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THE ROLE OF THE MYSTIC ACTOR  
AT THE DECLINE OF CIVILIZATION

By

SUSAN DUNLOP HARPER

B.A. University of Vermont, 1976

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts degree  
Wilfrid Laurier University

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#### ABSTRACT

An examination of the creative role of the individual confronting the decline and possible destruction of civilization, this thesis explores the potential of one human being to achieve, through a process of the reconciliation of opposites, unity within himself and throughout the world. William Butler Yeats's theories of the Unity of Opposites, the Unity of Being, and the Unity of Culture are applied to the responsibility of the individual to realize his identity as mystic actor: a person who takes action within the sacred, thereby creating himself and the universe in which he lives.

## FORWARD

Life upon a stage is appealingly simple. A director casts an actor in a role which the actor, following specified guidelines, proceeds to create. In life, the casting of a role is far more complex. There is no director to designate the course of a human being's path. There are no scripts to delineate action and theme. The first acts are bewildering, full of whispering contradictions and unbelievable possibilities; the final acts, unwritten.

From the moment as a child when one senses oneself to be apart from others, one's role in life can prove a haunting mystery. The quest to unveil that role is invariably the most exhilarating and rewarding adventure life affords.

Unfortunately, the span of a life is brief. There is so much to be done--studies to pursue, a career to develop, children to raise, dinner to make and dishes to wash--and so little time. The search for ~~one ordinary human being's role in life cannot be postponed, abandoned,~~ or divorced from his ordinary life. Nor could the personal quest of this student be separated from this thesis.

This thesis is concerned with the role of the artist at the decline of civilization. Its foundation is deeply rooted in certain premises: that life is an art of the union of opposing virtues; that art is the expression of the sacred unity of all life; that each man alive is in every sense an artist, a creator of himself and of the world;

that artist and art, creator and creation, sacred and man are indivisible; that the way of the artist is the unitive path of the mystic; and, finally, that the true identity of all men, all artists, is that of the mystic actor--the man who takes action within the sacred, the artist who is art. This paper presents the thesis that, through a transformation of consciousness, it is possible for the artist to recall his lost identity and become himself--the mystic actor participating in the greatest act of love imaginable, the creation, hence salvation, of the world.

The thoughts and revelations of numerous scholars, mystics, scientists, and artists have been enlisted in the development of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is the aesthetic theory of William Butler Yeats which provides the structure for this thesis. The creative role of the individual who struggles to reconcile the opposites within himself and the warring world in order to become whole, in order to find peace, is explored in light of the decline of civilization and Yeats's theories of the Unity of Being, Unity of Culture, and Unity of Opposites. The focus of this thesis is the action, direct and simple, which the aesthetic theory of Yeats reveals as the creative potential within each individual and which the world urgently requires--the action of the mystic actor: creation--thus, salvation.

This thesis is composed according to parameters peculiar to its writer's personal search--to limitations of intellect, emotion, and vision. It is, nevertheless, an inquiry into a universal search in which all human beings participate in the depths of their souls.

Urgency and passion are woven through each page of this thesis,

indicative of the writer's conviction that both are inherent and inextricably bound aspects of life itself. The days and nights of a life are astonishingly few--far too few to learn to love enough, to laugh enough, to be brave enough, to discover one's role and become oneself. Life is an urgent proposition to be met with an appreciation of mortality and a stride of commitment which one might call passion.

The decline of civilization crystallizes the role of the individual by the passion and urgency it evokes through its manifestation of ultimate mortality and the necessity of immediate, life-affirming action. This thesis is not written as a blanket indictment of modern civilization. Rather, its purpose is to openly confront the extremity of mankind's self-destructive capability in order to reveal individual creative responsibility. What follows is not a sociological analysis of civilization. Opposing views are neither examined nor debated. This thesis is concerned with the analysis and application of one particular view, not with defending this view by argumentation. It is this writer's belief that the results of the examination of civilization from the perspective of its decline and destruction need not prove negative, but beneficial and life-affirming to an astonishing degree.

Every human being alive turns to the joyous laughter of children, the still moon, a gentle hand, the mountains at sunset--to all that is beautiful, alive and pure--to find hope, meaning and relationship. Such things provide the sustenance of a life. Yet they are but fragments of a life cast of shimmering light and shadow. Without the confrontation and acceptance of the rest of life, these gifts of the light are but pale possibilities in an existence fraught with contradiction and pain. It is the hope of this writer that within the extremity of civilization's

most horrific possibility, nuclear holocaust, waits the soul of the world and the role of each individual. Perhaps in this case, extremity offers mankind a great deal more than the golden mean.

This thesis has no pretensions of being a guidebook to nuclear disarmament or happy endings, but neither is it the least concerned with metaphorical action or meaningless abstraction. Rather, it examines a choice available to every individual regarding the destiny of mankind and the world. It cannot be emphasized enough that neither Yeats nor his aesthetic theory are the focus of this paper. The decline and destruction of civilization are not the focus; they are merely symptoms of a grave problem. This paper is concerned with the immediate, tangible solution of that problem by one human being who is moved by love to transform himself, thereby remaking himself and the world. Its foundation is mystical union, the direct, living experience of the sacred within the life of a man--an artist--and the effect of that union upon the world in which he lives--society, nations, universe. Union within constitutes union without. "The end of art is peace." ("Ireland" in Yeats 1924: 255)

The authorities quoted on the following pages are highly renowned and respected in their various fields of physics, Christianity, mysticism, parapsychology, biology, the forging of history, etc. This fact is absolutely crucial to the documentation of this thesis which is so atypical of its genre. Authorities are quoted extensively in order to substantiate each assertion made.

More important than the respect commanded by these authorities, is the vision which all share. The individuals quoted on these pages bless the world with a love which unites it. They are people of different



creeds, races, and professions, but their unitive vision binds them as one. Some, like Lawrence, Bergson, Regardie, and Waite, were contemporaries of Yeats. All are modern men who live, or lived, in a world of vast complexity and contradiction. All embrace this world and affirm the creative role of the individual within it. Each has about him the vision of the mystic actor.

The mysticism explored upon these pages is neither classical nor does it exist for the very elite. It is not the framework of doctrine or dogma. Rather, it is a terribly simple choice open to all who dearly love life. This mysticism is the direct, living experience of the sacred unity of all life in the days and nights of an ordinary man who, by realizing himself, has become the extraordinary truth of the world. It is quite true that this understanding of mysticism has not the faintest relation to the common misconception of mysticism--the mortification of the body, and the negation and utter denial of earthly life. The mysticism here explored creates, affirms, and sustains a life which it holds holy. It is as common as courage, joy and love. It can be found wherever life is embraced and man strives to become his possibility.

This thesis serves the purpose of staff and lantern on its writer's personal journey to discover the role of the mystic actor. If the words which follow are emphatic, it is not because the writer has reached a summit and is basking there in glory. When one is travel-worn and aching from following the path of opposites, one's voice becomes strained and one's nerves taut. If the words which follow are overly loud, it is only so that the writer will hear them. It must be made clear that the conflict of opposites within the world is not examined in this thesis as separate from the conflict of opposites within each

individual and, most specifically, the writer. Therefore, the word "we" is used repeatedly, indicating the world of human beings and the writer amongst them.

The use of the words "man" and "men" is consistent throughout this thesis, reflecting neither an oversight of women nor a sexist bias. The terms are employed simply as an abbreviated form of "human being." They are intended to convey no sexual or sexist meaning of any sort, and should not be interpreted as such.

It should be noted that the language within this thesis is employed in a poetic form and does not adhere to technical standards of usage. Further, the use of language is reminiscent of that found within Eastern religious traditions (as in the return of withdrawal, the use of the useless, the action of non-action). Thus, according to Western rules of logic, such usage appears contradictory and paradoxical. Terms frequently cited (such as "art") represent in themselves a Unity of Opposites wherein the mundane (the technical means--theatre, painting, dance, music--of manifesting the sacred unity of life) and the sacred (the art of living) are inextricably bound in one unified vision of life itself.

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## CHAPTER I

### LAST DAYS: THE ANALYSIS WHICH PRECEDES ACTION

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned. . .  
("The Second Coming" in Yeats 1970: 185)

It is with urgency that these words fall from the autumnal night and shudder violently into prose. They lurch onto paper--broken pieces of half-remembered prayers in the halting evocation of a soul--and they lie there, so many scattered shards of time and space. The words crumple into drafts upon the floor beside the wastebasket, mutate into scholarly pretensions and crude constructions. But within all prose remains a faint possibility, a hope for which the night, the wind and the words alone exist, that it will be transformed into a poetry of wisdom beyond knowledge and love beyond passion, into an art of silence beyond image and a life of peace beyond opposition.

The bomb dropped on Hiroshima had the explosive force of approximately 15,000 tons (15 kilotons) of TNT. Today, the U.S. has over 30,000 nuclear bombs and Russia has 20,000. Nuclear weapons in present day arsenals range in size from one kiloton to 20 megatons (20 million tons of TNT). All the bombs dropped during the eight and a half years the U.S. fought in Vietnam were equivalent to four million tons of TNT (4 megatons). (Physicians for Social Responsibility no date: unpaginated)

The radio crackled through an October night in 1982. The 40-second item carried by ABC National News drew the expected snickers from its audience. And then, it chilled the marrow of their bones. It was an account of a hitchhiker on the highways of Germany who introduces him-

self to motorists as Gabriel, warns them of the imminent end of the world, and then vanishes from their speeding cars. The Angel Gabriel portending the End of Days.

Let's talk about a twenty megaton bomb dropping on a city. It would gouge out a crater half a mile wide and three hundred feet deep. It would vaporize most people and buildings out to a radius of six miles from the center, lethally injure or kill most people out to a radius of twenty miles from the center. When I say lethally injure I mean shocking burns and shocking trauma as bodies are sucked out of buildings by the pressures created and slammed against other buildings, and millions of shards of flying glass bisecting, dissecting, and decapitating people with shocking organ injuries. (Caldicott in KUED 1981: 11)

For a few radio listeners, a very few, the earth quaked as if the words of the newscaster were the tanks of Yom Kippur thundering their way to the Golan on another chill October night. And the words evoked a similar upheaval--as if life, so predictable, so comfortable, suddenly erupted and then fell to earth in pieces like a shower of shrapnel or stars. After that, for some, nothing ever looked the same again, because vision was never the same.

Survivors of the fires would be exposed to lethal or sublethal doses of radiation from short-term fallout. Even mild winds of 20 miles per hour would carry fallout as far as 150 miles where everyone exposed could receive a lethal dose within 24 hours. This would cause acute radiation sickness, with decreased resistance to infection, and death within one to two weeks. Sublethal doses would produce an increased incidence of stillbirths, fetal malformations, leukemia, and cancer. In subsequent generations genetic damage would probably appear. (Physicians for Social Responsibility no date: unpaginated)

Angels warn of the End of Days. Physicians for Social Responsibility warns of nuclear holocaust. The words chosen are worlds apart; the messages are not.

In an all-out nuclear exchange, all major population and industrial centers would be hit, both in the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Such an exchange could be complete in one hour, and could destroy most life in the northern hemisphere. Worldwide fallout would result, with possible destruction of the ozone layer, changes in the earth's temperature and mutation of crops. It would be a different world

afterwards, colder, harsher, and contaminated by radiation for thousands of years. The number of deaths would break scales of comparison. (Physicians for Social Responsibility no date: unpaginated)

To deny the veracity of Gabriel's warning would not only be foolhardy, it would be mortally dangerous. And to do so because one doesn't ordinarily encounter angels on the German highways would be to mistake the identity of the message bearer. Whether he takes the form of phantom, fabrication, or flesh and blood, the bearer is indivisible from the message and its recipient. As one, they manifest the incarnate thoughts and actions of a humanity which urgently craves transformation. That end--or process, and that process only--of transformation is man's destiny. Predicted events, like a reading of death in the layout of a tarot hand, occur only through man's choice of inertia. Then, the foretold events become destined by man himself as his last possible opportunity for transformation, despite himself. The truth of Gabriel's warning--or man's warning to himself--is not to be found in flights of angels or in nuclear arsenals, but in the life of a man, in the new way of seeing that the warning may bring about which frees each man to be, to act, to transform himself and the world before it is too late and we destine the predicted apocalypse through our own inertia.

There is little time left. Ironically, for those who heed the warnings, there is even less.

What I want you to understand definitely is that as long as people are quite mechanical, things can repeat and repeat almost indefinitely. But if people become more conscious, or if the possibility of becoming conscious appears, their time is limited. They cannot expect an unlimited number of recurrences if they have already begun to know something or to learn something. The more they learn, the shorter becomes their time. . . The closer one comes to the possibility of change, the smaller the number of chances becomes, and if one finds a chance and does not use it, one may lose it altogether. . . time is counted. . . (Ouspensky 1971b: 419)

Even if a man were to heed Gabriel's warning, recognize the time slipping from his grasp, what could he do, one man in the path of nuclear holocaust? Can a man remake himself and the world single-handedly? Can one man undo the desecration and destruction of millions upon millions of dead and living men? Can he shake the inertia of a planet? If he chooses, perhaps. If he is to be true to himself, to life, he must. Man must act. He must

. . . reinvent the world. However, extinction will not wait for us to reinvent the world. Evolution was slow to produce us, but our extinction will be swift; it will literally be over before we know it. We have to match swiftness with swiftness. Because everything we do and everything we are is in jeopardy, and because the peril is immediate and unrelenting, every person is the right person to act and every moment is the right moment to begin, starting with the present moment. For nothing underscores our common humanity as strongly as the peril of extinction does. . . The purpose of action, though, is not to replace life with politics. The point is not to turn life into a scene of protest; life is the point. (Schell 1982: 226-227)

Even assuming that a man is willing and able to act, isn't it too late? Wasn't the present predestined by the past? Doesn't that same past predetermine the future? Isn't the action of one man futile? Does man any longer have relationship to his destiny? Ouspensky has a disturbing answer.

