

JOLANTA DUDEK has made interpreting complex twentieth-century poetry into something of a speciality. Her approach to interpretative criticism is basically phenomenological. After completing a doctoral thesis on the post-war poetry of K. Wierzyński at the Jagellonian University in Cracow (where she graduated), Jolanta Dudek was a Rawnsley Student at St. Hugh's College, Oxford, where she wrote a second doctoral thesis comparing the mature poetry of Wierzyński and Yeats. Her recent habilitation thesis at the Jagellonian University — where she teaches — seeks to reveal the extent to which the poetry of Czesław Miłosz has been inspired by English poetry (W. Blake and T. S. Eliot in particular) as well as by the writings of European philosophers and religious thinkers. Other poets whose work has been explored by Jolanta Dudek include: T. Gajcy, J. Przybós, M. Jastrun, S. Grochowiak and Z. Herbert.

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**ARS POETICA VILLELMI B. YEATS
ET CASIMIRI WIERZYŃSKI
INTER SE COMPARANTUR**



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JOLANTA DUDEK

**THE POETICS OF W. B. YEATS
AND K. WIERZYŃSKI:
A PARALLEL**



Nakładem Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego

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Introduction

In the present study, the author's aim has been to draw a parallel between two artistic phenomena 'situated' (so to speak) in two recognizably distinct – albeit European – cultural traditions. These two phenomena are two poems – Yeats's *The Tower* and Wierzyński's *Piąta pora roku*. The author hopes that such a parallel will not only contribute to a better understanding of the poetry of Yeats and Wierzyński, but that – indirectly – it will also serve to shed some new light on the work of other European poets writing in the twentieth century.

The two poems chosen for analysis and comparison are – in the present author's opinion – poems which are 'representative' (so to speak) of the poetry of their authors, but which so far have defied complete and satisfactory analysis. Both were written at periods during which their authors – Yeats and Wierzyński – are now generally considered¹ to have been at the height of their 'creative powers'. It so happens that both poets were 'then' in their sixties².

The method of analysis is based largely on the work of Roman Ingarden (*O dziele literackim / Das literarische Kunstwerk*), Erich Auerbach (*Mimesis*) and – to a lesser extent – that of Kazimierz Wyka and Georges Poulet. The analysis of both poems has been carried out with particular reference to:

1. The function of the following themes – the poet; nature; creation; imagination; poetry; "unity of Being".
2. The concept of a speaker (or 'protagonist').
3. The structure of a lyrical monologue.
4. The use of poetic myths, symbols and images.

The fact that Yeats and Wierzyński 'inherited' or 'were born into' two recognizably distinct and independent literary (and cultural) traditions would seem to rule out the possibility that one poet may have 'influenced' the other to any significant extent³. If, then, there are – as the author of the present study hopes to demonstrate – significant similarities between the work of the two poets, these are to be explained rather by the existence of a 'deeper' – European – literary tradition (Romanticism) which links the

¹ By serious scholars.

² When Wierzyński (1894 – 1969) made his *début* as a poet, Yeats (1865 – 1939) was well into his fifties.

³ Cf. R. Wellek, *The crisis of comparative literature* [in:] R. Wellek, *Concepts of criticism*, Yale U.P., New Haven/London 1971.

two apparently unrelated literary (and cultural) traditions in which the poems of Yeats and Wierzyński are firmly 'embedded'. The hypothesis that there is just such a greater, European Romantic tradition has been vigorously and convincingly⁴ defended by René Wellek.

The author of the present study shares the opinion of a number of English – speaking⁵ and Polish⁶ scholars who believe that Romanticism as a literary tradition is still very much alive in the twentieth century. As a 'way of thinking' about man, art and the world, Romanticism – the author believes – is still present in the 'living memory'⁷ of many twentieth-century poets – including those who have ostensibly 'cut themselves off' from the Romantic tradition. This, however, can only be demonstrated by making comparative analyses of individual poems. Comparisons such as these⁸ must be carried out at three levels:

1. Within the context of the work of the individual poet.
2. Within the context of the (national) literary and cultural tradition into which the poet was 'born' and which he 'inherited', so to speak.
3. Within the (as yet somewhat hypothetical) context of a broader, European literary and cultural tradition.

The author believes that such 'international' comparative analyses – if properly carried out – can serve only to further our understanding – at a 'national' level – of the work of the poets chosen for comparison. The author hopes that the 'beneficiary' of the present study will be Kazimierz Wierzyński, whose poetry – in the author's opinion – has been misunderstood (and consequently 'undervalued') by many of his fellow countrymen to an incomparably greater extent than was ever the case with Yeats.

⁴ In the author's opinion.

Cf. R. Wellek, *The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History and Romanticism re-examined* [in:] R. Wellek, op.cit.

⁵ Cf. F. Kermode, *Romantic image*, London 1971.

Cf. N. Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism*, New York 1968.

Cf. *Romanticism. Vistas, instances, continuities*, Ed. D. Thorburn and G. Hartman, Cornell U.P. 1973.

⁶ Cf. M. Dłuska, *Studia i rozprawy*, Kraków 1972, vol. III.

Cf. M. Janion, *Gorączka romantyczna*, Warsaw 1975.

Cf. M. Tatara, *Dziedzictwo Słowackiego w poezji polskiej ostatniego półwiecza: 1918 – 1968*, Wrocław 1973.

Cf. T. Weiss, *Romantyczna genealogia polskiego modernizmu. Rekonesans*, Warsaw 1974.

Cf. C. Zgorzelski, *Od Oświecenia ku romantyzmowi i współczesności*, Kraków 1978.

⁷ To use Ingarden's term (*żywa pamięć*). Cf. *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego* [in:] R. Ingarden, *Studia z estetyki*, vol. I, Warsaw 1957, p. 65.

⁸ Cf. R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Teoria literatury* (Theory of Literature), Ed. M. Żurowski (trans. M. Żurowski, I. Sieradzki, J. Krycki), Warsaw 1970, Part I: chapter V.

Cf. H. Markiewicz, *Zakres i podział literaturoznawstwa porównawczego and Badania porównawcze w literaturoznawstwie polskim* [in:] H. Markiewicz, *Przekroje i zblżenia, dawne i nowe*, Warsaw 1976.

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Part One

W.B. YEATS: The Tower (poem)

I

In 1928, at the age of sixty-three, Yeats published a collection of poems entitled *The Tower*¹. Many critics consider *The Tower* to be Yeats's central poetical achievement² – the meeting-point, as it were, of the lines of development of the poetry he had written until then, and of the new lines of development of the poetry he wrote afterwards.

The themes which preoccupied Yeats in the period of his maturity as a poet are: imagination and its relation to nature, the nation and spiritual values; the poet and poetry (art); love; death; history; eternity; freedom; necessity; the unity of being. The Romantic genealogy of this array of themes is self-evident³.

¹ According to the chronology of A.N. Jeffares (*A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, Macmillan, London 1977) the manuscript of *The Tower* dates from the same year as that of *A Vision*, i.e. 1925.

² Reviewing *The Tower* in 1928, J.G. Fletcher wrote: "Here we have not a collection of anthology specimens, good or bad, but what is essentially a Weltanschauung worked out at high tension in poetic form" (in: *Critics on Yeats*, Ed. R.C. Cowell, London 1971, p. 12).

A.G. Stock (1961): "By clarity of conviction and mastery of technique Yeats had come to the height of his power in *The Tower* and *The Winding Stair* and both style and thought had a strange, not always easy lucidity" (A.G. Stock, W.B. Yeats, *his poetry and thought*, Cambridge 1961, p. 191).

P. Ure (1963): works in which "Yeats achieves magniloquence, final authority and self-possession" and whose poems "constitute Yeats's central achievement" include *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921), *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair* (1933); (P. Ure, *Yeats*, Edinburgh 1963, p. 61).

T. Parkinson (1964): "The end of the title poem *The Tower* and the closing stanza of *Among School Children* were both written late in the great productive period of which *The Tower* is the key book" (T. Parkinson, *W.B. Yeats: the later poetry*, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley 1964, p. 111).

A.N. Jeffares (1968): "Yeats's change of style and his maturity were probably not generally recognized until the publication of *The Tower* in 1928" (A.N. Jeffares, op.cit., p. 251).

³ Cf. M. Janion, *Zamknięcie. Badania literackie nad XIX w.* [in:] *Gorączka romantyczna*, Warsaw 1975, p. 548.

For the Romantic theme of the Unity of Being see also: H. Bloom, *Yeats*, Oxford 1970, p. 51: "Unity of Being, which Yeats never ceased to seek, was the goal of the Paterian quest, and perhaps of all questing in the Romantic tradition".

The collection opens with a poem entitled *Sailing to Byzantium*, in which Yeats evokes a vision of the City of Art (and, indirectly, of eternity) similar to the Xanadu of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, the Arcadia of Shelley's *Epipsychidion* and *Alastor*, or Blake's *Golgonooza*⁴.

Sailing to Byzantium is followed by a poem which bears the same title as the collection itself, viz. *The Tower*, and which develops the problems of art, nature and eternity even further⁵. This poem would seem to be central to the entire collection – here, it would seem, is the “focal point” of Yeats's mature poetry, for here its essential features are concentrated⁶. It is firmly set in the poet's previous creative development as well as in the High Romantic tradition of English poetry, which Yeats chose to inherit⁷.

Cf. also the entry 'Unity' [in:] R. Wellek, *Index of topics and terms* [in:] *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750 – 1950, vol. 2: The Romantic Age*, London 1955.

⁴ Cf. G. Melchiori; *The Dome of Many Coloured Glass* [in:] *The Whole Mystery of Art. Patterns into poetry in the work of W.B. Yeats*, London 1960.

⁵ T. Parkinson draws attention to the structure of the volume *The Tower*: “The solidity of *The Tower* has often been noted, and the reading of individual poems in it is frequently altered by their relation to the remainder of the book. In this respect *Sailing to Byzantium* is revealing, for if the poem resolves the problem of old age and art there is something rather odd in Yeats's following it with a poem (*The Tower*) which offers a significantly different treatment of the subject and a continued examination of images dominant in *Sailing to Byzantium*. Seen in the context of the book *Sailing to Byzantium* is a definition or sketch of a problem rather than a denial of it, and the very existence of *Byzantium* illustrates that it did not exhaust the problem in any sense. (...) In Yeats's 'construction' of *The Tower*, he was interested in making a design, so that he could comprehend what he took to be the major drift of his poetry” (op.cit., pp. 56 – 57).

⁶ *The Tower* is considered to be one of Yeats's 'great' poems:

J. Spencer (1928): “... and many of these poems – *The Tower*, *Nineteen Nineteen*, *Among School Children* will remain a permanent part of English poetry” (in: *W.B. Yeats, A Critical Anthology*, Ed. W.H. Pritchard, Penguin Books 1972, p. 94).

R. Ellmann (1949): “... he drew his strength for the three mighty poems of 1925 and 1926: *The Tower* (October 7, 1925), *Among School Children* (June 14, 1926) and *Sailing to Byzantium* (September 26, 1926). These poems seem to have his full life behind them” (R. Ellmann, *Yeats. The Man and the Masks*, London 1973, p. 254).

T. Parkinson, loc.cit., 1964.

D. Davie (1964): „His greatest poems – *Sailing to Byzantium*, *The Tower*, *Among School Children* – these poems, which come later than those I've been talking about, have tended to lead later poetry astray” (in: *W.B. Yeats. A Critical Anthology*, Ed. W.H. Pritchard, Penguin Books 1972, p. 308).

⁷ Many critics have written about Yeats's Romantic 'heritage'. To mention only a few:

G. Hough in *The Last Romantics* (1947) traces the development of the English Romantic tradition from the middle of the 19th century to Yeats.

F. Kermode in *Romantic Image* (1957) draws attention to the continual presence of a 'central Romantic tradition' (notions of Image and isolation) in 19th and 20th century European poetry and criticism. In French literature the heirs of this tradition are the symbolists. As far as English poetry is concerned, Kermode considers the heirs of the 'central Romantic tradition' to be Yeats (first and foremost), T.S. Eliot and E. Pound. In Kermode's opinion A. Symons can be seen as a link between the French Symbolists and Yeats. The 'links' between the generation of the 'Great Romantics' and the 'tragic generation' of Yeats are – in Kermode's view – M. Arnold and W. Pater:

“... these notions of image and isolation developed independently in England, from native Romantic roots. The Symbol of the French is, as we shall see, the Romantic Image writ large and given more elaborate metaphysical and magical support; and if we go back far enough, we can see that English poets – using the same ultimate sources, Boehme and Swedenborg, the Germans of the late eighteenth century – developed

Linked to Romantic images of a “happy prison”⁸ (specifically to Shelley’s tower) is the leading motif–symbol of the poem and collection, viz. the tower, which is the tangible nucleus of all the poem’s meanings. The first words of the poem may be interpreted not only as an allusion to Blake’s famous letter on the power of imagination – which grows as the body declines⁹ – but also as a covert dispute with Shelley, who in his essay *On a Future State* expresses an opinion contrary to that of Blake¹⁰. Whereas Yeats’s tower represents the protagonist’s mind “looking outward upon men and things”¹¹ (more specifically, the protagonist’s imagination) – in accordance with

their own way of ‘recalling us to the truth of the image’. This native tradition is in some ways more significant for modern poetry than imported Symbolism; Blake and Pater stand behind Yeats at his most magnificent, and in the thought of Arthur Symons, crucial for the historian, they are at least as important as the French poets” (F. Kermode, *Romantic Image*, London 1971, pp. 17–18).

“The free self–delighting intellect which knows that pain is the cost of joy, the licence to look inward and paint, as Blake and Palmer painted, a symbolic world; to make a magical explanation of a divine order – all this represents the victory of Coleridge, of Blake and the French; it is the heritage, delightful and tragic, to which Yeats was born”. (F. Kermode, *op.cit.*, p. 39).

“He is the poet in whose work Romantic isolation achieves its full quality as a theme for poetry, being no longer a pose, a complaint, or a programme; and his treatment of it is very closely related to his belief in what Pater called ‘vision’ and the French called Symbol” (F. Kermode, *op.cit.*, p. 42).

In the same book Kermode defines the concept of Romanticism and puts forward the hypothesis that the Romantic era is still with us:

“I here use ‘Romantic’ in a restricted sense as applicable to the literature of one epoch, beginning in the late years of the eighteenth century and not yet finished, and as referring to the high valuation placed during this period upon the image–making powers of the mind at the expense of its rational powers, and to the substitution of organicist for mechanistic modes of thinking about works of art” (F. Kermode, *op.cit.*, p. 56).

The same conception of human imagination, of nature as an organic whole – the same poetic style which employs myths and symbols as the chief sources of artistic expression were – according to R. Wellek (1963) – the essential issues of the Romantic movement, those which laid the foundation for its European unity (cf. R. Wellek, *The concept of Romanticism in literary scholarship and Romanticism re–examined* [in:] *Concepts of Literary Criticism*, Yale University Press 1971).

In a book devoted to Yeats’s iconography (*The Whole Mystery of Art*, ed.cit.) G. Melchiori makes a fine analysis of the links between the symbolism of Yeats and that of the great Romantics (Blake, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats).

H. Bloom has written a book devoted almost entirely to the relationship between Yeats’s work and that of Blake, Shelley, Pater and other Romantics (H. Bloom, *Yeats*, Oxford 1970).

According to Bloom: “Blake, Shelley, Morris, Pater, Balzac and Nietzsche count for more in *A Vision*, and in Yeats’s poetry, than do Blavatsky, Mathers, Swedenborg, Thomas Tylor, Agrippa and the secrets of the Golden Dawn” (H. Bloom, *op.cit.*, p. 212).

N. Frye, who sees the work of many well known 20th century poets and writers (e.g. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, E. Pound, Beckett, D.H. Lawrence, Proust) as a continuation of the most important Romantic issues, takes a stand similar to that of Kermode (N. Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism*, New York 1968).

⁸ Cf. V. Brombert, *The Happy Prison: A Recurring Romantic Metaphor* [in:] *Romanticism. Vistas, Instances, Continuities*, Ed. D. Thorburn and G. Hartman, Cornell U.P. 1973.

⁹ Cf. A.N. Jeffares, *op.cit.*, p. 258.

¹⁰ “In old age the mind gradually withers; and as it grew and was strengthened with the body, so does it together with the body sink into decrepitude” (Shelley, *On a future state* [in:] *Shelley, Selected Poetry, Prose and Letters*, Ed. A.S.B. Glover, London 1951, p. 979).

¹¹ “The tower, important in Maeterlinck, as in Shelley, is, like the sea, and rivers, and caves with fountains, a very ancient symbol, and would perhaps, as years went by, have grown more important in his poetry.

Yeats's interpretation of Shelley's symbol – the Romantic faith in the power of imagination which is expressed in the poem approaches Blake's maximalism.

In an interior monologue, the poem's protagonist (or "speaker") attempts to understand the meaning of his own life as seen through the prism of nature, art, national tradition and eternity. This monologue is reminiscent of dialectic meditation, which attempts to reconcile conflicting emotional and intellectual attitudes. The poem's enveloping structure contains symbolic representations (parts I and III), mythical narration (part II) and an *envoi* to posterity (part III). Vision, meditation and rhetoric coexist in the poem.

The protagonist's interior monologue begins *in medias res* and introduces the poem's (Romantic) main theme – imagination¹².

The contrast between it and the cave in *Laon and Cythna* suggests a contrast between the mind looking outward upon men and things and the mind looking inward upon itself" (W.B. Yeats, *The philosophy of Shelley's Poetry* [in:] *Essays and Introductions*, Macmillan, London 1974, p. 87).

"... that shadow is the tower,
 And the light proves that he is reading still.
 He has found, after the manner of this kind,
 Mere images; chosen this place to live in
 Because, it may be, of the candle-light
 From the far tower where Milton's Platonist
 Sat late, or Shelley's visionary prince:
 The lonely light that Samuel Palmer engraved,
 An image of mysterious wisdom won by toil;
 And now he seeks in book or manuscript
 What he shall never find.

(W.B. Yeats, *The Phases of the Moon* [in:] *Collected Poems*, Macmillan, London 1971, p. 184).

The following critics have made detailed analyses of the symbolism of the tower in Yeats's poetry:

J.R. Henn, *The Lonely Tower. Studies in the poetry of W.B. Yeats*, London 1965, pp. 131 – 133.

G. Melchiori, op.cit., chapter III: *The Swan, Helen and the Tower*.

¹² "Romantic poems tend to be about Romantic imagination" (W.K. Wimsatt Jr and C. Brookes, *Literary Criticism. A Short History*, vol. 3, London 1970, p. 404).

H. Bloom considers *The Tower's* basic theme to be 'excess of imagination' (H. Bloom, op.cit., p. 350). This critic has written a short but comprehensive interpretation of the poem (op.cit., pp. 349 – 352). This interpretation, however, is impressionistic and biographical in character, little use being made of Bloom's own comparative studies on the relationship between Yeats and the Romantics (H. Bloom, op.cit.).

Other critics – i.e. those whose works are cited in the present study – have made only fragmentary and incomplete analyses of *The Tower* (poem). The fragments upon which most attention has been focused are: part I, the last stanza of part II and two fragments of part III beginning with the words 'And I declare my faith...' and 'Now shall I make my soul...'

It would seem that general agreement as to the main theme of the poem is lacking:

L. Lerner: "This theme of abstractions versus the fullness of living ties in very naturally with the great theme of the later Yeats, his hatred of old age. Here is the opening section of *The Tower* (...) The contrast here is between philosophy and fishing. Philosophy is done sitting at a desk; it is done with the intellect only, it is abstract. Fishing is a bodily activity, it is done by the whole man, it is done by young men, the young men of the third section of the poem..." (L. Lerner, *Yeats's poetic world* [in:] *Critics on Yeats*, Ed. R. Cowell, London 1971, p. 105).

W.H. Pritchard: "Part I of *The Tower* asks what to do with decrepit age, then part II takes thirteen winding stanzas to prepare for the closing affirmations of part III. The final stanza of part II is my interest,

What shall I do with this absurdity –
 O heart, O troubled heart – this caricature,
 Decrepit age that has been tied to me
 As to a dog's tail?
 Never had I more
 Excited, passionate, fantastical
 Imagination, nor an ear and eye
 That more expected the impossible –
 No, not in boyhood when with rod and fly
 Or the humbler worm, I climbed Ben Bulbin's back
 And had the livelong summer day to spend.
 It seems that I must bid the Muse go pack,
 Choose Plato and Plotinus for a friend
 Until imagination, ear and eye,
 Can be content with argument and deal
 In abstract things; or be derided by
 A sort of battered kettle at the heel¹³.

The poem's fictional space is determined by the Romantic opposition of centre (the tower) and circumference (the world outside the tower)¹⁴. The protagonist of *The Tower* is situated at the centre of the space and seeks to subordinate the circumference (the world outside) to that centre (the tower). With the aid of his imagination, he wishes to encompass all that is exterior to him: nature, the sphere of abstract ideas, national tradition, the living and the dead. Corresponding to the poem's fictional space – which blurs the dividing – line between the exterior and the interior – is its fictional time – construction. The spiritual (internal) time of imagination is opposed to the cyclical, biological time of nature which strictly delimits the youth and life of the protagonist. This internal time of imagination is infinite and seeks to dominate biological

coming as it does after the poet has sent imagination forth to call up all sorts of people from history, legend, his own writings as aids and witnesses to his dilemma" (W.H. Pritchard, *The Uses of Yeats's Poetry* [in:] *W.B. Yeats. A Critical Anthology*, Ed. W.H. Pritchard, Penguin Books 1972, p. 365).

Y. Winters considers that the various parts of the poem are loosely linked: "What he is saying is almost as foolish as what he says in section III of *The Tower* (p. 195), especially the twelve lines beginning 'And I declare my faith'. These lines are uttered with a passion which is so obviously meant to be convincing, but who can be convinced? The second half of the second song is an excellent elegiac stanza, but it has only a loose connection with what has preceded" (Y. Winters, *Forms of Discovery* [in:] *ibidem*, p. 268).

A.G. Stock considers that the lonely meditation of the poem is devoted to a discussion or argument between "the contemplative soul and the passionate heart that lives through experience. The soul wins this round, but only just, and perhaps only in theory, for the whole poem is crowded with experience both actual and imaginary, but at any rate it ends facing towards eternity" (A.G. Stock, *op.cit.*, p. 185).

¹³ The text I am using is that of the *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, Macmillan, London 1971, pp. 218 – 225.

¹⁴ Cf. G. Poulet, *Romantyzm*, trans. P. Taranczewski [in:] G. Poulet, *Metamorfozy czasu*, Warsaw 1977.

time. Corresponding to the dual character of time and space is the division of the represented world into two spheres, viz. that of nature and that of imagination, as well as two contrasting self-representations (or autocreations) of the protagonist, viz. as a young man living in harmony with nature and as an old man living in accordance with spiritual as opposed to natural laws. It would seem that the symbolic tower has a unifying function, encompassing both the protagonist's past, which is anchored in the natural world, and the present, linked with the internal world.

In the tower, which is subordinated to the laws of both nature and imagination, light emotional tones compete with the dark tones introduced by the motifs of "the battered kettle at the heel", decrepit age tied to a dog's tail¹⁵, withdrawal from life and the giving up of poetry and love (the Muse is to be replaced by Plato and Plotinus – lines 12 – 17) – all of which symbolize the protagonist's decline and defeat. In the context of these "dark" motifs, the tower – the poem's central symbol – takes on negative emotional meanings and becomes the "tower of mourning" of Shelley's *Epipsychidion*. The main reasons for the protagonist's bitterness are old age and the probable dismissal of poetry and love (the Muse). This bitterness, however, is tinged with triumph, for it transpires that the protagonist's imagination is able to resist the natural cycle of birth and death and that – paradoxically – its power grows as the body declines.

The protagonist examines the relationship of imagination to the world of nature, to the sphere of the protagonist's feelings and to the sphere of "abstract things" as represented by Plato and Plotinus. Imagination – which mediates between the ideal world and nature – would seem to be linked in an intimate and peculiar way to the feelings of the protagonist. The sphere of feelings and passions is introduced by the following motifs: "troubled heart", "excited, passionate imagination" and the Muse (which also introduces a fourth sphere – art). The motif of the Muse therefore unites the spheres of feeling, imagination and art.

Both the treatment of the poem's theme (ideas – nature – feelings – imagination – art) and the motifs of the symbolic climb and symbolic immersion in the sphere of "abstract things" point directly to an implied Platonic–Romantic context¹⁶. For the

¹⁵ In Christian iconography the dog is the symbol of defeat. Cf. F.E. Hulme, *The history, principles and practice of symbolism in Christian art*, London 1908, pp. 179 – 180.

¹⁶ For a review of Platonic themes treated by European (and especially English) Romantics, see W.K. Wimsatt Jr and C. Brookes, *Literary Criticism. A Short History*, vol. 3, ed.cit. Pages 430 – 431 of this book also give useful information about the work of the late 18th century translator, editor and critic Thomas Taylor, who made the writings of Plato, Plotinus, Porphyry and other Neo-Platonists accessible to the English Romantics and Yeats.

For information on the links between the Romantics and Platonism see also: R. Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism 1750 – 1950*, vol. 2, London 1955.

The following works would seem to be representative of the English Romantics' "reading" of Plato:

Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*.

W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, New York 1899.

W. Pater, *The Renaissance*, London 1924 (first publ. 1873).

According to F. Kermode (op.cit.) and H. Bloom (op.cit., ch. 1 and 2), Pater is the link between the generation of the Great Romantics and the 'Tragic Generation' of Yeats. Cf. also: W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, London 1977, pp. 302 – 3).

present, the poem's protagonist treats the teachings of Plato and Plotinus as a single point of reference.

The motif of the young fisherman's symbolic climb to the top of Ben Bulben would seem to be a direct allusion to Walter Pater's¹⁷ interpretation of Plato's theory of knowledge. It would also seem that the poem's protagonist has many qualities in common with the hero of Pater's essay *Plato and Platonism*. As understood by Pater – who was an “intermediary” between the High Romantics and the generation of Yeats – Platonism has much in common with the Plotinic and Romantic (Shelley) interpretations of Plato's works¹⁸.

Pater's Plato is first and foremost the author of texts which were particularly dear to the Romantics (and to the protagonist of *The Tower*), being devoted to the questions of: love, beauty and poetry (*The Banquet, Phaedrus*); the perfect man, the perfect state and perfect knowledge (*The Republic*); the immortality of the soul (*Phaedo*); life after death (*The Republic*); the Soul of the World (*Timaeus*).

“He wrote of me in that extravagant style
He had learnt from Pater, and to round his tale
Said I was dead, and dead I choose to be”.

(W.B. Yeats, *The Phases of the Moon* [in:] *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 184).

Yeats's essays, like his poems, contain frequent allusions to Platonism. To give only a few examples:

The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry (1900) [in:] W.B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, ed.cit.

Bishop Berkeley (1931), *ibidem*.

My Friend's Book (1932), *ibidem*.

Per Amica Silentia Lunae (1917) [in:] W.B. Yeats, *Mythologies*, Macmillan, London 1977.

A Vision, Macmillan, London 1978.

Yeats's attitude to Platonism is, however, ambiguous – in his essays and in poems like *The Tower*. Yeats's essays and the commentaries of A.N. Jeffares tell us that Yeats knew: Plato's dialogues, the *Enneads* in MacKenna's translation, the works of the Cambridge Platonists, the works and editions of T. Taylor.

It is not enough, however, to speak of Yeats's Platonism. Few and far between are the critics who ask themselves what particular *tradition* of Platonism is being alluded to in any one poem and what the functions of these allusions are. One critic who recognizes the problem is R. Snukal:

“It is often assumed that because Yeats uses Platonic and neoplatonic images he must necessarily be a Platonist. What happens when this kind of evidence is used to show that Yeats is usually, or even sometimes a Platonist, can be found in almost every critical work on the poetry. Even the best of Yeats's critics continually fall into this trap (...) Yeats's usual strategy is not to write long discursive poems, but to utilise certain traditional myths, images and metaphors; and by changing these myths, metaphors and images to suggest his own usually unorthodox view” (R. Snukal, *High Talk. The philosophical poetry of W.B. Yeats*, Cambridge 1973, pp. 23 – 27).

In an appendix (B), R. Snukal has reproduced Taylor's edition of Porphyry's famous essay (known to the Romantics and to Yeats) *On the cave of Nymphs*.

F.A.C. Wilson has written two books on Yeats's Platonism: *W.B. Yeats and Tradition*, London 1968 (first publ. 1958) and *Yeats's Iconography*, London 1969 (first published 1960).

G. Melchiori (op.cit.) has written an excellent analysis of Platonic–Romantic symbolism in Yeats's poetry.

¹⁷ Cf. W. Pater, *The Doctrine of Plato* [in:] *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit., p. 161. H. Bloom (op.cit., p. 34) also draws attention to the Renaissance–Romantic stylization of the hero of *Plato and Platonism*.

¹⁸ Cf. also: *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* [in:] Shelley, *Selected Poetry, Prose and Letters*, Ed. A.S.B. Glover, London 1951, pp. 350 – 352.

Pater's hero – like a character in Plotinus's treatise on beauty¹⁹ and the young fisherman of *The Tower* – climbs to the symbolic summit ("mountain-top") of the Perfect City of Beauty, Justice and Good. The journey of Pater's hero begins in nature and is supposed to end in the sphere of ideas. Human feelings would seem to constitute an intermediate sphere between nature and ideas. Pater's Plato is as much a lover of nature as an "enthusiast of ideas". His "enthusiasm of ideas" is "a kind of madness", "impassioned desire for true knowledge"²⁰. Pater's Plato is nearer to Homer and "poetical thought" than to Aristotle and scholasticism²¹. He is both a sceptic and a visionary²². He conducts an unceasing dialogue with himself in order to approach truth through intellectual "query"²³. He makes use of the free form of the essay, which allows him to combine meditation with mythical vision²⁴.

The difference between Pater's Plato and the protagonist of *The Tower* is that the latter is a Romantic to a much greater degree. For the protagonist of *The Tower*, the Platonic world of ideas means not only "the way of speaking about certain elements of the mind"²⁵, but in addition would seem to be synonymous with eternity and the autonomous world created by the imagination²⁶. Endowed with an "excited, passionate, fan-

¹⁹ Cf. *First Ennead, Sixth Tractate, Beauty* [in:] Plotinus, *The Six Enneads*, trans. S. MacKenna and B.S. Page, Encyclopaedia Britannica inc., Chicago 1952.

The motif of the climb frequently recurs in Plotinus (cf. Plotinus, op.cit., p. 221). This Platonic motif also appears in Yeats's essay *Blake's Illustrations to Dante* (1924):

"In the illustrations of Purgatory there is a serene beauty, and one finds his Dante and Virgil climbing among the rough rocks under a cloudy sun, and in their sleep upon the smooth steps towards the summit, a placid, marmoreal, tender, starry rapture" (in: W.B. Yeats, *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 127).

It can thus be seen that the motif of the climb, symbolizing the journey to heaven, has its iconographical counterpart, like Yeats's other symbols. Cf. G. Melchiori, op.cit. and T.R. Henn, op.cit.

²⁰ Cf. W. Pater, op.cit., p. 154.

²¹ Cf. W. Pater, op.cit., pp. 139 – 143.

For the Romantics Plato was above all a poet who had created myths:

"Plato was essentially a poet – the truth and splendour of his imagery and the melody of his language are the most intense that it is possible to conceive" (Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*).

This is also true of Yeats:

"All souls have vehicle or body, and when one has said that with More and the Platonists one has escaped from the abstract schools who seek always the power of some Church or institution, and found oneself with great poetry and superstition which is but a popular poetry, in a pleasant, dangerous world" (W.B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (1917) [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit., p. 348).

²² Walter Pater, op.cit., pp. 172 – 174.

²³ W. Pater, *ibidem*, p. 176.

²⁴ W. Pater, *ibidem*, p. 156.

²⁵ "The Platonic doctrine of 'Ideas', as was said, is not so much a doctrine, as a way of speaking or feeling about certain elements of the mind; and this temper, this peculiar way of feeling, of speaking, which for most of us will have many difficulties, is not uniformly noticeable in Plato's Dialogues, but is to be found more especially in the Phaedo, the Symposium, and in certain books of The Republic, above all in the Phaedrus" (W. Pater, *ibidem*, p. 147).

²⁶ "This world of Imagination is the world of Eternity; it is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the Vegetated body. This World of Imagination is Infinite & Eternal, whereas the world of Generation, or Vegetation, is Finite & Temporal ...The Human Imagination... appear'd to Me... throwing off the Temporal that the Eternal might be Establish'd... In Eternity one Thing never Changes into another

tastical imagination”, he thinks of immersing himself in the sphere of “abstract things”. Creative imagination is for him, as for the Romantics, the active counterpart of passive Platonic intellect²⁷. This imagination is endowed with Romantic passionate feelings (passionate imagination, troubled heart) and Platonic inner senses (ear and eye). By virtue of these inner senses the protagonist’s imagination is able to see the ideal world directly. The counterpart of Platonic “madness” and Romantic “enthusiasm”²⁸ or inspiration is the “excitement” mentioned by the protagonist in the first few words of his monologue.

In the protagonist’s utterances, Platonic and Plotinic tradition is combined with Christian, biblical and mediaeval tradition, as in the case of the Romantics. The protagonist of *The Tower* attempts to solve the Platonic problem of the cognitive nature of art²⁹ – i.e. the relationship between art and nature and between art and the world of ideas – by invoking the Romantic mythical theme of the “quest”³⁰ (by means of art) for paradise or the “unfallen world”, where harmony reigns between spiritual and material values and which in the poetry of Blake, Keats and Shelley appears in Arcadian visions reminiscent of pastorals³¹. This Romantic search for harmony between nature and the ideal world is also undertaken by Pater’s Plato. The Yeatsian counterpart of the search for Arcadia, Paradise Lost, the Unfallen World or the Perfect City is the endeavour to achieve Unity of Being³², understood as: the inner harmony of all man’s faculties (will,

Thing. Each Identity is Eternal” (W. Blake, quoted by F. Kermodé, op.cit., p. 104 and also by Yeats in: *Symbolism in Painting* (1898) [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 151).

²⁷ Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, ‘Platon’ [in:] W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia filozofii*, vol. I, Warsaw 1968.

²⁸ Cf. A. Gerard, *On the logic of Romanticism* [in:] *Romanticism, Points of View*, Ed. R. Gleckner and G.E. Enscoe, Prentice-Hall Inc., NJ 1962.

See also M. Bowra, *The Romantic Imagination*, Harvard Univ. Press 1957.

²⁹ Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Estetyka Platona* [in:] W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki*, vol. I, Wrocław 1962.

³⁰ H. Bloom draws attention to the presence of the Romantic tradition of the ‘quest romance’ in Yeats’s work (H. Bloom, *Yeats*, ed.cit., pp. 4 – 5). Pater’s Plato also embodies this ideal of the ‘quester’ for unity of the material and spiritual worlds.

Cf. also W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Element in Literature* (1898) [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 186.

³¹ Cf. H. Bloom, op.cit., pp. 8 and 244. R. Przybylski, *Ogrody romantyków*, Kraków 1978.

³² “I thought that in man and race alike there is something called “Unity of Being”, using that term as Dante used it when he compared beauty in the Convito to a perfectly proportioned human body. My father, from whom I had learned the term, preferred a comparison to a musical instrument so strung that if we touch a string all the strings murmur faintly (...) When I began, however, to apply this thought to the State and to argue for a law – made balance among trades and occupations my father displayed at once the violent Free Trader and propagandist of liberty” (W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, ed.cit., p. 190).

“... whereas true Unity of Being, where all the nature murmurs in response if but a single note be touched, is found emotionally, instinctively, by the rejection of all experience not of the right quality, and by the limitation of its quantity. Of all this I knew nothing, for I saw the world by the light of what my father had said, speaking about some Frenchman who frequented the dissecting-rooms to overcome his dread in the interest of that Unity. My father had mocked, but had not explained why he had mocked, and I for my unhappiness had felt a shuddering fascination. Nor did I understand as yet how little that Unity, however wisely sought, is possible without a Unity of Culture in class or people, that is no longer possible at all” (W.B. Yeats, *ibidem*, p. 355).

imagination, body); harmony between man, nature and society; cosmic order. An image of Unity of Being in *The Tower* would seem to be the vision of the past, in which the protagonist's spiritual development (the climb) corresponds to youth, summer and friendly nature.

This Romantic myth, however, has a tragic pole, of which the protagonist of *The Tower* is fully conscious. The other, dark pole³³ of the myth of the Unity of Being is the recollection of the protagonist's downfall, the loss of his innocence and his consequent entanglement: in time and space; in old age, death and transition; the antinomy of spirit and matter – c.f. the image of the protagonist's physical decline.

At this juncture the conflict can be resolved only by imagination and art³⁴. This Romantic antinomy was foreshadowed by Rousseau and employed by Schiller in his essay on "Naive and sentimental poetry"³⁵, in which he opposes nature and culture. According to Schiller, a sentimental poet is one who has lost that primaevial union with nature possessed by the "naive" poet Homer³⁶, and which he must attempt to regain through art. While the natural environment of the "naive" poet is nature, that of the sentimental poet is culture. It would seem that Blake, in opposing the power of imagination to the weakness of the "foolish" or "vegetated" body³⁷, was of a similar opinion. It must be said, however, that Blake viewed the relation of nature to art and to the ideal world in the light of the Bible (as interpreted by Manicheans and Gnostics) and made the problem of the fall of man and the world and their redemption by imagination and "cultivated life" (creation) the central theme of his poetry³⁸.

It would seem that in *The Tower*, this Romantic theme of the quest for the Unity of Being (to which Yeats himself draws attention in an essay on Blake) appears in the

Unity of Culture and Unity of Sensibility are two of the most important concepts of Romantic-Symbolist criticism, from the time of Shelley through that of Pater (*The Renaissance*, ed.cit., p. 28) down to Eliot and the "New Criticism". This question is dealt with by F. Kermode (*Dissociation of Sensibility* [in:] op.cit., ch. 8).

³³ Cf. H. Bloom's remarks on the Romantic 'dark tradition' (H. Bloom, op.cit., p. 18).

The best study of Romantic 'morbid themes' is by M. Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, transl. A. Davidson, Oxford 1954.

³⁴ Cf. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*.

³⁵ Cf. F. Schiller, *O Poezji naiwnej i sentymentalnej*, trans. I. Krońska [in:] F. Schiller, *Listy o estetycznym wychowaniu człowieka i inne rozprawy*, Warsaw 1972.

³⁶ Yeats, both in *The Tower* and in other poems, remains faithful to the English Romantic interpretation of the character of Homer. In this interpretation emphasis is laid on (among other things) the naivety, naturalness and simplicity of Homer's poetry (cf. Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*). What is particularly stressed, however, is the passionateness (cf. Shelley's *A Defence...*), mysticism (Keats) and expressiveness (Shelley) of the blind poet, who fathomed the secrets of heaven, earth and hell (Keats). Cf. J. Keats, *To Homer* [in:] *The Oxford Book of English Romantic Verse*, Oxford 1958, p. 685.

In German Romantic criticism (Schlegel), Schiller's term 'sentimental' is synonymous with 'Romantic' and 'subjective'. Yeats, on the other hand, uses the terms 'sentimental', 'objective' and 'primary' as synonyms in opposition to the terms 'subjective', 'antithetical' and 'Romantic' (cf. H. Bloom, op.cit., pp. 223 – 224). Schiller notwithstanding, therefore, Yeats's Homer is a 'Romantic'.

³⁷ Cf. A.N. Jeffares, *A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*, ed.cit., p. 258.

³⁸ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *William Blake and the Imagination* (1897) and *William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* (1924) [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit.

symbolism of the Celtic legend of the Holy Grail, which had been taken up by the Preraphaelites – W. Morris in particular – and which dominated Yeats's early work³⁹.

On the level of narration⁴⁰, the Legend (myth) of the Holy Grail tells of the hero's search for the Grail and of his ultimate failure or success. On the level of meaning, the Legend tells of an attempt to redeem the world through spiritual values. In the context of the story of the Grail, the youth climbing to the source of the stream at the top of Ben Bulbin on a summer's day (c.f. *The Tower*, parts I and III) equipped with fishing-rod and bait (worm, fly) is reminiscent of: the young and energetic Fisher-King; Sir Gawain or Perceval⁴¹; the innocent knight living in perfect spiritual and physical union with nature. This spiritual union is additionally suggested by the motif of the worm, which is perhaps an allusion to Blake's *The Book of Thel* or Shelley's *Epipsychidion*:

The spirit of the worm beneath the sod

In love and worship blends itself with God⁴².

– where "worm" is as it were humblest manifestation of the spirit⁴³ which pervades the world and which unites it with God. Alluded to here is the Romantic concept of "oracular nature" – a visible sign of the invisible and another manifestation of the same being⁴⁴.

In the legend of the Grail, the old Fisher-King awaits the arrival of the youthful knight who will bring him spiritual and physical renewal. In *The Tower*, the Youth and

³⁹ "In our time Scandinavian tradition, because of the imagination of Richard Wagner and of William Morris and of the earlier and, as I think, greater Henrik Ibsen, has created a new romance, and, through the imagination of Richard Wagner, become all but the most passionate element in the arts of the modern world. There is indeed but one other element as passionate, the still unfaded legends of Arthur of the Holy Grail; and now a new fountain of legends, and, as I think, a more abundant fountain than any in Europe, is being opened, the fountain of Gaelic legends" (W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Element in Literature* (1902) [in:] *ibidem*, p. 186).

F.A.C. Wilson has made a penetrating and thorough analysis of the influence of the legend of the Grail and its esoteric and Modernist (Morris's *The Well at the World's End*) interpretations on Yeats's work (F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats's Iconography*, ed.cit., pp. 47 – 59). The same critic (*ibidem*) also points to the 'Grail' stylization of the character Hanrahan, hero of *Stories of Red Hanrahan*.

Cf. Yeats's essay on W. Morris and *The Well at the World's End* entitled *The Happiest of the Poets* (1902) [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit.

F.A.C. Wilson also makes a comparison of the use of the legend of the Grail by Yeats and by Eliot (*Yeats's Iconography*, ed.cit.).

⁴⁰ N. Frye in *The Archetypes of Literature* equates the archetype with myth and distinguishes between two aspects of myth – that of narration and that of meaning ('Archetypy Literatury', trans. A. Bejska [in:] *Współczesna teoria badań literackich za granicą. Antologia*, Ed. H. Markiewicz, vol. II, Cracow 1976).

⁴¹ Cf. F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats's Iconography*, loc.cit.

⁴² Shelley, *Epipsychidion* [in:] Shelley, op.cit., p. 532.

⁴³ The function and meaning of the motif of the worm in Romantic literature has been analysed by Z. Stefanowska, *Świat owadzi w czwartej części Dziadów* [in:] *Studia romantyczne*, Ed. M. Żmigrodzka, Wrocław 1973.

H. Kenner interprets the motif of the 'humbler worm' as a parodic allusion to the creative 'decline' of Wordsworth's later poetry (H. Kenner, *The Sacred Book of the Arts* [in:] *Yeats. A collection of critical essays*, Ed. J. Unterecker, Prentice Hall Inc. NJ 1963, p. 20).

⁴⁴ Cf. *Imagination: Wordsworth and Coleridge* [in:] W.K. Wimsatt Jr and C. Brookes, op.cit., ch. 18.

the Old Man are one and the same person. Moreover, the Old Man (who corresponds to the Old King in the legend of the Grail) possesses in his inner self the life-giving source of eternal youth – imagination. Being conscious of and having experienced the superiority of the spiritual (as opposed to the material) world, he yearns not for youthful, “natural” union with the world, but for secondary, “spiritual” union, which is made possible only by imagination. It would seem that this spiritual source of the unity of all being is in the Old Man himself. If so, then the allusions to Plato and Plotinus, the withdrawal from life and the giving up of “passions” and art (the probable dismissal of the Muse) in favour of “abstract things” must be seen as ironic:

It seems that I must bid the Muse go pack,
 Choose Plato and Plotinus for a friend
 Until imagination, ear and eye,
 Can be content with argument and deal
 In abstract things; or be derided by
 A sort of battered kettle at the heel.

Plato and Plotinus here would seem to appear in the dual role of masters of the spiritual life and creators of an extremely dualistic vision of the world which is hostile to passions and nature and is therefore opposed to the Romantic myth of the Unity of Being. In *The Tower*, therefore, two visions of reality dear to the Romantics (and known to Pater) – monistic and extremely dualistic (Manichean) – would seem to overlap. They would seem to result from the two opposing interpretations of Platonism discussed by Pater in his essay⁴⁵. Corresponding to these two visions of reality are two

⁴⁵ “Plato is to be interpreted not merely by his antecedents, by the influence upon him of those who preceded him, but by his successors, by the temper, the intellectual alliances, of those who directly or indirectly have been sympathetic with him. Now it is noticeable that, at first sight somewhat incongruously, a certain number of Manicheans have always been of his company; people who held that matter was evil. Pointing significantly to an unmistakable vein of Manichean, or Puritan sentiment actually there in the Platonic Dialogues, these rude companions or successors of his, carry us back to his great predecessor, to Socrates, whose personal influence had so strongly enforced on Plato the severities, moral and intellectual alike of Parmenides and of the Pythagoreans. The cold breath of a harshly abstract, a too incorporeal philosophy, had blown, like an east wind, on that last depressing day in the prison-cell of Socrates; and the venerable commonplaces then put forth, in which an overstrained pagan sensuality seems to be reacting, to be taking vengeance on itself, turned now sick and suicidal, will lose none of their weight with Plato: – That ‘all who rightly touch philosophy, study nothing else than to *die*, and to be *dead*’ – that ‘the soul reasons best, when, as much as possible, it comes to be alone with itself, bidding good-bye to the body, and to the utmost of its power, rejecting communion with it, with the very touch of it, aiming at what *is*’. It was, in short, as if for the soul to have come into a human body at all, had been the seed of disease in it, the beginning of its own proper death (...) He (i.e. Plato – J.D.) opens his door indeed to those austere monitors. They correct the sensuous richness of his genius, but could not suppress it. The sensuous lover becomes a lover of the invisible, but still a lover, after his earlier pattern, carrying into the world of intellectual vision, of *θεωρία*, all the associations of the actual world of sight. Some of its invisible realities he can all but see with the bodily eye: the absolute Temperance, in the person of the youthful Charmides; the absolute Righteousness, in the person of the dying Socrates. Yes, truly! all true knowledge will be like the knowledge of a person, of living persons, and truths, for Plato, in spite of his Socratic asceticism, to the last, something to *look at*. The

conceptions of man: on the one hand “natural man”, who lives in a state of innocence (c.f. W. Blake’s *Songs of Innocence*) and who is in perfect harmony with nature and the spiritual world (Pater’s Plato); on the other hand “daimonic man”, who has lost primaeval Unity of Being, who attempts to overcome the dualism of spirit and nature⁴⁶ and whose attitude to nature – in which he detects both imperfect (fallen) and perfect (unfallen) elements – is ambiguous (cf. W. Blake’s *Songs of Experience*⁴⁷).

Apart from the suggestion that the spiritual world appears to the protagonist to be uniform and subjective (imagination, inspired and endowed with inner senses, encompasses the natural world and immerses itself in abstractions), there is also the opposite suggestion, namely that the spiritual world appears to the protagonist to be differentiated into the spheres of passions and “abstract things”. Which of these spheres comes higher in the spiritual order or whether this order is objective in character is not, however, made clear. What kind of abstractions the protagonist has in mind is also not made clear, though the kinds of “passions” (love and creation) are indirectly suggested (the Muse).

The ambiguity and complexity of the first part of *The Tower* is rooted in the note of self-irony and self-mockery which opens and closes this part of the poem (lines 1 - 4 and 12 - 17). This mockery and irony attenuates the dramatic tension of the interior monologue (victory – defeat; young man – old man; spirit – matter; unity – dualism; subjectivity – objectivity; nature – ideas – art), creates a distance between the reader and the protagonist and also warns the reader not to take the protagonist’s probable dismissal of the Muse and his choice of Plato and Plotinus as spiritual guides too seriously.

eyes which had noted physical things, so finely, vividly, continuously, would be still at work; and, Plato thus qualifying the Manichean or Puritan element in Socrates by his own capacity for the world of sense, Platonism has contributed largely, has been an immense encouragement towards, the redemption of matter, of the world of sense, by art, by all right education, by the creeds and worship of the Christian Church – towards the vindication of the dignity of the body” (W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit., pp. 128 – 131).

On the Manichean interpretation of Plotinus, see also: B. Russel, *History of Western Philosophy*, London 1946, pp. 308 – 321.

Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Platon* [in:] W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia Filozofii*, vol. I, ed.cit.

