

Scientific Contributions
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THE QUANTUM POETICS OF YEATSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Prof NCT Meihuizen

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***The Quantum Poetics of Yeatsian
Manuscripts***

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The Quantum Poetics of Yeatsian Manuscripts

The Ferdinand Postma Library has recently begun to acquire the Cornell Edition of Yeats's manuscript materials. This edition comprises the extant manuscripts and their transcriptions of all Yeats's poetry and drama. This is, in its way, an important acquisition for North-West University, and for South Africa, where metropolitan studies in literature in English have been in decline for the past two decades due to an overdetermined, if understandable, focus on local literature. The acquisition is particularly important because it brings us closer to the creative practices and procedures of one of the greatest poets who wrote in English, the Irishman William Butler Yeats. That he should be Irish is ironic, considering the bitter history informing Ireland's relationship with England – but that is another story. The reason why I feel it is important to focus on Yeats's manuscripts has its basis in the contemporary tendency of literary critics to de-emphasise the productions of specific authors, probably in the wake of the paradigm-shifting revelation of 'intertextuality', where specific instances of writing are overshadowed by the universe of texts, interconnected, de-individualised, impersonalised. The critic's input is perceived as being as important as the original author's, as she and the author have equal access to the textual universe. What does nothing to help in this matter is a sense that difficulty for its own sake is present in the writing of poetry. Adam Kirsch makes this point in his 2008 book *The Modern Element* (Kirsch, 2008: 120), and the poet Marianne Moore noted the same many years before in her 1924 poem 'Poetry' (1955: 41-2)). Why should difficulty for its own sake be a problem? Well, for one thing, the concomitant obscurity can conceal lack of insight, and one consequence might be that the ludic element becomes the all-in-all by way of compensation. Of course there is something valuable about intertextuality and the ludic – cognitive interactive processes might be set in motion, for the possible aesthetic, intellectual and emotional enrichment of the participants (I

distinguish among these probably indistinguishable elements for the sake of simplicity). But there is a corresponding danger: specific individual *intention* is undermined. The large implication of this is that the author's intention no longer matters. I exaggerate, but the implication is there. If I were a Marxist, I might say, along with Terry Eagleton (2003: 37), that this attitude could lead to the weakening of *specific* responsibilities, political and social. As a non-Marxist I do say that in the wake of this attitude intellectual and creative probity becomes endangered. Michael Wood remarks in his recent book, *Yeats and Violence*: '... there is something wasteful and disagreeable about not wanting to know what writers think they are doing and about the accompanying assumption that critics know better' (2010: 97). Textual scholar Peter Shillingsburg, very aware of the subtly variegated nature of the 'web of signifying elements' in a text, can nevertheless say, in *From Gutenberg to Google*, 'The real author may be inaccessible as the validator of "intentions" – even when still alive – but this does not vitiate the function of the author's real intentions in writing – they were there and they made a difference' (2006: 53).

What has all this to do with the Cornell Yeats series? Let me refer briefly to an example I've considered in some detail elsewhere – the great American critic Helen Vendler's reading of Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium'. In summary, Vendler bases her reading of the poem on the fact that Yeats introduces each stanza with a Roman numeral. In doing so she is able to claim a unique interpretation of the poem centred on the different stations or locations implied by each numeral, but otherwise not explicitly present. These stations, she says, have different vectors, which are in tension with each other. For instance, the one pointing heavenwards is undercut by the one pointing earthwards. She, in effect, makes the Roman numerals 'speak', where Yeats is silent, and so imposes meaning at crucial points in the poem, meaning largely to do with Freud, sex, and Hellenistic versus Hebraic values. She thus replaces the poem's emphasis on aesthetic transformation with dramatic psychodrama,

interesting in its own way, but swerving from what most critics perceive to be the poet's intention.

If we turn to the manuscripts of the poem, as made available in the Cornell Series, which show Yeats's earliest drafts with their inchoate ideas, his later drafts where the poem begins to take shape, and his final drafts before publication, where the poem is almost fully developed, do we find Roman numerals? No. They appear for the first time in the proofs of his rare volume *October Blast*, published in a limited edition by the poet's sisters' hand-press, the Cuala Press. This means that the numerals did not play a role in Yeats's conception of the poem, when the supposed drama perceived by Vendler should have been uppermost in his mind. They were inserted after the poem had been finalised. In fact, I might add that in the last published version of the poem before Yeats's death, in his self-edited *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century Verse*, the numerals have been removed (1936: 82-3).

