W.B. YEATS

THE POEMS OF W.B. YEATS

VOLUME THREE: 1899–1910

EDITED BY
PETER McDONALD

ROUTLEDGE

THE POEMS OF W.B. YEATS

In this multi-volume edition, the poetry of W.B. Yeats (1865–1939) is presented in full, with newly established texts and detailed, wide-ranging commentary. Yeats began to write verse in the nineteenth century, and over time his own arrangements of poems repeatedly revised and rearranged both texts and canon. This edition of Yeats's poetry presents all his verse, both published and unpublished, including a generous selection of textual variants from the many manuscript and printed sources. The edition also supplies the most extensive commentary on Yeats's poetry to date, explaining specific references, and setting poems in their contexts; it also gives an account of the vast range of both literary and historical influences at work on the verse. The poems are presented in order of composition, and major revisions or rewritings of poems result in separate inclusions (in chronological sequence) for these writings as they were subsequently reconceived by the poet.

In this third volume, Yeats's poetry of the first decade of the twentieth century is brought into sharp focus, revealing the extent of his efforts to re-fashion a style that had already made him a well-known poet. All of the major modes in Yeats's earlier work are subject to radical re-imagining in these years, from poetic narrative founded in Irish myth, in poems such as 'Baile and Aillinn' and 'The Old Age of Queen Maeve', to the symbolist drama-poetry of *The Shadowy Waters*, here edited in its two (completely different) versions of 1900 and 1906. In a decade when the theatre was one of Yeats's principal concerns, his lyric poems, which were becoming increasingly explicit in personal terms, began to discover new intensities of conversational pitch and mythic resonance. Poems such as 'The Folly of Being Comforted', 'Adam's Curse', 'No Second Troy', and 'The Fascination of What's Difficult' are given close attention in this new edition, alongside topical and epigrammatic pieces that are often passed over in accounts of Yeats's development. The evolving complexities of Yeats's personal and political lives are crucial to his artistic growth in these years, and the commentary gives these generous attention, showing how the poetry both feeds upon and often transcends the circumstances of its composition. The volume offers strong evidence for this decade as a crucial one in Yeats's poetic life, in which the poet created wholly new registers for his verse as well as new dimensions for his imaginative vision.

Peter McDonald is an Irish poet and critic. He has published eight books of poetry, including his *Collected Poems* (2012), and four books of criticism, including *Sound Intentions: The Workings of Rhyme in Nineteenth-Century Poetry* (2012). He has edited several critical collections, and is the author of numerous articles on nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry. He has taught at the Universities of Cambridge, Bristol, and Oxford, where he became Christopher Tower Student and Tutor in Poetry in 1999. Since 2016, he has been Professor of British and Irish Poetry at the University of Oxford.

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TO EDNA LONGLEY

Contents

A Note from the General Editors

The Longman Annotated English Poets series was launched in 1965 with the publication of Kenneth Allott's edition of *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*. F.W. Bateson wrote then that the 'new series is the first designed to provide university students and teachers, and the general reader with complete and fully annotated editions of the major English poets'. That remains the aim of the series, and Bateson's original vision of its policy remains essentially the same. Its 'concern is primarily with the *meaning* of the extant texts in their various contexts'.

Accordingly, the annotation which the various editors provide ranges from the glossing of obscure words and references to the evocation of the cultural, social, and political contexts within which the poems were created and first received. The editions draw on recent scholarship but also embody the fruits of the editors' own new research. The aim, in so far as this is possible through the medium of editorial annotation, is to place the modern reader in a position which approximates that enjoyed by the poems' first audience.

The treatment of the text has varied pragmatically from edition to edition; some have provided modernized texts where the original conventions of spelling and punctuation were likely to create problems for a reader, whereas others retain the original accidentals – the spelling, punctuation, italics, and capitals.

In the case of this new edition of Yeats, the editor's detailed research into the cultural contexts of Yeats's poetry provides a new generation of readers with an extensive resource for understanding not only Yeats's own extraordinary work but also the rich and diverse culture of his Ireland.

Paul Hammond
David Hopkins
Michael Rossington

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to all those institutions and individuals who have contributed to the research on which this edition is based. I have been fortunate to receive such generous help and advice throughout.

A primary debt is owed to those libraries and research collections on whose resources I have drawn, and I must acknowledge in particular the staffs of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the National Library of Ireland in Dublin, and the John J. Burns Collection, in the library of Boston College.

An edition such as this one is bound to be heavily indebted to all its predecessors, but there are some editors of Yeats to whom I must express a special obligation. I have built on foundations laid by fine editors of the poet, not least those of the late Professors A.N. Jeffares, Daniel Albright, and Richard J. Finneran; and I have been inspired as well as educated by the extraordinary achievements of the editors associated with the continuing project of Yeats's *Collected Letters*: Professor John Kelly, Professor Ronald Schuchard, Professor Warwick Gould, and Deirdre Toomey have also, besides their labours over the *Letters*, contributed in many ways to establishing the modern scholarship on Yeats from which I hope I have profited, and to which the present work is contributed with (all too necessary) humility.

My editors in the Longman Annotated English Poets series – Professor Paul Hammond, Professor David Hopkins, and Professor Michael Rossington – have once again proved exemplary in their care and patience, and I remain appreciative of the attention with which they have read and thought about this volume. Any errors now (as before) are to be laid solely to my own account.

Among the many people whose advice and critical acumen have been necessary to the present work, and whose support has been invaluable for it, I thank especially Professor Fran Brearton, Professor Matthew Campbell, Professor Roy Foster, Professor Edward Larrissy, and Professor Rosanna Warren. The support of my family has been, as ever, essential: I remain grateful and indebted to Karen, Louisa, and Sammy.

This volume is dedicated to Professor Edna Longley, without whose lifetime of critical and scholarly work the understanding of modern poetry, and of Irish poetry in particular, would be immeasurably the poorer: I have learned from her more things about poetry and Ireland – and of course about Yeats – than I could hope to enumerate. Beyond that, Edna Longley's example, support, and friendship have contributed more to my own endeavours – as an editor, a critic, and as a poet – than I can ever satisfactorily express.

Peter McDonald

Woodstock, Oxfordshire, 2022

Chronology of W.B. Yeats's Life and Publications, 1899–1910

For abbreviations of names, see p. xv.

1899 (Feb.) In Paris, proposes marriage to MG, unsuccessfully. During his stay, meets with J.M. Synge.
(Apr.) Publication of *The Wind Among the Reeds*.
(May) Publication of *Poems* (1899). First performance of *The Countess Cathleen* in Dublin: despite success, the play is subsequently denounced in the press by Cardinal Logue as religiously unorthodox. WBY goes to Coole, where he is to be based until Nov.
(Sep.) Spends time with MG in Dublin and Belfast.
(Oct.) Begins collaborative work with GM on drama *Diarmuid and Grania*. On platform with MG and John O'Leary in Dublin public meeting against the South African War.
(Nov.) Returns to London.

1900 (3 Jan.) Death of WBY's mother, Susan Pollexfen.
(Feb.) Debilitated by prolonged colds, WBY is cared for in London by AG. Attends short season by the Irish Literary Theatre in Dublin.
(Mar.) Publishes a letter in protest at Queen Victoria's projected visit to Ireland. Quarrel with MacGregor Mathers over provenance of GD foundational documents.
(Apr.) Confrontation with Mathers's lieutenant, Aleister Crowley (armed and in highland regalia), at GD premises; later this month WBY and other GD members win legal case against Crowley.
(May) *The Shadowy Waters* published in the US magazine *The North American Review*.
(Jun.) In residence at Coole, where WBY is based until Oct.
(Aug.) Attends public dedication of headstone at the grave of the poet Raftery, with AG, Douglas Hyde and Edward Martyn.
(Dec.) Publication of *The Shadowy Waters* in book form.

1901 (Apr.) Publication of *P01*.
(May) Becomes a client of literary agent A.P. Watt.
(Jul.) Spends the month at Coole, and stays intermittently until Oct.
(Oct.) *Diarmuid and Grania* produced in Dublin.
(Dec.) In contact for the first time with JQ.

1902 (Apr.) *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, with MG playing the title role, produced to acclaim in Dublin, with WBY in attendance. AG's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, with a Preface by WBY, published.
(Jun.) Visit with GM to site of Tara, where destructive amateur excavations are in progress. WBY goes into residence at Coole for the summer.
(Jul.) Publication of expanded edn. of *The Celtic Twilight*.
(Sep.) Quarrel with GM over collaboration on a play, *Where There is Nothing*, prompting WBY to write the play in great haste in order to produce a work wholly his own.

(Oct.) *Where There is Nothing* published in *The United Irishman*. Publication of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*.

(Nov.) In Dublin, meets James Joyce for the first time.

1903 (Feb.) Learns of MG's intention to marry John MacBride, and of her decision to join the Roman Catholic Church; WBY begs her not to go ahead with either of these things, but MG is received into the Church on 17 Feb. and marries MacBride on 21 Feb.

(Mar.) *The Hour-Glass* performed in Dublin.

(May) Meets with MG in London, and hears from her of the unhappiness of her new marriage. Publication of *Ideas of Good and Evil* (a collection of WBY's essays), and of the play *Where There is Nothing*.

(Jun.) In residence at Coole, intermittently until mid-Oct.

(Jul.) Publishes letter of protest on the visit to Ireland of the new king, Edward VII.

(Aug.) Publication of *In the Seven Woods*: *Being Poems Chiefly of the Irish Heroic Age* by ECY's Dun Emer Press. Publication of *The Hour-Glass*.

(Sep.) *The Hour-Glass* published in the *North American Review*, and *The Pot of Broth* published in the *Gael*.

(Oct.) *The King's Threshold* performed in Dublin.

(Nov.) Sails to America for US lecture tour, organized by JQ. Based in New York City, WBY has an itinerary that takes him between now and mid-Mar. 1904 across the whole country and into Canada.

(Dec.) Dines with President Theodore Roosevelt: they discuss the fairies.

1904 (Jan.) AG's *Gods and Fighting Men* published, with a Preface by WBY.

(Mar.) Helped by JQ, in negotiations with Macmillan in New York to become the American publishers of his work. Publication of *On Baile's Strand* and *The King's Threshold*. Sails back to England and arrives Mar. 16.

(May) Annie Horniman's offer to purchase the Mechanics' Institute in Dublin as a performance venue for the Irish National Literary Theatre is accepted by AG and WBY.

(Jun.) Publication of *P04*. *Where There is Nothing* performed in London. Publication of WBY's fiction, *The Adoration of the Magi and The Tables of the Law* (first published privately in 1897).

(Jul.) In residence at Coole, where he works on his play *Deirdre*, until Oct.

(Dec.) Opening season in Dublin of the new Abbey Theatre.

1905 (Jun.) Publication of *Stories of Red Hanrahan*. Has initial conversations at Stratford-on-Avon with A.H. Bullen which will lead to the project for *Collected Works in Verse and Prose* (1908).

(Jul.) Having disliked a London production by Florence Farr of *The Shadowy Waters*, WBY goes to Coole (where he is based until the autumn) and begins work on the play's wholesale rewriting.

1906 (Apr.) A heavily revised version of *On Baile's Strand* is performed in Dublin.

(Sep.) Publication of *The Poems of Spenser*, edited by WBY.

(Oct.) Publication of *Poems 1899–1905*.

(Nov.) Publication of vol. 1 of *Poetical Works* in the US.