⁴⁶ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., pp. 84 - 89; see also Phase Three and Phase Seventeen

⁴⁷ “Mere sympathy for living things is not enough, because we must learn to separate their ‘infected’ from their eternal, their satanic from their divine part; and this can only be done by desiring always beauty, the one mask through which can be seen the unveiled eyes of eternity” (W.B. Yeats; *William Blake and his illustrations to Dante* [in:] *Essays ...* ed.cit., p. 139)

II

Whereas part I of the protagonist's monologue takes place on the threshold – as it were – of the tower of imagination, in part II the protagonist is on the top of the tower. The symbolic climb, which in part I is associated with youth, is in part II taken up again by the Old Man. The ruined tower, the leafless tree of life⁴⁸ and dusk here correspond to the mountain, the stream and summer. The Old Man remains faithful to the youthful intuition of the unity of all being. The tower of his imagination is a Romantic tower, open to heaven and earth⁴⁹. The decrepitude of the Old Man's surroundings is a reminder that the spiritual world order which the Old Man is in search of will be an order of the imagination, built "against" nature:

I pace upon the battlements and stare
 On the foundations of a house, or where
 Tree, like a sooty finger, starts from the earth;
 And send imagination forth
 Under the day's declining beam, and call
 Images and memories
 From ruin or from ancient trees,
 For I would ask a question of them all.

As the narration proceeds, the monologue's symbolic background becomes richer in details and is gradually given depth. The protagonist stands between heaven and earth and, in the light of the dying day, encompasses with his mind's eye the foundations of the house, the ancient trees and the entire landscape: the "ridge", the lake, the neighbouring cottages, the "old bawn". This scenery is both realistic and symbolic. It can even be compared with the view from Thoor Ballylee⁵⁰. The whole of this piece of land, together with the walls of the tower, is permeated with the experiences of the people who once lived there. These people and their affairs live on in local tales and legends⁵¹: the blind poet (Raftery); the local beauty (Mary Hynes); the cruel landowner (Mrs. French); the "bankrupt" aristocrat. The protagonist of *The Tower* is at one and the same time the chronicler (as it were) of the environs of Ballylee and a poet who created the character Hanrahan.

Part II of *The Tower*, divided into regular stanzas of eight lines each, with regular rhyme-schemes⁵², is – with the exception of the first stanza – written in the style of a

⁴⁸ This landscape is an allusion to the landscape of the 'dark' version of the myth of the Grail. Cf. F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats's Iconography*, Loc.cit.

⁴⁹ Cf. V. Brombert, op.cit.

⁵⁰ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Dust hath closed Helen's Eye* (1902) [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit.

⁵¹ Cf. Yeat's footnotes to *The Tower*.

⁵² His stanzaic habits are also rather fixed (...) Some of his stanza forms were taken from minor earlier writers, as the form of 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' was taken from Cowley's 'Ode on the Death of

ballad-like, dramatized tale of ghosts and fantastic adventures. These take place during the (characteristic) time between sunset and the full moon. This ballad-like stylization accentuates *The Tower's* organic link with the local folk traditions of the environs of Ballylee still further. This link is also emphasized in the author's own notes to the poem. The ballad-like stylization of the second part of *The Tower* is in keeping with the poem's ballad-like problem – i.e. the strangeness of human existence⁵³. By drawing up a spiritual chronicle of his native parts, the protagonist hopes to find an answer to the haunting problem of the meaning of life: old age, love, death and art.

The narration is conducted on three levels: authentic or “actual” (personal and local chronicle); fictional (the story of Hanrahan); mythical – Greek (Homer, the Iliad, Plato) and Celtic (the legend of the Grail). Whereas the first level corresponds to nature, the second and third levels correspond to art⁵⁴. The characters form three groups: “authentic” (Mrs. French, the local beauty, the bankrupt knight, the blind poet, the protagonist-chronicler, woman won, woman lost); “mythical” (Helen, Homer); those characters created by the protagonist (Hanrahan). All these characters are as it were incarnations of two fundamental heroes, namely man and woman (or: the poet and his Muse).

In part II of *The Tower* the persons of part I are gradually made more concrete. The three levels of narration – “authentic”, “fictional” and “mythical” – begin to overlap. The equivalents of the Muse are in turn: the cruel Mrs. French (from Galway); the local beauty Mary Hynes (from Ballylee); Helen of Troy; Hanrahan's girl; the mysterious “woman won” and “woman lost”, directly linked with the protagonist. Further “reappearances” in part II of the Old Man (of part I) are in turn: the blind poet Raftery (from Ballylee) who sang the beauty of a local girl (Mary Hynes); Homer, who sang the beauty of Helen; the bankrupt aristocrat, who once owned the tower; the central character of Hanrahan, who is at one and the same time the Old Man and the Youth of part I.

Hanrahan is a character from Yeat's early stories. According to Yeat's own commentary to *The Tower*, the Hanrahan of *The Tower* and the Hanrahan of Yeat's stories are one and the same character. The dividing-line between the protagonist of *The Tower* and W.B. Yeats, author of the Red Hanrahan stories – like the dividing-line between the protagonist and Hanrahan – is gradually blurred. The poetical world of *The Tower* oscillates between near reality and pure fiction⁵⁵:

Mr. William Hervey' and used again in 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul' and part II of 'The Tower' (T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 199).

⁵³ Cf. D. Hoffman. *Yeat's use of the ballad form* [in:] *Critics on Yeats*, ed.cit.

Cf. J. Opacki: 'Ballada literacka – opis gatunku' [in:] J. Opacki and Cz. Zgorzelski, *Ballada*, Wrocław 1970.

⁵⁴ A.G. Stock considers that in *The Tower* Yeats has achieved the fusion (he had been seeking to achieve) of the actual and visionary planes of his poetry: "But in *The Tower*, when he looks out on the landscape, mind and place, the visionary and the actual, have become indistinguishably one" (A.G. Stock, op.cit., p. 86).

⁵⁵ Cf. Byron's *Don Juan*.

And I myself created Hanrahan
 And drove him drunk or sober through the dawn
 From somewhere in the neighbouring cottages (...)

For a proper comprehension of the significance of the main character of *The Tower*, i.e. Hanrahan, one must take the author-protagonist's advice and refer to Yeat's stories. The Hanrahan of Yeat's stories is a poet and a folk counterpart of the heroes of the legend of the Grail. The young Hanrahan of Yeat's stories loses his beloved while under the influence of a spell and begins the search for an ideal land of eternal youth, spring, love, beauty, wisdom and power⁵⁶. The aging Hanrahan curses his old age⁵⁷ and continues the quest until the end of his life. The vision of an ideal world, which suddenly ("in one beat of a heart") haunts Hanrahan several times in the course of his life, becomes a reality only at the moment of his death. Hanrahan then realizes that ideal reality lies dormant in the reality of everyday life, which is its visible, though "imperfect" ("fallen") manifestation.

Such an "imperfect" symbol of the land of perfection sought by Hanrahan is the "country wench" (cf. the tenth stanza of part II of *The Tower*) Winny Byrne and her poor cottage on the top of the hill, where Hanrahan is eventually lured by the barking of bewitched dogs chasing a hare. The "wench" and her surroundings then become transformed. Winny Byrne becomes the most beautiful woman in the world – the embodiment of eternal womanhood – while her cottage becomes the wonderful palace of the legend of the Grail. The dying Hanrahan's conversation with the transformed Winny Byrne runs as follows:

– You will go looking for me no more upon the breasts of women.

– Who are you? – he said then.

– I am one of the lasting people, of the lasting unwearied Voices, that make my dwelling in the broken and the dying, and those that have lost their wits; and I come looking for you, and you are mine until the whole world is burned like a candle that is spent. And look up now – she said – for the wisps that for our wedding are lighted⁵⁸.

The end of the story *The Death of Hanrahan* illuminates the meaning of parts I and II of *The Tower*. It suggests that in the world of the spirit there is unity of opposites. Old age, death, ugliness and poverty are not so much opposites as necessary complements

⁵⁶ Cf. *Red Hanrahan* and *The twisting of the Rope* [in:] *Stories of Red Hanrahan* (1897). *Rewritten in 1907 with Lady Gregory's Help* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit.

F.A.C. Wilson draws attention to the stylization of the *Stories of Red Hanrahan* on the legend of the Grail (F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeat's Iconograph*, loc.cit.)

Cf. Shelley: "The functions of the poetical faculty are twofold; by one it creates new materials of knowledge, and power, and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to certain rhythm and order, which may be called the beautiful and the good" (Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*).

⁵⁷ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Red Hanrahan's Curse* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit.

⁵⁸ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *The Death of Hanrahan* [in:] *ibidem*, p. 260.

to youth, beauty and happiness. Paraphrasing the remarks of F.A.C. Wilson⁵⁹ (taken from the end of his study of Yeats's drama *The King of the Great Clock Tower*) one can say that the Hanrahan stories "broaden out at its conclusion into a general statement of the Platonic theory of opposites. Every quality cries out to be combined with that which is most alien to it, and without such fusion cannot be called complete: 'without contraries is no progression'."

It is this very unity of opposites which is sought by the protagonist of *The Tower* – the Old Man – who is just barely distinguished from W.B. Yeats (the creator of Hanrahan) and from Hanrahan himself. The Hanrahan of *The Tower* therefore appears to be the protagonist's principal mask, uniting the present of the protagonist's interior monologue with the "mythological" past. In the second part of *The Tower* the briefly retold story of the protagonist's life serves to recapitulate the various levels of lyrical narration – i.e. the experiences of the protagonist; the inhabitants of Ballylee; Celtic and Greek mythological heroes. In addition, it symbolizes the successive stages of man's existence: from the youthful search for the unity of being – resulting in defeat – to rebellion against old age and the experience of eternity and death.

In the second part of *The Tower* all the successive episodes from the past – retold by the protagonist in stanzas 2 – 8 (the story of Mrs. French; the local beauty; allusions to the story of Helen of Troy) – have as their climax the scene in which Hanrahan chases the dogs which are themselves chasing a hare (stanzas 6 and 7). This scene, which ends in defeat (the meaning of which will be explained) is in opposition both to the symbolic climb of part I of *The Tower* and to the end of the story about Hanrahan (quoted above):

And I myself created Hanrahan
 And drove him drunk or sober through the dawn
 From somewhere in the neighbouring cottages.
 Caught by an old man's juggleries
 He stumbled, tumbled, fumbled to and fro
 And had but broken knees for hire
 And horrible splendour of desire;
 I thought it all out twenty years ago;

Good fellows shuffled cards in an old bawn;
 And when that ancient ruffian's turn was on
 He so bewitched the cards under his thumb
 That all but the one card became
 A pack of hounds and not a pack of cards.

⁵⁹ Cf. F.A.C. Wilson, *W.B. Yeats and Tradition*, ed.cit., p. 94. The idea of complementary opposites was also dear to Blake (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*). Yeats writes about this in his essay *W. Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit.

And that he changed into a hare.
 Hanrahan rose in frenzy there
 And followed up those baying creatures towards –
 O towards I have forgotten what – enough! (...)

This fragment, coming after the episodes of the local beauty and Helen of Troy, is a successive transformation of the central theme of *The Tower* – i.e. the search. In the Hanrahan episode, therefore, all the symbolic meanings of the second part of *The Tower* – woven around the theme of the search, the character of Helen of Troy and the motifs of the tower, the sun, the moon and the dogs chasing the hare – overlap.

The symbols assembled in the second part of *The Tower* – like the character of Hanrahan – derive from various earlier works and have their established meanings in the overall context of Yeats's works. This allows the poet not only to further illuminate, but also to enrich the poem's meaning. The interpretative centre of all the symbols quoted is the titular motif of the tower, which is indirectly invoked by them. Always linked with this, the poem's main symbol, is the character of Helen, who in turn unites the great conflicting forces of love and war⁶⁰. Linked with love in the Hanrahan stories is the motif of the sun becoming one with the moon⁶¹. In Yeats's essays the sun and the moon represent the father and mother of "all living things"⁶², the two mythical principles of being and – in later works – also two opposed spiritual attitudes (to be discussed below). In the poem *Under the Round Tower*, the linking together of three symbols – sun, moon and tower – suggests the alchemical transformation of twofold being (dual being) into unity. The symbol of the tower therefore has alchemical overtones. Bearing in mind that the dogs and the hare are also alchemical symbols endowed with sexual meaning, one can say that in the second part of *The Tower* – as in Yeats's earlier works – erotic and mystical symbolism concurs with alchemical symbolism⁶³.

Just as the characters of the second part of *The Tower* can, in the final analysis, be reduced to a couple (man and woman), so all the symbols introduced in the second part of the poem "revolve" around two opposed elements of being and suggest a search for

⁶⁰ Cf. G. Melchiori, *The Swan, Helen and the Tower* [in:] op.cit.

⁶¹ "The sun and the moon are the man and the girl, they are my life and your life, they are traveling and ever travelling through the skies as if under the one hood. It was God who made them for one another. He made your life and my life before the beginning of the world, He made them that they might go through the world, up and down, like the two best dancers that go on with the dance up and down the long floor of the barn, fresh and laughing, when all the rest are tired out and leaning against the wall" (W.B. Yeats, *The Twisting of the Rope* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit., pp. 227 – 228).

⁶² "Did not the Egyptian carve it on emerald that all living things have the sun for father and the moon for mother, and has it not been said that a man of genius takes the most after his mother?" (1903 – W.B. Yeats, *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 216).

⁶³ The magic and alchemical aspect of Yeats's symbolism has been analysed by T. Henn (op.cit.). G. Melchiori (op.cit.) and F.A.C. Wilson (op.cit.) – who have linked it with Yeats's favourite book *Axel* (by Villiers de l'Isle Adam) and with Yeats's reading of works on the occult.

The magical and alchemical function of poetry is also stressed by Shelley: "... its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life" (Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*).

the transformation and unity of opposites, the perfect expression of which is human love.

In *The Tower*, love is seen in a humanistic and cosmic context. Emphasis is laid on man's lack of self-sufficiency and his need for fulfilment. It would seem that the myth of Androgyne from Plato's *Banquet (Symposium)* belongs to the poem's implied context. Love is understood as the simplest possibility of self-realization and completeness – that unity of opposites on a human scale for which all the characters of *The Tower* yearn. The universal aspect of love is also revealed, there being the suggestion that this most human of passions might well be the principle of cosmic order (Unity of Being).

O may the moon and sunlight seem
 One inextricable beam,
 For if I triumph I must make men mad.

This fragment also directly illuminates the Platonic–Romantic implied context of the second part of the poem. The belief in the power of love (understood as a cosmic law) to unite opposites brings to mind the favourite text of the Romantics – Plato's *Banquet*⁶⁴.

The motif of the inspired poet, whose “divine madness” (“mania”) is the key to real wisdom, brings to mind another Platonic source of the Romantics, namely *Phaedrus*, where four kinds of “divine” (as opposed to human or pathological) madness are discussed: – those of the prophet, the lover, the mystic and the poet⁶⁵.

In *Phaedrus* and in *The Banquet* love is also understood as a particular psychic disposition conditioning man's spiritual development, the goal of which is the “possession of immortal good”⁶⁶, identified with the idea of beauty.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Platona Uczta*, trans. W. Witwicki, Lwów 1924 (part XII – Eryximachus).

Cf. Shelley, *The Banquet of Plato* [in:] Shelley, op.cit.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Platona Fajdros*, trans. W. Witwicki, Warsaw 1958, XLVII, p. 104.

⁶⁶ I. Dąbbska has drawn attention to the complex meaning of the concept of love in Plato's dialogues (I. Dąbbska, *Dwa studia o Platonic*, Wrocław 1972, pp. 37 – 38).

Cf. Shelley: “Love is the desire that good be for ever present to us. Of necessity Love must also be the desire of immortality” (Shelley, *The Banquet of Plato* [in:] Shelley, op.cit., p. 862).

Cf. Shelley: “When any one, ascending from a correct system of Love, begins to contemplate this supreme beauty, he already touches the consummation of his labour. For such as discipline themselves upon this system, or are conducted by another beginning to ascend through these transitory objects which are beautiful, towards that which is beauty itself, proceeding as on steps from the love of one form to that of two, and from that of two, to that of all forms which are beautiful; and from beautiful forms to beautiful habits and institutions, and from institutions to beautiful doctrines; until, from the meditation of many doctrines, they arrive at that which is nothing else than the doctrine of the supreme beauty itself, in the knowledge and contemplation of which at length they repose.

‘Such a life as this my dear Socrates’, exclaimed the stranger Prophetess, ‘spent in the contemplation of the beautiful, is the life for men to live; which if you chance ever to experience, you will esteem far beyond gold and rich garments, and even those lovely persons whom you and many others now gaze on with astonishment, and are prepared neither to eat nor drink so that you may behold and live for ever with these objects of your love! What then shall we imagine to be the aspect of the supreme beauty itself, simple, pure.

For the Romantics, who held creative imagination⁶⁷ to be the chief intellectual faculty, love was the basis of imagination and the pre-condition for creation. Platonic love, being “enthusiasm for beauty”⁶⁸ (beauty in the final analysis being identified with Good), for the Romantics meant also “enthusiasm for art”, i.e. for beauty created by man, who as a creator of beauty tends to become God’s equal⁶⁹.

In *The Tower* this creative aspect of love is introduced by the motif of the inspired poet⁷⁰ – i.e. the poem’s protagonist – who, in accordance with the Romantic interpretation of the role of the poet, combines in himself all four kinds of “divine madness”. The protagonist of *The Tower* is as much a poet as he is a lover, prophet, mystic and teacher. He wishes to open the gates of his lonely tower and meet the spiritual needs of mankind. He is not passive but active, and – like the Romantic inspired poet – attempts to

uncontaminated with the intermixture of human flesh and colours, and all other idle and unreal shapes attendant on mortality: the divine, the original, the supreme, the self consistent, the monoëdic beautiful itself? What must be the life of him who dwells with and gazes on that which it becomes us all to seek? Think you not that to him alone is accorded the prerogative of bringing forth, not images and shadows of virtue, for he is in contact not with a shadow but with reality: with virtue itself, in the production and nourishment of which he becomes dear to the Gods, and if such a privilege is conceded to any human being himself immortal” (Shelley, *ibidem*, p. 867).

⁶⁷ Cf. Shelley: “According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action, which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced, and the latter, as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing from them as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity. The one is the *το ποιειν*, or the principle of synthesis, and has for its object those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; the other is the *το λογιζειν*, or principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things, simply as relations; considering thoughts not in their integral unity, but as the algebraical representations which conduct to certain general results. Reason is the enumeration of quantities already known, imagination is the perception of the value of those quantities, both separately and as a whole. Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things. Reason is to the imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance” (Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 1023 – 1024).

Yeats’s own interpretation of ‘reason’ and ‘imagination’ is similar to that of Shelley in the essay *William Blake and his illustrations to the Divine Comedy* (W.B. Yeats, *Essays...* ed.cit., p. 112).

According to W. Pater, Platonic *θεωπια* – understood as man’s supreme intellectual faculty, uniting the sensual and rational spheres of the human psyche – is equivalent to ‘imaginative reason’, i.e. the imagination of the Romantics:

“For him (i.e. Plato – J.D.) all gifts of sense and intelligence converge in one supreme faculty of theoretic vision, *θεωπια*, the imaginative reason” (W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit., p. 126).

The Yeatsian synonyms for imagination are ‘intellect’ and ‘creative mind’.

It would therefore appear that the Romantics were not so much opposed to reason as to the idea that analytical reason is man’s supreme intellectual faculty.

Cf. A. Gerard, *On the logic of Romanticism* [in:] *Romanticism. Points of View* ed.cit., pp. 232 – 234.

Cf. also C.M. Bowra (op.cit.), R. Wellek (op.cit.), W.K. Wimsatt Jr and C. Brookes (op.cit.), F. Kermode (op.cit.).

⁶⁸ The expression is Pater’s (W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit.).

⁶⁹ The concept of creation and its evolution has been studied by M. Tatarkiewicz (W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dziele sześciu pojęć. Sztuka. Piękno. Forma. Twórczość. Odtworczość. Przewidywanie*, Warsaw 1976

⁷⁰ The Yeatsian counterparts of ‘inspiration’ are ‘folly’, ‘excitement’, ‘madness’, ‘trenzy’ and ‘histerica passio’.

transform people by revealing to them the secret of cosmic order, i.e. the Platonic order of light, beauty and love⁷¹. According to the Romantics, inspired poetry is above all a creative act of love and knowing and the expression of an inner vision of truth and beauty. This act can be repeated in the soul of the reader or hearer, where it brings about the deepest of reactions, i.e. inspired madness (cf. "I must make men mad").

Yeats grasped and developed the essential tenets of the Romantic theory of imagination and poetry (together with its Platonic implied context) to be found (chiefly) in the works of Blake, Shelley and Pater – also Coleridge and Wordsworth⁷². In an essay on Blake⁷³ he wrote: "Passions because most living are most holy". According to Yeats, Blake's conception of imagination, art and the cosmos is based on the "holy" passions of love and creation (i.e. the madness of the lover and the poet in *Phaedrus*).

In an essay on Shelley⁷⁴, Yeats draws a parallel between Blake's "Holy Spirit", which was supposed to be the "central power of the world", and Shelley's Plotinic conception of "intellectual beauty". In both cases the sources of lifegiving and creative spiritual energy are: love, beauty, truth, freedom and creation.

Bearing in mind the Romantic conception of poetical imagination, it is not difficult to understand why in *The Tower* – the theme of which is precisely imagination – such an important part is played by love.

It is to be noted, however, that a whole fragment of the second part of *The Tower* devoted to the Romantic ideal of inspired poetry is permeated with a consciousness of the enormous gulf that separates the protagonist from this ideal. A sign of this gulf is the use of the optative mood (O may the sun...) and also the protagonist's description of his alter ego as a "half-mounted man".

It is also to be noted that in *The Tower*, emotions other than love are mentioned – in particular rage and pride. These would hardly have been endowed with creative power by Shelley.

⁷¹ "The whole objection, however, of the immortality of poetry rests upon a misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man (...) But poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian lights stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them, as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coexists. The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination (...)" (Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 1032).

This openness to the needs of mankind, which is characteristic of the Great Romantics, is foreign to the Decadents, shut up in their 'ivory towers'. Cf. R. Brombert, op.cit., p. 75.

⁷² Much information concerning Yeats's attitude to the Romantics is to be found in: W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit. and in: W.B. Yeats, *Memoirs*. Transcribed and edited by D. Donoghue, Macmillan, London 1972.

⁷³ Cf. *William Blake and the Imagination* (1897) [in:] W.B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, ed.cit., p. 113.

⁷⁴ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry* [in:] ibidem, pp. 77 – 78.

It would therefore seem that the protagonist of *The Tower*, insofar as his views on the role of passion in man's inner life and creation are concerned, is closer to Blake than to Shelley. Yeats's essays confirm this. In his essays on Blake and Shelley, Yeats constructed his own version of the Romantic tradition⁷⁵ and it is to this that his own works "refer", so to speak. Interpreting Blake, Yeats quotes the following fragment:

"Men are admitted into Heaven not because they have curbed and governed their passions, but because they have cultivated their understandings. The treasures of Heaven are not negations of passion but realities of intellect, from which the passions emanate uncurbed in their eternal glory"⁷⁶

This quotation of Blake's views on the emotional sphere of the human psyche would seem to be close to Yeats's own views on the matter. Yeats's understanding of the emotional sphere is in turn close to the Nietzschean concept of vital energy⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Yeats's interpretation of the poetry of Blake and Shelley is subjected to critical examination by H. Bloom, who describes it as 'creative misinterpretation'.

⁷⁶ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., pp 137 – 138.

The rest of the quote reads as follows: "The fool shall not enter into Heaven, let him be ever so holy. Holiness is not the price of entering into Heaven. Those who are cast out are all those who, having no passions of their own, because no intellect, have spent their lives in curbing and governing other people's by the various acts of poverty and cruelty of all kinds ... The modern Church crucifies Christ with the head downwards. Woe, woe, woe to you hypocrites". Cf. W. Blake, *A Vision of the Last Judgment* [in:] *Complete Writings*, Ed. G. Keynes, Oxford 1979, p. 615.

⁷⁷ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *The Second Coming* [in:] *Collected Poems*, p. 211 and *Whence had they come* [in:] *ibidem*, p. 332.

(Yeats:) "I have always come to this certainty: what moves natural men in the arts is what moves them in life, and that is, intensity of personal life (...) They must go out of the theatre with the strength they live by strengthened from looking upon some passion that could, whatever its chosen way of life, strike down an enemy, fill a long stocking with money or move a girl's heart (...) An existing person, whether the hero of a play or the maker of poems, will display the greatest volume of personal energy, and this energy must seem to come out of the body as out of the mind" (W.B. Yeats, *Personality and the Intellectual Essences* (1906) [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., pp. 265 – 266).

Cf. also Blake:

"1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.

2. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body; and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.

3. Energy is Eternal Delight.

Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

And being restrained, it by degrees becomes passive, till it is only the shadow of desire". (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* [in:] W. Blake, *A Selection of Poems and Letters*, Ed. J. Bronowski, Penguin Books 1972, p. 94).

Cf. also Keats:

"I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination. What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth – whether it existed before or not – for I have the same idea of all our Passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty" (J. Keats, *Letter to Benjamin Bailey, 22 November 1817* [in:] *English Critical Texts. 16th Century to 20th century*, Ed. D.J. Enright and E. Je Chickera, London 1963, p. 256).

Cf. also R. Wellek's remarks on the meaning of the word 'passion' in the critical works of Coleridge (R. Wellek, op.cit., p. 168).

(cf. “passionate intensity”), which can find its expression not only in creation, but also in destruction.

On the basis of Yeats’s essay on Blake, one can say that Yeats did not make the creative power of passions dependent on their moral qualification (according to criteria of good and evil) but endowed each passion with potentially creative power. In this he considered himself to be following in the footsteps of Blake, author of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Like Blake, he also believed that passions should be understood and not suppressed. The “understanding” of passions would seem to mean the revealing of their creative possibilities.

For Yeats, creative possibilities were to be found also in “negative” passions such as “rage”, “pride”⁷⁸ (which permeate *The Tower*) and even “hate”⁷⁹. The reverse is also possible: “positive” passions such as love, if improperly understood, can become forces of destruction.

In the second part of *The Tower*, the protagonist would seem to attempt to purify his own imagination through an understanding of its foundations, i.e. passions, and in particular that most powerful of passions – Platonic and Romantic love.

It is the sphere of “realization” and not that of “wishing” which is predominant in the second part of the poem. Opposed to the sphere of “realization” is the Romantic concept of creative love (which unites opposites) and the concomitant ideal of inspired poetry, i.e. the sphere of wishing.

Mrs. French (the cruel Salome), the local beauty, Helen of Troy, Hanrahan’s girl, the protagonist’s women – all these female characters bring to their male counterparts not the harmony they long for, but death, defeat and unease⁸⁰. The most powerful of Platonic and Romantic passions – love – is thus the object of comprehensive discussion. The questions which haunt the protagonist can be formulated as follows:

1. What exactly *is* love – a psychic disposition, feeling, desire, inspiration or mania?
2. What is the *object* of love – human bodies, human souls, ideas or art? Is the object of love possessed or contemplated?
3. Is love endowed with creative power?

Yeats’s attitude to Nietzsche is one of the problems of Yeats criticism. That he knew Nietzsche’s writings is borne out both by his poetical work (cf. *The Phases of the Moon*) and by his prose (cf. *A Vision*). It is also clear that Yeats’s attitude to Nietzsche was complex. In *Blake’s illustrations to Dante* Yeats draws attention to the Romantic genealogy of Nietzsche’s thought, which ‘flows always, though with an even more violent current in the bed Blake’s thought has worn’ (p. 130). H. Bloom sees Nietzsche and Yeats as belonging to a common, European Romantic tradition of culture. In the opinion of H. Bloom, the cult of energy (apocalyptic vitalism), together with the myth of eternal recurrence, the idea of the ‘superman’, ‘antithetical wisdom’, the motif of ‘tragic joy’ and the conception of life as tragedy are Romantic concepts which are present not only in the work of Nietzsche and Yeats, but also in that of Shelley, Blake and Pater.

⁷⁸ Yeats’s understanding of the word ‘pride’ will be discussed below.

⁷⁹ Cf. *The Spur* [in:] W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*, ed.cit. p. 359.

Cf. ‘Ribh considers Christian Love insufficient’ [in:] *ibidem*, p. 330.

⁸⁰ Cf. M. Praz, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* [in:] *op.cit.*

4. Is love a law only of the human heart, or is it a law of the universe? Can it be both, i.e. can it be a source of both spiritual and cosmic order (Unity of Being)?

The answers to these questions must be sought in the fate of the male characters of *The Tower*, in the Greek "level" of the poem and in the protagonist's conversation with Hanrahan. In other words – in the whole complex symbolism of motifs, events and characters, which – oscillating between the positive and negative poles of love – clearly favours the latter.

The reasons for the failure of the male characters of *The Tower* as far as love is concerned must first and foremost be sought in the deeper meanings of the motifs of the sun and moon, which are present both in the episode of the local beauty and in the stanza devoted to Helen of Troy. One of the local beauty's admirers loses his life because he and his companions "... mistook the brightness of the moon / For the prosaic light of day ..." –

Some few remembered still when I was young
 A peasant girl commended by a song,
 Who'd lived somewhere upon that rocky place,
 And praised the colour of her face,
 And had the greater joy in praising her,
 Remembering that, if walked she there,
 Farmers jostled at the fair
 So great a glory did the song confer.

And certain men, being maddened by those rhymes,
 Or else by toasting her a score of times,
 Rose from the table and declared it right
 To test their glory by their sight;
 But they mistook the brightness of the moon
 For the prosaic light of day –
 Music had driven their wits astray –
 And one was drowned in the great bog of Cloone.

Any attempt to fully explain the symbolism of the sun and the moon in the second part of *The Tower* must take into account the meaning given to these motifs in Yeats's earlier works, especially in the poem *The phases of the moon* (written in 1919) and in the essay *A Vision*⁸¹ (published in 1926). In *A Vision* Yeats fully developed a cyclical

⁸¹ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit.

H. Bloom gives an interpretation of *A Vision* (1) in the light of the two versions of the text, (2) in the light of the poetry of Blake and Shelley, and (3) in the light of the psychology of Freud and Jung (H. Bloom, op.cit., ch. 14, 15).

More concise studies of *A Vision* are to be found in:
 R. Ellmann, op.cit., ch. XV.

vision (sketched out in *The phases of the moon*) of human life and history linked to the Platonic concepts of the “great year” and the wheel of reincarnation.

According to Yeats, each human life corresponds to one of twenty-six (out of a possible twenty-eight) phases of the moon – phase one (total darkness) and phase fifteen (the full moon) being considered non-human. The phases are divided into “primary” (i.e. objective) and “antithetical” (i.e. subjective). This classification reflects the two fundamental forces of the human psyche, namely that (primary – symbolized by the sun) directed towards the outside world and that (antithetical – symbolized by the moon) directed towards the inner self. In the process of reincarnation, the total experience of the human soul encompasses both the objective (i.e. primary) and the subjective phases. Yeats himself, *qua* “the last Romantic”, preferred subjective, “lonely ecstasy”, which he opposed to the “communal wisdom of society”⁸².

The moon plays a dominant role in his symbolism, the full moon (phase fifteen) expressing Unity of Being. In the case of an individual life the phase of the full moon signifies the achievement – after a certain number of incarnations – of the internal integration of all man’s faculties, i.e. the will, creative intellect (imagination) and the body⁸³. In the case of history, the phase of the full moon denotes great cultural ages.

According to Yeats, such great cultural ages were Periclean Athens, the Italian Renaissance and the early period of Byzantine art. Unity of Being signifies the integration – achieved during these ages – of various fields of human endeavour (i.e. history, religion, daily life, art). Art evokes the entire community’s spiritual vision, the function of the artist being to express this “social” vision⁸⁴. Yeats also calls the phase of the Unity of Being the “Phase of Complete Beauty”. The meaning of “complete beauty” would seem to be close to the Platonic concept of justice as it is understood in *The Republic*, i.e. the harmonious and hierarchical attuning of man’s physical and spiritual faculties.

In *A Vision*, both individuals and whole societies belonging to the sign of the full moon (symbolizing the phase of Unity of Being) give themselves up to lonely contemplation of fulfilled desires. The remaining phases of the moon (with the exception of phase one – total darkness and chaos) symbolize the degree in which man (in successive reincarnations) or cyclical history have approached to or receded from Unity of Being.

A.G. Stock, *op.cit.*, ch. VIII and IX.

T.R. Henn, *op.cit.*, ch. 12.

⁸² Cf. H. Bloom, *op.cit.*, p. 224.

⁸³ “During the supernatural incarnation of Phase 15, we were compelled to assume an absolute identity of the Will, or self, with its creative power, of beauty with body” (W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 162).

⁸⁴ “I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, that architect and artificers – though not, it may be, poets, for language had been the instrument of controversy and must have grown abstract – spoke to the multitude and the few alike. The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books, were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject – matter and that the vision of a whole people” (W.B. Yeats, *ibidem*, pp. 279 – 280).

In *A Vision*, Yeats places beautiful women near to phase fifteen, i.e. in the immediate vicinity of “superhuman” perfection, almost unattainable by ordinary mortals but possible in art. In *The Tower* beautiful women are accompanied both by the symbolism of the moon or the union of sun and moon and by allusions to Homer and Plato (who created myths). As it stands, this would seem to suggest that the only perfect expression of “enthusiasm for beauty” (i.e. love) is art which is free of desire, which incarnates dreams and which is given to contemplation.

In *The Tower*, beautiful women become symbols of both Unity of Being and the organic beauty of art, in accordance with the well known Romantic parallel between a poem and a beautiful woman⁸⁵.

In the poetical world of *The Tower*, where the moon and the sun are also shown as two equal sources of light, the symbolic aspect of moonlight and sunlight comes to the fore. This can surely be no accident, since in Platonic and especially Neo-Platonic aesthetics, light is identified with both the essence of being and beauty, being thereby indirectly associated with knowledge, love and art. According to Plotinus, light – like love, beauty and knowledge – has two aspects: material and spiritual. The Romantics for their part were fascinated by light, which symbolized “order”, “harmony”, “spiritual illumination”, “work of imagination”, “transcendental vision”, and the “ideal to which a poet aspires”⁸⁶. Shelley preferred the light of the sun, others preferred that of the moon (imagination, beauty, love).

By the “prosaic light of day” – for which the unfortunate admirers of the beautiful country girl mistake the light of the moon – the protagonist of *The Tower* not only

⁸⁵ Cf. F. Kermode, *The Dancer* [in:] op.cit. Cf. also footnote No. 32.

⁸⁶ “Inevitably some images proved so appropriate to the Romantic endeavour to tame chaos, to assert an ideal order, that they recur in the work of many poets. The most universal image is perhaps that of light, a fit symbol of spiritual illumination, of the transcendental vision, of the work of the imagination, or of the ideal to which the poet aspires. It takes many forms, but the sun, moon and stars are especially prominent because of their associations with heaven, their nature as permanent sources of light. So for instance, the sun and the moon are controlling influences on the voyage of the ancient mariner and throughout Coleridge’s poetry the moon in particular seems, as a light that shines in darkness, to symbolize the work of the imagination. In the Prelude, as elsewhere in Wordsworth’s poetry, the sun and moon play their part, especially the ‘deep radiance’ of the setting sun (...) Again in the climax of this poem it is the moon that reigns ‘in single glory’ over the grand vision in the last book. Keats wrote a long poem on the theme of the Endymion, a human being spiritualized, made immortal, through his love for the moon, which again represents perhaps the power of the imagination; and the central figure of ‘Hyperion’ is the sungod. As Keats had appealed to a star as an emblem of permanence, ‘Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!’ so in ‘Adonais’ Shelley’s vision transmutes the dead poet into a fixed star, made immortal. One of the dominant images in *In Memoriam* is again light, and the restoration of faith in Tennyson is symbolized in the union of evening and morning stars, Hesper and Phosphor (Section cxi), both Venus, and both representing that love which had seemed destroyed with the death of Hallam, but is finally reborn in the morning light of a new assertion. All the heavenly bodies were types of ‘that unchanging realm, where Love reigns evermore’, and the pervasive image of light could well be made the basis of an anthology of Romantic poetry” (R.A. Foakes, *Order out of Chaos* [in:] *Romanticism. Points of View*, ed.cit., p. 243).

The meaning of the motif of the moon in this part of *The Tower* is interpreted by T. Parkinson as follows: “In this one poem the moon is used to suggest the fall from unity into diversity, the imagination, feminine enchantment, and one of the antithetical forces that compose art” (T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 165).

means the purely material, sensual pole of Platonic beauty and love, but also means the world of nature as opposed to art. As in the Plotinic parable, the heroes of *The Tower* suffer defeat (and one of them is drowned in the “bog” of matter) because their fascination with physical charms prevents them from understanding the spiritual aspect of love and beauty (symbolized by moonlight) and also because they fail to recognize the “superhuman” status of the beautiful girl, who embodies beauty in both of its aspects. They do not know that beings who unite in themselves spiritual and physical beauty have no need of ordinary people. The partners of these perfect women can probably only be superhuman beings like themselves. Hence the necessity for the transformation of ordinary people and the wish that – through inspired poetry – they too might be able to partake of love which is at once spiritual and material.

The poem’s Greek stanza, devoted to Homer, Helen and the inspired poet, would seem to suggest that in the second part of *The Tower* (especially stanzas 3 and 4) other motifs concerning love and beauty – from *The Banquet* and *Phaedrus* – are recalled by the poet. In particular:

1. The conception of love not so much as a passion, as a mental disposition whose object is the eternal possession of immortal good, identified with the idea of beauty.
2. The differentiation of spiritual beauty (= good = wisdom = virtue) and physical beauty.
3. The conviction that spiritual beauty is superior to physical beauty (e.g. Socrates).
4. The distinction between two kinds of love: “higher” and “lower”.

According to Plato, “higher” love begins at the level of physical attraction to a beautiful body and leads to a knowledge of the very idea of beauty (i.e. of good) through an intensification of spiritual (intellectual) life. At first, the lovers make use of their external senses, the most important being sight. Later they use only the inner counterparts of the senses. “Lower” love begins and ends only at the level of physical pleasure. In *The Banquet* these two kinds of love have their respective goddesses of beauty, namely Venus Uranian (higher love) and Venus Pandemian (lower love)⁸⁷.

Whereas the Hanrahan episode is the climax of the narrative, the meaning of the second part of the poem would seem to be expressed by the Greek level of *The Tower*. Here reflections on the theme of love as the basis of imagination develop into reflections on the essence and function of poetry.

Strange, but the man who made the song was blind;
Yet, now I have considered it, I find

⁸⁷ Cf. Yeats’s remarks on the symbols of the morning star and evening star in Shelley’s poetry:

“We know too that had Prince Athanase been finished it would have described the finding of Pandemos, the Star’s lower genius, and the growing weary of her, and the coming of its true genius Urania at the coming of death, as the day finds the star at evening. There is hardly indeed a poem of any length in which one does not find it as a symbol of love, or liberty, or wisdom, or beauty, or of some other expression of that Intellectual Beauty which was to Shelley’s mind the central power of the world; and to its faint and fleeting light he offers up all desires...” (W.B. Yeats, *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 89).

That nothing strange; the tragedy began
 With Homer that was a blind man,
 And Helen has all living hearts betrayed.
 O may the moon and sunlight seem
 One inextricable beam,
 For if I triumph I must make men mad.

In *The Tower*, Homer is presented as the first creator of the ideally beautiful woman, who is indirectly responsible for the yearning for the ideal world felt by all the male characters of *The Tower*. This Homer is a complex character who has nothing in common with Schiller's "naive" poet. He is close to the ambiguous Homer of Plato's dialogues (the inspired poet and the creator of mimetic poetry), to the inspired Homer of Keats's poem *To Homer* and to the Homer of Pater's essays (where he is on a par with Plato)⁸⁸.

According to Pater, Homer and Plato were the first to link the concept of beauty to a human passion – love. Pater was also of the opinion that Homer's gods are the counterparts of Plato's ideas⁸⁹. In *The Tower*, therefore, Homer appears in a context of allusions to the ambiguous Platonic conception of the poet, love and poetry.

In this Platonic context the beautiful Helen too seems to be the embodiment of Plato's thoughts. She is at one and the same time: a woman; the idea of beauty (i.e. that "abstract thing" opposed to "living hearts"); a goddess; a mimetic creation (which becomes the object of desire of the "living heart" and the source of its misfortune)⁹⁰.

The feasibility of such an interpretation is supported by a comprehensive analysis of all three love episodes in the second part of *The Tower*. Linked by a common theme and

⁸⁸ The attitude of the English Romantics and Yeats to Homer is coloured by the allegorical and symbolical interpretation of the *Odyssey* by the Neo-Platonist Porphyry.

Cf. Footnotes No 16 and 36.

Cf. Shelley, *A Defence of poetry*.

Cf. W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit.

⁸⁹ "It was like a recrudescence of polytheism in that abstract world: a return of the many gods of Homer, veiled now as abstract notions, Love, Fear, Confidence and the like; and as such, the modern anthropologist, our student of the natural history of man, would rank the Platonic theory as but a form of what he calls 'animism'. Animism, that tendency to locate the movements of a soul like our own in every object, almost in every circumstance, which impresses one with a sense of power, is a condition of mind, of which the simplest illustration is primitive man adoring, as a divine being endowed with will, the meteoric stone that came rushing from the sky. That condition 'survives', however, in the negro, who thinks the discharging gun a living creature; as it survives also, more subtly, in the culture of Wordsworth and Shelley, for whom clouds and peaks are kindred spirits: in the pantheism of Goethe; and in Schelling, who formulates that pantheism as a philosophic, a Platonic, theory. Such 'animistic' instinct was, certainly, a natural element in Plato's mental constitution – the instinctive effort to find *anima*, the conditions of personality, in whatever preoccupied his mind, a mind, be it remembered, of which the various functions, as we reckon them, imagination, reason, intuition, were still by no means clearly analysed and differentiated from each other, but participated, all alike and all together in every single act of mind" (W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit., p. 151).

⁹⁰ This treatment of the character of Helen foreshadows the poetical 'creed' of the protagonist in the third part of *The Tower*. In this 'creed' the world of the imagination is equated with the ideal and real world.

by common motifs, they become as it were three variants of the same basic narrative. In the first episode a real girl is transformed into a living legend and becomes the subject of a poet's song, an idealized creation unattainable by those who seek her in the world of everyday life. In the third episode Hanrahan sets off in vain pursuit of a bewitched hare. In reward, Hanrahan "... had but broken knees for hire/ And horrible splendour of desire ...".

In the context of these two episodes the heroine of the middle fragment – beautiful Helen – also becomes as it were a phantom, a creation of the poetical imagination, which "all living hearts betrayed". It would therefore seem that the protagonist – in an allusive and ironic manner – here recalls Plato's well known arguments in *The Republic*⁹¹ against:

1. Homer as a (literally) mad poet, i.e. the irresponsible maker of mimetic phantoms that lead people away from the path to real knowledge.
2. Art, understood as imitation of imitation, i.e. coming bottom in the Platonic hierarchy: ideas – nature – art (mimesis).
3. Passions, understood as the lower part of the human soul, from which poetry arises and which poetry excites.

The "failure in love" of the male characters of the second part of *The Tower* can also be seen as follows: they fail because irresponsible, blind poets have aroused in them carnal desire for persons who do not exist, i.e. love for the artificial world, which is but the shadow of reality. In other words, the cause of their misfortune is beauty created by man, i.e. art: "... the tragedy began / With Homer that was a blind man, / And Helen has all living hearts betrayed".

Seen in this context, the blindness of Homer and the poet who sang the beauty of the country girl takes on a further meaning, indicating not only the blind poet's proximity to the ideal world (Keats), but also his turning away from people and the real world. In this fragment it would seem that Yeats's understanding of blindness⁹² concurs with Plato's and that the poet here recalls yet another motif from *Phaedrus* and Plotinus's treatise on beauty, namely blindness and clairvoyance. In *Phaedrus* blindness symbolizes a false conception of love, based on desire, while sight is linked to the description of real love, whose object is the contemplation of the idea of beauty (= good) and truth. In *Phaedrus* blindness is also the poet's punishment for falsehood, the motif of blindness and clairvoyance being directly linked to the discussion on the reality and "divinity" of Helen.

When Socrates speaks of "lower" love he covers his face with his cloak so as not to offend Eros. Only when he begins to talk about "higher" love does he uncover his face. He explains his behaviour by reminding his listener of the story of the poet Stezichor,

⁹¹ Cf. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. D. Lee, Penguin Books 1975, parts III and X.

⁹² Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Why the Blind Man in Ancient Times was made a Poet* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., pp. 277 – 278.

Cf. also footnote No 36.

who was deprived of his sight by the gods for having offended Helen. Stezichor dared to blame Helen – beauty incarnate and almost a goddess (daughter of Leda and Zeus) – for war (i.e. evil). Realizing his mistake, Stezichor wrote in a propitiatory palinode that the Trojan war was waged over a phantom and had nothing whatever to do with the real Helen (who never left Sparta).

In *The Tower*, the order in which the Platonic belief in the spectral, mimetic character of art is opposed to the equally Platonic belief in the superhuman character of inspired poetry (which mediates between the real world and the ideal world) leaves no doubt as to which sphere – nature or art – is “spectral” in character and as to who is really blind. The blindness of the poets turns out to be clairvoyance, while the sight of the admirers of the beautiful girl turns out to be blindness. The ideal world represented by art turns out to be the real world, while the natural world turns out to be an illusion. Beautiful Helen and the heroine of the local poet’s song represent “super-reality” which can be the object only of love of a particular kind. The words “The tragedy began with Homer” are not so much a condemnation of inspired poetry as a condemnation of Homer’s audience, who like the admirers of the beautiful country girl – were incapable of thinking in extra-material categories and who were incapable of assuming a disinterested attitude towards beauty. Hence the need for people to be transformed.

At this juncture it is worthwhile to refer to the writings of Plato’s follower and commentator Plotinus and in particular to that fragment of his treatise on beauty which deals with the difference between real and illusory beauty. Plotinus links the motif of the shadowlike, spectral character of sensual beauty and the motif of love as a pursuit and vain attempt to grasp an elusive phantom to the motif of blindness, as does Yeats in *The Tower*⁹³:

“He that has the strength, let him arise and withdraw into himself, forgoing all that is known by the eyes, turning away for ever from the material beauty that once made his joy. When he perceives those shapes of grace that show in body, let him not pursue: he must know them for copies, vestiges, shadows, and hasten away towards that they tell of. For if anyone follow what is like a beautiful shape playing over water – is there not a myth telling in symbol of such a dupe, how he sank into the depths of the current and was swept away into nothingness? So too, one that is held by material beauty and will not break free shall be precipitated, not in body but in Soul, down to the dark depths loathed of the Intellectual-Being, where, blind even in the Lower-World, he shall have commerce only with shadows, there as here”.

The image (introduced in the next stanza) of the “ancient bankrupt” who is totally disenchanted with life and who is unmoved by love, music⁹⁴ or hate (an enemy’s clipped

⁹³ Cf. Plotinus, *The First Ennead*, VI. 9, p. 29 (ed.cit.).

⁹⁴ For the ancient Greeks, and for the Romantics and Yeats, dance, music and poetry were a group of related arts.

ear) is not only the epilogue of the love theme (or „thread”) but is also the next stage in the discussion on imagination, nature, poetry (art) and the creative role of passions (especially love).

It is noteworthy that in this fragment the present tense, associated with the protagonist's interior monologue, makes its reappearance along with the encoded motifs of the dog (dog's day) and the tower (this house). The tower, once the property of the bankrupt, is now the “house” of the protagonist. The reader has the impression more and more that in *The Tower*, expressive⁹⁵ poetry is opposed to mimetic poetry and that all the characters and events symbolize not only the inner experiences of the protagonist but also the experiences of the community to which he belongs and the experiences of mankind as a whole.

⁹⁵ In earliest times the Greeks used the word ‘mimesis’ to refer to dance, mimicry, song, music and religious poetry. It meant the expression of feelings by means of gesture, movement, melody and song. The primary, ritual meaning of ‘mimesis’ was therefore ‘expression’ or ‘imitation’ (‘in the sense of the actor's imitation, and not that of the copyist’). Only later was the meaning of the word broadened out to include painting and sculpture (Socrates). ‘Mimesis’ became synonymous with the ‘imitation’ of reality in the sense of ‘copying’ appearances or the ‘representation’ of reality. In modern times ‘mimesis’ has become synonymous with realism and naturalism.

Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki*, vol. I, Wrocław 1962, pp. 26 – 27.

Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Odwórczość: dzieje stosunku sztuki do rzeczywistości* [in:] W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć*, Warsaw 1976.

The complex meaning of the word ‘mimesis’ can be observed in the works of Plato and Aristotle (*Poetics*), as well as Yeats. In *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* ‘imitation’ means the expression of the actor, the ‘wearing of a mask’ (Cf. footnote No 113). In *William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* the term ‘mimetic’ refers to the copying of reality by the artist (‘mimetic art’ as opposed to ‘expressive art’):

“True art is expressive and symbolic, and makes every form, every sound, every colour, every gesture, a signature of some unanalysable imaginative essence. False art is not expressive, but mimetic, not from experience but from observation, and is the mother of all evil, persuading us to save our bodies alive at no matter what cost of rapine and fraud. True art is the flame of the Last Day, which begins for every man when he is first moved by beauty, and which seeks to burn all things until they become ‘infinite and holy’”. (W.B. Yeats, *William Blake and his Illustrations ...* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 140).