My quibble here might seem no more than a quibble, and yet it is of some import as an example of the freedom critics, even powerful, established critics with immense reputations, can take with works of art in 'death-of-the-author' times. Responsible scholarship should recognise the difference between speculation and assertion, and an examination of the material evidence associated with art works is central in this matter. Of course, referring to material evidence such as drafts of poems is becoming more and more difficult, when draft variants by contemporary writers are committed to oblivion with a press of the delete button, but much can still be done with the works of great figures from the past. I am thinking, too, of cases where computers can help in the preservation and transmission of manuscripts. Stirling examples already exist, and work has been done by scholars such as Peter Shillingsburg and Paul Eggert, as well as another recent visitor to this campus, Dirk Van Hulle from Antwerp University, digitalising another Irish writer, Samuel Beckett. One would like to see similar work being done on Yeats manuscripts, though the exercise should

not to be undertaken lightly. Shillingsburg refers to ‘the enthusiasm and hope and delight that often attends the new electronic revolution’: ‘Such feelings appear to mask the wrongheadedness represented by Michael Hart’s plan in the early 1990s to put “100,000 vanilla texts” on the Internet by the year 2000 in the Project Gutenberg and the unbelievably strong support he has received from enthusiastic ersatz editors who have contributed to his project’. Shillingsburg goes on to ask, thereby indicating the responsibility involved in any editing work: ‘Does anyone believe that a Project Gutenberg electronic text could be relied upon to be accurate? Do these productions state accurately what the source text was? Do they describe the bibliographic features of the source text? Did the “editors” pick as a source text one that has any sort of authority or historical importance? Did they indicate in any way how the editing or transcribing or scanning involved changed the text? ... [I]f some Project Gutenberg texts are reliable, how can we know which are which?’ (21-2).

My concern at present is not preservation and accurate transmission, however, but rather, once more, intention, intention based on what can be derived from manuscripts. Despite what I have said so far I am not against approaches centring on intertextuality; I am not against deconstruction. Deconstruction has always shown an interest in the fragmentary, the incomplete, and the page of a Yeats manuscript might be seen as just such a fragment. A fragment, for a deconstructor, implies process over product, creative act over created object, delaying of closure – in short, the prominence of what is incomplete (that is, a reversal of the old hierarchy where product triumphed over process). One book is exemplary: *Deconstruction and Criticism* (1979), which included essays by such illuminati of the time as Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and even the not yet sceptical Harold Bloom. The focus of the book was Romantic literature, because of this literature’s emphasis on fragments and incompleteness. Some of the lines in Shelley’s published poems, for example, have gaps in them, indicating work in progress, work to which

he would have returned if not for his early death. For instance, the Dantean *terza rima* ‘Triumph of Life’ breaks off in mid-dialogue, with the pregnant exclamation: ‘Then, what is life? I cried’ (2008 385). The absence of closure here, with its suggestion of the unanswerable, is significant. Incompletion is freighted with meaning, just as a work-in-progress manuscript might be, as we will see presently when I consider Julia Kristeva’s notion of the ‘geno-text’. Yet, again, as Shillingsburg notes, ‘deconstruction focuses primarily on the ways social pressures, the slipperiness of language itself, and a writer’s unconscious assumptions subvert or extend or even contradict the ostensible surface meaning of what is written’ (52). He goes on to say, ‘my assumptions about authors begin with the notion that writers are frequently very aware of and are master manipulators of that which they do *not* say, as well as what they do’ (ibid.). This statement ties in well with my underlying theme of Yeatsian intentionality.

To develop this theme, what I want to look into now is, of all things, particle and wave physics and the manuscript fragment as figurative representative of both the particle and the wave. My source here is the work done by Daniel Albright in his book, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* (1997). Albright, himself a fine Yeats editor, initially theorises the nature of quantum poetics, and it will be to my purposes to summarise his work in this area, first, to demonstrate the contemporary Modernist currency of metaphors from quantum physics, and, second, to provide a springboard for the investigation of an approach to manuscript studies which is inspired by the thematics of quantum poetics.

