Yeats as a man and a poet had diverse interests and his friendships reflect these interests. These interests stem from his essentially romantic conservative nature which goes a long way in explaining seemingly contrary points of view. It was a way of looking at life in an intensely unique way. His friendships and intimacies as well as his social relationships at different stages of his life both reflect his interests and form his attitudes. Again this seemingly complex attitude of the poet's the Irish heritage was an integral part of his background and entered into his poetic imagination as a creative factor. This throws him into conflict with the contemporary English literary scene which was also part of his heritage. In some cases the friendships were mainly literary and at other times his literary and social interests coincided which gave rise to long-enduring friendships. These interests were essentially part of Yeats's search towards an integrated personality and often enough his friendships were part of a conscious pattern which aimed at a unity of being which is reflected in the poet and the man. His varied interests can thus be seen as part of a whole - the unified personality though at times they occur as isolated fragments and not as part of the whole.

I had been put into a rage by the followers of Huxley, Tyndall, Carolus Duran, and Bastien-Lepage, who not
only asserted the unimportance of subject whether in art or literature, but the independence of the arts from one another. Upon the other hand, I delighted in every age where poet and artist confined themselves gladly to some inherited subject-matter known to the whole people, far I thought that in man and race alike there is something called 'Unity of Being' using that term as Dante used it when he compared beauty in the Convito to a perfectly proportioned human body. My father, from whom I had learned the term, preferred a comparison to a musical instrument so strung that if we touch a string all the strings murmur faintly.¹

These interests are fundamental to an understanding of his poetry and the consistency of the thought is an indication of the depth of study that Yeats gave to his poetry and to life. Yet though the circles and interests they catered to varied, there was a unity in the personality of Yeats. One of the earliest influences was that of his father who took upon himself the task of teaching Yeats the points of style and poetry. Rebelling against his father's scientific rationalism and his unbelief in religious matters Yeats moved away from his father's attitudes because of his own romantic impulses. It evoked in Yeats as a child and later as a young man, a sense and an instinctive turning to a feeling for mysticism.

which would be almost religious in its impulse.

My father's unbelief had set me thinking about the evidences of religion and I weighed the matter perpetually with great anxiety, for I did not think I could live without religion. All my religious emotions were, I think, connected with clouds and cloudy glimpses of luminous sky, perhaps because of some Bible picture of God's speaking to Abraham or the like. At least I can remember the sight moving me to tears.2

Yeats's discovery of the fairy and folk-lore catered to the mystical, romantic and anti-rationalistic streak in his nature. He felt that it had an earthy realism and paradoxically an inherent mysticism which would help to make up for a lack of a formal religion. This search for an earthy realism may perhaps be an indication of his skepticism which he overcame by systematically practicing mysticism. This is also seen in his early love of natural science which he suppressed in order to stress his romantic, mystical tendencies. This religious belief manifested itself in a poetic tradition which would transform this religious instinct into something approaching a religion.

I was unlike others of my generation in one thing only. I am very religious, and deprived by Huxley and Tyndall, whom I detested, of the simple-minded religion of my childhood, I had made a new religion, almost an

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2. Ibid., 'Reveries over Childhood and Youth', pp. 25-26
infallible Church of poetic tradition, of a fardel of stories, and of personages, and of emotions, inseparable from their first expression, passed on from generation to generation by poets and painters with some help from philosophers and theologians. I wished for a world where I could discover this tradition perpetually and not in pictures and in poems only, but in tiles round the chimney-piece and in the hangings that kept out the draught. I had even created a dogma. Because those imaginary people are created out of the deepest instinct of man, to be his measure and his norm, whatever I can imagine those mouths speaking may be the nearest I can go to truth. When I listened they seemed always to speak of one thing only: they, their lover, every incident of their lives, were steeped in the supernatural. 3

This interest in the supernatural coincided with Yeats's search for an Irish identity. This had its roots in his Sligo background which proved to be a creative force in his poetry and prose as is evident in his Autobiographies. It is a means of defining his Irish identity in his search for a literary background in late nineteenth century London. Even in his early years Yeats's bias is towards his Irish Protestant background which he clings to in the face of his English school days.

3. Ibid., "The Trembling of the Veil", "Four Hours 1887-1891*, pp. 115-116
This search for an identity of his own with sanctions outside himself in different traditions and systems of philosophy show that it was not a spontaneous impulse on Yeats's part. It was a conscious and deliberate act. His romantic impulses delighted in the Irish folklore yet in the same vein his Irish identity rested mainly in his Anglo-Irish Protestant background bringing out his conservative tendencies. His romantic and religious beliefs based upon instinctive tendencies contrasted with his approach towards Protestantism and Catholicism which were for him social in their implications and values and that is why his social ideas and his romantic impulses often pull in different directions creating a tension in both the poet and the man. Though Yeats professed a unity of Culture by uniting Protestant and Catholic Ireland in his prose, his writings reveal his inherent social bias towards the Protestant tradition in Irish affairs.

I probably dared myself to other feats of a like sort, for I did not think English people intelligent or well-behaved unless they were artists. Every one I knew well Sligo despised Nationalists and Catholics, but all disliked England with a prejudice that had come down perhaps from the days of the Irish parliament. 4

Yet as Yeats was conscious of the schism between Catholics and Protestants and of the schism in himself he tried to bring together through literature an ideal union. But as will be

4. Ibid., "Reveries over Childhood and Youth", pp. 33-34
pointed out later this literary ideal did not often live up to his expectations.

I had noticed that Irish Catholics among whom had been born so many political martyrs had not the good taste, the household courtesy and decency of the Protestant Ireland I had known, yet Protestant Ireland seemed to think of nothing but getting on in the world. I thought we might bring the halves together if we had a national literature that made Ireland beautiful in the memory, and yet had been freed from provincialism by an exacting criticism, a European pose.  

This interest in an Irish identity coincided with an interest in the supernatural which gave rise to his interest in the Irish folk and fairy lore and an interest in theosophy and eastern mysticism and was a conscious turning away from the influence of his father's scientific rationalism. Yeats's religious interest found expression in these things at a time when literary London was also experiencing this wave of Eastern mysticism and theosophy among other literary movements. It was also a manifestation of his romantic inclinations as the supernatural is associated with the romantic in literature.

It was only when I began to study psychical research and mystical philosophy that I broke away from my father's influence. He had been a follower of John Stuart Mill and so had never shared Rossetti's

5. Ibid., pp. 101-102
conviction that it mattered to nobody whether the sun went round the earth or the earth round the sun. But through this new research, this reaction from popular science, I had begun to feel that I had allies for my secret thought.  

London seemed to be the centre of a new ferment in ideas and was itself in a process of change. This mood had a duality of vision ranging from the current Victorian beliefs and systems of thought to a new wave which challenged this old outlook.  

London helped to provide Yeats with an outlook which he had already tried to initiate by himself. It helped to focus on movements and events and ideas which helped to define the personality of the poet. One of the earliest interests which reflected itself in his poetry was the fascination that the Orient held for him. In late 1885 or early 1886 he came into contact with Mohini Chatterjee, a disciple of Madame Blavatsky. Mohini Chatterjee was one of the members of the Theosophical Society in India and had a grasp of Western and Indian philosophy. Two statements of Chatterjee made a deep impact upon Yeats who at this time was searching for a system that could embrace both his poetic and philosophic vision. One was the thought that truth was a state of mind and the second was the belief in reincarnation and the immortality of the

6. Ibid., p. 89

soul. The essence of Chatterjee's philosophy were these two ideas and what is worth noting is that Yeats at this point was not so much searching for a philosophy that seemed to clarify his beliefs as was on the search for a system that would enable him to unite his interests in the occult, in Irish nationalism and philosophy. It was part of his poetic belief.