1907 (Jan.) WBY goes hurriedly from Scotland to Ireland on the news that the first performance of Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* at the Abbey has been disrupted by protesters. After the week's run has been completed (with help from the police), WBY takes part in public debate at the Theatre on the play.
(Mar.) Although he is in Dublin, WBY decides he will not attend the funeral of his early mentor, John O'Leary, probably on account of O'Leary's late association with MG's estranged husband John MacBride.
(Apr.–May) WBY tours Italy in the company of AG and her son Robert, visiting Florence, Rimini, San Marino, Venice, Urbino, and Ravenna.
(Jul.) In residence at Coole, intermittently until Oct. Publication of vol. 2 of *Poetical Works* (consisting of WBY's plays) in the US.
(Aug.) Publication of *Deirdre*.
(Dec.) WBY's short prose pieces, *Discoveries*, published by Dun Emer Press.

1908 (Mar.) Play *The Golden Helmet* produced by the Abbey in Dublin (published in America for copyright purposes in Jun.). Begins romantic involvement with Mabel Dickinson.
(May) Publication of *The Unicorn from the Stars*, WBY's collaborative rewriting with AG of *Where There is Nothing*.
(Jun.) Spends a week in Paris, in constant company with MG. *P08* published.
(Jul.) Takes up summer residence at Coole, staying until the end of Sep. Believes himself to be in spiritual contact with MG, and by Sep. in an occasional state of astral union with her.
(Sep.) First two volumes of *CWVP08* published.
(Oct.) Sees MG in London, though relationship moves no closer to a stable romantic state. Vols. 3 and 4 of *CWVP08* published.
(Nov.) Vols. 5 and 6 of *CWVP08* published. Successful Dublin production of *Deirdre* starring Mrs. Patrick Campbell, which moves to London at the end of the month.
(Dec.) Vols. 7 and 8 of *CWVP08* published. Goes to Paris for over three weeks, seeing much of MG and probably in brief sexual relationship with her.

1909 (Feb.) WBY is seriously perturbed by reports of AG's serious illness (she does, however, recover rapidly from this).
(Mar.) The death of J.M. Synge (whose terminal illness WBY had known about for some time) occasions private distress, as well as being a serious event for the Abbey Theatre.
(Jul.) Goes to Coole for the summer, staying in Ireland until Nov.

1910 (Feb.) Dublin performance of *The Green Helmet* (WBY's earlier *The Golden Helmet* rewritten in verse).
(Mar.) Publication of *Poems: Second Series*, dated 1909.
(Apr.–May) Visits Colleville-sur-Mer in Normandy, where he stays as guest of MG.
(Jul.) In residence at Coole intermittently until mid-Oct.
(Aug.) British government awards WBY a Civil List pension of £150 p.a.
(Sep.) Death in Sligo of WBY's uncle, George Pollexfen. Advance copies of *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (Cuala Press) arrive, though the book is not published until Dec.

Abbreviations

In the notes to the poems, abbreviations have been employed for references to some persons, to certain volumes published by W.B. Yeats, to edited versions of the poet's work, and to some frequently mentioned critical and reference materials. Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

Persons

AG	Lady Augusta Gregory
ECY	Elizabeth Corbet Yeats ('Lolly'), the poet's sister
GM	George Moore
GY	George Yeats (née Hyde-Lees), the poet's wife
JBY	John Butler Yeats, the poet's father
JQ	John Quinn
MG	Maud Gonne
SMY	Susan Mary Yeats ('Lily'), the poet's sister
WBY	William Butler Yeats

Books by W.B. Yeats

CP33	*The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (1933).
CP50	*The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (1950).
CWVP08	*The Collected Works in Verse and Prose of W.B. Yeats* (8 vols.) (Stratford-on-Avon, 1908).
EPS	*Early Poems and Stories* (1925).
GH10	*The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (Dundrum, 1910).
GH12	*The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (New York, 1912).
ISW	*In the Seven Woods: Being Poems Chiefly of the Irish Heroic Age* (Dundrum, 1903).
LP22	*Later Poems* (1922).
LP26	*Later Poems* (1926)
LP31	*Later Poems* (1931).
P49	*The Poems of W.B. Yeats* (2 vols.) (1949).
P99	*Poems* (1899). [Thirteen further editions of this book appeared between 1901 and 1929: where these are referred to, they are abbreviated to *P* with the last two digits of the year of publication – e.g. *P12* is *Poems* (1912).]
P99–05	*Poems 1899–1905* (Stratford-on-Avon and Dublin, 1906).
PSS	*Poems*: *Second Series* (1909).
PW06	*The Poetical Works of William B. Yeats* vol. 1 (New York, 1906) and vol. 2. (New York, 1907).
R14	*Responsibilities*: *Poems and Two Plays* (Dundrum, 1914).

R16	*Responsibilities and Other Poems* (1916).
SP21	*Selected Poems* (1921).
SP29	*Selected Poems Lyrical and Narrative* (1929).
TSW	*The Shadowy Waters* (1900, 1906).

Other Writings by W.B. Yeats

Letters

CL 1	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats* vol. 1 (1865–1895) eds. John Kelly and Eric Domville (Oxford, 1986).
CL 2	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats* vol. 2 (1896–1900) eds. Warwick Gould, John Kelly, and Deirdre Toomey (Oxford, 1997).
CL 3	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats* vol. 3 (1901–1904) eds. John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford, 1994).
CL 4	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats* vol. 4 (1905–1907) eds. John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford, 2005).
CL 5	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats* vol. 5 (1908–1910) eds. John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford, 2018).
InteLex	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats. Electronic Edition* gen. ed. John Kelly (Charlottesville VA, InteLex Corporation, 2002).

Edited Writings of W.B. Yeats

Albright	*W.B. Yeats*: *The Poems* ed. Daniel Albright (1990).
Bradford *PQ*	*The Writing of* The Player Queen ed. Curtis Bradford (De Kalb, IL, 1977).
Cornell *Deirdre*	Deirdre: *Manuscript Materials* ed. Virginia Bartholome Rohan (Ithaca, NY, 2004).
Cornell *DG*	Diarmuid and Grania: *Manuscript Materials* ed. J.C.C. Mays (Ithaca, NY, 2005).
Cornell *ISWGH*	In the Seven Woods *and* The Green Helmet and Other Poems: *Manuscript Materials* ed. David Holdeman (Ithaca, NY, 2002).
CW 1	*The Poems* 2nd edn., ed. R.J. Finneran (1997).
CW 2	*The Plays* eds. David R. Clark and Rosalind E. Clark (2001).
CW 3	*Autobiographies* eds. William H. O'Donnell and Douglas N. Archibald (1999).
CW 4	*Early Essays* eds. Richard J. Finneran and George Bornstein (2007).
CW 5	*Later Essays* ed. William H. O'Donnell (1994).
CW 6	*Prefaces and Introductions* ed. William H. O'Donnell (1988).
CW 8	*The Irish Dramatic Movement* eds. Mary FitzGerald and Richard J. Finneran (2003).
CW 9	*Early Articles and Reviews* eds. John P. Frayne and Madeleine Marchaterre (2004).

CW 10	*Later Articles and Reviews* ed. Colton Johnson (2000).
DC	*Druid Craft*: *The Writing of* The Shadowy Waters eds. Michael J. Sidnell, George P. Mayhew, and David R. Clark (Amerst, MA, 1971).
M	*Mythologies* eds. Warwick Gould and Deirdre Toomey (2005).
Mem.	*Memoirs* ed. Denis Donoghue (1972).
SB	*The Speckled Bird: An Autobiographical Novel with Variant Versions: New Edition* ed. William H. O'Donnell (2003).
VE	*The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats* eds. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (1956).
VP	*The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats* ed. Russell K. Alspach (1966).
YP	*Yeats's Poems* ed. A.N. Jeffares (1989, 3rd edn. 1996).

Writings by Lady Gregory

AGD92–02	*Lady Gregory's Diaries 1892–1902* ed. James Pethica (Gerrards Cross, 1996).
CM	*Cuchulain of Muirthemne*: *The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster* (1902).
GFM	*Gods and Fighting Men*: *The Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland* (1904).
SY	*Seventy Years*: *Being the Autobiography of Lady Gregory* (ed. Colin Smythe) (Gerrards Cross, 1974).
VBWI	*Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland* (2 vols.) (1920).

Other Writings

Denson	*Letters from AE* ed. Alan Denson (1961).
G-YL	*The Gonne–Yeats Letters 1893–1938* eds. Anna MacBride White and A. Norman Jeffares (1994).
LTWBY 1, 2	*Letters to W.B. Yeats* eds. Richard J. Finneran, George Mills Harper, and William M. Murphy (2 vols., Basingstoke, 1977).
Mikhail 1, 2	*W.B. Yeats: Interviews and Recollections* ed. E.H. Mikhail (2 vols., Basingstoke, 1977).
Moore	*W.B. Yeats and T. Sturge Moore*: *Their Correspondence 1901–1937* ed. Ursula Bridge (1953).
Murphy	William M. Murphy, *Prodigal Father*: *The Life of John Butler Yeats (1839–1922)* (1978, 2nd edn. Syracuse, NY, 2001).
Servant	Maud Gonne MacBride, *A Servant to the Queen*: *Reminiscences* (1938), eds. A. Norman Jeffares and Anna MacBride White (Gerrards Cross, 1994).
TLAS	*Too Long a Sacrifice*: *The Letters of Maud Gonne and John Quinn* eds. J. and R. Londraville (Cranbury, NJ, 1999).

Critical and Reference Materials

The following is a list of the most commonly cited books of criticism and reference in the present volume's notes. It is not a critical bibliography: the fullest listings of critical work may be found in K.P.S. Jochum, *W.B. Yeats*: *A Critical Bibliography of Criticism* 2nd edn. (Urbana, IL, 1990), supplemented by annual bibliographies in *YACTS* and *YA*.

Adams	Hazard Adams, *The Book of Yeats's Poems* (Tallahassee, FL, 1990).
Bloom	Harold Bloom, *Yeats* (1970).
Bornstein	George Bornstein, *Yeats and Shelley* (Chicago, IL, 1970).
Bradford	Curtis Bradford, *Yeats at Work* (Carbondale, IL, 1965).
Brown	Terence Brown, *The Life of W.B. Yeats*: *A Critical Biography* (Oxford, 1999).
Chapman	Wayne K. Chapman, *Yeats and English Renaissance Literature* (New York, 1991).
Cullingford	Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, *Gender and History in Yeats's Love Poetry* (Cambridge, 1993).
Donoghue	Denis Donoghue, *Yeats* (Glasgow, 1971).
Ellmann, *Man and the Masks*	Richard Ellmann, *Yeats*: *The Man and the Masks* (1948, 2nd edn. 1979).
Ellmann, *Identity*	Richard Ellmann, *The Identity of Yeats* (1954, 2nd edn. 1964).
Engelberg	Edward Engelberg, *The Vast Design: Patterns in W.B. Yeats's Aesthetic* (Toronto, 1964, 2nd edn. 1988).
Finneran	Richard J. Finneran, *Editing Yeats's Poems: A Reconsideration* (Basingstoke, 1990).
Greaves	Richard Greaves, *Tradition, Reception and Modernism in W.B. Yeats* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).
Grene	Nicholas Grene, *Yeats's Poetic Codes* (Oxford, 2008).
Harris	Daniel A. Harris, *Yeats Coole Park and Ballylee* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).
Henn	T.R. Henn, *The Lonely Tower: Studies in the Poetry of W.B. Yeats* (1950).
Holdeman	David Holdeman, *Much Labouring*: *The Texts and Authors of Yeats's First Modernist Books* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1997).
Holdeman and Levitas	David Holdeman and Ben Levitas eds., *W.B. Yeats in Context* (Cambridge, 2010).
Hone	Joseph Hone, *W.B. Yeats 1865–1939* (1943, 2nd edn. 1962).
Howes	Marjorie Howes, *Yeats's Nations*: *Gender, Class, and Irishness* (Cambridge, 1996).