In the light of this essay it would appear that:

(I) Yeats uses the term ‘mimetic’ in its narrow sense, as in part X of Plato's *Republic*.

(II) He uses the term ‘expressive’ in a broad sense.

(III) The term ‘expressive art’ may therefore encompass both ‘inspired poetry’ (*Phaedrus*) and symbolist poetry.

(IV) Thus broadly understood, ‘expression’ may mean not only the ‘bringing out of feelings (of experiences)’ but also ‘their presentation and evocation’.

(V) In this broad understanding of ‘expression’ there is no place for the Nietzschean dichotomy of contemplation and expression, or of beauty and expression.

“In ancient times two kinds of arts were distinguished, some were destined for contemplation, others for expression. In modern times a controversy has arisen. Some theoreticians are of the opinion that every art has a contemplative character, others, that they all must stand for expression. The thesis may be true or not, depending on what is meant by ‘expression’. And there is a wide range of meanings. Expression can be natural or artificial, direct or indirect (making use of some specially constructed objects). It can serve itself or must be shown to others; it can have either normal or intensified scale, individual schemes following general ones, or made to be seen through real objects or by means of signs; but first of all, expression, if used in a very wide sense, is not only the bringing out of the feelings, but also their presentation and evocation” (W. Tatarkiewicz, *Ekspresja i sztuka* (English summary) [in:] *Estetyka*, 1962, pp. 46 – 61).

This impression would seem to be confirmed by the motif of the Great Memory, introduced in the following stanza. This is the Yeatsian counterpart of the memory of the Platonic Soul of the World (*Timaeus*). According to Plotinus this memory “is vested in the imaging faculty” and it is “an active power of the mind”⁹⁶.

I must recall a man that neither love
 Nor music nor an enemy's clipped ear
 Could, he was so harried, cheer;
 A figure that has grown so fabulous
 There's not a neighbour left to say
 When he finished his dog's day:
 An ancient bankrupt master of this house.

Before that ruin came, for centuries,
 Rough men—at-arms, cross-gartered to the knees
 Or shod in iron, climbed the narrow stairs,
 And certain men—at-arms there were
 Whose images, in the Great Memory stored,
 Come with loud cry and panting breast
 To break upon a sleeper's rest
 While their great wooden dice beat on the board.

The motif of the Great Memory directly introduces the poem's “supernatural dimension” and justifies the concept of inspired expressive poetry. The concept of the “Great Memory” is also linked to the question (or problem) of the mode of existence of the characters of *The Tower* and hence to that of art itself.

It is the function and meaning of this Platonic-Romantic concept in *The Tower* that deserves to be examined first. It makes its appearance in connection with the image of the tower in the period preceding its ruin and decline. The tower's condition prior to its ruin also concerns the present, in which the protagonist – moved by rage – conducts his monologue. The past, in which the poet places the “bankrupt”, is linked to the ruin of the symbolic tower of imagination – ruin in this case signifying the extinction of all passions.

⁹⁶ Cf. Plotinus, op.cit., *Fourth Ennead*, III.31 and VI.3 (pp. 158 and 190).

Cf. Yeats: “... and I believe in three doctrines which have, as I think, been handed down from early times and been the foundations of nearly all magical practices. These doctrines are:

(1) That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.

(2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature itself.

(3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols” (W.B. Yeats, *Magic* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 28).

Cf. also W.B. Yeats, *Anima Mundi* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed. cit.

At this stage of his meditation the protagonist reveals the most important feature of the conception of imagination which is sketched out in the poem, namely that each individual imagination, thanks to the creative power of passion, maintains contact with the central imagination of the world, which is the eternal source of creative impulses. The extinction of passion therefore means the interruption of this contact. In the ninth stanza the Great Memory, which remains in contact with the protagonist's own imagination – symbolized by the tower – becomes eternity, which for the present is the tower's only dome. Meditation on imagination, nature and poetry (art) therefore becomes meditation on eternity as well. It is thanks to this use of the concept of the Great Memory that “the beyond” in *The Tower* is not abstract in character⁹⁷.

The direct image of eternity is to be found in stanzas 9 and 10. Its indirect image is to be found in the structure of the poem's represented world. The Great Memory of *The Tower* is a spiritual community of people linked to a concrete part of the world. It is also the community of the souls – smouldering with passion – of the former inhabitants, who “come with loud cry and panting breast to break upon the sleeper's rest”. In addition, the Great Memory includes fictitious characters (e.g. Hanrahan) who express or project as it were the inner experiences of the poet and the community. The content of these experiences is basically constant.

This Great Memory is stratified, so to speak. The “strata” are the Greek, Celtic, Mediaeval, Renaissance and Romantic “levels” of the poem. There is the suggestion that the whole visible and invisible world, the living and the dead, together with the contents of their imaginations, are creations of or are part of the Great Memory, to which the raging old man – an image of the protagonist – also belongs.

The protagonist (the poet) is as it were an intermediary between the Great Memory and the community, rather like the Platonic inspired poet who is an intermediary between God and the world of ideas on the one hand, and people on the other. Thus the soul of the raging old man – if not the old man in person – invoked in stanza 10 is accompanied from the Great Memory not only by the fictitious Hanrahan but also by the souls of the inhabitants of the environs of Thoor Ballylee. This scene also suggests the interdependence and near synonymy of the concepts of eternity, imagination and art (poetry).

As I would question all, come all who can;
 Come old, necessitous, half-mounted man;
 And bring beauty's blind rambling celebrant;
 The red man the juggler sent
 Through God-forsaken meadows; Mrs. French,
 Gifted with so fine an ear;
 The man drowned in a bog's mire,
 When mocking Muses chose the country wench.

⁹⁷ C.M. Bowra has written on the vagueness of the Romantic concept of 'The Beyond' (op.cit., p. 276).

The Yeatsian Great Memory – understood as the memory or imagination of the soul of the world – which so for would seem to be the ultimate frontier of all being – is not to be confused with Plato's *Anima Mundi*, which is presented in *Timaeus* as an intermediate sphere between the ideal world and the material world. In *The Tower*, poetry (art) seems to have as a basis for its existence both the poet's excess of spiritual life, full of creative passion, and the inner experiences – stored in the Great Memory – of dead people, with whom the artist maintains creative contact.

The Great Memory would also seem to be a kind of supraindividual spiritual energy, which for Yeats and for the Romantics was synonymous with creative energy⁹⁸. This would explain why in *The Tower* all the characters, symbols and themes "revolve" around the passion which is most creative and which is common to all people, i.e. love. Love constitutes as it were the mainstream of biological, emotional and intellectual life.

The image of the Great Memory in *The Tower* is therefore close to the conceptions of Shelley and Blake, who identified Plato's Soul of the World either with a central imagination of the world and Christ (Blake)⁹⁹ or with a central intellect (Shelley's Great Mind)¹⁰⁰. It is from this central world imagination or intellect¹⁰¹ – the real "home" of all individual imaginations – that the law of love radiates (cf. Blake's "pulsation of the artery")¹⁰² and unites opposites. According to Blake, the redemption of man and the world could be achieved thanks to the creative effort of imagination.

In *The Tower*, the motif of the Great Memory – the active and all-embracing memory of the soul of the world – explains the mixing of various levels of narration and time

⁹⁸ Cf. footnote No 77.

⁹⁹ "We do not want either Greek or Roman Models if we are but just & true to our own Imaginations, those Worlds of Eternity in which we shall live for ever in Jesus our Lord". (W. Blake: preface to *Milton* [in:] W. Blake, *A Selection of poems and letters*, Ed. J. Bronowski, Penguin Books 1972, p. 161).

Cf. Yeats: "The historical Christ was indeed no more than the supreme symbol of the artistic imagination, in which, with every passion wrought to perfect beauty by art and poetry, we shall live, when the body has passed away for the last time; but before that hour man must labour through many lives and many deaths (...) 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 the 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'". (W.B. Yeats, *William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., pp. 137 – 139).

"We carry to Anima Mundi our memory, and that memory is for a time our external world; and all passionate moments recur again and again, for passion desires its own recurrence more than any event, and whatever there is of corresponding complacency or remorse is our beginning of judgement; nor do we remember only the events of life, for thoughts bred of longing and of fear, all those parasitic vegetables that have slipped through our fingers, come again like a rope's end to smite us upon the face..." (W.B. Yeats, *Anima Mundi* [in:] *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit., p. 354).

"But the passions, when we know that they cannot find fulfilment, become vision; and a vision, whether we wake or sleep, prolongs its power by rhythm and pattern, the wheel where the world is butterfly" (W.B. Yeats, *ibidem*, p. 341).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *The philosophy of Shelley's poetry* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit.

¹⁰¹ Cf. footnote No 67.

¹⁰² Cf. W. Blake, *Milton* [in:] ed.cit., p. 183 – 184.

planes as well as the elasticity of the boundary between fiction and reality. It also explains the attempt on the part of the poet to render abstracts concrete by approximating them to the world of art and man's inner experiences. It further suggests that the protagonist of *The Tower* – who had so far displayed the duality of Plato's conception of nature, love, beauty, poetry and the poet – in reality favours those of Plato's conceptions which can be consistently interpreted in the spirit of spiritualistic monism.

One has the impression that the preceding display of Platonic ambiguities is directed not so much against Plato himself as against an extremely dualistic interpretation of Plato, which led to (among other things) the concept of so-called "Platonic love", dear to the Romantics. This popular conception of love¹⁰³ appears in *The Tower* as the opposite of that hierarchical and cosmic vision of creative love – invoked earlier by means of complex symbolism – which has the power to unite opposites and which also was outlined by Plato (*The Banquet, Phaedrus*) and by the great Romantics.

The motif of "Platonic love" (oscillating between the two poles of fulfilment and non-fulfilment, which as a source of inspiration preferred "woman lost" and which held the promise of fulfilment in the after-life, when the two halves of Androgyne would unite¹⁰⁴) is introduced in the final question of *The Tower*: "Does the imagination dwell the most/ Upon a woman won or woman lost?" It would seem that it is this one-sided conception of love which is the main bone of contention between the protagonist on the one hand and – on the other hand – not so much the Great Romantics, as their lesser successors:

¹⁰³ The concept of 'Platonic love' was dear to D.G. Rossetti, *Ch. Rossetti and the Tragic Generation*.

Cf. the following fragment from *All Souls night* (the last poem of the collection *The Tower*):

"Horton's the first I call. He loved strange thought
And knew that sweet extremity of pride
That's called platonic love,
And that to such a pitch of passion wrought
Nothing could bring him, when his lady died,
Anodyne for his love.
Words were but wasted breath:
One dear hope had he:
The inclemency
Of that or the next winter would be death".

(W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 257).

Cf. Yeats: "If a Rossetti was a subconscious influence, and perhaps the most powerful of all, we looked consciously to Pater for our philosophy" (W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, ed.cit., p. 302).

"Considering such matters, I am tempted by a Spenserian fantasy in which the Damsel Romanticism is sustained and nourished by various writers through the nineteenth century but is captured, finally, and betrayed, by two sibling dragons, a Pre-Raphaelite and Rider Haggard. The damsel is rescued and restored to beauty by two knights, Conrad and Yeats. Conrad of course, slays Rider Haggard, and Yeats, after a struggle, slays Christiana Rossetti" (D. Thornburn, *Conrad's Romanticism* [in:] *Romanticism. Vistas, Instances, Continuities*, ed.cit., p. 231).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Shelley, *Epipsychidion*.

As I would question all, come all who can;
(...)

Did all old men and women rich and poor
Who trod upon these rocks or passed this door,
Whether in public or in secret rage
As I do now against old age?
But I have found an answer in those eyes
That are impatient to be gone;
Go therefore; but live Hanrahan,
For I need all his mighty memories.

Old lecher with a love on every wind,
Bring up out of that deep considering mind
All that you have discovered in the grave,
For it is certain that you have
Reckoned up every unforeknown, unseeing
Plunge, lured by a softening eye,
Or by a touch or a sigh,
Into the labyrinth of another's being;

Does the imagination dwell the most
Upon a woman won or woman lost?
If on the lost, admit you turned aside
From a great labyrinth out of pride,
Cowardice, some silly over – subtle thought
Or anything called conscience once;
And that if memory recur, the sun's
Under eclipse and the day blotted out.

The question as to whether so-called “Platonic love” can be a motive force of the imagination is examined at the end of the second part of *The Tower*, both on a “personal” plane and on the plane of art. The poet shows the other “side” or aspect of Romantic love for a woman, namely the association of love for “woman lost” with art and death¹⁰⁵. It is for Hanrahan to settle the question of the creative aspect of love for a woman, Hanrahan being an intermediary not only between the world of the dead (eternity) and art, but also between the poem's protagonist – linked to the world of art – and W.B. Yeats, author of the Hanrahan stories. In a certain sense, therefore, “woman lost” (the counterpart of the Muse of the first part of the poem) becomes Hanrahan's equal

¹⁰⁵ Cf. M. Praz, *The Beauty of the Medusa* [in:] *The Romantic Agony*, ed.cit., ch. I.
Cf. W.B. Yeats, *The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 72.

insofar as her mode of existence is concerned. Both characters oscillate between “reality” and “fiction”, between life and death.

The presence of the Romantic triad love – art (= beauty) – death (eternity) in *The Tower* brings to mind Yeats’s interpretation of Shelley’s poetry. According to Shelley’s Platonic conception – recalled by Yeats –, real love, freedom, beauty and justice are attainable only in art or in life after death. In Yeats’s opinion, therefore, Shelley defines the mode of existence of art as being an intermediate state between life and death and compares creative ecstasy to death¹⁰⁶.

The final question of *The Tower*, namely whether it is fulfilled or unfulfilled love that is the passion which nourishes imagination and creativity, gives to the “personal” level of the second part of the poem the character of a bitter examination of conscience made by the protagonist, who is dejected by the knowledge of his defeat. The last stanzas see the definite return of the present tense associated with the interior monologue, while the tenuous distinction between the protagonist and his mask (Hanrahan) is almost swept aside. Hanrahan turns out to be as it were the “second voice” of the protagonist’s interior monologue. This is made evident by the ambiguous use of the second person in the following lines, which are addressed either to Hanrahan or to the protagonist himself:

If on the lost admit you turned aside
From the great labyrinth out of pride,

The fact that Hanrahan – like the raging old man – inhabits the Great Memory and that both these characters are linked to the bankrupt of stanza 8 suggests that in the second part of *The Tower*, the poet has used the Romantic motif of the hero’s symbolic death, which heralds his spiritual renewal or transformation¹⁰⁷. This motif of transformation is moreover linked to the tower’s alchemical dimension and is the point of

¹⁰⁶ “This beauty, this divine order, whereof all things shall become a part in a kind of resurrection of the body, is already visible to the dead and to souls in ecstasy, for ecstasy is a kind of death”. (W.B. Yeats, *ibidem*, p. 71).

¹⁰⁷ In chapter six of his book *W.B. Yeats and Tradition* (ed.cit.), F.A.C. Wilson, interpreting Yeats’s poem entitled *Byzantium*, suggests that: (1) the speaker in *Byzantium* (the poem being linked with *Sailing to Byzantium* from the collection *The Tower*) is a purgatorial ghost; (2) the poem represents the state ‘after death’, described by Yeats as ‘dreaming back’. Wilson supports his hypothesis with very convincing argumentation based on examples taken from mythology which was known to Yeats and Platonic, Hindu, Egyptian and Cabbalistic texts. According to T. Parkinson, however, such a reading of the poem is too ‘daring’ (T. Parkinson, *op.cit.*, p. 117). Further support for Wilson’s hypothesis is nevertheless to be found in Romantic literature. The motif of ‘spiritual death and rebirth, or secular conversion’ is present not only in Yeats’s poetry – and, in my opinion, in *The Tower* – but also in the works of Wordsworth (*The Prelude*), Coleridge (*The Ancient Mariner*), Carlyle (*Sartor Resartus*) and in Polish Romantic works such as, for example, Adam Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* (*Forefathers’ Eve*), where there is also a purgatorial ghost. It is not surprising, therefore, that this Romantic motif is seen by Maud Bodkin as an ‘archetypal pattern’ (“The Rebirth Archetype”).

Cf. M. Peckham, *Towards a Theory of Romanticism* [in:] *Romanticism. Points of View*, ed.cit.

Cf. M. Bodkin, *A Study of the Ancient Mariner* and of the “Rebirth Archetype” [in:] M. Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry. Psychological Studies of Imagination*, Oxford 1934.

departure for the third part of the poem. The protagonist's dramatized interior monologue is concerned with this very possibility of renewal or transformation and reveals the cause of spiritual death, namely the squandering of an opportunity – afforded by properly understood human love – to achieve Unity of Being and creation.

One aspect of the misunderstanding of love is the excessive importance which is attached either to love's spiritual element (some silly over subtle thought) or to love's sensual element (horrible splendour of desire). The other aspect is the denial of love¹⁰⁸. Of the destructive forces in the human psyche which cause love to be squandered or misunderstood, the protagonist mentions: pride, cowardice, conscience and cruelty. For Yeats, as for Blake, the squandering of the creative power of passion is synonymous with the decline of the imagination. In the essay *William Blake and Imagination* we read:

“He cried again and again that everything that lives is holy, and that nothing is unholy except things that do not live – lethargies, and cruelties, and timidities, and that denial of imagination which is the root they grew from in old times. Passions because most living are most holy – and this was a scandalous paradox in his time – and man shall enter eternity borne upon their wings”¹⁰⁹.

The negation of imagination in the second part of *The Tower* would therefore seem to be represented by: the cruel Mrs. French, heroine of an episode reminiscent of the story of Salome; the bankrupt, who lives in a state of lethargy and who is moved by no passion; the protagonist himself, tortured by pangs of conscience. The image of the labyrinth which makes its appearance at the end of the second part of the poem –

¹⁰⁸ Another possible interpretation of the ‘dismissal of love’ by the protagonist of *The Tower* is suggested by the following fragment of *A Vision*:

“Sometimes the bond is between an incarnate Daimon and a Spirit of the Thirteenth Cone. This bond created by the fixed attention of the Daimon will pass through the same stages as if it were between man and some ordinary discarnate spirit. Victimage for the Dead arises through such acts as prevents the union of two incarnate Daimons and is therefore the prevention or refusal of a particular experience, but Victimage for a Spirit of the Thirteenth Cone results from the prevention or refusal of experience itself. This refusal may arise from pride, from the fear of injuring another or oneself, from something which we call asceticism; it may have any cause, but the Spirit of the Thirteenth Cone is starved. Such Spirit may itself create the events that incited the man to refuse experience, St. Simon may be driven to his pillar. In the whirling of the gyres the incarnate Daimon is starved in its turn, but starved not of natural experience, but of supernatural...” (W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 239).

Cf. Bloom's biographical interpretation of the second part of *The Tower*:

“What is immensely moving here is Yeats's clear self-condemnation, for he implicitly states a failure of desire on his part in his love for Maud Gonne. Like Hanrahan, he turned aside, and could not give all to love. Far in the background, and yet relevant, is Shelley's similarly conscious failure in his *Epipsychidion*, where the limitations of selfhood triumph over the poet's intense love for Emilia Viviani. Hanrahan, in the story *Red Hanrahan's Curse*, felt ‘a great anger against old age and all it brought with it’, but his struggle with self never proceeded far enough for him to accept the four sacred emblems – cauldron of pleasure, stone of power, spear of courage, sword of knowledge – that could have been his. Taken together, the four attributes would have unified him in the image of a Blakean Divine Man, or God. The implication in *The Tower* is that Yeats, like Hanrahan, has failed, but the failure is not less heroic than most simpler fulfilments of desire” (H. Bloom, op.cit., p. 351).

¹⁰⁹ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Essays...*, ed.cit., pp. 112 – 113.

Blake's symbol of the fallen world and fallen man¹¹⁰ – is in contrast to the tower of imagination and united opposites which stands open to eternity.

The motif of the death of the principle hero (Hanrahan) and the protagonist's defeat (synonymous with spiritual death), the question about the meaning of love and the meaning of the old man's rage which opens and closes the second part of *The Tower*, the mythical narration in the past tense (stanzas 2 – 8) which is woven into the interior monologue and whose purpose is to illuminate the problems which haunt the protagonist – all these motifs, as well as the entire poem's structure, would seem to evoke that state of the soul which is "between death and birth" and which Yeats describes in *A Vision* as "Dreaming Back": that state of the soul which precedes reincarnation¹¹¹.

At the moment of his death, man makes as it were an appraisal of his past life. He meditates many times over upon the successive episodes of his past existence until – having understood all his shortcomings – he cleanses himself and is then reincarnated. In his review of a book written by a friend who was himself an advocate of Platonic "monism" as well as the theory of the soul's rebirth and "pre-natal memory", Yeats describes this state of the soul in the following words¹¹²:

"He thinks that when a man is to attain great wisdom he first learns all the evil of his past, assumes responsibility for his share in that evil, follows out with a complete knowledge the consequence of very act, repents the sin of twenty thousand years, unified at last in thought and only when this agony has been exhausted can he recall what was 'lovely and beloved'".

In the light of this commentary, the character of Hanrahan appears to be a "daimon" or "ultimate self" from *Per Amica silentia Lunae* and *A Vision*, i.e. the sum of all the past lives of the protagonist and – at the same time – a living man's spiritual "alter ego", mysteriously linked to the person of his beloved or to the Muse – the second voice of the protagonist's interior monologue or examination of conscience¹¹³.

¹¹⁰ Cf. H. Bloom, *op.cit.*, p. 222.

¹¹¹ "In the Dreaming back, the Spirit is compelled to live over and over again the events that had most moved it; there can be nothing new, but the old events stand forth in a light which is dim or bright according to the intensity of the passion that accompanied them. They occur in the order of their intensity or luminosity, the more intense first, and the painful are commonly the more intense, and repeat themselves again and again. In the Return, upon the other hand, the Spirit must live through past events in the order of their occurrence, because it is compelled by the Celestial Body to trace every passionate event to its cause until all are related and understood, turned into knowledge, made a part of itself. All that keeps the Spirit from its freedom may be compared to a knot that has to be untied or to an oscillation or a violence that must end in a return of equilibrium" (W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 226).

¹¹² Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Essays...*, ed.cit., pp. 416 – 417.

¹¹³ "*The Four Faculties* are not the abstract categories of philosophy, being the result of the four memories of the Daimon or ultimate self of that man. His Body of Fate, the series of events forced upon him from without, is shaped out of the Daimon's memory of the events of his past incarnations; his Mask or object of desire or idea of the good out of its memory of the moments of exaltation in his past lives, his Will or normal ego out of its memory of all the events of his present life, whether consciously remembered or not; his Creative Mind from its memory of ideas – or universals – displayed by actual men in past lives, or their spirits between lives". (W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 83).

This examination of conscience is unfavourable for the protagonist. His love for a woman has taken him only halfway up the symbolic tower of imagination (“come old necessitous, half mounted man”). His love for “woman lost” has turned out to be too weak a passion to hold its own against the forces which inhabit the imagination. His love for “woman won” has turned out to be too one-sided. In both cases love has turned out to be uncreative and incompatible with both Unity of Being and Plato’s teachings on the “degrees” or “steps” of love.

In the light of this summary, it is not surprising that the protagonist of *The Tower* – the old man full of irony – opposes the power of an old man’s rage to the power of love. According to Plato, rage¹¹⁴ which proceeds from the realization that beauty is missing or lost is a component of the “mania” of the lover. In the case of the protagonist, rage can become a new source of creation and a motive force for the imagination – a means of spiritual rebirth, leading to the recovery of a lost value (beauty). That is why the protagonist begins the final part of his meditation on love with a question about the power of this rage:

Did all old men and women, rich and poor,
 Who trod upon these rocks or passed this door,
 Whether in public or in secret rage
 As I do now against old age?

Cf. “I thought the hero found hanging upon some oak of Dodona an ancient mask, where perhaps there lingered something of Egypt, and that he changed it to his fancy, touching it a little here and there, gilding the eyebrows or putting a gilt line where the cheek-bone comes, that when at last he looked out of its eyes he knew another’s breath came and went within his breath upon the carven lips, and that his eyes were upon the instant fixed upon a visionary world: how else could the god have come to us in the forest? (...) a strange living man may win for Daimon an illustrious dead man; but now I add another thought: the Daimon comes not as like to like but seeking its own opposite, for man and Daimon feed the hunger in one another’s hearts. Because the ghost is simple, the man heterogenous and confused, they are but knit together when the man has found a mask whose lineaments permit the expression of all the man most lacks, and it may be dreads, and of that only.

The more insatiable in all desire, the more resolute to refuse deception or an easy victory, the more close will be the bond, the more violent and definite the antipathy (...) and I think it was Heraclitus who said: the Daimon is our destiny. When I think of life as a struggle with the Daimon who would ever set us to the hardest work among those not impossible, I understand why there is a deep enmity between a man and his destiny, and why a man loves nothing but his destiny (...) Then my imagination runs from Daimon to sweetheart, and I divine an analogy that evades the intellect” (W.B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit., pp. 335 – 336). This fragment also throws light on the symbolic link between the Muse, Hanrahan, woman won and woman lost. Cf. footnote No 108.

Yeats’s ‘doctrine of the mask’ is interpreted by R. Ellmann (Yeats, *the Man and the Mask*, ed.cit.).

The character Hanrahan is interpreted as an ‘antiseif’ (in *The Tower*) by H. Bloom (op.cit., p. 351) who does not link him either with the other male characters of the poem or with the Muse. Bloom also fails to perceive the ‘Grail’ stylization of Hanrahan.

T. Henn (op.cit., p. 5) interprets the character of the young Fisherman as an ‘antiseif’.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, XXXI – XXXII, ed.cit., pp. 79 – 81).

In the second part of *The Tower*, therefore, the popular conception of Romantic love (Platonic love) is opposed not only to the maximalist Platonic–Romantic vision of love and to Plato’s teachings on the “grades” or „steps” of love and the essence of the lover’s madness (a mixture of rage and joy), but also to the belief of the Romantics that all passions are endowed with creative force.

The motif of the sun in eclipse which closes the second part of the poem is in all probability an allusion to the following famous words of Plotinus, taken from his essay on beauty¹¹⁵:

“Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty unless itself be beautiful”.

The image of the eclipsed and solitary sun¹¹⁶ therefore suggests that those concepts which are vital to the Platonic–Romantic conceptions of art and imagination – i.e. love and beauty – have been improperly understood by the protagonist and, furthermore, that harmony between Plato’s Venus Urania (woman lost) and Venus Pandemos (woman won) – or between Plotinus’s “Heavenly Aphrodite” and “Earthly Aphrodite” – has not been achieved.

III

The third part of *The Tower* is a final summing up of the protagonist’s life and also an *envoi* to posterity. The fact that it is written in irregular lines (almost three–stress lines) serves to emphasize its distinct character.

The stylization of the third part of *The Tower* as a will accounts for the visionary rhetoric of this part of the poem. It is also a sign of the Romantic motif of the hero’s return to teach¹¹⁷. In *The Tower*, this motif is the central link in the group of Romantic narrative motifs which are woven around the theme of life and rebirth. The pre–condition for rebirth is a full awareness of good and evil done in the past. It is to the attaining of an awareness of past “evil” (i.e. the squandered opportunity of achieving Unity of Being and creation which is offered by love for a woman) that the second part of *The Tower* is devoted. The third part of the poem brings images of what in the life of the protagonist was really worthy of love (“lovely and beloved”) and worthy of being transmitted to posterity.

The cryptonims of these values are in turn “pride”, “giving”, “faith” and the images of the young fishermen, great people, the learned and ascetic old man shut up in a

¹¹⁵ Cf. Plotinus, *First Ennead*, VI.9, ed.cit., pp. 25 – 26.

¹¹⁶ Parkinson interprets the motif of the solitary sun as ‘the fall from unity into diversity’ and as ‘the defeat of reason’, the sun being associated with ‘objectivity’ and ‘masculinity’ (T. Parkinson, op.cit., pp. 164 – 166. Cf. also p. 156).

¹¹⁷ Cf. footnote No 107.

tower which stands open to the clouds, “Translunar Paradise” and the “Superhuman mirror resembling dream”. All these motifs concern the higher form of love – for “intellectual beauty” – this being the only form of love which is creative.

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; I declare
 They shall inherit my pride,
 The pride of the people that were
 Bound neither to Cause nor to State,
 Neither to slaves that were spat on,
 Nor to the tyrants that spat,
 The people of Burke and of Grattan
 That gave, though free to refuse –
 Pride, like that of the morn,
 When the headlong light is loose,
 Or that of the fabulous horn,
 Or that of the sudden shower
 When all streams are dry,
 Or that of the hour
 When the swan must fix his eye
 Upon a fading gleam,
 Float out upon a long
 Last reach of glittering stream
 And there sing his last song. (...)

The third part of *The Tower* is a counter-proposition of ideas in relation to the second part of the poem. This is emphasized by the fact that in part III the poet has set the motif of the young fishermen's climb against the motif of the labyrinth, which comes at the end of part II.

This contrast of images would seem to suggest that the second and third parts of *The Tower* “discuss” two different Plotinic paths to the vision of the ideal world, namely the “circuit path” and the “direct path”. The “circuit path” – symbolized by the winding stairs of the tower and by the labyrinth of love – entails involvement in the outer, material world. The “direct path”, whose symbolic equivalent in the second part of *The Tower* would seem to be the climb, leads directly to the “summit” and entails “giving” (i.e. creation).

According to Plotinus, all people strive to attain “superreality” (“vision”) and must choose between the “direct path” and the “circuit path”:

“... and there is every reason to believe that child or man, in sport or in earnest, is playing or working only towards Vision, that every act is an effort towards Vision; the compulsory act, which tends rather to bring the Vision down to outward things, and the act thought of as voluntary, less concerned with the outer, originate alike in the effort towards Vision¹¹⁸ (...) Action thus is set towards contemplation and an object of contemplation, so that even those whose life is in doing have seeing as their object; what they have not been able to achieve by the direct path, they hope to come at by the circuit”¹¹⁹.

The protagonist of *The Tower* would seem to proceed likewise. The steep climb to the top of the mountain (part I) is an image of his youth. The labyrinth (part II) is the winding way of love – linked perhaps to the age of maturity. The image of the climb which opens the third part of *The Tower* is yet another attempt to approach spiritual reality by the direct path¹²⁰.

The protagonist’s “will” also has as its aim the gradual sketching out of an image of the ideal human creator, climbing up the rungs of the “ladder of love”, which takes him to real beauty. The protagonist counts the young fishermen, the national heroes of Ireland and himself as creators. The Platonic concept of creative love (*The Banquet*) is thus broadened out to encompass politics, sport and art – in accordance with Plotinus’s opinion that the ultimate goal of all human endeavour is the vision of the ideal world.

In the third part of *The Tower* the young fishermen – who are both sportsmen and poets and who are akin to the national heroes of Ireland – would seem to symbolize a broadened concept of the Unity of Being¹²¹. They embody the Romantic ideal of a life which is as intensive as possible, combining artistic and intellectual achievement with heroic deeds in the fields of politics, sport, love, war or asceticism¹²².

This Romantic yearning for the “unity of life and art” – the yearning to overcome the antinomy of “perfection of life” and “perfection of art” – is constantly present in Yeats’s work¹²³. It is to be found, for example, in his essay of 1924 entitled *Blake’s illustrations to Dante*¹²⁴:

¹¹⁸ Cf. Plotinus, *Third Ennead*, VIII,1,ed.cit., p. 129.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Plotinus, *ibidem*, p. 131.

¹²⁰ “In so far as a man is like all other men, the inflow finds him upon the winding path, and in so far as he is a saint or sage, upon the straight path” (W.B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit., p. 361).

¹²¹ Cf. My analysis of part I of *The Tower*.

¹²² Cf. W.B. Yeats, *In Memory of Major Robert Gregory* [in:] *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., pp. 148 – 152.

¹²³ “The intellect of man is forced to choose

Perfection of the life, or of the work,

And if it take the second must refuse

A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark”.

(W.B. Yeats, *The Choice* [in:] *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 278).

¹²⁴ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, ed.cit., p. 139.

“Mere sympathy for living things is not enough, because we must learn to separate their “infected” from their eternal, their satanic from their divine part; and this can only be done by desiring always beauty, the one mask through which can be seen the unveiled eyes of eternity. We must then be artists in all things, and understand that love and old age and death are first among the arts. In this sense he insists that “Christ’s apostles were artists”, that “Christianity is Art”, and that “the whole business of man is the arts” ”.

What characterizes these “artists of life” or great men in part III of *The Tower* is “pride”, “giving”, free will (The people of Burke and of Grattan / That gave, though free to refuse) and “faith”. Foremost among these characteristics is pride – pride being the source of the others. In the second part of *The Tower* “pride” is also the most important reason for the protagonist’s withdrawal from the labyrinth of love.

The context in which the word “pride” appears in *The Tower* would seem to indicate that this word is a synonym for creative imagination. In Yeats’s opinion (cf. *Blake’s illustrations to Dante*) the word “pride” was given a similar meaning by W. Blake. According to Yeats, the word “pride” for Blake signified not “selfishness” but “mental gift”, i.e. creative imagination, which ordinary people attempt to belittle, labelling it “pride”. This “mental gift” is the source of all artistic and scientific creativity (“cultivated life”), which strives to transform the world into a “New Jerusalem”, governed by laws of the spirit (i.e. of the imagination), namely love, creation, freedom, truth and beauty¹²⁵. In the third part of *The Tower* “giving” is the counterpart of Blake’s “cultivated life”, equated with creation.

The whole of the first rhetorical period, woven around the theme of “pride” and “giving” and inlaid with examples of the attitudes of exceptional people (the sportsman, great politicians and thinkers, the poet) therefore ends with a sequence of symbolic motifs concerning the soul’s beauty: light; the horn of plenty (“fabulous horn”); the “sudden shower”; dawn; the swan singing its last song¹²⁶. These motifs usher in the next

¹²⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 136 – 137. H. Bloom interprets the motif of ‘pride’ differently, arguing – with, it would seem, little justification – against T. Whitaker’s interpretation:

“In the third section of *The Tower*, Yeats turns to what is left, as his dream–drunken Hanrahan could not. Like Hanrahan, the poet has not attained Unity of Being, and so finds himself at the impasse of knowing perfection neither in his life nor in his work. But nothing in the first section, with its conflict of active imagination and fading nature, or in the second with its parallel conflict of imagination and the unfading self, compels the poet to surrender his Blakean and Shelleyan pride in the continued autonomy of the imagination. Whitaker boldly claims more for Yeats here, and speaks of a pride ‘that is not the ego’s apprehensive desire to possess and dominate but the whole being’s exultant sense of creative giving’. This is to grant Yeats more than he dared to assert for himself, and neglects his near – identity with Hanrahan in the second part of the poem. There is, one needs to admit, much Anglo–Irish posturing and drumbeating in part III, and much purely Yeatsian striking of attitudes as well. Here the poem is in decline, and its celebration of ‘up–standing men’ for their pre–dawn fishing expeditions is rather inappropriate if not silly. A little irony would have helped, for once, but it does not come, and the poem becomes very vulnerable to the charge of ‘excessive dramatization’ that Yvor Winters has urged so vigorously against Yeats’s work” (H. Bloom, *op.cit.*, pp. 351 – 352).

part of the “will” – the protagonist’s act of faith in the creative and uniting power of human dreams, understood – in accordance with Platonic and Romantic “theory” of dreaming and sleep¹²⁷ as an inner vision of super-reality which is accessible through imagination:

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,
 Made lock, stock and barrel
 Out of his bitter soul,
 Aye, sun and moon and star all,
 And further add to that
 That, being dead, we rise,
 Dream and so create
 Translunar Paradise.
 I have prepared my peace
 With learned Italian things
 And the proud stones of Greece,
 Poet’s imaginings
 And memories of love,
 Memories of the words of women,
 All those things whereof
 Man makes a superhuman
 Mirror-resembling dream.

The metaphors “Translunar Paradise” and “Superhuman mirror-resembling dream” – the first of which concerns the world created by dreaming while the second

¹²⁶ “The title poem of *The Tower* is one instance in which the swan holds to the confined meanings of Platonic tradition, for in this poem a temporary resolution is made of the conflict between temporal and spiritual experience (...) The swan is associated with the fullness of nature, and as in ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’, it offers itself to the poet when he is contemplating the winter of his years and a crisis in his spiritual life. This swan, however, is not one of many natural birds but is close to the unique symbolic swan that the moralist or mythological poet identifies with the solitary soul. And this swan represents not rebellious resentment of life but fulfilment (...)” (T. Parkinson, *The Swan* [in:] op.cit., pp. 135 – 136).

Cf. G. Melchiori, *The Swan, Helen and The Tower* [in:] G. Melchiori, op.cit., ch. III.

¹²⁷ “The purpose of rhythm, it has always seemed to me, is to prolong the moment of contemplation. the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols” (W.B. Yeats, *The Symbolism of Poetry* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 159).

Pater, in his ‘Romantic’ interpretation of Platonism, draws attention to the motif of prophetic and mystical sleep in the ninth part of Plato’s *Republic* (W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit., p. 123).

concerns the work of poetry as an artifact – serve as a framework for the protagonist's creed. This creed contains the following suggestions concerning the inter-relationships between “super – reality”, dreaming and poetry:

1. Man is the creator of both the visible world and superreality.
2. In the hierarchy of worlds, this super–reality (Translunar Paradise) – created in dreaming – is not only higher than the earth, but is also higher than Shelley's paradise of art “between earth and moon”¹²⁸ and higher than the (implied) Lunar Paradise (a symbol of the *Anima Mundi*)¹²⁹.
3. Being a “superhuman mirror–resembling dream”, a work of art is only an imperfect mirror (“mirror– resembling”, but not “reflecting”) of the super–reality of dream-

¹²⁸ “And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught
Upon those wandering isles of aëry dew,
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,
She sate, and heard all that had happened new
Between the earth and moon, since they had brought
The last intelligence – and now she grew
Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night –
And now she wept, and now she laughed outright”.
(Shelley, *The Witch of Atlas* [in:] Shelley, op.cit., p. 698).

¹²⁹ “I am persuaded, that a logical process, or a series of related images, has body and period and think of *Anima Mundi* as a great pool or garden where it moves through its allotted growth like a great water plant or fragrantly branches in the air. Indeed as Spenser's Garden of Adonis (...)” (W.B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit., p. 352).

“In the Platonic tradition, the normal image for *Anima Mundi* is the garden, where the archetypes of ideas of all created things grow as flowers and where the soul, between incarnations, takes its ease; a symbolism which enters our literature with Spenser's Garden of Adonis and round which Shelley wrote his ‘The Sensitive Plant’ (...) Yeats found however that Italian Neoplatonism used the sea and the garden as interchangeable symbols, and (remarking that Jungian psychology thought similarly) he is at pains to record the fact in the preface to *Fighting the Waves* (...)” (F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats's Iconography*, ed.cit., p. 97).

As the ‘Mother of the Universe’, the moon was indirectly associated in Yeats's symbolism with ‘*Anima Mundi*’. This is suggested, for instance, by the title of Yeats's two–part essay ‘*Per Amica Silentia Lunae*’ (I. *Anima Hominis*, II. *Anima Mundi*).

According to E. Panofsky, the Italian Neoplatonists (e.g. Marsiglio Ficino) described the earthly world as ‘sublunar’. The sphere between the sublunar world and the cosmic mind was the Soul of the World, inhabited by Venus Pandemos (Venus Vulgaris) – ‘vis generandi’ – symbolizing the eternal beauty which is present in the corporeal or material world. The highest heavenly sphere of the cosmic Mind was inhabited by Venus Urania (Venus Coelestis) – i.e. ‘pure intelligence’, comparable with Caritas (mediator between the human mind and God). Each Venus was accompanied by her own Amor, who was thought of as her son. The son of Venus Pandemos was Amor Vulgaris, who was guardian of the sensual imagination. Amor divinus, son of Venus Urania, urged the intellectual contemplation of beauty.

Cf. E. Panofsky, *Neoplatonist Ruch we Florencji (The Neoplatonist movement in Florence)* [in:] E. Panofsky, *Studia z Historii Sztuki (Essays in the History of Art)*, Warsaw 1971, p. 195.

Cf. Wilson's remarks on Yeats's interpretation of the idea of ‘Three Worlds’ and the three spheres of the human soul in the work of W. Morris (F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats's Iconography*, ed.cit., p. 56 – 57).

Cf. N. Frye's interpretation of Blake's three worlds (Ulro, Beulah, Eden) (N. Frye, *Fearful Symmetry...*, ed.cit., pp. 26 and 50).

Cf. Yeats: “Shelley, a good Platonist, seems, in his earliest work to set this general soul in the place of God, an opinion, one may find from More's friend Cudworth, now affirmed, now combated by classic authority; but More would steady us with a definition” (W.B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [in:] *Mythologies*, p. 351).

ing (Translunar Paradise). In the hierarchy of worlds it occupies a position somewhat lower than that of "Translunar Paradise".

It can easily be seen that in the protagonist's credo Romantic and Platonic motifs overlap. The motif of the hierarchy of worlds and the hierarchy of reflections brings to mind Plotinus, as well as Shelley and Blake.

The differentiation between Translunar Paradise and the superhuman mirror-resembling dream recalls the Plotinic categories of vision and image (representation). Vision concerns the ideal world present in the divine mind while image (representation) concerns the material world, which is an imperfect "reflection" of the higher world¹³⁰.

The motif of the mirror appears several times in Shelley's essay *A defence of poetry*. In this text, which is a manifesto of Romantic poetry, language is defined as a "mirror of thoughts", poets as "mirrors in which the spectator beholds himself, under a thin disguise of circumstance, stript of all but that ideal perfection and energy which every one feels to be the internal type of all that he loves, admires and would become"¹³¹ and dramatic poetry as a "prismatic and many sided mirror that reflects the brightest rays of human nature"¹³².

In the same essay Shelley speaks of the "superhuman wisdom", of poetry¹³³ and of a new Paradise governed by the law of love and created in place of Eden by the Troubadours of Provence, the Italian poets of the Renaissance and above all by Dante, author of *Il Paradiso* and *Vita Nuova*:

"His apotheosis of Beatrice in Paradise, and the gradations of his own love and her loveliness, by which as by steps he feigns himself to have ascended to the throne of the Supreme Cause, is the most glorious imagination of modern poetry. The acutest critics have justly reversed the judgment of the vulgar, and the order of the great acts of the "Divine Drama", in the measure of the admiration which they accord to the Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. The latter is a perpetual hymn of everlasting love. Love, which found a worthy poet in Plato alone of all the ancients, has been celebrated by a chorus of the greatest writers of the renovated world; ..."134.

The protagonist's frequent references to Plato and Plotinus are in conformity with the "Platonic spirit" of Shelley's manifesto.

Given that the protagonist's "creed" has clear affinities with Plotinus's theology of creation, the protagonist's "controversy" with Plato and Plotinus would seem to be not

¹³⁰ "As long as we were Above, collected within the Intellectual nature, we were satisfied; we were held in the intellectual act; we had vision because we drew all into unity – for the thinker in us was the Intellectual Principle telling us of itself – and the soul or mind was motionless, assenting to that act of its prior. But now that we are once more here – living in the secondary, the soul – we seek for persuasive probabilities: it is through the image we desire to know the archetype" (Plotinus, *Fifth Ennead*, III.6 [in:] Plotinus, op.cit., p. 219.)

¹³¹ Cf. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry* [in:] ed.cit., p. 1035.

¹³² Ibidem, p. 1036.

¹³³ Ibidem, p. 1029.

¹³⁴ Ibidem, p. 1049.

really a controversy at all. The opening words of the creed (I mock Plotinus thought / And cry in Plato's teeth) would seem to refer to the extremely dualistic and abstract interpretation of the works of the two philosophers, who for Shelley (*A defence of poetry*) and Pater were first and foremost poets and visionaries. Plotinus for Pater was a new Plato: "in whom the mystical element in the Platonic philosophy had been worked out to the utmost limit of vision and ecstasy"¹³⁵.

Yeats's commentary to *The Tower*, which quotes from MacKenna's translation of Plotinus's fifth Ennead, lends support to this hypothesis:

"When I wrote the lines about Plato and Plotinus I forgot that it is some thing in our eyes that makes us see them as all transcendence. Has not Plotinus written: 'Let every soul recall, then, at the outset the truth that soul is the author of all living things, that it has breathed the life into them all, whatever is nourished by earth and sea, all the creatures of the air, the divine stars in the sky: it is the maker of the sun; itself formed and ordered this vast heaven and conducts all that rhythmic motion – and it is a principle distinct from all these to which it gives law and movement and life, and it must of necessity be more honourable than they, for they gather or dissolve as soul brings them life or abandons them, but soul, since it never can abandon itself, is of eternal being'?"¹³⁶.

It would seem that in part III of *The Tower* the real purpose of this apparent controversy with Plato and Plotinus is to reveal the mythical and Platonic roots of Romanticism. Hence the concord of Shelleyan and Plotinic terminology which characterizes the protagonist's creed.

The protagonist's Romantic creed constitutes a reinterpretation of Plotinus, whose theology is used (a) to interpret human creation; (b) to reinterpret the sphere of transcendence; (c) to recall the main tenets of expressive poetics¹³⁷, concerning the inter-relationships between poetry, nature and the ideal world and also the relationship between the work of art (Superhuman mirror-resembling dream) and the conception which precedes it (dream).

The Enneads are brought to mind above all by the image with which the creed begins: a vision of man who is both the creator of "super-reality" (Plotinic "there") – identified with dreaming – and the creator of reality, i.e. of the real world ("the whole")¹³⁸ – of life, death, sun, moon and stars.

¹³⁵ Cf. W. Pater, *Pico della Mirandola* [in:] *The Renaissance*, Macmillan, London 1924, p. 39. Cf. footnote No 134.

¹³⁶ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 533.

Cf. Plotinus, op.cit., p. 208.

¹³⁷ Cf. footnote No 95.

¹³⁸ It is to be noted that in the protagonist's 'creed' Romantic and Plotinic terminology ('the whole') concurs with colloquial idiom. The protagonist's 'creed' is among the most often interpreted fragments of *The Tower*. Its links with the poetry of the Romantics (Keats, Shelley) were pointed out in 1928 by J. Fletcher (see footnote No 2). F.A.C. Wilson has drawn attention to the 'creeds's' 'Neoplatonism' (*Yeats's Iconography*, p. 92 – 93). R. Ellmann has given a decidedly 'non-Platonic' interpretation of the 'creed' (R. Ellmann,

According to the main principle of Plotinus's cosmogony – partially recalled by Yeats in his commentary to *The Tower* – the real creator of the visible world is the Third Person of God, i.e. the Soul, which yearns for unity with the First Person (The First, The One)¹³⁹. The Soul is filled with a feeling of insufficiency and yearning for absolute good, which according to Plotinus constitutes the essence of love and creation¹⁴⁰. Each individual human soul – including the “bitter soul” of the protagonist's creed – is a part of this Soul, which creates the material world and yearns for the absolute. According to Plotinus, man can therefore in a sense be considered to be co-creator of the world. Being a part of the Divine Soul, which emanates from the two Divine Persons preceding it (i.e. The One and the Intellectual Principle), man is as it were part of the three Divine Persons. He can therefore partake of the spiritual vision of God Himself – “there”, i.e. in the sphere of ideal reflections:

“For all There is Heaven; earth is heaven, and sea heaven; and animal and plant and man; all is heavenly content of that heaven: and the Gods in it, despising neither men nor anything else that is there where all is of the heavenly order, traverse all that country and all space in peace (...) And each of them contains all within itself, and at the same time sees all in every other, so that everywhere there is all, and all is all and each all, and infinite the glory. Each of them is great; the small is great; the sun, There, is all the stars; and every star, again, is all the stars and sun. While some one manner of being is dominant in each, all are mirrored in every other”¹⁴¹.

The Plotinic “There” would seem to correspond to the Paradise (Translunar Paradise) of part III of *The Tower*, created by the Romantic imagination. The indirectly introduced motif of taking part in the inner life of God the Creator through imagination and dreaming recalls Blake's view – close to that of Yeats – that imagination is the first emanation of divinity, identified with Christ and accessible by means of man's individual imagination¹⁴². This motif also recalls Shelley's belief, voiced in his essay

op.cit., p. 254). My own interpretation is similar to that of R. Snukal (see footnote No 16). A.G. Stock has drawn attention to the links between the ‘creed’ and the Druid legends written by Yeats and Lady Gregory (A.G. Stock, op.cit., p. 22 – 23). Cf. the following words written by Yeats in his preface to Lady Gregory's book *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904):

“One remembers the Druid who answered when someone asked him who made the world, ‘The Druids made it’” (quoted by A.G. Stock).

¹³⁹ Cf. Plotinus, *The Fifth Ennead*, I: *The Three Initial Hypostases* [in:] op.cit. In various Enneads these ‘Three Initial Hypostases’ are given the names: *The One*, *The God*, *The Beautiful*, and *The One*, *The Intellectual Principle*, *The Soul*.