I have remembered today that the Brahmin Mohini Chatterjee said to me "when I was young I was happy. I thought truth was something that could be conveyed from one man's mind to another. I now know it is a state of mind." 8

Mohini Chatterjee therefore departed from the logical notion of truth as a series of propositions. This was an idealistic position which suited Yeats's romantic notions. Yeats was always consciously striving towards a unity of being which would encompass his ideas. Feeling and thought were central to the poet and the man. Overriding all this was the aim to develop a clarity and hardness in thought which is seen in his later poetry. Reality and vision, passion and thought are to be united in an all encompassing vision.

In Yeats's volume of poems "Crossways" there is a marked Indian influence in some of the poetry, while the other half of the poetry reflects his Irish interests. The contrast between the two, on the face of it, is apparent but what seems

8. W. B. Yeats, Autobiographies, "Estrangement" Extracts from a Diary kept in 1909, p. 464
to be the more remarkable is that both have an underlying unity of theme and as early as this volume of poems Yeats was trying to bring about a unity in thought and feeling. The attraction of contraries, the self and the anti-self and the assumption of masks creates the tension and 'Crossways' rests in the tension between Eastern and Western philosophy, between action and contemplation reflected in the Irish and Indian poems respectively.

By implication the 'philosophy' of Irish faery lore declares that all power is from the body, all intelligence from the spirit. Western civilization, religion and magic insist on power and therefore on body, and hence these three doctrines - efficient rule, the Incarnation thaumaturgy. Eastern thoughts answer to these with indifference to rule, scorn of the flesh, contemplation of the formless. Western minds who follow the Eastern way become weak and vapoury, because unfit for the work forced upon them by Western life. Every symbol is an invocation which produces its equivalent expression in all worlds. The Incarnation invoked modern science and modern efficiency, and individualized emotion. It produced a solidification of all those things that grow from individual will. The historical truth of the Incarnation is indifferent, though the belief in that truth was essential to the power of the Invocation. All civilization is held together by the suggestions of an invisible hypnotist—by artificially created illusions.
The knowledge of reality is always in some measure a secret knowledge. It is kind of death.  

"Anushuya and Vijaya", "The Indian upon God" and "The Indian to his Love" and "The Sad Shepherd" show Yeats's interest in Indian philosophy. Yet it is only in "The Winding Stair and other Poems" (1933) that Yeats celebrates his friendship with Mohini Chatterjee in "Mohini Chatterjee".

It was around 1912 that Yeats met Tagore and wrote an introduction to Gitanjali. He also produced Tagore's play Post Office. Yeats was attracted to Tagore's works because of its essential simplicity combining a vision that embraced both the common men and the noble, and was basically spiritual in its appeal, which he was striving for in his own work.

The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes. A tradition, where poetry and religion are the same thing, has passed through the centuries, gathering from learned and unlearned metaphor and emotion, and carried back to the multitude the thought of the scholar and of the noble.

The poetess Sarojini Naidu was also a frequent visitor at his 'Monday Evenings' as was Tagore. He was also attracted to the works of Toru Dutt and he stressed the need of setting up an

9. Ibid., pp. 481-482

annual literary meet in India to Mr. Harihar Das. Thus his Indian connections brought out one aspect of Yeats's personality - his romantic nature which manifested itself in mysticism. It was a search for a belief and a system that could incorporate his poetic insight. Yet his Indian poems do not offer any new beliefs and is of passing interest only. His search for a philosophy was also the product of a mind deeply interested in the occult and mysticism.

Yet his romantic beliefs were attracted to the emotional nationalism of the Indian writers. Thus he was attracted to the Indian philosophers not only because of their spiritualism but also because of a common bond of nationalism. As spokesmen of the oppressed people in the British Empire Irish and Indian leaders felt drawn toward each other. Certain early presidents of the annual meetings of the Indian National Congress were Irishmen for example, Sir William Widderburn. A letter from Maud Gonne, the Irish revolutionary to Yeats brings out the close contacts between Irishmen and Indians who were drawn to each other's fight against colonialism and fight for independence.

How I love and reverence the Dublin crowd. They are always fearless and heroic when ever a national or religious idea is before them. They never fought like that all through the labour war last winter. They stood dejectedly listening to orators telling them to fight for themselves to better their condition, there was no enthusiasm though they starved and suffered.
silently and bravely and stood to a blundering leader loyally as people of no other country would have done. I have written to The Freeman but I do not know if they will publish my letter. The war scare and the sacrifice of those poor Dublin men and women and children should make it possible for Redmond to obtain a great deal for Ireland.

You probably know about Balgangadhar Tilak the great Indian scholar and Nationalist leader who wrote *The Age of the Vedas*, *The Origins of the Aryans* and edited *Kasari* a paper written in English and in Marathi. Mukherjee says that apart from politics he has done wonderful work in rousing his countrymen to study their heroic literature and in teaching the value of spirituality.

The English put that man in prison for seven years - he was only liberated last month. A meeting to celebrate his release is being organized by the Indians in London and probably they will ask you to raise your voice to welcome back to liberty the distinguished Nationalist and scholar.11

In Yeats's edition of the *Oxford Book of Modern English Verse* he includes some poems of Tagore, Shri Purohit Swami and Manmohan Ghose. All the poems are philosophic poems and bear close resemblance to Yeats's Indian poems. Political, artistic

and philosophic considerations were a common bond between Yeats and his Indian poems. His Indian poems are remarkable not in themselves, but for the light it throws on Yeats who even at this early stage was working consciously towards a merging of his national, philosophic and occult views. At this stage Yeats as a poet had yet to assimilate the ideas and at times this gives rise to a certain obscurity in some of his earlier poetry which resolves itself in the later poetry.

Yeats's interest in the occult was a direct reaction to his father's agnosticism. In fact Yeats is rebelling against the concept of a scientific and materialistic society and he felt that Ireland was enhanced because of her folklore and way of life in close contact with the soil. As Yeats writes in a letter to O'Leary his view of the occult is that it was an intrinsic part of his personality.

Now as to Magic. It is surely absurd to hold me 'weak' or otherwise because I chose to persist in a study which I decided deliberately four or five years ago to make, next to my poetry, the most important pursuit of my life. Whether it be, or be not, bad for my health can only be decided by one who knows what magic is and not at all by any amateur. The probable explanation however of your somewhat testy postcard is that you were out at Bedford Park and heard my father discoursing about my magical pursuits out of the immense depths of his ignorance as to everything that I am doing and thinking. If I had not made magic my constant study I
would not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would the Countess Cathleen have ever come to exist. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write. It holds to my work the same relation that the philosophy of Godwin held to the work of Shelley and I have always considered myself a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance - the revolt of the soul against the intellect now beginning in the world.  

What is evident is that Yeats was consciously launching a crusade. He was no passive vehicle of influence. Yet we must keep in mind that Yeats's interest in the occult was one which happened to be the general trend of many of the Irish poets. What is understandable is that his interest in supernatural communication was prevalent in his time and in Ireland itself. Maud Gonne and her father, Yeats's uncle George Pollexfen, 'Diana Varnon', Miss Horniman and even Yeats's wife were involved. What is remarkable is that in Dublin itself which was the intellectual and cultural capital of Ireland the literary elite were closely involved in occult studies. Perhaps it can be explained by the circumstances under which they were writing. They were writing in the eighteen nineties at a time when the Irish were becoming politically more conscious than ever before. But what is most notable is the fact that there

was a conscious aim to throw off the English supremacy. Thus this interest in the occult was linked to Ireland's Celtic heritage which had traces of mysticism and fairy lore which had links with the supernatural. It was a means of discovering a national identity in their own heritage and was a means of escape from the arid materialism of the middle classes. The Irish writers tended to equate England with science, industry and rationalism and believed that Ireland's Celtic heritage was a means of rediscovering one's Irish identity.