Howes and Kelly	Marjorie Howes and J.S. Kelly eds., *The Cambridge Companion to W.B. Yeats* (Cambridge, 2006).
Jeffares	A. Norman Jeffares, *A New Commentary on the Poems of W.B. Yeats* (Basingstoke, 1984).
Kelly	J.S. Kelly, *A W.B. Yeats Chronology* (Basingstoke, 2003).
Larrissy	Edward Larrissy, *Yeats the Poet*: *The Measures of Difference* (Hemel Hempstead, 1994).
Loizeaux	Elizabeth Bergman Loizeaux, *Yeats and the Visual Arts* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1986).
Longley	Edna Longley, *Yeats and Modern Poetry* (Cambridge, 2013).
McGarry	James P. McGarry, *Place Names in the Writings of William Butler Yeats* (Gerrards Cross, 1976).
MacNeice	Louis MacNeice, *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats* (1941, 2nd edn. 1967).
Parkinson	Thomas Parkinson, *W.B. Yeats, Self-Critic: A Study of his Early Verse* (Berkeley, CA, 1951).
Purdy	Dwight H. Purdy, *Biblical Echo and Allusion in the Poetry of W.B. Yeats* (Cranbury, NJ, 1994).
Ramazani	Jahan Ramazani, *Yeats and the Poetry of Death: Elegy, Self-Elegy, and the Sublime* (New Haven, CT, 1990).
Reid	Forrest Reid, *W.B. Yeats*: *A Critical Study* (1915).
Saul	G.B. Saul, *Prolegomena to the Study of Yeats's Poems* (Philadelphia, PA, 1957).
Schuchard	Ronald Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (Oxford, 2008).
Sidnell	Michael J. Sidnell, *Yeats's Poetry and Poetics* (Basingstoke, 1996).
Toomey	*Yeats and Women* ed. Deirdre Toomey (Basingstoke, 1997).
Vendler	Helen Vendler, *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form* (Oxford, 2007).
Wade	Allan Wade, *A Bibliography of the Writings of W.B. Yeats* (1951, 3rd edn. 1968).
Whitaker	Thomas R. Whitaker, *Swan and Shadow: Yeats's Dialogue with History* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1964).
YA	*Yeats Annual* (London and Basingstoke, 1982–). Cited by volume.
YACTS	*Yeats*: *An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies* (Ithaca, NY, and Ann Arbor, MI, 1983–1999). Cited by volume.

Other Abbreviations

GD	Order of the Golden Dawn.
NLI	National Library of Ireland.
NYPL	New York Public Library.

In recording manuscript variants, the following abbreviations and signs are used in the notes.

del. (following word or phrase)	Deleted: where a replacement is made for one or two words, this is transcribed after *del*. (e.g., How *del*. Why).
del. (within square brackets [ ])	Deleted: where a line or lines have been deleted, the whole is enclosed within square brackets, e.g. [Who lies beneath these *del*.]
^ and ^. . .^	Indicates written material entered by WBY either above a line or between two lines.
hol.	Holograph.
MS	Manuscript.
repr.	Reproduced.
TS	Typescript.

Introduction

In keeping with the principles of the Longman Annotated English Poets series, this edition of W.B. Yeats's poetry sets out to provide edited texts of all the author's poems, including a selection of textual variants from manuscript and printed sources, along with a commentary that explains specific references, sets poems in their contexts, and offers an account of particular influences, both literary and historical, at work on the verse. As much as possible, poems are presented in order of composition, and major revisions or rewritings result in separate inclusions (in chronological sequence) for works thus reconceived by the poet. It follows from this that the edition is not, and cannot even remotely resemble, any book that Yeats himself would have envisaged in order to present his *oeuvre* to posterity. There have been many arguments (often intense ones) about the figure Yeats 'finally' intended his work to cut, in terms of its presentation in a 'collected' form. For the most part, these are not arguments that this edition feels obliged to address – nor are they, perhaps, arguments capable of any definitive solution in editorial terms. Instead, this Longman edition presents a life's poetic work in a form which its author would never have intended – as a relatively heavily annotated, continuous chronological sequence – in order to provide a new perspective (part historical, part critical) on a career of composition that began when the poet was about seventeen and ended only days before his death in 1939, at the age of seventy-four. The shape this edition makes is the partly accidental one made by an actual life; whereas the shape of Yeats's intended *oeuvre* is something quite distinct, and far more a matter of design than of chance. The purpose of this brief introduction is to outline the editorial principles that have been applied and to explain the consequences in practice of those principles, since Yeats offers some editorial difficulties that are not often presented in such acute forms by other poets.

Principles of inclusion. It is the aim of the present edition to make as comprehensive a gathering as possible of Yeats's poems. By 'poems' here is meant more than just those pieces which the poet saw into print, and unpublished or abandoned work is included alongside the poetry that appeared in volume or periodical forms. The question of what is meant by a poem for these purposes needs to be addressed: of the many manuscript stray lines and stray phrases, for which no home in any completed piece is easily to be found, a large proportion have not been included here, except in cases where they seem to possess inherent interest for critical reading (as, for example, when they point forwards to later creative developments for the poet). On a much larger scale, though, the problem in deciding what should constitute a 'poem' by Yeats affects editorial policy with regard to work cast in dramatic form. Here, an editorial decision has been taken not to include the verse-plays for which Yeats plainly had staging intentions at the time of composition, and which were subsequently played on stage, but to provide edited versions of those works which, though set out on the page in dramatic form, were either never performed or had no reasonable prospect of performance.

Such works belong mainly to the earliest phase of the poet's career, and it is with *The Countess Cathleen* (begun in 1889) that Yeats's dramatic composition begins to be

unambiguously an attempt at something which will be represented on stage. From this point onwards, the fact of generic difference means that Yeats's verse-drama, though closely related to his body of lyric poetry, is not incorporated in the present edition (though on those occasions when the poet allowed a lyric from a play to be printed separately, that is brought within the purview of the present work). A difficult case is presented by the verse-play *The Shadowy Waters*, which Yeats saw sometimes as a poem, and sometimes as a stage play, and which was indeed put on the stage; among its numerous printed incarnations are versions explicitly for the theatre, as well as versions that connect it much more closely with the nineteenth-century tradition of verse-drama intended for the page. The present edition includes the latter but excludes the former: thus, the 1900 *The Shadowy Waters* is edited, and its substantially re-written version of 1906 is included also, but the 'acting version' produced by Yeats is excluded. Many of Yeats's stage plays include snatches (or more) of lyric verse and songs. It is possible to make a case for the inclusion of these in an edition of Yeats's poetry – and R.J. Finneran places these in an Appendix to his edition of *The Poems* (*CW* 1) – but their stage context is more important than their separate generic identity as pieces of verse, and the poet himself did not offer them as distinct poems. The present edition excludes these, while including lyrics from the stage which Yeats did separately publish. For the reader of Yeats who wishes to gain a full sense of his creative achievement at any time, and his development as an artist, the plays themselves remain, of course, essential. This is particularly true of the period covered by the present volume, when a great deal of Yeats's literary energy went into the production of drama; and works such as *On Baile's Strand*, *The King's Threshold*, or *Deirdre* are indispensable to an understanding of the evolution of his technical resource as a writer of verse, quite apart from their inherent dramatic merit.

Texts and copy-texts. This edition is built around a core of those poems which W.B. Yeats preserved in successive collected editions of his verse. For these, the usual copy-text has been *The Poems of W.B. Yeats* (2 vols., 1949), prepared under the supervision of the poet's widow, George Yeats, alongside his long-serving copy-editor at the publisher Macmillan, Thomas Mark. It was this text which served as the basis for *A Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats* (first published in 1956, and still the fullest repository of variants in the poems' printed texts), and it can claim precedence as the closest thing to a 'final' text with direct editorial links to the poet himself. There are places where the 1949 edition requires supplement or emendation, and these are shown in the present edition's notes as and when they occur; but in general there is no good reason for an editor to quarrel with the readings or to reject them on the basis that they may owe much to Mrs Yeats and Thomas Mark: these were the poet's trusted readers, and Yeats was explicit on the degree to which he looked to Mark in particular to regulate and supply punctuation. Yeats's punctuation, as he acknowledged, was almost as disordered and threadbare as his spelling; there is no evidence that he wished to be seen wearing either in public. The present edition is not concerned with questions of intended order of poems, nor with intended inclusions and exclusions, since these do not fall within the scope of an arrangement founded on the concept of chronological order of composition. Yet the poet's acts of ordering and arrangement were also in their way compositional acts, even acts of revision. For this reason, the contents of Yeats's published volumes will be listed

as appendices in this edition, allowing readers to see the differing shapes which he chose for his *oeuvre* in its process of evolution over time. Poems printed in Yeats's lifetime, but either dropped from collected editions or never included in these, are edited in general from their latest texts, and accounts of these are given in the notes. Where poems exist only in manuscript, the source is given in the notes, and (where multiple manuscripts are involved) the copy-text is specified. In presenting reading texts for these pieces, the present edition regularizes spelling and (where necessary) supplies punctuation. For all of the texts which the poet did see into print, the present edition generally follows both the punctuation and spelling of the copy-text versions. The reader should understand that Yeats was heavily reliant on the services of others in arriving at the presentation of these texts, and that he accepted (more often than not) conventions of both spelling and punctuation which he was himself largely unable to maintain. One area in which the poet was liable to repeated changes of mind, from one edition to the next, was the spelling of proper names, and in particular proper names in Irish. While this matter had reached some state of relative stability by the 1930s, resulting in the regularized spellings for the 1949 *Poems* which provides copy-texts for many of the poems here, Irish proper names – from Oisin/Usheen to almost everybody else – were for many years in a state of flux for Yeats's published texts. The present edition does not attempt to present the elaborate (not to say labyrinthine) record of change; however, in the notes for the poems the forms used both by Yeats and his sources, as well as in related material from before and after his time, are kept largely in their first-written guises. Any impression of a stable set of spellings for Irish names in the poet's time would be an illusion; and the fluidity of this state of affairs offered Yeats – who was not in the least a speaker or a reader of the Irish language – room for creative manoeuvre as he put his poetry before Irish, British, and American audiences. Again, a full record of the many changes is to be found in the *Variorum Edition* of Allt and Alspach.

Manuscript and printed variants. Yeats's poetry has behind it a large number of manuscript versions. These can be early rough beginnings, slightly less rough drafts, and then fair copies (and for many poems, all of these). For a long time critics have found this manuscript evidence suggestive and often worthy of study in its own right. The aim of this edition is to present as much as possible those manuscript versions that may have a bearing on the critical understanding of each poem. Inevitably, though, this is a subjective process rather than an objectively regulated routine, since decisions about what to include and what to pass over in silence are in every instance those of the editor. In general, an attempt has been made to err on the side of inclusiveness where that is possible in practical terms: relatively small changes may, after all, reveal points in the evolution of Yeats's senses of cadence or of syntax that prove to be of some critical interest. It is not possible, on the other hand, to render a comprehensive account of all the changes in some of the more complex sequences of manuscripts behind a number of poems without establishing what would be effectively an *apparatus criticus*, which demands careful navigation on the part of readers in order to arrive at relevant information for any given line. The fullest available accounts of Yeats's poetic manuscripts (where there are commonly photographic reproductions in addition to full diplomatic transcriptions) may be found in the Cornell series of manuscript materials, where individually edited volumes

are keyed to Yeats's individual collections. In the present edition, manuscript material, when reproduced, is usually given with editorially supplied spelling and punctuation, unless there is good reason to reproduce the spelling or punctuation of the original: this is intended to clarify readings and present a more immediately comprehensible view of Yeats's composition in process; readers who need to see exactly the forms of spelling and punctuation used in the manuscripts must consult the relevant Cornell volumes. Transcription from Yeats's handwriting is notoriously difficult, and it is to be expected that different pairs of eyes will come up with different readings from time to time. The present edition has very often, in cases of doubt, gratefully accepted readings from the Cornell editors; occasionally, however, its readings do differ from theirs, and such divergences are generally mentioned in the notes. Once a Yeats poem reached print, the process of change was seldom at an end. Here, there is less room for uncertainty in the matter of readings, at least. The present edition attempts to give as full a record of printed variants as practicable, at least with regard to matters of verbal alteration. In matters of punctuation, in which changes are too numerous to be given in full, editorial recording is here much more sparing; and in questions of the spelling of names, the myriad changes of policy between different editions have been largely passed over in silence. For the fullest record of printed variants available, readers should consult the *Variorum Edition* of the poems which, although not always easy to use, is comprehensive in its coverage.