Albright’s initial working theses are three: ‘first, that the English Modernist poets of the early twentieth century strove to break down the walls that separate the text from its messy, pre-verbal origins and from its digestion in the mind of the reader’. This first thesis involves pre-texts and post-texts – the poem before its final form, and then the poem

assimilated by the reader and perhaps modified. I will return to the pre-text in more detail presently. Albright's second thesis is, 'that the methods of physicists helped to inspire poets to search for the elementary particles of which poems were constructed – poememes, one might call them' (1). He points out that these two theses are closely related, because 'the search for the poememe [or elementary particle] entails research into the fundamental operations of the imagination [whence the poem originates]'. This thesis is of significance in manuscript analysis, which might help uncover, at least in part, 'the fundamental operations of the imagination'. His third thesis is based on the fact that as the search for the poememe became increasingly difficult, resulting in failure and frustration, poets developed a contrary model to the particle model, the wave model. I would question the clear causal chain apparent in this last thesis, but not the presence of a wave model, which might have its roots in far earlier conceptions than quantum physics, but to which the latter would have offered contemporary corroboration.

By way of a background, before we tackle this wave-particle dualism, we might (along with Albright, rushing in where angels fear to tread) briefly refer to Max Planck's 1900 paper that postulated 'the existence of what he called the elementary quantum of action – a discrete unit of energy'. Planck's model tried to explain heat-radiation from a body, which he saw as 'the vibration of minute oscillators', which were perhaps atoms. Albright notes that writers had, to a degree, anticipated Planck: 'It is true that rhetoricians had tried for many centuries to isolate and denominate various speech-acts, including the elements of poems; and, some years before 1900, a school of poets – the Symbolists – had chosen one of these poem-elements, and flamboyantly promoted it to a state of hyper-aesthetic autotely [or being an end in itself]' (1996: 7). He refers here to the elevation of the symbol in French poetry, as present, for example, in Mallarmé and Villiers de l'Isle Adam, and which certainly influenced or reinforced the approach favoured by Yeats. Yeats's friend, Arthur Symons, in

his 1899 book, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, wrote of Mallarmé: ‘he attains Wagner’s ideal, that “the most complete work of the poet should be that which, in its final achievement, becomes a perfect music”’: every word is a jewel, scattering and recapturing sudden fire, every image is a symbol, and the whole poem is visible music’ (1899: 193). In this passage (from the book that Frank Kermode, incidentally, calls the most important one in T.S. Eliot’s undergraduate career), one might anachronistically see the words as jewel *particles* at the heart of symbols, their ‘scattered and recaptured’ radiance, as *waves*. As Albright points out, however, ‘it was not until the early years of the twentieth century that poets started to become seriously engrossed in the nomenclature of elementary poetical particles’ (1997: 7). Albright turns to Ezra Pound, and notes that he felt ‘that physics and art alike had long been encumbered by crude elementary particles – too gross, too clumsy; the tinier the atom, the greater the possibilities for finesse, *souplesse* [flexibility], precision’ (8). For example, Pound was very interested in ‘the metrical exactitude of Stravinsky’s system of notation: it seemed that Stravinsky, by manipulating smaller rhythmemes than previous composers, was capable of subtler, more rapid, more penetrating musical effects’ (ibid.). This observation coincided with Pound’s notion of the vortex, where ‘a tiny whirlwind’ was ‘capable of generating large shape’ (ibid.). Pound (who acted as Yeats’s secretary between 1913 and 1916) was probably the most articulate spokesperson of Modernism in the 1910s, and he lauded the scientific revolution. It was, of course, now that Einstein started to become widely known. His work had a profound effect on the Modernists. Stemming from Einstein at the time (though also apparent long before, to Isaac Newton) was the perception that light has qualities of both particles and waves. Albright says that the Modernists can often be seen as conceiving both models at the same time, though, of course, by means of analogy with their art, not factual corroboration (25).

Poetic quanta in Eliot, for instance, would correspond to his interest in discrete fragments, or particles, from various sources. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) might be seen as an accumulation of discrete particles with wave-like radiances. His famous line in section V (near the end of the poem) is to the point, as it refers to all the material that preceded it: 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins' (1970: 79). And consider the fragments we find in the first of Yeats's 'Two Songs from a Play' (1957: 437):

I saw a staring virgin stand
Where Holy Dionysus died,
And tear the heart out of his side,
And lay the heart upon her hand
And bear that beating heart away;
And then did all the muses sing
Of Magnus Annus in the spring,
As though God's death were but a play.