They all look to Ireland to produce some great spiritual teaching. It was also a means of bypassing both Roman Catholicism and the Protestant point of view. As a result they looked towards continental systems of thought and Eastern mysticism. A.P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* made a tremendous impact on those seeking mysticism as an outlet for their philosophic quests. The Dublin Hermetic Society was founded on June fifteen 1885 by Yeats, Johnston and their friends. It was Charlie Johnston who introduced Yeats to Madame Blavatsky. Yeats soon graduated into the inner circle of students who studied oriental symbolism. It was believed that every part of the body had its corresponding elements in the heavens which comprised seven colours of the planets and the notes of the musical scale. In an essay written for Madame Blavatsky's *Lucifer* Yeats tries to combine his Irish

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interests and his interest in the occult. However Yeats's enquiring mind sought for evidence and an official of the society asked him to resign. This shows the other part of his mind - his initial scepticism and conservative nature.

This interest in occult matters was a reaction to the growing materialism of Irish society and the rise of the scientific outlook. The Catholic Church disapproved of such matters though it was also against the materialism in Irish life. Its reactionary conservative ideology held that spiritual wisdom rested in their Church alone. Yeats was aware of this Catholic outlook as is evident in his letter to Katherine Tynan.

Then comes an article on Nettleship's designs for the art review, great designs never published before, and later an article on Blake and his anti-materialistic art, for somewhere, describing experiments lately made by me, Ellis, Mrs. Besant, etc. in clairvoyance, I being the mesmerist; and experiments in which a needle suspended from a silk thread under a glass case has moved to and fro and round in answer to my will, and the will of one of two others who have tried, no one touching the glass; some experiments too of still stranger nature.

Probably if I decide to publish these things I shall get called all sorts of names - impostor, Liar and the rest for in this way does official science carry on its
trade. But you do not care for magic and its fortunes and yet your Church's enemy is also materialism.  

After this phase he entered the Order of the Golden Dawn after a chance encounter with Macgregor Mathers in the Reading Room of the British Museum. The order was one of the Christian Cabbalists who believed that at the base of everything was the Tree of Life which represents the Universe which had ten spheres that have related correspondences. Yeats learned from a fellow-member how to make images which seemed to him to come from a deeper source than mere memory. He believed that the images evoked made his writings more vivid and sensuous. What is significant is that after his association with the Theosophists he was only interested in thought and discussion, whereas after he was initiated into the Order of the Golden Dawn he was inspired to engage himself in public deeds. Years later Yeats celebrates the friendship with Mathers in "All Souls Night" (The Tower 1926). The whole atmosphere of the poem is fraught with tension and a certain ceremoniousness. The images of the 'bell' and the 'wine glasses' enhance the air of mystery and bring to mind Mather's ideas on relationship between symbol and thought. There is a close communion between the supernatural and the physical world. Towards the end of the poem Yeats makes his own contribution to the study of the supernatural and mysticism which later finds expression in A Vision.

14. W.B. Yeats Letter to Katherine Tynan, Feb. 28th, 1890, Ibid., p. 150
What is significant is that Yeats in his development as a poet in the earlier period is still groping towards a unity of structure and theme, thought and emotion. His earlier volume of poems like 'The Rose' and 'The Wind among the Reeds' are full of poems which are often allegorical and mystical with symbols which have Irish associations. Yet in spite of Yeats's assertion of the central position that his interest in the occult has in his poetry we can enjoy his poetry for its own sake.

We must keep in mind that though these circles and interests they catered to varied, yet there was a unity in the personality of Yeats. It was the same man who organised public societies and institutions and performed magic in retirement or among exclusive circles. Through all this ran the search for, and creation of a personal identity at once rich and varied.

Yeats rejected certain things: science, rationalism, the tyranny of England and the ignorance of the mob and his father's beliefs.

Sometimes I would try to argue with him, for I had come to think the philosophy of his fellow-artists and himself a misunderstanding created by Victorian science, and science I had grown to hate with a monkish hate, but no good came out of it, and in a moment I would unsay what I had said and pretend that I did not really believe it. 15

15. W.B. Yeats, Autobiographies Reveries over Childhood and Youth, p. 82
Yeats valued certain other things because of his romantic nature—mysticism, Irish freedom, the medieval unity of soul and mind and of land and peasant. It grew out of long experiment and experience. This synthesis is partly realised in Yeats's theory of masks which helps explain the many contrary facets of his personality. Yeats from the very beginning was aware of contradictory points of view within himself, his romantic and conservative tendencies, yet he was aware of the need for an overall unity combining opposite principles.

Be secret and exult
Because of all things known
That is the most difficult. 16

In a note in his diary in 1909 he is aware of the need of creating a form or mask which would reconcile opposing principles and which would reveal the author's antithetical self. Even in his early poetry his Eastern and Irish poems represent the contemplative and the active self.

What does the woman in Paris reveal to the Magi?
Surely some resemblance between face and mask? Does the narrator refuse this manuscript and so never learn its contents. Is it simply the doctrine of the Mask? The choosing of some one mask? Hardly, for that would be the imitation of Christ in a new form. Is it

16. W.B. Yeats, "To a friend whose work has come to nothing" "Responsibilities" (1914) Collected Poems, p. 122
becoming Mask after Mask? Perhaps the name only should be given 'mask and face' - yet the Nature of the men seems to prepare for a continual charge - a phantasmagoria, one day one God and the next another.17

This theory of the self and anti-self is implicit in his theory of the mask. It received a new impetus from Yeats's interest in spiritualism. At a seance Yeats discovered his opposite self, Leo Africanus. This inspired Yeats to use it as a background for his poetry and plays. It could also be developed into a religious system, the central idea being the union of the self and the anti-self. In his theory of the mask Yeats tries to attain a discipline through these images of self and anti-self. It is a means of ordering of experience.

There is a relation between discipline and the theatrical sense. If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are and try to assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves, though we may accept one from others. Active virtue as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a current code is therefore theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of a mask. It is the condition of arduous full life.18

What is striking is Yeats's application of the theory of the

18. Ibid., p. 151
mask in his search for a unity between his social and poetic ideas. He relates it to his conservative preference of an aristocracy, not merely socially, but in art, culture and dramatic theory.

The tragic mask expresses a passion or mood, a state of the soul; that only. (The mask of musician or of the dying slave). The mask of comedy an individual (Any Modern picture). The mask of farce an energy; in this the joyous life by its own excess has become superficial, it has driven out thought (Any grotesque head). Then these are connected in some way with the dominant moods of the three classes which have given the cradles, as it were, to tragedy, comedy and farce, aristocracy, the middle class and the people - exaltation, moral force, labour.¹⁹

This theory of the self and anti-self finds full expression in A Vision. His theories of contraries are in fact a search towards an integrated personality and this explains his concern with the occult, Irish fairy lore, Irish nationalism and the very nature of his political thought rests on this balance between the contraries - the romantic and the conservative.

