old the world on dreaming fed; Grey truth is now her painted toy. The Song of the Happy Shepherd Already there is the appeal to a lost world of ancient imaginative truth – superior to drab reality sick children of the world, as he calls it later in the poem – the appearance of esoteric symbols in the Rood and Chronos, and indeed in W. Yeats had drawn on earlier English traditions, notably Blake, Shelley and Rossetti to say more than immediately meets the eye through an imagery of symbols. Some were traditional – rose, sea, tower – and others were of his own devising, becoming more complex and interrelated in later poems. Inherent in these views was the doctrine of correspondences, the doctrine of signatures, and the doctrine of magical in connotations and symbols which have power over spiritual and material reality. His larger views on Ireland and its social emancipation were emphasized, as were his increasing use of everyday language and speech rhythms, and of cinematic approaches, one image following another without much connecting text. All are well documented. The pre-Raphaelite detail is pruned back and made more effective. There was man whom Sorrow named his friend, And he, of his high comrade Sorrows dreaming, Went walking with slow steps along the gleaming And humming sands, where windy surges wend: When the wave of moonlight glosses The dim grey sands with light, Far off by furthest Rosses We foot it all the night. The light of evening, Lissadell, Great windows open to the south, Two girls in silk kimonos, both Beautiful. Poems should not express anything but themselves. They should simply be. Most verse writers compose in verse, moreover, when the lines already on paper serve to direct, shape and give birth to future lines. In contrast, Yeats pondered matters deeply by writing innumerable drafts in prose and then verse, and nothing he started was ever abandoned. The approach gave him freedom to arrange thoughts, but also posed difficulties in finding appropriate metrical expression. Thoughts were often replaced by images, therefore, without connecting explanation, so that even his best poems can suffer from abrupt changes of direction, tone and concluding thought. The Second Coming A generally successful poem, though there are thematic breaks at these line endings: What are the monuments exactly? Why celebrate bodily decrepitude? Byzantine artists did not make mechanical birds. What knowledge or insight does the poet possess that the lords and ladies would want to hear? I consider these to be flaws, shortcomings that keep intelligent readers from fully enjoying the poem, and which a little more work would have corrected. That is no country for old men. Caught in that sensual music all neglect Monuments of unaging intellect. But why did Yeats create these problems in the first place? Because, I suspect, he saw himself the medium at a seance, receiving important messages that had to be conveyed verbatim. In time, when Yeats continued to ignore the matter, as did the other founders of Modernism in their own work , the difficulties became a distinctive and necessary part of modern poetry. It was language itself that was faulty. A vast critical movement sprang up in later decades to show that this was necessarily the case, when poets were simply being more perceptive and honest than writers in more mundane professions. Leda and the Swan So mastered by the brute blood of the air, Did she put on his knowledge with his power Before the indifferent beak could let her drop. How does the air have blood? The poem ends just when beginning to say something interesting. That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea. Very well, but why torn? Dolphins often appear in Greek art and legend, of course, but their significance is in fact various and contested. A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street, Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can, Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut Who keeps the till. He was writing strongly to the end, and remained an anti-materialist, where symbols and emblems continue to exist in a larger spiritual world, whatever the preceding lines might suggest: Players and painted stage took all my love And not those things that they were emblems of. What is Yeats saying? The heady ideals of youth may decline into a mound of refuse in a material sense, moreover, but they most certainly did not begin so. But the larger difficulties are these: If we have to consult specialist guides to