Another Troy must rise and set
Another lineage feed the crow,
Another Argo's painted prow
Drive to a flashier bauble yet.
The Roman Empire stood appalled;
It dropped the reins of peace and war
When that fierce virgin and her Star
Out of the fabulous darkness called.

The fragment particles include a pagan virgin, closely related to the Christian virgin, the link between Dionysus and Christ, the great year of the Platonists, the historical cycles of Vico, the myths of Troy and Jason, the historical cycle culminating in the Roman Empire, and the shift from paganism to Christianity, spanned by this empire. We must bear in mind, however, in relation to the fragmentary and Yeats, that one of his early dicta when he was in his twenties, based on a sentence which ‘seemed to form in my head, without my willing it, much as sentences form when we are half-asleep’, was, ‘Hammer your thoughts into unity’ (1962: 263). The fragment particles in his poems, then, are not *meant* to be dislocated and incomplete; they are intended. As he wrote elsewhere regarding his conscious intentionality in composing – in a way that also has a bearing on the importance of his manuscripts: ‘Metrical composition is always very difficult for me, nothing is done upon the first day, not one rhyme is in its place; and when at last the rhymes begin to come, the first rough draft of a six-line stanza takes the whole day’ (1955: 202). His struggles to find form and express meaning are clearly perceptible in the manuscripts.

Thus, despite the influential nature of quantum relativity, the Modernists were not uncritical of its leading representative, Einstein. The formlessness of a world where all motion is relative, and where bodies change in mass and length when speed increases, did not generally appeal to Modernist sensibility, devoted as it was to an aesthetics centred in form, or, as in the case of the influence of impressionism, impressionistic suggestions made in relation to underlying form. The Modernists turned to an earlier atomic model, in the thinking of the seventeenth-century German philosopher, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Leibniz argued that the world was composed of single units, which he called monads. The monad is a highly structured, coherent atomic unit, a fact in itself appealing to the Modernists. The influence of Leibniz on Yeats was strong. This is what Yeats had to say about the monad:

There is something within a man or enclosing him that Leibnitz called a monad, and that I prefer to call a daimon. That daimon is timeless, it has present before it has past and future, or it has no present and is that past and future... (*Variorum Plays*, p.975 (1932) quoted in Albright, p.14)

What Yeats points to here is nothing as clean-cut as an elementary particle, but a transcendent radiation or emanation of the life force, which, like a hologram, contains the whole in any portion of its parts, and which is assigned to an individual. This observation of how the part informs the whole will have some bearing on my later investigation of Yeats's manuscripts.

Pound and Eliot were perhaps better acquainted with Leibniz than was Yeats. In 1916 Eliot published two essays on the philosopher in the journal *The Monist*. In one of the essays he links Leibniz with his own work on, in his terms, the 'much more finished philosopher', Bradley, seeing a similarity between Bradley's 'finite centre' (which almost corresponds with the traditional term 'soul') and the monad (Eliot 1916: 573-76). For his part, Pound wrote in the *Guide to Kulchur* that 'Leibniz was the last philosopher who "got hold of something"', and that, however discredited by modern science his theories might be, his basic perception 'holds as a concept' (1970: 74). Leibniz is notoriously difficult to comprehend, but Albright provides a useful idiots' guide: 'Leibniz offered to the Modernists something that modern physics could not, something far more useful to poets: an elementary particle [the monad] that was as much subjective as objective – a minimum unit of thought and perception, combined with a minimum unit of matter; a thinking atom, an atom with a point of view ... Leibniz offered a cosmos in which intelligence inhered in the smallest, wildest particle; an undissociated cosmos in which thought and the object of thought were, at the origin, one' (15).

Thus the smallest bit of mentality equals the smallest bit of matter. Leibniz's equation was as follows: psyche = hyle. If intelligence inheres in the smallest material particle, the particle is at once material and mental, at once (again, metaphorically speaking, of course) atom and energy pulse, or wave. Yeats's sense of perpetual daimonic substance as presented in the various states of existence in *A Vision* (1962: 219-40) comes closer to the material emanation of Leibniz than what Eliot was able to suspect when he dismissed Leibniz's compounding of mind and matter (1916: 575). Yeats, as a young man in the 1880s, had immersed himself in Blake, producing a comprehensive edition of his works, and lines such as, 'To see a World in a Grain of Sand' ('Auguries of Innocence' (1972: 431)), must have been alive in his mind as he contemplated Leibniz. Then, too, Leibniz would have confirmed Yeats's inspiriting of a world that, according to the poet, had been rendered dead matter by a materialist such as the Darwinian Thomas Huxley and, more unfairly on the part of Yeats, the French realist painter Jules Bastien-Lepage (Yeats 1955: 190).