Commentary: nature and extent. The commentary offered on poems in this edition tries to cover several areas of potential interest for readers. First, the date of composition, the textual and publication history of a piece, and its immediate contexts in Yeats's life are addressed. Here, frequent recourse to Yeats's other works is required, along with material from the poet's voluminous correspondence. These letters are cited, where appropriate, from the published volumes of *The Collected Letters*, and after that point from the electronic version (InteLex). (In transcribing quotations from correspondence in the present edition, the writer's wayward spellings, and his habits of non-punctuation are not always reproduced.)

A second area of attention in the commentaries is more broadly contextual: this attempts to see works in relation both to the poet's various source materials and to other relevant works upon which he drew, or by which, in a broader sense, he might have been influenced. The historical context of particular poems is also important, and an attempt has been made to locate work in relation to the moments of its composition and publication.

A third aspect of the commentary is more specifically literary: Yeats absorbed a very great deal of poetry, much of it when young, and for the length of his career showed signs of his reading in terms of stylistic indebtedness (and, indeed, stylistic innovation, since poetic innovation is often one way of paying a debt, and can be understood in terms of what it has profited from). In order to allow the reader to gain some sense of the ways in which these poems embody a vast number of specific points of contact with other poets' works, the present notes invite specific comparisons where necessary with previous writers and their poems. An illuminating comparison may indicate an allusion on Yeats's part; but it is also a way of setting the detail of the poetry against the broader traditions from which it draws, especially in terms of diction. So, the injunction to 'compare'

(or 'cp.' as it is abbreviated here) does not mean necessarily that Yeats is conscious of any given point of convergence with another poetic text (though sometimes of course he is); instead, it may mark a place where the phrase or line in question crosses other phrases and other lines by poets of whom, in general, Yeats was already aware. Much more sparingly, the present edition makes comparisons with work written later, and influenced by the relevant words of Yeats: this does, however, include subsequent work by Yeats himself, so that such comparison is an aid to more general understanding of the degree to which his poetry is self-feeding and self-perpetuating. No editor can always be entirely confident that a particular comparison has a critical point, or will turn out some day to yield one; but even coincidence is not necessarily pointless, and on many occasions 'cp.' is qualified as 'perhaps/possibly cp.': this is not the hedging of bets, but a gesture towards that larger body of poetry in English in which Yeats's poetry is located, where various lines and traditions of poetic diction operate in certain ways, and may well be exercising an influence on the composition, if only by being 'in the air' at a certain stage. That 'air', that broad and various tradition of other poems by other poets, is not only the 'English' tradition of Shakespeare and Milton, Spenser and Shelley (though it centrally includes them), but it is also significantly the tradition of Irish poetry in English – Yeats's congruence in detail with poets such as Aubrey De Vere and Sir Samuel Ferguson, James Clarence Mangan, and even such now obscure figures as Robert Dwyer Joyce or Thomas Caulfield Irwin, or political poets like Thomas Davis and 'Speranza' (Lady Jane Wilde), as well as contemporaries such as Katharine Tynan and George Russell (AE), is a matter where comparison (however tentative) may well pay critical dividends.

A fourth level of commentary is that broadly covered by the concept of 'reference' – that is, the explication of allusions and references made in the body of a poem and the offering of some evidence about how, where, and when the poet came about his knowledge of the things concerned. Here, the present edition is the beneficiary of a long tradition of explicatory commentary, from the work of G.B. Saul to that of A.N. Jeffares, as well as the authors of major modern editions of the poet, including D. Albright and R.J. Finneran; Jeffares's *New Commentary* (1984) remains an essential foundation for such work. (In due course, this will be superseded by a fresh commentary by W. Gould and D. Toomey, only a few of whose many insights the present edition can hope to have anticipated.) Explication has been a rich seam in critical studies of Yeats also, from early days to the present; and the present edition aims to make use of this is explaining numerous points of reference which are far from self-explicatory in the poems.

It is the critical tradition on Yeats which constitutes a final level of the commentary offered here; and while it is not possible to summarize and evaluate all that has been written on the poet's works within realistic bounds of length, this edition makes an attempt to represent major critical contributions to discussion of many poems, alongside (where relevant) the views of Yeats's contemporaries. The same degree of critical context has not been applied to every poem, and here again reasons of proportion influence the kinds of coverage given (a good number of Yeats's poems, most especially those from the early decades of his career as a published poet, have attracted very little in the way of critical treatment). Modern literary criticism on Yeats is voluminous, and shows many different aspects – historical, biographical, theoretical, and comparative – which would require

more space than the present commentary affords to be treated comprehensively or with justice. It is noticeable that the sheer volume of modern criticism does not guarantee close attention being paid to every poem Yeats published: it is as though critical reception of his work is simultaneously heavy and patchy. With poems from the twentieth century, Yeats's 'famous' pieces have drawn quantities of commentary that easily match those lavished on, say, Milton or Joyce: in the case of these poems, the present commentary is necessarily very selective, and cannot sensibly hope to account for everything. Yet other poems, often with much in them to notice and debate, to evaluate and contextualize, still go generally short of attention. Here, the present edition attempts to provide useful material for future criticism, and to suggest lines along which it might possibly develop. Yeats's own insight (as he expressed it in 1901) that 'one poem lights up another' is one that a careful commentary may well bear out, and the implicit assumption of the commentary in the present edition is that seeing Yeats's poetry whole (which is a good critical ambition, even if it is not the only one, or one that is comprehensively achievable) entails looking in places where a *de facto* canon of 'famous poems', however much these have been taught or loved, often does not extend. It is not wise, in any case, to presume or rush to impose limits on the critical utility of knowledge, according to one's own taste or partiality: and seeing a great poet's work whole, rather than in chosen parts, is not to study (or indeed edit) that poet to death, but into new kinds of life. Yeats's 'great' poems are not somehow threatened or lessened by the other poems he wrote, and they may even be made all the greater by them. Similarly, it is in the nature of real poetry to be able to absorb the history from which it emerges, and which it transforms; so knowing about that history will never, in the end, diminish the poetry. And however extensively great art is contextualized, it is impossible to contextualize it either out of its greatness or out of existence. It may be remarked, finally, that although Yeats's poems appear here as part of a venerable series referring to 'English Poets', the adjective must be taken only in the sense of the English language in which Yeats wrote: the poetic traditions within which the poet situated himself, and where he continues to be located, are to a vital extent Irish ones, just as Yeats himself is an Irish, and not an English, poet.

Dates of composition and chronological order of poems. Any ambition to present Yeats's poems in chronological order of composition faces two major obstacles. The first is similar to problems that present themselves in establishing the order of any other poet's writings, unless the writer has been an exceptionally careful keeper of records, and those records themselves have all been successfully kept: that is, there is often a shortage of documentary evidence for the date (or dates) on which a particular poem was composed. For Yeats, this situation is much more acute in his earlier work than that of his maturity; but it means, nevertheless, that many poems can only be assigned a very approximate date of composition, using various kinds of circumstantial evidence. This first difficulty, then, is not insurmountable, any more than it is unusual. A second obstacle, though, stands in the way of a chronological ordering, even when evidence is to hand about when Yeats might have first set pencil or pen to paper: put simply, the poet returned to his poems many times after they were first written (or rather, after they had been begun) and from the very earliest days had made substantial revision into what might be thought of as a habit of composition. Plainly, Yeats's revisions are moments of poetic creativity. So,

something begun in one week, month, or year might very easily be continued in another; and what was done then could be undone, done again, done differently, or simply done away with. This may present a confusing picture: a poem written first in the late 1880s can hold on to its title and its place while being rewritten on several occasions through successive decades, sometimes with substantial changes being implemented in editions as late as the 1930s. The question of 'when' such a poem was composed is not one that can be given any straightforward answer.

In negotiating the first of these obstacles, the present edition makes use of such documentary help as can be mustered, supplementing this with contextual information that may point towards a particular date or period when a poem first came into being. However, the documentary evidence is far from complete or conclusive, and an element of guesswork necessarily enters judgements made about order. When evidence is especially slight (and guesswork correspondingly substantial), the notes alert readers to this. The situation is especially difficult with Yeats's very early work, however; during the period covered by the present volume, it becomes more possible to be certain about dates of composition, based both on the evidence of manuscripts themselves, and on the circumstantial evidence of correspondence from Yeats and others, and (increasingly often) the records of periodical publication. It is an added complication that Yeats himself was somewhat slapdash with dates, even when he thought to record them: not only should we not assume that a particular date entered on a manuscript is the date when a poem was finished (it may be the date on which Yeats remembers beginning the piece), but we must not take it for granted that the poet always knew what day it was even on the day itself, let alone some weeks or months afterwards. The second obstacle is much more serious, and is more perplexing for an editor. It is, of course, feasible to print each poem in the order (however approximate) of first composition, but in its latest textual form, recording changes made to earlier versions and assigning dates to these; yet this runs the risk of being misleading as well as visually complex and cumbersome. Promoting a text of (for example) 1929 to the prime position in a reading version of something written first (and differently) in the 1880s would require a prominent editorial health warning, requiring readers to make their way through a dense undergrowth of earlier published and manuscript versions in order to arrive at a sense of what was first published or written by Yeats in a specific case. No editorial solution for this problem is ideal; but the present edition is arranged in such a way as to 'freeze' heavily revised poems at different points – often, in effect, at the points they reached before large-scale acts of revision took place. Separately edited versions of the substantially revised versions are provided, placed in the order of poems at the year in which the major revision happened. Thus, for example, 'The Sorrow of Love' (composed in 1891 and first published in 1892) is placed along with other poems of 1891, using as copy-text the last printed version before Yeats's major revision, and recording MS and textual variants up to that point; another version will appear with poems of 1924, since this was the year when the large-scale revision by the poet was made. This results in cases where poems appear in the chronological sequence more than once, and years apart. It is certainly true that Yeats did not intend such poems to have multiple identities in his *oeuvre*; at the same time, it is also true that these works do in fact possess distinct identities as literary productions, and

there are advantages for readers in being able to encounter them separately within the larger sequence. The major instance of this in the present volume is the verse-drama *The Shadowy Waters*: its volume publication in 1900 is edited first in its chronological place (while recording differences from the text as published in an American periodical by Yeats earlier in the year), and its later published incarnation of 1906 is separately edited along with other work finished in that year. Some shorter pieces, such as 'Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland' or 'Maid Quiet', are versions of poems written in the 1890s (and edited in Volume Two of this edition), and these are edited from their revised texts in chronological position here.

A critical assumption which is central to the present editorial procedure is that the work of revision for Yeats was creative work: in order to follow the arc of his poetic development from year to year, it is necessary to encounter substantial revisions in their chronological place, as elements in a larger and very complex process of self-reading and self-correction that often, for this poet, issued in further poems. It remains the case, naturally, that revision is not always on a major scale and that the smaller alterations are also deserving of attention. For this reason, an edited poem here will typically contain information about a number of alterations in print by the poet that come from earlier points than the date of the copy-text. By this means, it will be possible for the reader to see easily the particular phrases or lines that were present in a poem at its position in chronological sequence, but were subsequently changed, removed, or augmented by revision in later years.