Things are in a different relationship to possibilities: some things, although they have not yet happened and although it may seem to us that they can happen in one way or in another way, are in reality predestined. Nothing can be changed because such big causes are moving these things that, although they have not yet happened, they can happen only in one way. Take to-day. Certain things have to happen to-morrow because their causes lie in last year or in ten or twenty years ago. But if the cause of certain things that will happen to-morrow lies in to-day, then they can happen differently to-morrow if something is done differently to-day. So it is a question of the nature of the causes and of where they are. (Ouspensky 1971b: 418-419)

Upon the surface, Ouspensky's response, applied to the destiny of the planet, would appear to be the common one: desecration and

destruction have gone on too long; it is too late; the past is responsible for the present and future; the future, like the present, is out of control. Ouspensky, like millions of others, appears to be saying with Alan Watts,

We may have to face the tragedy that the whole situation of modern man is so far out of hand that we shall be compelled to let external events take their terrible course. (Watts 1972: 39)

Ouspensky's explanation of destiny is, of course, far more complex than such a rash assessment of it. The key to destiny, he insists, lies within "the nature of the causes and of where they are." Where else could the causes of man's destiny lie, but within man himself, within each man? Teilhard de Chardin minces no words: "The End of the Species is in the marrow of our bones." (Teilhard de Chardin 1964: 300) Lecomte du Nouy agrees.

Peace must be established by transforming man from the interior and not by erecting external structures. We have already said it: the source of all wars, the source of all evil, lies in us. (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: 185)

Ouspensky believes that it is not too late to rescue this world from its apparent, appalling destiny. He invites us to look within ourselves, to question the nature of our identity and discover who we are. "...what the effects might be: they might conceivably transform the world." (James 1958: 224) We may find that we are not destroyers, but creators, artists, perhaps even art. The act of releasing our false identity and becoming ourselves may save the world.

To become ourselves is the one thing to be done; but the true ourselves is that which is within us, and to exceed our outer self of body, life and mind is the condition for this highest being, which is our true and divine being, to become self-revealed and active. It is only by growing within and living within that we can find it; once that is done, to create from there the spiritual or divine mind, life and body and through this instrumentalisation to arrive



at the creation of a world which shall be the true environment of a divine living - this is the final object. (Aurobindo in Ghose 1981: 83)

The creation of a world such as Sri Aurobindo describes might easily be the work of the mystic actor--an artist who acts within the sacred, a man whose life is art, whose art is sacred because it is most human. If the world is to be remade, we must become mystic artists in all things, individuals who, "in moments of contemplation receive, as I think, the creative impulse. . . and so make and unmake mankind, and even the world itself. . ." (Yeats 1924: 195) Then, like William Butler Yeats, we will say:

The friends that have it I do wrong  
When ever I remake a song,  
Should know what issue is at stake:  
It is myself that I remake.  
("Untitled Poem" in Yeats 1971: 778)

Until then, until our identity has been recalled, until we become who we are, we will not be able to accept responsibility for our relationship with destiny and it will be difficult indeed to see any possibility of transformation within man or society. We cannot see until we are awake. We cannot awake to vision until we die to inertia.

Mr. Gurdjieff explained it to us like this. First we must realize that we are asleep; secondly we must awake. When we are awake we must die; when we die we can be born. . . Suppose we want to be born. We cannot be born until we die, and we cannot die until we awake. We cannot awake until we realize that we are asleep.  
(Ouspensky 1971b: 406)

A great magician, Eliphas Levi, once wrote, "To do nothing is as fatal as to do evil, but it is more cowardly. The most unpardonable of mortal sins is inertia." (Levi 1970: 171) Such is the nature of mankind's inaction in the face of the decline and destruction of civilization. It is a sleep which Thomas Merton describes as death operating "in the midst of life, not the end of life, but rather as the fear of life," as

life afraid of living. (Merton 1980: 86) We have become paralyzed by an insidious deadliness which has crept into our days and nights. By deadliness, "we never mean dead: we mean something depressingly active but for this very reason capable of change," capable of awakening. (Brook 1973: 40) The deadliness goes by a thousand names. Tolstoy refers to it as "anhedonia" (James 1958: 381) Teilhard de Chardin, as "'Public Enemy No. 1' - boredom." (Teilhard de Chardin 1964: 145) William Butler Yeats calls it "the slow dying of men's hearts" and "the autumn of the body." (Yeats 1924: 236) Colin Wilson puts it less poetically.

Bourgeois society reduces man. The comfortable life lowers man's resistance, so that he sinks into an unheroic sloth. If an animal that has been used to hard food is fed on a diet of mush, it gets tooth decay. The comfortable life causes spiritual decay just as soft sweet food causes tooth decay. (Wilson 1970: 13-14)

Giraudoux's ragpicker in The Madwoman of Chaillot describes the deadliness within us most simply, most horribly.

Twenty years ago, one day on the street, I saw a face in the crowd. A face, you might say, without a face. The eyes - empty. The expression - not human. Not a human face. It saw me staring, and when it looked back at me with its gelatine eyes, I shuddered. Because I knew that to make room for this one, one of us must have left the earth. A while after, I saw another. And another. And since then, I've seen hundreds come in - yes - thousands. (Giraudoux 1958: 32)

Giraudoux, Levi, Yeats, Merton, all concur with Simone Weil who believes that man falls into this "state more or less resembling death, more or less akin to a purely vegetative existence" when his needs are not satisfied. (Weil 1971: 7) In this civilization which has met all our material needs, a gaping spiritual need has been neglected. We have gained the world but lost our identity, and, in so doing, our souls. Life has become a form of death; death, "life afraid to love and trust itself. . ." (Merton 1980: 86)

If, as Ouspensky and legion others assert, we are asleep in the arms of inertia, then we must prepare for death in our beds amidst a nightmare beyond all comprehension. St. John had a metaphor to describe such a fate: the sleeping fire of hell--life without activity and without progress--sulphur in stagnation. (Levi 1970: 174)

It is a deep hell of our own choosing, the only hell we'll ever know.

At present, most of us do nothing. We look away. We remain calm. We are silent. We take refuge in the hope that the holocaust won't happen, and turn back to our individual concerns. We deny the truth that is all around us. Indifferent to the future of our kind, we grow indifferent to one another. We drift apart. We grow cold. We drowse our way toward the end of the world. But if once we shook off our lethargy and fatigue and began to act, the climate would change. Just as inertia produces despair - a despair often so deep that it does not even know itself as despair - arousal and action would give us access to hope, and life would start to mend: not just life in its entirety but daily life, every individual life. At that point, we would begin to withdraw from our role as both the victims and the perpetrators of mass murder. We would no longer be the destroyers of mankind but, rather, the gateway through which the future generations would enter the world. Then the passion and will that we need to save ourselves would flood into our lives. Then the walls of indifference, inertia, and coldness that now isolate each of us from others, and all of us from the past and future generations, would melt, like snow in spring. (Schell 1982: 230)

But how do we arouse ourselves from our deadly sleep to meet the spring? We can only start with life as we see it when we get out of bed and look into the mirror, when we read the news, watch our sleeping children, and stare into the darkness. We can start with the messages we send to ourselves, delivered by Gabriels of many names and faces, but of one vision, one life, one future. All our warnings will not come written by an angel on the wind of an autumn night. They may shake us out of our lethargy, nevertheless. The point is--to sleep lightly, so that when a message bearer speaks, we can awaken and act.

Meanwhile, it is within the nightmare that we must move, within the nightmare that we must bear the message to ourselves, treading the

corpse of our utopian dream of civilization. One hundred years ago, Henri Bergson foresaw this nightmare. He asked questions which must now be answered. In another century it may be too late.

What would happen if the mechanical forces, which science had brought into a state of readiness for the service of man, should themselves take possession of man in order to make his nature material as their own? What kind of a world would it be if this mechanism should seize the human race entire, and if the peoples, instead of raising themselves to a richer and more harmonious diversity, as persons may do, were to fall into the uniformity of things? What kind of a society would that be which should mechanically obey a word of command mechanically transmitted; which should rule its science and its conscience in accordance therewith; and which should lose along with the sense of justice, the power to discern between truth and falsehood? What new barbarism, this time final, would arise from these conditions to stifle feeling, ideas, and whole civilization of which the old barbarism contained the germ? What would happen, in short, if the moral effort of humanity should turn in its tracks at the moment of attaining its goal, and if some diabolical contrivance should cause it to produce the mechanization of spirit instead of the spiritualization of matter? (Bergson 1916: 35)

What would happen? There would be ecological disaster, economic collapse, geophysical cataclysms, and nuclear war: a premature extinction of a humanity only just beginning its evolution, "a death in the cradle - a case of infant mortality." (Schell 1982: 182)

But in the chill darkness of that autumnal night, there would always be a warning to mankind that none of this need happen unless we will it.

~~It~~ would be easy to disregard Bergson as one in a long line of reactionaries against an unassailable science. That would be to miss his point entirely. Bergson's nightmare is not of a science responsible for the materialization of mankind, but of a mankind which creates, nurtures, and worships mechanical forces which are finally released from their spiritual essence to vampirize life itself. William Butler Yeats describes this process with an ineffable tenderness.

Painting, music, science, politics, and even religion, because they have felt a growing belief that we know nothing but the fading and

flowering of the world, have changed in numberless elaborate ways. Man has wooed and won the world, and has fallen weary, and not, I think, for a time, but with a weariness that will not end until the last autumn, when the stars shall be blown away like withered leaves. He grew weary when he said, 'These things that I touch and see and hear are alone real,' for he saw them without illusion at last, and found them but air and dust and moisture. ("Autumn of the Body" in Yeats 1924: 236-237)

Yeats has recorded the epitaph composed by Bacon, Descartes, Newton, Locke, Galileo, Freud, by each of us, an epitaph which mankind has relentlessly carved onto its headstone: "These things that I touch and see and hear are alone real." And so we live entombed within our construction of reality--an existence of matter alienated from meaning. Thus our civilization and its many organs--science, religion, art--decay, cut off from their life-force, refusing all contact with the eternal, the sacred, the whole.

Has not the long decline of the arts been but a shadow of declining faith in an unseen reality? (Yeats 1962: 170)

We have come so far, only to find ourselves in a mechanical world with no one at the controls; only to confront "the crisis of confidence which springs from each man's wish to be a mind and person, in the face of the nagging fear that he is a mechanism." (Bronowski 1971: 9)

Freudianism replaced the saint and sinner alike with a mechanical psychological man, programmed from childhood to fail or succeed. . . The heights and depths of man's soul were each seen by Freud. . . as the result of infantile behavior patterns that rigidly controlled man for his lifetime - the grandest dimensions of experience reduced to a psychological determinism. (Roberts 1978: 63, 62)

In our laboratories, upon our stages and screens, in our classrooms, and at the foot of our altars, we have painstakingly attempted the transmutation of a winged humanity into a machine. We have given life to a phantom which bounds us to the grave. Unwittingly or not, men of reason every one of us, we have practiced the deadliest form of

### Black Magic.

When one creates phantoms for oneself, one puts vampires into the world, and one must nourish these children of a voluntary nightmare with one's blood, one's life, one's intelligence, and one's reason, without ever satisfying them. (Levi 1970: 171)

A century has passed, and we have fulfilled Henri Bergson's greatest fear, not the mechanization of spirit, but a mankind which has lost its identity and assumed another: creator become destroyer. It is a destroyer's world which we have erected--one doomed to self-destruction--one in which life is impossible.

Modern civilization finds itself in a difficult position because it does not suit us. It has been created without any knowledge of our real nature. . . . These theories build up civilizations which although designed for man fit only an incomplete monstrous image of man. . . . In truth, our civilization has created conditions of existence which. . . render life impossible. (Carrel 1961: 26)

That life on earth is rapidly becoming impossible is evident. A great deal of information was censored from the Global 2000 Report before it reached the public. However,

Among the projections that did make it into the final report are estimates that 20% of remaining animal species will be extinct by the year 2000. Each year an area of cropland the size of the state of Maine is becoming desert. This trend will continue unabated into the new century. In addition, 40% of remaining forests will be destroyed in the next 20 years. The increasing concentration of carbon dioxide in the air is expected to alter the earth's climate in ways that are still unpredictable. The gap between rich and poor countries is expected to increase, creating even greater threats to world stability and peace. (KUED 1981: 15)

That one-eighth to one-quarter of the world's population is starving is another fact. (KUED 1981: 15) However, in a world of mechanization, facts lose meaning and relation. A man remains untouched by the plight of the forests and the seas, untouched even by the imminent death of his own children. Each life becomes utterly isolated, splintered into a million brittle fragments - all shiny, dagger sharp, signifying nothing.

The result has been a culture which has developed in a very restricted medium, removed from the world, in a stovepipe atmosphere - a culture very strongly directed toward and influenced by technical science, very strongly tinged with pragmatism, extremely broken up by specialization, entirely deprived both of contact with this world and, at the same time, of any window opening into the world beyond. (Weil 1971: 45)

We can no more blame the state of the world on science than we can on religion or art. All suffer from this "tyranny of impersonal things." ("The Cutting of an Agate" in Yeats 1924: 374) All are deadly, skirting the edges of life, afraid to embrace it, afraid to love. Mistaking our identity to be pure matter, we prostitute art, science, and religion in the fulfillment of our material craving, thus creating deadliness in what were once sacred endeavors.

