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Zeus, nor born of a virgin, like Mary and Christ, but begotten from our spirit and history.

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the turmoil of the human race. According to Rajah, “each stony sleep creates its specific nightmare and, in the rocking cradle, looks on the birth of its death” (121). The beast has slept for twenty centuries, and now somewhere the cradle has been set rocking for it and its sleep, turned to nightmare, has been broken. Therefore, what is clear is a sphinx–shape out of pre-Christian darkness, indifferent to man, accompanied in its horrible progress by shrieks and shadows to change the fate of humanity. The poem ends in a question mark, and this lack of finality enforces our fearful apprehension of the uncontrollable future.

The gyre that had reached its greatest expansion was “democratic, leveling, egalitarian, anarchic, heterogeneous, feminine, humane”—tender qualities symbolized by a rocking cradle, Bethlehem and the Second Coming. On the other hand, the contrary gyre cherished a future that would obey “imminent power, would be aristocratic, hierarchical, multiple masculine, harsh and surgical” (Harrison 372) --- hard qualities symbolized by a rough beast. Thus, the poem’s rhetorical juxtaposition establishes a dialectical tension: a blood–dimmed tide and the ceremony of innocence; the best and the worst; a lack of conviction and a passionate intensity; a stony sleep vexed to nightmare and a rocking cradle, a slouching rough beast and Bethlehem; pitiless beast and affectionate Christ; the modern world and the ancient world; rocking cradle and rough beast; falcon and the desert birds; destruction and rebirth; terror and joy. “Above all”, says Harrison, “there are the dichotomies between the dying and burgeoning eras, in which goodness, democracy and peace will give place to evil, aristocracy and war” (369). The final point is that the antithetical revelation is neither from beyond mankind, like Leda and

all the energy that such an extreme overvaluation of man has generated in man. (20)

The rough beast, after twenty centuries of stony sleep, "Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?" (22), because "its hour come round at last" (21). The beast's rising is monstrous for the same reasons that the Christ's rocking cradle is a nightmare from the beast's perspective. Christ was born in Bethlehem that appears to be an ironically appropriate birthplace for the beast. Ellmann's view is that "The rocking cradle of Christianity has at least made way for its opposite, for Christianity has reached its utmost bound" (259-60). Like Christ, the beast's birth is represented as that of a new Dionysus, vexing the world to nightmare by his rocking cradle. The rough beast rises after two thousand years of sleep in the desert of Christianity. The twenty centuries of sleep brings to mind the idea of interlocking gyres of history. The reversal of the gyres is responsible for creating the hell we live in, the hell created by the rise of the rough beast after twenty centuries of sleep.

Yeats enjoyed the description of the Christian phenomenon as "a fabulous, formless darkness which bolted out every beautiful thing, and the darkness drops again because the antithetical phases are but, at the best, phases of a momentary illumination like that of a lightning flash"(Harrison 368). The phrase "second coming" has been generalized to refer to any great cataclysm in which an old order of things is violently overthrown and replaced by something new. The rough beast slouches toward Bethlehem to be born in the violent overthrow of our civilization, "an overthrow which, in terms of the last words of the section, will bring us to a time when all is in ruin once again" (Unterecker 158). The beast slouches because it is confused and has just broken its sleep. The nightmares were caused by

position of supporting the violent men of the Irish liberation struggle” (Smith 105). Yeats predicted that the establishment of dictatorship of Labour would split this nation into two and destroy it, because it is a nation of peasant proprietors and capitalists who would not accept this dictatorship.

The rough beast is accompanied by shadows of the indignant desert birds which bring to mind vultures flying in circles, waiting for the death of creatures. What is important is that in Yeats the desert symbolizes “the aridity of attitudes he disliked, notably liberal – democratic individualism and Christian – Platonic idealism and other – worldliness” (Variorum 828). The desert is an emotional symbol, because it signifies Yeats’s hatred to Ireland’s troubles and gives this hatred to the reader. The indignant desert birds have the ominous significance. The word “shadow” suggests darkness the birds bring to the modern world. These demonic birds flock round the new Messiah. At that subjective birth, “the bird-daemons are precipitated into action, but Christ’s crucifixion moves neither them nor their human charges” (Wilson 200). Therefore, subjectivity waits for a savior other than Christ. The desert birds prepare for war, and love it because of its horror, “that belief may be changed, civilization renewed” (Yeats 52-53). Therefore, they suggest the destruction of outdated and outworn beliefs, a transvaluation of values. Yeats’s concept of transvaluation of values substitutes opposites in place of those they wish to destroy and Nietzsche was certainly aware of this:

The time has come when we have to pay for having been Christians for two thousand years: we are losing the center of gravity by virtue of which we have lived; we are lost for a while. Abruptly we plunge into the opposite valuations, with

War I that had shaken the west hemisphere. It was the war in which human kind saw for the first time the effects of technological warfare, of means of mass extermination. It was the war that brought complete dehumanization of the involved individuals. "*The Second Coming*" foretells "not only the spread of totalitarianism in its new forms but the Second World War and the rise of every imaginable destructive force" (Rosenthal 43).

The rough beast of the poem is most centrally the beast of Bolshevism called up by the 1917 Russian Revolution and its parallels were Hitler's Nazism system and Mussolini's Fascist government. "As the terror of Fascism and Nazism increased Yeats ceased to speak in favor of existing government" (Ellmann 279). Being Anti-Bolshevik, Yeats is obsessed with the present decay of Eastern Europe. For Yeats Communist, Fascist, nationalist, clerical, anti-clerical are, all responsible according to the number of their victims. The troubles in Ireland refer to Anglo-Irish War and the Black and Tans. His Ireland was in the midst of turmoil and bloodshed when he wrote the poem. "From January 1919 to May 1921 war raged in Ireland between the English forces, including the notorious Black and Tans, and the Irish patriots" (Ellmann 235). As he moved in the streets, he heard reports of murders and saw traces of fighting. He showed a deep concern for the country's future in his letters. Yeats always had this fact in mind that "the Black and Tans were in fact an early manifestation of an outlook and methods which the Nazism were later to perfect" (O'Brien 276). The Civil War in Ireland was also responsible for the release of anarchy. The civil war was the microcosm of an epoch that was disintegrating. Ireland had seen the first revelation of this beast, at Easter 1916. "A fanatical opponent of communist and mere anarchy, Yeats found himself in the anomalous

winged beast that he associated with laughing, ecstatic destruction. Critical opinion has predominantly interpreted the rough beast as “a comfortless vision of horror, symbolizing the birth of a violent, bestial anti-civilization” (Unterecker 165). The most obvious interpretation seems to be the Egyptian Sphinx, which is male, unlike the Greek sphinx. The male Egyptian sphinx symbolizes “both the mighty strength and protective power of Egypt’s ruler”. It is the representation of “Hours, the Egyptian God of Light who was born each day as the rising sun, the symbol of renewed life” (Harrison 367). In Greek pantheon Dionysus, like Christ, was a God who died and was reborn; he was also a god of vegetation and animal life who took on different animal forms, one of which was the lion. The shape with lion body and the head of man could suggest the union of power and intelligence because both of them cannot be found simultaneously in either man or animal. At the end of Christian era, there shall be a lamentable “ departure of the Gods from men, evil demons will alone remain, who being mingled with human nature will violently impel the miserable men of that time to war, to rapine, to fraud, and to everything contrary to the nature of the soul” (Wilson 150). The beast will appear monstrous and terrifying to those whose tradition it supersedes, because it is “A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun” (15). It is always enigmatic, suggesting evil, violence and an antithetical religious movement. The rough beast represents the troubles Yeats sees in the world. By the rough beast, Yeats had in mind “ the First World War, the Bolshevic Revolution, the threat of anarchy and widespread violence in Ireland, all of which seemed to confirm Nietzsche’s prediction ... of immense wars accompanied by anarchy” (Harrison 365). Yeats wrote the poem while Europe and the rest of the world were trying to recover from the terrible experience of World

opinions and act upon anti-intellectual beliefs. Yvor Winters says "The best are the Irish aristocrats; the worst are the Irish engaged in politics, who were trying to establish a constitutional democracy" (28). Yeats feels dislike for "democracy and the political activity without which democracy can not survive—a dislike which was due in part to ... the fact that Maud Gonne was more interested in politics than Yeats"(25). The best and the worst refer to Yeats's personal associations, and are emotional symbols. They connote Yeats's experience in Ireland and his relationship with Maud Gonne.