Thus his interest in the occult can be linked to his interest in Irish fairy lore which was part of his childhood in Sligo. In fact there is a close interrelationship in his

¹⁹. Ibid., p. 153
poetry between the peasantry and fairy lore. Above all it heightened his nationalism. Yeats introduces fairy lore into his poetry and in 'The Stolen Child' a vivid account of their world is given but it is used as a contrast between our world and theirs. This interest in Irish myth and history is reflected in "The Wanderings of Oisin" which is closely related to the Irish Literary revival and distinguishes him as an Irish poet.

But what is more striking is that he was striving for a unity as a poet and a man, and his social, literary and political ideas tried to find a fusion in Irish literature and politics. In this he was influenced by the examples of Shelley and Blake. Yeats saw Shelley and Blake as defenders of freedom which Yeats associated with individual liberties in contrast to the bourgeois individualism as represented in a Democracy.

... that the things his opponents held white were indeed black, and the things they held black were white, ...
... that all busy with government are men of darkness and 'something other than human life'. One is reminded of Shelley, who was the next to take up the cry, though with a less abundant philosophic faculty, but still more of Nietzsche whose thoughts flows always, though with an even more violent current, in the bed Blake's thought has worn.20

20. W.B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions, p. 130
Yeats saw Shelley and Blake as lovers of Liberty which he felt had relevance in his struggle against Victorian hypocrisy and materialism. At this stage Yeats came into contact with William Morris in April 1886 and though attracted by Morris as a man and poet, was not taken up with his socialism.²¹

What drew Yeats to William Morris was that he felt that Morris as man and poet had achieved a fusion of social, political and literary ideas and thus he was attracted to Morris as an example of the unified personality. He was attracted to Morris's views of English materialism, to his ideas of the relationship between art and society but rejected his socialism. Thus we see Yeats accepting and rejecting ideas in a way which serves to bring out the struggle in Yeats for a unified and above all unique vision of life. He borrows ideas from different systems and thinkers who serve to help his own development as a poet and thinker, and this was one of the primary reasons for Yeats being attracted to Morris. He felt

²¹ Elizabeth Cullingford in Yeats, Ireland and Fascism (London: Macmillan 1981) believes that Morris's socialism had a deep and lasting impact upon Yeats's social and political attitudes. See chapter 2, pp. 16-27. She suggests that his attitude to the Dublin Lock-Out and his ideas on art and culture were the result of Morris's influence. Yeats's attitude to the Dublin Lock-Out was not the result of any working class sympathies but was a humane gesture based on his love of individual Liberty. His ideas regarding art and culture and educational facilities for the poor were the result of his conservative ideology with its stress on order and tradition and a hierarchical order of society which was coloured by his romantic Nationalistic ideals. His attitude was influenced by the social ethos of the Protestant tradition in Ireland and by his nationalistic bent of mind. His love of liberty is closely associated with John O'Leary's school of Nationalism. Thus his ideas seem closest to an Irish tradition.
he had achieved the ideal fusion of art, politics and literature in a public and personal context.

In England, men like William Morris, seeing about them passions so long separated from the perfect that it seemed as if they could not be charged until society had been changed, tried to unite the arts once more to life by uniting them to use. They advised painters to paint fewer pictures upon canvas and to burn more of them on plates; and they tried to persuade sculptors that a candlestack might be as beautiful as a statue.  

This artistic imagination of Yeats was expressed in a specifically Irish context. Through his friendship with O'Leary he found in Thomas Davis an Irish patriot whose literary ideals served political purposes. Yeats's romantic imagination and nationalism was drawn to Davis's concept of an Irish literature that would unite aesthetic and political purposes.

I would have Ireland recreate the ancient arts. As they were understood when they moved a whole people and not a few people who have grown up in a leisured class and made this understanding their business ... we all hope for arts like these. I think indeed I first learned to hope for them myself in Young Ireland societies, or in reading the essays of Davis.  

22. Essays and Introductions, p. 204
23. W.B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions, p. 206
Following the example of Davis, Yeats became the prime figure in the movement founding literary societies. One of the decisive factors that enabled Yeats to start this movement or rather give a shape to what was being done was the split in Irish politics after the fall of Parnell. It was at this juncture in Irish politics that people began to seek an outlet for national feeling that would be creative. Yeats gathered around him the Irish literary men like John Todhunter, Lionel Johnson, George Russell and Katherine Tynan and with their co-operation founded Irish literary societies.

When it was published I was in Dublin, founding a society there called 'The National Literary Society' and affiliating it with certain Young Ireland Societies in country towns which seemed anxious to accept its leadership. I had definite plans; I wanted to create an Irish theatre, I was finishing my 'Countess Cathleen' in its first meagre version, and thought of a travelling company to visit our country branches but before that there must be popular imaginative literature.  

For this purpose Yeats decided to issue a series of books which would be national in theme but this idea was also taken by Charles Gavan Duffy and this led to Yeats's first friction within the Irish literary circles.

Do not make any arrangements for giving the editorship to Duffy, for there is the strongest possible feeling

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24. W.B. Yeats, Autobiographies, Estrangement, pp. 473-74
here against the series being edited from Nice. Duffy
is also much too old and much too long out of touch
to be a good editor. Count Plunkett, Douglas Hyde or
myself would be the right people to choose from. At any
rate as I practically planned and started this whole
literary movement I do not think that anything should
be done behind my back. The National Literary Society
here promises to be quite strong enough to make the
success of a series of books but it certainly will not
put its shoulder to the wheel to back up a series of
Duffy's for he has enraged our members by such a
complex series of false moves. If I can make arrangements
such as will be required for the circulation of books
among the literary societies and Young Ireland Societies
in the country I think that I should be consulted about
the editorship.  

This controversy was later resolved, but was the first in a
series of incidents which were to have a deep impact upon Yeats.
Another such incident was the movement to commemorate Wolfe
Tone which gave rise to a controversy regarding the spending of
the funds.

The Young Dublin nationalists planned a monument to
Wolfe Tone, which, it was hoped, might exceed in bulk
and in height that of the too compromised and compromised

25. W. B. Yeats letter to Edward Garrett 1892 in Letters of
W.B. Yeats ed. Wade, op.cit., p. 215
Daniel O'Connell, and she proposed to raise money for it by these lectures. I had left the Temple and taken two rooms in Bloomsbury and in Bloomsbury lived important London Nationalists, elderly doctors, who had been medical students during the Fenian movement. So I was able to gather a sufficient committee to pass the necessary resolution. She had no sooner sailed than I found out why the Dublin committee had refused it, or rather put it off by delay and vague promises, a prominent Irish American had been murdered for political reasons, and another Irish American had been tried and acquitted, but was still accused by his political opponents, and the dispute had spread to London and to Ireland, and had there intermixed itself with current politics and gathered new bitterness. My committee and the majority of the Nationalist Irish Societies throughout England were upon one side and the Dublin committee and the majority of the Nationalist societies in Ireland upon the other, and feeling ran high. 26

Yeats's interest in Irish literature was further heightened by his coming into contact with John O'Leary, his first contact with politics. It was through his father that Yeats came to frequent the Contemporary club where politics was always discussed. O'Leary came to represent a heroic ideal for him.

For Yeats nationalism was always associated with heroism, illustrating the romantic bias of his thought.

It was this same view that led Yeats in his love for Maud Gonne to combine his nationalism and his Irish interests and associated her with the values of a heroic age and invested her with nobility.