THE POEMS

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THE SONG OF HEFFERNAN THE BLIND: A TRANSLATION

Textual history. This quatrain survives in one MS version, inscribed by WBY on a preliminary leaf of a copy of *P99* presented to AG by the poet on 10 May 1899, two days after its publication (now in the Woodruff Library, Emory University). Here, the quatrain follows and faces a MS version of the 1893 poem 'On A Child's Death'. The translation of Heffernan was never put into print by WBY, and it was first published in R. Schuchard, 'The Lady Gregory-Yeats Collection at Emory University', *YA* 3, 159.

William Heffernan (Liam Dall Ó hIfearnáin) and context for the translation. WBY had first become interested in the Irish poet William Dall Heffernan (Heffernan the Blind) as long ago as 1888. This poet was a very obscure figure, who seems to have left behind only around twenty poems when he died in 1803. Born in Co. Tipperary *c*.1720, he was strongly associated with Irish Jacobitism; some of his writing calls down curses on the Damer family, the local landholders who were originally planted in Shronehill by Cromwell. On 15 Dec. 1888, WBY wrote to Douglas Hyde with a request for an English translation of a quatrain by Heffernan (*CL* 1, 115–116):

> Can you tell me any thing about a Gaelic-speaking poet of the last century called William Heffernan or more usually William Dall or Blind William. He lived in Shronehill in county Tipperary and abused in verse Damer the usurer. I know Walsh's account both in "Irish Popular Songs" and "Irish Jacobite Poetry" but there are no dates. Could you tell me of any other authorities who speak of him? I know, by the way, Hardiman quotes him. Do the peasantry still remember his name and verse in Tipperary or elsewhere –
>
> On page 15 and 16 of Walsh's Irish Jacobite Poetry are some pieces of untranslated Irish of two and four lines each. I am afraid I will have to ask you to translate them for me. Have you the book if not I will lend you my copy. I hope you will not mind my giving you all this trouble but the fact is I want to write an account of Heffernan for the Dictionary of National Biography.

It is likely that Hyde obliged on this occasion, though any translation sent by him to WBY does not survive. The projected entry on Heffernan was not wanted by the DNB, and was not written for it (by WBY or anyone else), so in fact the poet had no immediate need for this translated material. It appears that WBY kept Hyde's crib in reserve

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for some possible future use, and by 1899 he was able to employ it in constructing the quatrain for AG's copy of his newly published *Poems*. Over recent years, WBY had spent much energy on Heffernan's political poem, '*Caitilin ni Uallachan* [Kathleen ni Houlihan]', in poems of 1894 and 1896 deriving from it (see 'Veering, Fleeting, Fickle' and 'O Tufted Reeds, Bend Low', in vol. 2 of the present edition), and he would return to it for 'Red Hanrahan's Song About Ireland' in 1903.

In fact, the quatrain produced by WBY incorporates material from two separate quatrains by Heffernan, which are to be found on facing pages of John Daly's editorial material in *Irish Jacobite Poetry* (1844, 2nd edn. 1866): the first is, according to Daly, one of the 'many short distichs heard amongst the people [which] bespeak [Heffernan's] poverty and his afflictions': this gives WBY Heffernan's complaints of the need to labour painfully for his bread. The second quatrain is introduced by O'Daly thus: 'Of [Heffernan's] first essays there is one more popular than the rest – not for any intrinsic merit it possesses, but because it throws some light on the domestic circle of a man whose life is much less known than it deserves – I shall conclude these quotations with it'. This second piece provides WBY with the 'I often am in. . .' locution (applied here to Lattin, Shronehill, and Conroy's town), as well as the companion-figures of Teig and Nora. The poem which WBY offers to AG as a 'translation' is just this, but it is also more precisely a conflation of the two Heffernan quatrains. It is, as Nancy Rutkowski Nash has written, 'a rather loose adaptation of one quatrain and a borrowing from another, all of which was originally translated by Hyde' ('Yeats and Heffernan the Blind', *YA* 4, 203).

The reason for WBY's decision to inscribe these lines in AG's copy of *P99* is a matter of speculation. One possibility is that the poet was aware of AG's ongoing researches into folk tradition and Irish poetry, and saw these lines as a suitable invocation of one (now obscure) figure from the previous century. AG's *Poets and Dreamers* (1903) has in fact only the scantiest of references to Heffernan, whom she refers to as 'O'Heffernan', and reads entirely in relation to Jacobite propaganda. AG does, however, register that Heffernan qualifies as a 'wandering' poet, and this itinerant quality seems to have struck WBY also as important. O'Daly's conclusion in effect prepares the ground for the figure WBY would go on to develop (and invent) once the historical Heffernan turned into characters such as Red Hanrahan (*Irish Jacobite Poetry,* 95):

> Every thing that fired the poet's fancy, or roused his passions, or filled his heart with indignant scorn of the miser and his alien horde, has disappeared; but the peasant's fame, the smallest traits of his character, the most trivial incidents of his life, and those rich and exuberant strains of Celtic eloquence, which came with the force and copiousness of a torrent upon his enemies, are remembered and recited by the people as if they were the productions of yesterday.

Date of composition. There is no evidence to provide a firm date when WBY might have fashioned this translation. It is possible that it dates back as far as the late 1880s, when the poet solicited a translation of the Irish from Hyde; but it seems much more likely that WBY turned back to Hyde's crib a good deal later than this, and the quatrain may well date from shortly before the time the poet inscribed it in AG's book.

Copy-text: *MS inscription by WBY on front flyleaf of AG's copy of P99 (Emory University).*

I often am in Shronehill, in Conroy is my bed,
I grind an old quern, I grind it for my bread,
And Teig and Nora with me, no other souls than these;
I grind an old quern and them I do not please.

Title] WBY's title in MS.

1.*J Shronehill*] Shrone hill MS. Now more usually Shronell, from the Irish *Srónaill* [a nose-like cliff], this townland about three miles from Tipperary was settled by Joseph Damer (1630–1720), a Cromwellian officer whose activities caused general resentment, including in a later generation that of the poet Heffernan.

Conroy] It is not clear where this is located: there are no townlands of the name in Co. Tipperary, though 'Conroy' is a fairly common surname in the area. In the second of the Heffernan quatrains, 'Conroy's town' is mentioned.

2, 4. *I grind an old quern*] The notion of menial (and hard) labour is conveyed here. WBY's knowledge that a quern is 'A simple, typically hand-operated, device for grinding corn, etc., consisting of two stones, the upper of which is rotated or rubbed on the lower' (*OED*) would have been reinforced (if it was not indeed gained from) references to labour at the quern by poets such as Aubrey De Vere, R.D. Joyce, and William Morris. WBY has 'An old slave grinding at a heavy quern' in his 1892 poem 'Fergus and the Druid' (35), and his short story, 'Where There Is Nothing, There Is God' (first publ. 1896) mentions 'Brother Bald Fox, whose business it was to turn the great quern in the quern-house, for he was too stupid for anything else'; this story also seems to show some awareness of the tradition of the 'quern song', of which the Heffernan poem may perhaps be an example: 'the quern was never idle, nor was it turned with grudging labour, for when any passed the beggar was heard singing as he drove the handle round' (*M*, 124).

3. *Teig and Nora*] O'Heffernan employs these two common names in the second of the two quatrains used by WBY.

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THE SHADOWY WATERS (1900)

Date and circumstances of composition. After the aborted attempt at publication of the 1896 version of *The Shadowy Waters* (edited in vol. 2 of present edition), WBY's work on this long-running project seems to have faltered for some time, before being taken up again in earnest in May 1899. The verse drama was nevertheless much in the poet's thoughts in the interim, and his struggles with the work were announced to AG as early as 1897, as she noted after a tea with WBY in London (entry for 23 Feb. 1897, *AGD92–02*, 129):

> He [WBY] believes there will be a reaction after the realism of Ibsen, and romance will have its turn – He has put "a great deal of himself" into his own new play – "the Shelter of the Waters"? – and rather startled me by saying about half his characters have eagles' faces –

In the course of 1897, WBY continued to think about revision and new composition in the piece, which by the summer he was still considering as his contribution to a newly founded 'Celtic Literary Theatre' involving both AG and Edward Martyn. In a letter of 7 Jul. 1897, JBY told his friend Sarah Purser about his son's play, a version of which he had by now evidently read (quoted *CL* 2, 121):

> Next summer some sort of an association with some sort of a Celtic appellation is going to give in Dublin a series of theatrical entertainments under the management of Mrs. Emery – they are to present a play by Edward Martyn (of Tillyra Castle) and Willie's play called the "Shadowy Waters" this latter to me absolutely unintelligible – however Mrs. Emery [*Florence Farr*] says she understands it and as she is to act in it one of the principal parts this is important though I suppose not absolutely necessary.

Even in its 1897 form the play was evidently quite unsuitable for the stage, and in the event WBY's *The Countess Cathleen* fitted the new group's theatrical purposes much more readily. In Jun. and Jul. 1897, while based at Tillyra as Martyn's guest, WBY is likely to have discussed his poetic play in some detail with GM, whose later recollection (which may also draw on discussions the following summer) gives some flavour of the conversations (*Ave* (1911), 241):

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> [WBY] had come over to Tillyra from Coole a few days before, and had read us *The Shadowy Waters*, a poem that he had been working on for more than seven years, using it as a receptacle or storehouse for all the fancies that had crossed his mind during that time, and these were so numerous that the pirate-ship ranging the Shadowy Waters came to us laden to the gunnel with Fomorians, beaked and unbeaked, spirits of Good and Evil of various repute, and, so far as we could understand the poem, these accompanied a metaphysical pirate of ancient Ireland cruising in the unknown waters of the North Sea in search of some ultimate kingdom. We admitted to Yeats, Edward [Martyn] and I, that no audience would be able to discover the story of the play, and we confessed ourselves among the baffled that would sit bewildered and go out raging against the poet. Our criticism did not appear to surprise Yeats; he seemed to realize that he had knotted and entangled his skein till no remedy short of breaking some of the threads would avail, and he eagerly accepted my proposal to go over to Coole to talk out the poem with him, and to redeem it, if possible, from the Fomorians. He would regret their picturesque appearance; but could I get rid of them, without losing the poetical passages? He would not like the words 'poetical passages' – I should have written 'beautiful verses'.

WBY established himself at Coole on 26 Jul. for a stay of two months; but there is no direct evidence on further composition of the play at this time. GM was, however, to have further involvement with the composition process, and WBY was to read him the play aloud (in the company of Arthur Symons, JBY, and Edmund Gosse) on two occasions at Christmas, 1898. Whatever the outcome of conversations at this time, sustained work on rewriting had to wait for WBY's stay at Coole in May 1899. Now, as the editors of *DC* comment, 'The conditions [for composition] were ideal; Lady Gregory [. . .] would protect his health and his time,' while 'His theatre colleagues, Moore and Martyn, were near at hand, the former ready to give the practical advice that proved invaluable in the inauguration of the Irish Literary Theatre' (*DC*, 225). There seems little doubt that WBY was spurred on at this point by thoughts of *TSW* as a potential stage-play, which would also constitute a poetic work for publication. The recent success (and accompanying public controversy) of *The Countess Cathleen* in Dublin gave WBY reason to attend to news that in London there were plans to establish the Stage Society, which would 'serve as an Experimental Theatre'. Writing to Clement Shorter from Coole on 27 May 1899, WBY announced his work to 'finish' the play (*CL* 2, 418):

> As a result of the success of 'The Irish Literary Theatre' I have a chance of getting 'The Shadowy Waters' done in London in Autumn and am therefore setting to work to finish it. I told you about it I think. It is a rather wild little play about the length of 'The Land of Heart's Desire', which acted rather less than 25 minutes, and probably the best verse I have written. Do you think a play of this length is too long for a magazine, American or English? I should want to get it published before it was acted if possible.