The foregoing discussion highlights the fact that an atomic sense of existence characterised Modernist awareness of the world, and that this sense was extended to influence in a figurative way Modernist poetics and theories. This much is of cultural-historical significance, and I hope the contextualisation it afforded has been interesting. I now want to appropriate this cultural-historical thematics for my own practical ends, not because there is a justified link between it and my critical praxis, but because the quantum as metaphor opens a means of probing an author's *intentions* when it comes to manuscript analysis. Thus, a consideration of the concept of the 'pre-text', which follows from the speculations on quanta presented by Albright in *Quantum Poetics*, helps me in this task. Albright, however, derives a different conception from the notion, more to do with informing elements outside the text than the internal matter generated in the production of the text. He quotes from Jean Bellemin-Noël's *Essais de critique génétique*: 'The difference between *The*

Text (finished; in other words, published) and the pre-text is that the former offers itself as an entity spell-bound in its destiny, where the latter holds and reveals its own history' (2-3 (116 (1979))). The published text is fixed and finalised, whereas the pre-text is a fluid field of potential, a transparent, pulsing genetic string. (Albright does not mention that the originally published Yeatsian text was often revisited and republished, making it too fluid and unfixed; but of course, as an individual object in its own right, any published book stands unalterable. As Shillingsburg puts it, as material objects, 'no two books or manuscripts could occupy the same space at the same time' (2006: 13)). Albright also quotes from Julia Kristeva's *Essais de sémiotique poétique*, where the term 'geno-text' is synonymous with pre-text, and 'pheno-text' with text, or already published work: '[The pheno-text is] a finished product: an utterance with a meaning ... [the geno-text is] an infinite syntactic and/or semantic generation ... which cannot be reduced to the generated structure' (3 (207 (1972))). In Kristeva's formulation of the geno-text we get a better idea than in Bellemin-Noël of the fluid potential of this pre-textual state in the writing process, so to speak.

Now, might manuscripts of published texts not be considered as geno-texts or pre-texts? This, at any rate, is my premise. Consider the following passage from the second manuscript page of the poem 'The Tower' [NLI 30,373 a, 2^r], in the Cornell Edition of Yeatsian manuscript materials. First, here are the six lines of a segment of the finished version (1957: 414):

It is time that I wrote my will;

I choose upstanding men

That climb the streams until

The fountain leap, and at dawn

Drop their cast at the side

Of dripping stone;...

Here is the corresponding early manuscript page (2007: 52-5):

It is time give I my testament
And when they put that testament

Θ

~~Old men~~

An old man makes his testament

And I

And this is mine

Now will I write my testament
And choose
And choose once more for an heir
Young men

I write my testament being old
~~And choose for an heir young men & tall~~

And choose once, that tall young man
Some tall young man
shall be my eir

[?with]
Climbed a mountain stream in the cold
Many dawns
~~Climbing a mountain stream in the cold~~
in
~~Casts a fly~~ [?Drifts] a fly ~~under~~ the cold
~~Dawn light upon the bare~~
I choose out young outstanding men
Men ~~the~~
~~That climb up~~ little
That climb up the rock

Here is the final version again, with an emphasis placed on words derived from the manuscript:

It is time that I wrote my will;

I **choose upstanding men,**
That **climb** the **streams** until
The fountain leap, and at **dawn**
Drop their **cast** at the side
Of dripping **stone**...