This theme of heroism and nobility is a recurring one in Yeats's plays, poetry and prose and with his establishment of the Abbey theatre his heroic plays were staged. Yet this theme is brought into confrontation with the gradual leaning towards peasant realistic dramas and a growing awareness of the reaction of the Irish public mainly middle class. Yeats's interest in the national movement led him to take the initiative in founding an Irish Literary Theatre which brought him into contact with people who were, besides the dramatists themselves, not necessarily literary minded but were inspired by the need for establishing a national theatre. George Moore, Edward Martyn, Synge and Lady Gregory were among the new acquaintances. In 'The Municipal Gallery Revisited' Yeats brings out the literary superiority of the three of them who he felt were instrumental in founding an Irish literature which was intensely nationalistic.

John Synge, I & Augusta Gregory, thought,
All that we did, all that we said or sung,
Must come from contact with the soil, from that
Contact everthing Antaeus - like grow strong
We three in modern times had brought
Everything down to that sole test again,
Dream of the noble and A beggar man.  

"By soil" Yeats means the contact with a peasant tradition with its store of Irish folklore. This passage also brings out Yeats's own Protestant Irish background which helped in the making of the poet.

In the founding of a national theatre Yeats's dream of a national consciousness and culture was fulfilled. But the reality of the audience often fell short of his expectations. In Yeats patriotism and art were finely fused, but for the masses very often patriotism was all that mattered. In his own play *Countess Cathleen* certain lines provoked disturbances.

The Light of Lights
Looks always in the motive, not the deed,
and
Sign with this quill
It was a feather growing on a cock
That crowed when Peter dared deny his Master,
And all who use it have great honour in hell

The last four considered an attack on the Pope, caused disturbances. Every disturbance was drowned by cheers.

Arthur Griffith, afterwards slanderer of Lane and Synge,

27. Yeats "The Municipal Gallery Revisited" *Collected Poems*, p. 369
founder of the Sinn Fein movement, first President of the Irish Free State, and at that time an enthusiastic anti-cleric, claimed to have brought a lot of men from the Quays and told them to applaud everything the Church would not like. I did not want my play turned into an anticlerical demonstration, and decided from the general feeling of discomfort when an evil peasant in my first Act trampled upon a Catholic Shrine that the disturbances were in part my own fault. In using what I considered traditional symbols I forget that in Ireland they are not symbols but realities. But the attacks in the main, like those upon Synge and O'Casey, came from the public ignorance of literary method.  

This lack of an artistic appreciation in the ranks of militant patriots led Yeats to despair of Ireland's cultural and artistic unity. The mob violence against Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* served to intensify his bitterness and disillusionment with the Irish public.

There is a dying out of national feeling very simple in its origin. You cannot keep the idea of a nation alive where there are no national institutions to reverence, no national success to admire, without a model of it in the mind of the people. You can call it 'Catheleen Houlihan' or the 'Shan van Voght' in a mood.

of simple feeling, and love that image, but for the general purposes of life you must have a complex mass of images, something like an architect's model. The Young Ireland poets created a mass of obvious images that filled the minds of the young—Wolfe Tone, King Brian, Emmet, Owen Roe Sarsfield, the Fisherman of Kinsale—answered the traditional slanders on Irish character and entered so into the affections that it followed men on to the scaffold. The ethical ideas implied were of necessity very simple, needing neither study nor unusual gifts for their understanding. Our own movements thought to do so the same thing in a more profound and therefore enduring way.\(^{29}\)

It is worth asking whether his literary and political circles were separate. Most of the Irish poets were involved in the national movement and this brought its own problems—the problems of uniting patriotic and artistic impulses. In the case of Yeats he tried to combine both though there is an underlying tension exemplified in *The Kings Threshold*. This problem is further heightened by the Protestant tradition which Yeats adheres to, while conscious of the need to bring about a literary and artistic unity of Catholic and Protestant Ireland for a unity of culture. For Yeats this Protestant tradition is not in the main religious, but is connected with its social

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29. Ibid., Estrangement, p. 493
values. Thus in his search and establishment of a literary revival he is drawn by the need to unify Ireland culturally and is therefore all the more bitter about the setbacks at the hands of the Irish public. At the same time public events have an impact upon his poetry, thus there is a two-fold relationship between Yeats and the effect of public events on his poetry.

This interest in Irish myth and history is reflected in 'The Wanderings of Oisin' which is closely related to the Irish literary revival and distinguishes him as a Irish poet. It marks a change in the development of Yeats, because he moves away from the Pre-Raphaelitism and symbolism of the eighteen nineties. Yet he does not give these up completely, the one counter balances the other. He writes on Irish themes yet his style at this stage is still influenced by French symbolism.

There is a close connection between Yeats's interest in the occult and his interest in symbolism. Both were reactions against the dominant values of an industrial society. 'Symbolists' were the name given to a group of French poets who reacted against the naturalistic trends in contemporary literature, and was first proclaimed by Jean Moreasain 'Le Figaro' of 18 September 1886. What the symbolists achieved was a unity between subject and object, between the internal and external world, the senses and practised a cult of beauty and mysticism. Their rhythms were based upon music which gave to their verse a new freedom of movement which was different from the classical norm. Very often a private symbolism was inherent in their work. French symbolism gained ground with
the work of Mallarmé and coincided with the beginnings of the aesthetic movement and the Celtic Renaissance. It was mainly through Arthur Symons and his work on French symbolism that Yeats came to know of and was influenced by Symbolism. To Yeats who had already been working with magical symbols, symbolism was an attractive alternative which would combine his metaphysical beliefs and actual beliefs. It was a means of setting out to create a pattern in the meaning and context of his poetry.

When with Johnson I had tuned myself to his mood, but Arthur Symons, more than any man I have ever known, would slip as it were into the mind of another, and my thoughts gained in richness and in clearness from his sympathy, nor shall I ever know how much my practice and my theory owe to the passages that he read me from Catullus and from Verlaine and Mallarmé. 30

It was through Symons that Yeats came into contact with continental literature and with Aubrey and Mabel Beardsley. In 1891 Rhys, Yeats and T.W. Rolleston founded the Rhymers Club. The one unifying factor was an opposition of all ideas which could be neatly explained, emotion and symbol become the keynotes of their thought which is expressed in their poetry.

All art that is not mere story-telling or mere portraiture is symbolic, and has the purpose of those

30. Autobiographies 'The Tragic Generation' 'The Trembling of the Veil', pp. 319-320
symbolic talismans which medieval magicians made with complex colours and forms, and bade their patrons ponder daily and guard with holy secrecy; for it entangles in complex colours and forms, a part of the Divine Essence.  

All sounds, all colours, all forms, either because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet precise emotion, or as I prefer to think, call down among us certain disembodied powers, whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions and when sound and colour, and form are in a musical relation, a beautiful relation to one another, they become as it were, one sound, one colour, one form and evoke an emotion that is made out of their distant evocations and yet is one emotion. 

Yeats divides the symbols into emotional and intellectual symbols and stresses the importance of the intellect without which no poem can be fully appreciated.

It is the intellect that decides where the reader shall ponder over the procession of symbols, and if the symbols are merely emotional, he gazes from amid the accidents and destinies of the world; but if the symbols are intellectual too, he becomes himself a part of pure intellect and he is himself mingled with the procession.

32. Ibid., pp. 156-157  
33. Ibid., p. 161
Yet though Yeats was a member of the "tragic generation" he came to feel that poetry that was overornamental should be made stark. This change in Yeats can be associated with his change into a modern poet and in this he was helped by Ezra Pound. Two things Yeats had in common with Pound, firstly there was his aesthetic ideas against individual expression which led Yeats away from the intensely personal symbols of the symbolists and secondly his socio-cultural ideas against the modern world, democracy and modern finance.