In the opinion of T.R. Henn, the dogma of the Holy Trinity was one of Yeats's obsessions: “The history of the Trinity, and heretical modifications of that ‘abstract Greek absurdity’, seems to have been one of his obsessions” (T.R. Henn, op.cit., p. 151).

Cf. W.B. Yeats, *The Completed Symbol* [in:] *A Vision*, bk. II, ed.cit., pp. 193 – 196).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Plotinus, *The Third Ennead*, V, *On Love* [in:] Plotinus, op.cit.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Plotinus, *The Fifth Ennead*, VIII. 3 and 4, ed.cit., p. 241.

¹⁴² Cf. footnote No 99.

A defence of poetry, that the poet takes part “in divine nature as regards providence, no less than as regards creation”¹⁴³.

In the remarks on the ideal act of creation (i.e. “giving”) contained in the first lines of the creed, where act, idea and shape constitute an indissoluble unity, the terminology of Plotinus concords with that of Shelley (That, being dead, we rise, / Dream and so create / Translunar Paradise). Together with the motif of “Translunar Paradise”, another link with Shelley is the comparison of poetic ecstasy to death¹⁴⁴.

The words “rise” and “giving” can be traced to MacKenna’s translation of the Enneads. In the fifth Ennead – the various parts of which deal with (among other things) the Holy Trinity (The Three Initial Hypostases) and Intellectual Beauty – the process of reaching the sphere designated by the word “There” is described metaphorically as a gradual “rising” above the material world. The description of the perfect “Giver” – God – also comes from the fifth Ennead. It is the inner life of God (i.e. of the perfect “Giver” – elsewhere called “The Artist”) which Plotinus presents as being the perfect unity of act, idea and shape. In *The Tower*, however, this Romantic endeavour to equate “artist’s work” with “artist’s dream”¹⁴⁵ – derived from Plotinic theology – is accompanied by the Romantic view – also derived from Plotinus – that the primary vision is not the same as its “image”¹⁴⁶ and that in the hierarchy of reflections, the work of art (Super-human mirror–resembling dream) comes higher than the material world: “... a poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth” (Shelley – *A defence of poetry*)¹⁴⁷.

The second part of the poetic “creed” – from “I have prepared my peace” to “Super-human mirror–resembling dream” – being an account of the “stuff” of which a work of art is made, is indirectly also a description of the structure of the imagination.

The meditation on man’s creative power which precedes this fragment of the creed, together with the preceding context of the first and second parts of *The Tower* (meditations on the role of passion and imagination, references and allusions to Plato and Homer, Plotinic theology and Dante) adequately explain why “Learned Italian things / And the proud stones of Greece” come at the top of the hierarchy of poetic “material”. The meaning of the metaphor “Learned Italian things”¹⁴⁸ is also determined by the

¹⁴³ Cf. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry* [in:] Shelley, op.cit., p. 1037.

¹⁴⁴ “This beauty, this divine order, whereof all things shall become a part in a kind of resurrection of the body, is already visible to the dead and to souls in ecstasy, for ecstasy is a kind of death” (W.B. Yeats, *The Philosophy of Shelley’s Poetry* [in:] *Essays...*, p. 71).

¹⁴⁵ Cf. T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 29.

¹⁴⁶ “... but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet. (...) for Milton conceived the *Paradise Lost* as a whole before he executed it in portions” (Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 1050).

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 1029.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. “Before that end much had she ravelled out
From a discourse in figurative speech
By some learned Indian
On the soul’s journey. How it is whirled about,

preceding context. It would seem that the metaphor refers to the works of the Renaissance humanists and Italian artists connected with the “school” of the Platonic Academy in Florence¹⁴⁹. Two of the most famous representatives of this “school” were Marsiglio Ficino (who translated and wrote a commentary to Plotinus) and Pico della Mirandola, who is mentioned by Yeats in *A Vision*¹⁵⁰ and to whom Pater devoted one of his essays on the Italian Renaissance¹⁵¹. It would seem that Pater’s Romantic presentation of Pico della Mirandola is of particular significance for an understanding of *The Tower*¹⁵².

Pater’s youthful Pico combines considerable physical beauty with an outstanding intellect (i.e. imagination) and “deep and passionate” emotionality. He is capable both of having love affairs and of practising mysticism and asceticism. Pater compares his writings to those of Plato, singling out Pico’s Italian commentary on Plato’s conception of divine love and unseen beauty for particular mention. Pater also draws attention to Pico’s symbolic attitude to the material world. The motifs of the tree and the mountain – important elements in the landscape of *The Tower* – make their appearance in this context.

“Everywhere there is an unbroken system of correspondences. Every object in the terrestrial world is an analogue, a symbol or counterpart, of some higher reality in the

Wherever the orbit of the moon can reach,
Until it plunge into the sun;
And there, free and yet fast,
Being both Chance and Choice,
Forget its broken toys
And sink into its own delight at last”.

(W.B. Yeats, *All Souls’ Night. Epilogue to A Vision* [in:] *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 258).

¹⁴⁹ Cf. E. Panofsky, op.cit. A. Kuczyńska has drawn attention to the link between the concepts of beauty, love and freedom in the philosophy of Marsiglio Ficino (and, in my opinion, in the poetry of Yeats and the Romantics – J.D.): A. Kuczyńska, *Teoria piękna Marsiglia Ficina* [in:] *Estetyka*, 1963.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 20.

¹⁵¹ Cf. W. Pater, *Pico della Mirandola* [in:] *The Renaissance*, ed.cit.

Cf. F.A.C. Wilson: “... he has leaned heavily upon Italian Renaissance Neoplatonism, of which he clearly knew much more than his critics have supposed. His wife had read Pico della Mirandola, and though Yeats himself is modest about his knowledge of that philosopher, he acquired much that Pico could have taught him from the slightly later English Platonism of Henry More. One of his own Italian sources was Castiglione’s *The Courtier*, and he says that he has drawn upon it in his text (...) The Platonism Castiglione learned from the schools of Pico and Gemistus Pletho is in fact important over the whole range of Yeats’s poetry, and he is not writing idly in the famous lines in ‘The Tower’:

I have prepared my peace
With learned Italian things
And the proud stones of Greece”.

(F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats’s Iconography*, ed.cit., pp. 92 – 104).

In the opinion of F.A.C. Wilson, the ideas of the Italian Neoplatonists which were particularly dear to Yeats are: the theory of reincarnation, the belief that corporeal beauty is a reflection of spiritual beauty and the belief that the goal of the soul’s reincarnation is Intellectual Beauty.

¹⁵² “Pater’s account of Pico della Mirandola is applicable, almost word for word, to Yeats himself” (T.R.Henn, *The Lonely Tower*, ed.cit., p. 266). Pater’s Pico embodies the Italian Neoplatonist ideal of the unity of spiritual and physical beauty.

starry heavens, and this again of some law of the angelic life in the world beyond the stars. There is the element of fire in the material world; the sun is the fire of heaven; and in the super-celestial world there is the fire of the seraphic intelligence. 'But behold how they differ! The elementary fire burns, the heavenly fire vivifies, the super-celestial fire loves'. In this way, every natural object, every combination of natural forces, every accident in the lives of men, is filled with higher meanings. (...) There are oracles in every tree and mountain-top, and a significance in every accidental combination of the events of life"¹⁵³.

Pater considers the significant characteristic of Pico's work to be a yearning (shared by the protagonist of *The Tower*) for the "imaginative reconciliation of opposing traditions" – Greek, Jewish, Cabbalistic, astrological and Christian. Pater also recalls Pico's speech devoted to the "dignity of human nature" and "the greatness of man", where the philosopher-poet puts man and the earth at the centre of a Ptolemaic universe.

The protagonist's words "I have prepared my peace / With learned Italian things / And the proud stones of Greece" therefore in a sense sum up the stormy and wide-ranging discussion with Plato and Plotinus and indicate that the Platonic tradition which is dearest to the protagonist is in all probability that of the Italian Renaissance – in particular that of Pico della Mirandola, whose conception of man as an intermediary between God and people and as a creator of poetry which is not a copy of nature but an expression of inner vision is similar to that of the Romantics¹⁵⁴.

Coming after "learned Italian things / And the proud stones of Greece" in the hierarchy of poetic material are the poet's imaginings and reminiscences of earthly love (memories of love / Memories of the words of women). It would seem that this characteristic gradation of poetic matter is yet another manifestation of the Romantic-Plotinic law of universal analogy (cf. Pater's essay on Pico della Mirandola¹⁵⁵). According to this law, the structure of a poem corresponds to the structure of the imagination, which in turn corresponds to the structure of the world. The whole of reality appears to be dualistic but is in fact united.

¹⁵³ Cf. W. Pater, *Pico della Mirandola* [in:] *The Renaissance*, ed.cit., pp. 47 – 48.

¹⁵⁴ Z. Łempicki has made a study of the links between the Renaissance and Romanticism (Z. Łempicki, *Renesans, Oświecenie, Romantyzm i inne studia z historii kultury*, Warsaw 1966).

Renaissance poetics introduced the concepts of creation and creator (similar to God) to European thought for the first time.

Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Twórczość: dzieje pojęcia* [in:] W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sztuki i poezji*, ed.cit.

Cf. A. Kuczyńska, *Człowiek i Świat. Wątki antropologiczne w poetykach Renesansu Włoskiego*, Warsaw 1976.

Cf. E. Sarnowska, *Teoria poezji Macieja Kazimierza Sarbiewskiego* [in:] *Studia z teorii i historii poezji*, Ed. M. Głowiński, Seria I, Wrocław 1967.

¹⁵⁵ "With this change of substance, this return to imagination, this understanding that the laws of art which are the hidden laws of the world, would come a change of style..." (W.B. Yeats, *The symbolism in poetry* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 163).

"... the laws of composition are the application to art of the universal laws of all creation, so that the work of art becomes in itself a symbol by the simple fact of submitting to them" (A. Gerard, *On the logic of Romanticism* [in:] *Romanticism. Points of View*, ed.cit., p. 235).

This deep unity finds its fullest expression in the human imagination, where two spheres co-operate and coexist: (a) the higher sphere (imagination), which remains in contact with the ideal sphere, and (b) the lower sphere (fancy), which is tied to the world of the senses and provides the higher sphere with “material”¹⁵⁶. The higher sphere of the imagination is also called “creative” or “pure”. The lower sphere – tied to the memory of material things – is also called representational or “material”¹⁵⁷. The Plotinic theory of expressive art “lends support” to this Romantic conception of imagination:

“Still the arts are not to be slighted on the ground that they create by imitation of natural objects; for, to begin with, these natural objects are themselves imitations; then we must recognize that they give no bare reproduction of the thing seen but go back to the Ideas from which Nature itself derives, and, furthermore, that much of their work is all their own; they are holders of beauty and add where nature is lacking”¹⁵⁸.

The transition from the visionary world of the imagination – where the spiritual is united with the material and the imagined with the experienced – to the poem (Super-human mirror-resembling dream) is effected by language (memories of the words of women) – Shelley’s “mirror of thoughts”, mankind’s common property and the poem’s consistent and immediate “material”. It is language (mirror of thoughts) that recreates the concrete world of the imagination, where logical, emotional and sensual elements are indissolubly united. This is emphasized by the image of the jackdaw warming the common, multi-layered nest built in a loophole of the common tower of imagination. This image symbolizes the poet and his work of art.

As at the loophole there
 The daws chatter and scream,
 And drop twigs layer upon layer.
 When they have mounted up,
 The mother bird will rest
 On their hollow top,
 And so warm her wild nest.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. footnotes Nos 12, 67, 77, 99. On the theory of imagination of Coleridge and Wordsworth see: R. Wellek, op.cit., W.K. Wimsatt Jr and C. Brookes, op.cit., and A. Gerard, op.cit.

“William Blake was the first writer of modern times to preach the indissoluble marriage of all great art with symbol. There had been allegorists and teachers of allegory in plenty, but the symbolic imagination, or, as Blake preferred to call it, ‘vision’, is not allegory, being ‘a representation of what actually exists really and unchangeably’. A symbol is indeed the only possible expression of some invisible essence, a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame; while allegory is one of many possible representations of an embodied thing, or familiar principle, and belongs to fancy and not to imagination; the one is revelation, the other an amusement”. (W.B. Yeats, *William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 116).

According to R. Snukal, *Yeats’s views on fancy and imagination are closer to those of Wordsworth than those of Coleridge* (R. Snukal, op.cit., pp. 97 - 112).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. G. Bachelard, *Poétique de l’espace*, Paris 1958 (Introduction).

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Plotinus, *Fifth Ennead*, VIII.1 [in:] Plotinus, op.cit., p. 239.

According to a suggestion in *A Vision*, the living bird warming its own nest is also a symbol of “vital knowledge” – the real wisdom of the Romantics¹⁵⁹ or Unity of Being – i.e. an integral experience of reality to which imagination gives direct access and to which poetry gives indirect access:

“My instructors identify consciousness with conflict, not with knowledge, substitute for subject and object and their attendant logic a struggle towards harmony, towards Unity of Being. Logical and emotional conflict alike lead towards a reality which is concrete, sensuous, bodily. My imagination was for a time haunted by figures that, muttering “The great systems”, held out to me the sun-dried skeletons of birds, and it seemed to me that this image was meant to turn my thoughts to the living bird. That bird signifies truth when it eats, evacuates, builds its nest, engenders, feeds its young; do not all intelligible truths lie in its passage from egg to dust?”¹⁶⁰.

The image of the jackdaw and its multi-layered nest is therefore at once a symbolic conclusion to the first part of the will and a summing up of the discussion on the themes of imagination, poetry, the poet¹⁶¹, Unity of Being and abstract transcendence (which had become synonymous with the “mistaken” interpretation of Plato and Plotinus).

This symbolic summing up is yet another indication that in the third part of *The Tower* two tendencies of Romantic poetics – vision (approaching symbolism) and didactic rhetoric – overlap¹⁶². As an advocate of expressive poetry and as a conscious heir of the English High Romantic tradition, Yeats quite naturally tends to favour symbolism¹⁶³.

The symbolic motifs of which the world of *The Tower* is built (e.g. the bird, the tower, the mirror, the climb, the quest, the tree, the fisherman) are firmly based in the European cultural tradition. They are not idle ornaments but are embedded in a special context constructed of selected “realistic” elements. The appearance of these motifs is

¹⁵⁹ “In what Coleridge calls ‘vital knowledge’ an intimate fusion takes place between the consciousness and its object, and the percept becomes an integral part of the percipient’s mind. This is why Wordsworth often uses such metaphysical terms as ‘drink’, ‘eat’, ‘absorb’, ‘nourish’, ‘feed’, to describe the relationship of cognition and, above all, of assimilation which is established between the thinking subject and the objective world. Similarly, what Keats calls ‘sensation’ is not an immediate intuition of truth with which the poet alone is favoured: it is the lived experience of reality, on the physical, moral and metaphysical planes; this experience (in which the personality is totally involved, with its intellectual emotional and volitional faculties), is the fundamental act by which the personality of a man deepens and grows towards the fullness of wisdom. (...) Such type of knowledge belongs to imagination (...) In Romantic doctrine, the work of art, like the poetic experience which it expresses, owes its value as synthesis to a concert of the faculties which is orchestrated by the imagination. All the faculties, sensory, emotional, intellectual, imaginative and moral contribute to the elaboration of the work of art” (A. Gerard, op.cit., p. 233).

¹⁶⁰ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 214.

¹⁶¹ “... the lonely subjective temperament is always symbolized as a bird, simply because it lives primarily in the zone of pure intellect, or ‘air’” (F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats’s Iconography*, ed.cit., p. 166). Cf. Shelley, *To a Skylark* [in:] *Shelley*, op.cit., pp. 763 – 766.

¹⁶² Cf. C.M. Bowra, *Prometheus Unbound* [in:] *The Romantic Imagination*, ed.cit.

¹⁶³ Cf. footnotes Nos 7, 156, 159.

always prepared for by other objects in the represented world and by the intellectual and emotional atmosphere which permeates that world.

At the centre of the Yeatsian image there is always "a strong visual basis"¹⁶⁴ (Cf. the fisherman climbing to the top of the mountain or the jackdaw sitting on its nest in a loophole of the tower). A cluster of multiple and multivalent emotional and intellectual meanings is constructed around this centre. In this sense Yeats's "images" are "icons" and are comparable to the symbols of the French symbolists, the images of the imagists and the concept of the Vortex introduced by Ezra Pound¹⁶⁵. It is also in this sense that Yeats's "images" would seem to "tally" with T.S. Eliot's (essentially Romantic) concept of "unified sensibility"¹⁶⁶.

At this juncture it may be recalled that Yeats himself particularly appreciated the "visionary realism"¹⁶⁷ of Blake's *Illustrations to Dante*. In *A Vision*, Blake is placed together with Michelangelo – another master of vivid expression – in the sixteenth phase.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. G. Melchiori:

"It is actually the pattern that makes a work of art out of materials which, in themselves, have no aesthetic value. It could be said of a poem that it is the expression of the inner world of the poet within a certain mental pattern. And the pattern itself is not superimposed afterwards, is not a metrical scheme or a technical device; it is a form of mental organization developed by the poet at the same time as he was gathering, more or less unconsciously, the materials from which the poem is born. I propose to enquire into the mental pattern upon which Yeats's poetry is built. And I may as well state that I suspect that this mental pattern had, in Yeats's case, a strong visual basis: that it approached a geometrical scheme (...). By way of introduction I wish in the next few pages to dwell on the definition of 'pattern': a scheme of organization both of thought and of form. I prefer 'pattern' to scheme because of its associations with sensuous impressions rather than with thought impressions. Poetry and art appeal to the mind through the senses (or to the senses only). The creator of poetry and art in his turn, even when his work expresses serious philosophical conceptions, operates through the senses, and his intuition is essentially sensorial. Impressions which would be merely physical for the average man affect the artist so deeply as to become for him the very essence of thought. His thought will therefore organize itself according to a mental pattern, which is not only of the mind but of all the senses. (Author's note: In his essay of April 1916 on 'Certain Noble Plays of Japan', Yeats himself wrote: 'We only believe in those thoughts which have been conceived not in the brain but in the whole body'. Not long afterwards T.S. Eliot wrote his famous pages on poetry as 'a direct sensuous apprehension of thought' and on the necessity of feeling 'thought as immediately as the odour of a rose'). So, for instance a visual pattern (a certain arrangement of lines and planes, a pictorial or plastic motif) may so impress a poet's mind as to become transformed there into a philosophical or metaphorical system.

That Yeats realized this transference of patterns from the sensory to the mental plane at a late stage of his development, appears clearly from the final passage of the introduction to the 1937 edition of *A Vision* (...)" (G. Melchiori, op.cit., pp. 2 – 3).

¹⁶⁵ R. Snukal uses the following terms as synonyms: 'symbol', 'icon', 'natural, not conventional sign' (R. Snukal, op.cit., pp. 75 – 80). Cf. F. Kermodé, loc.cit. in footnote No 7.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. G. Melchiori, loc.cit. in footnote No 164.

R.H. Fogle points out that Eliot's concept of 'unified sensibility' and the New Critics' 'doctrine of irony' are both derived from the Romantic views of Coleridge and Shelley (R.H. Fogle, *Romantic Bards and Metaphysical Reviewers* [in:] *Romanticism. Points of View*, ed.cit.).

¹⁶⁷ In the first part of his essay 'William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy' Yeats describes Blake's drawings as symbolic and expressive of 'visionary realism'. The source of this 'visionary realism' is the 'sharp and wiry bounding line'. In the opinion of Yeats (and Blake), great art is characterized by 'determinate outline'.

The end of the third part of *The Tower* sees the return of the initial vision (the image of the young man) in a transformed version. This symbolic vision is the poem's framework, clear to the point of iconic representation.

I leave both faith and pride
 To young upstanding men
 Climbing the mountain-side,
 That under bursting dawn
 They may drop a fly;
 Being of that metal made
 Till it was broken by
 This sedentary trade.

Now shall I make my soul,
 Compelling it to study
 In a learned school
 Till the wreck of body,
 Slow decay of blood,
 Testy delirium
 Or dull decrepitude,
 Or what worse evil come –
 The death of friends, or death
 Of every brilliant eye
 That made a catch in the breath –
 Seem but the clouds of the sky
 When the horizon fades;

Or a bird's sleepy cry
 Among the deepening shades. (1926)

The last part of *The Tower* is permeated with irony. The last stanzas of the poem would seem to constitute as much a negation as an affirmation of the worst misgivings of the protagonist *qua* the old man of the first part of *The Tower*.

The finale of *The Tower* is yet another voluntary relinquishment both of that form of Unity of Being which can be achieved by combining creation with heroic deeds and of that form of Unity of Being which can be achieved by creativity. The only passion which would seem to move the protagonist is therefore "bitterness".

It must be remembered, however, that in the terminology of Pater and Yeats, "bitterness" is a synonym of love for the ideal world. This "bitterness" is capable of creating "sweetness", i.e. beauty: the great art of Michelangelo¹⁶⁸, the splendid aristocratic

¹⁶⁸ "In the story of Michelangelo's life the strength often turning to bitterness, is not far to seek (...) Even his tenderness and pity are embittered by their strength (...) We know little of his youth, but all tends to make one believe in the vehemence of its passions. Beneath the Platonic calm of his sonnets there is latent a deep

homes of eighteenth-century Ireland and also the “Translunar Paradise” of the third part of *The Tower*. The protagonist’s retreat into his “bitter” inner self – prescribed by the Platonists (learned school) – would therefore appear to be yet another attempt to achieve Unity of Being by the “direct path”. The way of love for a woman and that of sport, politics and poetic creation turn out therefore to be “circuit paths” (“winding way” / “serpent way”).

The true “direct path” to Unity of Being is the way of the imagination of the ascetic and learned old man, who withdraws into the depths of his own “bitter” soul in order to meet that which in the first part of *The Tower* was described as “impossible”, and the synonyms of which were in turn “abstract things” and “Translunar Paradise”. The only reliable guides on this authentic “direct path” are the spiritual masters: Plato, Plotinus and the Italian Neo-Platonists.

The tower becomes more and more a symbol both of the imagination of the world and the imagination of the protagonist, whose attention is directed as much to what is outside him as to what is inside him. The symbolic tower of the protagonist therefore integrates meanings which – according to Yeats – are suggested in the poetry of Shelley by the symbolic motifs of the tower and the cave (“the mind looking outward upon men and things and the mind looking inward upon itself”)¹⁶⁹.

The Tower’s closing image of external reality as an amorphous mass of mist, clouds and shadows is therefore an allusion both to Shelley’s cave and Plato’s cave (in *The Republic*) – not to mention the cave (connected with the “regeneration myth”) in Porphyry’s essay.

The motif of the gradual ascent to the top of the tower – or to Shelley’s “reality beyond” which “was something other than thought”¹⁷⁰ – is a direct allusion to a fragment of Plotinus’s fifth Ennead. Here Plotinus distinguishes three kinds of people:

delight in carnal form and colour (...) The interest of Michelangelo’s poems is that they make us spectators of this struggle; the struggle of a strong nature to adorn and attune itself; the struggle of a desolating passion, which yearns to be resigned and sweet and pensive as Dante’s was...” (W. Pater, *The Poetry of Michelangelo* [in:] *The Renaissance*, ed.cit., p. 84).

“Some violent bitter man, some powerful man
Called architect and artist in, that they,
Bitter and violent men, might rear in stone
The sweetness that all longed for night and day,
The gentleness none there had ever known; ...”

(W.B. Yeats: ‘Meditations in time of civil war – I. Ancestral Houses’ [in:] *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 225). ‘Ancestral Houses’ comes immediately after the title poem of the collection of *The Tower*.

¹⁶⁹ “The tower, important in Maeterlinck, as in Shelley, is, like the sea, and rivers, and caves with fountains, a very ancient symbol, and would perhaps, as years went by, have grown more important in his poetry. The contrast between it and the cave in Laon and Cythna suggests a contrast between the mind looking outward upon men and things and the mind looking inward upon itself ...” (W.B. Yeats, *The Philosophy of Shelley’s Poetry* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 87).

¹⁷⁰ “When one turns to Shelley for an explanation of the cave and fountain one finds how close his thought was to Porphyry’s. He looked upon thought as a condition of life in generation and believed that the reality beyond was something other than thought” (W.B. Yeats, *ibidem*, p. 84).

those who cannot rise above the earth; those who rise a little but who fall down again; finally those who succeed in leaving the world behind them in order to reach God. The end of the eighth part of the fifth Ennead allows us to conclude that this breaking free of the earth means journeying into the depths of the inner “self”: “retreating inwards, he (i.e. man – J.D.) becomes the possessor of All”:

“But there is a third order – those godlike men who, in their mightier power, in the keenness of their sight, have clear vision of the splendour above and rise to it from among the clouds and fog of earth and hold firmly to that other world, looking beyond all here, delighted in the place of reality, their native land, like a man returning after long wanderings to the pleasant ways of his own country. (...) It is to be reached by those who, born with the nature of the lover, are also authentically philosophic by inherent temper; in pain of love towards beauty but not held by material loveliness, taking refuge from that in things whose beauty is of the soul – such things as virtue, knowledge, institutions, law and custom – and thence, rising still a step, reach to the source of this loveliness of the Soul, thence to whatever be above that again, until the uppermost is reached. The First, the Principle whose beauty is self-springing: this attained, there is an end to the pain inassuageable before”¹⁷¹.

The only “direct path” turns out therefore to be the way which leads into the depths of the inner self to an inner vision. Eternity – whose confines traverse the human soul (cf. the “thirteenth cone” in *A Vision*) – turns out to be not an abstraction after all¹⁷².

The journey to “abstract things” in the company of Plato and Plotinus, which is announced in the first part of *The Tower*, is eventually given a Romantic modification. The protagonist’s last chance of achieving Unity of Being turns out to be “lonely ecstasy”¹⁷³. This is the final task of his “excited, fantastical” imagination. He risks defeat and “derision” only if he fails to proceed along the true straight path.

At this juncture it may be recalled that in *A Vision* – chronologically closest to *The Tower* – Yeats considers the essence of holiness to be “supersensual receptivity”¹⁷⁴. In

¹⁷¹ Plotinus, *Fifth Ennead*, IX. 1 and 2, ed.cit., p. 246).

¹⁷² Cf. Blake’s ‘pulsation of the artery’:

“For in this Period the Poet’s Work is Done, and all the Great
Events of Time start forth & are conceiv’d in such a Period,
Within a Moment, a Pulsation of the Artery.

(...)

For every Space larger than a red Globule of Man’s blood

Is visionary, and is created by the Hammer of Los:

And every Space smaller than a Globule of Man’s blood opens
Into Eternity of which this vegetable Earth is but a shadow”

(W. Blake, *Milton, Book the First*, 31 [in:] W. Blake, op.cit., p. 184).

Cf. Yeats: “The particulars are the work of the Thirteenth Cone or cycle which is in every man and called by every man his freedom. Doubtless, for it can do all things and knows all things, it knows what it will do with its own freedom but it has kept the secret” (W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 302).

¹⁷³ Cf. H. Bloom, op.cit., p. 224.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 180.

the earlier *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* he wrote that it is only saints and sages that tread the straight path to “super-reality”¹⁷⁵, defined as the Condition of Fire¹⁷⁶.

The image of the ascetic old man living in a lonely tower that rises into the clouds appears in one of Yeats’s earliest essays (*A Tower on the Apennines*), where it symbolizes the surmounting of the Romantic antinomy of “perfection of life” and “perfection of art”:

“Away south upon another mountain a mediaeval tower, with no building near nor any sign of life, rose into the clouds. I saw suddenly in the mind’s eye an old man, erect and a little gaunt, standing in the door of the tower, while about him broke a windy light. He was the poet who had at last, because he had done so much for the word’s sake, come to share in the dignity of the saint”¹⁷⁷.

¹⁷⁵ “Many years ago I saw, between sleeping and waking, a woman of incredible beauty shooting an arrow into the sky, and from the moment when I made my first guess at her meaning I have thought much of the difference between the winding movement of Nature and the straight line, which is called in Balzac’s *Séraphita* the ‘Mark of Man’, but is better described as the mark of saint or sage. I think that we who are poets and artists, not being permitted to shoot beyond the tangible, must go from desire to weariness and so to desire again, and live but for the moment when vision comes to our weariness like terrible lightning, in the humility of the brutes (...). Only when we are saint or sage, and renounce experience itself can we, in imagery of the Christian Cabbala leave the sudden lightning and the path of the serpent and become the bowman who aims his arrow at the centre of the sun” (W.B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit. p. 340).

¹⁷⁶ “There are two realities, the terrestrial and the condition of fire. All power is from the terrestrial condition, for there all opposites meet and there only is the extreme of choice possible, full freedom. And there the heterogeneous is, and evil, for evil is the strain one upon another of opposites, but in the condition of fire is all music and all rest. Between is the condition of air where images have but a borrowed life, that of memory or that reflected upon them when they symbolize colours and intensities of fire: the place of shadows who are ‘in the whirl of those who are fading’ (...) When all sequence comes to an end, time comes to an end, and the soul puts on the rhythmic or spiritual body or luminous body and contemplates all the events of its memory and every possible impulse in an eternal possession of itself in one single moment. That condition is alone animate, all the rest is fantasy, and from thence come all the passions and, some have held, the very heat of the body” (W.B. Yeats, *ibidem*, pp. 356 – 357).

Interpreting the Condition of Fire (*ibidem*, p. 363), Yeats makes reference to the Neoplatonist Henry More. Yeats’s remarks on the Condition of Fire (or the ultimate reality) are reminiscent of Pater’s remarks on Pico della Mirandola, quoted above. According to Pater, corresponding to Pico’s three worlds are three kinds of fire: ‘elementary fire’, ‘heavenly fire’ and ‘super-celestial fire’ (W. Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 47).

¹⁷⁷ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 291.

According to Bloom, the following fragment from Coleridge’s poem ‘Limbo’ (written late in the poet’s life) contains “the most Yeatsian vision in a poem not by Yeats himself”:

“But that is lovely – looks like Human Time, –
An Old Man with a steady look sublime,
That stops his earthly task to watch the skies;
But he is blind – a Statue hath such eyes; –
Yet having moonward turned his face by chance,
Gazes the orb with moon-like countenance,
With scant white hairs, with foretop bald and high,
He gazes still, – his eyeless face all eye; –
As ‘twere an organ full of silent sight,
His whole face seemeth to rejoice in light!
Lip touching lip, all moveless, bust and limb –
He seems to gaze at that which seems to gaze on him!”

(Quoted by H. Bloom in *op.cit.*, p. 215 – chapter on *A Vision*).

The protagonist's final autocreation – the last stage of the ascent to the top of the Platonic ladder of love, immediately preceding rebirth – is as the ascetic old man shut up in the tower of imagination. As though he were in a monastery¹⁷⁸, the old man makes a last survey of his past life before leaving this world for eternity and the unknown.

Seen from this “super-terrestrial” viewpoint, love (as in Plato's *Banquet* and *Phaedrus*) is above all a desire for eternity, immortality and wisdom (i.e. the vision of the perfect world). Thus understood, love manifests itself not only as ecstasy, but also as rage and bitterness. The protagonist recalls the successive “rungs” of the ladder of love – i.e. his successive roles in life:

First there is the role of the young fisherman-sportsman-poet, who embodies the educative ideal of Plato's Academy as interpreted by Pater:

“Not to be ‘pure’ from the body, but to identify it, in its utmost fairness, with the fair soul, by a gymnastic ‘fused in music’, became from first to last, the aim of education as he conceived it”¹⁷⁹.

Then follows the role of the lover, who as a “half mounted man” reaches the level of *Anima Mundi* (Great Memory) and who attempts to reconcile the two aspects of love and the two poles of poetry (mimetic and expressive – there being no doubt that he prefers the latter).

Next comes the role of the poet-prophet-mystic, who endeavours to break free of *Anima Mundi*.

Lastly there is the role of the ascetic sage who yearns for direct contact with eternity – i.e. with the sphere above the Great Memory (*Anima Mundi*). The frontier of eternity traverses his soul.

Each of these roles would seem to be created by the protagonist's imagination as it attempts to reconcile the conflicting urges which present themselves to the protagonist, namely love for the world of the senses and passion which is purely intellectual.

The most difficult role for the protagonist is that of the sage. The protagonist *qua* old man is to the end filled with unquenched sensuality. To the end he remembers earthly love, “the words of women” and the ideal of the unity of the spiritual and material world. To the end he wavers between the lower and higher poles of the imagination – between the Muse on the one hand, and Plato and Plotinus on the other. He ultimately chooses Plato and Plotinus – not as philosophers who have created systems, but as spiritual guides and as poets who have created a mythical vision of the world. Whereas the presence of God in man and man's creative power fills him with admiration, the vision of the decline of material beauty fills him with rage and a feeling of rebellion. The protagonist's ironic detachment from the most difficult “role” in life

¹⁷⁸ Cf. “My Imagination is a Monastery and I am its Monk...” (J. Keats, *Letter to Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 16 August 1820 [in:] *English Critical Texts*, ed.cit., p. 259).

¹⁷⁹ Cf. W. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, ed.cit., p. 130.

“ – that of the ascetic wise man “ – stems from the impossibility of reconciling these conflicting emotions.

The protagonist of *The Tower* therefore embodies the Romantic ideal of the literary hero, who in Shelley's opinion should be “the living impersonation of the truth of human passions”¹⁸⁰ and the “image of the divinity in man”¹⁸¹. The protagonist of *The Tower* is “embodied passion”¹⁸², in the sense that he embodies passion to the same extent as Eros¹⁸³ (“Love” in Shelley's translation) in Plato's *Banquet*. According to Socrates and Diotima, Eros is not a god but a divine element of the world – a spirit (“daemon” in Shelley's translation) that “holds an intermediate place between what is divine and what is mortal”, that mediates between God and man and that “fills up that intermediate space between these two classes of beings, so as to bind together, by his

¹⁸⁰ Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 1035.

¹⁸¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 1035.

¹⁸² According to T. Parkinson, the poet in Yeats's poems may speak “in any of five separable functions”:

(1) “He may speak as the individuated being, whose life gives weight to his words” (*The Municipal Gallery Revisited*).

(2) He may speak “as a social character” or “a spokesman for his civilization”. (*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*).

(3) He may speak as a prophet (*Second Coming, Leda and the Swan*).

(4) “The poet may speak as overt dramatist. In this role he is a maker of *dramatis personae*, the shaper of personifications of passions, whether in stage plays or nominal lyrics. Even the poems of self-utterance, as suggested above, must to be successful attain the status of objectified drama (...) In lyric poems, too, he shapes personae not only out of his own being but out of admired historical figures like Swift or invented figures like Crazy Jane (Cracked Mary) or the man and woman young and old. These personae like those of his plays or those wrested from his individual fate, are ‘voices’, personifications and passionate embodiments that evoke Yeats's partisanship, his conviction of their importance and ultimate propriety, their decorum in the universal structure. It is in his loyalty to these figures, his conviction of their rightness, that his employment of the personae differs from that of Pound and Eliot. Pound's use of Malatesta is baffling in its ambiguities, and in some sense he seems to feel that Malatesta's complete wrongness is more admirable than any possible rightness, while at the same time he disclaims identity of himself with Siggy. Eliot's use of Gerontion and Prufrock as personae is motivated chiefly by his abiding contempt for their human incompetence. But Yeats's personae are the affirmations won by his struggle, so that the only persona regarded with amusement or with dislike in his poems is usually some abstraction from his own being. Crazy Jane and Tom the Lunatic he accepts and admires”.

(5) “The poet makes a statement when he acts as editor, maker of books (...) The most notable instance in Yeats's work is his preparation of the text of *The Tower*, his resurrection of an earlier poem, his exclusion of several poems (notably the sequence ‘A Woman Young and Old’) written well before the book was to go to press” (T.S. Parkinson, *The embodiment of truth: five modes, one poet* [in:] op.cit., pp. 42 – 55).

The protagonist of *The Tower* would seem to speak in all five modes listed by Parkinson, with the mode of ‘overt dramatist’, creator of ‘passionate embodiments’ prevailing.

My term ‘embodied passion’ corresponds to Parkinson's ‘passionate embodiment’ and to Yeats's ... formula (quoted by Parkinson, op.cit., pp. 3 – 4): ‘Man can embody truth but he cannot know it’.

¹⁸³ This passion (love), the embodiment of which would seem to be the protagonist of *The Tower*, is – it seems – the essence of eternity.

Cf. W.B. Yeats, *Whence had they come?* [in:] *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 332.

Cf. F.A.C. Wilson's remarks on Yeats's early tendency to personify ‘human faculties’ in a manner characteristic of polytheism (F.A.C. Wilson, *Yeats's Iconography*, ed.cit., p. 169.) See also footnotes Nos 76, 89 and 185.

own power, the whole universe of things” He is neither particularly wise nor particularly ignorant – neither ugly nor beautiful. He is a “homeless and unsandalled” hunter. The son of Plenty and Poverty, conceived at Aphrodite’s wedding, he yearns to possess beauty and wisdom and is torn by conflicting feelings of admiration, bitterness and rage. He is also a philosopher, “philosophy being an intermediate state between ignorance and wisdom”¹⁸⁴.

The protagonist of *The Tower* is at the centre of the poem’s structure – this being in conformity with the Romantic belief that a poem expresses the personality of the speaker, who is commonly – though mistakenly – physically identified with “the author of the poem”¹⁸⁵.

As presented in the poem, the personality of the protagonist renders a “naive” Romantic¹⁸⁶ interpretation of *The Tower* as a simple expression of the author’s life-experiences quite impossible. The protagonist of *The Tower* is a portrayal of a Romantic personality which has much in common with the character of “daimonic man” in *A Vision*. Such a portrayal is characteristic of Yeats’s mature Romanticism. Like “daimonic man”, the protagonist of *The Tower* strives to reconcile the conflicting poles of sensual and spiritual passion between which he is torn. In Yeatsian terminology this yearning for unity is given the name of “Mask”. Unity is jeopardized above all by the protagonist’s ageing body and by impulses which inhibit the imagination. The contradiction between “impossible” love for the material world and yearning for spiritual beauty can only be overcome by imagination (i.e. “creative mind”, “intellect”), which creates images of Unity of Being or of “simplicity that is also intensity”, i.e. successive roles in life: – the lover, the lone fisherman, the sage. These images (i.e. roles) become successive objects for imitation and desire by the Mask, which yearns for inner order. External circumstances and the inhibiting action of the body, however, prevent these roles from ever being fully assumed¹⁸⁷.

According to T. Parkinson, Yeats’s understanding of “personality” differs both from the egotistic concept of “individuality” (characteristic of “naive” Romanticism) and from the concept of “character”, identified with man as an abstract social being, empty of “inner life”.

Yeats’s conception of personality is therefore “antisocial”, dramatic and mythical. According to Parkinson, it is linked to the discovery by man’s imagination of a universal

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Shelley, *The Banquet of Plato*, ed.cit., pp. 855 –)

¹⁸⁵ “A poet writes always of his personal life, in his finest work out of its tragedy, whatever it be, remorse, lost love, or mere loneliness; he never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table, there is always a phantasmagoria. (...) ...he is more type than man, more passion than type” (W.B. Yeats, *A General Introduction For my Work. I. The First Principle* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 509).

¹⁸⁶ Cf. T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 46.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., Phase Seventeen. The Yeatsian ideal of ‘daimonic man’ is embodied in *A Vision* by Dante and Shelley. Blake and Michelangelo come close to achieving this ideal.

Cf. H. Bloom, For the daimonic man the love of the actual is not yet possible. Indeed such love makes Unity of Being impossible (H. Bloom, op.cit., p. 244).

or “passionate” role in “the great universal drama”. It means the being’s total identification with one of the spiritual passions that pervade the universe:

“... he saw the human being in three categories: that of individuality, in which the being refused both social function and his passionate role in the structure of the universe; that of character, in which the being refused his larger responsibilities in the interests of the safe, the defined, the abstract; and finally that of personality, in which the being accepted his passionate function in the great universal drama¹⁸⁸ (...) Personality is strongest when the being is living in a condition of greatest beauty and unity of being, while individuality is strongest when the being is living through a phase of conflict and fragmentation. Personality is a much freer condition and a more accurate one, closer to the truth, and distinct from both character and individuality because closer to unity with the design of the universe. Personality might be called the fated or assigned role of the being, character the socially imposed, individuality a product of refusal of both social and universal role, egotism, false self-assertion, denial. (...) Personality is religious, character social, individuality anarchic. The “personal” in such a psychology is not antithetical to the universal, though the ‘individual’ – or ‘individuated’ – is antipathetic to the timeless and spaceless community of spirits that is reality”¹⁸⁹.

In *A Vision* Yeats mentions the four “traditional attitudes” (or universal roles) which are to be found in *The Tower*, namely the lover, the sage, the hero, the scorner of life. They have the power to bring the life of a human being to perfection. These universal roles reveal themselves to the human spirit during one of the last stages of the state “between life and death”¹⁹⁰ – this in conformity with the Platonic myth. In *A Vision*, this stage is called “Purification”. It almost immediately precedes reincarnation. A universal role, however, is difficult to assume or imitate¹⁹¹, because as a rule it runs

¹⁸⁸ E.g. W.B. Yeats, *In Memory of Major Robert Gregory*. Cf. T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 21. See footnote No 182.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 40.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 234. Cf. Plato, *The Republic*, ed.cit., part 11 (Book Ten): The Myth of ER.

¹⁹¹ “Some years ago I began to believe that our culture, with its doctrine of sincerity and self-realization, made us gentle and passive, and that the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were right to found theirs upon the imagination of Christ or of some classic hero. Saint Francis and Caesar Borgia made themselves overmastering, creative persons by turning from the mirror to meditation upon a mask. When I had this thought I could see nothing else in life. (...) I was always thinking of the element of imitation in style and life, and of the life beyond heroic imitation. I find in an old diary: ‘I think all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other life, on a re-birth as something not one’s self, something created in a moment and perpetually renewed; in playing a game like that of a child where one loses the infinite pain of self-realization, in a grotesque or solemn painted face put on that one may hide from the terror of judgement... Perhaps all the sins and energies of the world are but the world’s flight from an infinite blinding beam; (...) If we cannot imagine ourselves as different from what we are, and try to assume that second self, we cannot impose a discipline upon ourselves though we may accept one from others. Active virtue, as distinguished from the passive acceptance of a code, is therefore theatrical, consciously dramatic, the wearing of the mask...” (W.B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* [in:] *Mythologies*, ed.cit., pp. 333 – 334).

Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 84. For Yeats’s understanding of the concept of ‘mimesis’ or ‘imitation’ see footnotes Nos 94 and 95.

counter to man's real inclinations. It is a revelation of the imagination, which remains in contact with the sphere of spirits – in particular with the Daimon or “anti-self” or “ultimate self”¹⁹². In essence, therefore, human personality is dramatic. It stems from the choice – continually renewed – of a difficult archetypal role: “Personality, no matter how habitual, is a constantly renewed choice...”¹⁹³. The protagonist of *The Tower* is faced with just such a choice. He hesitates to fully accept the only role worthy of an old man, namely that of the ascetic sage.

In *A Vision*, Yeats describes the continual struggle to maintain the chosen role which takes place in the consciousness of the individual¹⁹⁴:

“The stage-manager or Daimon, offers his actor an inherited scenario, the Body of Fate, and a Mask or role as unlike as possible to his natural ego or Will, and leaves him to improvise through his Creative Mind the dialogue and details of the plot. He must discover or reveal a being which only exists with extreme effort, when his muscles are as if they were all taut and all his energies active. But this is an antithetical man. For primary I go to the Commedia dell’arte in its decline”.

The portrayal of the protagonist of *The Tower* as a Romantic personality has much in common both with Plotinus's conception of personality as a role in the universal drama of the world¹⁹⁵ and with Shelley's conception of personality, contained in his

¹⁹² Cf. footnotes Nos 108 and 113.

¹⁹³ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., p. 84.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. W.B. Yeats, *ibidem*, p. 84.

See also Bloom's interpretation of *A Vision* in the light of similar conceptions of Blake, Shelley, Freud and Jung (H. Bloom, *op.cit.*, in particular pages 213 and 219).

¹⁹⁵ “So Plotinus had understood the nature and function of human personality, and although Yeats came to the dedicated study of Plotinus (in the Stephen MacKenna translation) late in life, he knew Plotinus early and the passage in the Third Ennead on the drama and the soul articulates with more than coincidental fullness many of Yeats's implicit notions” (T. Parkinson, *op.cit.*, p. 37).

Parkinson quotes the following fragments from the Third Ennead:

“In the dramas of human art, the poet provides the words but the actors add their own quality, good or bad – for they have more to do than merely repeat the author's words – in the truer drama which dramatic genius imitates in its degree, the soul displays itself in a part assigned by the creator of the piece.

As the actors of our stages get their masks and their costume, robes of state or rags, so a Soul is allotted its fortunes, and not at haphazard but always under a Reason: it adapts itself to the fortunes assigned to it; attunes itself, ranges itself rightly to the drama, to the whole principle of the piece: then it speaks out its business, exhibiting at the same time all that a Soul can express of its own Quality, as a singer in a song. A voice, a bearing, naturally fine or vulgar, may increase the charm of a piece; on the other hand, an actor with his ugly voice may make a sorry exhibition of himself, yet the drama stands as good work as ever: the dramatist, taking the action which a sound criticism suggests, disgraces one, taking his part for him, with perfect justice: another man he promotes to more serious roles or to any more important play he may have, while the first is cast for whatever minor work there may be. (...) Souls, (...) act in a vaster place than any stage: the Author has made them masters of all this world; they have a wide choice of place; they themselves determine the honour or discredit in which they are agents since their place and part are in keeping with their quality: they therefore fit into the Reason Principle of the Universe, each adjusted, most legitimately, to the appropriate environment, as every string of the lyre is set in the precisely right position, determined by the Principle directing musical utterance, for the due production of the tones within its capacity. All is just and good in the Universe in which every actor is set in his quite appropriate place, though it be to utter in the Darkness and in Tartarus the dreadful sounds whose utterance there is well.

remarks (made in his essay *A Defence of Poetry*) on creators (poets), heroes and readers of works which are great works according to Romantic criteria. Reconstructed in a hypothetically "Yeatsian" light¹⁹⁶, Shelley's conception of personality would read as follows:

1. Human personality is formed by the imitation of ideal personal models.

2. These ideal personal models are discovered by inspired poets, who in the moment of inspiration partake of Divine life (i.e. creativity and providence) and perceive the "divinity in man".

3. These ideal models of humanity are "living impersonations of passion", embodiments "of passion", "of energy and magnificence", "of energy, beauty and virtue".

4. The ideal personality (the "living impersonation of the truth of human passions") finds its expression in the Greek actor's tragic mask "on which the many expressions, appropriated to his dramatic character might be moulded into one permanent and unchanging expression"¹⁹⁷.

5. Shelley makes a clear distinction between the personality of the poet in the moment of inspiration ("the wisest, the happiest, the best of men") and his personality in everyday life¹⁹⁸.

As a personality, the protagonist of *The Tower* appears simultaneously in three aspects: as an inspired poet, as a dramatic hero ("living impersonation of the truth of human passions") and – partially – as the poem's "addressee"¹⁹⁹.

The combining of these three basic functions means that the protagonist of *The Tower* is a much more dynamic²⁰⁰ personality than the Romantic poet of Shelley's

This Universe is good not when the individual is a stone, but when everyone throws in his own voice towards a total harmony, singing out a life – thin, harsh, imperfect though it be. The Syrinx does not utter merely one pure note; there is a thin obscure sound which blends in to make the harmony of Syrinx music: the harmony is made up from tones of various grades, all the tones differing, but the resultant of all forming one sound (...) there is local difference but from every position, every string gives forth its own tone, the sound appropriate, at once to its particular place and to the entire plan" (Plotinus, *The Third Ennead*, II.17, ed.cit., pp. 91 – 92).

¹⁹⁶ I.e. taking into account those concepts of Yeats and Shelley which would seem to overlap.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 104.

¹⁹⁸ "The frequent recurrence of the poetical power, it is obvious to suppose, may produce in the mind a habit of order and harmony correlative with its own nature and with its effects upon other minds. But in the intervals of inspiration, and they may be frequent without being durable, a poet becomes a man, and is abandoned to the sudden reflux of the influences under which others habitually live. But as he is more delicately organized than other men, and sensible to pain and pleasure, both his own and that of others, in a degree unknown to them, he will avoid the one and pursue the other with an ardour proportioned to his difference. And he renders himself obnoxious to calumny, when he neglects to observe the circumstances under which these objects of universal pursuit and flight have disguised themselves in one another's garments" (Shelley, *ibidem*, p. 1053).

¹⁹⁹ This mythical addressee is the second voice of the protagonist's interior monologue (Hanrahan) in part II of *The Tower*. The protagonist's next addressees – in part III – are the young fishermen, who embody the protagonist's youth. Cf. footnote No 113.

²⁰⁰ "I had begun to get rid of everything that is not, whether in lyric or dramatic poetry, in some sense character in action; a pause in the midst of affection perhaps, but action always its end and theme. (...)

manifesto. The protagonist–poet of *The Tower* simultaneously creates his hero according to immemorial models and identifies himself with that hero.