understand the poems, they will not make immediate sense to most readers. If those guides, furthermore, suggest readings that make even less sense, we must either give up attempts to fully understand the poem and happily ignore the difficulties: And he added, "It is precisely this desire to interpret instead of to feel, to look for a meaning which is not there, that leads the critics to call symbolist poetry obscure. Until recently, *A Vision* remained a literary curiosity, an embarrassment to academics and fellow poets, a hocus pocus whose sole importance had been to keep the man magisterially alive and writing. To such a question I can but answer that if sometimes, overwhelmed by spectacle as all men must be in the midst of it, I have taken such periods literally, my reason has soon recovered; and now that the system stands out clearly in my imagination I regard them as stylistic arrangements of experience comparable to the cubes in the drawing of Wyndham Lewis and to the ovoids in the sculpture of Brancusi. They have helped me hold in a single thought reality and justice. For all his gifts as talker and revolutionary, Yeats the thinker could be remarkably elusive. *A Vision* occult matters were nonetheless central to W. Yeats, justifying the select audience and providing depth to his imagery. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write. Most scientists are adamant that psi activities cannot occur, and that the evidence must therefore be nonexistent or fraudulent. Yet the evidence does exist, in many thousands of well-documented studies. Astrologers tend to see their art as a language, however, a highly technical language with its own belief sets, skills and accepted practices – not in these respects unlike literary criticism, the reader may be bemused to learn. Then there is the personal element. The world views of Spengler or Toynbee, long since passed from vogue, did at least marshal evidence, and the more speculative astrological systems, which can be found in any good New Age bookshop, are closely documented with references to authorities and extensive case notes. *A Vision* has none of these. But how seriously are we to really take the symbols? One was created by the projection of inner feelings onto the world outside. The other existed as nascent words that slowly permeated the consciousness and expressed a state of mind initially unknown to their originator. Rare words were introduced, syntactical intricacies, private associations and baffling images. Metonymy replaced metaphor as symbol, and was in turn replaced by single words which opened in imagination to multiple levels of signification. Time was suspended, and the usual supports of plot and narrative removed. Even the implied poet faded away, and there were then only objects, enigmatically introduced but somehow made right and necessary by verse skill. But all operate through Yeats the seer and arbiter of spiritual significance. That seems to me the secret of his power. By themselves, the subjects of his poems are less than revelatory, inconsequential even, but that dreamy voice of authority invests them with something that lies beyond everyday experience. The Second Coming therefore relates to the antithetical civilization which will come with the third millennium, personified in the rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem as anarchy, horror and the drowning of innocence overrun the world. The Tower exhibits a close consistency of outlook and theme, each poem benefiting from others in the collection, but postulating the tower as an esoteric but empowering symbol may be overstating matters. Art, after all, in its most general conception, aims at fullness and fidelity to human experience, and Symbolism can hardly claim that with the uninstructed common reader. If Yeats was deluded in writing *A Vision* he was deluded in writing his later, supposedly more important poems that call on *A Vision* for their sense. Only the greatest of thinkers would understand him: He made very free use of his own interests in translating from the Greek of Sophocles, though often with striking, indeed beautiful lines: But the translations could take on a character quite foreign to the original. Sacred too is each leafed thing endowed with berries and with fruit as, nymphs attending, revelling, Here bloom the crocuses in gold, and on their graves the white narcissus guards the Goddesses of old from dewed awakening, dawn to dawn. And through this flows the Cephisus, unendingly, from fountains drawn: The Muses cannot hide their face nor Aphrodite ever cease to visit us with golden rein. Our youths are not its ravagers nor may the aged with their hand destroy this bounty of our land. Another praise we have to tell is for our mother city, writ in glory of the son of Cronus, with might of horses, might of sea, the god Poseidon, such is he who to master horse has shown us how to keep with iron bit their powerful anger in our thrall. Who comes into this country, and has come Where golden crocus and narcissus bloom, Where the Great Mother, mourning for her daughter And beauty-drunken by the water Glittering among grey-leaved olive-trees, Has plucked a flower and sung her loss; Who finds abounding Cephisus Has found the loveliest

spectacle there is. Because this country has a pious mind And so remembers that when all mankind But trod the road, or splashed about the shore, Poseidon gave it bit and oar, Every Colonus lad or lass discourses Of that oar and of that bit; Summer and winter, day and night, Of horses and horses of the sea, white horses. Yeats rearranged lines, and many of his couplets are somewhat contrived: Yeats was probably attracted to the white or shining with which the chorus opens, and, rather than relate it to the white limestone country of Greece, delved back into Irish mythology and conjured up waves breaking in sea horses. As a craftsman, Yeats had had obvious weaknesses to overcome. He was not an inventive rhymist: The moon in a silver bag. Are but a post that passing dogs defile Both from A Coat. He was not always a good critic of his work: Run till all the sages know. We the great gazebo built, They convicted us of guilt. In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz But on the credit side, Yeats had a gift for exquisite phrasing, often varying the pacing within the iambic metre: The woods of Arcady are dead, And over is their antique joy; Crossways Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream? One that is ever kind said yesterday: The Folly of Being Comforted And for the memorable phrase: Ignorant and wanton as the dawn. The Dawn Come build in the empty house of the stare.

Chapter 2 : SparkNotes: Yeats's Poetry: Analysis

A Vision: An Explanation of Life Founded upon the Writings of Giraldus and upon Certain Doctrines Attributed to Kusta Ben Luka, privately published in 1898, was a book-length study of various philosophical, historical, astrological, and poetic topics by the Irish poet William Butler Yeats.