From the beginning of his poetic career Yeats was striving for a fusion of passion and thought, intellect and the imagination, art and language. His poetry moves from a romantic mood to one that is increasingly bitter in its mood and is complex because of the suggestion of creativity which lies at the heart of his despair. This change is recorded in Yeats's introduction.

Then in 1900 everybody got down off his stilts; henceforth nobody drank absinthe with his black coffee, nobody went mad; nobody committed suicide; nobody joined the Catholic Church or if they did I have forgotten.\(^{34}\)

This change is part of the larger movement affecting late Victorian poetry and thus Yeats's poetry records this change. Apart from his personal development there were certain external

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factors which helped Yeats move in the direction he was
groping for. One was the poetry of the late nineteenth
century writers - the symbolists, members of 'the tragic
generation' as mentioned earlier. The Pre-raphaelites also
shared the symbolist's pre-occupation with metaphor, symbol,
language and style. It was a time of change and experiment,
as a result, form and content underwent a radical transformation.
It was not so much a change in subject matter as in style and
form which altered so as to reveal a greater complexity. One
of the writers who helped bring about this change in precision,
language and content was T.E. Hulme who advocated a new age of
classicism. His view of classicism and romanticism was that
both presented a different point of view of looking at things.
He prefers the classical point of view because he stresses the
need for hardness, precision and clarity in verse and a world
view which sees man as a finite being hemmed in by order and
tradition. The essence of his classicism was a greater
precision in the use of language so as to reveal a greater
complexity while remaining deceptively simple.

The great aim is accurate, precise and definite
description. The first thing is to recognize how
extraordinarily difficult this is. It is no mere
matter of carefulness; you have to use language, and
language as by its very nature a communal thing; that
is, it expresses never the exact thing but a compromise
that which is common to you, me and everybody. But
each man sees a little differently, and to get out
clearly and exactly what he does see, he must have a
terrific struggle with language, whether it be with
words or the technique of other arts.35

Hulme's view is rather similar to that of Pound whose influence,
more than that of any other poet, helped create a climate
favourable to the complex nature of modern poetry. In a world
dominated by science and rationalism he rediscovered the arts
of language. Pound went back to Dante and classical Chinese
literature to revive compactness in form and meaning in poetry,
which gave rise to Imagism with which he was closely associated.
He was reacting against the vague sublimity and mere verbal
elegance that in the nineteenth century became associated with
Milton. There was no correspondence between form and content,
the idea and the emotion which expressed itself in the word,
therefore Pound believed that with a change in the use of
language a greater complexity and paradoxically a greater
simplicity could be achieved. In Provencal poetry he finds an
artistic brilliance which was the result of a perfect blend of
thought and emotion. As stressed earlier Pound's main focus
was on the language itself.

An artist's technique is a test of his personal validity.
Honesty of the word is the writer's first aim, for
without it he can communicate nothing efficiently.

35. See T.E. Hulme 'Romanticism and Classicism' in Speculations
Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, ed. Herbert
Read (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1924), pp. 113–
140,
Orthology is a discipline both of morale and of morals. 36

This concern for language focussed on the image in the poem itself. It was partly a reaction against the symbolist movement. Precision, hardness and clarity became the keywords in the Imagist movement. It was a redefining of values and ideas in poetry itself. Pound advocated his ideas as follows:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.

2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regards rhythm to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome. 37

This pre-occupation with exactness is Pound's repudiation of the tradition of Romanticism which in the late nineteenth century led to vagueness and confusion. It was but natural that when Yeats came into contact with Pound, Pound influenced him to some extent. Yeats was working for a greater clarity and perception in his own writings as is evident from the romantic mood of the earlier volume of poems.

Though leaves are many, the root is one;
Through all the lying days of my youth


37. Ezra Pound, Literary Essays of Ezra Pound (London: Faber and Faber) Retrospect, p. 3
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
Now I may wither into the truth. 38

In a letter to the Editor of poetry he writes -

I suggest him to you because, although I do not really
like with my whole soul the metrical experiments he
has made for you, I think those experiments show a
vigorous creative mind. He is certainly a creative
personality of some sort, though it is too soon yet to
say of what sort. His experiments are perhaps errors,
I am not certain; but I would always sooner give the
laurel to vigorous errors than to any orthodoxy not
inspired. 39

What Pound did for a generation of writers was to help and to
advise. His ideas and values were the ideas and values that
summed up the temper of the modern mind and it is Pound as
literary critic who helped create this modern spirit that was
pertinent to the age. It was Pound, who with his Erudition
looked to classical Chinese literature and Homer for a system
of thought contained in images which were neat, direct and
economical and yet were complex. It is with Pound's
translations of classical Chinese literature that he stands
out in the literary history of the twentieth century. He
opened up new vistas of experience. An example of Pound's

translations can be seen in the poetry he rewrote from Giles' History of Chinese Literature in 'Fan Piece for her Imperial Lord'.

O fair white silk, fresh from the weaver's loom
Clear as the frost, bright as the winter snow
See! friendship fashions out of thee a fan,
Round as the round moon in heaven above. 40

to

O Fan of white silk
Clear as frost on the grass blade
You also are laid aside. 41

What is worth nothing is that Giles is translating Chinese poetry into the romantic idiom of the nineteenth century and Pound thought that wrong. The importance of Pound's translations of classical Chinese poetry lie not so much in their authenticity, sometimes there are misrepresentations, but in the direction that it gave to literary London - it was an attempt to review the character of an English poem. It brought into effect the assumption that a single line is a unit of creation, helped by the Imagist principle of vividness and directness by objectifying reality. Moreover the idea that sounds are arranged according to the musical effect, and by

41. Ibid., p. 197
musical we do not mean sonorous, gained credence. It showed the adaptability of meter to mood. These ideas created a revolution in poetry. It brought into being a poetry at once complex and simple.

This experiment with language is reflected in the novels of James Joyce. Pound in his essay 'Dubliners and Mr. James Joyce' 'Ulysses' brings out the chief merit of Joyce's work - his eye for presentation and vividness of detail.

Mr. Joyce's merit, I will not say his chief merit, but his most engaging merit, is that he carefully avoids telling you a lot you don't want to know. He presents his people swiftly and vividly, he does not sentimentalize over them, he does not weave convolutions. He is a realist. He does not believe 'life' would be allright if we stopped vivisection or if we instituted a new sort of economics. He gives the thing as it is.42

In the case of Yeats, Pound was attracted to a simplicity and directness of expression that Yeats had come to prefer himself. In 'The later Yeats' he writes -

'Is Mr. Yeats an Imageste'. No, Mr. Yeats is a symbolist, but he has written des Images as have many good poets before him, so that is nothing against him, and he had nothing against them (les Imagistes) as least so far

42. Ezra Pound "Dubliners and Mr. Joyce" from Literary Essays, p. 400
as I know — except what he calls "their devil's meters". 43

Pound in his essay brings out certain lines which show a gain in clarity and hardness. He then adds —

There have always been two sorts of poetry which are for me at least, the most 'Poetic', they are firstly, the sort of poetry which seems to be music just forcing itself into articulate speech, and secondly, that sort of poetry which seems as if sculpture or painting were just forced or forcing itself into words. The gulf between evocation and description, in this latter case, is the unbridgeable difference between genius and talent. It is perhaps the highest function of art that it should fill the mind with a noble profusion of sounds and images, that it should furnish the life of the mind with such accompaniment and surrounding. At any rate Mr. Yeats's work has done this in the past and still continues to do so. 44