Many years hence, when the reaction of the past shall have left only the grand outline in view, this perhaps is how a philosopher will speak of it. He will say that the idea, peculiar to the nineteenth century, of employing science in the satisfaction of our material wants had given a wholly unforeseen extension to the mechanical arts and had equipped man in less than forty years with more tools than he had made during the thousands of years he had lived on earth. Each new machine being for man a new organ - an artificial organ which merely prolongs the natural organs - his body became suddenly and prodigiously increased in size, without his soul being able at the same time to dilate to the dimensions of his new body. From this disproportion there issued the problems, moral, social, international. . . (Bergson 1916: 34)

From religious investigation into the nature of the universe, we have transmuted science into a soulless monster feeding upon the life of man. But we have done no less with art and religion.

The Christian Church is inevitably involved in this death of our civilisation. I can see that very clearly. If you consider the death symptoms, the foremost is an increasing preoccupation with the material things in life. Here the Churches go with the popular trend, and endorse, and even enhance, our affluent society's materialist standards. (Muggeridge 1969: 195)

Our relationship to the holy has become perverse. The only bond we recognize is that of need, a questionable bond at that. (Weil 1971: 248) Mystic union, the direct, living experience of the sacred

in the life of a man--the very ground of all religion--has become suspect. Religion has become a hellhag of doctrine and dogma, the willing victim of the vampirism of soulless things.

What keeps religion going is something else than abstract definitions and systems of concatenated adjectives, and something different from faculties of theology and their professors. All these things are after-effects, secondary accretions upon those phenomena of vital conversation with the unseen divine. . . renewing themselves in soecula soeculorum in the lives of humble private men. (James 1958: 340)

Art too suffers from a profound alienation from its own essence. The living expression of the sacred unity of all life has been slowly mutilated into what Yeats terms "a theatre of commerce." ("The Theatre" in Yeats 1924: 208) Like religion and science, art no longer holds relationship to men's lives; it reveals no mystery, no truth, no beauty. It has become mortal, and lost its humanity.

The condition of the Deadly Theatre at least is fairly obvious. All through the world theatre audiences are dwindling. There are occasional new movements, good new writers and so on, but as a whole, the theatre not only fails to elevate or instruct, it hardly even entertains. The theatre has often been called a whore, meaning its art is impure, but today this is true in another sense - whores take the money and then go short on the pleasure. The Broadway crisis, the Paris crisis, the West End crisis are the same: we do not need the ticket agents to tell us that the theatre has become a deadly business and the public is smelling it out. (Brook 1973: 10)

Our modern theatre, with the seats always growing more expensive, and its dramatic art drifting always from the living impulse of life, and become more and more what Rossetti would have called 'soulless self-reflections of man's skill,' no longer gives pleasure to any imaginative mind. ("Samhain: 1904" in Yeats 1962: 129)

Art has no public now; the public, no art. Art has no direct concern with us any more, and for good reason; hence, we need to have works of art explained to us - works as strange to us as an exotic jewel whose form does not suggest its use. (Appia 1969: 47)

The elevation of art to a sphere of its own, indeed, reflects a peculiar social situation in which artistic activity has no organic relationships either with an authentic culture or with the vital adjustment, expression and fulfilment of the individual. (Mukerjee 1954: x)



Art, science, religion--all have become corrupt with that eerie deadliness one encounters only in the living: the deadliness of inertia, of paralysis in the face of transformation. They have become cancerous organs of a world in desperate need of healing. What healing we attempt is piecemeal. Antibiotic here, surgery there. A meeting of the Union for Concerned Scientists, the War Resisters League, Women's Action For Nuclear Disarmament. . . We see our world, our body, in unrelated fragments and doctor accordingly. As a result, we succeed only in cosmetizing the symptoms of the disease. If only we could see our organs as one life; if only we could see the world as ourselves and ourselves as the world, then the world would be healed. We must be artists, yes--but to be whole, we must also be art.

In order for us to arrive at such a wholeness, there must be a reconciliation of all those apparent opposites within our lives which are the source of all inner and worldly conflict. The task of reconciliation seems overwhelming, but it occurs simply, unnoticed, when we realize our identity as the world. When we are the world, there is nothing which exists apart from us. There is no otherness, hence, there can be no contradiction. What we once viewed as opposites, we will then know as complements. Where we once believed with all our hearts that the sacred and profane are irreconcilable, that it is impossible to act in this world and the "next" simultaneously, to be a mystic and man of action, we will know otherwise.

This reconciliation of opposites, or coincidence of contraries, was a predominant theme in the aesthetic theory of Yeats and the mysticism of Nicholas of Cusa. Their works are firmly rooted in the idea that all contradiction is reconciled within the eternal, that everything exists

in the eternal, and the eternal exists in everything.

For Thou hast shown me that Thou canst not be seen elsewhere than where impossibility meeteth and faceth me, . . . and I have learnt that the place wherein Thou art found unveiled is girt round with the coincidence of contradictories, and this is the wall of Paradise wherein Thou dost abide. The door whereof is guarded by the most proud spirit of Reason, and, unless he be vanquished, the way in will not lie open. Thus 'tis beyond the coincidence of contradictories that Thou mayest be seen, and nowhere this side thereof. (Nicholas of Cusa 1960: 43-44)

Yeats believed that "the nobleness of the arts is in the mingling of contraries." ("The Cutting of an Agate" in Yeats 1924: 316) This mingling is no static event, but a dynamic, creative process in which "natural and supernatural with the self-same ring are wed." ("Ribh Denounces Patrick" in Yeats 1970: 283) In the union of opposites the battlefield called man is transformed into a Garden of Eden.

Art represents a complete fusion and synthesis of the conscious and unconscious desires of man and especially a reconciliation of man's life and death impulses of love and destruction. Out of the constructive work in art arises a wholeness in man's internal life as well as in external relations, which is the very essence of his success in adaptation. Man's sense of beauty and wholeness which is manifest in his aesthetic and mystic apprehension is ultimately rooted in his imperative need of reconciling the ambivalent, contending forces of love and hate that possess him in the depths of his being. (Mukerjee 1954: 33)

For Yeats, Christ was "the supreme symbol of the artistic imagination," ("William Blake" in Yeats 1924: 169) the epitome of the mingling of contraries. Yeats considered Christ's life of love to be the supreme art toward which all artists labour. If only we could, like Christ, accept our identity as supreme artists who with every creation remake themselves and the world, Yeats believed we could lead the world into Eden.

Paradise is simply the person, the self, but the radical self in its uninhibited freedom. The self no longer clothed with an ego. (Merton 1980: 7)

To accomplish such an art, man requires what Yeats termed "passion," the straining of man's entire being against all obstacles obstructing his unity. ("A People's Theatre" in Yeats 1962: 252)

This is not the simpering, slobbering affection of the ego. Passion as Yeats uses the word is an intensity of being which is the complement of Ouspensky's sleep and Yeats' own "autumn of the body." ("Autumn of the Body" in Yeats 1924: 236) Krishnamurti describes this passion as if it were his own.

The seeing of "what is," that very act is passion. . . Understanding really is passion. . . to examine the whole of living needs not only extraordinary clarity of perception, but also the intensity of passion. (Krishnamurti 1973: 61)

Passion comes when there is the total abandonment of the "me" and the "you," the "we" and the "they," and when, with that abandonment, there is a deep sense of austerity. (Krishnamurti 1973: 184)

So too, Arthur Edward Waite, like Yeats a magician in the Order of the Golden Dawn, explains,

The great passion is that in which there perishes finally whatsoever within us does not belong to the Eternal. (Waite 1923: 275)

What has passion to do with the peril of nuclear holocaust, the survival of mankind, and the recovery of each man's role in life? The answer is obvious.

The whole will of man must be concentrated on this struggle in which he is upheld by the newly acquired sense of his human dignity, from which he must draw at the same time the necessary strength and the proof of his high destiny. It is in the intensity of this effort, and not in its form nor in its result, that the true degree of humanization is revealed. (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: 87)

Passion is not the only tool of the mystic actor. There are others equally as important, among them imagination, sympathy, symbol and stillness. Each of these aspects of the artistic life is inextricably linked to all other aspects. Each implies the others and makes them possible. Together they uncreate and then recreate the world.

Our imaginations are but fragments of the universal imagination, portions of the universal body of God, and as we enlarge our imagination by imaginative sympathy, and transform with beauty and peace of art the sorrows and joys of the world, we put off the limited mortal man more and more and put on the unlimited 'immortal man.' (Yeats 1924: 170-171)

By imaginative sympathy, Yeats refers to a profound identification with all that lives, a reverence of shared meaning "because all life has the same root. . ." ("Irish Dramatic Movement" in Yeats 1923: 161) Sympathy is that process by which actor becomes character, audience becomes actor--and actor, audience, and character alike pass away into a oneness from which art is born. Sympathy results in art, in union, and art inevitably results in sympathy.

. . . my one unshakable belief. I thought that whatever of philosophy has been made poetry is alone permanent, and that one should begin to arrange it in some regular order, rejecting nothing as the make-believe of poets. I thought. . . that if a powerful and benevolent spirit has shaped the destiny of this world, we can better discover that destiny from the words that have gathered up the heart's desire of the world, than from historical records, or from speculation, wherein the heart withers. Since then I have observed dreams and visions very carefully, and am now certain that the imagination has some way of lighting on the truth that the reason has not, and that its commandments, delivered when the body is still and the reason silent, are the most binding we can ever know. ("Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" in Yeats 1924: 79-80)

That state "when the body is still and the reason silent" is the meditative or contemplative state which functions "to liberate us from all manner of abstractions and create at once a joyous artistic life." (Yeats 1978: 69) It is the silence which makes all action possible; the stillness which is action.

Silence. It is only in that state that you understand and act with an action that is nonfragmentary. (Krishnamurti 1973: 10)

For Yeats, as for all mystic actors, meditation is not an escape from life. It is a way of life which continually reaffirms and cherishes life.

Contemplation in the proper understanding is a governing preoccupation of life in love, and it belongs to the entire life; it is a permanent disposition and direction of the whole concern of being. (Waite 1923: 261)

To be dwelling in such contemplation while standing, walking, lying down, until sleep overcomes thee, is called living in Brahman. (Buddha in Ghose 1981: 26)

Within the stillness of contemplation lies another of the mystic actor's tools--image.

. . . there is for every man some one scene, some one adventure, some one picture that is the image of his secret life, for wisdom first speaks in images, and that this one image, if he would but brood over it his life long, would lead his soul, disentangled from unmeaning circumstance and the ebb and flow of the world, into that far household, where the undying gods await all whose souls have become simple as flame, whose bodies have become quiet as an agate lamp. ("Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" in Yeats 1924: 116)

Symbol, like passion and sympathy, "leads beyond the realm of division where subject and object stand over one another." (Merton 1980: 63) They lead into the realm of union.

The function of the symbol is not merely to bring about a union of minds and wills, as a cause produces an effect; the function of the symbol is to manifest a union that already exists but is not fully realized. The symbol awakens, or restores it. Therefore, it aims not at communication but at communion. (Merton 1980: 59)

Silence gives birth to symbol, but on the far side of symbol, silence waits again to claim her own. From image, we must pass into the imageless, into action.

Few men realize their potential as mystic actors. Most of us are more like actors who strut out onto the stage and suddenly draw a blank. We cannot remember who we are or why we are here. What ensues is a nightmare. It seems, like such actors, we have forgotten the art of living, forgotten that we must "be artists in all things, and understand that love and old age and death are first among the arts."

("William Blake" in Yeats 1924: 171) We no longer remember how to

create, what it was within us that cried out for creation. So we have become like C. S. Lewis' artist and now find ourselves in Deep Hell.

When you painted on earth - at least in your earlier days - it was because you caught glimpses of Heaven in the earthly landscape. The success of your painting was that it enabled others to see glimpses too. . . Light itself was your first love: you loved paint only as a means of telling about light. . . Ink and catgut and paint were necessary down there, but they are also dangerous stimulants. Every poet and musician and artist, but for Grace, is drawn away from love of the thing he tells, to love of the telling till, down in Deep Hell, they cannot be interested in God at all but only in what they say about Him. (Lewis 1946: 73)

It has been a slow, excruciating process which has brought us to Deep Hell. The passage began when we, the artists of life, forsook our duty to hang

Images of the life that was Eden  
About the child-bed of the world, that it,  
Looking upon those images, might bear  
Triumphant children.  
(The King's Threshold in Yeats 1934: 111-112)

Ours have not been triumphant children. In agony we have borne children of fear in a landscape of horror. Hell, though, need not perpetuate itself forever; it is only a delay of the inevitable movement of life. In the wilderness of Deep Hell, lies the promise of transformation. Fritjof Capra calls this an evolutionary perspective.

. . . a perspective that has been described very often by cultural historians. What they point out is that civilizations or cultures have a tendency to rise. . . then decline and disintegrate. And they would then be replaced by a different culture, but this different culture, the new culture, is rising while the old culture is declining. . . The mainstream, or declining culture, is composed of most of our social institutions including the universities, governments, the corporations and so on. The rising culture is. . . engaged in this profound cultural transformation. . ." (KUED 1981: 10)

Capra's view is a comforting one, but it overlooks one critical point. In this Deep Hell we have constructed lies the potential for nuclear war. For this potential, we prepare daily, building our warheads

and perfecting our delivery systems. Einstein once said that one cannot simultaneously prepare for and avoid war. So it seems, we shall not avoid nuclear holocaust. With it, evolution will cease. Humanity will be interred forever, a species of fear overcome by the violence of irreconcilable opposites. Life will have been a travesty; art, religion, and science, parodies of the absurd futility that was man.