We notice how many elements of the final version are present in the manuscript, but they are present in a haze, like midges in sunset light. These are: the sense that the ‘time’ has arrived to ‘write’ a ‘testament’ (which becomes ‘will’ in the final version), the act of ‘choosing’, the adjective ‘outstanding’ (a hackneyed, ‘Rotarian’ word, as Curtis Bradford notes (he is one of the pioneers of Yeats manuscript analysis), which is altered dramatically by changing the initial syllable and arriving at the more thoughtful ‘upstanding’ in the final version (1965: 97)), and the nouns and verbs ‘men’, ‘climbing’, ‘stream’, ‘dawn’, ‘cast’, and ‘rock’ (the latter as a variant of ‘stone’). An important *intention* is also signalled by this pre-text – the intention to leave a testament to a certain type of person who is symbiotically linked with nature, and thereby with permanent Yeatsian values associated with the psychic clarity of the dawn, and an ensuing self-sufficiency. What remains in a state of potential is whether to be specific or general (will the ‘I’ stand alone or be evoked in the context of what an ‘old man’ does), are the heirs young, tall, many or one, is the dawn explicitly ‘cold’ or not, and are rocks climbed or streams? This probing might seem inconsequential but the choices Yeats will make are important regarding (for instance) aural, symbolic, and semantic qualities, as well as the speaker’s point of view. We observe that nothing, apart from a dim picture and an intention, is yet settled in the poet’s mind, that various possibilities are present, including an abandonment of everything thus far mentioned. Here is the area of infinite semantic/syntactic generation Kristeva alludes to, and its presence and effect are rather self-evident.

What I am interested in, however, is the suggestive power of the smaller elements – of the word ‘testament’, for instance. Can this pre-textual element, this poetic quantum, add anything to our understanding? I don’t, at this stage, want to go into the problem of the possible newly acquired textual status of this word, now that it has been published in the Cornell Edition, or the problem that the Kristevan pre-text can never be reduced to a generated structure, which is what I am attempting to do, in a way. The fluid nature of the manuscript, whether published or not, must be assumed, at least in relation to the poem originally authorised for publication. Yeats eventually chose the word ‘will’, but ‘testament’ is a more resonant word, more weighty, more commanding of our attention. Here are relevant excerpts from the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* definition and etymology of the word: ‘ORIGIN Latin *testamentum* will (in Christian Latin also translating Greek *diathēkē* covenant), from *testari* bear witness, make a will, from *testis* witness ... 3 *Law*. A formal declaration of a person’s wishes as to the disposal of his or her property... after death; a will ... A (freq. spiritual) legacy, something bequeathed’. Its recurrence five times on this manuscript page alone makes it a notable fact that the word does not appear once in Yeats’s *Collected Poems*. Perhaps it is not a poetic quantity? And yet it forms a regular dactylic foot. Perhaps, according to Yeats, it does not have a poetic quality? Whatever the case may be, the intention of using it is present in the pre-text, and this quantum of intention commands our interest; to a degree, perhaps, that the blander word ‘will’ can not. What is *intended* involves a bearing witness, a covenant or agreement with resonant biblical and legal overtones, a type of will, a type of declaration of wishes, a handing down of qualities, a spiritual legacy; and all these carry associations inherent in the Latinism of the word ‘testament’. The semantic generation in this instance, and as thus presented, while not infinite, is certainly rich. This part of the pre-text of the poem is like a Leibnizian monad, with an emanation, so to speak, that conveys the intention behind the whole finished section of the poem.

Shortly after referring to Kristeva and Jean Bellemin-Noël, Albright points out that these days we tend to value whole structures as a means of interpreting their parts, instead of vice-versa. He sees this tendency in Kristeva, and indeed her vision reflects acute awareness of the intertextual ocean and its informative role regarding specific parts. Atomic Modernist poetics, by contrast, sees that ‘a poem’s strongest meanings reside in its smallest elements – *symbol, image, vortex* exist before the text begins, perhaps before the poet was born’ (5). Albright notes, ‘The [Modernist] poem (according to this model) is a conscious deployment of autonomous meaning-units discovered, not invented, by the poet’. He feels that the meaning of a Modernist text is dependent on ‘pre-textual atoms’. Again, he is not thinking of manuscript elements, but informing materials, such as the ‘auto-scholarly and auto-critical apparatus’ in Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, the ‘undigested quotations from Jacobean playwrights and serving maids’, or the key for decoding the enigma which Yeats offers at the same time as he proffers the enigmatic *A Vision* (1997: 5).

I now want to look at the pre-textual materials in ‘All Souls’ Night’, as Albright might understand them, before I turn, in conclusion, to a particular manuscript quantum of that poem, or the type of pre-text that particularly interests me in this lecture (1957: 473-4). Yeats has first called on the spirits of dead friends to participate in his wine on All Souls’ Night or Halloween, but then feels that any spirit presence will confirm his extraordinary findings in his book *A Vision*:

But names are nothing. What matter who it be,
So that his elements have grown so fine
The fume of muscatel
Can give his sharpened palate ecstasy
No living man can drink from the whole wine.