In the second stanza the poet behaves like a prophet who can announce the end of civilization and the beginning of war and absolutism. Therefore, the first stanza prepares the way for the horrible event of the second stanza. As soon as the poet talks about modern chaos, he experiences a vision out of "*Spiritus Mundi*" that troubles his sight. The *Spiritus Mundi* is the spirit of the world; it is the Great Memory, or the Great Mind, as Anima Mundi; it is the Record where images exist forever, the storehouse of images; it "is important because it indicates that the image is not a personal one, that he has not deliberately thought it up but has had it forced into his consciousness"(Ellmann 259). This image is drawn from a received tradition and is not related to Yeats's personal experience. As a result, it acts as an intellectual symbol that the whole poem centers around it. The ominous image is portrayed in the poet's mind and is transferred to the reader. The vision is "A shape with lion body and the head of a man" (14). Yeats tells us in his *Autobiographies* that "there rose before me mental images that I could not control: a desert and a black Titan raising himself up by his two hands from a heap of ancient ruins" (185). When he was to begin *On Bailer's Strand*, he always imagined at his left side just out of the range of the sight, a brazen

sun. This regular rise and fall is parallel to the rise and fall of the interlocking gyres of objectivity and subjectivity in history. Therefore, the blood-dimmed tide unleashes terrible destructive forces at the end of Christianity to begin the rise of the new civilization. The tide evokes ideas and leads to more contemplation on the part of the reader. Hence, it is an intellectual symbol. This tide drowns the ceremony of innocence which “carries an allusion to the purification rite of baptism” (Ellmann 259), symbol of Christianity, ceremony because in ceremony lies order, and innocence because it opposes the social violence symbolized by the blood-dimmed tide. The ceremony of innocence is drowning by “a tide of anarchy which, though evil and murderous in itself, is nevertheless historically innocent, acting as an agent of inevitable historical necessity” (Vendler 100). The result of drowning of innocence by the tide is that: “The best lack all conviction, while the worst /Are full of passionate intensity” (7-8).

Because of the tide, the worst seem ready to rule a world in which good men have grown skeptical and lack all conviction; the best have nothing to hold them above the tide, but the worst move above it. At the time we have reached, the best minds “being subjective, should have lost all faith though desiring it, and the worst minds, being so nearly objective, have no need of faith and may be full of passionate intensity without the control of any faith or wisdom” (Saul 225). In the normal course of events those who are rational gain control, and those who are irrational lack control and are confused. But anarchy through the blood-dimmed tide reverses the order. “The religious man”, says F.A.C. Wilson, “shall be accounted insane, the irreligious shall be thought wise, the furious brave, and the worst of men shall be considered a good man” (149). The best refers to Ireland’s intellectual skepticism, whereas the worst share unthinking

of harm. It also suggests that some natural order has been upended, is destroyed by "mere anarchy" loosed upon the world. The falcon was the most popular of the birds of prey when falconry was the sport of kings and nobles, "its fierce alertness and lofty bearing earning its reputation as a bird of nobility. Thus the separation of man and bird offers a striking image of social and cultural disintegration" (Harrison 365) which originates from Yeats's anguish at the disruption of the order, the homogeneity of the aristocracy he so admired. From what was said, it can be inferred that falcon and falconer are intellectual symbols, because mentioning them reminds the reader of their various meanings and connotations. As a bird, falcon is one of Yeats's main symbols, which plays a significant part in the poem. The reason why the center cannot hold those that revolve around it is that:

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood – dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned. (4-6)

Mere anarchy is appropriate for Bolshevik revolution, First World War and the troubles in Ireland. It suggests worse things to come. The blood dimmed tide puts an end to Christian era, "replacing both tolerance and discipline by their brutal parodies – mere anarchy and authoritarian violence" (Smith 112). The tide and anarchy announce the beginning of the new era, because every new era begins in horror and chaos. Yeats's view is that "Christianity had culminated in an egalitarian democracy which, disintegrating into mere anarchy, could not control the violence, the blood- dimmed tide, it had loosed on the world, signaling the approach of a new era" (Harrison 366). The tide itself strengthens the concept of interlocking gyre that has a similar fluctuating movement. Tide is a regular rise and fall in the level of the sea through the influence of the moon and the

All our scientific, democratic, fact-accumulating, heterogeneous civilization belongs to the outward gyre and prepares not the continuance of itself but the revelation as in a lightning flash ... of the civilization that must slowly takes its place" (165-66).