What Pound is trying to bring about is a change in rhythms suited to the mood of the poem, without necessarily conforming to the older concept of the traditional meters in verse. Yeats on his part though at times bewildered by Pound's startling

43. Ibid., 'The Later Yeats', p. 378
44. Ibid., p. 380
innovations acknowledged him as an authority in London's literary circles and as head of a new literary movement. Pound found Yeats sometimes too full of a vague symbolism but saw him as an important literary figure and as a bridge from Mallarmé and the Symbolists to the Imagists. Yeats sent some of his poems to Pound in particular 'The Mountain Tomb', 'To a child dancing upon the Shore' and 'Fallen Majesty' which were revised by Pound. In "Fallen Majesty" Pound removed as it were from "Once walked a thing that seemed as it were a burring cloud". In "The Mountain Tomb" he changed the lines —

Let there be no foot silent in the room
Nor mouth with kissing, or the wine unwet

To

Let there be no foot silent in the room
Nor mouth with kissing nor with wine unwet. 45

What is apparent is that the change in Yeats's poetry was due not so much to the influence of Pound who except for some minor changes did not bring about the change. This change was the result of many factors which were inherent in Yeats's consciousness of himself as a poet and literary critic. The influence of Pound and the Imagist movement was secondary to his own artistic process. Even in his early poetry, though influenced by French symbolism and Pre-Raphaelitism certain images have a clarity and hardness which is perfected in the

later poetry. This is seen most clearly in his animal imagery in the early and later poetry which is used to define certain qualities and moods of the poet—cruelty, avarice and restlessness.

First as a raven on whose ancient wings
Scarcely a feather lingered, then you seemed
A weasel moving on from stone to stone.  

and

The ravens of unresting thought;
Flying, crying, to and fro
Cruel claw and hungry thought.  

In the later poetry the animal imagery reflecting these moods broadens to include the private and public mind of Yeats as poet and Irishman.

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven
That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice.  

... ... ...

We pieced our thoughts into philosophy,
And planned to bring the world under a rule,
Who are but weasels fighting in a hole.  

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46. W.B. Yeats 'Fergus & the Druid' from "The Rose", p. 36, Collected poems.
47. W.B. Yeats 'The Two Trees' from 'The Rose', p. 55, Collected poems.
Pound did rewrite some of his verse but one feels that Yeats was working within an Irish tradition which had its own strength and clarity. He owes a lot to that tradition. The nature poetry in early Irish literature shows a great sensitivity and Yeats's verses just quoted show a remarkable similarity in mood and use of imagery.

Summer is gone
My tidings for you: the stag bells
Winter snows, summer is gone
Wind high and cold, sea running high,
Deep-red the bracken, its shape all gone -
The wild goose has raised his wonted cry
Cold has caught the wings of birds,
Season of ice - these are my thoughts.  

Thus we can say that Pound's influence over Yeats was beneficial in that it contained much helpful criticism. That Yeats was also aware of the help rendered can be seen in his correspondence. Pound's influence was to help bring about the transition from the late nineteenth century poetry and its set of values and mode to a poetry that was modern in its use of idiom, mood and focus. Thought and emotion are brought together in an image.

Perhaps the most obvious way Yeats's poetry developed can be seen in his dramas, as seen in the Noh dramas which are entirely symbolic and full of ritual and emblem. Yeats may have learnt about those plays from Pound. What is important is the way the Noh dramas conform to Yeats's conservative nature and his ideas on social order and tradition, helped by Pound who was supposed to have influenced him in his application of the Noh drama to Irish drama as he was working on the Fennellosa manuscript. What is significant is that Yeats was already consciously working for a drama which would be not only entirely symbolic but stark. In a letter to Fiona Macleod he writes –

My own theory of poetical or legendary drama is that it should have no realistic, or elaborate, but only a symbolic and decorative setting. A forest, for instance, should be represented by a forest pattern and not by a forest painting ... The plays might be almost in some cases, modern mystery plays.  

In another sense however it is a culmination of a long process of ideas which are part of his general outlook on the social order and tradition.

How but in custom and in ceremony

Are innocence and beauty born?

Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.\textsuperscript{52}

It was part of his inclination towards a feudal order of society.

In fact, with the help of Japanese plays translated by Ernest Fennollosa and finished by Ezra Pound, 'I have invented a form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way - an aristocratic form.'\textsuperscript{53}

When heroism returned to our age it bore with it as its first gift technical sincerity.\textsuperscript{54}

Yeats associates perfection in language with his conservative social ideal. \textit{At the Hawk's well} depicts the theme of failure. In \textit{Calvary} the moon stands for maximum subjectivity. The bird symbolism, that of the heron, hawk, eagle and swan Yeats says stands for subjectivity, illustrating his romantic bias. Yet this subjectivity is controlled through the use of the Noh drama with its emphasis on the formal and structural bringing an almost classical elegance to his plays.

Pound did help Yeats with many helpful details about timing and scenery and proved to be an imaginative dramatic

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52.] Yeats 'A Prayer for my Daughter' 'Michael Robartes and the Dancer', \textit{Collected Poems}, p. 214
\item[53.] Yeats 'Certain Noble Plays of Japan' \textit{Essays and Introductions}, p. 221
\item[54.] Ibid., p. 236
\end{footnotes}
critic. It was Pound who suggested that 'The Player Queen' be turned into a comedy and who rejected "The King of the Great Clock Rower" as 'putrid' and that the language was 'nobody language' after which Yeats revised the play.

Yeats, trying to define the essence of Pound's personality assigned him to Phase twenty-three and in an earlier version put him in the Phase of the Forerunner in his 'A Vision', who assumes a series of masks to attain true self-possession. Men whom Yeats put in phase twenty three like Pound, Joyce and Eliot lived by technique and it was this ordering of experience by which they could assume mastery over artistic experience. This mastery over artistic experience is at the root of Yeats's thought and is mirrored in the relationship between the artist and his society.

This relationship between the artist and his society was always a matter of interest but in the twentieth century it became the focus of critical analysis because of the various differing political and social ideologies which nurtured the modern poet. Political and economic systems were also subject to numerous influences and the modern writer was caught in the cross-currents between thought and events. Thus Pound's interest in and support for Fascism and Yeats's conservative politics were reactions to similar environments. Against this background Pound's dominance in the early years of the twentieth century is perhaps easier to understand. He was concerned with the fundamental role of the artist in relation to society, similar to Yeats. In 'The Teacher's
Mission' he writes -

The mental life of a nation is no man's private property. The function of the teaching profession is to maintain the health of the national mind. 55

Artists are the antennae of the race. If this statement is incomprehensible and if its corollaries need any explanation, let me put it that a nation's writers are the voltmeters and steam gauges of that nation's intellectual life. They are the registering instruments, and if they falsify their reports there is no measure to the harm they do. 56

In the case of Yeats disgust for opulence in language was coupled with his hatred of demagogy, the result of what the Irish public had meted out to him. This led to a growing confrontation between the artist and his society which resulted in Yeats's increasing respect for aristocratic order. His poetry reflects this change.

The Protestant tradition provided an anchor for a poet who was still looking for a system that would incorporate his romantic conservative ideology. In the rich Celtic heritage of the past Yeats found a source of inspiration, as in Irish folk tales. Moreover it was a coming to terms with

his own Irish identity, moving away from a European and a more literary symbolism to homeground. Moreover his social ideas tended to centre around the fine life therefore his motives are double edged.