It would appear from this that WBY had relatively quick completion in mind, and this may be owing in part to detailed conversations about the play which had taken place with various friends including AG and GM over the past couple of years. Word of the play was passed to the *Daily Express* in Dublin, which reported on 10 Jun. that it was to be produced as a curtain-raiser in London that autumn, and that 'Mr. Yeats thinks it the best thing he has written' (quoted in *CL* 2, 438). The pace of work was maintained over the coming weeks: on 21 Jun. WBY reported that the play 'is going on far better than when I left it aside a couple of years ago' (to Dora Sigerson Shorter, *CL* 2, 425), and on 12 Jul. the poet wrote to SMY about how "'The Shadowy Waters' is not finished, but is going on well' (*CL* 2, 433). As the summer went on, further reports confirmed both WBY's dedication to the work in hand ('I am deep in a long poem, which I dare not interrupt', he wrote to John Lane on 3 Aug. (*CL* 2 435)), and his confidence in its quality (writing to JBY on 11 Aug., 'it [*TSW*] is going very well [. . .] in some ways the best long poem I have done [. . .] more intense and more original' (*CL* 2, 437)). Plans for publication began to take shape in Aug., and WBY's sights were set on the *North American Review* (*NAR*), to whom he had by now (and lucratively) sold an essay, 'The Literary Movement in Ireland' (publ. Dec. 1899; *CW* 9, 459–470). The magazine had a London office, and the editor, William D. Fitts, who had already asked the poet whether he might be able to provide some verse, was in England that summer. WBY's letter to Fitts of 19 Aug., offering him *TSW*, anticipated completion of the piece in Sept. or Oct. (*CW* 2, 439–440):

> I am at work on a dramatic poem, 'The Shadowy Waters', which has to be done by September, if I am to get it on the stage in London, which I believe I can do this autumn. I cannot stop from this poem long enough to do you any poem of sufficient importance for me to send you for the generous terms you offer. I am a very slow writer. I have never done more than five or six good lines in a day, and not often that, and a poem of thirty or forty would take a couple of weeks probably. I suggest in my letter to New York that 'The Shadowy Waters' may not be too long for 'The North American Review'. It will be about 700 lines when finished. I have written about 400 lines. I don't think it will be a popular poem, but I think it may be a good deal noticed for it is very wild and passionate. It is lyrical in feeling, and will contain a certain number of actual lyrics. It is what people call Maeterlinckean, though certainly it owes nothing to him. The subject is old Irish, and it is of course in one act. I am anxious to impress on you that I do not think it will have many popular qualities, but I think it is my best poem of any length. It is quite unlike anything I have done. If you cared for it you could have it some time in October. If it is acted it will I think be so in November.

Since the poem as eventually published is 431 lines long, it appears that the bulk of actual composition (though not, of course, detailed revision) had in fact been done by this point. What the projected 300 extra lines might have contained is not clear, and it seems unlikely that these would have been made up entirely of lyrics (in the event,

no lyrics at all featured in the play). When WBY informed George Russell about the work at the end of Aug., he approached the subject by way of symbolism, of Russell's vision of the 'white fool', and the god Aengus: 'I may be getting the whole story,' WBY wrote, 'of the relations of man and woman, in symbol, – all that makes the subject of "The Shadowy Waters" (*CL* 2, 443). Yet even the appearance of Aengus would prove insufficient to allay pressing anxieties about the literary interference of GM. Russell's enthusiasm for the whole project of revision was very limited; and in Sep. 1899, on learning of some of GM's proposed amendments to the plot, he told WBY how 'I swore at Moore when I heard it [. . .] I would like to strangle him'. GM's intervention, it should be said, was made with WBY's full consent, certainly during the summer of 1899. Ridding the play finally of its hawk-headed Fomorians was both logical and necessary in order to create a potential script for the stage; and it seems likely that WBY wanted to make this radical exclusion more than just his own decision. One of GM's retrospective glimpses of the re-composition discussions at Coole identifies in WBY a willingness to turn away from 'human sympathies' (as instanced by his forthright rejection of new dramatic work by Martyn), and links this with the new shape for *TSW* (GM, *Ave* (1911), 282–283):

> Yesterevening, when we wandered about the lake, talking of *The Shadowy Waters*, trying to free it from the occult sciences that had grown about it, Fomorians beaked and unbeaked, and magic harps and Druid spells, I did not perceive that the difficulties into which the story had wandered could be attributed to a lack of human sympathy. But Yeats's treatment of Edward [Martyn] proved it to me. [. . .] To write a play our human and artistic sympathies must be very evenly balanced, and I remembered that amongst my suggestions for the reconstruction of *The Shadowy Waters*, the one that Yeats refused most resolutely was that the woman should refuse to accompany the metaphysical pirate to the ultimate North, but return somewhat diffidently, ashamed of herself, to the sailors who were drinking yellow ale. 'Yeats has reflected himself in the pirate,' I said. 'All he cares for is a piece of literature.'

Much of the 1899 work on *TSW* took place at Coole: there was an interruption in Sep., when WBY tailed MG in Belfast and in Dublin, but by Oct. he was back in the care of AG, and busily perfecting the play. The arrival of a playscript from Fiona Macleod, *The Immortal Hour*, revealed that William Sharp was already taking material and ideas wholesale from WBY, including elements of *TSW*: presumably, this helped stiffen general resolve at Coole. Also in Oct., Russell had been appraised of the ongoing work, and continued to feel instinctively hostile to it, not least on account of the involvement of GM. Russell told AG that he was 'sorry to hear that Moore has brought his inartistic soul to bear on the Shadowy Waters and that Willie is again altering'; his intention was to visit Coole and intervene in person: 'I will strangle Moore if necessary' (12 Aug. 1899, Berg collection, NYPL). GM and Russell did meet in Dublin at this time, though any entreaties (up to and including attempted strangulation) were in vain, and the collaboration in Co. Galway continued. Replying in early Nov. to a letter from Russell calling GM 'the fiend

who has suggested alterations', WBY defended the changes that were now being effected (*CL* 2, 463–464):

> I think you are wrong about 'The Shadowy Waters'. The picture was more impressive in its old form and I regret the loss of the Fomor but the poetry is richer and more various in the new, and it is getting written more easily. The new form will act much better. Moore does not much like my ideas of the proper way of speaking verse; but he is wrong and I want to do a little play which can be acted and half chanted and so help the return of bigger poetical plays to the stage. This is really a magical revolution for the magical word is the chanted word. The new 'Shadowy Waters' could be acted on two big tables in a drawing room; not that this will please you who don't much like acting at all I think.

As the year came to a close, WBY was back in London, and racing against a deadline for the revised work. On 21 Dec. the poet told AG how he had 'been trying to get my poem finished for next Saturday and will almost succeed', since 'I am about twenty or thirty lines from the end': he observed that 'The thing grows wilder and finer as it goes on, I think', and his confidence increased further by the next day, as he announced that 'I have just got to the end of 'The Shadowy Waters' and two days' revision here and there will have it ready for the 'North American Review'' (*CL* 2, 479). However, on 19 Jan. 1900, Russell was urging WBY to 'Please publish 'The Shadowy Waters' at once, before any more changes are suggested by the changing Tatuas' (*Denson*, 35). The real reason for delay at this point was not in fact anything to do with Tattwas Tarot card symbolism, but the death of WBY's mother on 3 Jan., which set back the poet's practical plans for having a finished TS ready for *NAR*. Nevertheless, WBY was able to contact G.G. Leveson-Gower (the *NAR*'s European editor) on 8 Jan., apologizing for not having given him the poem on 5 Jan. as agreed, and explaining this by 'an unexpected family trouble', and letting him know that the typed copy would be delivered on 9 Jan. A copy of the TS was with the New York editor of *NAR*, William Fitts, by the middle of Mar., and *TSW* was published in the magazine's May edition.

Sources. The action of *TSW*, and to a great extent its characters, do not have any specific sources in Irish or other legend; at the same time, these are intended by WBY to sit comfortably alongside Irish mythical narratives, and to be understood in relation to such stories, especially as they are related in the works of AG. In a note attached to a later version of the play in *CWVP08*, WBY recalled the work leading up to his 1900 version, placing the main emphasis on the significance of the god Aengus and his companion Edain (vol. 2, 254):

> I took the Aengus and Edain of *The Shadowy Waters* from poor translations of the various Aengus stories, which, new translated by Lady Gregory, make up so much of what is beautiful in both her books. They had, however, so completely become a part of my own thought that in 1897, when I was still working on an early version of *The Shadowy Waters*, I saw one night with my bodily eyes, as it seemed, two beautiful persons, who would, I believe, have answered to

> their names. The plot of the play itself has, however, no definite old story for its foundation, but was woven to a very great extent out of certain visionary experiences.

The clear hint here is that the work emerged largely from personal sources, or at least from an ultimately personal system of symbolism. WBY had been more forthcoming privately, when he wrote to Florence Farr in Jul. 1905 (*CL* 4, 135): 'The play as it was [i.e. *TSW* (1900)], came into existence after years of strained emotion, of living upon tip-toe, and is only right in its highest moments – the logic and circumstances are all wrong.' In his creative dealings with Aengus, WBY was indeed partly motivated by the 'bad translations' of Irish material in which he had encountered this figure (including perhaps the twelfth-century *Aislinge Oenguso*, the Dream-Vision of Aengus, in the Book of Leinster, first translated by E. Müller in *Revue Celtique* 3 (1876), 347–350, and paraphrased by J. Rhys in *Celtic Heathendom* (1888) 169–171), but also (and increasingly) by the development of Aengus as a character in AG's ongoing project of re-casting and re-telling the old myths. In the later 1890s, Aengus was still in the process of being promoted to an Irish love-god who, whether as a lover himself or as the sponsor of other lovers, could find a place both in WBY's poetic imagination and in the poet's personal life. *TSW* is the first of the large-scale projects (thought through and often written at Coole) which makes Aengus an important tutelary deity for the poet's own romantic fixation on MG: after the play, the long poems 'Baile and Aillinn' (1901) and 'The Old Age of Queen Maeve' (1902) both make use of Aengus, and both rely on a degree of consonance between the god's help with and the poet's success in love; both, also, have moments of convergence with *TSW* itself. The 'certain visionary experiences' that fed into *TSW* were those vouchsafed to WBY, sometimes along with George Russell, at Coole, and they were taken by the poet to involve Aengus in one form or another.