The world's development along the gyre of science, democracy, and heterogeneity is now coming apart; the next age will take its character not from the gyre of science and democracy, but from the contrary inner gyre. In the first stanza we have the idea of the dying of the modern civilization. The world is overloaded with chaos and flux; disorder is seen everywhere. There is so much confusion that "the falcon cannot hear the falconer" (2), because the gyre has reached to its greatest expansion and it is time for the next gyre to begin the movement. The falcon represents man, losing touch with Christianity. In this case, the falconer is Christ, who began the era of history that has now reached its conclusion. It represents Christian civilization moving farther away from Christ. To Richard P. Blackmur "the falconer is symbolic of active or intellectual mind; the falconer is perhaps the soul itself or its uniting principle" (850). The soul or intellectual mind exists in revolution around God, to whom it clings in love, "holding itself to the utmost of its power near to Him as the Being on which all depends; and since it can not coincide with God it circles about him" (Wilson 208). The relationship between falcon and falconer suggests servant and master relationship. Absence of contact between falcon and falconer brings disintegration and loss of form or structure, and implies "man's separation from every ideal of himself that has enabled him to control his life" (Ellmann 259). It also hints at technology progressing beyond mankind's ability to control it. Technology has advanced to the point where it would do a great deal

would bring about its opposite, an era of joyful, dangerous, individual life" (49). This period of individual life brings to mind the subjective cone that is antithetical to primary cone of Christianity. Therefore the Christian revelation which signified the beginning of a cycle is now approaching its end, and the possibility of the antithetical is about to begin. Jan Stallworthy's view is that "As Christ was the primary revelation to an antithetical age; He that is to come will be the antithetical revelation to a primary age" (18). Thus, the poem, as an artistic whole, passes from a pattern of objective first movement into a more subjective second movement. In the Christian era, the birth of Christ happens at phase one and phase fifteen stands for the end of Christian era, the birth of the beast, but generally Leda, Christ and Rough Beast occupy phases one, fifteen and twenty-eight respectively. In the objective cone of Christianity, every man tries to look like his neighbor and repress individuality and personality, because Christianity is obsessed with mass movement. Contrarily, in the subjective cone individuality is at its height, which is illustrated through Fascism. Yeats saw in Mussolini's and Hitler's Fascist regime "personal government at its height and a burst of powerful personality such as he anticipated for the new era" (Ellmann 248).

According to phases of the moon, the poem is located in phases twenty-four and twenty-five where subjectivity is dominant. John Unterecker quotes Yeats describing the historical process as it is symbolized in his double cones:

At the present moment the life gyre is sweeping outward, unlike that before the birth of Christ, which was narrowing and has almost reached its greatest expansion. The revelation, which approaches will, however, takes its character from the contrary movement of the interior gyre.

Christ is supposed to be reborn after crucifixion and bring peace to the world, but in Yeats's poem the story is something else. The title of the poem suggests a visionary quality as Apocalypse. The Biblical history is linear, not cyclical; it has a beginning (Genesis), a turning point (the birth and crucifixion of Christ), and St. John's Biblical Revelation of the end of time and the second coming of Christ. In this poem, Yeats predicts that the Christian era will soon give way apocalyptically to an era ruled by a desert beast with the body of a lion and the head of a man that brings horror and destruction:

In spite of his promise ... that the next era would be subjective and preferable to the present, the god of that era, who rises from desert sands, is no beneficent Dionysus but a monster. The poet's vision of horror surmounts his vision of the cycles...Whatever the new dispensation can bring, it inspires only a sense of horrible helplessness to avert what no man can desire ... The final intimation that the new god will be born in Bethlehem, which Christianity associates with passive infancy and the tenderness of maternal love, makes its brutishness particularly frightful. (Ellmann 164-65)