By “assuming” archetypal masks (or “images” or “roles”)²⁰¹, the protagonist–poet of *The Tower* also creates himself as a personality, striving to achieve inner harmony. By creating himself in the image of a universal model, he expresses this model and exerts an influence on his listeners or readers, transforming them into superhuman personalities like himself²⁰². He therefore takes part in the divine act of creation and maintains contact with mortals, with the world of spirits and with the sphere of vision – thus achieving full Unity of Being²⁰³.

Given the “overlapping” viewpoints of the poet and teacher, the Romantic hero and the poem’s addressee, the protagonist’s monologue is at once:

1. An examination of conscience and a summing up of the Romantic hero’s life – reminiscent of the poems of Wordsworth, Shelley and Browning²⁰⁴.

2. A Romantic poet’s testament addressed to posterity.

3. A treatise on expressive poetry composed by the protagonist–poet “against the background of” the mythical past of the protagonist–hero and the discussion with Plato, Plotinus and the Romantics.

The direct and indirect allusions to Plato, Plotinus, Celtic mythology, the Italian Renaissance, Blake, Shelley and Pater serve to reveal the links between this *ars poetica* and the earliest versions of expressive poetics as well as their Romantic mutation.

The actual and apparent controversies with both closer and more distant predecessors serve to trace the evolution of expressive poetry down to its latest manifestation, i.e. the poetry of W.B. Yeats, who is concealed by the represented world of *The Tower* and who, according to T. Parkinson:

“... carried the ideas of the Romantic movement to their full fruition, and (...) assimilated and qualified the ideas of the modernist aesthetic. He lived through two

I delight in active men, taking the same delight in soldier and craftsman; I would have poetry turn its back upon all that moodish curiosity, psychology – the poetic theme has always been present. I recall an Indian tale: certain men said to the greatest of the sages, ‘Who are your Masters?’ And he replied, ‘The Wind and the harlot, the virgin and the child, the lion and the eagle’ (W.B. Yeats, *An Introduction for my Plays* [in:] *Essays...*, ed.cit., p. 530).

²⁰¹ Cf. footnotes Nos 191, 194 and 195.

²⁰² Cf. ‘I shall make men mad’.

²⁰³ W.Y. Tindall interprets ‘Unity of Being’ as the ‘integration and harmony of self, world and spirit’ (W. Tindall, *The Symbolism of W.B. Yeats* [in:] *Yeats. A Collection of Critical Essays*, Ed. J. Unterecker, ed.cit., p. 49).

²⁰⁴ Cf. W. Wordsworth, *The Prelude*; P.B. Shelley, *Epipsychidion*; R. Browning, *The Pope*; A. Tennyson, *Ulysses*.

“Whitaker subtly presents the analogue of Tennyson’s Ulysses, another old man who lusts after action, seeking a death that will be his own creation. Other Victorian dramatic monologues suggest themselves also, including perhaps the greatest, Browning’s visionary Pope brooding on the abyss of history, and on the necessity for accepting human responsibility, lest all action be wasted, and human death lose all significance. Yeats’s poem almost sustains such comparison without loss of dignity, which is a considerable tribute to it” (H. Bloom, *op.cit.*, pp. 349 – 350).

major literary periods, affirming continuities and accepting changes with a clear sense of tradition rather than convention, and innovation rather than novelty. His poetry thus represents the widest range of dramatic possibilities, in practice and in implied theory, so that all the major issues are raised by him"²⁰⁵.

The Tower is an excellent illustration of the evolution of Romantic poetics in the direction of both dramatic and symbolic expression. The poem's structure is permeated by contrasts and tensions, which are present both at the level of versification (the difference between the "meditative" first two parts of the poem and part III)²⁰⁶ and on the level of style (the interior monologue with its two currents – emotional and intellectual – and which changes into narration or a speech). The monologue is addressed to a certain "You". Poeticisms, colloquialisms, regionalisms, literary allusions and multilevel emotional and intellectual symbols coexist in this monologue. The meanings of individual words are continually modified and enriched by the changing context in which they appear. The entire monologue is stylized – partly as a ballad, partly as a testament. All this goes to explain why, at the level of style, *The Tower* appears at one and the same time to "shimmer with meanings" and to tend towards maximal condensation of meaning around a basic emotional and intellectual centre.

This "dramaticism" is also to be found in the structure of the poem's represented world. The three time planes, "overlapping" so to speak (i.e. those of the protagonist *qua* hero, the protagonist *qua* poet /creator of the hero/ and the protagonist *qua* addresser) mean that the monologue is conducted as it were on three levels and that the distinction between past, present and future is blurred. The protagonist's degree of

²⁰⁵ T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 70.

²⁰⁶ According to M. Perloff:

Part I of *The Tower* is pentameter cross-rhyme.

Part II of *The Tower* is pentameter aabbcd4d4c.

Part III of *The Tower* is trimeter cross-rhyme, where "the term cross-rhyme refers to the scheme abab".

(M. Perloff, *Rhyme and Meaning in the poetry of Yeats*, The Hague 1970, pp. 155 and 145).

Cf. T. Parkinson: "The prosodic possibilities available to Yeats as a poet writing in English were four in number. He could conceive of the line as written in feet, chiefly iambic and he could attempt to maintain a set number of feet per line as in the standard iambic pentameter. He could count syllables and keep a fixed syllable count of six, eight, ten, any given number, to a line. Or he could ignore syllable count or the concept of the foot and simply maintain a relatively fixed number of heavy stresses per line, with a wide range of syllable count. Or he could ignore any fixed count of foot, stress, or syllable and write in free verse, using breath and phrase as prosodic units. (...) I find no positive evidence that Yeats thought in terms of feet, and my own persuasion is that he combined a syllabic and a stress prosody. In such a prosody a five stress line is the equivalent of a ten syllable line, and the two are interchangeable. The ten syllable line may have in it well over five stresses; but they are equivalent. Any given poem may be in one or the other measure predominantly, and in Yeats's prosody there tends to be a correlation between the kind of poem and the kind of line used. His more formal, commemorative, and meditative poems tend to be in decasyllabic lines that give them their air of philosophic weight and contemplative grasp. His brief intense lyrics, on the other hand, are written in lines that are best understood as being divisible into a fixed number of stresses, with a wide range of syllabic count" (T. Parkinson, op.cit., pp. 203 – 204).

See also footnote No 52.

detachment with respect to the past varies according to whether he merely recalls, relives or directly experiences it²⁰⁷.

Variations of distance in time are accompanied by mythological and symbolic variations in the meaning of characters, situations and motifs, which appear in or are suggested by changing and often contrastive contexts (e.g. the tower, the fisherman). This results in irony and a multiplicity of solutions to problems.

Platonism, which is so vital to the questions raised in the poem (the relation between the poet's imagination, passions, nature /i.e. the material world/, the ideal sphere and the work of art; the problem of the Unity of Being) is by no means a fixed and invariable point of reference. As presented in *The Tower*, Platonism is a transformational series of different interpretations of a group of basic themes. Platonism appears in several versions: mythical and philosophic; Plotinic; mediaeval; that of the Italian Renaissance; English Romantic; popular and extremely dualistic; that reduced to the concept of so-called "Platonic love". While some of these versions of Platonism are accepted by the protagonist, others are rejected outright or are treated with ironic detachment.

The "motive force" behind such a dramatic construction of the represented world is the protagonist's emotional and intellectual tension, which accompanies the search for inner and cosmic order, i.e. for Unity of Being.

In Yeats's opinion, the concept of Unity of Being is "impossible" without the concept of Unity of culture²⁰⁸. In *The Tower*, this unity of culture is created by motifs, characters and situations coming from various literary and cultural epochs and which appear to be ever newer manifestations of the same immemorial passion. This is in keeping with Shelley's view that the poetry of the whole world constitutes as it were one great multivocal poem "which all poets like the co-operating thoughts of the great mind have built up since the beginning of the world"²⁰⁹.

The Tower suggests that the evolution of expressive poetry has proceeded along the lines set down by Shelley and the Romantics. In this view, the poet enjoys the status both of mediator between the material world and the spiritual world (the essence of both worlds being the eternal passion) and of creator of visions and maker of "living images"²¹⁰ and poems (which are transformations of visions). In the words of Shelley: "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal form"²¹¹. In the words of the protagonist of *The Tower*: "Man makes a superhuman mirror-resembling dream". In

²⁰⁷ Cf. R. Ingarden, *Zjawiska perspektywy czasowej* [in:] R. Ingarden, *Studia z Estetyki*, vol. 1, Warsaw 1957.

The present analysis of Yeats's *The Tower* is in large measure based on Ingarden's 'layer' and 'phase' theory of the structure of works of literature. Cf. R. Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (1931), and the Polish version: *O dziele literackim*, Warsaw 1960.

²⁰⁸ Cf. footnotes Nos 32 and 203.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 1039.

²¹⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 1030.

²¹¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 1029.

the words of W.B. Yeats: "Man can embody the truth but he cannot know it"²¹². In this Romantic view the poetic work is an analogue of reality and "the laws of art are the hidden laws of the world"²¹³.

Expressive poetry therefore not only formulates feelings, but also presents and evokes them. Thus understood, expressive poetry is in no way hostile to contemplation and does not preclude it²¹⁴. In *The Tower*, Homer's Helen is at once an object of contemplation and an expressive symbol. There is therefore no place for the Nietzschean dichotomy in Yeats's *Ars poetica*.

The Tower is intended to exert an influence on the reader or hearer by restoring to him both inner harmony and harmony with the world. The reader is therefore led to contemplate a perfect vision of the world – "Translunar Paradise", Shelley's "Paradise" or Blake's New Jerusalem.

The protagonist of *The Tower*, however, holds himself aloof from this ideal. This detachment derives from his catastrophism, based on a circular vision of history and culture (which he shares with Plato, Vico, Shelley²¹⁵ and Nietzsche) and grounded in a fear that the Romantic personality – torn by contradictions – might ultimately be dispersed²¹⁶. Such a dispersal could lead to the decline of human personality in general and hence to total chaos and the decline of art. The finale of *The Tower* can therefore be interpreted as a last heroic effort made by the protagonist to restore inner order at the cost of completely cutting himself off from the wheel of civilization (symbolized by the winding stairs of the tower²¹⁷ speeding into chaos.

²¹² Quoted by T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 4.

²¹³ Cf. footnotes Nos 153 and 155.

²¹⁴ Cf. footnote No 95.

²¹⁵ Cf. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 1040.

²¹⁶ 'Daimonic man' has two possibilities:

(1) Simplification through intensity

(2) Dispersal

Cf. W.B. Yeats, *A Vision*, ed.cit., Phase Seventeen.

²¹⁷ Such an interpretation of the finale of *The Tower* is supported by the sequence of poems which comes immediately after the poem and which is entitled 'Meditations In Time of Civil War'. The last stanza of the last poem of this sequence runs as follows:

"I turn away and shut the door, and on the stair
Wonder how many times I could have proved my worth
In something that all others understand or share;
But O! ambitious heart, had such a proof drawn forth
A company of friends, a conscience set at ease,
It had but made us pine the more. The abstract joy,
The half-read wisdom of daemonic images,
Suffice the ageing man as once the growing boy".

(W.B. Yeats, *I see Phantoms of Hared and of the Heart's Fullness and of the Coming Emptiness* [in:] *Collected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 232).

Cf. T. Henn, op.cit., pp. 131 – 134. Cf. T. Parkinson, op.cit., p. 144.

“I foresee a time when the majority of men will so accept historical tradition that they will quarrel not as to who can impose his personality upon others but as to who can best embody the common aim, when all personality will seem an impurity, ‘sentimentality’, ‘sullenness’, ‘egotism’ – something that revolts not morals alone but good taste. There will be no longer great intellect for a ceaseless activity will be required of all; and where rights are swallowed up in duties, and solitude is difficult, creation except among avowedly archaistic and unpopular groups will grow impossible”²¹⁸.

²¹⁸ W.B. Yeats, *A Vision* (A), pp. 212 – 213. Quoted by H. Bloom, op.cit., p. 289.

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Part Two

K. WIERZYŃSKI: Piąta pora roku

I

Wierzyński included *Piąta pora roku* in a collection of poems entitled *Tkanka ziemi*. When this collection was published – in 1960 – Wierzyński was sixty-six years old and – as an émigré – had already published two collections of poems which, taken together, can be considered to mark a turning-point in the evolution of his poetry. These are: *Korzec maku* (1951) and *Siedem podków* (1954). In these collections Wierzyński's poetry has been renewed and has been shorn of the patriotic rhetoric of his wartime poems¹.

The main themes treated in *Korzec maku* and *Siedem podków* are: the poet, poetry and art. The *leitmotiv* of Wierzyński's poetry – earth – also makes its re-appearance in these two collections. Towards the end of his life Wierzyński wrote as follows about this *leitmotiv* in his poetry:

Ziemia jest trwaniem pośród przemijania życia i jednością pośród różnorodnego świata. Ziemia unosi mnie jak religia ponad doczesność i jak religia przedłuża chwile mego istnienia. Była, zanim tu przyszedłem, i zostanie kiedy stąd odejdę. W melancholii ludzkiego życia nie znam nic radośniejszego niż ta myśl, która za każdym uświadomieniem przemawia do mnie jak nie znana przedtem nowina².

The earth endures in the transience of life and it brings together the variety of the world. It is the earth which raises me above the ephemeral and, with religion, it lengthens the brief span of my existence. It was there before my coming and it will be after I have gone. In the melancholy of human existence I know of nothing as joyful as this thought: every time it surfaces in my mind it appears as news never heard before.

¹ Cf. Jolanta Dudek, *Liryka Kazimierza Wierzyńskiego z lat 1951 – 1969*, Wrocław 1975.

² Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Cygańskim wozem*, London 1966, p. 8.

The collection of poems entitled *Siedem podków* – preceding the collection entitled *Tkanka ziemi* – contains a poem entitled *Mowa i ziemia*, the theme of which is the link between poetry, earth, the native speech and the biography of the protagonist-poet. The problem of man's multiple union or alliance with earth is the principal theme of the poems collected in *Tkanka ziemi*. This collection opens with a poem entitled *Piąta pora roku*. In this poem the poet returns to the theme treated in *Mowa i ziemia* – namely the link between the poet, his art and his native soil. In *Piąta pora roku*, however, this problem is seen in the Romantic categories of eternity and memory (imagination). This accords with the view of the anonymous Polish author of an article entitled "O idei i uczuciu nieskończoności" (1818) that:

...piękno w poezji ukazując nam kształty skończone, ocuć w nas przecież, również jak piękno w malarstwie i snycerstwie, uczucie nieskończoności powinno³.

Beauty, in poetry, presents to us finite forms but it should also awaken us to a sense of infinity, as should the beauty of painting and of sculpture.

It also accords with the view of F. Schelling – a philosopher held in esteem by the Polish Romantics – that nothing can be a work of art which does not in some way represent something eternal⁴.

By virtue of its versification, style, structure and genre, *Piąta pora roku* – one of Wierzyński's most representative poems – is firmly rooted in that Polish poetic tradition which has its origins in the poetry of the great Romantics (in particular that of Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki) and which is still very much alive⁵. Wierzyński's immediate poetic predecessors, who can be considered to have acted as a 'link' between his generation and the Romantic tradition of Polish poetry (A. Mickiewicz, J. Słowacki, Z. Krasiński, C.K. Norwid) are: the playwright Stanisław Wyspiański⁶ and the poets Leopold Staff⁷ and Bolesław Leśmian⁸.

³ Quoted by C. Zgorzelski, *Od Oświecenia ku Romantyzmowi i współczesności*, Kraków 1978, p. 161.

⁴ Cf. F.W.J. Schelling, *Podstawowe założenia filozofii sztuki*, [in:] F.W.J. Schelling, *System idealizmu transcendentnego*, trans. K. Krzemieniowa, Warsaw 1979, p. 366:

"Dziełem sztuki nie jest nic, co bezpośrednio lub przynajmniej w odbiciu nie przedstawia czegoś nieskończonego".

⁵ Cf. C. Zgorzelski, op.cit., chapter IV. Cf. M. Janion, *Gorączka romantyczna*, Warsaw 1975, p. 142: "Związane jest to niewątpliwie z wyjątkową rolą, której nie da się z niczym i z nikim innym porównać – jest on ciągle i stale – i zapewne tak już pozostanie na zawsze – 'pierwszym z Polaków', 'największym człowiekiem polskim'".

Cf. M. Tataro, *Dziedzictwo Słowackiego w poezji polskiej ostatniego półwiecza 1918 – 1968*, Wrocław 1973, esp. Chapter III. Cf. M. Dłuska, *Legenda wieczności* [in:] *Studia i rozprawy*, Kraków 1972, vol. III. Cf. J. Dudek, op.cit., pp. 58 – 90.

⁶ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Kurhany*, 1938.

⁷ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *O Leopoldzie Staffie* [in:] *Cygańskim wozem*, ed.cit.

⁸ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *O Bolesławie Leśmianie*, Warsaw 1939.

Piąta pora roku is also firmly set in the inter-war 'Skamander' period of Wierzyński's poetry⁹. Like most of the poetry Wierzyński wrote as an émigré (i.e. in the years 1951 – 1969), *Piąta pora roku* seems to be a mature synthesis of the main artistic trends of those of the poet's contemporaries who belonged to the 'Skamander' group of poets – the linguistic virtuosity of Julian Tuwim (who made use of the natural prosodical and stylistic tendencies of colloquial Polish); the extraordinary emotional tension of the patriotic poems of Antoni Słonimski; the poetry of cultural tradition (*poezja kultury*) of Jan Lechoń and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz; the 'rococo' predilection for small objects of everyday use and the subtle humour of Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska.

This post-war synthesis and further refinement of the basic artistic tendencies of the Skamander poets would seem to have been foreshadowed by the poetry which Wierzyński wrote between the wars (1919 – 1939). During this period Wierzyński was already perfecting the metrical and stanzaic forms which he had inherited from the Romantics. In doing so, he made abundant and ingenious use of colloquialisms¹⁰ and of European as well as national poetic images, myths and themes.

In the highly condensed and relatively short lyric poems he wrote as an émigré (1951 – 1969), Wierzyński seems to have put into practice the theories – concerned mainly with dramatic and epic poetry – which were expounded by Mickiewicz and Mochnacki.

II

The diversity of genres to be found in *Piąta pora roku* is characteristic of longer Romantic works – the ballad, the Romantic epic poem, Romantic drama. Here dramatic, lyric and epic elements 'overlap'. The poem's enveloping structure and the central scene (with the protagonist's dead parents) are dramatic in character. The poem begins *in medias res* with the protagonist's mind encompassing in the space of an instant (*Ptaka przeleciał przede mną, ptak ...*) the most important moments of his own past. It ends with the protagonist addressing the poem's listeners.

The time of *Piąta pora roku* is internal. Two overlapping rhythm patterns can be distinguished. These correspond to the cyclical time of nature and to the instantaneous, pulsating time of the human memory, in which the past blends with the present and the not too distant future.

The space of *Piąta pora roku* is also internal. The Carpathian landscape – observed from various angles and points in space – corresponds to the cyclical time of nature, appearing as many as four times. This landscape – like cyclical time – functions as a fluctuating background and as a link between four clearly designated spatial points: a

⁹ Cf. J. Dudek, *Liryka...*, loc.cit.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Dhuska, *Studia i rozprawy*, ed.cit., vol.III.

room in a cottage or chapel (at the beginning and at the end of the poem); mountain-tops; the other world.

These points in space, which are distinct from the cyclical continuum, mark the principal stages of the protagonist's life. The instantaneous (i.e. most recent) past – the background to which is the room in the cottage or chapel – occupies the three stanzas of the poem's opening section. The more distant past (Stanzas 4 – 14) corresponds to the first stage in the protagonist's life, associated with people and with the Carpathian countryside. This period ends with the protagonist meeting his dead parents and with a vision of the other world (Stanzas 12 – 14). The central part of the monologue (Stanzas 15 – 19)¹¹ is concerned with the present, the 'action' taking place on the mountain-tops. The last fragment is addressed to the poem's listeners and is concerned with the future (Stanza 20) – this future being related, as it were, to the recent past of the poem's opening section. The poem opens and closes with the image of villagers gathered for an evening's singing and conversation – a *wieczornica*. An important difference, however, is that at the end of the poem the internal ritual (Stanzas 1 – 3) acquires as it were an intersubjective dimension, with the poem's listeners waiting for the apparition of the Spirit of earth (Stanza 20).

III

The poem's enveloping structure and the central scene (with the protagonist's dead parents) constitute its dramatic 'axis' and are intimately linked with the folk-Slavonic-cum-mythical-ritualistic stylization which permeates *Piąta pora roku*. The Slavonic stylization functions as a literary allusion. The image with which the poem opens and closes – that of the *wieczornica* – not only refers directly to a village custom (that of villagers gathering in the evening in order to talk and sing together) but also refers indirectly to the oral traditions of Slavonic folk literature:

Ptak przeleciał przeze mnie, ptak,
I drzwi zostawił otwarte,
I tego wieczoru o zmroku
Zeszły się we mnie pory roku
Żywe i martwe.

Jedna była młodzieńcza, wesola,
Jeszcze śni mi się, jeszcze mnie woła
(Ach, pusty śmiech, niedorzeczność!),
Druga była żarliwa, gorąca,

¹¹ I consider the line *Czemu nie śpiewa?* – coming after Stanza 18 of *Piąta pora roku* – to be the equivalent of a stanza. I therefore count it as Stanza 19.

Czerwoną wargą jeszcze mnie trąca,
 Trzecia – jesienna, czwarta – zimowa,
 A piąta – śmierć i wieczność.
 Zeszły się i mrucały coś w ucho wieczory
 (Bachanalie, gorzkie żale, nieszpory?),
 Nie wiedziałem co znaczy niejasny ten śpiew,
 Płynął czas i odmiany i ja z nimi razem,
 Zachodziły mnie zewsząd swym krajobrazem
 Aż weszły mi w krew¹². (Stanzas 1 – 3)

The poem's finale ...

Więc wyznam wam ostatnią troskę,
 Śpiewajcie ją jak chłopską piosnkę
 I kiedy świat się w zmierzchu ściemnia,
 Zamknijcie okna, spuście story,
 Niech tam gromadzą się wieczory
 I gdy powróci z pola ziemia,
 Niech swoje ciężkie zzuje buty
 I kurz otrzepie z nich przysuty,
 Niech się położy, odpoczywa,
 Szczęśliwa albo nieszczęśliwa,
 I niech potoczy się jabłuszko
 Pod siennik jej, pod łóżko. (Stanza 20)

... is also a clear allusion to Mickiewicz's drama entitled *Dziady*, in which a major role is played by the stylization of the ancient ritual custom of calling forth the Spirits of dead ancestors on one night of every year. In Mickiewicz's drama the ritual takes place in a dark cemetery in a remote part of Lithuania. The ritual (*Dziady*) is intended to alleviate the lot of the dead by means of prayer and food¹³. The leader of the ritual (the *Guślarz*) – accompanied by those present, singing in chorus – opens the second part of Mickiewicz's drama with the following words:

¹² I quote from the text of *Piąta pora roku* to be found in: Kazimierz Wierzyński, *Poezje wybrane 1951 – 1964*, ed. M. Dłuska, Kraków 1972, pp. 107 – 110.

An English translation of the poem (entitled *The Fifth Season* is to be found in: Kazimierz Wierzyński, *Selected Poems*, New York 1959, pp. 42 – 45. The usual cautions apply.

¹³ Cf. S. Pigoń, *Do źródeł Dziadów kowieńsko-wileńskich* [in:] *Studia literackie*, Kraków 1951. Cf. Wierzyński's poems entitled *Litwa jesienna* and *Dziady* [in:] *Poezje zebrane*, London, pp. 140 and 488.

Zamknijcie drzwi od kaplicy
 I stańcie dokoła truny
 Żadnej lampy, żadnej świecy!
 W oknach zawieście całuny!
 Niech księżyc jasność błada
 Szczelinami tu nie wpada¹⁴.

Close the chapel's heavy door,
 Stand around the coffin's head;
 Let no candle-glimmer bore
 Through the windows, shrouded
 dead.
 Let no moonbeam pierce the
 black,
 Falling through the telltale crack.
 (transl. G.R. Noyes)

It is to these words of the *Guślarz* that the finale of *Piąta pora roku* alludes. The Spirit called forth in Wierzyński's poem turns out to be the Spirit of earth. In Mickiewicz's drama (at the end of part II) the most important Spirit to appear is that of the poet Gustaw, who had committed suicide. Gustaw's Spirit comes (*Dziady*, part IV) in order to re-enact the drama of his life (the story of his misfortune in love), to which there are three parts – the hour of love, that of despair and that of caution. Like Gustaw, the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* experiences a symbolic death and a symbolic return to this world in the course of a dramatized tale:

Wiem. Dawno temu doszczętnie wymarłem
 A jednak trwam znów ...

The basic difference between Gustaw and Wierzyński's protagonist is that the latter is at one and the same time the organizer of the ritual (i.e. the *Guślarz*, as it were) and its main participant (i.e. Gustaw, as it were). The Spirit which Wierzyński's protagonist would seem to invoke (in his capacity as *guślarz*) is the Spirit of earth. It would seem that the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* returns to this world not in order to expiate sin (as Gustaw does) but in order to nourish – with song (which becomes transformed, it seems, into an apple) – both the Spirit of earth and the living who participate in the ritual.

The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* sees the whole of his life through the 'prism' of a mysterious spiritual union or link with the natural environment of the land of his childhood (Mickiewicz's *kraj lat dziecinnych*), with its community of living and dead. In his monologue there are echoes of: the monologue of Gustaw, lover of Maryla (*Dziady*, IV)¹⁵; the *improvizacja* of Gustaw-Konrad, fighting with God for the fortunes of his nation (*Dziady*, III); the émigré's nostalgia for the land of his childhood – the *kraj lat dziecinnych* of the epilogue to Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*. It is, however, the tone of the

¹⁴ Cf. Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła poetyckie*, Ed. T. Pini, Nowogródek 1934, p. 129.

¹⁵ Cf M. Dłuska, *op.cit.*, vol. III, p. 131:

“... fotywn przewodni powracającej panoramy kraju, oglądanej aż czterokrotnie z różnych perspektyw, pociągają za sobą konsekwencje stylistyczne. Czarnoksiężska latarnia ukazuje go kolejno – w barwach pamięci, pod tchnieniem śmierci, w miłości i żalu, a wreszcie w barwie nadziei: w nieśmiertelności słowa”.

protagonist that dominates the monologue of *Piąta pora roku*. This is the tone of a man who is faced with death and eternity and who is filled with a deep love for earth – the ‘tissue of our existence’ (*tkanka naszego istnienia*)¹⁶, our common homeland and the mother of all people and Spirits.

Piąta pora roku is therefore first and foremost the utterance of a mythical ‘son of (the goddess) Earth’ – a telluric being whom the Romantics conceived of as being in intimate spiritual and physical union with nature. As a mythical son of Earth, Wierzyński’s protagonist is also the conscience of nature – mother of people and Spirits. This would seem to explain the mysterious expansion of his consciousness, which encompasses ‘all things living and dead’ (*wszystkie sprawy żywe i martwe*) – plants, animals, landscapes, people and Spirits.

Wierzyński’s belief that all living things are intimately linked with the earth which they inhabit was that of the (great) Polish Romantics – in particular Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Norwid. It was also that of the literary critic Maurycy Mochnacki, who in a famous essay entitled *O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym* (1830) wrote:

Człowieku! Imię twoje ziemia. Z ziemi ciało twoje – choć z czterech stron świata przyniesionej, wschodu, zachodu, północy i południa. W ziemi mieszkanie twoje, czyż się w ziemię nie obrócisz? Czyż nie ma ziemi w naszych kościach? Czyż we krwi naszej nie płynie żelazo, – metal, tak głęboko w łonie ziemi gniazda swoje mający? A złoto i inne kruszce – czyż nie są dla nas lekarstwem, trucizną? ... Czyż zioła i rośliny ziemskie z różnych nas nie wyleczają niemocy? Czyż źródła, cudownymi uzdrawiające skutkami, nie sączą się ze skalnych zdrojowisk? – Jakiż kres położyć tym związkom z każdej nieledwie strony, z każdego względu...¹⁷

Man! Your name is earth! Your flesh comes from the earth – from its four corners, East, West, North and South. You live on the earth and will you not turn into it? Are not our very bones of earth? Does not the iron flow in our blood, an ore, nestling deeply in the bowels of the earth? And gold, and other ores – are they not both our poison and our cure? Do not herbs and other plants of the earth provide remedies for diverse complaints? And streams, capable of effecting miraculous cures, do they not flow out of rocky watercourses? Is there any end to these bonds, which link us on every side, from every point of view?

The corollary of this belief (common to the Romantics) in the basic affinity or unity of all being and in the supremacy of spirit over matter is the idea of the Great Chain of Being – held in common by the European Romantics. Mochnacki and Słowacki interpreted this idea in the categories of evolution (cf. Słowacki’s *Genezis z Ducha*). Accord-

¹⁶ Cf. the poem entitled *Tkanka ziemi* [in:] K. Wierzyński, *Poezje wybrane*, ed.cit., pp. 143 – 144 (*Selected poems*, ed.cit., pp. 25 – 26 – ‘Tissue of Earth’).

¹⁷ Cf. Maurycy Mochnacki, *O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym*, Kraków 1923, pp. 15 – 16.

ing to Mochnacki, evolution in nature progresses from non-organic nature to the spirit, which is the hidden cause of matter:

Tak wszystko się uduchownia w naturze; wszystko zmierza ku temu, co żadną nie jest rzeczą, i przedmiotem rozbioru być nie może, – do myśli, do pojęcia, które samo siebie pojmuje, rozumie. Patrzymy na świat: któż przodkuje wszystkim jestestwom? – Człowiek – Któż jest człowiek? – Ostatnie ogniwo łańcucha stworzeń. Przeto jest częścią natury, częścią jednej całości. Człowiek ma myśl, ma pojęcie. Zatem i natura tę myśl mieć musi – z samej konieczności i konsekwencji logicznej tego rozumowania. Myśli ona naszą myślą i sama siebie naszym pojmuje rozumieniem. W człowieku jako częście całości swojej przychodzi do refleksji¹⁸.

... Myśleć jest to żyć. Życie nasze od tego punktu się zaczyna... Natura jest, bo myśli, duch jest częścią natury. I natura z tej tylko jest przyczyny¹⁹.

Everything in nature becomes spirit; everything aims at what is immaterial and cannot be analysed: a thought and an idea which embraces and understands itself. Look at the world: who is it who leads all creation? Man! But what is man? The last link in the chain of creation, therefore a part of nature, a part of one totality. Man thinks, he comprehends; nature also must be able to comprehend: this reasoning makes it logical and necessary. Nature thinks the way we think and comprehends itself with our own intelligence.

It is reflected in man as a part of the whole... To think is to live: our life begins at that point. Nature exists because it thinks, spirit is a part of nature and the only reason for nature's existence.

It would seem that this belief in man's intimate spiritual union with nature (man being nature's consciousness) and in the idea of the Great Chain of Being is interpreted by Wierzyński in the way it was interpreted (on the one hand) by Mochnacki (op.cit.) and Słowacki (op.cit.) and (on the other hand) by Mickiewicz (in *Dziady*)²⁰. *Piąta pora roku* is the expression of the mystical experience – similar to that of the ancient ritual in *Dziady* – of the protagonist's union with the elements (earth, fire, air and water), non-organic nature (mountains), plants, animals and the great community of personal Spirits²¹. Among the members of the community of Spirits are: the Spirits of the protagonist's dead parents; living people seen as Spirits (the shepherds); the inhabitants of the protagonist's Carpathian homeland – raftsmen, peasants, woodcutters, cowherds;

¹⁸ Cf. Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 25.

¹⁹ Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 26.

²⁰ Cf. M. Janion, *Romantyzm polski wśród romantyzmów europejskich* [in:] *Studia romantyczne*, Ed. by M. Żmigrodzka, Wrocław 1973, p. 44.

²¹ Cf. M. Janion, op.cit., p. 32.

the listeners of the protagonist's monologue; the Spirit of earth, represented (as in the title-poem of *Tkanka ziemi*) as a tired farmer – or, more probably, a farmer's wife; the personifications of the seasons (these being also stages in the protagonist's life) which participate in the internal phase of the ritual (Stanzas 1 – 3).

In the finale of *Piąta pora roku* the protagonist therefore appears as the leading Spirit of the great community of the living and the dead (i.e. as an inspired poet) and also as the leader of the ritual (cf. the *Guślarz* in Mickiewicz's *Dziady*). He appears to invoke that Spirit which he considers to be the most important of all – the Spirit of earth – in order to nourish it, not (as ancient custom demands) with milk, honey and grain, but with song, which 'materializes' into ... an apple (*jabłuszko*).

IV

The ritualistic stylization present both in the finale of *Piąta pora roku* and in the poem's opening section reveals another of the poem's 'layers' or 'strata', so to speak. This is the Greek myth about the eternal, cyclical rebirth of life on earth – the reconciliation of earth and man, gods and people. Seen through the 'prism' of the Greek myth, *Piąta pora roku* appears to be an account of the Dionysian ritual, which had as its aim the spiritual renewal of the individual through contact with nature and with the human community. This Dionysian dimension would seem to be foreshadowed directly by the third stanza of the poem's opening section:

Ptak przeleciał przeze mnie, ptak,
I drzwi zostawił otwarte,
I tego wieczoru o zmroku
Zeszły się we mnie pory roku
Żywe i martwe.

Jedna była młodzieńcza, wesola,
Jeszcze śni mi się, jeszcze mnie woła
(Ach, pusty śmiech, niedorzeczność!)
Druga była żarliwa, gorąca,
Czerwoną wargą jeszcze mnie trąca,
Trzecia – jesienna, czwarta – zimowa,
A piąta – śmierć i wieczność.

Zeszły się i mruzczały coś w ucho wieczory
(Bachanalie, gorzkie żale, nieszpory?),
Nie wiedziałem co znaczy niejasny ten śpiew,
Płynął czas i odmiany i ja z nimi razem,
Zachodziły mnie zewsząd swym krajobrazem
Aż weszły mi w krew.

Obszyłem się liśćmi, porosłem górami,
 Paliły się we mnie ogniska pastuchów:
 Pod drzewem, w deszczu, przykryci workami,
 Podobni byli do duchów.

Spąłem na siennych, wygrzanych polanach,
 Gałęzią chojar kołysał mnie niski,
 Budziły mnie sarny, kobiece w kolanach,
 Skacząc jak wodotryski.

Z Węgier kotliną opasłe woły
 Porykując sły za ratajem żydowskim,
 Poganiacze w południe rozkładali toboły,
 Pili coś, gryźli. Pachniało czosnkiem.

W sadach czerwionych, w kotłach miedzianych
 Warzyli chłopci czarne powidła,
 Krzyczałem w tłumie jak ja zakochanych:
 "Młodości, podaj mi skrzydła!"

A w zimie sosny leśnym wyciosiem
 Spuszczano z hukiem po śnieżnym korycie,
 Siekiery stękały topornym odgłosem
 Na gołej czaszce, na szczycie.

Kiedy zelżało, karpacki parobek
 Spychał je w rzekę i skuwał na tratwy:
 Płynęły sosny po chleb, na zarobek,
 Nie łatwy, bracie nie łatwy.

I znów szły wiosny i lata powoli
 Wiatr jabłka strącał jesienne i sliwy
 I pędził chmury w doli, niedoli
 Szczęśliwej i nieszczęśliwej.

Szedł ruch za ruchem, ruchome odmiany
 Ludzi i roślin, i skóry zwierzęcej,
 Doczesne pory i czas powikłany,
 Wszystko co żyło i jeszcze coś więcej.

(Stanzas 1 – 11)

The 'self-portrait' indirectly sketched by the protagonist at the beginning of *Piąta pora roku* seems to have traits which are not only those of Mickiewicz's *Guślarz*, Mickiewicz's Gustaw-Konrad and the mythical 'son of Earth', but also those of the Cory-

phaeus of the Graeco-Christian ritual, who is in mythical union with the deity (cf. *Ptāk przeleciał przeze mnie, ptāk...*). The role of the Bacchantes taking part in the ritual singing is played by the personifications of the seasons and the 'animations' of evenings.

The cultural syncretism which is characteristic of Wierzyński's poetry and of *Piąta pora roku* and which consists of linking Slavonic pagan traditions with the traditions of Christianity and Ancient Greece (*Dziady* – Bacchanalia – *gorzkie żale* – *nieszpory*) derives from (European and Polish) Romanticism and modernism. In the field of cultural syncretism Wierzyński's immediate predecessor is Wyspiański, who clothed the heroes of Ancient Greece in Slavonic costumes and brought them to the banks of the Vistula. *Skamander połyska / Wiślaną światłąc się falą* – wrote Wyspiański in his visionary drama entitled *Akropolis* (1904), in which Biblical characters and characters taken from Polish history mix with Greek mythical heroes. In 1920 Wyspiański's words became the motto of the 'Skamander' group of poets²², to which Wierzyński belonged in his youth. It is Wyspiański's work and that of the Romantics (Słowacki, Krasiński, Norwid) that is responsible for the continual renewal in Polish poetry of the parallel between Greek and Polish history on the one hand, and between Greek and Polish poetry on the other.

The Dionysian myth present in *Piąta pora roku* is common to Wierzyński and to European and Polish literature (and art) of the turn of the (nineteenth) century²³. F. Nietzsche – author of *The Birth of Tragedy* – was of course largely responsible for the revival of this myth in European culture. However, the interpretation of the Dionysian myth made by Wierzyński in *Piąta pora roku* is as original as that which he made in his first collection of poems, entitled *Wiosna i wino*. In a study entitled *The Dionysian and Apollinian antinomy in Kazimierz Wierzyński's early poetry*²⁴, Tymon Terlecki makes the following observations:

1. The Dionysian myth is only indirectly present in *Wiosna i wino*, its main manifestation being the joyous atmosphere of ecstatic enthusiasm for life and the visible world which pervades the volume²⁵.

2. In *Wiosna i wino*, however, this Dionysian atmosphere has already been 'sacralized' in the spirit of the Christian Renaissance (St. Francis of Assisi). Wierzyński's Dionysus is mainly a god of all-embracing love, the great leveller of the world²⁶. In Terlecki's view, this 'sacralization' of the Dionysian myth in Wierzyński's early poetry is characteristic of the manner in which Nietzsche's ideas were received in Poland – and in particular by Leopold Staff:

²² Cf. Jan Lechoń, *Przemówienie na pierwszym wieczorze literackim "Skamandra" [in:] J. Zacharska, Skamander*, Warsaw 1977, pp. 108 – 110.

²³ Cf. M. Głowiński, *Maska Dionizosa [in:] Młodopolski świat wyobraźni*, Ed. M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, Kraków 1977.

²⁴ [in:] *For Wiktor Weintraub* (essays in honour of W.W.), 1975.

²⁵ Cf. Terlecki, op.cit., pp. 526 – 527.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 524.

"The Christianization is to a great extent specifically Polish. The Polish variant of Nietzscheanism (with the almost exclusive exception of Stanisław Wyspiański) manifested a tendency towards disarming or neutralizing it. Many aspects of Nietzsche's ideology, especially the anti-Christian, anti-social and anti-egalitarian, were toned down. In Wierzyński this feature can be traced directly to the man who initiated him in poetry, Leopold Staff. Following the inclinations of his lyrical temperament, Staff achieved a surprising blend of Dionysus with Francis of Assisi. (He was a congenial translator of the *Fioretti* and an enthusiastic interpreter of Saint Francis. Staff saw in the Umbrian saint the forerunner of the Renaissance, the Christian embodiment of the Renaissance concept of life)"²⁷.

3. The other authentically Nietzschean motifs of the Dionysian myth which are present in Wierzyński's early poetry are the idea of eternal recurrence²⁸ and the belief in the intimate union between Dionysus and nature²⁹. In the opinion of Terlecki, this particular 'concurrence' with the Nietzschean myth would seem to prove yet again that Wierzyński's interpretation of the Dionysian myth was coloured by Polish poetic tradition:

"The link with the idyllic tradition of Polish poetry seems more convincing however; the rural character of Polish symbolism represents a specific trait within the framework of the European movement of the same name"³⁰.

4. According to Terlecki, Wierzyński's Dionysus in *Wiosna i wino* is a god of poetic inspiration and ecstasy who nevertheless does not cause the protagonist to lose his *principium individuationis* – i.e. his distinct lyrical 'ego'³¹ – entirely.

5. At the end of his study Terlecki notes that there is an absence of Dionysian disorder³² in the structure of the early poems. The versification, style and 'represented world' – permeated with the atmosphere of Dionysian enthusiasm which is to be found in Wierzyński's early poems – have been subjected to the rigours of a rational, Apollonian structure. A balance has been kept between the musical (sound) and image qualities of the poems, and also between direct and indirect lyricism.

These observations lead Terlecki to conclude that in his early poetry, Wierzyński achieved a synthesis of Apollonian and Dionysian elements. According to Nietzsche, this synthesis is characteristic of Greek tragedy. In the words of Terlecki:

"*Toutes proportions gardées*, Wierzyński's early poetry seems to be fundamentally another example of such a reconciliation, such a resolution of opposites and the final victory over them. It is a paradoxical union of *hybris* – excess, exaggeration – with *sofrosyne* – the quality of restraint and the wisdom of moderation, self-awareness and self-control. It is the resolution of two tensions, one centrifugal and the other centripetal.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 523.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 530.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 534.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 536.

³¹ Ibidem, pp. 533 – 534.

³² Ibidem, p. 527.

tal, one disintegrating and the other concentrating, focusing. This fact defines the originality of the poetic phenomenon and explains perhaps its almost unconditional acceptance by the reading public”³³.

V

If the version of the Dionysian myth to be found in Wierzyński's early poetry – as presented by Terlecki – is compared with the version to be found in *Piąta pora roku*, it can be seen that:

1. The only genuinely Nietzschean element of the interpretation of the Dionysian myth which is found in Wierzyński's poetry is the idea of eternal recurrence (eternal return) and the cyclical rebirth of nature. This idea is to be found in a poem devoted to Nietzsche and entitled *Przypomniał mi się Nietzsche* (from the collection *Tkanka ziemi*)³⁴. In this poem the recurrence of all phenomena is symbolized by migratory birds. In *Piąta pora roku* the motif of the bird appears twice. The first time it evokes a vision of the cyclical recurrence of natural phenomena. The second time it suggests the Nietzschean-Dionysian aspect of the theme of eternity – the ‘fifth season’ – which is examined in the poem. However, the bird in *Piąta pora roku* is not only the migratory bird of Nietzsche's poem³⁵ but also – as will be shown – the bird of Polish Romantic poetry.

2. The interpretation of the Dionysian myth which is found in *Piąta pora roku* has been coloured (and made more profound) by the great Romantic myth of the spiritual unity of man and nature. Here allusions to the Dionysian myth ‘coexist’ with allusions to Polish Romantic poetry. The latter reveal that as an émigré, Wierzyński became fully conscious of the Romantic sources which inspired his own lyric poetry and that of his predecessors Staff and Leśmian. This ‘process’ can already be seen at work in the poems Wierzyński wrote between the wars (*Wolność tragiczna* – 1936, *Kurhany* – 1939). In a lecture entitled *O Bolesławie Leśmianie* (1939), Wierzyński drew attention to his outstanding predecessors' links with Romanticism³⁶. It is therefore difficult to believe that Wierzyński had not traced Staff's fascination with St. Francis of Assisi back to Mickiewicz and that he was not familiar with Mickiewicz's lecture of 19th March 1844, where we read³⁷:

³³ Ibidem, p. 532. Terlecki does not attempt to suggest that Wierzyński achieved the synthesis of Apollonian and Dionysian elements in his early poetry by a conscious application of Nietzsche's ideas. Indeed, Terlecki insists that it is he – the critic – who is applying Nietzsche's ideas in order to interpret Wierzyński's poetry. It would seem that the Nietzschean ‘yardstick’ could also be used in order to interpret the poetry of W.B. Yeats and many of the European Romantics, including Mickiewicz. The poetry of Mickiewicz is notable for: musicality; imagery; emotional dynamism; a rational structure; the ‘overlapping’ of lyrical, epic and dramatic elements; continual oscillation between excessive egotism and a strong feeling of community with other people.

³⁴ Cf. Terlecki, op.cit., p. 522

³⁵ Loc.cit.

³⁶ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *O Bolesławie Leśmianie*, ed.cit.

³⁷ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Cygańskim wozem*, ed.cit., p. 14: “Na wzgórzu schody i złożony napis na bramie:

Powiedziałem już dawniej z innego powodu, że rozum ludzki nie dokáže niczego w tym przedmiocie, że tylko sam chrystianizm, sięgając jedną ręką dalej w niebo, a drugą zagłębiając w tajniki przyrodzenia, potrafi wydobyć na jaw nasze związki z królestwem zwierząt i jestestw nieorganicznych. Chrystianizm to, a nie kto inny, i nie przez co innego, jak przez miłość doszedł także tajemnicy niewolnictwa między ludźmi, a doszedłszy znalazł sposoby je zniszczyć. Filozofowie nie przyczynili się do tego... Chrześcijaństwo rozwinęło najdalej uczucia moralne. Księgi chrześcijańskie pełne są przykładów głębokiej sympatii zwierząt ku ludziom pobożnym i nawzajem. Czytam w brewiarzu, że gdy Św. Antoni umarł na pustyni, lwy wykopały dla niego w nocy jamę, w której go towarzysze pochowali. Kiedy Św. Antoni Padewski mówił, zwierzęta nastawiały uszy, i ryby nawet przyplływały do niego. Nie dziwimy się temu. Ta siła, co nasze zmysły i dusze otwiera na dźwięk głosu natchnionego, ten promień niewidomy, co przechodzi przez słowo dotykalne, daje się odczuć i duchom niższym. Św. Franciszek Seraficki, ów wielki cudotwórca, z jakąż miłością mówił o zwierzętach: braciszkami, siostrzyczkami swymi ich nazywał! A was to gorszy, że uczyniono wzmiankę o duchu zwierząt³⁸.

I said before, for a different reason, that human intellect counts for nothing in this: only Christianity itself, stretching one hand out towards heaven and the other to the mysteries of nature, can disclose our bond with the animal kingdom and the kingdom of inorganic spirits. Only Christianity, for reason of love and none other discovered the secret reason for slavery among men and, having found it, found the means to destroy it. Philosophers had no hand in this... Christianity has done most to further morality. Christian writings are full of examples of the love of animals for men of religion and, in turn, man's love for them. My breviary tells me that when St. Anthony died in the desert, he was buried by his companions in a grave which lions had dug for him during the night. When St. Anthony of Padua spoke, animals pricked up their ears and even fishes swam towards him. This should come as no surprise. The force which opens our senses and our souls to an inspired call, that invisible ray pervading the tangible word, can be felt by lower beings. St. Francis of Assisi, the great miracle maker, spoke of animals with love: called them his brethren and sisters! Yet you are shocked to hear me speak of the spirits of animals!

Collège de France. Dwa dni przed wigilią Bożego Narodzenia r. 1840 Mickiewicz wszedł po tych stopniach, aby wygłosić pierwszy swój wykład. Był profesorem literatur słowiańskich, ale wykładał swoje idee o nowym świecie "odrodzonej moralności i wolności".

³⁸ Cf. Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła prozą*, Ed. T. Pini, vol. IV: *Wykłady o literaturach słowiańskich*, Rok Czwartý 1843 – 1844, p. 148.

It is enough to read Staff's preface of 1910 to the *Fioretti* to realize to what extent the twentieth-century Polish fascination with St. Francis of Assisi was conditioned by the Romantic belief in the mysterious unity of all creation:

Dusza ludzka stworzona jest dla słońca, wiosny i wesela. Mówi o tym nieomylny instynkt tej książki, cała w niej nieświadoma sobie niewinność poszukiwania ścieżek wyzwolenia. Zauważono, że najczęstszym w niej słowem jest: Radość. Wnikanie w najgłębsze tajemnice zachwytem myśli i zapamiętaniem się duszy oddaje ona równoważnikami radośnie upajających woni, światła i słodyczy. Cudowny ten materializm wrażeń wykwita ze związku zmysłów uduchowionych i ucieleśnionej prawie duszy Boskim kwiatem niepomowanej, nienagannej jedności Tajemnicy³⁹.

The human soul is made for the sun, the Spring and gaiety. The unerring instinct of this book indicates it, and its unselfconscious innocence searches for a path to freedom. It has been noted that the most frequent word in it is: joy. The penetration of the deepest mysteries by a soul engrossed in the search is represented by the sensual equivalents of fragrance, light and sweetness. A union of senses pervaded by the spirit with a soul on the point of becoming material comes into flower, a mystery beyond understanding.