TSW *and* Axël. The long play *Axël* by the French writer Auguste Villiers de l'Isle Adam (1838–1889) was published in 1890, and quickly gained a reputation in France and beyond as a work of great Symbolist ambition, as well as one with associations of decadence. The work held a powerful attraction for WBY, who endeavoured (very unusually for him) to understand it in the original French. In Feb. 1894, WBY attended a performance of the play in Paris, accompanied by MG. The plot of *Axël*, with its elements of Rosicrucianism and medievalism, resolving into the doomed affair of two death-bound lovers (Axël and Sara), plainly had numerous points of appeal for the poet. WBY himself gave an account of the play in an article about the Paris performance for *The Bookman* in Apr. 1894 (*CW* 9, 236):

> In the play Sara, a woman of this strange Medusa-like type, comes to the castle of a Count Axël, who lives in the Black Forest studying magic with Janus, a wizard ascetic of the Rosy Cross. When she arrives he has already refused first the life of the world, typified by the advice of a certain 'commander' his cousin, the life of the spiritual intellect labouring in the world but not of it, as symbolised by the teaching and practice of the adept Janus; and she herself has refused the religious life as symbolized by the veil of the nun. In a last great scene they

> meet in a vault full of treasure – the glory of the world – and avow their mutual love. He first tries to kill her because the knowledge that she is in the world will never let him rest. She throws herself upon his neck and cries, 'Do not kill me; what were the use? I am unforgettable. Think what you refuse. All the favour of other women were not worth my cruelties. I am the most mournful of virgins. I think that I can remember having made angels fall. Alas, flowers and children have died in my shadow. Give way to my love. I will teach you marvellous words which will intoxicate like the wine of the East. . . . I know the secrets of infinite joys, of delicious cries, of pleasures beyond all hope . . ., to veil you with my hair, where you will breathe the spirit of dead roses'. The marvellous scene prolongs itself from wonder to wonder till in the height of his joyous love Axël remembers that his dream must die in the light of the common world, and pronounces the condemnation of all life, of all pleasure, of all hope. The lovers resolve to die. They drink poison, and so complete the fourfold renunciation – of the cloister, of the active life of the world, of the labouring life of the intellect, of the passionate life of love. The infinite is alone worth attaining, and the infinite is the possession of the dead. Such appears to be the moral. Seldom has the utmost pessimism found a more magnificent expression.

Several years before *TSW* started to come into coherent form as a work, it is clear that WBY was finding in Axël and Sara the models for what Forgael and Dectora would eventually become. The French play is in itself already deeply indebted to other doomed lovers – not least, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and Wagner's Tristan and Isolde – so WBY was well aware that in appropriating de l'Isle Adam's work for *TSW* he was in effect simply continuing the deep (and in some ways repetitive) allusiveness of *Axël* itself. The initial act of appropriation, however, is less creative than it is personal on WBY's part: that the poet in 1894 saw himself as Axël and MG as Sara is as obvious as it is (somewhat naively) wishful. It is likely that WBY discovered in *Axël* a way of figuring the kind of consummation between lovers which would go beyond the merely sexual, and offer a transcendental reward for renunciation and abstinence. On a number of counts, this fails to fit the facts of the case in the poet's relationship with MG; but it does, on the other hand, demonstrate an artistic resolution for a romantic fixation with regard to which WBY could only at this stage realistically take a view of 'the utmost pessimism'. The characters of Forgael and Dectora gave WBY plenty of trouble as his play evolved through the stages of composition (and this trouble did not come to an end with the 1900 version), but *Axël* certainly permitted the poet to fix his two lovers in their symbolic identities. As Lloyd Parks puts it, 'Like his counterpoint Axel, Forgael refuses love at first and accepts it later, but only in the guise of an 'eternal union'', while 'Like Sara, Dectora first defends the worldly notion of love and then yields to Forgael's idea of a supernatural emotion' ('The Influence of Villiers de l'Isle Adam on W.B. Yeats', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 6/3–4 (Spring-Summer 1978), 269).

In the 1890s, WBY repeatedly alluded to *Axël*, and was apt to return to the text and its author frequently thereafter: in many ways, the French play outlasted the immediate romantic obsessions in the light of which WBY had first encountered it, and became for

him a signal instance of the aristocratic renunciation of the world of commonness and mere appearance. One line which he often quoted, 'Vivre? Les serviteurs feront ça pour nous' [Living? Our servants will do that for us'] became so common a Yeatsian watchword that it is easily taken as belonging to the poet himself. Yet there is comparatively little sign of this aristocratic metaphysical anarchism in the 1900 *TSW*, where WBY's focus is more steadily upon a consummation of sexual love which is also its transcendence. Additionally, it should be remembered that there is a very significant difference between de l'Isle Adam's Sara and WBY's Dectora: while Sara (however laboriously) does fall in love with Axël, Dectora is made to love Forgael by means of his enchantment, and Aengus' magical harp. Dectora does not so much renounce the world, as have her memories of it magically wiped. Obviously WBY was aware of the troubling complications posed by this situation; just as obviously, de l'Isle Adam supplied few hints of how those complications might ever be resolved. In this respect, the 1900 *TSW* is still a story in the process of further development. But it is as well to remember that the plot of *TSW* hinges on the forcible co-option of a woman to the apocalyptic/sexual fantasies of a more powerful man: in this respect, WBY's concentration of the much longer drawn-out *Axël* makes violent gender dynamics much more immediate and difficult. In the first flush of enthusiasm for the French play, in Nov. 1894, WBY recommended that a novelist make 'your men salient, marked, dominant', rather than 'refined, distinguished, sympathetic' in order to 'treble the solidity of your work', citing de l'Isle Adam as a creative authority: but this was advice given to Olivia Shakespear which, given the imminent sexual relationship between himself and that novelist, seems something less than disinterested (*CL* 1, 415).

If *TSW* eloquently records WBY's debt to de l'Isle Adam, it also suggests the larger-scale limits to that debt in the poet's ongoing creative development. Arthur Symons – who is very likely to have been the poet's (much-needed) guide in his early attempts to read the text – gave some sense of the limits of *Axël*'s scope (*Fortnightly Review*, Aug. 1899):

> In the sense in which that word is ordinarily used, Villiers has no pathos. This is enough to explain why he can never, in the phrase he would have disliked so greatly, 'touch the popular heart.' 'A chacun son infini' [to each his own infinite] he has said; and, in the avidity of his search for the infinite, he has no mercy for the blind weakness which goes stumbling over the earth, without so much as knowing that the sun and stars are overhead. [. . .] It is certain that the destiny of the greater part of the human race is either infinitely pathetic or infinitely ridiculous. Under which aspect, then, shall that destiny and those obscure fractions of humanity be considered? Villiers was too sincere an idealist, too absolute in his idealism, to hesitate. 'As for living,' he cries, in that splendid phrase of *Axël*, 'our servants will do that for us!'

Symons manages here to suggest something of the limitations of *TSW*. For WBY, *Axël* became in time in part an object of nostalgia, rather than a creatively enabling text, and he could write about it confidently as an illustration of his own – ever more completely

written-up – past life. In 1924, in a preface to an English translation of *Axël*, WBY quoted passages of his own 1894 report in *The Bookman*, but set this in the perspective of self-mythologizing literary history (*CW* 6, 156):

> It [*Axël*] did not move me because I thought it a great masterpiece, but because it seemed part of a religious rite, the ceremony perhaps of some secret Order wherein my generation had been initiated. Even those strange sentences so much in the manner of my time – 'as to living, our servants will do that for us'; 'O to veil you with my hair where you will breathe the spirit of dead roses' – did not seem so important as the symbols: the forest castle, the treasure, the lamp that had burned before Solomon [. . .] I can see how those symbols became a part of me, and for years to come dominated my imagination [. . .] Is it only because I opened the book for the first time when I had the vivid senses of youth that I must see that tower room always, and hear always that thunder?

Publication history. WBY's initial publication of *TSW* was in *NAR*, and this was a relatively lucrative journal: the poet had received £40 for 'The Literary Movement in Ireland', and he had been promised £20 for a normal-length poem (see letter to JBY, 11 Aug. 1899, *CL* 2, 436). WBY had no short poems available in the summer of 1899, but clearly expected a larger sum for the substantial *TSW*, which he offered to the journal at this time (in Jan. 1900, however, the poet informed its European editor that 'I made no arrangement with Mr. Fitts [the New York editor] about the price'); in fact, the magazine was able to offer 'up to £75 and in exceptional cases more' in 1899, so it is possible that WBY in the event did quite well financially (see *CL* 2, 488). By the time *NAR* had appeared in May 1900, WBY was involved in negotiations with Macmillan to publish his past and future work, including *TSW*; but these came to nothing, after two powerfully negative readers' reports. The poet himself suspected this would happen: 'I doubt if they will really come to the point, for they have asked to see 'Shadowy Waters', and that they will dislike' (letter to AG, 1 May 1900, *CL* 2, 520). Another publisher, Hodder and Stoughton, was already in play for taking on WBY's back catalogue (though, in the event, they ended up with only *TSW*), and the poet told AG on 5 Jun. that *TSW* 'certainly should come out in the autumn' (*CL* 2, 537). A.P. Watt began to act as WBY's literary agent in Jun., and the poet told Hodder and Stoughton on 1 Aug. that they would have *TSW* 'by early autumn' (*CL* 2, 557: this may imply that further revision was by now envisaged). An agreement with Hodder and Stoughton for *TSW* was signed on 16 Oct. (see *CL* 2, 577–580, where this is reproduced in full), and the book was published on 22 Dec. WBY retained the American rights to the book, and Watt succeeded in placing it with Dodd, Mead and Co. in the US on what WBY called 'good terms' (to AG, 8 Jan. 1901, *CL* 3, 11); the American book was published (with text identical to the Hodder and Stoughton version) in Apr. 1901 – 'It is much nicer than the English edition', the poet remarked (to William Stevens, 1 May 1901, *CL* 3, 64). The volume was not republished on either side of the Atlantic, and remaining copies of the English edition were purchased by WBY on behalf of his new publisher, A.H. Bullen, in 1904. An almost completely revised version of *TSW* was to appear in Bullen's first WBY publication,

P99–05, in 1906 (edited separately in the present volume). The 1900 *TSW* thereafter vanished from view for all but book collectors, until it was included in *VE* (where variants from the text of *NAR* were also recorded in full).

Reception. *TSW* had been much anticipated, not least by those closest to its poet. On 2 Jan. 1900, JBY wrote in relief to AG that the work 'is perfectly fresh and genuine – fruit in good season' (*Murphy*, 215), and on publication of the Hodder and Stoughton edition he told his son how he was 'reading 'The Shadowy Waters' with great enthusiasm' (20 Dec. 1900, *Denson*, 39). In Dec. 1900, MG wrote to the poet of how *TSW* 'is beautiful – more beautiful even than I remembered it', telling him that 'I read it last night, I read it this morning, when instead I ought to have been working', and she summed up her enthusiasm with 'It is perhaps the most beautiful thing you have ever written, and yet while I write this I feel that it is treason to the Secret Rose and to the other poems' (*G-YL*, 138). George Russell, who had never been well-disposed to the idea of any revision of *TSW*, and had been alarmed and exasperated by GM's involvement (see *Date and circumstances of composition*), was perhaps inevitably disappointed by the finished work of 1900. WBY knew of his friend's doubts about the revised poem, but Russell's letter of congratulation on the appearance of *TSW* kept these somewhere between its lines (Dec. 1900, *LTWBY* 1, 75):

> Thanks for the Shadowy Waters, a most beautiful poem, which should have been printed faintly on dim twilight coloured paper and bound in skins with golden symbolism of stars and sybils and Druidic emblems. I feel that a nineteenth century person in this hideous world ought not to read it until he has cast aside his modern clothes and put on an ancient robe, and found out somewhere an old hall in a castle hung round with mementos of a thousand years ago to read it in.

But in notes of his conversation made by George Roberts (of the Irish National Theatre Society and the Dublin publishers Maunsel and Co.) in Jan. 1901, Russell was sweepingly negative (Houghton Library, Harvard; quoted in *DC*, 288–289):

> I do not like *The Shadowy Waters* in the published version as much as some of his earlier work. It was much better in the first version which was written several years ago. [. . .] Since the first version several have been written, each succeeding version showing a more highly wrought art, but expressing less effectively the idea, until now it has become a sort of decorating pattern poem, bearing the same relation to a living poem as [one of] Burne Jones's pictures, with drapery placed in position merely for effect and flowers stuck up where the decorative scheme needed them without considering whether things could grow there or not, does to a picture of passion and imagining such as [G.F.] Watts paints. Yeats has no philosophical basis for his poetry. Except an arbitrary system which he has from the 'Rosicrucian Cult' which is obscure and unsatisfactory and has an arbitrary system of symbols only to be understood by initiates. The gods to Yeats are merely symbols, which he frequently uses in

> a merely fanciful way [. . .] He is too fond of putting a blue ribbon round the necks of the gods. In *The Shadowy Waters* he has introduced a languor into the life of the gods which is the atmosphere of a London drawing room at the end of the season.

