



Issue 15

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“Pictures passing before the mind’s eye”: the Tarot, the Order of the Golden Dawn, and William Butler Yeats’s Poetry

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‘...you walk in the moon,
And, though you have passed the best of life, still trace,
Enthralled by the unconquerable delusion,
Magical shapes. ... Why should you leave the lamp
Burning along beside an open book
And trace these characters upon the sands?’ ...
— ‘Because I seek an image, not a book’
 (“Ego Dominus Tuus”, 1915)

From the 1880s onwards, the Order of the Golden Dawn counted many artists and illustrious figures among its members, who were undoubtedly attracted by its theosophical ideology as much as by its performative rituals. With its colourful pictures, occult tradition and wealth of arcane symbols, the Tarot easily formed an integral part of the Golden Dawn: it was one of the divination methods taught to adepts, while, on another level, it represented the Order’s organisation. This omnipresence of the Tarot left its traces in its members’ artistic pursuits. Some of them created new Tarot decks; others assimilated their occult experiences in different ways. It has been argued that William Butler Yeats, one of the Golden Dawn’s most prominent members, chose to use Tarot imagery in his poetry. However, a closer look at Yeats’s poetic imagery shows this to be too complex to constitute exact correspondences with the Tarot. Indeed, as I shall argue in this piece, W.B. Yeats’s poetic images transcend the mere representation of images: they may have been intended to function as a ‘linguistic Tarot’.

1

A young man of high ambitions, W.B. Yeats left the Theosophical Society when he found it not only disapproved of his interest in practical magic, but even actively hindered him from conducting experiments with which he hoped to gain practical understanding of the Society’s lore. In the Order of the Golden Dawn he met

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kindred spirits. The Order's ideology was based on theosophical principles, but crucially taught in both theory and practice.¹ Here, it was the combination of understanding and personal experience of the astral world which would lead the adept to divine wisdom.

Divination, or "astral projection" with the help of a divinatory system, was the key for accessing the astral world. Yeats was particularly eager to master divination, as he found his childhood observations of the spiritual in the material world agreed with the principles which were at the heart of the divination process.² Like any adept, Yeats started by learning about, drawing and using "Tattwas". These are geometrical shapes (square, disc, egg, triangle and crescent) depicted on cards. Even though simple in shape, the Tattwas' symbolism and meanings were relatively complex, and hence subject of the Golden Dawn novices' theoretical study of the cards. In their application, the Tattwas would transform into "gates" to the astral world, which could then be explored and understood on a higher level. Success in this meditation on symbols depended necessarily, but still only partially, on the correct execution of given instructions. Most crucial to divination was experience, in both senses of the term: familiarity through practice, and the event itself. Yeats described his repeated efforts to practise divination skills by drawing Tattwa shapes on paper and in his mind.³ It should be noted that the action of drawing, much more than a mere preliminary task, formed an integral part of the procedure, and was primarily ritualistic, not didactic in nature.

In their advanced lessons, students of the Golden Dawn were introduced to more complex divinatory methods, among them "geomantic figures",

the Enochian language, astrology, and also the Tarot. Golden Dawn teachings on the Tarot were written by one of the Order's founders, S.L. MacGregor Mathers,⁴ and present a synthesis of Hebrew letters and numbers, planetary symbols, colours and corresponding divinatory meanings of the individual cards. The Tarot occupied a dual position in the Order of the Golden Dawn. On the one hand, its composition was received as a symbolic representation of the Order's structure, while on the other, the process of learning Tarot divination furthered the adept's progress within this hierarchy. For a Golden Dawn adept, therefore, the Tarot was both a symbolic compendium and an instrument for acquiring transcendental knowledge.

These two aspects, the collective and the individual, were conjoined in the Golden Dawn rituals, where the adept's progress was both achieved and celebrated. Here, the Tarot functioned as a bridge between theory and practice. Symbols which feature prominently in the Tarot, such as those representing the four suits (wands, coins, cups and swords), were used as props; occasionally, Tarot cards representing the adept's stage of advancement were displayed and their symbolism was analysed; and sometimes a scroll containing Mathers' writings on the Tarot was carried into the ritual vault. In general, Tarot cards were present in all aspects of the Order's life, be it as an object of everyday study, mnemonic or symbolic template, or a metaphorical artefact in the rituals.