The central idea behind the poem is the prophetic intuition of the advent of a new cycle of civilization, which is to destroy all established principles of the previous cycle. Plato has a terrible passage describing the end of a cycle when "men are left helpless and defenseless, without skill or resource, to die of famine or be torn in pieces by the beasts" (Wilson 149). When a civilization has reached its fullest expansion, an annunciation occurs; the arrival of a new God, in the middle point of the circle, the beginning of the reversal of all that has been achieved. Melchiori says, "What distinguished him from the decadents was his conviction that the destruction of one world

This movement repeatedly happens both in souls of man and in history. It can be inferred that phases of the moon are related to the progression of time and world history. The new and full moons are the periods where time begins and ends. However, it is not an end in the right sense of the word; it is actually a beginning of a new cycle. The phases in between are the growth and evolution of the human soul over time. The cycle lasts two thousand years and each period is dominated by a single civilization and its own disintegration. "Every millennium is a wheel to itself, with its own full moon and its dark obliteration. But in two thousand years, more or less, a civilization sweeps round its phases" (stock 138). The life of every man, as well as history, goes through a similar cycle. "Every cycle begins in a state of objectivity and with violence which is evil; it proceeds through subjectivity, and it then proceeds toward objectivity and ultimate dispersal and a new beginning" (Winters 20). The phases of the moon move in a circular period and each cyclic movement of history "is an hour within the day of a larger movement, and that all these cycles are caught within one all- inclusive Great Year which has a cosmic purpose" (Clark 55). As a result, the objective cone corresponds to the dark of the moon and the subjective cone equals the full moon in the Great Wheel.

Yeats's "*The Second Coming*", written in 1919, expresses his sense of horror at what might happen to our civilization. The Trojan war, the birth of Christ and the second coming were already considered by him as three fundamental crises in the world history, each of which reversed the established order and moved in a new cycle of civilization. "*The Second Coming*" is not, however, that which Christians expect, but the antithesis of all that has been built upon the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. According to Christianity,

starts to “unwind the thread the previous age has wound” (Henn 195). With the first gyre winding, the movement culminates in its climax, but as the other gyre symbolizing the oppository movement intervenes, the first one starts falling apart and disintegrates. The two contrasting cones are primary and antithetical. The primary cone is objective and solar; the antithetical is subjective as well as lunar. The subjective cone is called that of the antithetical tincture because it is in continual conflict with its opposite; the objective cone is called that of the primary tincture, because whereas subjectivity tends to separate man from man, objectivity brings us back to the mass where we began. The Great Wheel is divided into twenty-eight phases that are called lunar phases. The number twenty eight corresponds with the number of days in a lunation. The classification is based upon the amount of subjectivity or objectivity, words for which Yeats substitutes antithetical and primary gyres. At the top is dark of the moon (pure objectivity) that is phase one and at the bottom is the full moon (pure subjectivity), which stands for phase fifteen. In phase one and phase fifteen the soul does not take on a human form. These are superhuman phases in which no human form exists, because the conflicting forces are at rest. On the whole the two phases implied here are far reaching for man, but between these two, human’s life is moving towards one point or the other. “It begins in unity with the matrix of Nature at the dark of the moon, moves toward self-conscious individual life at full moon and, then, with the shattering of individual unity, lapses back into the matrix” (Whitaker 124). The soul passes through all the phases within a single lifetime. Beginning with objective state of infancy (phase one), it rises to the full subjectivity of maturity (phase 15), and sinks back to where it dies (phase 28) and then after a period of time begins the round once more.

descends at birth and to which it returns after death" (Stock 201). The gyres are entwined and are perpetually at war with each other, now one and now the other is triumphant in a series of battles. What Yeats means by a gyre is explained in *A Vision* quoted by Jeffares:

A line is a symbol of time, and expresses a movement, symbolizing the emotional subjective mind, without extension in space; a plane, cutting the line at right angles, is spatial, the symbol of objectivity and intellect. A gyre is a combination of line and plane, and as one tendency or the other must always be stronger the gyre is always expanding or contracting. The gyre is drawn as a cone, which represents sometimes the individual soul and its history, sometimes general life. For these two cones are substituted, since neither the soul of man nor nature can be expressed without conflict. (201)

The Gyres provided Yeats with an image to represent the antinomies. The cones were not restricted to symbolizing objectivity and subjectivity; they were also "particular and universal", "quality and quantity", "living and the dead", "man and Daimon", "man and woman", "man and God", "love and hate", "man and beast". On a more abstract level, they are "permanence and change", "the one and the many", "the natural and the supernatural worlds", "one living the other's death, dying the other's life"(Rajan 85). A double gyre shows two striving principles that meet each other in a circle to construct a perfect movement and without that no movement is possible.