Yeats remained involved with the Abbey until his death, both as a member of the board and a prolific playwright. In 1891, he helped set up the Dun Emer Press to publish work by writers associated with the Revival. This became the Cuala Press in 1894, and inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement, sought to "find work for Irish hands in the making of beautiful things. Yeats met the American poet Ezra Pound in 1907. Pound had travelled to London at least partly to meet the older man, whom he considered "the only poet worthy of serious study. He would often visit and stay there as it was a central meeting place for people who supported the resurgence of Irish literature and cultural traditions. His poem, "The Wild Swans at Coole" was written there, between 1896 and 1900. He wrote prefaces for two books of Irish mythological tales, compiled by Augusta, Lady Gregory: *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, and *Gods and Fighting Men*. In the preface of the later he wrote: However, as his life progressed, he sheltered much of his revolutionary spirit and distanced himself from the intense political landscape until 1922, when he was appointed Senator for the Irish Free State. In the 1920s Yeats was fascinated with the authoritarian, anti-democratic, nationalist movements of Europe, and he composed several marching songs for the far right Blueshirts, although they were never used. He was a fierce opponent of individualism and political liberalism, and saw the fascist movements as a triumph of public order and the needs of the national collective over petty individualism. On the other hand, he was also an elitist who abhorred the idea of mob-rule, and saw democracy as a threat to good governance and public order. His rival John MacBride had been executed for his role in the Easter Rising, so Yeats hoped that his widow might remarry. Yeats proposed in an indifferent manner, with conditions attached, and he both expected and hoped she would turn him down. According to Foster "when he duly asked Maud to marry him, and was duly refused, his thoughts shifted with surprising speed to her daughter. When Maud told her that she was going to marry, Iseult cried and told her mother that she hated MacBride. At fifteen, she proposed to Yeats. In 1908, he proposed to Iseult, but was rejected. Despite warnings from her friends "George He must be dead" Hyde-Lees accepted, and the two were married on 20 October. The couple went on to have two children, Anne and Michael. Although in later years he had romantic relationships with other women, Georgie herself wrote to her husband "When you are dead, people will talk about your love affairs, but I shall say nothing, for I will remember how proud you were. The spirits communicated a complex and esoteric system of philosophy and history, which the couple developed into an exposition using geometrical shapes: In 1925, he wrote to his publisher T. His reply to many of the letters of congratulations sent to him contained the words: As he remarked, "The theatres of Dublin were empty buildings hired by the English traveling companies, and we wanted Irish plays and Irish players. When we thought of these plays we thought of everything that was romantic and poetical, because the nationalism we had called up "the nationalism every generation had called up in moments of discouragement" was romantic and poetical. For the first time he had money, and he was able to repay not only his own debts, but those of his father. He had been appointed to the first Irish Senate in 1922, and was re-appointed for a second term in 1927. In response, Yeats delivered a series of speeches that attacked the "quixotically impressive" ambitions of the government and clergy, likening their campaign tactics to those of "medieval Spain. This conviction has come to us through ancient philosophy and modern literature, and it seems to us a most sacrilegious thing to persuade two people who hate each other You will put a wedge in the midst of this nation". In 1928, he chaired a coinage committee charged with selecting a set of designs for the first currency of the Irish Free State. Towards the end of his life "and especially after the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and Great Depression, which led some to question whether democracy could cope with deep economic difficulty" Yeats seems to have returned to his aristocratic sympathies. During the aftermath of the First World War, he became sceptical about the efficacy of democratic government, and anticipated political reconstruction in Europe through totalitarian rule. Chantry House, Steyning. A plaque on the wall reads "William Butler Yeats" wrote many

of his later poems in this house". In a letter of , Yeats noted: "If I write poetry it will be unlike anything I have done". Attempts had been made at Roquebrune to dissuade the family from proceeding with the removal of the remains to Ireland due to the uncertainty of their identity. His body had earlier been exhumed and transferred to the ossuary. "Cast a cold Eye On Life, on Death." Neither Michael Yeats nor Sean MacBride, the Irish foreign minister who organised the ceremony, wanted to know the details of how the remains were collected, Ostrorog notes. He repeatedly urges caution and discretion and says the Irish ambassador in Paris should not be informed. The French Foreign Ministry authorized Ostrorog to secretly cover the cost of repatriation from his slush fund. Yeats bibliography and Category: Yeats Yeats is generally considered one of the twentieth century key English language poets. He was a Symbolist poet, using allusive imagery and symbolic structures throughout his career. He chose words and assembled them so that, in addition to a particular meaning, they suggest abstract thoughts that may seem more significant and resonant. His use of symbols [87] is usually something physical that is both itself and a suggestion of other, perhaps immaterial, timeless qualities. Much of the remainder of his life was lived outside Ireland, although he did lease Riversdale house in the Dublin suburb of Rathfarnham in . He wrote prolifically through his final years, and published poetry, plays, and prose. In , he attended the Abbey for the final time to see the premiere of his play *Purgatory*. His *Autobiographies of William Butler Yeats* was published that same year. His work can be divided into three general periods. The early poems are lushly pre-Raphaelite in tone, self-consciously ornate, and, at times, according to unsympathetic critics, stilted. In many ways, this poetry is a return to the vision of his earlier work. The opposition between the worldly minded man of the sword and the spiritually minded man of God, the theme of *The Wanderings of Oisín*, is reproduced in *A Dialogue Between Self and Soul*. His most important collections of poetry started with *The Green Helmet and Responsibilities*, *The Tower*, *The Winding Stair*, and *New Poems* contained some of the most potent images in twentieth-century poetry. Foster notes how Gonne was "notoriously unreliable on dates and places", p. *The New York Times*, 30 January Retrieved on 21 May Yeats, *Man and Poet*. Retrieved 2 May 2012 via Google Books.