2

In the early years of the Order, when commercially produced Tarot decks were not available in England, Mathers (or possibly his wife) designed the Golden Dawn Tarot; this was never published and is now lost. Throughout the history of the Tarot, its structure and elementary imagery were generally

customised, but allowed for artistic variation in the individual appearance of a deck, as well as for adaptation to specific belief systems through subtle alterations of the symbols, terminology or colour schemes. Such alterations are exhibited in the decks created by two other members of the Golden Dawn, Arthur Edward Waite and Aleister Crowley. The creation of these decks was, in fact, a twofold act: the actual realisations of the cards, as customary in the occult tradition, was carried out by two artists, Pamela Colman Smith and Frieda Harris respectively, whereas the inspiration was provided by Waite and Crowley, who were credited with their design. Evidently the cards were not primarily perceived as physical entities in the circumstance of their production – rather, it was the idea behind them (i.e. the connection with the astral world, the comprehension of its principles and their expression in human terms) that was decisive. The creator of a Tarot deck therefore functions as a channel for the divine wisdom, or as a mediator between the astral world and the aspiring adept. The physical realisation of the pictures is then an instrument that re-traces the initial, inspired human insight into divine wisdom and translates it into appropriate symbols, to make it accessible to a wider group of individuals.

The history of the Tarot in the Golden Dawn is characterised by the concepts of individual progress through experience, and universal progress through recognition of the former, so that the system generates progress in itself. It is not possible to trace the exact amount of Golden Dawn imagery that found its way into either of Waite's and Crowley's sets.⁵ Waite's and Crowley's personalities are revealed in their publications, especially in their style, which is scholarly and explanatory for Waite, but confusing and obscure in the case of Crowley. Indeed Waite formulated his writings

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so carefully that it is difficult to trace his occult ambitions or find betrayal of the oath of secrecy he had sworn to the Order.⁶ Nevertheless these personalised accounts have a common denominator in their meticulous approach to the subject matter, the Tarot. Mathers re-wrote his rituals several times, and eventually incorporated Waite's Tarot deck into the teachings of the Order; Waite published several tracts on the Tarot, in revised versions.⁷ Even Crowley's insistence on several redrafts of his Tarot cards – a procedure which cost Frieda Harris several years in of her life and, for want of a better pun, her spirits – may be put into this context. In spite of these three men's strong characters, the motivation for their repetitive adaptation of Tarot lore lies not primarily in a desire for personal expression or gain. Instead, it emerges from an attempt to find a perfect system for the communication of a higher truth, an attempt which was always sensitive to new, improved insights into the astral world.

3

While the Order provided its adepts with information on divination in the form of manuscripts and private instruction, the production of cards for personal use was each member's own responsibility. As already mentioned above, all adepts were required to 'copy [...] [Tattwa symbols] as accurately as possible'.⁸ For Tarot decks there were similar practices in place. Members reportedly reproduced their own sets of cards from Mathers' templates, in accordance with detailed instructions for outlines and colour schemes. This tradition continued even when Tarot decks were obtainable, though sometimes on a more basic level: the founder of a daughter order of the Golden Dawn, the Builders of the Adytum, once a member of the Golden Dawn himself, produced a deck with outline drawings in black and white, which was handed out
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Announcement

Starting in May 2006, the journal *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* put out by the University of Pennsylvania Press will become available as a package with the Societas Magica dues. Dues rates with the journal will go up accordingly.

DUES FOR 2006 (when the journal has only 2 scheduled issues):

All Members: \$35/year

Of this amount, \$20 goes to the press, \$15 stays with Societas Magica

(\$20 represents \$5 off the newsstand price for the journal.)

Dues are payable by May 15 of each year. A reminder notice will go out in April. The first issue of the journal will be mailed out later in May.

DUES FOR 2007 and following years (when the journal will be issued quarterly):

Student rate: \$35

(distribution as above)

Regular Members: \$47

Of this amount, \$32 goes to the press, \$15 stays with Societas Magica

(\$32 is \$7 off newsstand price for the Journal)

Those who do not wish to subscribe to the journal may remain members and receive the newsletter at a rate of \$15 per year.

Arrangements are being made to allow all members, including those not resident in the US, to pay dues online at the Societas Magica website through Paypal.