I have mummy truths to tell
Whereat the living mock,
Though not for sober ear,
For maybe all that hear
Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock.

Such thought, such thought have I that hold it tight
Till meditation master all its parts,
Nothing can stay my glance
Until that glance run in the world's despite
To where the damned have howled away their hearts
And where the blessed dance;
Such thought, that in it bound
I need no other thing
Wound in mind's wandering
As mummies in the mummy cloth are wound.

As in 'Two Songs from a Play', part 1, allusions abound. The master symbol, or trope of the poem is the eponymous All Souls' Night, when the dead and supernatural beings walk. The notion of spirits participating of a drink with humans in order to communicate goes back at least to the blood-trench in Homer in Book XI of *The Odyssey*, the howling damned to Dante, and the dancing blessed to the classical Hesperides, or isles of the blessed; while the vortex of the mummy cloth refers to Yeats's own gyres, as well as works such as *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, which underpinned The Golden Dawn esoteric society, to which he at one time belonged. I feel that these allusive elements are ever-flowing currents or waves in the ocean

of intertextuality, and so are of a different order from the discrete atomic fragments in the manuscript. Manuscript material related to this section of the poem includes the deleted phrase: ‘While ~~blustering Time confounds me~~ with his shows’, and the related ‘~~Although Time stamped on~~ ground’ (2007: 653). This theme of Time informs a preoccupation of Yeats’s old age – the disfiguring nature of time and the need for transcendence of it. That this theme should be excised from the final poem prompts thought. For, though ghosts are an expression of the transcendence of time, they are related in Yeats’s thought to a temporal process, which is almost Dantesque in nature in its acceptance of supernal and infernal life, but which involves purgation of passions stemming from material existence, acceptance of the conditions of a future life, and eventual rebirth into material existence (Dampier, 2012: 55-89). The final image of the ‘mummy’ added to the other images evokes, in its vortex-like winding, continuing process. The theme of the tyranny of Time clarified matters in ‘Sailing to Byzantium’; here, it might have clouded the issue. Also, the quantum of oppressive ‘Time’ inscribed in but then removed from the manuscript helps us to perceive Yeats’s own somewhat reassuring modicum of doubt regarding his subject matter, the same sort of dialectical doubt we find in that last poem, ‘The Man and the Echo’ (1957: 632-3). Time is only oppressive if our individual time is limited; in the Yeatsian eternal return implicit in the poem ‘All Souls’ Night’, our time is not limited.

What I wanted to show in this lecture is the relevance of the metaphors from quantum physics to a particular study of Modernist poetics and, more generally, to manuscript materials. These materials are, in a sense, particles, which in their particular suggestiveness add to our understanding of the complete text. In considering these poetic quanta, one ponders the mechanics of creativity in so far as one can with given materials (as opposed to imposing extrinsic views). A work in the manuscript stage can begin with an image, a small,

puzzling creature, say, as in the manuscripts of D.J. Opperman's poem cycle, 'Spermutasie', to use a local example. This small humanoid creature, a tiny being with wings, is the particle which attaches significance to itself, becomes part of a flow of referentiality, making Opperman add to his drafts scientific information on the eyes of owls and their link with humankind through this, and with the Greek goddess of wisdom, owl-eyed Athene (*Athene glaukopis*) (Klopper, 1989: 262-72).

One might never even partially understand the subterranean processes of the imagination, but one can get a glimpse of these processes through manuscripts. If the keystones in these processes are the immeasurables that come together in the mind of the poet, and that depend on, for instance, associative combination, the development of verbal patterning, the search for semantic direction, the search for aural perfection, the attainment of sufficient probity, the attainment of sufficient emotional charge, and the search for a match between form and content, then the manuscripts admittedly show more of 'the rich, dark nothing' than the creatures to be 'disinterred' from it, to quote from Yeats's late poem 'The Gyres' (1957: 565). But at the same time they can reveal certain of the luminous threads that pull all into the light. Is an intimation of this that indefinable extra, conveyed by the poet Robert Graves as that which causes your hairs to stand on end when you read a 'true poem' (Graves, 1961: 24)? This prickly sensation might well derive from the intuitive recognition of the force inhering in a verbal structure that brings from the shadowy yet paradigmatic pre-textual realm a sense of that infinite generation which stirs restlessly beneath the printed page, but which is carefully harnessed by the writer's *intentionality*.

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