Staff's words also reveal the link between the Polish Romantic fascination with St. Francis and the idea – common to all European Romantics – of the future reconciliation of all creation, the great spiritual transformation of individuals and the renewal of all mankind which is achieved by people who are inspired – who are artists in all they do. This idea was proclaimed by Mickiewicz in his Paris lectures. In support of his views, Mickiewicz frequently cites the Gospels, F. Schelling, J. Boehme, Saint-Martin and Polish Romantic poets and philosophers:

Schelling, największy z filozofów niemieckich, ogłasza teraz w Berlinie swoją długo tajoną doktrynę, której pierwiastki znajdujemy w poetach polskich. Utrzymuje on, że chrystianizm dotąd przeszedł tylko dwa stany, dwa okresy swojego zawodu. Pierwsza z tych epok była, jak ją nazywa, epoką Świętego Piotra, to jest epoką wiary silnej,

In Berlin, the greatest German philosopher – Schelling – has announced the creed which he has long cherished in secret and whose elements are to be found in the writings of Polish poets. Schelling maintains that Christianity – so far – has passed through no more than two periods or stages. During the first stage, which he calls the era of St. Peter, faith

³⁹ Cf. Leopold Staff, *Franciszkanizm* [in:] *Programy i dyskusje literackie okresu Młodej Polski*, Ed. M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, Wrocław 1977, p. 693.

samoistnej syntetycznej, która trwała do VI albo do VII wieku. Nastąpiła po niej epoka Świętego Pawła, czasy rozpraw i doktryn, obejmujące resztę wieków średnich i protestantyzmu. Teraz, wedle Schellinga, mamy ujrzeć epokę Świętego Jana, epokę entuzjazmu i miłości. Doktryna ta pokazała się dopiero przed kilku miesiącami, a wiadomo wszystkim, że sławny autor Irydijona rozwinął był ją już poetycznie w symbolach⁴⁰.

was strong, spontaneous, and syncretic. That era continued until the 6th or 7th Century. It was followed by the era of St. Paul, a period of theological disputation, which took in the rest of the Middle Ages and the Reformation. According to Schelling, we are now about to enter the era of St. John, a period of love and fervour. It is only months since Schelling published his creed, yet we know that the author of Iridion had developed those ideas earlier in symbolic form.

Seen in the light of Mickiewicz's youthful 'poetical manifestos' (*Oda do młodości*, *Romantyczność*) and the lectures he gave later as professor at the Collège de France, the poetical 'manifesto' of the Skamander group – so often criticized for its 'vitalism'⁴¹, its 'lack of poetic ideas'⁴² and its *programofobia*⁴³ – can be seen to contain an idea common to all the Polish Romantics and also to W. Blake, P.B. Shelley and W.B. Yeats (*Unity of Being!*) – namely the belief in the coming of the 'New Jerusalem', i.e. an age of enthusiasm, love and creation.

This Romantic idea of 'universal love'⁴⁴ was taken up by the young poets of newly independent Poland – Tuwim, Lechoń, Wierzyński – who, following in the footsteps of some of the 'Młoda Polska'⁴⁵ writers (Stanisław Brzozowski, an excellent critic and philosopher, author of *Legenda Młodej Polski*; Leopold Staff, a Symbolist poet who discovered and sang the secrets of everyday life and who translated the *Fioretti* of St. Francis and the works of Nietzsche; Stefan Żeromski, author of *Uroda życia* and the extremely important lecture *Literatura a życie polskie* (1915); Stanisław Wyspiański, author of the drama *Wyzwolenie*; Adolf Dygasiński, author of the novel *Gody życia*) discarded the national – martyrological interpretation of Romanticism, thus preparing the way for the treatment – by themselves – of the most 'Romantic' myth of the great Romantics – the myth of the fundamental unity and future reconciliation of all being.

In his *Słowo wstępne* to the first issue of the magazine *Skamander* (1920) – published just one hundred years after Mickiewicz's 'manifesto' poems *Oda do młodości* (1820) and *Romantyczność* (1821) – Horzyca wrote:

⁴⁰ Cf. Mickiewicz, *Wykłady...*, Rok Drugi 1841 – 1843, ed.cit., p. 320.

⁴¹ Cf. A. Nowaczyński, *Skamander polyska, wiślaną świetląc się falą* – 1921 [in:] J. Zacharska, *Skamander*, ed.cit., pp. 162 – 173.

⁴² Cf. T. Peiper, *Poeci bez idei poetyckiej* – 1928 [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 178 – 184.

⁴³ Cf. K. Irzykowski, *Programofobia* – 1934 [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 156 – 162.

⁴⁴ Cf. J. Tuwim, *Manifest powszechnej miłości* [in:] *Dzieła*, vol. 5: *Pisma prozą*, Warsaw 1964.

⁴⁵ *Młoda Polska* (1890 – 1918) is the Polish counterpart of European Modernism and Symbolism.

Nie chcemy przeoczyć zła, ale miłość nasza jest nad wszelkie zło silniejsza: dlatego kochamy dzień dzisiejszy niezachwianą, pierwszą miłością, jesteśmy i chcemy być jego dziećmi. A dzień ów nie jest dniem siedmiu plag, lecz i dniem narodzin nowego świata... wierzymy iż królestwo ducha jest królestwem z tego świata, że nim będzie, być musi... Lecz raz jeszcze rzucając dawne hasła, świadomi jesteśmy, żeśmy o sto lat starsi, że słowa nasze są inne, choć brzmienie to samo, że nadeszły inne czasy, które w starym symbolu ujrzyć pragną i muszą – nową treść... ale chcemy zdobywać, zapalać serca ludzi, chcemy być ich uśmiechem i płaczem;... Wierzymy w zesłanie ducha Bożego na dusze, ale także i w pracę w tym duchu i wierzymy, że tą tylko drogą rzetelnej i sprawnej twórczości zbudować potrafimy kościół nowej sztuki, jaki się nam marzy, przybytek pojednania szczytów z dolinami, i obudzić pieśń, co iść będzie z ust do ust, z serc do serc, jak dobra wieść, jak radosne witanie poranka”⁴⁶.

We do not wish to ignore evil but our love is stronger: that is why the present is our first, unswerving love. We are children of the present and we are willing to be its children. The present day is not the day of the seven plagues but the day on which a new world is born... we believe that the realm of the spirit is of this world, will be of this world, must be of this world. While repeating the old call, we are well aware that we are older by a hundred years and that our words are different although they sound the same. Our times are different: we want, and we ought to find new meaning in the old symbols... but we still want to conquer and to fire the hearts of men, we wish to be their laughter and their tears... We believe that the Holy Ghost descends into the souls of men but we believe also that mankind has a task to fulfil with its aid. We know that only an earnest and skilful effort can build the church of new art we dream of, an ark of the covenant between the heights and the depths. Only such magnitude of effort will be able to awaken poetry which will spread throughout the land, from man to man and from heart to heart like good news and a happy welcome of the morn.

In *Piąta pora roku* the first and second seasons of the year embody – as it were – the enthusiastic atmosphere of Wierzyński’s first collections of poems – *Wiosna i wino* (1919) and *Wróble na dachu* (1921) – together with the fervour of his later poetry:

Jedna była młodzięcza, wesoła,
Jeszcze śni mi się, jeszcze mnie woła

⁴⁶ Cf. *Słowo wstępne do Skamandra* [in:] J. Zacharska, op.cit., pp. 105 – 107. See also Zacharska’s remarks on the authorship of the Skamander ‘manifesto’ (p. 259).

(Ach pusty śmiech, niedorzeczność!),
 Druga była zarliwa, gorąca,
 Czerwoną wargą jeszcze mnie trąca ...

(in Stanza 2)

This joyful Dionysian-Franciscan tone is explicitly associated with Mickiewicz's *Oda do młodości* (cf. the Skamander 'manifesto' penned by Horzyca):

Krzyczałem w tłumie jak ja zakochanych
 "Młodości, podaj mi skrzydła!"

(in Stanza 7)

We can therefore say that in *Piąta pora roku* there has been a significant 'shift in emphasis' by comparison with the youthful 'self-portrait' sketched by the protagonist of *Wiosna i wino*, who describes the atmosphere of his lyric poetry and himself as '*Renesansowo-helleńsko-dzisiejszy*'⁴⁷ (cf. *szumi w mej głowie*). Paraphrasing this definition, we may describe the atmosphere of *Piąta pora roku* as '*romantyczno-renesansowo-helleńsko-dzisiejszą*'. The allusions to (great) Romanticism in *Piąta pora roku* show that it was this poetic tradition that proved to be Wierzyński's most important and lasting source of inspiration.

3. In the opening section of *Piąta pora roku* the vision of a Dionysian procession – consisting of people, plants, animals, seasons and the young poet himself – together with the motifs of camp-fires, sleep on forest clearings, leaping roe-deer (reminiscent of Bacchantes dressed in deer-skins – *Budziły mnie samy, kobiece w kolanach/ Skacząc jak wodotryski*) and also the interpretation of the Dionysian ritual as one which gives man the experience of the eternity of existence and the feeling of his own immortality – all this taken together seems to be reminiscent of the Christianized version of the Dionysian ritual which is to be found in an 'adaptation' of Greek mythology entitled *Bajeczna starożytność* – a well known book written by the eminent scholar Tadeusz Zieliński⁴⁸:

"... boskie natchnienie owładnęło sercem Tyrezjasza; zaczął głosić o nowym bogu Bakchosie-Dionizosie, synu Zeusa i Semeli. Odślonił on ludziom znaczenie tajemnego związku rodziców boga: Zeus żył w rozterce z Matką-Ziemią, wyrwawszy ludzkość spod władzy jej praw, pod którymi żyła przedtem na

Divine inspiration descended onto Tiresias and he proclaimed the new god Bacchus-Dionysos, son of Zeus and Semele. He disclosed to people the secret of the god's parents' union: the discord between Zeus and his mother the Earth goddess, from whose domination he had, by giving it the power of

⁴⁷ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., p. 30.

⁴⁸ Cf. T. Terlecki, *The Dionysian and Apollinian antinomy in Kazimierz Wierzyński's Early Poetry*, ed.cit., p. 520. Cf. T. Zieliński, *Bajeczna starożytność*, Warsaw 1957, pp. 21 – 22.

równi z innymi stworzeniami, i wprowadziwszy ją na drogę rozwoju umysłowego. Lecz na tej drodze nie ma spokoju duchowego i dlatego Zeus zrodził rozjemcę – Dionizosa. Został on wychowany daleko, wśród nimf góry Zeusowej; teraz wraca do rodzinnego miasta swej matki i niesie mu cenny dar – swe misteria, z nimi zaś pojednanie z Matką-Ziemią. On rzuci hasło – i zbiegną się jego czciciele, bachanci i bachantki, na święte polanki ojczystych gór, aby choć w ciągu kilku dni żyć tam wedle praw Matki-Ziemi; będą nocowali na zielonej murawie, będą spędzali dni w wesołych korowodach, przy dźwiękach szalonej muzyki – tympanów, cymbałów i fletów. Ogarnie ich nieokiełznany zachwyty, wyda im się, że dusza oddzieli się od ciała i żyje własnym, niewymownie szczęśliwym życiem, że ta ich dusza ma swój własny byt i jest niezniszczalna, że nie zginie, gdy ciało w proch się rozsypie. Bóg ześle na swych bachantów i bachantki cudowne błogosławieństwo: odziani w skóry jelenie, z tytsem zamiast broni, staną się nietykalni dla przyrody i dla ludzi. Sama Matka-Ziemia będzie ich karmiła i poila, dając im mleko, miód, wino, gdzie i ile zapagną”.

reasoning, snatched mankind, which up till then had been her subject together with all the rest of creation. The state of discord was responsible for spiritual disquiet and to obviate it Zeus conceived Dionysos the mediator. Dionysos had been brought up in a far away country among the nymphs of Olympus; but he returned to his mother's native city bringing the precious gift of his mysteries and, with them, reconciliation with Mother Earth. When he calls his worshippers the Bacchantes will come down to the clearings in the mountains to live there, only for a few days, according to the law of Mother Earth. They will sleep in the green sward and spend the day in happy cavorting to the sound of the wild music of drums cymbals and flutes. Under a spell of unbridled rapture they will feel their souls leave their bodies and attain an independent and inexpressibly happy existence, indestructable, imperishable even when the flesh turns into ashes. The God will send them his thraumaturgic blessing. Clothed in deer skins, with thyrsus in place of arms, they will be inviolable to man or beast. Mother Earth herself will provide them with food and drink: as much of milk and wine as they will wish for.

4. The dark, tragic pole of the Dionysian myth – absent in Wierzyński's early poetry – is also to be found in *Piąta pora roku*. The 'price' of – or condition for – spiritual rebirth through contact with the earth and with the community of the living and the dead is the protagonist's symbolic death:

Wiem. Dawno już doszczętnie wymarłem
A jednak trwam znów.

(Stanza 16)

This dark pole of the Dionysian myth is foreshadowed in the poem's opening stan-

zas by the motif of *gorzkie zale* – a Lenten service which anticipates Christ's passion. In *Piąta pora roku*, however, this dark pole may well be fused with the favorite myth of the Polish Romantics, namely the Eleusinian myth – the story of Demeter and Persephone interpreted as being about the future spiritual rebirth of mankind through the suffering of individuals and of nations. At the beginning of the twentieth century this interpretation of the myth made its appearance in Wyspiański's visionary drama entitled *Noc listopadowa*, the theme of which is the unsuccessful 1830 uprising against Russia.

Demeter's farewell to Persephone (who returns to Hades) takes place in the autumn. In *Piąta pora roku* the protagonist's parents come to him at about the same time of the year (late autumn-early winter) in order to take him to the other side of life – *w głąb, w tajemniczy obszar*.

VI

By means of an internally celebrated Dionysian-Eleusinian ritual – i.e. by means of rebirth after symbolic death – the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* achieves that superhuman state of visionary ecstasy – “life in death, death in life” – which is sought by the protagonist of Yeats's *The Tower*, stylized as the hero of the myth of the Grail.

The mystical vision of the unity of all being together with its accompanying emotional atmosphere belongs to the lyrical ‘axis’ of *Piąta pora roku*. As a son of the Earth, as the embodiment of the earth's self-awareness, as the leader of the ritual chorus, as the leader of the great community of personal spirits and as a visionary poet, the poem's protagonist reveals to his listeners the secret of life and of eternity, which is conceived of as being the last stage in the cycle of transformation undergone by the existence of nature and man. The apple (*jabłuszko*) which rolls under the bed of Earth would seem to symbolize immortality – acquired in the garden of the Hesperides by Hercules (one of the heroes of Mickiewicz's *Oda do młodości*).

The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* is therefore not only the leader of a Graeco-Slavonic-Christian ritual, but – like the protagonist of Yeats's *The Tower* – a Platonic inspired poet, revealer of the truth about the world and man. The symbol of this inspiration is the bird, which causes the sudden expansion of the protagonist's consciousness to cosmic dimensions. This bird not only heralds the eternal cycle of birth and transformation of the Nietzschean myth but also brings to mind the birds of the Romantic poetry of Norwid and Słowacki:

1. In part III of Norwid's long poem entitled *Pięć zarysów* the bird symbolizes the idea of metempsychosis: after death the hearts (i.e. spirits) of the most sensitive men transmigrate into the bodies of birds, whereas those of the less sensitive must inhabit plants and minerals:

The motif of fire which accompanies this mystical bird (=God) in Słowacki's poem becomes an element of the outer world – absorbed by the protagonist's memory – in *Piąta pora roku*:

Obszyłem się liśćmi, porosłem górami
Paliły się we mnie ogniska pastuchów: (in Stanza 4)

This prosaic transposition of the motif of fire – the attribute of the inspired poet – points to a reinterpretation of the sources of poetic inspiration by Wierzyński. In *Piąta pora roku* inspiration comes simultaneously from two directions – from the earth (fire) and from the sky (bird). The distinction between earth and sky is thus blurred somewhat. The bird and the fire function both as realistic elements of man's everyday environment and as symbols of creation. This 'mystery of everyday life' (tajemnica codzienności) was cultivated by Wierzyński from his very beginnings as a poet (cf. *Tryptyk o dzieciach* in *Wiosna i wino*)⁵¹. As an émigré, he reinterpreted the most fantastic and ecstatic imaginations of the Romantics (which were nevertheless dear to him)⁵² in the same manner.

4. The bird of *Piąta pora roku*, which evokes a vision of the land of the protagonist's childhood, is also related to the angel – the guardian Spirit of the earthly homeland of the (Polish) Romantics. Such a transformation of a bird (the stork – which in the Polish countryside is still spoken of as the guardian of the homestead where it chooses to build its nest) into an angel occurs in Słowacki's metempsychic epic poem entitled *Król Duch*, woven around motifs from Poland's prehistoric and mediaeval past.

The narrator of this poem is the Spirit Her (=the mythical Er of Book X of Plato's *Republic*) who chooses to be reincarnated in successive Polish rulers, legendary, mediaeval and mythical:

On potem w duchów świętych tajemnicy
Najgłębszej – zasiadł przecudowną chatę
Na szmaragdowych łąkach, przy Kruszwicy,
Nad którą boże dwa twory skrzydlate
Jak dwa posągi wiejskie okolicy
Stały ... A gniazdo ich, mchami brodate,
W ogniu komina ponad chaty czołem
Księżycem zdało się – a ptak aniołem⁵³.

⁵¹ Cf. J. Dudek, op.cit., pp. 30 - 38.

⁵² Cf. *O Moim Genjusz* [in:] K. Wierzyński, *Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., p. 475. Cf. *Dziady*, ibidem, p. 488. Cf. *Narodziny z ptakami*, ibidem, p. 500.

⁵³ Quoted by K. Wyka, *Thanatos i Polska*, Kraków 1971, pp. 112 – 113. Cf. J. Słowacki, *Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. J. Kleiner, t. XVII, Wrocław 1975, p. 117.

The Polish Romantics held that every nation as well as every man had its own Guardian Spirit (or Angel). In another well-known poem by Słowacki we read:

Anioły stoją na rodzinnych polach,
I chcąc powitać lecą w nasze strony⁵⁴.

In *Król Duch* the protagonist's Slavonic homeland is described as follows:

Kraina pełna zamków i kościołów
Z niebem związana wstęgami aniołów.

In almost every Polish landscape painted by the Symbolist artist Jacek Malczewski (late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) – in whose work Romantic, Dionysian and Franciscan motifs are fused with motifs from Polish folklore (as in Wierzyński's *Piąta pora roku*) – there are angels, complete with colourful, 'full-size' wings and having the beauty of country girls⁵⁵. The angels accompany a young man on his earthly peregrination (Tobias series). The paintings symbolize human life conceived as a never-ending journey (cf. Tobias's journey to the home of his father). The angel is therefore associated with life, death, youth, old age and eternity.

Malczewski's paintings entitled *Autoportret z Tobiaszem i Parkami* (1912) and *Portret Feliksa Jasińskiego* (1903) would seem to constitute an iconographic parallel to the situation outlined by Wierzyński at the beginning of *Piąta pora roku*⁵⁶. In *Autoportret z Tobiaszem i Parkami*, which is a Symbolist self-portrait, the artist – posing as Tobias the elder – can be seen sitting with hands joined as for prayer (in the manner of St. Francis). Before him (to the right) stands a boy – Tobias the younger – holding up to his father's face a fish which he has already begun to cut open. Behind Tobias the elder stand three plain-looking country women who represent the Parcae. Behind Tobias the younger stands a beautiful young woman with wings who functions at one and the same time as: the Archangel Raphael; a supernumerary member of the Parcae – holding with one hand the thread/fishing-line (to which the fish is still attached) and in the other a sharp instrument; the Muse; the Angel of Death. This symbolic scene has similarities with that imagined by Wierzyński in the opening section of *Piąta pora roku*. Here the protagonist – lost in meditation – is visited by five symbolic beings. Four of these are the personifications of the seasons, which also function as Muses, Parcae, Bacchantes and participators in the ritual:

⁵⁴ K. Wyka, op.cit., p. 109.

⁵⁵ Cf. K. Wyka, op.cit., chapters 9, 10, 11.

⁵⁶ According to Kazimierz Wyka, Malczewski's angels can also be seen to be related to the Parcae, the Furies and the Chimeras. According to the poet Jan Lechoń (a friend of Wierzyński) Malczewski's angels can also be seen to be related to fauns. Cf. *Jacek Malczewski* [in:] Jan Lechoń *Poezje*, Warsaw 1973. Cf. another of Malczewski's paintings entitled *Piosnka jesienna*, which depicts a young man dressed in what appears to be a soldier's greatcoat in the company of a girl holding in her hands a dead swallow (symbolizing death and the approach of winter).

Jedna była młodzieńcza, wesoła,
 Jeszcze śni mi się, jeszcze mnie woła
 (Ach pusty śmiech, niedorzeczność!),
 Druga była żarliwa, gorąca,
 Czerwoną wargą jeszcze mnie trąca
 Trzecia – jesienna, czwarta – zimowa,
 A piąta – śmierć i wieczność.

The four seasons reappear in Stanza 12:

(...) i legły u nogi
 Jaskółcze wiosny, bukowe lata
 I jesień sowa i zima brodata.

Here the fifth season is not further defined. Its 'emissary', however, would seem to be the bird – released perhaps only a short time ago. This fifth character would seem to fulfil the functions of both the angel and Tobias the younger in Malczewski's painting.

The hypothesis that the fifth character (season) in the opening section of *Piąta pora roku* is linked with the bird – emissary (which [she] may well have just released) would seem to find some support in the second of Malczewski's paintings mentioned above. In the painting entitled *Portret Feliksa Jasińskiego* we see the head (in profile, facing left) of a bearded man who – against the background of a winter landscape – is looking at a bird – a kingfisher – which is being held by a straw doll. The doll, which has a wreath of flowers on its head, represents Marzanna – the Slavonic deity of winter. In conformity with ancient custom, this doll is ritually drowned at the end of winter each year in order to herald the coming of the spring.

In Slavonic folklore, the kingfisher (which – significantly perhaps – was more likely to be seen in Wierzyński's Sub-Carpathian countryside than in other parts of Poland in its frontiers between the two World Wars) heralds earth's rebirth in the spring. In the poetry of Słowacki, the kingfisher (*halcyjon*) often makes its appearance and is at times compared to an angel. In Żeromski's historical novel entitled *Popioły* the kingfisher (*zimorodek* – the bird's common name in Polish, cf. *zima* = winter, *rodzić* = give birth to) heralds changes in the characters' lives⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Cf. K. Wyka, op.cit., pp. 145 – 147. Cf. also Wierzyński's poem entitled *Psalm o wierzbach*, in which the kingfisher is associated with the Carpathian spring (*Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., p. 525). This symbolism of the kingfisher – the favourite bird of the European Romantics – has its origins in Greek mythology. The blissfully happy couple Alcyone (daughter of Aeolus, king of the winds) and Ceyx (son of the Morning Star) are punished for their presumption by the gods (Hera and Zeus), who cause Ceyx to be drowned. When Alcyone out of grief throws herself into the sea, the gods take pity on their victims and change them both into birds, calming the seas once a year (before and after the winter solstice) in order to allow them just enough time to build their (seaborne) nest and hatch out their eggs. The kingfisher has therefore come to symbolize: extreme happiness, which – because it is accompanied by a sense of blind self-sufficiency – is short-lived and ends in disaster; the fragile union of the heavens and the earthly elements (and hence fragile spiritual and material fertility); peace and tranquillity which is fragile.

In Wierzyński's poem entitled *Alviano* the bird has Franciscan -Dionysian associations. Here St. Francis appears to be at one and the same time a deity of nature and a bird preaching to fellow birds. The theme of the 'sermon' is the unity of all creation⁵⁸:

Co on wam opowiadał,
Ptaki i Alviano,
Że słyszy jak w gęstej wiośnie
Trawa musuje i rośnie
Nad Umbrą zaczarowaną?

Że ręce ma z bluszczu,
Że oblatuje wesoły
Rozkołysane drzewa,
Gardłem zielonem śpiewa
I mieszka w nich, jak dzięcioły?

Że mówić można do ostu
I pisać na wodzie wspomnienia
I wszystko to ktoś zrozumie,
Wiatr mu powtórzy w szumie,
Bo wszystko – z jednego stworzenia?

Co on wam mówił? Powtórzcie,
Winnice, oliwki, zające,
Że można modlić się w ptakach,
W liściach, mchu i widłakach,
I że można się modlić niechcący?

What dewy sermons did he preach
That made you birds of Alviano
End a spring note to hear him teach

How hint of green becomes a blade

Of grass in Umbrian carpets laid?
And did the ivy ask him how
To wreath upon a sap-filled bough,

The leaves pretending they were birds,

Joining their music to his words?
Did choruses from other trees
Contribute on an April breeze?
I know he spoke with purple thistle,

Wrote songs on recollection's water

And taught the winds a milder whistle.

—As you birds did, they understood,

For we are one in the wide wood.
What did he tell you as you grew?
The leafy vines and olives knew
— Even the stricken leaping hare
Who all unknowing shook with prayer.

(transl. Livingston Welch)

Cf. the entry *alcyon* in: J. Chevalier, *Dictionnaire des symboles*, Paris 1973, vol. I, pp. 37 – 39.

Cf. the entry *Ceyx* in: *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford 1979.

⁵⁸ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., p. 437. Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Selected poems*, ed.cit., p. 17.

It can therefore be no great surprise that in *Piąta pora roku*, the bird turns out to be an 'emissary' of the Spirits of the protagonist's dead parents, who would seem to be latently present at the beginning of the poem and who function as guardian Spirits in that part of the protagonist's inner space which is occupied by the fifth season. These guardian Spirits would seem to 'correspond' in their function to the doll holding a kingfisher, the Archangel Raphael and Tobias the younger in Malczewski's painting.

The 'represented world' of *Piąta pora roku* – like that of Malczewski's paintings – is composed of both realistic and fantastic elements. As a poet, however, Wierzyński has greater freedom for manoeuvre between the two poles of realism and fantasy, since the objects represented by the poet are 'schematized' – i.e. are imaginal skeleton-structures (*schematy wyobrażeniowe*) which are to be 'actualised' by a process of 'concretization' (to use Ingarden's term – *konkretyzacja*)⁵⁹ in the listener's or hearer's mind – to a much greater extent than those represented by the painter. The objects, events and situations represented in *Piąta pora roku* have been 'schematized' in such a way as to allow them to be 'actualised' in the listener's mind in one of three ways – realistically; fantastically; both realistically and fantastically. In Wierzyński's poem, the *oscillation* between the two poles of fantasy and realism which is so characteristic of Romantic works has therefore been replaced by the *coexistence* of fantasy and realism⁶⁰. The poet achieves this by the use of allusions, suggestions and words having multiple meanings, as well as by the 'prosaic transposition' of anything out of the ordinary and the 'materialization' of abstractions.

In *Piąta pora roku* Spring – like Summer – has a human psychology, being 'youthful', 'gay' and 'smiling/laughing'. Spring's attitude to human Spirits is – as in the case of the other seasons – that of a tame animal:

(...) i legły u nogi

Jaskólcze wiosny, bukowe lata

I jesień sowa i zima brodata.

Spring is also described as being *jaskółcza* (an adjective formed from *jaskółka* = swallow). Taken together, these characteristics attributed to Spring may lead the reader in the following 'directions':

(a) The reader may imagine Spring as a Slavonic or Greek nymph (or Muse) whose head is wreathed not in flowers – which would have been the 'normal thing' – but in swallows. Thus reconstructed, Spring would be a fantastic creation reminiscent of the Goplana (a nymph) of Słowacki's *Balladyna*.

(b) The reader may stay with the second image of Spring (cf. Stanza 12) and inter-

⁵⁹ Cf. Roman Ingarden, *O Dziele Literackim*, Warsaw 1960, Part II: chapters VIII and IX, Part III: chapter XIII. This work also appeared in German under the title *Das literarische Kunstwerk*.

⁶⁰ Cf. K. Wyka, "Pan Tadeusz". *Studia o poemacie*, Warsaw 1963.

pret the epithet *jaskółcza*. as one evoking the swallows which habitually migrate to Poland in the spring⁶¹.

(c) The third possibility is a combination of the two possibilities already discussed.

Each of these 'choices' or 'paths' is accompanied by a mood of gaiety and light-heartedness.

The most conspicuous 'contour' of the 'represented world' of *Piąta pora roku* – like that of Malczewski's paintings – is its 'everyday' and autobiographical aspect, made up by the protagonist's personal experiences and objects and events reminiscent of those known to the reader in everyday life. There are, however, several dimensions to this 'everyday' aspect of the poem's 'represented world'. The protagonist-poet's life and his links with people and with his native Carpathian landscape are shown through the following 'prisms', so to speak:

1. The 'prism' of an archetypal premonition of inevitable death, accompanied by the hope of attaining a complete vision of truth – cf. Stanza 15:

Teraz tu słyszę, czego nikt nie słyszy,
I widzę rzeczy na skroś i spod spodu
I pełny jestem śmierci jak ciszy
I pełny wieczności jak chłodu.

2. The 'prism' of mythological and Biblical motifs.
3. The 'prism' of Polish folklore.
4. The 'prism' of Romantic poetry.

VII

The most ambiguous motif of *Piąta pora roku* is that of the bird – an element of the poem's 'nature' background; a symbol of the eternal recurrence of phenomena; the envoy of eternity and death; a symbol of inspiration; a 'relation' of the Muses, the Parcae and the guardian Angel-Spirit; a symbol of nostalgia (home sickness); a symbol of the unity of heaven and earth. The motif of the bird is the poem's main semantic and thematic link (nature – eternity – imagination – art).

It can therefore be no accident that in the opening section of *Piąta pora roku* the bird is linked with song and blood – the words *ptak*, *śpiew* and *krw* being the only one-stress verse endings in the entire poem. This association of the bird with song and blood leads us to yet another meaning of the symbol. Like the bird in Part III of Yeats's *The Tower*, the bird in *Piąta pora roku* would seem to symbolize 'living truth' – equated with the words uttered by the inspired poet and with the poet's 'inner truth', which is either a reflection of or a synonym for absolute truth.

⁶¹ Cf. "Legenda wieczności" [in:] M. Dłuska, *Studia i rozprawy*, ed.cit., vol. III, p. 156.

Such an expressive theory of the inspired words of⁶² saints, great philosophers and poets is to be found in Mickiewicz's Paris lectures (*Wykłady o literaturach słowiańskich* – 1844 – lectures VII and VIII). Like Plotinus's theory of creation (discussed in connection with Yeats's *The Tower*), Mickiewicz's theory would appear to assume that every creator strives to achieve unity of intuitive thought, the creative act and the result (i.e. the work of art). Another tenet would appear to be that the inspired word reaches the hearer's (or reader's) soul – on which it 'acts' directly – without being distorted in any way. For Mickiewicz, therefore, the inspired 'word' has the following characteristics⁶³:

1. It is a reflection of the word of God (promień słowa Bożego⁶⁴. – i.e. it is partial revelation (*objawienie cząstkowe*)⁶⁵.

2. It is an expression of the human soul⁶⁶.

3. It has two aspects – spiritual and material. Both aspects form an indissoluble whole (cf. the human body and soul). The force which binds both aspects together is love, which is found in man and is the source of life, creation and inspiration – the divine element of the world:

“Słowo jest to ciało i duch stopione
razem ogniem boskim znajdującym się w
człowieku... Słowo jest to cały czło-
wiek”⁶⁷.

The word is the flesh and the spirit made
one by the heavenly fire present in
human nature. The word is the whole
man.

4. Mickiewicz compares it to an 'airborne ball of fire' (*lotna i płomienista kulka*)⁶⁸. Indirectly, therefore, it may be associated with a bird. This would certainly seem to be the case in *Piąta pora roku*.

⁶² The meaning of Mickiewicz's term 'word' is complex. 'Word' may mean: 'God's revelation to man'; 'God'; 'the inspired work of art'; 'inspired action'; 'the inspired man'; 'the basis of being'.

⁶³ I have chosen only those characteristics which are relevant to my analysis of Wierzyński's poem.

⁶⁴ “Ale jeżeli ciężko otrzymać Słowo, promień Słowa Bożego, jeżeli w niewielu tylko epokach dano światu widzieć organa tego Słowa, ciężko też je przyjąć” (Mickiewicz, op.cit., Rok Czwarty, p. 150).

⁶⁵ “Zastanawiając się nad wewnętrzną pracą naszego ducha, moglibyśmy już przyjść do niejasnego poznania Słowa Bożego, bo każdy z nas ma w sobie iskrę Bożą, ma swoje Słowo Boże, i wszystkie nasze dzieła są Słowami cząstkowymi” (ibidem, p. 148).

⁶⁶ “Pisarze i artyści, wynętrzając się w poezji albo w sztuce, czynią nie co innego, tylko dogadzają potrzebie udzielania się naszym duchom” (ibidem, p. 130).

⁶⁷ Ibidem, pp. 132 – 133.

⁶⁸ “Dla przekonania się, ile w tem prawdy, dosyć będzie, jeżeli każdy zastanowi się, co się z nim dzieje w tych rzadkich chwilach, kiedy miłość silna, szczerza i czysta, kiedy uczucie patriotyczne albo natchnienie boskie każe mu mówić. Jakiś ogień wewnętrzny zapala się natenczas w głębi naszego jestestwa, przebiega nagle po wszystkich żyłach, przejmując, roztopia niejako całą naszą organizację, i z tak roztopionego człowieka duch jego, ciągnąc pierwiastek, (...) tworzy tę lotną i płomienistą kulkę, którą nazywamy słowem, która wylatuje z nas, nie rozłączając się z nami, która zdaje się znikać, a jednak trwa tak długo, jak duch, co ją wydał, to jest – bez końca” (ibidem, p. 132).

5. The voice of the inspired poet is a 'current of life and strength' (*prąd życia i siły*) which penetrates the listener's soul directly⁶⁹.

6. Undoubtedly influenced by the Gospel, Mickiewicz equates the word with 'spiritual power' (*moc duchowa*) – the essence of which is love – and with food (bread)⁷⁰. Mickiewicz thus considers the inspired word to be a source of both spiritual and material (biological) life⁷¹:

"Moc to słowo, które się już urzeczywistnia, wchodzi w życie, daje żywotność, karmi"⁷².

7. As an expression of the power (*siła/moc*) of the spirit, the inspired word is also equated with action and work. All work is *wyłączenie czucia i mocy*⁷³.

8. The inspired word is an act (*czyn*), insofar as it is a combination of (good) intention and inner strength (*intencja i siła połączone w jednym duchu*)⁷⁴.

9. The word is therefore 'holy' (*święte*) and has creative power⁷⁵.

10. Every man who is inspired is a real author (*sprawca*)⁷⁶.

11. Every man who is inspired is also the 'word incarnate' (*słowo wcielone*)⁷⁷.

12. All human works (*czyny*) which are the result of inspiration are 'partial words'⁷⁸ (*słowa cząstkowe*).

⁶⁹ "...bo z dźwiękiem głosu tych mężów bożych wszedłby w nas taki prąd życia i siły, że duch nasz zdołałby zaraz uchwycić wewnętrzne znaczenie tego dźwięku, pojąć ich pragnienie Boga, zawarte w wyrazach, a wyrazy te natychmiast umysł nasz przekładałby sobie na francuskie" (Ibidem, p. 134).

⁷⁰ Cf. Note 68. "Mówiliśmy o cudowności słowa żywiącego, o duchu stającym się pokarmem" (ibidem, p. 139).

⁷¹ "Ewangelia powiada, że człowiek żyje nie tylko chlebem, ale i słowem Bożem. Odwołując się do Ewangelii, można rzec śmiało, że, jeżeli gdzie objawia się niedostatek i głód duchowy, to pewno tam zabrakło słowa Chrystusowego. Ewangelia rozszana była po świecie na zasitek ducha ludzkiego. Skoro zaś zważymy wpływ ducha na stan fizyczny człowieka, odkryjemy i prawdziwą przyczynę nędzy materialnej, która w istocie nie jest niczem innym jak tylko następstwem nędzy moralnej – a wtedy, łatwo da się nam pojąć i ta jeszcze cudowność słowa, jego działalność na ciało, jego pożywność (...) bo niezawodnie słowo może nakarmić" (ibidem, p. 136).

⁷² Ibidem, p. 136.

⁷³ "Praca zaś podług Hezjoda jest to wyłączenie czucia i mocy" (ibidem, p. 137).

⁷⁴ "Intencja i siła połączone w jednym duchu, stanowią czyn. Ten, kto taki czyn spełnia, jest prawdziwym autorem. *Auctor*, w języku łacińskim, znaczy sprawcę, człowieka, przez którego rzecz jaka zostaje nie napisana, ale sprawiona, i który pomnaża *auger*, zbiór rzeczy, mających byt w czynie. Takie sprawowanie rzeczy, taka realizacja daje razem człowiekowi powagę, władzę istotną" (ibidem, pp. 141 – 142).

⁷⁵ "Rzecz ta, z siebie niezmiernie ważna dla wszystkich nas, Słowian, dotyka szczególnie. S ł o w i a n i e wychodzi na to, co lud s ł o w a. Lud ten zachowuje dotąd czystą tradycję znaczenia słowa, do którego zawsze przywiązuje pojęcie świętości i mocy twórczej" (ibidem, p. 131).

⁷⁶ Cf. footnote No. 74.

⁷⁷ "Z doktryn nic nie wynika: doktryna jest to sposób widzenia jednego człowieka (...) Rzecz, nie mogącą się sformułować, trwała, żywa, działająca, jest sam człowiek, słowo wcielone. Tego to człowieka przeczuwają i zapowiadają poeci polscy; człowieka, który *śród głosów mylnych, wśród wrzasków tysiąca, / Uchem duszy rozpozna przeznaczeń kół grzanie, / Wskoczy w rydwan wyroków i zajmie siedzenie, / I po czasie przejedzie jako Przeznaczenie*" (Mickiewicz, op.cit., Rok Drugi 1841 – 1842, p. 320).

⁷⁸ "... bo każdy z nas ma w sobie iskrę Bożą, ma swoje Słowo Boże, i wszystkie nasze dzieła są Słowami cząstkowymi. Co to jest ten błysk, w którym artysta pojmuje od razu cały zarys, cały pomysł swojego dzieła? Błysk ten jest tego dzieła Słowem" (Mickiewicz, op.cit., Rok Czwarty, p. 148).

Mickiewicz's theory of the inspired 'word' can therefore be seen to be concerned with (inspired) thought, speech, acts, works and people. It is also intimately related to Mickiewicz's conception of the Slavs as people who are naturally receptive to the inspired word (i.e. revelation)⁷⁹ – their name (*Słowianin* = Slav) being traditionally considered to be derived from the word *słowo* (=word) – and to his conception of the language of the Slavs⁸⁰ as an organic being (*jestestwo organiczne*) which:

“przeszedłszy przez wszystkie stopnie niższe swojego bytu zachowało w sobie razem życie roślinne, zwierzęce i ludzkie, a każde z nich w dojrzałym rozwinięciu i zupełnej całości”⁸¹.

This language has both a human and a divine dimension. It is at once an expression of the inspired spirit and an 'image' or 'voice' of nature, conceived as an organic whole⁸².

It would seem that in many of the poems he wrote as an émigré, Wierzyński alluded to this 'theory' or rather 'mythology' of the inspired 'word' which was elaborated by Mickiewicz. In *Mowa i ziemia* (in: *Siedem podków*, 1954) the protagonist's native language – equated in turn with: the earth's whisper; the earth's song; the protagonist's unhappy fate; the protagonist's love 'sown in blood' – is his inseparable travelling companion. In a poem entitled *Tuwim* (in: *Tkanka ziemi*) the Polish language is equated with nectar-rich clover, the poet – Tuwim – being equated with a spring, the water of which refreshes his native tongue, people, plants and animals. In a poem entitled *Poezja* (in: *Sen mara*, 1969) poetry is described as 'immaterial matter' – equated with love – and is also associated by the protagonist with the 'immaterial matter' of the Romantics⁸³, i.e. with electricity. In this poem the inspired word – the 'fiery word' – is described variously as a 'grain', as 'light' and as 'conception'.

In *Piąta pora roku* the inspired word, symbolized by the bird – cf. Mickiewicz's 'airborne ball of fire' – is associated with the song of nature and with the protagonist's

⁷⁹ “Nazwa ‘Słowianie’ oznacza więc, w interpretacji Mickiewicza, nie lud posiadający słowo, lecz lud oczekujący Słowa. Słowo zaś, słowo objawione, zawsze wciela się w wielką jednostkę o szczególnych uzdolnieniach charyzmatycznych (‘Bóg nie ma innego sposobu przemawiania do ludzi: musi obrać człowieka’)”

– A. Walicki, *Filozofia a mesjanizm*, Warsaw 1970, pp. 276 – 277.

⁸⁰ “... Słowianie wszystkie zasoby umysłowe złączyli w ten jeden olbrzymi pomnik. Język słowiański, tak dawny, jak Indyan i Germanów, żyje dziś jeszcze w ustach osiemdziesięciu milionów ludzi” (Mickiewicz, op.cit., Rok Pierwszy, p. 23).

⁸¹ Ibidem, p. 9.

⁸² “Można by powiedzieć, że cały ten ogromny język, jakby odlany z samorodnego kruszcu bez żadnej mieszaniny, wytrysnął i rozwinął się z jednego słowa (...) Są w nim obadwa pierwiastki boski i ludzki – składa się on niby z dwóch języków, które rozwijają się razem, jeden, zstępując od rzeczy niewidomych i wyższych do rzeczy widomych i niższych, drugi, wznosząc się ze świata materialnego w świat duchowy. Ten sam podział znajdujemy w Genesie, gdzie Bóg jednym jestestwem sam daje nazwiska, drugich nazwanie zostawuje człowiekowi. (...) Ze wszystkich języków słowiański rozległością swoją najwięcej odpowiada ogromowi natury” (ibidem, pp. 23 – 24).

⁸³ Cf. *Cztery toasty pewnego Chemika na cześć istot promienistych* [in:] A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła poetyckie*, ed.cit., pp. 107 – 108.

blood. The association *ptak – śpiew – krew* would therefore seem to point to the life-giving force of the inspired word, which at the end of the poem becomes an apple (i.e. a form of nourishment) – cf. once again Mickiewicz's 'airborne ball of fire' and the inspired word as bread.

Mickiewicz's theory, according to which the inspired word is equated with 'God', 'inspired man', 'action', 'work', 'thought' and defined as the maximum concentration of inner feeling and strength, would seem to explain why in *Piąta pora roku* the description of poetic ecstasy takes the form of a description of consciously undertaken activities and why this description gives way to (or develops into) inner action:

Obszyłem się liśćmi, porosłem górami,
 Palily się we mnie ogniska pastuchów:

The fact that Mickiewicz equates the inspired word with the inspired man would also seem to throw light on the suggestion – found in the last part of *Piąta pora roku* – that the protagonist's dead parents appear to see him as being possessed by the bird, their emissary:

Przypominają mi nagle, że ptak
 Przeleciał przez mnie, ptak,
 I drzwi zostawił otwarte
 Na góry moje, na drzewa,
 Na wszystkie sprawy
 Żywe i martwe.

Czemu nie śpiewa?

VIII

Another motif (after those of the bird, the Muses and fire) which is linked with inspired poetry in *Piąta pora roku* is that of sleep on the warm, dry grass of forest clearings (*na siennych, wygrzanych polanach*). This motif is also concealed in the poem's Carpathian background. It belongs to the sphere of the Dionysian myth present in the poem and is also linked with the Romantic concept of the inspired poet.

In Polish Romantic lyric poetry the state of ecstasy – reminiscent of Dionysian inebriation⁸⁴ – is commonly represented as a state (intermediate between contemplation and action, sleep and consciousness) in which the poet becomes dispossessed of his body and encompasses (with his spirit) the earth, rising above it in order to reach the

⁸⁴ Cf. *Mania twórcza* [in:] T. Zieliński, *Po co Homer? Świat anyczny a my*, Ed. A. Biernacki, Kraków 1970, pp. 308 – 316.

invisible world. The perception of reality which accompanies this state of ecstasy is far superior to that which accompanies consciousness. Vision therefore often gives way to interior action and lyric monologue is often replaced by narration. This is the case, for example, in Mickiewicz's poem entitled *Widzenia*. The protagonist of this poem – like that of *Piąta pora roku* – encompasses with his spirit the whole visible and invisible world. He feels the movements of the entire universe within himself and meets face to face with God and the Angels:

Dźwięk mię uderzył – nagle moje ciało,
 Jak ów kwiat polny, otoczony puchem,
 Prysło, zerwane anioła podmuchem,
 I ziarno duszy nagie pozostało.

I zdało mi się, żem się nagle zbudził
 Ze snu straszego, co mię długo trudził.
 I jak zbudzony ociera pot z czoła,
 Tak ocierałem swoje przeszłe czyny,
 Które wisiały przy mnie, jak łupiny
 Wokoło świeżo rozkwitłego ziola.

(...)

Teraz widziałem całe wielkie morze,
 Płynące z środka jak ze źródła, z Boga,

(...)

I mogłem latać po całym przestworze,
 Biegać, jak promień przy boskim promieniu
 Mądrości bożej; i w dziwnym widzeniu
 I światłem byłem, i żrenicą razem.

(...)

A w środku siebie, jakoby w ognisku,
 Czułem od razu całe Przyrodzenie.
 Stałem się osią w nieskończonym kole,
 Sam nieruchomy, czułem jego ruchy;
 Byłem w pierwotnym żywiołów żywiole,
 W miejscu skąd wszystkie rozchodzą się duchy,
 Świat ruszające, same nieruchome⁸⁵:

In *Piąta pora roku* – as in Mickiewicz's *Widzenie* – the protagonist's inner vision gives way to inner action. In Wierzyński's poem the motifs of sleep on forest clearings (*na siennych, wygrzanych polanach* – cf. Stanza 5) and the protagonist's ascent to the mountain-tops (cf. Stanza 16) correspond in Mickiewicz's poem to the motifs of sleep and the protagonist's flight into eternity. The two visions differ basically in that the

⁸⁵ A. Mickiewicz, *Dzieła poetyckie*, ed.cit., p. 68.

vision of Wierzyński's protagonist is dominated by earth, whereas that of Mickiewicz's is dominated by heaven. That of Wierzyński's protagonist is furthermore a retrospective vision of (the protagonist's) life, which is nearing its end. This would seem to explain the fact that in *Piąta pora roku* heaven is shown from a terrestrial standpoint. It would also seem to explain the absence of God, with Whom Mickiewicz's protagonist becomes united. In *Piąta pora roku* Mickiewicz's God and Angels have been 'replaced' – so to speak – by the protagonist's native Carpathian landscape and by the Spirits of his dead parents. It is the latter – and not Angels – who control life on earth and whom the winds and seasons obey (Stanza 12). It is to them – not to God – that the protagonist is accountable for what he creates. It is from them that he inherits the earth, people, plants and animals of his native Carpathian homeland:

Bo przyszli potem z daleka umarli,
 Łokciem o lasy jodłowe się wsparli,
 Patrzyli wokół – a ziemia szeroka
 Drobną im rzęsą zawisła u oka,
 Wiatr stanął w miejscu, stanęły drogi
 W białym spokoju, i legły u nogi
 Jaskółcze wiosny, bukowe lata
 I jesień sowa i zima brodata.

I rzekł mój ojciec do matki mojej,
 Dym odpędzając pod koniec wojny:
 “Nie bój się, wszystko się tak uspokoi
 W śmierci wieczyście spokojnej”.

I wzięli mnie. Wiedli w głąb, w tajemniczy
 Obszar, gdzie nic się z tej ziemi nie liczy,
 Gdzie wiosnie, latu, jesieni i zimie
 W innym języku nadano imię.
 Gdzie niezliczone, zawile odmiany,
 W jeden zrównały się czas odwikłany,
 Który też ustał, – tyle, że sprzęta
 Opustoszałe po zgiełku mrowisko, –
 I dokonało wtedy się wszystko:
 Ostatnia pora otwarła się. Piąta

Teraz tu słyszę, czego nikt nie słyszy,
 I widzę rzeczy na skroś i spod spodu
 I pełny jestem śmierci jak ciszy
 I pełny wieczności jak chłodu.

Wiem. Dawno temu doszczętnie wymarłem
 A jednak trwam znów, i łokciem o góry
 Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem
 I patrzę, synów mych szukam, czy który
 Obszył się liśćmi i porósł lasami,

A może stoi przy ogniu pastuchów
 I pójdzie śladem, co został za nami,
 I znów powtórzy przyrodę tych ruchów
 Gdy zgrzane życie porami gęstymi
 Dyszało w słońce i szło do księżycy,
 Gdy we mnie ciekła krew mojej ziemi
 A w matkach mleko i w sosnach żywica.

I rzekł mój ojciec: "Jeszcze go prowadź,
 Bo ludzkie oczy z żalu w nim bledną".
 A matka: "Nie masz tu czego żałować,
 Śmierć i życie, to jedno."

I tak mi mówią, tak pocieszają,
 Że nic nie przepadło, że nie zapomną
 Jak cień mój w tamtym przesunął się kraju,
 Że gospodarkę objąłem ogromną,
 Sienne polany i woły węgierskie,
 Zapach powideł, zimowia niebieskie,
 Sosny masztowe i biedę w Karpatach,
 Cały dobytek, który się splatał
 Z ludzi i roślin i skóry zwierzęcej,
 I nawet mówią mi jeszcze coś więcej,
 Przypominają mi nagle, że ptak
 Przeleciał przez mnie, ptak,
 I drzwi zostawił otwarte
 Na góry moje, na drzewa,
 Na wszystkie sprawy
 Żywe i martwe.