Sessions Sponsored by the Societas Magica at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds, U.K.,

July 10-13, 2006

For further details, see IMC website at
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2006.html>

I. Session 1012 Magic, Emotion, and the Mind: Sophie Page, moderator

Magic and Emotion in 13th-Century Pastoral Manuals

Catherine Rider

The Mentally Incapacitated as the Key to Unlocking the Connection between the Mind and the Soul in Late Medieval England

Wendy Turner

Magic and Emotion in the Works of Roger Bacon

Amanda Power

II. Session 1112 Magic, Emotion and Power

Emotions: A Source of, or Impediment to, Magical Power?

Frank Klaassen

Intention, Emotion, and Wonder in Medieval Ritual Magic

Sophie L. Page

Military Magic as a Means of Sublimating Hope, Wrath, and Disappointment

Benedek Láng

Sessions Sponsored by the Societas Magica at the Forty-First International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 4-7, 2006

For further details, see IMC website at <http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/>

I. Codicological Contexts for Works of Magic I

(Co-Sponsored by the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence)

New Genre or Old Corruption?

Two Versions of a Medieval Hebrew Magic Manual - Victoria Duroff, University of Toronto

The Healer and the Book: Rituals in Late Medieval Remedybooks - Lea Olsan, University of Louisiana at Monroe

Magical Texts in Physical Context: The Codicology of a Thirteenth-Century English Amulet - Don C. Skemer, Princeton University

II. Codicological Contexts for Works of Magic II

(Co-Sponsored by the Research Group on Manuscript Evidence)

A Twelfth-Century Treatise on Esoteric Shorthand in its Manuscript Context - John Haines, University of Toronto

The Fortunes of a Book: Berengarius Ganellus' Summa Sacre Magice (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Germ. Fol. 903) - Jan Veenstra, University of Groningen

'The Syve will Turne Rounde': Reclaiming Ritual Magic in Oxford, Bodleian, MS Additional B.1. - Christopher Phillips, University of Saskatchewan

III. Magic, Conception and Childbirth

(Co-Sponsored by Medica: Society for the Study of Healing in the Middle Ages)

An Overview of Charms, Herbs and Amulets in Medieval Women's Birthing Practices - Ginger Guardiola, Colorado State University

How Ædelhild Expected When She Was Exepecting: Prognostication and Self-Help in Anglo-Saxon England - John A. Geck, University of Toronto

Magical Intervention in High Medieval Conception and Birth - Fiona Harris-Stoertz, Trent University

IV. Magical and Sacred Objects: Talismans, Chalices, Wheels

Guardians at the Door: Apotropaic Remedies for Domicilic Perils - C. Riley Auge, Flathead Valley Community College

Contagious Grace: Ritual Paraphernalia and Magical Contamination in Medieval Christianity - Ayse Tuzlak, University of Calgary

Working Models: Theorizing Kabbalistic Volvelles - Marla Segol, Carleton University

V. Picatrix

The Medici Carved Gems and the Picatrix - Pat Aakhus, University of Southern Indiana

Picatrix Illustratus - Benedek Láng, Budapest University of Technology and Economics

Facias Ymaginem: Wax Figures and Interpersonal Relations in Picatrix - Elisabeth Carnell, Western Michigan University

The annual general meeting will be held noon, Saturday, May 6, 2006

Notes and Queries

Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages

Catherine Rider

A new book recently issued from Oxford University Press, *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages* looks at the widely held medieval belief that magic could cause sexual dysfunction, focusing mainly on the period 1150-1450. Many the sources for this were produced in medieval universities, or by authors who had been educated there: commentaries

on canon law and on the university theology text-book, the Sentences of Peter Lombard, and medical compendia. The book argues that these academic sources often reflect magical practices that existed outside the universities, especially in the thirteenth century when a new drive towards reform and pastoral care in the Church brought a greater number of clerics than before into contact with popular magical practices, and encouraged them to write about what they had seen.