Russell's views, however, were not widely shared by the reviewers. Even before its publication in book form, *TSW* had attracted the admiring attention of one London critical drawing-room, in *The Academy*, 26 May 1900:

> The current *North American Review* contains a dramatic poem by Mr. W.B. Yeats, on a theme drawn from Irish legend. Mr. Yeats is one of the few who handle such legends, not as mere exotics, but in a spirit truly and natively kindred to their own. [. . .] But this simple tale Mr. Yeats infuses with all that magic of vaporous dream which is his peculiar and sole secret among living poets. Yet the expression which produces this effect is as pellucid as rain-drops. [. . .] It is evident that Mr. Yeats retains his full gift – if, indeed, we have yet seen all that is in its possible development.

By now, familiarity with WBY's work could be taken for granted by writers on poetry, and with *TSW*'s English publication a common observation was that the new work offered more of an already much-enjoyed poetic product. For *The Outlook* (22 Dec. 1900), the new book, 'Beautiful right through', was 'A sort of mystical drama, full, of course, of Mr. Yeats'. Readers of *The Athenaeum*, 12 Jan. 1901, were reassured that 'Those who have felt the fascination of Mr. Yeats's work will not need to be told that of this theme he creates a poem of shimmering beauty'; at the same time, there was the gentle warning that 'like all strongly individual poetry, it demands an acceptance of the writer's mood; and there are moods and minds to which 'The Shadowy Waters,' with its deliberate rejection of love, the human thing, for love the wraith, may well appear bloodless and phantasmal.' Some immediate reception found *TSW* altogether too lacking in substance – a reviewer in *The Scotsman* (20 Dec. 1900), who was possibly suffering from between-meals hunger at the time, took this to the extreme of a laboured comparison of the play to fancy but insubstantial *haute cuisine*, and managed to compare *TSW* unfavourably to a 'good thick ham sandwich': 'What one gets is the caress of elusive imagery, the liquidation of softly flowing verse [. . .] But the vision, sprung of a mist of beauty, fades into a mist of beauty.' In *The Outlook* (12 Jan. 1901), a reviewer's determination to condescend to WBY was undermined by a certain amount of admiration for the poem:

> In the absence of that overwhelming inspiration which has been vouchsafed neither to him nor to his English contemporaries, Mr. Yeats does wonderfully. Indeed, 'The Shadowy Waters' is, perhaps, the next best thing to a great poem. That is to say, it is a piece of metrical embroidery. It might have been written by one looking steadfastly on a lily. There are no drops or lapses in it, no fallings away from grace, no bad or halting workmanship. It is brief, truly, but it begins, goes on, and ends beautifully. [. . .] 'The Shadowy Waters' does not matter a rap

> as drama. It does not matter a rap as Celticism, and it has nothing to do with Irish Nationalism. As pretty English, however, it has not been surpassed by any of the young poets of our time, and it will be read and re-read by all lovers of pleasant and carefully wrought English verse.

The Manchester Guardian (4 Mar. 1901), on the other hand, found *TSW* to be much more substantial fare, announcing the work in a headline as 'A Great Poem', and hailing it as 'both a profound allegory and a beautiful human story'; the reviewer felt more at ease with WBY's 'mysticism' here than in the recently published *The Wind Among the Reeds*: 'Much of his recent lyrical poetry, lovely as it was, seemed to be overlaid with another mysticism, accidental, conventional, and curious, dependent for its intellectual sanction upon this or that cabalistic tradition and almost narrowed to a whimsical esotericism; in 'The Shadowy Waters' he is returned to a larger expression of supernatural allurement.' For all this, a roundup of the year's new poetry in *The Academy*, 7 Dec. 1901, reported that 'Shadowy, dreamlike, and unsubstantial, this poem could appeal only to the few'. Such a view was evidently itself not uncommon, and in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (Mar. 1902), Stephen Gwynn observed how 'Poetry has grown esoteric, and the beautiful verse which Mr. Yeats writes in his most recent play, *The Shadowy Waters*, would be unintelligible to an average audience, and pushes its avoidance of rhetoric and of the obvious rhythm to a point at which it is apt to seem, to the normal person, either incoherent or unmelodious.' Gwynn made these observations as a convinced admirer of the work: writing about 'The Celtic Inspiration' in *The Spectator* (2 Mar. 1901), he had hailed it as 'by far the best which Mr. Yeats has produced,' possessing 'the most exquisite beauty alike in style and thought, which neither in style nor in thought owns kinship with any English creation'. Gwynn's ringing declaration that 'There are no purple patches, the whole poem, through its six or seven hundred lines, is all rich in beauty as a gorgeous tapestry' is perhaps just a little the less resonant for his conviction that the work was several hundred lines longer than it actually is.

Unbeknownst to WBY, one international reader would prove in coming years to be important to the poet's career. This was JQ, who recalled his first encounter with *TSW* in a letter to WBY of 3 Apr. 1903:

> [*TSW*] is, I have sometimes thought, the most perfect thing you have ever done in poetry. I remember very well the Sunday morning in May two years ago when on my way to the country I stopped at a newsstand to buy a Sunday paper and picked up a copy of *The North American Review* containing *Shadowy Waters* and took it to the country with me, and the great pleasure I had in reading it lying in the grass under the shade of a great tree out in the woods. It will be a hard job to stage it well, but if it is done right it will be a beautiful thing.

But American reactions after the publication there of *TSW* did include complaint: calling WBY 'An Irish Symbolist', New York's *The Independent* (22 Aug. 1901) recorded how 'By virtue of some incomprehensible mythical machinery [*TSW*] floats between wind and water in a blur of symbolic moonlight, tantalizing and elusive', and demanded 'While

there is a single man or woman of flesh and blood left in Ireland is it not preposterous that an Irish poet, anxious for the regeneration of his literature, should waste his pains trying to warm over such broth as this?' In *The Dial* (1 Oct. 1901) *TSW* was said to be 'dramatic in form, but woven of a dream-tissue so impalpable that ordinary words are well-nigh powerless to convey the impression that it leaves upon the mental vision of a reader,' and as a result 'its finer qualities elude both analysis and exhibition'. But other American reactions were warmer: for the *Current Encyclopedia* in Chicago (Jul.-Dec. 1901), 'Mr. Yeats has contrived to write a poem of no great length in heroic measure and dramatic form, wherein no Christian thought is permitted to intrude itself upon an interpretation of Irish paganry and superstition [. . .] The beauty of the work is great and so forms a worthy addition to Mr. Yeats' readily remarkable contributions to the spirit of our English poesy.' A more informed, and more ambitious, estimate of the work was attempted in *The Harvard Monthly* (Oct. 1901):

> *The Shadowy Waters* is beyond doubt Mr. Yeats' maturest work. [. . .] The poem is to a certain extent symbolic, and the streams that Forgael is seeking represent a poetic ideal, striven for in a materialistic world, where human weakness permits the ideal to be won but rarely, and never to be held. [. . .] It is perhaps not too much to say that *The Wanderings of Oisin* represents Mr. Yeats' early or purely poetic ideal, and *The Shadowy Waters* that ideal tempered by experience. The first poem was a lyric of youth – the second a drama, which though in another world from actual life, strikes a distinct note of human limitation.

A discussion of WBY's career in *The Bookman* (New York), Dec. 1903 remarked that 'The height of this attainment, up to the present time, is undoubtedly his dramatic poem, 'The Shadowy Waters' [. . .] a voicing of the divine discontent that interferes with accomplishment and serene temper: a groping after the eternal verities merely because of the heart-breaking and transitory conditions of earthly life'. By 1905, in the throes of wholesale revision of *TSW*, WBY himself remembered this earlier version in terms suggesting autobiography: 'The play as it was came into existence after years of strained emotion, of living upon tip-toe, and is only right in its highest moments – the logic and circumstances are all wrong' (to Florence Farr, 19 Jul. 1905, *CL* 4, 134).

Critical interpretation. The poem's subsequent revision for *P99–05* and after effectively blocked twentieth-century critical discussion of the 1900 version. This was despite the early advocacy of the 1900 text, 'a dramatic poem of exquisite if highly exotic beauty', by F. Reid in his 1915 study of WBY (Reid, 113–114):

> If the success of a work of art depend upon the perfection with which the artist has realized and made concrete a mood, *The Shadowy Waters* must be admitted to be flawless. It is impossible that anything could be more filled with atmosphere. It has a heavy, delicious, drowsy beauty, like a thing dreamed in a weariness of life, or in some not quite natural sleep. The fresh woodland charm, which was what made *The Land of Heart's Desire* so attractive, is altogether gone. *The Shadowy Waters* is the last autumnal echo of Mr. Yeats's great period, the decade

> from 1890 to 1900. It is purely as a poem that it must be judged. It might be made beautiful upon the stage by actors with beautiful voices, who were content to think only of the music of the lines they were speaking, but it could never be made dramatic. Less than in any other of the plays is there even an attempt at characterization. Forgael and Dectora are spirits wandering lonely as stars in the black void of space. If they were human beings the whole conception of this enchanted love would strike us as immoral and odious, essentially ignoble. Yet, in one sense, they are real, have a meaning and a life. Only this life is wholly different from that of the figures in more realistic drama. It is a life that flows through them from the mind of their creator, like music from a violin: they are but the mirrors in which we read different aspects of that mind. They are like the moon, shining with a borrowed radiance; and yet it might be pleaded that they are, strictly speaking, neither remote nor inhuman, because they embody each a human emotion, and express it in words of a very moving loveliness. The pleading for human love, the love of the woman shuddering back from the icy rapture of the longing for an impossible perfection – the desire of the artist and the saint – that is the subject; and there is nothing in the play but these two almost disembodied loves.

Reid's identification of the poem as the culmination (and also the final waning) of WBY's 'great period' may help to identify the reasons why the poet himself was content to let it fade from general view. Despite the occasional grumble – Cecil French, for example, wrote to WBY in 1922 of how 'Had I the wealth I should like to issue a reprint of it [*TSW* 1900], and have lawsuits and quarrels with you' (quoted Hone, 168) – the poem in its first published form was largely forgotten. Although Louis MacNeice in 1941 observed that WBY's 'nostalgia for another world, for a dream-world which is all knowledge and no action, reached its culmination in *The Shadowy Waters*, published in 1900' (MacNeice, 74), it is quite possible that he had not actually read the early version to which he refers. The one major piece of modern criticism that places the 1900 *TSW* in the foreground is that by H. Bloom in 1970. Bloom expresses an absolute preference for still earlier versions of the poem (which he cites from *DC*), but maintains that 'The dramatic poem of 1900 has more nearly the right blend of savagery and control than the early, unfinished version, or the later, too-finished versions' (Bloom, 137). The reading offered by Bloom is conducted in terms of symbolism and WBY's debts to Shelley, within a broadly biographical frame of the poet's frustrated love for MG. Comparing the poem with the sexually overheated agendas of Shelley's *Laon and Cythna* and 'Epispychidion', Bloom claims that 'The torment of *The Shadowy Waters* [. . .] is not so much Yeats's baffled longing for Maud Gonne as it is his recognition [. . .] that he is cursed with the temperament of the antithetical quester [. . .] There is no sexual love-making between Forgael and Dectora [. . .] love and the means of love have drawn even further apart, and the world of *The Shadowy Waters* cannot admit even a momentary sexual fulfilment' (Bloom, 139). Some of the other major interpretations of this poem (such as those of G. Bornstein and R. Ellmann) address themselves in large part to the version of 1906 and after: these are discussed in the present volume in the prefatory matter to that work.