Chapter 3 : BL38 W. B. Yeats, A Vision

A Vision has ratings and 25 reviews. J.W. Dionysius said: I strongly recommend reading this on heavy psychedelics, that is, if your tolerance is kale.

This card is labelled "La Torre" in most Italian packs, such as the one that W. The majority of designs show a lightning flash, often coming from a cloud, striking the top of a crenelated tower, dislodging its crown, and with two or more people falling, along with a hail of particles. In many ways both these attributes have some appropriateness for George: Peh means "mouth" and her work as medium for the automatic script gave words to the communicators, and she was strongly marked as a Scorpio, both by her astrological rising sign and her cycle sign in the system, ruled by Mars Pluto had not been discovered, and the Yeatses generally used the traditional rulers anyway. The symbolism may well extend further. In this structure, Water and Fire were associated with Hod and Netzach, respectively, so that the path joining them is the last one that is wholly within that elemental world. Beyond that came the Portal Ritual, after which the successful aspirant would pass to the Second Order. This ritual symbolically involves crossing the "Veil of the Paroketh", separating the lower sephiroth from the central ones. The lower four sephiroth on the Tree of Life, with some of the Golden Dawn correspondences. The Portal Ritual does not have a specific grade related to it, representing a liminal level: George followed the same steps, over twenty years later, inducted into the Stella Matutina in August. Her advance through the grades seems to have been a little rapider, with initiations into the next grades in September and then November or December as far as can be told from astrological charts she drew up that seem to indicate the times of initiations, see *Becoming George*. Three or more months later, the aspirant might be ready to undergo the initiation to Philosophus. In this ritual he or she is addressed by the title of "Monocris de Astris", and symbolically approaches the sephirah of Netzach via the three paths that lead to it from the lower sephiroth already mastered: The ritual of the Philosophus, approaching Netzach via the horizontal path from Hod, shows the card as conceived by the Golden Dawn: And the Sixteenth Key of the Tarot: It represents a Tower struck by a lightning-flash proceeding from a rayed circle and terminating in a triangle. It is the Tower of Babel. The flash exactly forms the Astronomical symbol of Mars. It is the Power of the Triad rushing down and destroying the Column of Darkness. The men falling from the tower represent the fall of the kings of Edom. On the left-hand side is Darkness, and Eleven Circles symbolically representing the Qliphoth. This underlines that this stage is the true final stage of the elemental levels, associated with a breaking down of the Tower of selfhood that was built before, so that a new one can be constructed consciously to lead to the Higher Self. A new Tarot pack, coming from the Golden Dawn tradition, actually includes a unicorn in the symbolism of the Tower card. The tower seems to have been constructed out of letter blocks, with the base constructed from the twelve so-called simple letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the middle tier from the seven double letters, and the highest level from the three mother letters. These categories come from the Sepher Yetzirah and correspond in turn with the twelve signs of the zodiac, the seven ancient planets, and the three elements—excluding earth. The circle is in fact a complex geodesic form of sphere, patterned on the "flower of life". This widespread form of sacred geometry can in turn be used as a matrix to generate the cabalistic Tree of Life: Over the stormy left side the rainbow arches, recalling the rainbow that came after the Flood that destroyed almost all human and animal life on earth. If the tower recalls the destruction of the Tower of Babel, it is testimony to the less fatal punishment that the promise of the rainbow symbolizes. Uriel is the angel of the Mysteries, who overthrows the false perceptions" Farrell and Wendrich. Traditionally also, Uriel is the angel who warned Noah about the coming flood, so the card brings together many aspects of emerging from an experience in which the old order is swept away to be replaced by a new one. It seems that the Yeatses must have been thinking about something very similar, and made the connection through study, or more likely through vision. In an e-mail, Nicola informed me that "The inspiration to include the unicorn in the Tower image came from a joint meditation wherein my husband and I met with the Tower archetype, who requested that Harry paint a unicorn in the image to represent the Archangel Uriel. Uriel is the Angel of the Mysteries, who overthrows false perceptions". Farrell also made the same connection, independently: Unfortunately for