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together with exhaustive colouring instructions. Since Tarot cards were much more intricate in their design than Tattwa cards, their function was more instrumental in the induction of astral projection. Significantly, the experience during the copying process for Tarot cards appears to mirror or perhaps retrace that of the creation of Tarot decks described above. Even though merely imitating original artwork, an adept producing his own set suffers a bodily experience (the handling of paper and paint), which forms a complement to the spiritual act of astral projection. Rather than passively learning about the Tarot and its meanings, or simply using the cards as a divinatory tool, the adept establishes a link between himself and occult wisdom: he generates a new manifestation of the traditional symbols on paper whilst connecting with their place of origin, the astral world, in meditation.⁹

4

Naturally, occult experiences with the Tarot also inspired artistic expression in other media. William Butler Yeats was among those whose occult studies had a profound impact on his approach to life and work, as best documented in his autobiographies and his theories on the forces behind man's character, published in *A Vision*. A variety of scholarly studies on related subjects have been published in the past, ranging widely in their chosen methodologies. The only publication to date dealing specifically with the present topic, Kathleen Raine's *Yeats, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn*, observes direct correspondences between imagery in the Tarot and Yeats's writings.¹⁰ Yet a cursory look at Yeats's biography, the nature of his writings, and the concepts developed in his autobiographical and theoretical writings indicate that such a one to one correspondence is unlikely: while the Tarot doubtlessly left an impression on Yeats, it was only one of various

divination methods he studied, in one of several occult orders he attended.¹¹ Similarly, Yeats's poetic imagery is too complex as to be borrowed directly from the Tarot. The tower, a prominent image in Yeats's poems, may serve as an example. Although there is a theoretical possibility of its affinity with Tarot trump XVI, 'The Tower', it must be noted that the trump's meaning ('Victory over Splendour' or '[a]mbition, fighting, war courage. [...] In certain combinations, destruction, danger, fall ruin')¹² does not agree with the symbol as developed by Yeats, e.g. the tower as an emblem of man's solitary search for wisdom, as in "Ego Dominus Tuus" (1915) and "The Phases of the Moon" (1918). Further, especially in his later poems, there is a close connection between poetic and real towers, especially Thoor Ballylee, which Yeats owned from 1916 onwards ("To be Carved on a Stone at Thoor Ballylee" (1921), "A Prayer for my Daughter" (1919)). Whether Yeats's choice of home was due to an interest in a tower symbol or vice versa cannot be decided, and would be inconsequential at this point. However, there is much evidence (beyond the few examples just given) that an explicit correspondence of Tarot images and poetic images may not be shown with any certainty.¹³

Should we be surprised about the fact that a relationship between poetry and the Tarot cannot be shown at a literal level? By no means. As has been shown above, Yeats's search for wisdom led him to study in various occult societies, but he failed, or perhaps refused, to accept a single of these closed systems *in toto*. When internal quarrels in the Order of the Golden Dawn showed its flaws, Yeats considered continuing his occult studies independently, and even 'planned a mystical Order [...]; and for ten years to come [...] [his] most impassioned thought was a vain

attempt to find philosophy and to create ritual for that Order.'¹⁴ Although this plan never materialised on the envisaged scale, Yeats continued to look for alternative traditions outside the occult context which would prove more satisfactory for his purposes.

I am very religious, and deprived [...] of the simple-minded religion of my childhood, I made a new religion, almost an infallible Church of poetic tradition, of a fardel of stories, and of personages, and of emotions, inseparable from their first expression, passed on from generation to generation by poets and painters with some help from philosophers and theologians.¹⁵

Soon after these reflections, which Yeats noted down in his journal for 1887, his occupation with Irish literature culminated in his well-known endeavour to establish a Celtic revival, beginning with the establishment of the Irish Literary Society four years later.

Relevant for the present context is the fact that adept and poet give a nod to each other in the theories on poetry which Yeats developed throughout his adult life. There poetry, as an integral part of the search for enlightenment, aspires to perfect natural expression.¹⁶ Neither artistic nor artificial in the conventional sense of the terms, the composition of poetry becomes an experience involving emotion and intellect, just as reading the resulting piece of writing appeals to these two faculties. Unifying factor, instrument and vital part of this process are "symbols", a concept which Yeats develops especially in his essay on 'The Symbolism of Poetry'.

All sounds, all colours, all forms [...] call down among us certain disembodied powers, whose footsteps over our hearts we call emotions;

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and when sound, and colour, and form are in a musical relation, a beautiful relation to one another, they become, as it were, one sound, one colour, one form, and evoke an emotion that is made out of their distinct evocations and yet is one emotion. The same relation exists between all portions of every work of art, whether it be an epic or a song, and the more perfect it is and the more various and numerous the elements that have flowed into its perfection, the more powerful will be the emotion, the power, the god it calls among us. [...]