Czemu nie śpiewa?

Więc wyznam wam ostatnią troskę,
 Śpiewajcie ją jak chłopską piosnkę
 I kiedy świat się w zmierzchu ściemnia,
 Zamknijcie okna, spuśćcie story,
 Niech tam gromadzą się wieczory

I gdy powróci z pola ziemia,
 Niech swoje ciężkie zzuje buty
 I kurz otrzepie z nich przysuty,
 Niech się położy, odpoczywa,

Szczęśliwa albo nieszczęśliwa,
 I niech potoczy się jabłuszko
 Pod siennik jej, pod łóżko.

(Stanzas 12 – 20)

IX

The vocation of the inspired poet is to fathom the secret of heaven and earth and to reveal it to others. The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* is called upon to do just this by his dead parents, who remind him that: *...ptak/Przeleciał przeze mnie .../I drzwi zostawił otwarte/...Na wszystkie sprawy/ Żywe i martwe*. They also ask him why the bird does not sing: *Czemu nie śpiewa?*

The conception of creation and art which is implicit in the scene with the protagonist's dead parents becomes easier to grasp when it is seen in the light of (creative aspects of) Mickiewicz's conception of expressive art, as set out in his Paris lectures. Mickiewicz's theory of expressive art may be summarized as follows:

1. Art is related to religion⁸⁶. Indeed, art would seem to be a kind of religion.
2. The secret of art is creation⁸⁷.
3. The artist finds 'models' for his creation in an ideal land of personal Spirits. According to Mickiewicz, this land of personal Spirits corresponds to Plato's sphere of ideas⁸⁸.
4. Art is therefore a kind of 'invocation of Spirits', as it were – an expression of a directly experienced vision. According to Mickiewicz, the function of art seems to be both expressive and epistemological:

⁸⁶ Cf. A. Mickiewicz, *Wykłady o literaturach słowiańskich*, Rok III i IV, ed.cit., p. 127: "Dla niektórych ludzi sztuka jest jeszcze jednym sposobem praktykowania religijności, jakiego trzymać się śmieją".

⁸⁷ "Sztuka nie jest także przypomnieniem rzeczywistości: tworzy przedmioty, których nikt nigdy nie widział" (ibidem, p. 127).

⁸⁸ "Skądże więc wziąć wzór, ideał arcydzieła? Ideału tego nie ma gdzie indziej tylko w krainie duchów. Niektórzy filozofowie starożytni, Pytagoras, Platon wiedzieli o tem – wszyscy wielcy artyści to czuli, teoretycy dzisiejsi poczynają domyślać się tego" (loc.cit.).

Sztuka zatem jest pewnym rodzajem wywoływania duchów, jest operacją tajemniczą i świętą... Sztuka nie jest i nie może być innem, jak tylko wyrażaniem widzenia⁸⁹.

Art is the invocation of spirits, an activity both mysterious and holy...

Art is not and cannot be anything other than an expression of a vision.

5. The artist's talent is a 'thread' which links the poet with the invisible world:

"I cóż to jest talent artysty? To, co nazywamy talentem, darem nieba, co artyści czują w sobie, a czego nie starają się dosyć pojąć, nie jest niczym innem, jak tylko spójnią, łączącą ducha artysty ze światem niewidomym: jest to przywilej stykania się z krainą duchów. Poeta polski, Malczewski, powiada:

I drży nić, którą serce do nieba związane:
To kropla słodkiej rosy spadła po niej w ranę⁹⁰.

The thread that joins the heart to heaven trembles as the drop of sweet dew falls from it into the wound

6. Mickiewicz gives the name *cudowność* (= the wonderful/ the marvellous/ *le merveilleux*) to the inspired poet's (characteristic) feeling that he has close links both with the 'land of Spirits' and with nature. He considers this *cudowność* to be the essence of poetry:

Każdy utwór poetycki ma w głębi siebie to życie organiczne, tajemne, nazwane po szkolnemu cudownością, które wznosząc się w miarę jak wzrasta zakres utworu, w wierszach i piosnkach przebija się tylko na kształt lekkiego tchnienia z krain wyższych – w epopei i w dramacie przybiera już widomą postać bóstwa⁹¹.

Every poetic work has in its depths an organic, secret life which can be called, in simple terms, a sense of wonder. Its level rises with the scope of the poem: in simple lines and songs it is only a light breeze from higher regions, in an epic or a drama it takes on a numinous form.

7. Mickiewicz considered that the Slavs have an inborn feeling for *cudowność*.. In his opinion this feeling has its source in the 'virgin', austere and continually changing natural environment of the Slavonic homelands. Mickiewicz also believed that Slavonic oral literature is permeated with *cudowność*:

⁸⁹ Loc.cit.

⁹⁰ Loc.cit.

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 66.

Lud słowiański całe życie opowiada i opiewa, co się dzieje pod ziemią, w powietrzu, na niebie... Sztuka wysiła się na tysiące sposobów dla obudzenia w duszy mieszkańców Zachodu uczucia cudowności – u nas dosyć na to samej natury. Ta dziewicza, wspaniała, dzika natura, co z każdym dniem przybiera nowe wdzięki i nową grozę, ma w sobie razem coś niezmiernie świętego i przejmującego strachem ⁹².

The life of Slav peoples is all storytelling and a celebration of what happens in the bowels of the earth, in the air and in the firmament of heaven... Art makes infinite efforts to awaken a sense of wonder in the mind of Western man but we have it in our nature. Our intact, wild nature is full of splendour, altering from day to day, taking on a new attraction and a new dread, carrying something holy and yet awesome.

8. According to Mickiewicz, the poetry of the Slavs is characterized by 'earthiness' (*ziemskość*), by its reluctance to outstep the bounds of nature (*pozostawanie w granicach przyrodzenia*)⁹³ and by the continual presence of birds, plants and animals. The birds and animals are often able to speak.

9. In Mickiewicz's opinion, Polish poetry is distinguished from other Slavonic poetry by its gaiety, joyfulness, joviality and also by its dramatic tendency (contrasts, oppositions)⁹⁴.

10. Mickiewicz felt that Slavonic drama ought to take its inspiration from the cult of the dead (cf. *Dziady*), which – in his opinion – is common to all the Slavonic peoples⁹⁵. Slavonic drama, he thought, ought to be a synthesis of all the poetic 'elements' (*żywioty*) – i.e. genres – dramatic, lyric and epic. It ought also to take the reader to the 'supernatural world' (*świat nadziemski*), thus evoking a feeling of *cudowność*:

Z tego cośmy powiedzieli można wnosić, jak trudno jest napisać dramat słowiański, któryby obejmował wszystkie żywioty poezji narodowej, nigdzie nie ukazujące się tak licznie i tak rozmaicie.

It follows from what we have said that it is exceedingly difficult to write a Slav drama which would contain all the elements of national poetry in all their variety and multiplicity. That drama

⁹² Ibidem, p. 129.

⁹³ Mickiewicz, op.cit., Rok I, p. 52.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, pp. 9 and 52.

⁹⁵ "Wiemy z historii i mitologii, że oddawanie czci umarłym stanowiło ważną część dawnej religii słowiańskiej, i Dzień Zaduszny był obchodzony ze wszystkich świąt najuroczyściej" (Mickiewicz, op.cit., Rok III, pp. 66 – 67).

Dramat ten powinienby był być lirycznym i przypominać uroczę dźwięki pieśni gminnych – powinienby naśladować opowiadania ... powinienby przytem przenosić w świat naziemski⁹⁶.

ought to imitate the fables of story-tellers and take us into the world of the supernatural.

11. Mickiewicz urges authors of drama to follow in the footsteps of Slavonic (peasant) story-tellers (*bajarze*). These *bajarze* identify themselves completely with the heroes of their tales. The main events are 'acted out' before the listeners:

... autorowie dramatyczni mogliby wziąć bardzo użyteczny przykład z bajarzy gminnych, z wieśniaków słowiańskich, opowiadających bajki. U żadnego ludu niemasz powieści tak bogatych, tak dziwnych, i pewnie żadna publiczność nie słucha tak ciekawie, z takim natężeniem uwagi, jak ta drużyna, co otacza biednego chłopka, prawiącego bajkę w swojej chacie ... Bajarz prawie zawsze sam występuje w zdarzeniach opowiadanych, odgrywa część swojego dramatu. Czasem daje do zrozumienia, że co się stało najważniejszego to on zrobił i bez niego nicby nie było – czasem bardzo prostym sposobem porusza nagle swoich słuchaczy⁹⁷.

... dramatic authors should follow the example of village story-tellers and the Slav peasant fables. No people have stories as rich and so wondrous. It is unlikely that there exists any audience prepared to listen with as much curiosity and such a degree of attention as a group listening to a peasant telling a story in his cottage ... the story-teller is, almost invariably, a protagonist in the happenings, he plays a part in his own drama. Sometimes he indicates that it was he who was responsible for the most weighty event and that without him none of it would have taken place. On other occasions by simple means he suddenly moves his listeners.

Mickiewicz goes on to recall the well-known Slavonic tale about a fiery bird:

Wielu Polakom i Rosjanom musi być znana ta bajka gdzie bohater jej idzie szukać cudownego ptaka i znajduje tylko jedno jego pióro zgubione w przelocie, które miało taki blask, że kiedy je wniósł do izby, cała izba oświeciła się jak od pochodni⁹⁸.

Many Poles and Russians are familiar with the tale of a hero in search of a wonder bird, who finds one of its feathers lost in flight but shining so brightly that the room lights up as by torchlight when it is brought inside.

⁹⁶ Ibidem, p. 66.

⁹⁷ Ibidem, p. 68.

⁹⁸ Loc.cit.

Mickiewicz's conception of art as a form of religion and cognition would seem to explain why in *Piąta pora roku* the themes of eternity and nature are intimately linked with the theme of poetry.

Similarly, Mickiewicz's conception of the poet as a mediator between the 'land of Spirits' and the visible worlds (i.e. nature and people) would seem to explain why in *Piąta pora roku* the Spirits of the protagonist's dead parents not only act as their son's guide in the spiritual world but also make him possessor of the Carpathian landscape and inquire about his activities as a creator.

Mickiewicz's conception of *cudowność* – the source of which is the Slavonic 'natural environment' – would also seem to throw light on the role played by the Carpathian landscape, the personifications of the seasons and the 'personification' of earth in *Piąta pora roku*. Indeed, the personification of earth (at the end of the poem) may even be a slightly jocular allusion to Mickiewicz's assertion that art is an invocation of Spirits (*sztuka jest pewnym rodzajem wywoływania duchów*).

Mickiewicz's remarks about Slavonic drama would seem to go a long way towards illuminating the structure of *Piąta pora roku*, in which dramatic, lyric and epic elements coexist, so to speak.

The dramatic elements present in the poem are: the ritual stylization (Dionysian-Eleusinian ritual/ *Dziady*) which permeates the entire poem (cf. the beginning, the end, the scene with the protagonist's dead parents).

Lyric elements are: the images of the Carpathian landscape, of which there are four different versions in the poem⁹⁹; these constitute the poem's refrain, as it were, and serve to stylize the poem as a dithyramb¹⁰⁰ in honour of earth and as a 'peasant song' (*chłopska piosnka*):

Więc wyznam wam ostatnią troskę
Śpiewajcie ją jak chłopską piosnkę.

The image of the Carpathian landscape, people, plants and animals is seen from a terrestrial (Stanzas 4 – 11) and eternal (Stanzas 12, 16, 18) standpoint. It is also seen through the 'prisms' of: the joyful experience of the unity of all being (Stanzas 4 – 11); despair at the loss of this unity (Stanza 12); love and nostalgia (Stanza 16); hope (Stanza 18).

This recurring image of the protagonist's Carpathian homeland also – indirectly – introduces the mythical theme of the cyclical recurrence of phenomena. The poem's main epic element is the protagonist's story – told in the face of death, so to speak – of

⁹⁹ Cf. "Legenda wieczności" [in:] M. Dłuska, *Studia i rozprawy*, ed.cit., vol. III (tables of recurring motifs in *Piąta pora roku*).

¹⁰⁰ "Dytyrambowy charakter *Piątej pory roku* daje diametralnie różny obraz postępowania rytmicznego i melodycznego. Właściwie należałoby każdą część utworu traktować osobno. Da się jednak i tutaj na tle różnorodności dostrzec pewne wytyczne ogólne ujednociające całość. W każdym razie wyróżnić trzeba część ściśle zwrotkową od części strofoidalnych". (M. Dłuska, op.cit., vol. III, p. 149.).

the part of his past life which is organically linked with his Carpathian homeland and its living and dead inhabitants.

Mickiewicz's description of the *bajarze* as story-tellers who partly narrate and partly enact their tales would seem to fit the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* – *qua* narrator – admirably.

Mickiewicz's Romantic suggestion that poets should seek inspiration in peasant fairy-tales (*baśni ludowa*) calls for an examination of *Piąta pora roku* through the 'prism' of fairy-tales. The poem's finale contains three fairy-tale motifs – that of the magic bird, that of the magic apple and that of the sleeping hero (or heroine) – earth in the guise of a peasant [woman]]¹⁰¹. It is for earth that the bird sings and the apple rolls.

In *Piąta pora roku* these fairy-tale motifs have (already) undergone a considerable transformation. The extent of this transformation can best be gauged by referring to Leśmian's *Klechdy sezamowe*, with which Wierzyński was almost certainly familiar¹⁰². These are fairy-tales woven around motifs taken from the *Arabian Nights*¹⁰³. In Leśmian's tale entitled *O pięknej Parysady i o ptaku Bulbulezarze* there is, together with the beautiful princess Parysada, a magic bird – Bulbulezar – which tells fairy-tales with a human voice and which has the wings of a peacock, the neck of a swan, the beak of a stork, the claws of a vulture and the eyes of a swallow (its appearance therefore parallels the multiple significance of Wierzyński's symbol). In Leśmian's tale there is also a singing tree (*Dąb-Samograj*) and a magic spring (*Struga-Złotosmuga*).

In *Piąta pora roku* these last two motifs have been replaced – so to speak – by that of the rolling apple. The motif of the apple – taken from Slavonic folklore¹⁰⁴ – would also seem to be capable of being interpreted as a motif from Greek mythology. The personification of earth, which in the finale of *Piąta pora roku* goes to lie down on her/its bed and for which the apple is destined, would seem to be reminiscent of the sleeping heroine of fairy-tales. Wierzyński's singing bird would seem to 'correspond' to both the talking bird and the singing tree of Leśmian's tale. This perhaps explains why the song of Wierzyński's bird appears to be transformed into an apple. The motif of the singing tree is therefore only apparently absent in *Piąta pora roku*. It is in fact latently present. Wierzyński's 'tree', however, would seem to possess characteristics which are first and

¹⁰¹ The question as to whether (in the poem's last stanza) earth is personified as a man or as a woman is left open by the poet. In Polish, the gender of the noun *ziemia* is feminine. Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Selected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 45. Here the translator has personified earth as a man. Cf. M. Dłuska, op.cit., vol. III, 136.

¹⁰² Leśmian's *Klechdy sezamowe* were first published in 1913. Cf. Footnote No. 8.

¹⁰³ Cf. R. Zimand, "Preliminaria do Klechd Leśmiana" [in:] *Studia o Leśmianie*, Ed. M. Głowiński and J. Stawiński, Warsaw 1971.

¹⁰⁴ "Motyw jabłka (jabłuszka) nie jest typowym motywem baśni i pieśni ludowych w rodzinnych stronach poety (Podkarpacie za Lwowem, okolice Stryja). Jest natomiast szeroko znany jako motyw słowiański. Już Żegota Pauli (*Pieśni ludu polskiego w Galicji*, Lwów 1838) przytaczając piosenkę polską osnutą na motywie jabłuszka (s. 3 – 4, pieśń nr 1), dodaje w odsyłaczu, że motyw ten zna poezja ludowa serbska, polska w różnych okolicach i morawska. Przeoczył folklor słowacki i rosyjski. W rosyjskiej literaturze ludowej motyw jabłuszka, i to właśnie motyw jabłuszka toczącego się (...) jest szczególnie rozpowszechniony i uważany za typowy" (M. Dłuska, op.cit., vol. III, p. 134).

foremost those of the apple tree of the Hesperidian garden¹⁰⁵. Its fruit would seem to promise immortality.

The analogy between the singing bird and the tree bearing magic fruit – suggested by the song's transformation into an apple – may be traced to the Romantic motifs of the bird and the tree as analogues of the poet. The motif of the bird as an analogue of the poet is a traditional one. The tree is a favourite Romantic analogue for: the literary work conceived as an organism; national poetry conceived as an organism; the national poet organically inked with his homeland and with his native cultural tradition. The motif of the tree is used in these three senses by the Polish Romantic critic Moch-nacki¹⁰⁶.

In a poem entitled *Owoce* (in: *Rozmowa z puszcza*, 1929) Wierzyński compares the poet to an apple-tree:

Wiersze się we mnie jak wielkie

Jabłka czerwone kołyszają¹⁰⁷.

The poet is often compared to a bird in Wierzyński's poetry¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. T. Zieliński, *Bajeczna starożytność*, ed.cit., pp. 184 – 187.

Cf. J. Parandowski, *Mitologia*, Warsaw 1972, pp. 198 – 199.

CF. "Na razie jest to sumarycznie i w całości biorąc liryka, czysta i stosowana liryka. Na razie jest to tylko ogród rozkoszy i ogród katuszy. Stanowczo już nie 'wróble na dachu', ale co nieco kolibry i pawie na drzewie z rajskimi jabłkami, choć w niejednym już dostrzega się szpony i sępią siłę uskrzydlenia" (A. Nowaczyński, op.cit., p. 171).

Cf. passages on Dionysus in: R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Penguin Books 1980.

Cf. the entry *Dionysus* in: *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed.cit.

Cf. the entry *Dionysus (Bacchus)* in: J. Chevalier *Dictionnaire des symboles*, ed.cit.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Moch-nacki, op.cit., pp. 37, 54, 132, comp. footnote No 120.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., p. 133.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. ibidem, p. 509:

Ptak

Nie podchodźcie do mnie za blisko,

Nie płosźcie mnie,

Jestem ptakiem.

Moje ziemskie wirowisko,

Koło moje pod gwiazdami,

Imię moje i śpiew mój –

Zapisane Zodiakiem.

Jeśli co stąd zabieram,

To w lotkach moich powietrze:

Waszego mi trzeba oddechu,

Bym wolny, niedostrzeżony,

Oblatywał dalekie me strony

Na akwilonskim wietrze.

Co daję wam za to?

Ruch mój wysoki,

Podróż za gwiazdę skrzydlatą

I los wasz w mojej zapisany podróży.

Nie podchodźcie do mnie za blisko,

Jestem ptakiem.

The fairy-tale suggested by Wierzyński in the finale of *Piąta pora roku* is therefore jocular in character. It is as it were an abbreviated, synthetic fairy-tale in which transformed motifs from Greek, Slavonic and Oriental fairy-tales coexist harmoniously with motifs from Romantic poetry. Set as it is in the ritual of *Dziady* – evoked as an literary allusion – the fairy-tale causes the ritual to take on the atmosphere of a Franciscan Nativity-play – an atmosphere of light-heartedness and naive *cudowność*. In the finale of *Piąta pora roku* the protagonist would therefore appear to assume an attitude of jovial detachment towards the Romantic poetic tradition so dear to him. He does not detach himself completely, however, for the pose of ‘naive poet’ – which he would seem to assume consciously – can be traced to Schiller’s myth about the naive and the sentimental poet. Schiller’s ‘sentimental’ (i.e. Romantic) poet – having become conscious of all the oppositions which are to be found in the world – strives to re-create the unity of all beings by means of imagination and art. In doing so, he hopes to regain or restore that unity which is the ‘natural environment’ of Schiller’s naive poet. As a Romantic ‘naive’ poet, the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* is therefore an inspired poet who creates the myth of the restored unity of all Being.

Schiller’s myth about the naive and the sentimental poet is linked with the ‘pastoral’ current in European Romantic poetry. In *Piąta pora roku* the protagonist’s attitude of naive poet, which is linked with the Dionysian-Franciscan myth and which dominates the protagonist’s past and future, would seem to be a modern counterpart to the ‘pastoral’ current in the poetry of the great Romantics (including Słowacki and Mickiewicz)¹⁰⁹.

The last part (Stanzas 17 – 20) of *Piąta pora roku* would seem to enrich Mickiewicz’s conception of art (as set forth in the Paris lectures) by the addition of an idea taken from Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* (Part III) – namely the idea that art is a human form of eternity:

Ja czuję nieśmiertelność, nieśmiertelność tworzę.

This idea would seem to be common to the European Romantics and Symbolists. It is certainly dear to Wierzyński¹¹⁰.

Z mego lotu się wróży.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. the *pasterki* in the poetry of Mickiewicz and Słowacki, and the images of nature in Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz*.

Cf. K. Wyka, *Pan Tadeusz. Studia o poemacie*, ed.cit. Cf. J. Kleiner, *Słowacki*, Wrocław 1969.

Cf. J. Kleiner, *Mickiewicz*, vols I and II (parts 1 and 2), Lublin 1948.

¹¹⁰ “Dziś jest poza tymi wrotami. Nasz umysł i nasza wyobraźnia nie ogarniają tamtych obszarów ani ich trwania a język określa je słowami absolutu, jako nieskończoność i wieczność. My żyjący tu, na ziemi, w nieustannym lęku przemijania, też staramy się utwierdzić nasze istnienie i stworzyć własną doczesną wieczność, na podobieństwo tamtej, zaświatowej. Jeśli coś przetrwa pomiędzy nami, przejdzie z pokolenia na pokolenie i żyje tak przez stulecia, mówimy, że odbywa drogę wieczną. Przy drodze tej stoją pomniki naszej sławy, dzieła naszej pracy, symbole naszej miłości, niby straż naszego istnienia. Im bogatszy jest ten szpaler, tym łatwiej nam kroczyć tamtędy i tym dalej prowadzi nas droga. Teraz zajął tam miejsce Lechoń. Dzieło jego przetrwa między nami, przejdzie z pokolenia na pokolenie i prowadzi nas będzie jako symbol obcowania z wiecznością” (K. Wierzyński, *Cygańskim wozem*, ed.cit., pp. 157 – 158).

Cf. “Sztuka dla sztuki nie jest absurdem, jest warunkiem rozwoju. To tyle co człowiek dla samego siebie. Człowiek musi istnieć dla siebie aby zaistniał dla innych. Im więcej bogactwa zgromadzi w granicach swojej

X

The idea that art is a human form of eternity is formulated by Mickiewicz's Konrad – an inspired poet – in his *improvizacja* (*Dziady*, part III). In the mouth of Konrad, this idea is an expression of the Promethean attitude of a man who – in a one-sided dialogue – challenges the Almighty. In *Piąta pora roku*, the central part of the protagonist's monologue (Stanza 16) would seem to be a transformation, as it were, of Konrad's *improvizacja*. Here motifs from the *improvizacja* are fused with motifs from other Romantic works – in the main from other works by Mickiewicz and Słowacki.

Wierzyński's protagonist is accompanied by the very motifs which in Konrad's *improvizacja* are associated with inspiration – namely those of: song; the Muse; the bird (wings); fire; sleep; flight (the discarding of the body in order to rise up above the earth); the spiritual encompassing of the past and the future; the journey to the 'land of Spirits'. The 'mania' (i.e. inspiration) of Wierzyński's protagonist – like that of Romantic poets – is composed of all four kinds of (Platonic) 'madness'¹¹¹. It is therefore:

1. A Dionysian 'inebriation' which permits the experience of the unity of all beings.
2. A poetic 'frenzy' sent by the Muses.
3. An Apollinian 'prophetic' madness (the motif of the apple carrying with it the promise of immortality – i.e. that of the protagonist-poet's song).
4. The 'madness' of the lover – 'conferred' not by Eros, but by St. Francis of Assisi and (it will be argued) by Prometheus.

Whereas the past of Wierzyński's protagonist would seem to be coloured by the Dionysian myth, his present would seem to be coloured by the myth of Prometheus. Wierzyński's treatment of the Promethean myth¹¹² in *Piąta pora roku* is similar to his treatment of the Dionysian myth:

1. Wierzyński 'reinterprets' the Promethean myth by fusing it with the Dionysian myth. In *Piąta pora roku* the emotional and intellectual attitude which is complementary to the Dionysian attitude would seem to be represented not by the Apollo of

osobowości, tym staje się cenniejszym społecznie. Sztuka bez rozpracowania własnych celów jest śmieciem,

jak człowiek bez rozbudowy wewnętrznej jest pozycją statystyczną. Sztuka musi mieć prawo do samoistości, bez niej nie wejdzie w obręb dobra powszechnego" (ibidem, p. 92).

Cf. *Księga Cudów* [in:] K. Wierzyński, *Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., pp. 552 – 553.

¹¹¹ Cf. T. Zieliński, *Mania twórcza* [in:] op.cit.

¹¹² "Za wytrwałość żagli pośmiertnych (...) Słowa te lecą ku nam poprzez całą beznadzieję bytu wprost z nieulekłego serca poety i dźwięczą szczególnie bliskim nam echem. Ich prometejski odgłos łączy się z najwyższym lotem poezji polskiej, jeśli zgodzimy się na to, że w sumarycznym skrócie najważniejszą jej treścią był właśnie opór przeciw wszelkiej ludzkiej i boskiej przemocy, walka z ziemskim i nadziemskim wrogiem, wierność sprawie, dla której się żyje i za którą się umiera (...) Pomoc, jaką niiosa poezja, była jedynym wyzwoleniem osaczonego ducha. Poświęcił jej wszystko i we wszystkim zaufał, w swej sile i słabości" (K. Wierzyński, *O Bolesławie Leśniamie*, ed.cit., pp. 32 – 33).

Nietzsche's version of the myth but by Prometheus – the lone benefactor of men, whose superior he is by virtue of his 'titanic' nature¹¹³.

2. In Wierzyński's interpretation, the 'common denominator' of both myths seems to be a Franciscan-Romantic feeling of solidarity between Spirits, people, plants, animals and (the) earth (cf. Stanza 18).

3. The Promethean myth is therefore only indirectly present in *Piąta pora roku*. It manifests itself in the intellectual and emotional attitude assumed by the protagonist. The name of Prometheus – like that of Dionysus – is nowhere mentioned in the poem. All the conspicuously Greek motifs of the Promethean myth – the bird (vulture/eagle); fire; the son of Earth chained to a cliff on the orders of Zeus – as well as the theme of Prometheus's conflict with God on behalf of men and his subsequent sufferings have been 'reinterpreted' and transformed by Wierzyński (the same may be said of the motifs and main theme of the Dionysian myth). In *Piąta pora roku* the central image of the Promethean myth – that of Prometheus chained to a cliff while a vulture eats away his liver – has been transformed into an image of a Romantic inspired poet leaning on mountain-tops and looking down at the earth below (the symbolic bird having just flown 'through' him):

Wiem. Dawno temu doszczętnie wymarłem
A jednak trwam znów, i łokciem o góry
Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem
I patrzę, synów mych szukam...

This quasi-Promethean gesture has a dual significance:

(a) It is a repetition of the gesture made by the protagonist's dead parents (Stanza 12):

Bo przyszli potem z daleka umarli,
Łokciem o lasy jodłowe się wsparli,
Patrzyli wokół – a ziemia szeroka
Drobną im rzeszą zawisła u oka.

(b) It is also an allusion to Romantic iconography and poetry. A well-known portrait of Mickiewicz – painted in St. Petersburg in 1828 by the Polish artist Walenty Wańkiewicz¹¹⁴ – shows the young poet leaning on the Crimean mountain Ajudah and looking in the direction of the sea. The painter was of course inspired by Mickiewicz's sonnet entitled *Ajudah* (one of the *Sonety krymskie*, 1826 – written during the poet's term of 'internal deportation'):

¹¹³ Cf. Footnote No. 105.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Mickiewicz *Dzieła poetyckie*, ed.cit., p. XVI.

Lubię poglądać wsparty na Judahu skale,

Jak spienione bałwany to w czarne szeregi

Ścisnąwszy się buchają, to jak srebrne śniegi

W milionowych tęczach kołują wspaniale.

Trąca się o mieliznę, rozbijają na fale,

Jak wojsko wielorybów zalegając brzegi,

Zdobędą ląd w tryumfie i na powrót, zbiegi,

Mieczą za sobą muszle, perły i korale.

Podobnie na twe serce, o poeto młody!

Namiętność często groźne wzburza niepogody,

Lecz gdy podniesiesz bardon, ona bez twej szkody

Ucieka w zapomnienia pograżyć się toni

I nieśmiertelne pieśni za sobą uroni,

Z których wieki uplotą ozdobę twych skroni¹¹⁵.

I love to lean against Ayudah's face

And watch the frothing waves as on they pour,

Dark ranks close-pressed, then burst like snow and soar,

A milion silver rainbows arched in space.

They strike the sands, they break and interlace;

Like whales in battle that beset the shore,

They seize the land and then retreat once more,

Shells, pearls, and corals scattered in their race.

And so it is, young poet, in your heart.

There passion raises storms, but when you start

Your strains, the whirlwinds harmlessly depart

And sink deep down in pools of memory.

Yet

They leave you songs, which after years will set

As shining jewels in your coronet.

(transl. Dorothea Prall Radin)

Mickiewicz's sonnet opens with an image present in *Piąta pora roku* – that of the inspired poet leaning on a mountain. Wierzyński's protagonist – like that of Mickiewicz's sonnet – is absorbed by (engrossed in) the creative power of nature. Both protagonists detect an analogy between creation by nature and creation by the poet. Wierzyński's protagonist, however, would seem to have carried the analogy further by assuming that poetic creation is as it were a continuation of the creative process of nature:

(...) i łokciem o góry

Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem

I patrzę, synów mych szukam, czy który

¹¹⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 35.

Obszył się liśćmi i porósł lasami,
 A może stoi przy ogniu pastuchów
 I pójdzie śladem, co został za nami,
 I znów powtórzy przyrodę tych ruchów
 Gdy zgrzane życie porami gęstymi
 Dyszało w słońce i szło do księżyca,
 Gdy we mnie ciekła krew mojej ziemi
 A w matkach mleko i w sosnach żywica.

In *Piąta pora roku* (Stanza 16) the idea that art is a human form of eternity would seem to be capable of being traced to the Romantic philosophy of nature sketched by Mochnacki in his work entitled *O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym*. Mochnacki's 'point of departure' is Schelling's evolutionary and spiritual theory of nature. In Mochnacki's view, literature is as it were a continuation of the creative evolution of nature. Nature attains 'self-awareness'¹¹⁶ in human thought. The thought of a nation finds its expression in literature:

...Literatura wyciągnięciem jest na
 jaśnię myśli narodu. W niej, że tak rzekę,
 czujemy się jak po tętnie¹¹⁷.

...Literature is the thought of the nation
 brought out into the light. We may say
 that in it we feel our heartbeats.

According to Mochnacki, therefore, literature is directly linked with a national community and – indirectly – with that community's 'natural environment'. It is an organic product, rather like a tree. A necessary stage in the spiritual evolution of any man – and especially a poet – is to be 'rooted' in a national community and in nature. Mochnacki describes the development of an individual as a gradual 'spreading out' of his spirit as it encompasses nature, the national community and eventually the whole of mankind¹¹⁸.

This 'spreading out' of the individual Spirit is necessarily accompanied by the grad-

¹¹⁶ Cf. Footnotes Nos. 19 and 20.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 27.

¹¹⁸ "Pierwszy człowiek, jak wszystko z y w i ą c e, z łona natury jeszcze n i e w y ł o n i o n y, spał snem twardym we śnie niewypowiedzianego szczęścia. Powoli zaczął się budzić z tego s n u na j a w i e i wychodzić duszą, myślą z wszech rzeczy ogółu. Na koniec został szczegółem, istotą r o z u m n ą – jednostką dumającą! Ta jest wielka jestestwa naszego tajemnica. Cóż go dotąd zaszczyca po tylu wiekach obłędnej kolei? Co w nim najpiękniejszego? Oto tęsknica na duszy i boleść na sercu, która je uciska po stracie nieskazitelnego mienia! Oto chęć wyjścia tą samą promienną myślą z ciasnego koła, z okresu j e d n o s t k i, e g o i z m u, samolubstwa – chęć rozszerzenia się, rozprzestrzenienia miłością płomienistą, wszystko obejmującą od końca do końca, we wszech rzeczy jestestwie, w nierozdzielonym całej natury porządku – w tej harmonii, tej cudotwórczej tonice całego świata!..." (Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 30).

"Rozszerzenie się ojczywego, rodowitego j a, rozumienie się w jestestwie drugich, ogarnienie wszystkiego rodu ludzkiego we wszystkich czasach tą ognistą miłością, która z nieba na ziemię zstąpiła, – ten kres ostateczny chrześcijańskiej kultury, ten, nie inny, przedmiot historii powszechnej" (ibidem, p. 51).

ual extinction of the individual's 'ego'. Mochnacki illustrates this extinction with the analogy of the tree which lives on by its own partial death:

Jest jakieś drzewo, wspomniane przez jednego z pisarzy kościelnych, które wtenczas zielenieje, kiedy je okrzeują; drzewo to idzie w zapasy z żelazem, śmiercią żyje, krzewi się wycięciem – gdy go już nie masz, wtenczas rośnie¹¹⁹.

There was a tree, mentioned by one of the Church writers, which becomes covered with leaves when cut down; that tree triumphs over steel, lives in death, spreads when cut – when it is no more, it persists in growing.

It is from such an apparently – but only apparently – dead tree that the apple of the finale of *Piąta pora roku* comes:

Wiem. Dawno temu doszczętnie wymarłem
A jednak trwam znów, i łokciem o góry
Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem
I patrzę, synów mych szukam...

The bird of Wierzyński's poem (living in the branches of this apparently dead tree) brings to mind another of Mochnacki's images¹²⁰. The 'tree' is deeply rooted in the human community, in the community's cultural tradition and in the community's natural environment or homeland.

It is this very organic link with his native community, its cultural tradition and its natural homeland that the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* would seem to be giving expression to when – against the background of the Carpathian landscape – he imitates the gesture of the protagonist of Mickiewicz's sonnet *Ajudah*. In *Piąta pora roku*, therefore, this gesture is a symbol. It is the gesture of a 'Promethean' poet – a visionary and a creator of eternity. It is accompanied by a feeling of solidarity with the past and concern for the future:

¹¹⁹ Loc.cit.

¹²⁰ "Pismo porównywa umiętność, wiedzę, wiadomość do drzewa. Wielkie w tem rozumienie!! Jako i w innym porównaniu z ziarnem gorczycznem, które wedle wyrazów P a n a, tak wielką łożę puszcza, że się i ptacy na niej chowają. (...) Takim samym rozrasta się kształtem drzewo wiadomości człowieka, tem bardziej narodu, jakby z pnia, który swe korzenie głęboko i szeroko rozpostarł w wiedzy wewnątrz obróconej jestestwa, byt i istotę swoją uznającego..." (ibidem, p. 54).

"Wszelki ród rodowity, historyczny, w historję świata zachodzący, jest jako roślina w patriarchalnej osiadłości; z nasion na ojczystym rozkwita gruncie, a potem za błogosławieństwem nieba w wysokie, cieniste drzewo wyrasta. Stoi mocno i bezpiecznie to drzewo, jeśli sse pokarm z ziemi, jako z piersi macierzyńskich. Korzeniem jego jest przeszłość historyczna. A wszystkie dzieje tego pnia rok rocznie wyrzynające się na nim pierścienie szeroko rozprowadzą!" (ibidem, p. 37).

"Wszystkie razem liście na drzewie, tak długo skamieniałem i niemem, ojczystej poezji zaszumiały. Coś niem wstrząsnęło niewidomą mocą od ziemi do korony, że teraz szeleści, i rusza gałęziami w wiatru powiewie, mruczy, i gada, jakby odczarowane" (ibidem, p. 132).

(...) i łokciem o góry
 Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem
 I patrzę, synów mych szukam...

The gesture is also an analogue of Konrad's gesture in part III (*improwizacja*) of Mickiewicz's *Dziady*. Konrad, struggling with God over the fortunes of his nation, encompasses with his arms all 'past and future generations'. In *Piąta pora roku*, therefore, the gesture of leaning on mountain-tops expresses the protagonist's Promethean love for the world and for the living and the dead. It expresses the 'spreading out' of an individual Spirit (cf. Mochnacki). The present tense which is to be found in this part of the poem would seem to indicate that the scenery for the ritual which is performed by the protagonist is that of the Carpathian mountains. Here is the meeting-place of the seasons of the year and the Spirits of the protagonist's dead parents. From here there is an extensive 'view' of the past and the future – of people, nature and eternity:

Teraz tu słyszę, czego nikt nie słyszy,
 I widzę rzeczy na skroś i spod spodu
 I pełny jestem śmierci jak ciszy
 I pełny wieczności jak chłodu.

Wiem. Dawno temu doszczętnie wymarłem
 A jednak trwam znów, i łokciem o góry
 Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem...

The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* therefore appears to be a heroic Spirit related to the *Król-Duch*, hero and narrator of Słowacki's epic poem of the same name. As a heroic Spirit who has fathomed the secret of life, death and eternity, Wierzyński's protagonist returns to his Carpathian homeland in order to reveal that secret to its inhabitants. His gesture of leaning on mountain – tops is as it were a 'condensation' of the symbolic gestures (also made against the background of mountains) of the Romantic heroes of Mickiewicz (cf. *Do XXX. Na Alpach w Splügen, 1829*) and Słowacki (cf. *Kordian*), who look in the direction of their homeland from the Alps. It is in the Caucasian mountains that the funeral pyre of Her – the hero of (Plato's myth of Er and) Słowacki's *Król-Duch* – is located. Słowacki's Her would seem to be the most Promethean character in Polish Romantic literature, expressing the link between the cultural traditions of Poland and Ancient Greece. This character is also linked with the idea of palingenesis, which was dear to the Polish Romantics and to late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Polish writers¹²¹.

The idea of palingenesis would not seem to be alien to the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku*. He makes his gesture of leaning on mountain-tops as a Spirit who returns to his native land and who (at the end of his monologue) addresses his (living) listeners, for

¹²¹ 'Młoda Polska' (1890 – 1918) is the Polish counterpart of European Modernism and Symbolism.

Cf. The philosophical writings (in English and Polish) of Wincenty Lutosławski. Cf. H. Floryńska, *Spadkobiercy Króla Duchy*, Wrocław 1976.

whom he performs a ritual which is reminiscent of *Dziady*. By his gesture, Wierzyński's protagonist – as a heroic Spirit – also expresses his communion with the great poets of the past and their successors in the future.

The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* therefore sees his native poetic tradition (together with his own poetry) as a whole which is organically linked with his native land and destined for its inhabitants. He would seem to view his own poetry and that of the Romantics as a continuation of the creation of nature. The last 'link' of this continuous chain is formed or constituted by transcendental eternity. The protagonist sees eternity as the last in a cycle of changes to which nature and human existence are subject. There is therefore a suggestion that this cycle (spring – summer – autumn – winter – death/eternity) may be repeated.

In Wierzyński's poem entitled *Słowo* (in: *Róża wiatrów*, 1942) this suggestion of the protagonist's rebirth is rooted in the Romantic mythology of the inspired word. Here there is an image of the universe as a tree which has grown out of the 'word'. The various boughs of this tree would seem to correspond to the songs of poets, sung in various languages. The word, being the omnipresent basis of the world, pervades the earth and the poet's interior. Earth, the poet's thought and creation, life and death would all seem to be just various manifestations of the same 'word'. The return to the earth (i.e. death) is therefore a return to the 'word':

Co mi zostało tutaj? Słowo,
Konar z wiecznego ścięty drzewa,
Ciosam zeń skrzypce i na nowo
Jesion w mych rękach szumi, śpiewa,

Co we mnie jest naprawdę? Słowo,
W którym się rodzę jak w kolebce,
I w którym trumnę mam sosnową,
Życie i śmierć powtarzam, szepcę.

What waited my appearance here?
The word,
branch cut from an ancient tree to
which belongs
the violin I fashion for my hands
to play the rustling ashtree of my
songs.

What waits this moment with me
still? The word,
in which my birth, as in a cradle,
sways,
in which, as in a coffin of plain pine

I lie, and tell my first and my last days.

Co tu zostanie po mnie? Słowo
 I w głąb wpuszczone me korzenie,
 Ziemia niech z nich zagada mową,
 Z ziemi powstałem, w nią się zmie-
 nię¹²².

What waits when I have disappeared?
 The word.
 And my green roots explore the dark to
 learn
 the language of the earth that utters me.
 Born of the earth, to earth I shall return.

(transl. Kenneth Pitchford)

In *Piąta pora roku* the concept of eternity would also seem to be indissolubly linked to the mythology of the word. The protagonist's journey into the world of Spirits is described as a journey into the realm of another (eternal) language (Stanza 14):

I wzięli mnie. Wiedli w głąb, w tajemniczy
 Obszar, gdzie nic się z tej ziemi nie liczy,
 Gdzie wiosnie, latu, jesieni i zimie
 W innym języku nadano imię.

For the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku*, the spiritual return to the land of his birth is tantamount to a return to his native poetic tradition and to the 'word' (i.e. to poetic creation). He receives the gift of the word – which is as it were a forerunner of eternity – in the form of a bird (= the analogue of one of the boughs of the tree of life from the poem *Słowo*). In *Piąta pora roku*, the bird is associated with blood, milk, resin (Stanza 16) and the apple (Stanza 20).

By his gesture of leaning on mountain-tops, the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* expresses not only his link with the Great Romantic tradition but also – indirectly – his own interpretation of that tradition¹²³. The gesture 'sets up' – so to speak – the protagonist's 'cultural mythology', in which he and his (Polish) Romantic predecessors occupy a position parallel to that of the Greek Titan Prometheus. It would therefore also seem to confirm the idea – present in the poem – of a parallel and organic development of the universe. According to this idea, the course of the history of mankind, nations, individuals and art is analogous to the process of evolution in nature. This Romantic idea of the parallel development of the universe was formulated by Mochnacki in his essay *O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym*:

¹²² K. Wierzyński, *Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., p. 311 – 312. Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Selected Poems*, ed.cit., p. 23.

¹²³ Cf. Footnote No. 112. Cf. H. Floryńska, op.cit., chapters II and III. Cf. J.Kleiner, *Mickiewicz*, ed.cit., vol. II, part 1.

I w rzeczy samej, zdaje się, że natura w każdym człowieku wznawia i niejaki powtarza proces powszechnej formacji wszystkich dzieł swoich, przebiegając przez stopnie i schody pośrednie tą samą drogą od początku ku końcowi. Tryb postępowania jednak, toż w przyrodzeniu, toż w człowieku, toż w historii¹²⁴.

It seems indeed that nature itself starts anew and repeats in every human being the universal process of the creation of all its works, taking the same path and the same steps from the beginning until the end. The essence of the same whether in nature, in man or in history.

Mochnacki believed that mountains, being the first link in the chain of evolution, correspond to the earth's first inhabitants – the Titans:

Pierwsza w dziejach epoka anorganiczna przypomina naturę. Ma ten sam kształt i podobieństwo. Tam w dali niedościgłej postrzegamy kolosalne postacie pierwszych synów ziemi – malarskie figury, grupy patriarchalne. Wielki był człowiek w początkach. Są to niejako skały pierwiastkowej formacji w porządku historycznym¹²⁵.

The first non-organic era in history resembled nature. It had the same shape and formation. We became aware of giant figures at great unattainable distances, the first sons of the earth, figures from paintings, patriarchal groupings. Man in his beginning had greatness in him. Those were the rocks of history, its primeval formation.

Support for the hypothesis that the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* perceives a parallel between Titans (and people raised to the status of Titans, e.g. the great Romantics) and (the) mountains is to be found in Stanza 8 of the poem. Here the mountain-top is described anthropomorphically as a 'bare skull' (*goła czaszka*). Further support for this hypothesis is lent by the (well-known) Polish legend about enchanted knights sleeping in the western Carpathians (in that section known as the Tatra mountains)¹²⁶.

In *Piąta pora roku* the poet would seem to have been endowed with 'superhuman' status¹²⁷. The highest points in the landscape – the mountains and the trees – would appear to be analogues (as it were) of the highest flights of the poet's imagination, which rebuilds the initial unity of all Beings – this in accordance with Romantic conceptions of sublimity¹²⁸:

¹²⁴ Mochnacki, op.cit., p.28).

¹²⁵ Ibidem, p. 31.

¹²⁶ Cf. *Śpiący rycerze* [in:] Kazimierz Tetmajer, *Na Skalnym Podhalu*, Kraków 1976.

¹²⁷ Wierzyński's concept of the superhuman status of the inspired poet has nothing in common with Nietzsche's concept of the *Uebermensch*.

¹²⁸ Cf. W.K. Wimsatt Jr. and C. Brooks, *Romantic criticism*, London 1970.

Przypominają mi nagle, że ptak
 Przeleciał przeze mnie, ptak,
 I drzwi zostawił otwarte
 Na góry moje, na drzewa,
 Na wszystkie sprawy
 Żywe i martwe.

By including himself among the 'Titans' of national poetry, the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* indirectly gives expression to his personal pride. This feeling of pride proceeds from the belief in the 'superhuman' status of the inspired poet and is an important element in the Polish variant of Romantic Prometheanism (cf. Konrad's *improwizacja* in Mickiewicz's *Dziady*)¹²⁹. It must be said, however, that in the case of Wierzyński's protagonist, this pride is expressed discretely and appears to have been deliberately 'played down', so to speak. Wierzyński's protagonist presents himself first and foremost as a son who imitates the gesture made by the Spirits of his dead parents. To this might be added his human fear of death, his attachment to the world, his naive feeling of *cudowność* and his humour. All these factors neutralize any pathos that might otherwise have crept into the poem.

The struggle with God and the feeling of alienation towards the transcendental sphere which are to be found in Mickiewicz's¹³⁰ version of Romantic Prometheanism is absent in *Piąta pora roku*. Wierzyński's protagonist does not struggle with God and does not even reach the sphere in which 'Creator and Nature meet' (*gdzie graniczy Stwórca i Natura*)¹³¹. He does, however, reach the sphere inhabited by the Spirits of the dead.

The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* sees the world of eternity as a timeless, motionless, cold sphere – that of an 'alien language' – which is contrasted with the earth (cf. Stanza 14). It is nevertheless a friendly sphere, inhabited by the Spirits of his dead parents. The latter 'mediate', as it were, between the sphere of eternity (which the protagonist has yet to fathom) and nature, people and poetry (cf. Stanza 18):

I rzekł mój ojciec: "Jeszcze go prowadź
 Bo ludzkie oczy z żalu w nim bledną".
 A Matka: "Nie masz tu czego żałować,
 Śmierć i życie to jedno".

The protagonist's journey into the other world resembles in some respects the return of Tobias the younger to the home of his father. As a newcomer to the world of eternity, Wierzyński's protagonist can be said to be 'luckier' than the protagonist of

¹²⁹ Cf. T. Ziełiński, *Mania twórcza* [in:] op.cit.

¹³⁰ Ibidem.

¹³¹ Cf. *Dziady*, Część III *Improwizacja* [in:] Mickiewicz, *Dzieła poetyckie*, ed.cit., p. 173. Cf. T. Ziełiński, op.cit.

Leśmian's poem entitled *Urszula Kochanowska*¹³². Although in *Piąta pora roku* – by contrast with Leśmian's poem – the world of eternity is not reminiscent of this world, the protagonist is met by the Spirits of his dead parents and not by God (who in Leśmian's poem comes instead of the parents expected by the protagonist)¹³³. From the other world (in *Piąta pora roku*) there is a 'view' of the protagonist's Carpathian homeland (cf. Stanzas 16 and 18). The guardian Spirits of his dead parents urge the protagonist-poet to create. Art would seem to be a man-made link between 'earth' and 'heaven'¹³⁴.

In *Piąta pora roku*, therefore, the important Promethean elements found in the poetry of Mickiewicz (Konrad's struggle with God in *Dziady*) and Leśmian (the rejection of God's proposals for eternity in *Eliasz* and *W czas zmartwychwstania*) are absent. For Wierzyński's protagonist Prometheanism would seem to mean not 'resistance to all human and divine constraint – a struggle against the terrestrial and super-terrestrial enemy'¹³⁵ but 'fidelity to the cause for which one lives and for which one dies'¹³⁶. This cause is poetry. The 'superhuman' (and, insofar as the poet writes for his fellow men, the 'human'¹³⁷) function of poetry would seem to reside first and foremost in the realization of the Romantic dream of creating the human equivalent of eternity. This equivalent of eternity would seem to be art, which reconciles the 'depths' and 'heights' of Being. In his lecture on Leśmian entitled *O Bolesławie Leśmianie* (1939) Wierzyński speaks of (Leśmian's) 'myth of extended being' (*leśmianowski mit o poszerzonym istnieniu*)¹³⁸.

XI

Taken as a whole, the structure of *Piąta pora roku* would seem to resemble that of a myth. Its 'prototype' in Polish literature – an epic poem whose structure resembles that of a religious myth – is Słowacki's *Król-Duch*¹³⁹. Słowacki's protagonist (the Spirit Her)

¹³² Cf. Bolesław Leśmian, *Poezje*, Warsaw 1957, pp. 385 – 386.