the life of me I do not know where I got this association from. With symbolism that is both different and strikingly congruent, the Wendrich card of the Tower bears out much of the passage that was quoted at the end of the "The Unicorn and the Lightning-Struck Tower, III": The crises are a form of constructive destruction. He expresses through a system of images a harmony of related aims and we should discover in this harmony of aims, in this unity of being not the mere intervention of the thirteenth cone but the sphere itself. I am thinking of the Tarot trump [of the? It may seem a strange emblem to choose as a bookplate, but it is a constant reminder that the initiate is remaking herself, shattering the tower of self that has been constructed largely unawares in youth, and that part of building a new structure of self and life comes from the words, letters, and speech of the books she reads.

Chapter 4 : William Butler Yeats: A Vision and the Seer

One of the most remarkable channeled documents of the past century is Nobel Prize-winning poet William Butler Yeats' A Vision. Yeats explains how he obtained A Vision as follows: "On the afternoon of October 24th, , four days after my marriage, my wife surprised me by attempting automatic writing.

An associated glossary of terms and a bibliography are available here. Explications and Contexts is available for purchase and free download: The first ever volume of essays devoted to aspects of A Vision has been written by a range of scholars who examine a variety of themes and approaches, edited by Matthew Gibson, Claire Nally and me. Chapman, who has contributed to the volume as well. The book is published in both electronic and printed form. It is also accessible online via Liverpool Scholarship Online and University Press Scholarship Online simplest to search on "Yeats" and "Vision"; or click this direct link functional April , though this is by subscription or through a library. Contents "Something Intended, Complete": The exhibition opened on 25 May and is due to run for three years. I have to acknowledge bias, from being involved with it, but it genuinely is very good. See the Links page for further information and resources. The font for the text of this site is not fixed, to enable you to read it in whatever typeface you prefer. Also, what suits the screen may not suit the printed page. Click here for examples. Those using Firefox as browser may find some of the characters represented by little question-marks in black diamond squares, and can change viewing settingsâ€™click here for details. There may be some links to pages that are projected but not yet completed, and the site-map gives a picture of the current and projected shape of the site. Any comment is welcome. It examines elements of the system that interest me, particularly looking at parallels and how the System fits with esoteric and symbolic systems more generally. Whereas the website aims to offer clear and direct interpretation of A Vision for readers and students, confining itself largely to what Yeats himself wrote and to the academic study of his work, the comments and articles in the blog will be rather more speculative, exploratory and possibly personal. I add to the blog very slowly, and as it is far from topical and will only be minimally sequential, I hope that readers will feel able and welcome to respond to any post, whether it was nominally put up the day before or months or even years before. All the images and quotations used on these pages are believed to be used legitimately within the laws of copyright. If you notice any that are not, please contact me and they will be removed. This site was created and written, and is maintained by Neil Mann contact.

Chapter 5 : The Widening Gyre

A Vision was the result of Yeats' and Georgie's mystical and pseudo-supernatural experiences. Yeats believed in reincarnation and borrowed from many esoteric sources, philosophies and religions. Yeats believed in reincarnation and borrowed from many esoteric sources, philosophies and religions.

Chapter 6 : Yeats's Vision: W. B. Yeats and "A Vision"

A Vision. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, Reprint, 'with the author's final revisions', Yeats's 'defence against the chaos of the world' outlines a complex philosophical, ontological, and symbolic system he 'learned' from his 'instructors', the spirits speaking through the mediumship of his wife, her automatic script, and her dreams (see 57) between October

Chapter 7 : A Vision - Wikipedia

Yeats' Ireland: An Enchanted Vision by Benedict Kiely; W. B. Yeats and a great selection of similar Used, New and Collectible Books available now at www.nxgvision.com

Chapter 8 : A Vision by Yeats, William Butler

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Chapter 9 : W. B. Yeats, A Vision – A. L. Duck

Yeats, W.V. A www.nxgvision.comlan, Yeats describes his Vision as "a system of thought that would leave my imagination free to create as it chose and yet make all that it created, or could create, part of the one history, and that the soul's" (xi).