[With intellectual symbols,] innumerable meanings, which are held to [...] [certain concepts] by bonds of subtle suggestion, and alike in the emotions and in the intellect, move visibly through my mind, and move invisibly beyond the threshold of sleep, casting lights and shadows of an indefinable wisdom on

what had seemed before, it may be, but sterility and noisy violence.¹⁷

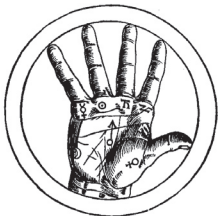
At this stage, subtle connections to the nature and function of symbols in the Tarot emerge, especially if we compare the 'threshold of sleep' with the state of mind in astral projection. Indeed, Yeats continues, 'the soul moves among symbols and unfolds in symbols when trance, or madness, or deep meditation has withdrawn it from every impulse but its own.'¹⁸

A third passage from Yeats's autobiography is even more evocative of the creation of a Tarot deck: '[w]hen a man writes any work of genius [...], is it not because some knowledge or power has come into his mind from beyond his mind? It is called up by an image, as I think'.¹⁹ And finally, a short note of Yeats's 'Essay on Magic', in which he states that the 'great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols', confirms that the conceptions of poetic and occult symbols have much in common. In both cases, symbols unite obscure concepts in a simple form, in order to evoke complex pictures. Symbols

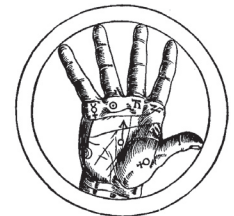
form the gate between man's mind (which is restricted while conscious but expanding in meditation) and the 'great memory', which cannot be accessed directly or understood without a mediating faculty, whatever form this may take. Moreover, magician and poet, priest and ancient Irish druid all take part in one practice, and consequently, ancient symbols occupy a special place in all traditions.²⁰ The emerging poetry Yeats describes and aspires to write is universal in that it connects poet and reader with emotions, pictures and truths that transcend the boundaries of established belief systems.

In the current context, it is particularly noteworthy that the poet may be regarded as an instrument, a mediator between man and universal knowledge and its translator into human terms, in the same way that the creator of a Tarot deck forms a connection between man and the astral world. Yet it should be noted that the poet is creator and artisan in one person, and therefore inspiration and creation occur more immediately for poetry than for a divination system. If we take all of the foresaid into account, it is this

The Societas Magica invites proposals for essays to run in future issues of the newsletter.



We are looking for short essays (1500 to 2500 words) announcing new developments deriving from research in the study and teaching of magic and its related topics. We are especially interested in writing which engages magic in tension or dialogue with other rhetorical and ritual constructions: magic and the law, medicine and magic, magic and modernity, magic and the secularized world.



We are also looking for smaller pieces for our notes and queries column. News about dissertations in progress or completed, manuscript discoveries, or other such items are all welcomed. Proposals for essays, smaller pieces, or notes on topics of potential interest to members of the Societas Magica will be welcome.

At the moment we are especially interested in writing which looks at periods other than medieval, but most topics are acceptable as long as they involve fresh research.

Please contact Lea Olsan: olsan@ulm.edu

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conceptual correlation between poetry and the Tarot that may indicate the effect of Yeats's spiritual life on his professional life and vice versa. For him, occult systems like the Tarot and poetry represent two sides of the same coin, and either could aid the mind on the path to divine enlightenment. Yeats did not (as Kathleen Raine stated) merely use or describe Tarot images in his poetry. Rather, encouraged by the forms of creativity promoted in turn of the century English occultism, he, like some of his contemporaries, incorporated his occultist knowledge in the conceptualisation of his creative work. Thus, Yeats the poet and Yeats the adept remain two faces of one inquisitive individual, and moreover a particularly inspired one.

¹ The history of the Order of the Golden Dawn, its rituals and symbolism have been described in detail in a number of publications, the most prominent of which are listed in the bibliography below. This article is based on my unpublished M.A. thesis, *Yeats und Tarot* (University of Heidelberg, 2002), which contains a comprehensive bibliography of relevant literature published at the time.