¹³³ "Nie wstydział się ciepła i czułości, tych prostych a nieodzownych cech wszelkiej poezji, i choć kunszt swego zawodu, jak przystało na mistrza, cenił wysoko, nigdy nie zaparł się serca. Z najzwyklejszych uczuć umiał stworzyć tak wzruszające arcydzieło jak opowieść Urszuli Kochanowskiej o jej przybyciu do nieba" (K. Wierzyński, *O Bolesławie Leśmianie*, ed.cit., p. 34).

¹³⁴ Cf. Footnote No. 110.

¹³⁵ Cf. Footnote No 112.

¹³⁶ Cf. Footnote No 112.

¹³⁷ Although the idea of art for art's sake was dear to Wierzyński (cf. Footnote No 110), he firmly believed – as did the Romantics – that art is for everyone and not simply for the 'chosen few'.

¹³⁸ "Dziś, kiedy nie tylko przed człowiekiem, lecz i przed wielkimi jego wspólnotami stoją pytania rozstrzygające o bycie, to utwierdzenie spodów i szczytów, ten leśmianowski mit poszerzonego istnienia umacnia nas wobec burz i uderzeń" (K. Wierzyński, *O Bolesławie Leśmianie*, ed.cit., p. 38).

¹³⁹ Cf. M. Tatar: "Struktura mitu religijnego a *Król-Duch* Słowackiego" [in:] *Studia romantyczne*, ed.cit.

systematically reincarnates himself as one or other of the legendary (i.e. prehistoric) and mediaeval kings of Poland. The story of his various 'lives' is intended to reveal the secret meaning of Polish history. Similarly, the story told by Wierzyński's protagonist – a Spirit – about his past life as a poet is intended to reveal the secret of eternity and death.

The narration of Wierzyński's protagonist – like that of Słowacki's – is made in ritualistic circumstances (the ritual of *Dziady*)¹⁴⁰. It is accompanied by a belief in the magic power of the poetic word¹⁴¹. Its purpose is to invoke the Spirit of earth. The 'backcloth' of the mythical narration is a rhythmically (i.e. seasonally – x 4) changing Carpathian landscape¹⁴². The bird heralds the prolongation of this cycle by the addition of a fifth 'season' – eternity. Its second appearance, just before the end of the poem (the first being at the beginning), heralds as it were a new cycle of death and birth and – indirectly – the rebirth of the protagonist¹⁴³.

On quite another – autobiographical – plane, the narration of *Piąta pora roku* tells of events which 'really' happened and in which the narrator took part. The stages in the narrator's life which are outlined in the poem can be seen to correspond to known facts of Wierzyński's biography. In this sense the narration is 'verifiable' and 'authentic'¹⁴⁴. The author of *Piąta pora roku* – Wierzyński – and the poem's protagonist both spent their childhood and early youth in the immediate vicinity of the Carpathian mountains (Wierzyński was born in Drohobycz)¹⁴⁵. The descriptions of the Carpathian landscape which are to be found in *Piąta pora roku* would – in their realistic aspect – seem to resemble that found in Wierzyński's reminiscences set down in a collection of essays entitled *Cygańskim wozem*:

Właściwie świat nadaje się, by chodzić po nim piechotą. Wtedy jest dostępny i namacalny od oczu do podeszwy. Najbardziej nostalgiczne wspomnienia mam ze szkolnych czasów, z wędrówek na Bubniszcze i Urycz, przez Synowódzko na Paraszkę, pod Kałusz, Dolinę, Wygodę. Nagle polany w lasach, kiedy z chłodnego cienia wychodzi się na złotą misę kipiących traw, legowiska sarnie

The world is really designed to be explored on foot. It becomes accessible and tangible to one's eye and one's soles. My most nostalgic memories are those of my school days, wandering over Bubniszcze and Urycz, through Synowódzko to Paraszka, towards Kałusz, Dolina and Wygoda. The unexpected clearings, when one enters into a golden bowl of sward from the cool shade, the

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *ibidem*.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *ibidem*.

¹⁴² Cf. E. Cassirer, *Esej o człowieku. Wstęp do filozofii kultury* (An Essay on Man), trans. A. Staniewska, Warsaw 1971, Part Two, chapter VII (myth and religion).

¹⁴³ Cf. Tatar, *op.cit.*

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *ibidem*.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *Kazimierz Wierzyński* [in:] M. Dhuska, *op.cit.*, vol. III.

z wygniecioną pościółką, dzikie maliny wśród pajęczyn, na których rosa nie wysycha do południa, i przełęcze, przełęcze, gdzie wieje mocny wiatr i otwierają się dwa widoki, z prawa i z lewa, spadające w dół, z kucymi wsiami w georginiach i malwach, z dziewanną, z jastrzębiami pod niebem i kwiczołami na jałowcach jesienią. Ach, gdyby można pójść raz jeszcze krętą i żółtą ścieżką, wydeptaną na zboczach przez krowy, albo przez gęste łąki po pas, pod czarne ściany buków i sosen w Karpatach¹⁴⁶.

deer's hiding place with its matted litter, wild raspberries covered with cobwebs dripping with dew till noon and the mountain passes where the wind is fierce and where there are two views, one to the right, another to the left falling down towards villages with their dahlias, mallows and mulleins, with hawks in the sky and thrushes resting in the gorse in the autumn. If only I could walk once more on a twisting yellowy path, trodden by cows descending the slope or through meadows with grass waist high, towards the black wall of beech and pine in the Carpathians.

The author of *Piąta pora roku* was – like the poem's protagonist – a poet who had experienced war, the death of his closest relatives and the hardships of life as an émigré (cf. Stanzas 13 and 14). Both author and protagonist can be described as poets who were 'twice born'¹⁴⁷.

The various stages in the work of Wierzyński's protagonist (and Wierzyński himself) – as a poet – can indeed be seen to 'correspond' to stages in the work of the great (Polish) Romantics: the youthfulness, joyfulness and expansiveness of Mickiewicz's *Oda do młodości* (cf. Stanza 7); the Prometheanism of Part III of Mickiewicz's *Dziady*; the nostalgic, pastoral vision of the land of childhood (*kraj lat dziecińczych*) of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*¹⁴⁸; the mythology of Słowacki's *Król–Duch*.

The autobiographical narration of the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* is not simply a relation of facts, but also an attempt to explain them in the universal categories of death and eternity. This universal aspect of the poem is largely responsible for its mythical character. It proceeds from the protagonist's examination of the story of his life through the 'prism' of well-known themes from Greek mythology and Romantic literature¹⁴⁹.

The story of the protagonist's life would therefore seem to be a story of the loss of 'paradise' and its subsequent recovery (by means of art). Such a view of the poet's life – and of human life in general – was held by the European Romantics. The Polish critic

¹⁴⁶ Cf. K. Wierzyński, *Cygańskim wozem*. ed.cit., pp. 5–6.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. W. Weintraub, *Szkic do arcykału* [in:] *Przebity światem* (various contributors), London 1969, p. 53.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. M. Dłuska, *Legenda wieczności* [in:] op.cit., vol. III.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. M. Tatara, op.cit.

Mochnacki related the myth of the loss of Paradise and the attempts to recover it to the history of the life of every human being as well as to that of mankind as a whole:

Jeden raz w życiu swoim każdy z nas był w raju nim wyszedł z lat dzieciennych; w przeciągu między brzaskiem, świtem, jutrzenką, w rozdziale między wschodem i południem lat męskich...¹⁵⁰.

Once in a lifetime every one of us has been in paradise before we left the world of childhood; between the twilights, the daybreak and the dawn, in a chapter between the sunrise and the noon of adult life.

In Mochnacki's version of the myth of Paradise lost Romantic (Schiller), Biblical and Greek (the story of the Titans and the four ages of mankind) elements are fused in a peculiar and not always consistent manner¹⁵¹. Here the Titans would seem to have come before the human age of Paradise¹⁵². Although the human age of Paradise was notable for the harmonious coexistence of man, nature and God (this external harmony being accompanied by inner harmony¹⁵³, man at this stage of his existence – Mochnacki believed – was able to comprehend nature and (perhaps) God directly (by intuition) but did not know himself¹⁵⁴. Mochnacki compares the next period in the history of man and mankind to sleep. During this period poetic inspiration is unaware of its aims. In Mochnacki's view, this age of ignorance and childhood corresponds to the plant kingdom in the world of nature¹⁵⁵:

A dalej – następujący okres: czyż nie przypada do miary z wegetacją w naturze organicznej? Czasy poetyckiego natchnienia zapachu? Nie sen–li to rzeczywiście? Fantazja włada w tym świecie i jako duch nad ziemią się unosi. Stwarza, czaruje.

Then – the next period: is it not like the vegetation in the realm of nature? Is it a time of poetic inspiration and enthusiasm? Is it not like sleep, a dream? Imagination sways its dominion over the world and it hovers like a spirit over the globe, a creator and a sorcerer.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Like Coleridge, Mochnacki was under the 'spell' of various German Romantic philosophers and writers.

Cf. K. Krzemień-Ojak, *Maurycy Mochnacki. Program kulturalny i myśl krytyczno literacka*, Warsaw 1975.

¹⁵² Cf. Footnote No. 125.

¹⁵³ Following in the footsteps of German philosophers, Mochnacki distinguishes four faculties of the human soul: 'um' (theoretical reason); 'rozum' (practical reason); 'imaginacja' (reflective imagination); 'fantazja' (creative imagination). Cf. Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 43. Mochnacki often speaks of memory as being a separate faculty. Cf. "Największa moc rozumu w dzieleniu, przeciwnie f a n t a z j a części rozdzielone spaja w całość i wszystko totalizuje" (Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 62).

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Footnote 118.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 31.

In *Piąta pora roku* the protagonist's vision of his own youth would seem to be reminiscent of Mochnacki's description of the early stages of man's existence. The childhood and youth of Wierzyński's protagonist are seen as a sleepy vision (cf. Stanza 5) of a Dionysian procession. The 'participants' in this partly realistic, partly fantastic procession are: the protagonist; plants; animals; people; the wind; clouds; the seasons; cyclical time and movement (cf. Stanzas 6 – 11). The participants seem to be united by poetic enthusiasm (cf. *Krzyczałem w tłumie jak ja zakochanych: / "Młodości, podaj mi skrzydła"*) and – it would seem – a degree of ignorance (cf. *Nie wiedziałem co znaczy niejasny ten śpiew, / Płynął czas i odmiany i ja z nimi razem*).

This moving procession of shapes, sounds, smells and colours stops at the moment when the Spirits of the protagonist's dead parents make their appearance. The 'centre-piece' of the protagonist's narration is the partly related, partly enacted scene with the Spirits of his dead parents¹⁵⁶, which encompasses the protagonist's past and present. The protagonist's vaguely defined past is linked with an allusion to war (cf. Stanza 13) and with the protagonist's journey in the sphere of eternity, accompanied by the Spirits of his parents (Stanza 14). Whereas this part of the narration would seem to tell about the loss of 'paradise', the fragment in the present tense (Stanza 15 – 20) would seem to tell about its recovery. The recovery of 'paradise' is equated with the acquisition of secret knowledge and with the return of the protagonist's Spirit to poetry (song) and to his homeland.

This second part of the narration concerning the loss (Stanzas 12 – 14) and recovery (15 – 20) of 'paradise' differs in some respects from Mochnacki's version of the myth. Mochnacki's description of the loss of 'paradise' can be seen as a reflection of Romantic reaction against eighteenth-century epistemological mechanism and empiricism. Mochnacki believed that man consciously destroyed his original spiritual and material harmony when he made the mistake of inquiring about himself and about the world. Man thus chose to tread the false road of knowledge which is based exclusively on the senses and on practical reason. For Mochnacki, the period of 'paradise lost' is one of individual and collective egoism and a false, 'mechanistic' vision of the world¹⁵⁷. The recovery of 'paradise' – i.e. the reconstruction of inner and outer harmony – would for Mochnacki seem to be conditional upon man's choice of the true road of knowledge which is based on intuition and creative imagination¹⁵⁸. This road leads to the spiritual

¹⁵⁶ Cf. M. Tatara, op.cit.

¹⁵⁷ "Mechanizm opanował umysły. Układy oddzielnych nauk odmieniają się przed oczyma naszymi w słowniki technicznych wyrazów i technicznych manipulacji: coraz więcej mnoży się szczegółów, nie powiązanych myślą ogólną; żadnej prawie teorii, żadnego systematu, żadnej całości organicznej (...) Naukę trzeba mieć w sobie, w środku i z nas samych, z jestestwa naszego wszelką wyciągnąć umiejętność (...) Każda umiejętność tak oryginalna, tak pierwotna być musi, jak p o e z j a i poetyckie natchnienie (...) Umiejętność nie jest rzeczą pamięci, ale największą jest sprawą i misterstwem ducha. Najpiękniejsze odkrycia winniśmy naukowemu entu jazmowi i ledwo nie poetyckiej i n s p i r a c j i, – tej najwyższej filozofii genjuszu" (Mochnacki, op.cit., pp. 57 – 59).

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Footnote No. 157.

transformation of individuals – namely the ‘spreading out’ of the spirit and the extinction of egoism. The resulting vision of the world is that of an organic whole. Paraphrasing the words of the Gospel, Mochnacki writes that man ought to be ‘as wise as a serpent and as innocent as a child’¹⁵⁹ – thus (it would seem) acquiring superhuman status.

For the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* the loss of ‘paradise’ is not the result of choosing a false theory of knowledge, which Mochnacki would seem to equate with man’s departure from the initial sphere of myth. Indeed, Wierzyński’s protagonist never ventures outside the sphere of myth. His dramatized narrative is told from two standpoints – terrestrial and super-terrestrial¹⁶⁰ – which (partially) ‘overlap’, so to speak. When the super-terrestrial standpoint ‘operates’, the protagonist’s initial ‘paradise’ is lost. At the same time, however, the sphere of myth is extended and acquires a super-terrestrial dimension.

The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* has already fathomed the secret of the visible world. By taking part in the life of nature, he has discovered the fundamental principle of life – movement¹⁶¹ – and the fundamental dimension of the visible world – time:

Szedł ruch za ruchem, ruchome odmiany
Ludzi i roślin i skóry zwierzęcej,
Doczesne pory i czas powikłany,
Wszystko co żyło i jeszcze coś więcej.

The loss of ‘paradise’ is linked with the discovery of the world of Spirits and eternity and – *ipso facto* – with the addition of a supersensual dimension to knowledge (cf. *Bo przyszli potem z daleka umarli, ...*). Seen from a terrestrial standpoint, the loss of ‘paradise’ seems to the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* to be the result of historical events.

¹⁵⁹ Mochnacki would appear to be undecided as to the means whereby Paradise is to be regained – by creative imagination, theoretical reason or a combination of both. What is certain in that intuition has a part to play in the process of recovery.

Cf. “Cel historii taki: ‘B a d ż m y j a k o d z i e c i’ ale w u m i e, rozumie w uznaniu siebie samych w jestestwie naszym (...) Naostatek: myśl, że człowiek dąży do o d z y s k a n i a owego stanu, to jest: ‘żeby – jako pismo mówi – gołębią prostotą z węzową ł a c z y ł c h y t r o ś c i ą, czyli innymi słowy, co na jedno wypada, z tego przenośnego rozumienia, żeby u m e m, rozumem, żartkością i przenikliwością swojego dowcipu, toż głębokiem a jasnym samego siebie *pojęciem*, ze wszystkimi dary i dzielnościami cywilizacji, które z tego *pojęcia* wypłynęły, był tak dobry, tak niewinny, tak cichy i natchniony jak ów pierwszy człowiek przed wywołaniem i tułactwem swoim, kiedy go Stworzyciel nieba i ziemi posadził ręką swoją w raj...” (Mochnacki, op.cit., pp. 32 – 34). Cf. Footnote No. 157.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. M. Tatar, op.cit.

¹⁶¹ The images of *natura naturans* link Wierzyński with Leśmian and the Romantics. Cf. “Nature działa bezprzestannie; wszystko, co zewnątrz nas postrzegamy, *dzieje się, staje się*, albo *stało się*, czyli przyszło do skutku przez działanie (...) A tak, ponieważ rzecz, osnowa, przedmiot umiejętności przyrodzenia *jest w ruchu* ponieważ natura jest w ruchu (*naturans*), co z tego wynika? Oto, że i środek pojmowania, zbliżania się do natury, także *ruchomy* być powinien” (Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 53).

Cf. K. Wyka, ‘Pan Tadeusz’. *Studia o poemacie*, ed.cit.

Cf. I. Opacki, *Pośmiertna w głębi jezior maska* [in:] *Studia o Leśmianie*, ed.cit.

Seen from a super-terrestrial standpoint, it seems to him to be the result of the intervention of the Spirits of his dead parents, who come to take him to the next world (cf. Stanzas 12 – 14). In *Piąta pora roku*, therefore, the loss of the protagonist's initial 'paradise' has features of a mythical initiation. The 'price' of this further initiation would seem to be the protagonist's symbolic death. (cf. Stanza 16)¹⁶².

The protagonist is initiated by being shown the timeless sphere (in which there is no movement) and by being shown the sources of movement. The latter would seem to be none other than the Spirits of his dead parents, who control the elements (cf. Stanza 12). The secret of the unity of life and death (Stanza 17) which they reveal to him belongs to the sphere of 'paradise regained'. The recovery of 'paradise' would seem to be accomplished by the discovery that external movement and time are 'internalized', so to speak (Stanza 16) and become the 'first cause' as it were of creation and the visible world (cf. Stanza 18). The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* would therefore appear to believe that the sources of eternity are to be found in himself. This is certainly one possible interpretation of Stanza 18.

The protagonist tells the story of the loss and recovery of 'paradise' using a few Biblical and (Greek) mythological themes which have been transformed and fused together. The beginning of the narration (about the loss of 'paradise') brings to mind: a Dionysian procession; the departure from Eden; the journey of Tobias the younger, ending with his return to the home of his parents (Stanzas 4 – 11). The iconographic counterpart to this part of *Piąta pora roku* would seem to be Malczewski's painting entitled *Tobiasz z Aniołami*¹⁶³. The protagonist's journey into the other world in the company of the Spirits of his dead parents and his subsequent return to the land of his birth and childhood bring to mind the following mythological themes:

1. The (guided) descent into and subsequent return from the underworld by Persephone, heroine of the Eleusinian myth:

I wzięli mnie. Wiedli w głąb, w tajemniczy
Obszar, gdzie nic się z tej ziemi nie liczy,

2. The death and rebirth of Dionysus:

Wiem. Dawno temu doszczętnie wymarłem
A jednak trwam znów i łokciem o góry
Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem
I patrzę, synów mych szukam ...

¹⁶² Cf. M. Tatar, op.cit.

¹⁶³ Cf. K. Wyka, *Thanatos i Polska*, ed.cit., chapter 8.

For a discussion of the motif of the procession in 'Młoda Polska' poetry see: M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Symbolizm i symbolika w poezji Młodej Polski*, Kraków 1975, pp. 149 – 150.

3. The journey made by Hercules to hell and to the garden of the Hesperides – the apple (Stanza 20) being a symbol of Paradise regained¹⁶⁴.

4. The peregrinations or 'guided tours' made in the next world by Aeneas and Dante.

All these mythological themes have been introduced into *Piąta pora roku* by way of allusion. They have been condensed and transformed to conform with Polish poetic tradition. They have also been subordinated to a theme which would seem to be common to the European Romantics – that of the loss of 'paradise' and its recovery by means of imagination, memory and art. But even this theme has been transformed in *Piąta pora roku*, which begins not with the loss of 'paradise' but with its recovery by the Spirit of the protagonist (Stanzas 1 – 4). It is only later on that the protagonist goes back into the past in order to recall the full story of the loss and recovery of 'paradise'.

The motifs of the protagonist's symbolic death and his rebirth through poetic creation and through his spiritual return to the Carpathian land of his youth are anchored in the poetry of the Polish Romantics. In the nostalgic poems¹⁶⁵ of Mickiewicz (cf. *Gdy tu mój trup*), the protagonist's separation from his native land is equated with death. In Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* the protagonist's return to the 'land of his childhood' by means of memory and poetry is equated with the recovery of health and life (cf. the *Inwokacja* and *Epilog* to *Pan Tadeusz*). Mickiewicz's *kraj lat dziecinnych* corresponds to Mochnacki's 'initial paradise' – i.e. youth.

The image of 'paradise regained' presented by the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* is much broader than the image of the 'land of childhood' which is sketched by the narrator of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*. The 'paradise regained' of *Piąta pora roku* is as it were Mickiewicz's 'land of childhood' extended to include the community of Spirits (cf. *Dziady*). It is as it were a miniature condensation of the worlds of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* and *Dziady* and Słowacki's *Król–Duch*. It would also seem to be much broader and richer than the rather abstract 'paradise regained' of Mochnacki's essay.

The 'paradise regained' of *Piąta pora roku* is a mythical land located in the Carpathian mountains. In his Paris lectures, Mickiewicz describes the Carpathians as the central homeland of the Slavs¹⁶⁶, the 'ancient stronghold of the Slavs' and the 'principal theatre of Slavonic history'. According to Mickiewicz, it was in the Carpathians (and not at Gniezno) that the mythical Slavonic eagle made its first nest, thus founding the first Slavonic settlement:

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Footnote No. 104.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. M. Dłuska, op.cit.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. *Pierwsze wieki historii polskiej*: Księga I: *Słowiańszczyzna od wyjścia jej z Azji do czasów Lecha, Czecha i Rusa, czyli Ruryka* [in:] Mickiewicz, *Dzieła prozą*, Ed. T. Pini, Nowogródek 1934, Tom I.

Środkiem teatru ogólnych dziejów Słowiańszczyzny są Karpaty. Na wierzchołku tych gór – jak powiada poeta – osiedł ptak słowiański i jednym skrzydłem uderzył po Morzu Czarnem, drugim po Bałtyku. Z tamtej strony łańcucha Karpackiego, na rozległych płaszczynach swoich ukazują się nam Rusini i Polacy – z tej, w dolinach u podnóża Alp i Hemus rozmaite ludy, z pomiędzy których Czechy aż w głębi Niemiec stoją, jak przednia straż, posuniona ku Zachodowi¹⁶⁷.

The Carpathians are the historic theatre, the focal point for the Slavs. The poet says that the Slavonic bird stopped to rest on the top of the mountains, its wings spread out from the Black Sea to the Baltic. On one side, Poles and Ruthenians live in the vast plains; on the other, in the foothills and valleys of the Alps and the Balkans live many peoples, the Czechs among them who, ensconced in the German lands, are as an outpost towards the West.

For the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku*, the 'recovery of paradise' – which is preceded by the flight of the bird and which in the poem 'takes precedence' (so to speak) over the 'loss of paradise' – is identified with the return to the 'sacral place'¹⁶⁸ and *illud tempus*¹⁶⁹ of myth as well as to the sources of movement and creation. In *Piąta pora roku*, therefore, the myth of the loss and recovery of 'paradise' has been transformed into a cosmogonic myth (i.e. one about the creation of the world):

Wiem. Dawno temu doszczętnie wymarłem
 A jednak trwam znów, i łokciem o góry
 Jak tamci z mego plemienia się wsparłem
 I patrzę, synów mych szukam, czy który
 Obszył się liśćmi i porósł lasami,
 A może stoi przy ogniu pastuchów
 I pójdzie śladem, co został za nami,
 I znów powtórzy przyrodę tych ruchów
 Gdy zgrzane życie porami gęstymi
 Dyszało w słońce i szło do księżycy,
 Gdy we mnie ciekła krew mojej ziemi
 A w matkach mleko i w sosnach żywica.

These lines from *Piąta pora roku* would seem to be reminiscent of Dygasiński's novel entitled *Gody życia*, the end of which is stylized as an Ancient Slavonic 'version' of

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Mickiewicz, *Wykłady o literaturach słowiańskich*, ed.cit., Rok I, p. 9.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. J. Kwiatkowski, *U podstaw liryki Leopolda Staffa*, Warsaw 1966, chapter III (Paradise lost).

Cf. M. Tataru, op.cit.

Cf. M. Eliade, *Sacrum, mit, historia*, Warsaw.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. M. Eliade, op.cit.

(the) cosmogonic myth¹⁷⁰. In this novel the Sun-god and the Earth-goddess together beget the Life-god, whom they entrust to the care of the Live-goddess. The Life-god in Dygasiński's cosmogony is the Artist, who embodies love, beauty, Good, truth and creative power. The enemy of Life is the 'black god', creator of evil, death, suffering and disease. Life, using the creative power with which he has been endowed by his father, creates a perfect world (equated with the world created by art) distinct from the 'sub-solar world' which has been 'polluted' by the 'black god'¹⁷¹.

'Life' is also the 'hero' of the cosmogonic myth invented by the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku*. In this cosmogony, however, there is no 'black god'. 'Life's' parents would seem to be the mythical couple made up by the sun and the moon. Life is identified with movement and with the flow of multiform, life-giving creative force (cf. the bird – song – blood – milk – resin – the apple) which permeates the whole of the poem's 'represented world'. It strives to reach its origins, i.e. the sun and the moon (= the super-terrestrial world):

Gdy zgrzane życie porami gęstymi
Dyszało w słońce i szło do księżycy,

This last image would seem to be reminiscent not only of Dygasiński's cosmogonic novel but also Bergson's *élan vital* – a (largely) spiritual¹⁷² force which permeates the

¹⁷⁰ *Gody życia* first appeared in 1902. Cf. F. Ziejka, *Motywy prastowiańskie [in:] Młodopolski świat wyobraźni*, Ed. M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, Kraków 1976. Cf. K. Wyka, *Thanatos i Polska*, ed.cit.

¹⁷¹ Adolf Dygasiński, *Gody życia*, Warsaw 1948, pp. 138 – 141:

“Bóg Jasny i Dziewa Ziemia, para boska miłosna, wydali na Świat bożycy Życie, dziecię niewinne i czyste, dobre. Natchnęli je miłością, prawdą, otoczyli wdziękami szczęścia, ażeby było piękne, nieśmiertelne. Dali mu za niańkę i opiekunkę boginię Żywą, najlepszą z siostr bogów, o obliczu słonecznym, o spojrzeniu tak czystym, jak pogoda Niebios w poranek letni (...) Alić bóg czarny, wróg odwieczny Słońca, przeciwnik dzieł jego zacięty i wiecznie niechętny, zaczął jasność ciemnościami, rozmnożył głody blade, zimna drżące i niedolę wszelką, chciały podgryzać wątek Życia młodziutkiego. (...) Zło pomieszało się w Życiu z dobrem, wzięło górę i zamieniło krynicę przezystą w kałużę szpetną. (...) Dopiero Żywa, ciężko strudowana daremnym wysiłkiem opieki nad Życiem, załamała ręce i wzniosła głos błagalny do Słońca: (...) A słońce jej odrzeczło: Ja, ojciec, przelałem w życie ogień twórczy. Wiano rodzicielskie wystarcza – jestem pewny – do stworzenia świata nowego, dokąd ani śmierć, ani niedola, ani żadne zło nie dosięgną. (...) Idź, dziewo boska, otwórz Życiu dłoń przeczystą bramy nieśmiertelności! (...) Życie zebrało swe siły najlepsze, otrzymane w posagu od bóstwa, i poza światem podslonecznym stworzyło świat własny – cudo nad cuda (...) Pragnienie niebotyczne, marzenia najwznioślejsze, piękność co bóstwo wzór jej stanowi, zamieszkały w tej krainie nowej. (...) Ziemia jest piękna (...) Wdzięki jej jednak nie zdołają sprostać piękności świata, który teraz stworzyły dusze szlachetne, poczuwające w sobie iskrę bożą. Dzieło nowe stworzenia ...”.

¹⁷² Bergson's concept of *élan vital* is open to various interpretations, e.g.:-

“*élan vital* nie jest niczym innym jak świadomością puszczoną przez materię” (Ludwik Chmaj, *O Duszy zamkniętej i otwartej* [in:] “Przegląd Współczesny”, Nr 122 – 123, 1932, p. 8). – “*Élan vital* – to jedno z pojęć konstytutywnych doktryny Bergsona. Jest życiem uniwersalnie czynnym we wszystkich sferach rzeczywistości: w samym akcie tworzenia materii, w rozwoju gatunków, w twórczości indywidualnym ludzkiego, w życiu społecznym. Możemy wcielić się w jego nieustającą aktywność i przez sympatię intuicyjną współżyć z jego tętnem – niosącym świat ku stałym niespodziankom i nowościom, stałym poszukiwaniom i wysiłkom” (L. Kołakowski, *Bergson: antynomia praktycznego rozumu* [in:] Bergson, *Ewolucja twórcza*, trans. F. Znaniński, Warszawa 1957, p. XVIII).

whole world, which is the essence of the world and which therefore 'unites' apparent opposites. All visible and invisible 'things' are manifestations of *élan vital* – in *Piąta pora roku*: the bird, song, blood, milk, resin, the apple, people, plants, animals, mountains. This explains why, in the poetical world of *Piąta pora roku*, life and death are one (cf. Stanza 17). The metaphor 'the nature of these movements' (*przyroda tych ruchów*) in Stanza 16 does away with the opposition between the invisible, creative basis of life and the visible world – between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*¹⁷³.

The opposition between life and art¹⁷⁴ is also eliminated in the poem. Life, which is identified with 'lasting' (cf. Stanza 16 – *trwanie*), is also equated with creation. In *Piąta pora roku* 'lasting', 'movement' and 'life' are – it would seem – three ideas which together can be seen to relate to Bergson's philosophy¹⁷⁵. In Stanza 16 'lasting' (cf. Bergson's *durée*) would seem to mean the protagonist's intuitive union with the *élan vital* and its creative evolution. It is also opposed (in accordance, it would seem, with Bergsonian metaphysics) to cyclical time and movement (cf. Stanza 11 – *czas powi-klany*). Another characteristic of Bergsonian 'lasting' (*durée*) is the elasticity of the boundaries between the past, present and future¹⁷⁶ which is to be found in *Piąta pora roku*, where it would appear to have 'replaced' the mythical *illud tempus* of the cosmogonic myth of Wierzyński's protagonist.

The protagonist's dead parents belong to the sphere of the poem's 'Ancient Slavonic' cosmogonic myth. In accordance with the mythical law of universal identity and analogy which 'operates' in the poetical world of *Piąta pora roku* (cf. the protagonist – the bird – song – blood – life – milk – resin – the apple), the protagonist's dead parents would seem to be analogues of – if indeed they are not identifiable with – the sun and the moon (the mythical father and mother of All Being). This would seem to account for their immense size (cf. Stanza 12 – *a ziemia szeroka / Drobna im rzęsą zawisła u oka*). Their child – the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* – would seem to be identifiable with Dygasiński's Lifegod (cf. Stanza 16) and with Bergson's *élan vital*.

It is therefore no great surprise that – at the beginning of the poem – the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* creates himself as a mythical god identifiable with the god Universe (made of the four elements) of Plato's *Timaeus*¹⁷⁷. He 'becomes covered in

Bergson made a strong impact on Polish thinkers and artists in the first forty years of the twentieth century – on Leśmian in particular.

Cf. Bolesław Leśmian, *Z rozmyślań o Bergsonie* – 1910 [in:] *Szkice literackie*, Warsaw 1959.

Cf. J. Błoiński, *Bergson a program poetycki Leśmiana* [in:] *Studia o Leśmianie*, ed.cit.

Cf. W. Rzymowski, *Élan vital na greckim pomniku. K. Wierzyński w nowych granicach świata* [in:] "Wiadomości Literackie", 1930, Nr 38.

¹⁷³ Cf. Footnote No 161.

¹⁷⁴ "Życie jest wszystkim! Nie ma żadnej sztuki!" (K. Wierzyński, *Manifest szalony* [in:] *Poezje zebrane*, ed.cit., pp. 37 – 38.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Bergson, *Ewolucja twórcza*, ed.cit. Cf. L. Kołakowski, op.cit.

¹⁷⁶ "Trwanie jest to ciągły postęp przeszłości, która wgrzyza się w przyszłość i nabrzmiewa idąc naprzód" (Bergson, op.cit., p. 18).

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Plato, *Timaios i Kritias*, trans. W. Witwicki, Warsaw 1960, VII, VIII, IX, XLIV.

mountains' and is 'sewn up in leaves'. A fire burns inside him and a bird flies through him. His whole body is permeated with blood and song and contains all 'living' and 'dead' beings. It brings to mind the image of the tree of life (cf. *obszyłem się liśćmi*) and that of a mountain (cf. *porośłem górami ... Na gołej czaszce, na szczycie*):

Ptak przeleciał przez mnie, ptak,
I drzwi zostawił otwarte,
(...)
Obszyłem się liśćmi, porośłem górami,
Palily się we mnie ogniska pastuchów;
Pod drzewami, w deszczu, przykryci workami,
Podobni byli do duchów.

(...)
Siekiera stękała topornym odgłosem
Na gołej czaszce, na szczycie.

(...)
Szedł ruch za ruchem, ruchome odmiany
Ludzi i roślin i skóry zwierzęcej,
Doczesne pory i czas powikłany,
Wszystko co żyło i jeszcze coś więcej.

Bo przyszli potem z daleka umarli
Łokciem o lasy jodłowe się wsparli,
Patrzyli wokół – a ziemia szeroka
Drobną im rzęsą zawisła u oka,

In the cosmogonic myth 'set up' by the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku*, Greek ideas about the process of creation coexist with those of the Romantics and Bergson. The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* is first and foremost the creator and the soul of the universe. At the centre of this soul there burns a fire, which not only 'illuminates' the shepherds huddled round it, but also transforms them into Spirits (cf. Stanza 3). This inner fire is a Romantic analogue of the protagonist's imagination, endowed with creative force and intuition. The Romantics compared the creative imagination to a lamp which illuminates the universe¹⁷⁸ and which – in so doing – reveals the secret of the universe (in *Piąta pora roku* – movement and life), saturating it with the light of feeling (in *Piąta pora roku* – love, rapture, sadness and *cudowność*) – thus transforming it. The lamp then reflects this world which it has itself transformed. In Mochnacki's essay (quoted above), the analogues of intuitive thought are: 'light', 'sun', 'chandelier/candelabrum', 'lamp' and 'the soul of the world'. Mochnacki describes philosophers (and poets)¹⁷⁹ as 'architects of nature', who seek to fully fathom the secret of man and the

¹⁷⁸ Cf. M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Oxford 1977.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Footnote No. 153.

universe – i.e. whose goal is inner vision ('seeing oneself with a spiritual eye'). According to Mochnacki, the 'starting point' of the cognitive process is intuition – i.e. entering into one's inner self¹⁸⁰. Mochnacki compares the process of the cognitive approach to the 'inner vision' to the 'building of the world', to the gradual 'spreading out of the spirit' and to the recovery of paradise:

Dla natury trzeba jasności. Tą jasnością, tym świecznikiem przyrodzenia, tą lampą światów – jest myśl człowieka–anioła. Cała natura w niej się maluje jak obraz nadbrzeżnych kształtów w ruchomym strumieniu – jak cień rzeczy na zwierciadle (...) światło jakiegokolwiek, wiedzące że jaśniej, byłoby myślą, pojęciem; byłoby słońcem – duszą świata¹⁸¹ (...) Myślą sporządzamy sobie świat zewnętrzny. Rozumując budujemy gmach przyrodzenia i wszystkie ukazujące się w tym gmachu zjawiska. Prawdziwy filozof, badacz przyrodzenia, jest architektem natury!¹⁸² (...) Jedna linia przez wszystkie lata życia naszego się rozciąga; z początku w ciemnych nienależnych punktach, jak we mgle i w mroku – dalej coraz jaśniejsza, wyraźniejsza; naostatek samą jest jasnością, promieniem, światłem, wewnątrz obróconą źrenicą – widzeniem siebie okiem ducha – 'uznaniem samego siebie w oddzielnym jestestwie' – Otóż zagadka naszego bytu!...¹⁸³

Nature needs light. The thought of man, the angel, provides this light: the candelabrum and the lamp of the world. The whole of nature is mirrored in it, as the forms of the water's edge are mirrored in a stream, as the shadow of an object is reflected in a looking glass (...) Any light, if aware that it shines, would become a thought, an idea; it would become a sun, a spirit of the world. (...) The external world is a creation of thought. We build the fabric of nature and all the phenomena within it by an invention of the mind. A real philosopher and naturalist is an architect of nature. (...) One long line extends throughout our life: in the beginning interrupted, obscured at some points as if in a hazy mist but becoming clearer, and brighter; till, in the end, it becomes radiance itself, a ray, a light, a pupil looking inward so that we see ourselves in the light of the spirit and 'recognize ourselves as a separate being'. That is the mystery of our existence!

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Mickiewicz: "...kiedy tymczasem *intuicya* (intus itio) daje nam razem i uczuć i pojęć sposób otrzymywania prawdy: *intus itio* jest to wejście wewnątrz siebie" (Mickiewicz, *Wykłady o literaturach słowiańskich*, ed.cit., Rok III, p. 94).

¹⁸¹ Mochnacki, op.cit., p. 24.

¹⁸² Ibidem, p. 53.

¹⁸³ Ibidem, p. 30.

The imagination of the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* would therefore seem to be reminiscent both of the creative and reflective imagination of the Romantics and of Bergsonian memory¹⁸⁴. It is as it were the 'meeting ground' of matter and spirit – 'life' and 'death'. Its contents, which consist of memories of movements, images and feelings – as well as imaginings – form a dynamic whole. A characteristic property of this imagination is its 'lasting' (cf. Stanzas 15 – 16). Its concentration precedes all creative activity (cf. Stanzas 19 – 20)¹⁸⁵.

The structure of the protagonist's imagination would seem to be an analogue both of the structure of the poem's 'represented world' and of the structure of a universe which has been enriched by the creations of man. The 'layout' of this imagination (so to speak) would appear to be concentric. At the centre there would seem to be the creative principle of the world (i.e. *élan vital* – cf. Stanzas 15 – 16). The centre would appear to correspond to the protagonist's 'deep self'¹⁸⁶. The outer 'layers' of the protagonist's imagination encompass: inorganic and organic nature; the world of Spirits; eternity; literary images, myths and symbols created by the protagonist or transformed by him. These images, myths and symbols are derived from European as well as Polish literature. They are concerned with nature, man's life, the poet, poetry, imagination, creation and eternity.

The protagonist's imagination would seem to be indestructible. It is to this indestructibility that people, plants, animals and Spirits owe their immortality (cf. Stanzas 15 – 18). In this sense the 'represented world' of *Piąta pora roku* is an image of eternity (i.e. of imagination) as well as being its product (cf. Stanza 20).

The imagination of the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* has two emotional 'poles', so to speak. One of these is 'Dionysian' – a yearning for unity with people and nature. The other is 'Promethean' – a yearning for leadership of the human community and for the role of mediator between that community and the world of Spirits. Both these emotional poles are linked by a feeling of 'Franciscan' love for people and the world.

The process of the 'actualization' of all the memories and imaginings which are contained in the protagonist's imagination is 'triggered off' – so to speak – by a sudden shock¹⁸⁷ (*Ptaka przeleciał przede mną, ptak*), which causes a sudden 'ordering' and 'opening up' of the protagonist's imagination, making it host to Spirits. This shock may be equated with the intuitive insight into the secret of one's own life and the world as described by Bergson¹⁸⁸ and the Romantics. In *Piąta pora roku* the secret would seem to be creative 'lasting' (cf. Stanzas 16 – 17).

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Footnote No. 153. Cf. Bergson, *Materia i pamięć* (La matière et la mémoire), Warsaw 1930. Cf. J. Dudek, op.cit., p. 88.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Bergson, *Materia i pamięć*, ed.cit.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. L. Kołakowski, op.cit.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. L. Chmaj, op.cit. Cf. "W krainie życia wszystko odbywa się przez wstrząśnienia" (Mickiewicz, *Wykłady...*, ed.cit., Rok IV, p. 150).

¹⁸⁸ Cf. L. Chmaj, op.cit.

The process of the ‘actualization’ of the contents of the protagonist’s imagination would seem to be identified with the creative process (i.e. the process of cognition and expression)¹⁸⁹. The protagonist’s narration about the fathoming of the secret of life and death becomes transformed into a cosmogonic myth.

The cosmogonic myth ‘set up’ by the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* would seem to be the fullest realization of the tenets of expressive poetics. The structure of this myth is an image of the structure of the protagonist’s imagination, which unites all oppositions and which is identified with the soul of the universe and with eternity.

¹⁸⁹ See above, pages 109 – 112 and 117 – 121.

Michał Anioł

Michał Anioł malował leżąc
Przywiązany na deskach do stropu,
Gdy zatrzęśło freskami, ścianami
I kaplicą i całą Europą.

Spojrzał w dół, w ludzki tłum jak się roi,
Toczy wojny, wyrzyna się, brata,
I odkrzyknął im z góry:
“Spokojnie,
Bo przerwę,
Przerwę Stworzenie Świata”.

(K. Wierzyński, *Poezje zebrane*, p. 509 – cf. *Selected Poems*, p. 11).

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CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing analyses of *The Tower* and *Piąta pora roku* show that – as mature poets – both W.B. Yeats and K. Wierzyński closely ‘identified themselves’ with the ‘native’ Romantic literary tradition which they happened to ‘inherit’ (so to speak). In doing so, both poets became linked by a common European cultural tradition – Romanticism (and Symbolism, its continuation).

Both poets employed the native Romantic ‘forms’ which they chose to inherit (genre, style, versification, structure) in relatively short lyric poems, transforming them in accordance with their own artistic inclinations. The poems of both poets may be described as being extremely ‘condensed’ yet rich in complex meaning, as well as being ‘dramatized’.

Yeats’s poem ‘continues’ the English Romantic tradition of an interior monologue which – in one and the same work – may take the form of a vision, a mythical narration, a meditation or an ‘address’ to a second person (cf. Shelley’s *Epipsychidion*). The monologue of *The Tower* ‘oscillates’ – in characteristically Romantic fashion – between a dualistic and a monistic (spiritual monism) view of the world. Yeats – following in Pater’s footsteps – traces this ‘oscillation’ to its source. In doing so, he discovers (in the works of Plato and Plotinus) the Platonic and Neoplatonic sources of Romantic expressive poetics.

Wierzyński’s poem ‘continues’ – in a relatively short, lyrical form – the Polish Romantic tradition of ‘ritualistic’ drama (cf. Mickiewicz’s *Dziady*) and mythical epic poetry (cf. Słowacki’s *Król-Duch*). The overall structure of *Piąta pora roku* – as in the case of some of Słowacki’s greatest poems – is that of a cosmogonic myth. The ‘ideological infrastructure’ of this myth is the monistic (spiritual monism) pole of the Romantic philosophy of nature (Mochnacki, Słowacki) continued (and modified – Bergson!) in the twentieth century by Leśmian. Wierzyński finds support for such a view of the world in Bergson’s philosophy of nature, in the *Fioretti* of St. Francis of Assisi and in the mythology of Ancient Greece. In *Piąta pora roku*, therefore, Platonism is only indirectly present.

In both poems the ‘represented world’ has been constructed in such a way as to continually express the protagonist’s detachment towards the themes and motifs of Romantic poetry which are dear to the poet. This detachment finds its expression in manifest or hidden irony, which may take the form of: ‘self-mockery’ (Yeats); open or subdued polemics (Yeats); the use of the optative mood (Yeats); a lyrical joke (Wierzyński); the ‘prosaic transformation’ of the loftier themes of Romantic poetry

(Wierzyński); frequent allusions and suggestions (Yeats and Wierzyński); the transference of the 'centre of gravity' of the poem's 'represented world' from the sphere of indefinite transcendence to that of the 'everyday environment'. In Yeats's poem this 'everyday environment' is the landscape and architecture of a district in Ireland (the land of the poet's birth) – Ballylee and its environs – chosen by the poet as a material as well as a spiritual 'homeland'. The 'everyday environment' in *Piąta pora roku* is the Sub-Carpathian landscape in which the poet spent his youth.

The lyric monologue of both poems has been stylized as a strongly rhythmical spoken utterance. Both poems have been written in verse which is free and irregular. In both poems colloquialisms 'coexist' happily with 'hidden' (i.e. inconspicuous) archaisms and regionalisms. Metaphors are invariably 'prepared for' and 'motivated' by the context in which they appear.

The 'represented world' in both *The Tower* and *Piąta pora roku* has a 'multi-dimensional' as well as a 'multi-layer' (or 'multi-level') structure. The most conspicuous 'layer' in both poems is that of the 'everyday environment' (i.e. the 'personal' or 'authentic' layer). The mythical 'layer' – hidden 'below' that of the 'everyday environment' (so to speak) – can in the case of both poems be said to consist of several 'secondary layers' or 'sub-layers' – Greek (Homer and Plato – Yeats; Dionysian – Eleusinian and Promethean – Wierzyński); Biblical and Celtic (Yeats); Slavonic (Wierzyński); Renaissance (Neoplatonism – Yeats; Franciscanism – Wierzyński); Romantic (Yeats and Wierzyński). Each element of the 'represented world' of both poems may be viewed through the 'prism' (so to speak) of any one 'layer' or 'sub-layer' – thus becoming a complex symbol, which is the counterpart of the Romantic 'image' (cf. Kermode). All the symbols (or 'images') are linked by a rational 'axis' which in *The Tower* takes the form of an interior monologue and in *Piąta pora roku* that of a dramatized narrative.

The intellectual 'axis' of the 'represented world' of both poems is the (transformed) mythical theme of the quest for (Yeats) and the finding of (Wierzyński) 'paradise lost'. In *The Tower*, this theme is associated with dialectic meditation, with the Platonic motif of climbing up the hill (or ladder) of love and knowledge and with the quest for the Grail. In *Piąta pora roku* the theme is associated with the gradual intuitive, mythical initiation (reminiscent of the Eleusinian myth and of Dante) into the secret of the (visible and invisible) world (cf. Bergson's 'creative lasting').

Both poets make use of a wide range of emotionality. Yeats's protagonist often speaks about his feelings directly. By contrast, Wierzyński's protagonist is much more 'reserved' and indirect in speaking about his feelings, even going as far as to make use of gestures.

Both poems are permeated by dramatic tension which results from the conflict between a yearning for unity with people and with the visible world (on the one hand), and the need to rebuild inner and cosmic order by means of imagination and art (on the other).

The two poets – Yeats and Wierzyński – are deeply linked by their common, Romantic belief in the capacity of poetry and imagination for creation, cognition and the

reconciliation of opposites. They are also linked by their belief that 'the laws of art are the hidden laws of the universe'. At the end of *The Tower*, Yeats's protagonist shuts himself up in the tower of imagination (a symbol of the Great Memory and the protagonist's own imagination). The protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* begins his monologue by 'repeating' in his imagination the process of the creation of the world.

In both poems, creative imagination is closely linked with memory. The world of imagination is in both poems also equated with eternity. The work of art is at one and the same time an image of and a form of eternity. The 'justification' for this common point of view, however, is not the same in the two poems – Plotinus in the case of Yeats, Bergson in the case of Wierzyński.

Both poets are linked by an expressive approach to poetry and by a conscious inclination to blur the distinction between 'life' and 'art'. *The Tower* and *Piąta pora roku* are both – directly – the 'autobiographical' narrations of a protagonist. Indirectly, the two poems both constitute as it were an *ars poetica*.

In both poems, the protagonist is 'situated' (so to speak) at the centre of the 'represented world'. He is in both poems a 'multi-layer', 'mythologized' personality. His 'super-human' status derives from the fact that he is a visionary who is united with the creative principle of the world and who 'mediates', as it were, between a definite human community and the world of Spirits. This liaison with the human community is much more strongly expressed by the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* than by that of *The Tower*. Wierzyński's protagonist is much more 'natural' than that of Yeats in the manner in which he makes contact with the world of Spirits. Wierzyński's protagonist is visited in 'ritualistic circumstances' by the Spirits of his dead parents. By contrast, Yeats's protagonist himself 'invokes' the Spirits of past inhabitants of the environs of Ballylee. In both poems, however, the invocation of Spirits (cf. the invocation of the Spirit of earth in *Piąta pora roku*) is treated by the protagonist with humorous detachment.

Both protagonists speak on two levels, as it were – one 'human', the other 'super-human'. As 'people', the protagonists of both poems can be seen to be reminiscent of their creators – Yeats and Wierzyński. As a 'super-human' being, the protagonist of *The Tower* is the embodiment of the 'passion' which from time immemorial has filled the Great Memory of the 'soul of the world'. For his part, the protagonist of *Piąta pora roku* is pure imagination, which is the counterpart of the imagination of the 'soul of the world'.

For both protagonists, life is synonymous with creation, which in turn is synonymous with action, cognition and expression. Both protagonists are conspicuous for their complex activity. In *Piąta pora roku*, the creative activity of the protagonist is 'in unison' (so to speak) with the creative impetus of *natura naturans*. The images of nature in Wierzyński's poem – like those in Polish Romantic and Symbolist poetry – are therefore continually 'on the move', as it were. By contrast, the images of nature in *The Tower* are fairly static.