The ascent of man into heaven is not the key, but rather his ascent here into the spirit and the descent also of the spirit into his normal humanity and the transformation of this earthly nature. For that and not some post mortem salvation is the real new birth for which humanity waits as the crowning movement of its long obscure and painful course. (Aurobindo in Satprem 1968: 367)

Capra's point is, of course, incontestable: as in the life of a man, transformation is the destiny of a civilization--for movement is the very essence of life. Tragically though, it is the testimony of the past that, more often than not, only ruins stand in the warm sunlight as witnesses of the apotheosis of a culture. Perhaps this time, if we choose, it will be different. It could be our children who stand--great pillars of peace and joy--marveling that the airy, luminous creation they will call civilization was once, on a vile autumnal night, a worm.

The half-century in which I have been consciously alive seems to me to have been quite exceptionally destructive, murderous and brutal. More people have been killed and terrorised, more driven from their homes and native places; more of the past's heritage has been destroyed, more lies propagated and base persuasion engaged in, with less compensatory achievement in art, literature, and imaginative understanding, than in any comparable period in history. (Muggeridge 1969: 52)

Something must change. We must change quickly, before another night passes. We must die to this life, to this Deep Hell, so that we may be born to paradise.

We need to change completely, that is the greatest revolution - not throwing bombs and killing each other. The greatest revolution is whether the mind can transform itself immediately and be entirely different tomorrow. (Krishnamurti 1973: 36)

I don't regard this at all as a gloomy point of view. If one considers the nature and present objectives of our society, I think it's much more optimistic to suppose it's going to collapse than it's going to succeed. Its success would be nightmare beyond all thought or belief. (Muggeridge 1969: 202)

Maybe we have something to be thankful for. Maybe, in this "twilight of a spent civilisation" (Muggeridge 1969: 53), we shall witness a world become a star. Maybe by immersing ourselves in this life on the brink of extinction, we shall be liberated into action.

To hope for a change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition. What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual solution cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance. To that call in the being there must always be some answer in the Divine Reality and Nature. (Aurobindo in Ghose 1981: 18)

But how many people even raise that call of which Sri Aurobindo speaks? Once again Ouspensky provides a frightening response.

Man must become a different being. . . (But) then we must understand that all men cannot develop and become different beings. . . It may sound strange but we must realize that it is not only rare, but is becoming more and more rare. To the question: 'Why cannot all men develop and become different beings?' the answer is very simple: 'Because they do not want it.' (Ouspensky in Ghose 1981: 145)

Maybe we don't want transformation because wanting it would be an admission of the state of the world and of our complicity in it. It is a terrible thing to confront the extinction of the human race, the destruction of a planet, the death of millions of living, the murder of the future and the millions of unborn, and the desecration of the dead.

The trouble with nuclear war today, and trying to think about it today, and predict what is going to happen, is that it's so much bigger, so much more of a cataclysm than the human mind has ever encompassed, that no one can really describe it. No one wants to face it. (Admiral Laroque in KUED 1981: 13)



It is as though life itself were one huge distraction diverting our attention from the peril to life. In its apparent durability, a world menaced with imminent doom is in a way deceptive. It is almost an illusion. Now we are sitting at the breakfast table drinking our coffee and reading the newspaper, but in a moment we may be inside a fireball whose temperature is tens of thousands of degrees. Now we are on our way to work, walking through the city streets, but in a moment we may be standing on an empty plain under a darkened sky looking for the charred remnants of our children. Now we are alive, but in a moment we may be dead. Now there is human life on the earth, but in a moment it may be gone. (Schell 1982: 182)

Most of us would rather put out our eyes than admit to such a vision of the world, rather deny the present than face the future. We would prefer to sit by, a happy conflagration, claiming impotence, refusing action, waiting for apocalypse.

On the whole the world's reaction to the peril of extinction has been one of numbness and inertia, much as though extinction were as inescapable as death is. (Schell 1982: 184)

There is a horror far worse than extinction from which humanity wishes to escape. It is collaboration in a world of death. More than anything on earth, we want not to be responsible for such a world. We want desperately to be innocent. Yeats describes two sorts of innocence. The first, which was ours in primordial time and after which we blindly grasp, is spawned of ignorance and inexperience. The other is slowly, painfully created in the very human process of wisdom gained through experience. The first, Yeats calls "murderous innocence," because it is the negation of mankind's accumulated vision, wisdom and experience; as such, it is man's most deadly, destructive construction. The second form of innocence, Yeats calls "radical." It is the complete immersion in the human experience, love in action, a unity arising from the deepest participation in life. We shall never regain our lost Eden; the path of murderous innocence leads only to Deep Hell. But radical

innocence will lead us to a new Eden which pulses within us, awaiting only our recognition for it to burgeon forth. In that Eden will stand, as of old, a tree of knowledge of good and evil and no one looking at that tree will be able to distinguish it from the figure of man or god.

The Eden of radical innocence is not a paradise of the future. The only Eden which exists lies within us, has its roots firmly implanted in the present. So too, we are the only Adams, ". . . Adams of a different Eden, a more terrible Eden. . ." (Yeats 1962: 242) It is an Eden which demands of us an act of creation, which will prove an act of salvation, the greatest act of love imaginable.

But how can one man save the world--one man who gets up in the morning, goes to the bathroom, goes bald, grows old? One man can, in actuality, save the world through a simple act of self-recognition, because he is the world; the world, an Eden beyond our imagination, lying on the far side of silence.

The world is not outside us but in ourselves. We are the world. . . The question, then, is not to speculate about how we are to contact the world - as if we were somehow in outer space - but how to validate our relationship, give it a fully honest and human significance, and make it truly productive and worthwhile for our world. (Merton 1980: 106)

In order to begin this thesis, several insidious prejudices must be confronted at the outset. All deal with the "use" of what society has determined to be "useless"; utility being the ultimate criteria of value within our culture. Society's understanding of and, hence, relationship with the mystic, the artist, and the aesthetic theory of Yeats alike have been undermined by a peculiarly deadly interpretation of the term "useful." Use has come to be equated with

monetary gain, political manipulation, material stockpiling, that which can be computed by a machine, distilled in a beaker and printed in the Wall Street Journal. Use has become propagandized by an established authority from which mystic, artist, and Yeats all stand apart. The tragedy is that the three offer so very much to an establishment; they offer the authority upon which all life is based--the direct, living experience of the unity of all life, the indivisibility of the sacred and man. Nevertheless, we live in a culture which has reared us to see the mystic and artist as aberrant creatures, men who renounce life, 'real life,' in favour of the sacred or in favour of some imaginative existence. One man is selfish, the other egotistical. Both are considered luxuries in a civilization struggling for survival. So too, our culture most often regards the work and theory of Yeats as the products of an overly active imagination, of a reactionary and escapist, unworkable within the theatre and, in application, ridiculous in the 'real world.'

The following chapter will examine the common art of mystic and artist: the art of the mystic actor and its infinite utility. No one word comes to mind to describe that art; love comes the closest.

## CHAPTER II

### THE UNITY OF BEING AND THE UNITY OF OPPOSITES

To me all things are made of the conflict of two states of consciousness, beings or persons which die each other's life, live each other's death. That is true of life and death themselves, two cones. . . the apex of each in the other's base. (Yeats 1954: 918)

Opposites are everywhere face to face, dying each other's life, living each other's death. (Yeats 1962: 430)

Immortals become mortals, mortals become immortals; they live in each other's death and die in each other's life. (Heraclitus in Wheelwright 1964: 68)

Perhaps for Gabriel, life is crystalline, its purpose and patterns luminously one. Such can seldom be said of the vision of a man. "All things fall into a series of antinomies in human experience." (Yeats 1969: 193) Visions of angels and holocaust resist reconciliation. Man resists it. We have grown covetous of the battlecry and the clash of swords, as if conflict was the womb which bore us and all that separates us from the grave gaping at our feet. There is grim satisfaction for us in the battle of antinomies.

Such is the poise and serenity achieved by the self as it merges into the silence of Being that as it turns outwards and manifests itself in the world process it suffers a tremendous agony. The alternation of the self from silence to sound, from rest to motion, from sleep to waking is accordingly defined and apprehended by the artist as discord, arhythm and asymmetry. What is in reality a recurrent rhythm and alternation of Being and Becoming is now regarded as an essential and original antithesis and opposition. The principle of duality now supersedes the principle of unity as governing all motion, form and structure. (Mukerjee 1954: 270)

That life should be experienced by most individuals as a mind-

rending series of dualities, forever warring, eternally irreconcilable, is not surprising. The wastelands of contraries and contradictions are everywhere to be witnessed, but nowhere are they more savagely evident than in the eyes of a man. Man himself is the carrion of contradiction. He is the architect of towers and tombs, the master mind of Auschwitz. We "give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more." ("Waiting for Godot" in Clurman 1962: 77-78) But we give birth like madonnas to children who must be messiahs and ignite the darkness with possibility. We preach love, the resurrection of the body, the communion of souls. And each day the cancer within us grows as man utters the evocation of endings and summons apocalypse.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
 Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
 The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
 When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
 Troubles my sight: somewhere in the sands of the desert  
 A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
 Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
 The darkness drops again; but now I know  
 That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
 Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?  
 ("The Second Coming" in Yeats 1970: 185)

We are sphinxes of the vast desert. Within us is all opposition, all antinomy and all union, the questions and the answers, fate. We crave a transparent and fatal truth, but meaning, within a life of antithesis, runs deep beneath the sands. It cannot be separated from the moments of joy nor the years of pain; from the flashes of union nor the decades of alienation; from the rare moments of the sacred nor

the endless persistence of the profane and mundane. Meaning courses her way within the occasional concern, the remnants of love, through the suffocating indifference and the frustration. And we do not see her.

Our vision is consumed upon the battlefield of opposing forces by the Promethean struggle to reconcile sacred and profane, ecstasy and mundane, seen and unseen, whole and half, man and god. And we call this vision "life." Every aspect of that life lies bloody and broken upon the field--fragments of a body dismembered by a power it never recognized. Every aspect of our lives lies alien and unrelated, like a face without features, a body without a soul. We work, but often our employment has little to do with our family life and family life little to do with our politics. Our politics often bear little relation to our religion and our religion no relation to our social life. Social life rarely has anything to do with meaning of life. And life is as alien from death as health from disease. Death and disease have nothing to do with tension with which we live torn and vivisectioned between a thousand warring opposites--all with their self-espoused significance--signifying what?

Opposites are not in themselves a problem. Neither are their spawn, conflict and war. The carnage is indicative of a crisis far more alarming: mankind no longer comprehends relationship. Neither our halting vision, our fact-laden heads, nor our fearful hearts can encompass it. We thrash our lives away in the wake of opposites, blind to our relationship to ourselves, to the world, to our destiny, and blind to the greatest obstacle to union and, hence, our greatest

opportunity to union--antithesis itself. The very meaning, utility, and heroic possibility of opposites lie in their essence: relationship. Martin Buber once wrote, "In the beginning is relation." (Buber in Moore 1954: 418) In the end is its loss.

Upon his initiation into the Order of the Golden Dawn, W. B. Yeats chose the name *Demon Est Deus Inversus*. In so doing, he revealed a great deal about the nature of what Yeats termed "opposing virtues": interdependence, interaction, a dynamic union. "Fair and foul are near of kin, / And fair needs foul. . ." ("Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop" in Yeats 1970: 254) Yeats held firmly to the idea that opposites cannot exist without each other--god without man, life without death; that there is no distance, no separation, between opposites, only a creative interplay, a cosmic dance; that each opposite contains the other as life contains death and man contains god; that each opposite is its contrary; that at the point of deepest, passionate participation in life, all contraries are one and all opposition ceases to exist.

Arthur Miller's thesis in his haunting play After the Fall asserts that before the fall of man into division and separation, there was no love in the world. With the fall, love was born and that love is man's path back to wholeness, back to Eden. Yeats's understanding of the role of opposites in the life of a man is quite similar to Miller's idea of love. Yeats writes that the opposites warring within us and the world were born at the fall of man. They serve as stars to light our arduous path back to ourselves, back to Eden. Their value to us is as our greatest obstacle to union, for only the greatest

obstacle "that can be contemplated without despair rouses the will to full intensity." (Yeats 1979: 195) Opposites stir our passion, our memory. They rouse us to contemplation and action, spur us on to Eden. Within antinomy is union; within union there is no antinomy. That is the paradox of opposites.

Thus we admit the coincidence of contradictories, above which is the infinite.

Howbeit, this coincidence is a contradiction without contradiction, even as an end without an end. And Thou, Lord, sayest unto me that, just as otherness in unity is without otherness because it is unity, even so, in infinity, contradiction is without contradiction, because it is infinity. Infinity is simplicity itself, contradiction existeth not without becoming other. Yet in simplicity otherness existeth without becoming other because it is simplicity itself, seeing that all that is said of absolute simplicity coincideth therewith, because therein having is being. Therein the opposition of opposites is an opposition without opposition, just as the end of things finite is an end without an end. Thou, then, O God, are the Opposition of opposites, because Thou are infinite, and because Thou are infinite Thou art [sic] infinity itself. And in infinity the opposition of opposites existeth without opposition. (Nicholas of Cusa 1960: 58)

Antitheses exist to be melted into unity. They exist for the unity they are. In the course of a lifetime, this union of opposing virtues must occur. From the bonding emerges what Yeats called "the dream." What emerges is man--a new man, not rent and battlescarred, but complete and whole--a man who is his life, for whom no opposites exist, for whom union is the living reality of relationship.

Hence I observe how needful it is for me to enter into the darkness, and to admit the coincidence of opposites, beyond all the grasp of reason, and there to seek the truth where impossibility meeteth me. And beyond that, beyond even the highest ascent of intellect, when I shall have attained unto that which is unknown to every intellect, and which every intellect judgeth to be most far removed from truth, there, my God, art Thou, who are [sic] Absolute Necessity. (Nicholas of Cusa 1960: 43)

The word "dream" is fairly difficult for most people to accept, dwelling as it does beyond the far reaches of what we term "reality."