Lady Gregory is planting trees; for a year they have taken up much of her time. Her grandson will be fifty years old before they can be cut. We artists, do not we also plant trees and it is only after some fifty years that we are of much value? Everyday I notice some new analogy between the long-established life of the well-born and the artist's life. We came from the permanent things and create them, and instead of old blood we have old emotions and we carry in our heads always that form of societies aristocracies create now and again for some brief moment at Urbino or Versailles. We too despise the mob and suffer at its hands, and when we are happiest we have some little post in the house of Duke Frederick where we watch the proud dreamless world with humility, knowing that our knowledge is invisible and that at the first breath of ambition our dreams vanish.\(^57\)

More and more his literary, social and political ideas coalesce into an image of the poet in search of his subject stressing the superiority of the artistic imagination.

\(^{57}\). W.B. Yeats Estrangement *Autobiographies*, pp. 473-74
Style, personality-deliberately adopted and therefore a mask - is the only escape from the hot-faced bargainers and money changers.\(^{58}\)

Yeats's conservative ideas grew in reaction against the growing influence of the middle class, who dominated Irish events and who he felt signified a lack of culture. As a reaction his bias is in favour of the old established order and tradition which he feels would maintain stability in society and the liberty and dignity of the individual.

Ireland has grown sterile, because power has passed to men who lack the training which requires a certain amount of wealth to ensure continuity from generation to generation, and to free the mind in part from other tasks. A gentlemen is a man whose principal ideas are not connected with personal needs and his personal success. In old days he was a clerk or a noble, that is to say, he had freedom because of inherited wealth and position, or because of a personal renunciation. The names are different today and I would put the artist and the scholar in the category of the clerk, yet personal renunciation is not now sufficient as the hysterica passio of Ireland would be inspiration, or perhaps it is sufficient but is impossible without inherited culture. For without culture or holiness which

\(^{58}\) Ibid., p. 461
are always the gift of a very few, a man may renounce wealth or any other External thing, but he cannot renounce hatred, jealousy, revenge. Culture is the sanctity of the intellect.\textsuperscript{59}

It was this same view that led Yeats in his love for Maud Gonne to combine his Nationalism, his Irish interests and associated her with the values of a heroic age. His love poetry moves from open and an enthusiastic admiration for her to harshness, coldness, remonse and finally acceptance, yet it is always deeply moving. Maud Gonne shared many of his interests, especially in the occult and both were equally concerned about the spiritual destiny of Ireland. In "Red Hanrahans song about Ireland" Yeats associates Maud with Cathleen Ni Houlihan. In "The Wind among the Reeds" most of the poems are about her. The poems are intensely romantic in the tradition of courtly love. It has an aura of unreality and even fragility in it. In his association with Maud she is transformed into a symbol of grace, elegance and nobility which for Yeats is a sign of the 'fine life' bringing out his romantic conservative bias. In "No Second Troy" her beauty and nobility are compared to Helen.

Why sould I blame her that she filled my days
With misery, or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., pp. 473-74

\textsuperscript{60} W.B. Yeats 'No Second Troy", p. 101, Collected poems.
In "Beautiful Lofty Things" Yeats rounds up images of people who have nobility, grace and beauty which always come to mean for Yeats a representation of the values of a heroic age.

Maud Gonne at Howth station waiting a train
Pallas Athene in that straight back and arrogant head,
All the Olypians, a thing never known again. 61

It is significant that Maud Gonne is associated with the virtues of nobility and heroism by Yeats. He feels that her later career was influenced by the mob which led her to abstractions in her personal and public life. She devoted her life to a political principle which Yeats felt was radically wrong. Blind fanaticism and the influence of the mob were the prime factors that Yeats's conservative bias disliked and led him away from Maud Gonne's destructive politics to a search for stability which he found in Lady Gregory and her society.

Public and personal relationships are reflected in his friendship with Lady Gregory. In fact it is a link between his interests - his interest in the nobility was based on a need to find an anchor in a world which he felt was not in keeping with his values. Thus Coole park, a public symbol becomes a private symbol of the social values of a Protestant aristocratic tradition. Indeed all of Yeats's poetry is marked by this interrelationship between private symbol and public event.

Coole Park, as a public symbol, stands for wealth and has the status of a privileged society - that of the eighteenth century Ascendancy Big House. But for Yeats it also becomes a symbol for a way of life. In "Coole Park" the sense which Yeats always had when he was there manages to pervade the whole mood of that volume of poems.

This quality of an unchanging life of a feudal society is one which he admires. Speaking of Lady Gregory he writes -

She knew Ireland always in its permanent relationships, associations - violence but for a brief interruption -, never lost her sense of feudal responsibility not of duty as the word is generally understood, but of burdens laid upon her by her station and her character, a choice constantly renewed in solitude. 62

Similarly in 'A Prayer for my Daughter' ceremony and innocence are the two virtues which he cherishes, because these are associated with an established aristocracy.

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares Paddled in the thoroughfares
How but in custom and in ceremony

62. Yeats, "Dramatis Personae" Autobiographies, p. 385
Are innocence and beauty born? 63

Personal beauty becomes a symbol of beauty and elegance of an aristocratic society. 'In Memory of Eva and Constance Gore-Booth' is an elegy to the beauty and elegance of the two sisters born in an aristocratic family.

The light of evening, Lissadell
Great windows open to the south,
Two girls in silk kiminoes, both
Beautiful, one a gazelle. 64

Eva Gore-Booth became a close friend of Yeats and was a minor poetess whose second volume of poems was full of Irish themes, no doubt influenced by Yeats. In 'Easter 1916' Yeats refers to Constance's Horsemanship and in 'On a Political Prisoner' Yeats draws an image of Constance as she was in her youth. This image is contrasted with the change that Easter 1916 brings indissuasionment and pain which the contact with the mob brings.

Did she in touching that lone wing
Recall the years before her mind
Became a bitter, and abstract thing,
Her thought some popular enmity
Blind and leader of the blind

64. W.B. Yeats 'In memory of Eva and Constance Gore-Booth', p. 265, Collected poems.
Drinking the foul ditch where they lie. 65

In time 'the Raving autumn', signifying the mob brings many changes and Yeats regrets the passing away of the image of the two girls as they were in their youth.

Dear shadows, now you know it all
All the folly of a fight
With a common wrong or right
The innocent and the beautiful
Have no enemy but time. 66

What is also worth noting is that Yeats's constant reference to horsemanship is also a pointer to his conservative ideals as he associates heroism with an aristocratic order. 67 Robert Gregory is the epitome of an aristocratic culture.

Soldier, scholar, Horseman, he,
And all he did done perfectly

65. On a Political Prisoner, p. 207, Collected poems.

66. W.B. Yeats 'In memory of Eva Gore – Both and Con Markiewicz, p. 264, Collected poems.

67. "But the phrase 'Horsem an, pass by' has many meanings. In Irish idiom the word 'horseman' has certain overtones that may be missed in ordinary speech. It carries a note of respect, even of awe, the rider has something of hebraic strength and mystery, or even of the symbolic association of strength and wisdom that produced the centaurs, 'the holy centaurs of the hills'. The horseman belongs to aristocracy, he symbolizes possessions, breeding, strength, virility and a certain 'wildness of sorrow' as in those figures of Jack Yeats's paintings of the horseman at Irish funerals." - T.R. Henn, The Lonely Tower: Studies in the poetry of W.B. Yeats (London: Methuen, First published 1950, this edition 1979), p. 336
As though he had but that one trade alone.  

Thus we see Yeats’s friendships and associations combining like tributaries into the majestic river of his personality, thought and poetry.

68. W.B. Yeats, In memory of Major Robert Gregory (The Wild Swans at Coole), p. 151