² The world introduced to the young Yeats through Irish folklore was certainly a magical one; he was not startled to hear the voice of his conscience talk to him. Moreover, his short-sightedness was corrected with glasses rather late, so that Yeats constructed his own, auditive rather than visual, hazy rather than concrete world picture. His childhood interest in religion went along with an early dismissal of organised religion as he found it in church. These and other aspects of his early life, although individually not particularly significant, culminated in his co-founding the 'Dublin Hermetic Society' while at the Metropolitan Arts School, his

interest in oriental belief systems, and attendance of a seance in the 1880s.

³ See for example Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 207 ff.; Gilbert, *Golden Dawn Companion*, p. 151.

⁴ These are Manuscripts N-R, which are comprised in the 'Book "T" – The Tarot' as printed by Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, vol. 4, pp. 137-208. The individual manuscripts are reproduced in Gilbert, *Golden Dawn Companion*, and comprise: 'Description of the Seventy-Eight Tarot Symbols together with their meanings', 'Astronomical Correspondences', 'Tabular View of the Dominion of the Symbols of the Book "T" in the Celestial Heavens, and of the operation and Rule of the Tree of Life in the same as projected on a solid sphere', 'Methods of Divination', 'The opening of the Key' and 'Tabulated Rules'.

⁵ Even though Waite's deck served the Order's purposes well, it is worth noting that it was "corrected" and re-issued by Paul Foster Case in the form of the black-and-white deck mentioned below.

⁶ Dummett, *Game of Tarot*, p. 155.

⁷ Waite's *Key to the Tarot* was published in 1910, with added pictures (as *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*) in 1911; and in a new, revised edition in 1920.

⁸ Wang, *Introduction to the Golden Dawn Tarot*, p. 20.

⁹ It is likely that Yeats had these experiences while in the Golden Dawn, although the physical evidence is ambiguous. His library contained two sets of Tattwa cards and three Tarot decks; 'one belonged to Yeats and is marked with card symbols and attributions in his hand; another belonged to George Pollexfen [his uncle] and has some signs added in his hand; a third, cleaner and newer, probably belonged to Mrs Yeats.' It is not clear whether 'card symbols' here refers to the Tarot images, a part of them, or symbols of a different kind. Nevertheless it should be noted that Yeats's estate further included

'a dagger, a wand, a pentacle, and a broken lotus, all presumably made and constructed by Yeats according to instructions.' Harper, p. 3.

¹⁰ An analysis of different types of criticism of modernist literature and the occult may be found in Surette in *Birth of Modernism*, pp. 8-9; he also identifies Raine as a 'member of the occult movement'.

¹¹ These are the 'Dublin Hermetic Society', the Theosophical Society (and, eventually, the 'esoteric section', one of its two specialised divisions) and the Order of the Golden Dawn, where Yeats again used the possibility to join an emerging sub-section, the 'Stella Matutina'. Yeats further had a vivid interest in related but non-occult societies (especially literary groups), and did not restrict his occult experiences to those of the Golden Dawn.

¹² Mathers' 'Notes on the Tarot'/Book T; Regardie, *Original Account*, pp. 542 and 585.

¹³ Some examples of more recent discussions of the relation between literature and the occult, although excellent in their historical and analytic approach to the subject, have neglected the aspects developed in the following paragraphs; see e.g. Surette, *The Birth of Modernism* (1993); Materer, *Modernist Alchemy* (1995); and Surette/ Tryphonopoulos, eds., *Literary Modernism and the Occult Tradition* (1996). It should be noted that an unpublished doctoral dissertation which I have not been able to consult may be illuminating in related areas, even if it does not specifically focus on the Tarot: Elizabeth Tashery Shannon, *Tree and gyre: Yeats's poems, occultism, and 'A Vision'* (University of Kentucky, 2005).

¹⁴ Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 204.

¹⁵ Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 115.

¹⁶ This thought is developed in much of Yeats's critical writing, but the account of what was probably his initial reflection on style and role of poetry may be found in his *Autobiographies*,

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p. 105.

¹⁷ Yeats, *Essays*, pp. 156-157 and 160-161.

¹⁸ Yeats, *Essays*, p. 162.

¹⁹ Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 216.

²⁰ The poetic tradition of ritual and religious ceremony and the role of the Irish druid in this system cannot be discussed in detail here. Suffice to say that Yeats perceives the medium of poetry to be the unifying factor between these traditions.

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