In order to grasp it, we, as authors of antinomy, set up yet another pair of opposites; we call it "reality vs. the dream." But what are we thinking of? Is reality truly a world of conflict and irreconcilable differences? Is the dream merely the fabrication of a weak mind seeking escape from the reality of eternal antithesis? Or is what we call "reality" a fragmentary consciousness which perceives without comprehension of the whole, without love? And is the dream something complete, a consciousness in which the pieces not only come together but no longer exist except as a whole? Perhaps the dream is the man who becomes the reality of the Unity of Being. He is not the man who denies the opposites strewn upon the surface of life, but the man who unites them. So Yeats believes.

In the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, T.E. Lawrence describes two sorts of dreamers, those who dream by night and those who dream by day. The men who dream by night never assimilate their dreams into the light of life. Hence, their dreams remain meaningless shadows and the days of the night-dreamers are living nightmares. The dreamers of the day live their dreams until they are their dreams. Dream, dreamer, reality and ideal unite in the days of a life. Imagination and action stride the earth upon the feet of a man. The dreamers of the daylight are Yeats's dream: "the dreamers who must do what they dream, the doers who must dream what they do." (Yeats in Flannery 1976: 89)

Let me become all your dreams. I will make them walk about the world in solid bone and flesh. People looking at them will become all fire themselves. They will change, there will be a Last Judgment in their souls, a burning and dissolving. . . (Yeats in Ellmann 1964: 173)

Rather than discarding the dream as another extraneous element

within man's diverse experience, Yeats examines the dream as vital to man's life and to his salvation from meaninglessness and destruction. Like William James, he believes that "In communion with the Ideal new force comes into the world." (James 1958: 393) The dream is infinitely creative, bestowing power, vitality, and potency upon life. Yeats insists that man must play an active role in the dream. First, man must have the courage and imagination to dream and then to become the dream. In order to become the dream, man must become everything he is not. He must incorporate his opposite, assimilate his anti-self. In other words, man must identify, must unite, with all which he considers to be alien and other to the reality of himself.

By the help of an image  
 I call to my own opposite, summon all  
 That I have handled least, least looked upon.  
 (Yeats in Berryman 1967: 45)

Yeats finds the supreme example of the living dream in the figure of Christ, the union of all contraries: the carpenter who leads men; the contemplator who saves the world; the god who dies upon a cross; the man who rises from the dead; the man who is god, the god who is man. Yeats sees the Christ-nature which exists in all men as the potential union of man and god, reality and the dream, self and anti-self. It is the Unity of Being.

The union of self and anti-self is heroic, tragic, joyous. And it is impossible without imagination. For Yeats, imagination is the apprehension of the unity of all life--or the unified apprehension of all life. Because imagination perceives the wholeness of life, so too it conceives that wholeness. It is a potently creative life-force. From the unitive vision of imagination, burgeon art and mysticism--the

wedding of contraries. Within art and mysticism the man of action and the man of reverie become one--the dreamer by daylight, who, having explored the depths of antinomy, has become the living union beyond and within antinomy in which no opposition exists. Thus art and mysticism function in a uniquely constructive manner in the life of a man. By embracing the depth of contraries, the paradox and contradiction of each day, they unite us with ourselves and all others, actuality with potentiality, reality with the dream. As such, art and mysticism are easily regarded as highly evolved states of consciousness which affirm life as meaningful, creative, and heroic. Because they affirm life, they create and renew it. There can be no greater service to man.

Aesthetic satisfaction springs from a harmonious blending and fulfilment of man's antithetical impulses and experience that rhythmically punctuate his emotional life. The greater and deeper the co-ordinations and harmonies, the more satisfactory is the aesthetic experience. The aesthetic attitude is in fact a species of a genus of experiences arising from an ordering and fulfilment of impulses and moods which are conflicting and contradictory. Man's apprehensions of beauty, sublimity and holiness represent species of the same genus, and are associated with similar kinds of kinaesthetic and organic changes. The mystic and the artist often experience the same kind of emotions and attitudes of poise, joy and clarity that arise out of a harmony between conflicting, independent and mutually destructive impulses. (Mukerjee 1954, 90)

Tragedy is the death-affirming power of the mystic arts. As the "drowning and breaking of the dykes that separate man from man," ("The Tragic Theatre" in Yeats 1924: 298) it restores the balance of relationship to antinomy. Only in tragedy are man and life triumphant over contradiction and opposition, because only in tragedy is there the complete sweet surrender to the other--to death. In accepting death, the Yeatsean hero accepts it as himself. He smiles and

lives forever--complete man. If the arts attribute meaning to life, they do so by acknowledging it in death. This is the ultimate gift of tragedy, its shattering of the final antinomy. It is natural that Yeats's heroes should die with laughter upon their lips.

It is still true that the Deity gives us, according to His promise, not His thoughts or His convictions but His flesh and blood, and I believe that the elaborate technique of the arts, seeming to create out of itself a superhuman life, has taught more men to die than oratory or the Prayer Book. ("Noble Plays of Japan" in Yeats 1924: 291)

Life for the Yeatsean hero is a lesson in letting go and laughter. The more he releases--victory, possessions, loves, outcomes and ends--the more he laughs. With the loss of attachment comes the freedom to be. The intensity and passion of the tragic hero's effort to be is all that matters--the intensity of life in movement toward union. Where all is One, it is irrelevant by what name the winner of battle goes--death, life, god, hero--all are winners. Where vibrant life graciously smiles into the face of death, vibrant life smiles back.

When I and these are dead  
We should be carried to some windy hill  
To lie there with uncovered face awhile  
That mankind and that leper there may know  
Dead faces laugh.  
(The King's Threshold in Yeats 1934: 141)

It is fitting in the marriage of contraries that the hero, who spends his life in the struggle for more life, should finally embrace death with such deep, abiding love. Within love, antinomy perishes. The hero encounters only the deepest union; he is the deepest union. So it is in the mystic arts: the "other" is abandoned in love. Separation is to be found only in artifice; the demesne of contraries is externality, not life. Imaginative vision rejects, not the world, but externality. The problem is that externality is not always as it

appears. One cannot blithely label body or brain, cathedrals or skyscrapers as externality. Only that which does not reconcile the apparent opposites of existence--all that holds opposites apart--is externality. Externality sets itself up in opposition to union, in opposition to life. And unity is the only direction in which life can proceed, if it is to continue upon the earth.

To elect in the depths of our being for the possibility and hope of an indefinitely increasing unification of the Universe, is not merely the only course we can pursue which conforms to the evolutionary past of the world; it is the course that embraces, in its essence, every other constructive act in which we might look for an alternative. (Teilhard de Chardin 1964: 56)

The mystic actor with his unitive vision is the quintessence of evolution. He is not the strongest, but he is the fittest. He is reality wedded to the dream; a man of imaginative vision and heroic love. He recognizes profound possibility in actuality by wedding it to the ideal. He is mankind's hope, its creative potential, what we shall become when we realize ourselves. He is the blessed silence following the clash of swords, the rumble of tanks. He is the truth of all warring opposites--relationship. He is highly evolved man.

The man of genius is for us the best type of the normal man, in so far as he effects a successful co-operation of an unusually large number of elements of his personality - reaching a stage of integration slightly in advance of our own. (Myers 1954: 72)

The higher gifts of genius - poetry, the plastic arts, music, philosophy, pure mathematics - all of these are precisely as much in the central stream of evolution - are perceptions of new truth and powers of new action just as decisively predestined for the race of man - as the aboriginal Australian's faculty for throwing a boomerang or for swarming up a tree for grubs. There is, then, about those loftier interests nothing exotic, nothing accidental; they are an intrinsic part of that ever-evolving response to our surroundings which forms not only the planetary but the cosmic history of all our race. (Myers 1954: 96)

The "man of genius," "the completest type of humanity," (Myers 1954: 107) plays an enormous role in the unfolding of evolution, the role of creator. Yeats writes of it in "Under Ben Bulben."

Poet and sculptor do the work,  
Nor let the modish painter shirk  
What his great forefathers did,  
Bring the soul of man to God,  
Make him fill the cradle right.  
("Under Ben Bulben" in Yeats 1970: 312)

The responsibility for filling "the cradle right" lies in the hands of the mystic actor. He must hang "Images of the life that was Eden / About the child-bed of the world, that it, / Looking upon those images, might bear / Triumphant children." (The King's Threshold in Yeats 1934: 111-112) In so doing, he will "orient the march of humanity" (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: 83) toward a Unity of Being and Culture. Otherwise, "If the Arts should perish, / The world that lacked them would be like a woman / That, looking on the cloven lips of a hare, / Brings forth a hare." (The King's Threshold in Yeats 1934: 112)

It is this small group of men which alone interests us. Humanity follows them and is inspired by them, and only deserves our attention inasmuch as it strives to emulate them. We consider and study mankind as a living mass in the process of transformation. But we know that such a mass transformation can only begin through individuals who are in general very lightly scattered, if not unique, and that their contemporaries who are less well endowed only constitute the raw material which will eventually furnish other mutant individuals or will gather and transmit by tradition the progress born in a few evolved brains. These exceptional minds are the centers of radiation around which the ripples widen as around a stone thrown into the water. They can appear anywhere in the world, in America, in Asia, or in Europe; in any class of society. They are neither Chinese, Americans, English, French, nor Hindus; they are men. (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: 116)

In his classic, Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death, Myers concurs with Lecomte du Nouy on the evolutionary role of the mystic actor.

I am urging, then, that where life is concerned, and where, therefore, change is normality, we ought to place our norm somewhat ahead of the average man, though on the evolutionary track which our race is pursuing. I have suggested that the evolutionary track is at present leading him in the direction of greater complexity in the perceptions which he forms of things without, and of greater concentration in his own will and thought - in that response to perceptions he makes from within. Lastly, I have argued that men of genius, whose perceptions are presumably more vivid and complex than those of average men, are also the men who carry the power of concentration furthest; - reaching downwards, by some self-suggestion which they no more than we can explain to treasures of latent faculty in the hidden Self. (Myers 1954: 77)

It is not by studying the lives of the saints, nor by haunting museums of art that we will discover these treasures. They are buried within each man. Only by going within the silent reaches of the self can we fulfill our evolutionary role.

Yeats asks a frightening question in "The Second Coming":

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?  
("The Second Coming" in Yeats 1970: 185)

His answer is appalling. We are the answer. The day is upon us when we must choose either to enter within the veil of contradiction and give birth to the union of reality and the dream so that life on earth may continue, or condemn humanity to the annihilation of anti-thesis. There is little time. Our labour has begun.

Man must fight to prepare the advent of the spiritual being he is destined to become.

Evolution continues in our time, no longer on the physiological or anatomical plane but on the spiritual and moral plane. We are at the dawn of a new phase of evolution and the violent eddies due to this change in the order of things still conceal that fact from the eyes of the majority. . . . We are incapable of realizing it, but we are actually in the midst of a revolution, a revolution on the scale of evolution. In comparison, the social revolutions we witness, even if they cost hundreds of thousands of human lives, are but tragic children's games, and will leave no trace in the future. (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: 78)

Revolution is a grim image; it conjures up anarchy, bloodshed, and destruction--rebellions of antithesis which perpetuate perversity and oppression. But there is a different sort of revolution--one which brings truth, justice and unity into the world. The mystic actor and his relationship with the world constitute this revolution. His love, passive within the eternal, is a formidable power amidst decayed nations, corrupt governments, and self-serving men. The revolutionary love of the mystic actor is a dynamic movement, an affirmation of the only power found on earth--the unseen, the eternal.

. . . the unseen region. . . is not merely ideal, for it produces effects in this world. When we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality, for we are turned into new men, and consequences in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. (James 1958: 389)

The mystic actor's single service to society is that he is who he is: a revelation of the unity and holiness of life. His only function is as revelation of reality.

In each man there is a God and to make him manifest is the aim of the divine life. That we can all do. (Aurobindo in Satprem 1968: 319)

Inevitably, however, revolution and a complex revolution of vision and consciousness accompany such a revelation. So too, because the revelation of his being is that of the most complete man, the mystic actor serves as a lodestar for civilization, giving direction, illumination and possibility in the darkest nights of culture. All this occurs simply because he is who he is--the union of self and anti-self, reality and the dream, the union of all opposing virtues.

I know now that revelation is from the self, but from the age-long memoried self, that shapes the elaborate shell of the mollusc and the child in the womb; that teaches the birds to make their nest;



and that genius is a crisis that joins that buried self for certain moments to our trivial daily mind. (Yeats 1979: 272)

Governments, false codes of morality, injustices, may all fall in his path, but the only weapon of the mystic actor is the flaming sword of love which burns all antinomy into the pure flame of the eternal One.

Rebellion proves in this way that it is the very movement of life and that it cannot be denied without renouncing life. Its purest outburst, on each occasion, gives birth to existence. Thus it is love and fecundity or it is nothing at all. (Camus 1958: 304)

There is no power on earth which can stand in opposition to the flame of the last day--to the unseen. In theory, T. E. Lawrence understood this instinctively. In actuality, communion with the unseen won freedom for the Arab nations.

Suppose we were (as we might be) an influence, an idea, a thing intangible, invulnerable, without front or back, drifting about like a gas? Armies were like plants, immobile, firm-rooted, nourished through long stems to the head. We might be a vapour, blowing where we listed. Our kingdoms lay in each man's mind; and as we wanted nothing material to live on, so we might offer nothing material to the killing. It seemed a regular soldier might be helpless without a target, owning only what he sat on, and subjugating only what, by order, he could poke his rifle at. (Lawrence 1967: 195)

Bergson describes the same sort of unearthly warfare in War.

But the energy of our soldiers is drawn from something which does not waste, from an ideal of justice and freedom. Time has no hold on us. To the force which feeds only on its own brutality we are opposing that which seeks outside and above itself a principle of life and renovation. Whilst the one is gradually spending itself, the other is continually remaking itself. The one is already wavering, the other abides unshaken. (Bergson 1916: 46)

Yeats terms the preternatural warfare which Lawrence and Bergson describe "creative conflict," "that other war, where opposites die each other's death." (Yeats 1962: 417) It is a peculiar consciousness of the progression of life toward harmony. Quite the reverse of deadly

warfare--a source of meaningless suffering and spiritual death, and a crime against life itself-- creative conflict is an affirmation of life, emerging only from stillness, never from opposition. War becomes creative the moment man dies to himself. The result is a reconciliation of all opposites, which leads to the Unity of Being and Culture.

Love war because of its horror that belief may be changed, civilization renewed. (Yeats 1962: 425)

The mystic arts wage creative conflict through revelation, rejecting the superficial and unreal contraries for a living union.

Now the art I long for is also a battle, but it takes place in the depths of the soul. . . It is the struggle of the dream with the world. . . and the greater the contest, the greater the art. (Yeats in Ellmann 1964: 105)

Yeats writes that "the saints always fight" and adds "not the fighting of men in red coats, that formal, soon-finished fighting, but the endless battle, the endless battle." (Yeats in Farag 1978: 11)

It is the endless battle of redeeming men from conflict and death.

The modern world is experiencing horror and sorrow, moral and material disillusionment and suffering on a scale unparalleled in human history. The fate of Homo sapiens is sealed by total wars and their dangers which now encompass all the continents. The fate of the universe, also according to modern science, is doomed through the continuous annihilation of energy in empty space that condemns the sun to everlasting darkness and cold and the earth to a sterile, lifeless existence. As humanity faces death and void in both physical and social or moral planes, it is natural that a new art will be born accepting the challenge of death by its mystical vision of the unity of mankind that will triumph over the present blood-bath of the nations, and of the All-Good and the All-Beautiful who is beyond the finite universe of time and space and lives and loves eternally through his own cosmic rhythms of creation and destruction, happiness and death. As this vision spreads from the aesthetic to the social, political and moral realms, universal humanity will be reborn, the earth will enjoy an eternal spring, and sorrow and despair will be conquered by art. The function of art is to ceaselessly renew and replenish mankind's sinking heart under the grips of death. (Mukerjee 1954: 28-29)

The mystic arts are vast powers with which any established authority or institution must deal. Because the only authority which the mystic arts acknowledge is that of union, they pose a threat to external authorities. Thus, society has its censors, blackballing, inquisitions, and witch hunts.

In his search for God, the mystic goes his own way. If need be, he will brush aside formula, rites and even the priests who would serve him as a mediator. . . . Persons of this sort, harbouring such convictions, may obviously be dangerous to the stability of any institution that has come to regard its truths as the truths, and its way of worship as the only way. (Leuba in Ghose 1981: 2)

Mysticism represents 'a type of mind. . . which the institution does not and cannot produce. . . . Yet while it cannot produce, it can and must make use of the radical. Its very life depends on so doing. The institution which affects to see in him an enemy is excommunicating one who is fitted to keep in touch with the renewing sources of its own life.' (Bennett in Ghose 1981: 31)

It is natural, given his vision, that the mystic actor should participate within society and its orders with a certain detachment. In its unadulterated form in the life of a mystic actor, detachment implies the disassociation from ego and externality, not from life.

Detachment does not, however, consist in cutting off correspondence between one's manifest part and external things, but in a right attitude toward things that are external. The outer interests do not suffer from such detachment because it has a sanctifying motive, wholly distinct from the satiety and nausea which so often comes over the worldling, disqualifying him for daily interests and communications without drawing him towards the Kingdom of Heaven. On the contrary, we can do more good outwardly in proportion as we are more set apart inwardly and taken over to the Divine Side. Detachment in other words is the correspondence of our inward nature with temporal things in the sense of those that are eternal. It is the antithesis of engrossment therein for their own sake. It connotes also a revision of material, mental and even moral values in the light of those values which are spiritual. (Waite 1923: 262)

Liberation and transcendence need not necessarily impose a disappearance, a sheer dissolving out from the manifestation; it can prepare a liberation into action of the highest knowledge and an intensity of Power that can transform the world and fulfil the evolutionary urge. (Ghose 1981: 103)

Detachment is perfect love--a love not bounded by the impediments of self. So too, it is perfect service. Without the ego self, there is total immersion in life. Rather than inducing world renunciation, detachment stimulates the most profound world-identification. When one is the world, the world finds itself in very safe, loving hands--the hands of a Bodhisattva.

Accepting life, he (the seeker of the integral yoga) has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of the world's burden too along with it, as a continuation of his own sufficiently heavy load. Therefore his Yoga has much more the nature of a battle than others'; but this is not only an individual battle, it is a collective war waged over a considerable country. He has not only to conquer in himself the forces of egoistic falsehood and disorder, but to conquer them as representatives of the same adverse and inexhaustible forces in the world. Their representative character gives them a much more obstinate capacity of resistance, an almost endless right to recurrence. Often he finds that even after he has won persistently his own personal battle, he has still to win it over and over again in a seemingly interminable war, because his inner existence has already been so much enlarged that not only it contains his own being with its well-defined needs and experiences, but is a solidarity with the being of others, because in himself he contains the universe. (Aurobindo in Satprem 1968: 357)

The Bodhisattva, completely detached from all that passes, utterly one with the eternal, refuses Nirvana until every sentient being has first passed there. Where there is detachment, there is great love.

Because the infinite transcends all dualism, it is able to include dualism, so that realization is in no way incompatible with everyday awareness of the objective world, with physical life and activity. The profound detachment of the Self from the ego and the world is not a detachment of rejection but of acceptance and love. (Waite 1923: 187)

This life on earth is neither to be escaped nor forsaken. Where there is earth, there is Eden. If we lose earth, we lose the path to the Garden and we relinquish the truth of our being.

The touch of the Earth is always reinvigorating to the son of the Earth, even when he seeks a supraphysical Knowledge. It may even

be said that the supraphysical can only be really mastered in its fulness - to its heights we can always reach - when we keep our feet firmly on the physical. "Earth is His footing," says the Upanishad, whenever it images the Self that manifests the universe. (Aurobindo in Huxley 1945: 61)

John Synge, I and Augusta Gregory thought  
All that we did, all that we said or sang  
Must come from contact with the soil, from that  
Contact everything Antaeus-like grew strong.  
("The Municipal Gallery Revisited" in Yeats  
1970: 318)

The journey inward--reverie or contemplation--is an expansion outward. Withdrawal into the depths of soul always implies return of the soul of the world. If one's soul is the soul of the world, then withdrawal is return. It is the momentum which unites.

Creative personalities when they are taking the mystic path which is their highest spiritual level. . . belong to the duality of movement. . . we call. . . withdrawal and return. The withdrawal makes possible for the personality to realize powers within itself which might have remained dormant if he had not been released for the time being from his social toils and turmoils. . . but a transfiguration in solitude can have no purpose, and perhaps even no meaning, except as a prelude to the return of the transfigured personality into the social milieu out of which he originally came. . . The return is the essence of the whole movement as well as its final cause. (Toynbee in Ghose 1981: 68)

If I am forced to give it a name,  
I call it Tao, and I name it Supreme.  
Supreme means going on.  
Going on means going far.  
Going far means returning.  
(Tao Te Ching in Wilson 1963: 17)

Heroism, long dead, is rediscovered in creative conflict. The courage with which a man works toward a harmony of opposing virtues is a truly creative act. All creative acts are courageous, heroic. They restore lost meaning and identity to the world and lift man beyond the limits he has assigned to himself. The mystic actor expands human possibility by living and acting at the outer edges of possibility.

The capacity of the human spirit to transcend itself by uniting itself with ultimate Reality and by devoting itself to absolute Good is the source of its power to bring about a transformation of the self as a whole. . . . Thus, by transcending itself the spirit is always transforming the self as a whole, overcoming the limitations of the self and enlarging its being. It is the principle of creative life and growth. (Thomas 1951: 22)

Like Paul in Nikos Kazantzakis' The Last Temptation of Christ and Yeats's own magnificent Cuchulain, the mystic actor offers man the possibility of exceeding ~~himself~~ creating, himself.

I make the truth. ("The Death of Cuchulain" in Yeats 1940: 117)

I create the truth, create it out of obstinancy and longing and faith. I don't struggle to find it - I build it. I build it taller than man and thus I make man grow. (Kazantzakis 1960: 469)

Colin Wilson describes the self-exceeding nature of the mystic actor in terms of morality, "the power of higher forms of life to achieve yet more life," and sin, "the drifting of higher forms of life toward an animal level." (Wilson 1963: 98) As ever, there is a choice inherent.

We all have our role to play individually. But we only play it well on condition of always trying to do better, of overreaching ourselves. It is this effort which constitutes our personal participation in evolution, our duty. (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: 110)

This life lived at the outer edges of human possibility is what Yeats refers to as "excess," "the vivifying spirit of the finest art."

("The Celtic Element" in Yeats 1924: 227)

The saint does not claim to be a good example, hardly even to tell men what to do, for is he not the chief of sinners, and of how little can he be certain whether in the night of the soul or lost in the sweetness coming after? Nor can that composure of the moralists be dear to one who has heard the commandment, that is for the saint and his brother the poet alike, 'make excess ever more abundantly excessive' even were it possible to one shaken and trembling from his daily struggle. ("Art and Ideas" in Yeats 1924: 436)

It is a peculiar utility which the mystic artist possesses—

that of being true--being who he is. Thus, he is seen as evolutionary spearhead, revolutionary, creator, unifier, forger of wings. He improves the quality of life, not by luring large corporations to the cities, but by uniting the mundane with the dream and thus lifting life to the ideal. He enhances the vitality of life through its union with the unseen power of the eternal. So too, he instills value and ethics in society. He sets standards of meaning, truth, beauty and love by expanding humanity with relationship through the revelation of his being.

He is an effective ferment of goodness, a slow transmuter of the earthly into a more heavenly order. (James 1958: 279)

The saints. . . have proved themselves prophetic. Treating those whom they meet, in spite of the past, in spite of all appearances, as worthy, they have stimulated them to be worthy, miraculously transformed them by their radiant example and by the challenge of their expectation.

From this point of view we may admit the human charity which we find in all saints, and the great excess of it which we find in some saints, to be a genuinely creative social force, tending to make real a degree of virtue which it alone is ready to assume possible. The saints are authors, auctores, increasers of goodness. (James 1958: 277)

If the "general function of his charity in social evolution is vital and essential," (James 1958: 277) it is made possible by the vision of the mystic actor which beholds in each man the eternal unity and sacrality of all life. The mystic actor recognizes his own identity, and that of all men.

The image of God is found essentially and personally in all mankind. Each possesses it whole, entire and undivided, and all together not more than one alone. In this way we are all one, intimately united in our eternal image, which is the image of God and the source in us of all our life. Our created essence and our life are attached to it without mediation as to their eternal cause. (Ruysbroeck in Huxley 1945: 57)

Eternally, all creatures are God in God. . . So far as they are in God, they are the same life, the same essence, the same power, the same One, and nothing less. (Suso in Huxley 1945: 57)

When the identity of man <sup>is</sup> recognized, man and his world are remade. ". . . poets and painters and musicians. . . are continually making and un-making mankind. It is indeed only those things which seem useless or very feeble that have any power. . ." ("Symbolism of Poetry" in Yeats 1924: 193) The infinite utility of the mystic actor is a perfect example of the use of the useless, the being of non-being, the action of non-action. Coming to terms with such utility involves an unusually crystalline comprehension of antithesis, and thus a new perception of life itself.

Fool, fool - don't spoil my walking! I walk a crooked way - don't step on my feet. The mountain trees do themselves harm; the grease in the torch burns itself up. The cinnamon can be eaten and so it gets cut down. The lacquer tree can be used and so it gets hacked apart. All men know the use of the useful, but no one knows the use of the useless. (Chuang Tzu 1964: 63)

Nowadays it is not at all an easy thing to act the fool. One must stand along the roadways proclaiming oneself Gabriel and the End to be near at hand; one must suffer the sneers at the police station while filling out the report stating that one's hitchhiker vanished into thin air; one must look upon the direction in which the world is heading and say, "The future of the world is my responsibility. I must take action."

When a man becomes a fool, it is a miraculous event; the wedding of reality and the dream is always accompanied by epiphany. In the greater arcana of the Tarot, the fool is naught, card zero, the beginning of life, of consciousness, of the journey to recover one's role. Its placement, however, is at the end of the trumps, in the position of card number 21, the final card, signifying the end of the journey, enlightenment, union. The fool is the closed circle, the uroborus. He is annihilation



and eternal progression, withdrawal and return, the Alpha and Omega, reality and the dream. The fool is emptyheaded and, thus, wise. He is zero, therefore infinity. He is because he is not. He has died to himself and is therefore most alive of men. His non-being is his action which is non-action. His non-action recreates himself who is the world. He has no care for himself, but has taken on the care of all that lives. He is Eden, yet refuses to abide there until all sentient life has entered with him. The fool is the mystic actor, the dynamic, creative union of all contradiction. He is the "I am" which brings on the dawn.

"I am I, am I,"  
 All creation shivers  
 With that sweet cry.  
 (Yeats in Moore 1954: 442)

A single timeless act. . . all existence brought into the words: "I am." It resembles that last Greek number, a multiple of all numbers because there is nothing outside it, nothing to make a new beginning. ("The Holy Mountain" in Yeats 1924: 462)

The utility of "I am" may never be immediately apparent on this earth. It is, however, all that stands between mankind and imminent destruction. It is all that the mystic offers - Being true to Being.

Thirty spokes are united around the hub to make a wheel,  
 But it is on its non-being that the utility of the carriage depends.  
 Clay is molded to form a utensil,  
 But it is on its non-being that the utility of the utensil depends.  
 Doors and windows are cut out to make a room,  
 But it is on its non-being that the utility of the room depends.  
 Therefore turn being into advantage, and turn non-being into utility.  
 (Lao Tzu 1963: 119)

The mystic actor, being naught--the fool, is pure life liberated from all fetters. "Where there is nothing, where there is nothing - there is God!" ("The Secret Rose" in Yeats 1959: 185) He takes no

action, but "by acting without action, all things will be in order."

(Lao Tzu 1963: 103) "Therefore the sage says: I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed." (Lao Tzu 1963: 201) "Act without action. Do without ado." (Lao Tzu 1963: 212) The non-being of the mystic actor is the action of non-action or wu-wei. In his commentary on Chuang Tzu, Watson describes wu-wei, the action of zero.

In Chuang Tzu's view, the man who has freed himself from conventional standards of judgement can no longer be made to suffer, for he refuses to recognize poverty as any less desirable than affluence, to recognize death as any less desirable than life. He does not in any literal sense withdraw and hide from the world - to do so would show that he still passed judgement upon the world. He remains within society but refrains from acting out of the motives that lead ordinary men to struggle for wealth, fame, success, or safety. He maintains a state that Chuang Tzu refers to as wu-wei, or inaction, meaning by this term not a forced quietude, but a course of action that is not founded upon any purposeful motives of gain or striving. In such a state, all human actions become as spontaneous and mindless as those of the natural world. Man becomes one with Nature, or Heaven, as Chuang Tzu calls it, and merges himself with Tao, or the Way, the underlying unity that embraces men, Nature, and all that is in the universe. (Chuang Tzu 1964: 6)

Non-action is the action of "I am," the eternal motion, the marmorean stillness of the Absolute. When man dies to himself, he becomes himself, the mystic actor, the Eternal manifesting infinite non-action.

One who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, is intelligent among men, and he is in the transcendental position, although engaged in all sorts of activities. (Prabhupada 1973: 102)

We are the creators, the actors, of the second coming. On a wild autumnal night, we slouch toward Bethlehem to be born. We move ever so slowly, so painfully; an ageless sphinx of contradiction and paradox. Within us we carry all riddles, all answers, all division, all union. Within us wait Bethlehem and Eden. Along the dark highway we meet an image of ourselves which challenges us with the choice that

we know we must make: to bear a messiah or a monster in Bethlehem.

The choice is made with each heavy footfall. The product of humanity's womb is determined by the integrity of our journey through this existence ravaged by contradictory winds.

Gabriel admonishes us, "To thine own self be true." But how can we know what truth is? Yeats claims we can't intellectually know truth, but that we can embody it. Man can be truth. (Yeats 1954: 922)

What is really marvelous, in the case of the mystics and the saints, is not that they have more life, a more intense life than that of other people, but that in them truth should have become life. (Weil 1971: 249)

In order to be true, man must give birth to the living union of opposites within him--to a humanity of light, peace, joy and love.

It is possible that from our torpid sleep, mankind might wake. . .

. . . to find myself lying upon my back with all my limbs rigid, and to hear a ceremonial measured voice, which did not seem to be mine, speaking through my lips, "We make an image of him who sleeps," it said, "and it is not him who sleeps, and we call it Emmanuel." (Yeats in Moore 1954: 215)

It is equally possible that on our bleak and self-determined journey into night we may ignore the bearers of messages and the responsibilities they call up. If we choose thus to be untrue, mankind in Bethlehem will bring forth an abomination of antithesis whose violence will not cease until sated on our breath and blood. With this inviolate choice there will be no more revelation, revolution, evolution, or creation. There will be no more life on earth. Our end will not be the tragically joyous union of antinomy, the victorious communion of life and death. It will be disgusting. There will be no hero smiling tenderly, ecstatically at his lover, death, as he walks "proud, open-eyed and laughing to the tomb." ("Vacillation" in Yeats 1970: 246) Only

antithesis will grin madly as we turn with uncomprehending terror to meet the apocalypse we bear in Bethlehem.

It need not be a monster. Within our womb lies a messiah. But there are only moments left. That is enough to rediscover our true identity as the living union of opposing virtues.

O Friend, hope for Him whilst you live, know whilst you live,  
understand whilst you live; for in life deliverance abides.  
If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of deliverance  
in death?  
It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him  
because it has passed from the body;  
If He is found now, He is found then;  
If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death.  
(Kabir in Huxley 1945: 47)

### CHAPTER III

#### THE UNITY OF BEING AND THE UNITY OF CULTURE

Hold fast to the great form (Tao),  
And all the world will come.  
(Lao Tzu 1963: 162)

I am personally convinced that our Western Civilisation is approaching an end. This is an absolutely basic part of my thinking which governs all my feelings about the world that I live in. There is to me every symptom of our civilisation petering out. This was bound to happen sometime; it just seems to me to be happening now, when I am alive. (Muggeridge 1969: 195)

Like Malcom Muggeridge, W. B. Yeats believed Western civilization to be declining. As a member of the Golden Dawn, he shared with the Order an anticipation of vast cataclysms and immense wars. In "the slow dying of men's hearts," ("The Symbolism of Poetry" in Yeats 1924: 200) he watched the fall of the world. In the decay of civilization, he saw the death of mankind. At the point of perception when ordinary vision might well have bifurcated, acceding to the irreconcilability of opposites, Yeats maintained his unitive focus. Within the decline of civilization, he found a soaring possibility for mankind--a Unity of Being for civilization--which he called Unity of Culture.

A Kingdom of Heaven within and a City of God without, the just society, remains one of mysticism's final gifts. (Ghose 1981: 13)

That the imminence of apocalypse should yield up Eden is only natural according to Yeat's Unity of Opposites. Only an image as potent and moving as the End of Days could possibly shatter old, useless visions and instill a new perception of the world, could possibly

rouse mankind to action.

Nations, races, and individual men are unified by an image, or bundle of related images, symbolical or evocative of the state of mind which is, of all states of mind not impossible, the most difficult to that man, race, or nation; because only the greatest obstacle that can be contemplated without despair rouses the will to full intensity. (Yeats 1979: 194-195)

Toward Unity of Culture, and in the cause of Irish nationalism, Yeats fought relentlessly in the face of angry critics, rioting mobs, and apathy. By 1936 he had rejected all politics and forms of government as means to unity.

. . . why should I trouble about communism, fascism, liberalism, radicalism, when all. . . are going down stream with the artificial unity which ends every civilization? Only dead sticks can be tied into convenient bundles. (Yeats 1954: 869)

About Ireland and the world, Yeats formed the same unshakable opinion: they have lost, and must recover, their souls; the only way for nations and world to regain their souls is by individuals realizing their Unity of Being. Such an answer to the decline of civilization may seem ridiculously simple coming from a complex man of even more complex politics. It is, nevertheless, an answer which often issues from the mystic actors. Simone Weil, faced with the reconstruction of her war-ravaged France, offered her nation the same solution.

A terrible responsibility rests with us. For it is nothing less than a question of refashioning the soul of the country. . . As for a remedy, there is only one: To give the French people something to love; and, in the first place, to give them France to love; to conceive the reality corresponding to the name of France in such a way that as she actually is, in her very truth, she can be loved with the whole heart. (Weil 1971: 149, 157)

That mankind should create an idea of the world within himself, of a world of love and peace, and then create the world anew in the image of the idea, is not at all unreasonable. If, as Yeats writes, man has

made the world as it is, it is certainly within his power to make it into what it is not, but could be.

And I declare my faith:  
I mock Plotinus' thought  
And cry in Plato's teeth,  
Death and life were not  
Till man made up the whole,  
Make lock, stock and barrel  
Out of his bitter soul. . .  
("The Tower" in Yeats 1970: 196)

For both Weil and Yeats, the politics which promote unity and peace on earth have little to do with the profane machinations of forces and figures external to life. Politics are spiritual endeavors--politics of the soul--and they dictate the course of history of body and spirit. Nation and mystic arts are inextricably intertwined manifestations of the Unity of Being which humanity has realized.

To Yeats, politics implied an attitude towards this world and the next: he believed that the real nation is where the soul is, and the soul of a nation is the men who have attained unto themselves. Only in being true to his genius can man be true to his race, and whenever a man has found himself, the purpose of nationality is fulfilled in him. (Farag 1978: 24)

When Unity of Being is absent in the lives of individual men, when men can no longer recall their souls, their genius, the meaning of their lives, then the souls of nations are lost, governments and arts decay, and the soul of the world hides her face. The agonizingly urgent need of the world, of each individual and nation, becomes "the need to have a soul. . . again." (Weil 1971: 169)

Abbot Trithemius once wrote regarding the alchemical art: "Of other things thou wilt never make the one unless first the one rises out of thyself." (Trithemius in Moore, 299) His words are true of all apotheosis including the transformation of a world of destruction into a Garden of Eden. The soul of the world must be found first in the

soul of each individual. When men recover their Unity of Being, the world will know the peace of Unity of Culture.

Our civilization is in danger. And this danger menaces simultaneously the race, the nations, and the individuals. . . It is a crisis of man. Man is not able to manage the world derived from the caprice of his intelligence. He has no other alternative than to remake this world according to the laws of life. . . And the basis of this renovation can be found only in the knowledge of our body and soul. (Carrel 1961: 9)

The society is ourselves, the world is ourselves, the world is not different from us. What we are we have made the world because we are confused, we are ambitious, we are greedy, seeking power, position, prestige. We are aggressive, brutal, competitive, and we build a society which is equally competitive, brutal and violent. It seems to me that our responsibility is to understand ourselves first, because we are the world. (Krishnamurti 1973: 30)

Schelling suggests that "a world that has embarked on a holocaust is in its nature irrational and out of control." (Schell 1982: 207)

So too, a world which has lost its soul, "a totally unmythical world would be a world totally blind and insane." (Huxley in Ghose 1981: 16)

In cases of insanity, external recovery is of no use. Powder and paint neither disguise nor heal. The world's recovery must begin deep within. As each individual recovers that transfiguring sense of the unity and sacredness of all life, the world will become sane. The results of such a process of recovery will be as tangible as unpolluted seas, uncontaminated earth and sky, happy, fearless children and a warless planet.

They are made possible by living art, the art of living.

. . . outward change has meaning only when there is deep inward revolution: then the outer and inner are the same movement, not two separate movements. (Krishnamurti 1973: 112)

Man's other institutions and traditions work from without; art transforms from within. Art is the expression and communication of man's deepest instincts and emotions reconciled and integrated with his social experience and cultural heritage. (Mukerjee 1954: 1)

Yeats has assigned to the mystic actor a major role within



civilization. The utility of that role has rarely been ignored more effectively than by modern Western civilization, and has seldom been so eloquently defended than it was by Shelley.

. . . poets have been challenged to resign the civic crown to reasoners, mechanists, on another plea. It is admitted that the exercise of the imagination is most delightful, but it is alleged that that of reason is more useful. Let us examine as the grounds of this distinction, what is here meant by utility. Pleasure or good, in a general sense, is that which the consciousness of a sensitive and intelligent being seeks, and in which, when found, it acquiesces. There are two kinds of pleasure, one durable, universal and permanent; the other transitory and particular. Utility may either express the means of producing the former or the latter. In the former sense, whatever strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense, is useful. But a narrower meaning may be assigned to the word utility, confining it to express that which banishes the importunity of the wants of our animal nature, the surrounding men with security of life, the dispersing the grosser delusions of superstition, and the conciliating such a degree of mutual forbearance among men as may consist [sic] with the motives of personal advantage. (Shelley in Kaplan 1975: 373)

Prophets have uttered warnings of the End of Days since the beginning of civilization. For that very reason, their warnings are now ignored; along with their meaning and the appalling evidence of disaster and decay. But for that very reason, the warnings should be heard. Yeats, Waite, Levi, Aurobindo, Mukerjee, Capra, Muggeridge, Carrel, Lecomte du Nouy. . . each believe themselves to be a witness of some sort of Last Days. The imminence of nuclear holocaust lends literal tangibility to their reasoning. Beyond that very apparent interpretation of the meaning of Last Days, is the limit of days in the life of a man. Yeats's bones are buried in Ireland. Capra is still young. Yet Yeats did indeed witness the End of Days, just as Capra does now, for in the life of a man, each day is a Last Day, an irrevocable opportunity to make his own soul and to create the world

in the image of that soul. Each day lost, apocalypse gains form,  
substance and power.

The saint is one who knows that every moment of our human life is a moment of crisis; for at every moment we are called upon to make an all-important decision - to choose between the way that leads to death and spiritual darkness and the way that leads towards light and life; between interests exclusively temporal and the eternal order; between our personal will, or the will of some projection of our personality, and the will of God. (Huxley 1945: 43)

In the Last Days, life must return to art; art to its essence, mysticism.

The noblest art will be always pure experience - the art that insists on nothing, commands nothing - an art that is persuasive because it is almost silent, and is over-heard rather than heard. (Yeats in Ellmann 1964: 129)

If the arts have their origin in the expression of the Soul that listens and sees where for the outer mind are silence and dark, then evidently Mysticism is one and perhaps the greatest of the arts, the apotheosis of artistic expression and endeavour. Mysticism by some sweet ordinance of Nature has been always and at all times the most sacred of the arts. (Regardie 1973: 28)

The relationship between art and civilization is like that between body and soul, head and heart. The quality and vitality of one is the manifestation of the other.

Between art and society there is a reciprocity which has no end. The unity, the rhythm and the concord which the artist achieves as his art work evokes from society aspirations to achieve these in concrete human relations. (Mukerjee 1954: 31)

The measure of our civilization is exactly to be estimated by the extent to which its characteristic activities have the quality of art. (Edman 1967: 56)

Western civilization little comprehends the relationship between art and society. It prefers an art for "art's sake," and somehow sets up "art's sake" as sacrosanct because it is separate, untainted by questionable ties to the mundane needs, fears and wonders of our mundane lives. The key to our deadly art lies in its "ephemeral" nature. Our

art schools quickly bring the young artist to terms with the extreme limitations of his work. He is taught that art's efficaciousness spans no further than the back wall of the theatre, goes no deeper than the thickness of a canvas, lasts no longer than the final strain of the last note. The young artist is shown how to market and sell himself. He strives for the laugh, the tear, the revelation, perhaps; but is told to be realistic if ever he questions the relationship of his art to society or one's soul. He is tersely scolded, "Theatre has all it can do to make its own miracles; it cannot also make society's." (Cole 1975: 160) And so we have separated art from life. We have set it upon a pedestal where it masturbates mindlessly, preening inward upon emptiness. In a world such as ours in which all life is interrelated and interdependent, there is no place for such a deadly art. Society needs miracles; the world needs miracles. Living art, the art of the mystic, must meet the need.

For a long time we have separated art from our life and from our homes, in order to shut it up in museums, concert halls, or theatres. Living art knows not these sad compromises: it lives, we live in it, it lives in us. Living art has restored to us the measure we had lost, the measure of all things: ourselves! (Appia 1969: 130)

Art for art's sake is not living art, but rather a deadly construction which ever celebrates division, never unity. It is Yeats's theatre of commerce.

. . . art which does not reveal mysteries, which does not lead to the sphere of the Unknown, does not yield new knowledge, is a parody of art, and still more often it is not even a parody, but simply a commerce or an industry. (Ouspensky 1971a: 33)

True art exists for life's sake, for the sake of Unity of Being and Culture.

All art is in the last analysis an endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapour of the world an image of human perfection, and for its own and not for the art's sake. (Yeats in Moore 1954: 197)

Living art knows nothing of ephemerality, commerce, or division; it is immortal, potent, vital. It renders the invisible visible. It links society with the ideal, man with the divine. And it bestows peace on earth.

Many cultures have become extinct because these could not evolve a great art; others survive through the ages largely because they nurture a great living art. The social and biological value of art rests on the symbols or ideal transfigurations of human relations, the social view of man's life and destiny that art gives. Art makes human life freer, richer and more strenuous through its promise of transformation of both society and self. All that humanity dreams, strives and suffers for stands behind art, giving man peace, peace with self, with the society and with the universe. Society is what it is, not because of law, morals and tradition that cannot heal nor console, nor because of religion that cannot inspire nor invigorate, but because of art. Art reveals not only the perfectibility of man, but also the enduring essence of society that transcends the barriers of class, race or epoch. (Mukerjee 1954: xxi-xxii)

"The enduring essence of society" to which Mukerjee refers is Yeats's Unity of Culture, the soul of the world. "That civilization may not sink, / Its great battle lost. . ." ("Long-legged Fly" in Yeats 1970: 327), this essence must be revealed. Then, "the transformation of life into art" (Yeats 1959: 267) and "the recreation of the man through that art, the birth of a new species of man" (Yeats in O'Hara 1981: 97) will be accomplished.

Art by bringing about the unity and the order in the ideal plane, saves civilisation from disintegration and bears within its bosom the elements of its remaking. . . art mobilises all the truths of religion and metaphysics, and all the axioms of morality to give peace to the individual in his social regime. Art in fact combines metaphysics, philosophy, religion and ethics, and makes all these human and concrete in its task of bringing about the equilibrium between the individual and the society through an ideal collective representation that sometimes has an even greater power to mould humanity than the actual society and its institutions. (Mukerjee 1954: 141)

If apocalypse is impending, so is Unity of Culture. The poet in Yeats's The Shadowy Waters cries, "What the world's million lips are thirsting for / Must be substantial somewhere." (The Shadowy Waters in Yeats 1934: 151) Substance begins in mystic art. "Whatever we build in the imagination will accomplish itself in the circumstance of our lives." (Yeats in Ellmann 1964: 61) Just as art and life cannot be separated, so what is imagined and what can be touched, seen and heard cannot be divided. All that occurs unseen, becomes seen.

A little lyric evokes an emotion and this emotion gathers others about it and melts into their being in the making of some great epic; and at last needing an always less delicate body, or symbol, it flows out with all it has gathered among the blind instincts of daily life. . . . I am never certain, when I hear of some war, or of some religious excitement, or of some new manufacture, or of anything else that fills the ear of the world that it has not happened because of something that a boy piped in Thessaly. ("The Symbolism of Poetry" in Yeats 1924: 194)

Now it is our turn to pipe in Thessaly. With the music we make of our lives, we shall create our souls. With the art of our souls, we shall mold the soul of the world. In our hearts, our lives, our imaginations, our arts, we must recall Eden, not mythical and forbidden, but an Eden that is ourselves, an Eden that is the world.

The world is a mirror of Infinite Beauty, yet no man sees it. It is a Temple of Majesty, yet no man regards it. It is a region of Light and Peace, did not men disquiet it. It is the Paradise of God. It is more to man since he is fallen than it was before. It is the place of Angels and the Gate of Heaven. When Jacob waked out of his dream, he said, God is here, and I wist it not. How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven. (Traherne in Huxley 1945: 67-68)

#### CHAPTER IV

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . (Revelation 18:1-2)

It is doubtless good when destruction meets doom, when corruption and decay are purified by flame. It is doubtless wonderful to hear the fearful words, "Babylon the great is fallen." But it is ghastly beyond all measure. Babylon will not fall alone. With the desecration will pass all that is holy, all that is human. There will be no laughter drifting from the porch on still summer evenings. There will be no footprints along the dunes. There will be no sommersaulting in the backyard. All that is pure, beautiful and human, all that is living, will perish. There will be no spiritual victory, no victory of any kind. In the End of Days, Eden will fall with Babylon.

One might think that the responsibilities of a man living upon the brink of extinction would be extraordinary. In fact, they are no different from those of a man whose world will survive for another billion years. The responsibilities of both men are to life, simply to life. The difference is that through facing the crisis of possible holocaust, man's will is roused to intensity and he is freed from lethargy by realization to act. The difference is that his responsibility finally appears imperative.

. . . the man of today acts in the knowledge that the choice he makes will have its repercussions through countless centuries and upon countless human beings. He feels in himself the responsibilities and the power of an entire Universe. Progress has not caused the action of Man (Man himself) to change in each separate individual; but because of it the action of human nature (Mankind) has acquired, in every thinking man, a fullness that is wholly new. (Teilhard de Chardin 1964: 18)

Extinction is not merely a matter of horrific possibilities--lost races and crippled planets. Extinction represents the greatest spiritual challenge life offers: the challenge to man to confront himself as he has created himself in the form of his destiny; to reconcile the apparent opposites of his life and to realize his true role. In the recognition which follows acceptance of the challenge, an apotheosis of self and destiny occurs.

Two paths lie before us. One leads to death, the other to life. If we choose the first path - if we numbly refuse to acknowledge the nearness of extinction, all the while increasing our preparations to bring it about - then we in effect become the allies of death, and in everything we do our attachment to life will weaken. . . . On the other hand, if we reject our doom, and bend our efforts toward survival - if we arouse ourselves to the peril and act to forestall it, making ourselves the allies of life - then the anesthetic fog will lift: our vision, no longer straining not to see the obvious, will sharpen; our will, finding secure ground to build on, will be restored; and we will take full and clear possession of life again. (Schell 1982: 231)

Like the wizened infants in Yeats's "The Three Hermits," we totter upon the brink of our destiny. All that is past, cluttering the years, haunting the future, must not be forgotten. Our paths have been human. Because human, they are strewn with contradiction, failures and falsehoods; they are blessed by the infinite beauty of care and toil and love of life. There is no way to turn back upon the paths by which we have come, no time for remorse or regret. The ways of mankind lead to destiny. Now, we come to ours; to ourselves. If our

lives are lived as art, and not as rhetoric, if our art is purified into experience itself and our experience melds opposites into a Unity of Being, then we shall greet destiny with a song which will fill the world with harmony. That is mankind's responsibility--to go forward always, to exceed himself by becoming himself, to embrace a destiny of his own creation in which the singer is the song.

Indeed, if we admit the reality of the basic terms of the nuclear predicament - that present levels of global armament are great enough to possibly extinguish the species if a holocaust should occur; that in extinction every human purpose would be lost; that because once the species has been extinguished there will be no second chance, and the game will be over for all time; that therefore this possibility must be dealt with morally and politically as though it were a certainty; and that either by accident or by design a holocaust can occur at any second - then. . . we are driven almost inescapably to take action. . . (Schell 1982: 218-219)

There is a sanctity implicit in being human. The holy has little to do with commandments or strictures, the doctrines of science or the hypotheses of religion. It has to do with humanity, with life. All men are holy men; the holiest being simply the most human. Human responsibility is a divine obligation to the unity and sacrality of life itself. "This obligation is an eternal one. It is coextensive with the eternal destiny of human beings." (Weil 1971: 5)

It must be demonstrated that every man has a part to play and that he is free to play it or not; that he is a link in a chain and not a wisp of straw swept along by a torrent; that in brief, human dignity is not a vain word, and that when man is not convinced of this and does not try to attain this dignity, he lowers himself to the level of the beast. (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: unpaginated introduction)

It is not enough to be a decent, God-fearing, law-abiding person; to raise decent, God-fearing, law-abiding children. It is not enough to claim frustration and impotence in the face of warring ideologies and nations. It is not enough to be alarmed by corporate



manipulation. It is not enough to bury young soldiers and nuclear waste. It is not enough to rage over the arms race or to be appalled by the slaughter in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, El Salvador, South Africa, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Chad. . . It is not enough to be content with the comfort of our lives; complacent in the inability of one man to make a difference. The world must be changed. It must be saved--immediately. There are no saints or men of genius to do it for us; no one can do it for us. Responsibility falls upon each individual. In every frail human being lies the hope of the world, a living art.

The importance of each minute decision by the most minor actor with the smallest bit part will influence all of the other actions both present, past and future; for at one level all of the actors hear all of the other lines regardless of the time or place in which they are spoken, and all ad-lib in a simultaneous creativity so that the dramas change themselves constantly, all across the boards. (Roberts 1978: 132-133)

Apocalypse is a matter of free will. By accepting or rejecting our relationship with destiny, mankind accepts or rejects his freedom. When we relinquish responsibility for destiny, we relinquish our souls. It is not easy to accept freedom, but it is imperative if life is to continue on this planet.

Everyone shares a responsibility in the future. But this responsibility can materialize into a constructive effort only if people realize the full meaning of their lives, the significance of their endeavors and of their struggles, and if they keep their faith in the high destiny of Man. (Lecomte du Nouy 1946: unpaginated preface)

Rimbaud insists that "one makes oneself a visionary." (Wilson 1963: 80) It is time for us to do so. It is possible and it is necessary. "The world needs saints of genius, just as a city stricken by plague needs doctors. Where there is a need, there is an obligation." (Weil in Ghose 1981: 63) We must, finally, become ourselves.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Life offers few conclusions. We may never know whether, on that October night, a German motorist gave a ride to an angel or a madman. We cannot say if the world will continue for another hundred thousand years, or if it will be a wasteland in five. One might regard mortality as conclusive, but who is to say that the death of the body is the end of the man? Life may continue, forever eluding its own conclusion. Indeed, it is possible that within creation no conclusions exist.

It is, therefore, appalling to note that finality may perhaps be constructed out of the conflict of opposites, like an unnatural monster-spawn of mankind. Every action initiated in the life of a man is a choice, the repercussions of which are universal and immensely powerful in impact. With each individual action which perpetuates the conflict of opposites and, hence, advances the decline and destruction of civilization, each ordinary person on earth constructs an irreversible conclusion for mankind.

If human civilization is indeed declining, if the world is to be lost in nuclear holocaust, what are the implications regarding the relationship between mysticism and culture? Is the tie which binds mysticism and culture too flimsy? Can the two not coexist? Is mysticism, the very distillation of religion, only the stuff of ether and dying men's dreams? Is it of too little substance to participate

meaningfully in corporeal existence? Are contradiction and opposition the true nature of life and is unity but a figment of illusion?

Perhaps one could answer that learning one's role and following one's path through the vast web of this universe requires space and time not to be measured by the finite. Just as one's search to become oneself may not cease with bodily death, humanity's search for its role within life may not end with the destruction of one small planet. One might suggest that the architects of nuclear holocaust be handled with a certain gentleness and without the passing of judgement. Perhaps, one might continue, within the destruction of life waits the role of mankind.

It is an assertion of this thesis that light burns within darkness just as the cure lies within the investigation of cancer, and that there is hope in the confrontation of mankind's most horrific possibility-- nuclear holocaust. However, a distinction must be made. While there is significant benefit in the examination of the possibility, there will be none in the actual devastation of the world. It is possible to find infinite beauty and meaning in the death of a body; there is none to be found in the death of a soul. The destruction of the earth may signify a great deal more than the annihilation of life and the desecration of meaning. It may mean that mankind, rather than choosing to embrace its innate creative role in life, chose to construct another, that of destroyer, and thereby uncreated its very soul. Perhaps, finally, man will have constructed a conclusion for life itself.

But one can only say "perhaps." The coming years may prove quite unimagined. Through the confrontation of his destructive potential and

then through the reconciliation of opposites, each individual may awake from sleep to embrace the role in which he has been perpetually cast. We may become ourselves--mystic actors engaged by love in the creation and, hence, salvation of life.

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