Every thesis has implied in itself an antithesis; therefore, every movement holds the seeds of its own decay, which are of a counter-movement. While a gyre widens and expands in a spiral movement, it

important symbols, . . . the gyres are fundamentally diagrams of conflict" (83). William Blake's view that "without contraries there is no progression" is applicable to Yeats's view of gyres. Every gyre is in opposition to the other gyre and they are perpetually at war with one another, now one and now the other is triumphant in a series of regular battles.

Diagram of the Great Wheel is another restatement of the symbol of the gyres that is equipped with twenty-eight spokes corresponding to twenty-eight phases of the moon. According to Unterecker "the Great Wheel, representing everything, represented as well as the twenty-eight basic personalities, the twenty-eight incarnations a man must live through, the twenty-eight basic phases of each cycle of world history" (27). In the movement of the wheel, man seeks the opposite of his condition and attains his object as far as it is attainable. The man's opposite is his mask or anti-self that is against his self. The opposition, like the gyres, is a recurrent motif in the Great Wheel and phases of the moon in terms of waning and waxing of the moon. The wheel is divided into twenty eight phases, which encircles an evolutionary movement in every individual's life or a historical event. Each circle begins with a period of growth, moves toward maturity and then declines. When a movement comes to its end, a new one appears after it. An evolution with its inevitable disintegration covers half of the circle while the other half contains its opposite movement. Each half is considered as a gyre, therefore, the movements symbolized by these two gyres are interpenetrating and whirling within each other. According to Plato there are two cycles: "the cycle of Jupiter (which the Neoplatonist commentators interpret as meaning the physical world) and the cycle of Saturn, or the intellectual world, the pre-natal condition from which the soul

objects with a significance beyond themselves" (Abrams 9). Symbolism can be said to be an attempt to go beyond reality to a world of ideas that are of two kinds: the ideas within the poet that includes his emotions and the ideas in the Platonic sense that create a perfect supernatural world toward which man aspires. Emotional and intellectual symbols stand respectively for these two ideas that appear in Yeats theory of symbolism. Emotional symbols evoke the reader's emotion and cause the reader to be attracted or repulsed by the images evoked by the symbol. On the other hand, intellectual symbols evoke ideas alone or ideas mingled with emotions. Yeats distinguishes between emotional and intellectual symbols when he says, "if the symbols are merely emotional, the reader gazes from amid the accidents and destinies of the world, but if the symbols are intellectual too, he becomes himself a part of pure intellect, and he is himself mingled with the procession" (33). His clear preference is for the second sort, intellectual symbols, because through them the poem could give an indefinable wisdom.

Two structures are perceivable in Yeats's poetry: the early structure refers to the time when he was young and the latter refers to his maturity. His first structure is the Rose symbol that can be categorized under arbitrary symbols which are "cross, lily, bird, water, tree, moon and sun" (Tindall 47). The other structure is the notion of gyres and phases of the moon. Yeats's central poetic belief is that history can be interpreted as a series of expanding cones that we call gyres or vortex. The figure is frequently drawn as a double cone, the narrower end of each cone being in the center of the broad end of the other. The double cones have different tendencies: one is expanding while the other is contracting or as one diminishes the other increases. Balachanra Rajan says, " Conflict is Yeats's natural element and his

Symbolic Significance of Yeats’s “*The Second Coming*”

Ali Reza Najafi

Abstract:

This essay is the application of William Butler Yeats's idea of symbol to his poem "The Second Coming". In his "The Symbolism of Poetry", he distinguishes between two kinds of symbols. The emotional symbols evoke emotions, but intellectual symbols evoke ideas or ideas mingled with emotions. His preference is for the latter because it connotes a multiplicity of meanings. His symbols are the Great Wheel, the phases of the moon and the interpenetrating gyres of history. Yeats's symbols illustrate the fact that life is a conflict and without contraries there is no movement. The Christian era will soon give way to an era ruled by a desert beast that brings horror and destruction.

Key words: Yeats- Symbol- interpenetrating gyres of history- second coming

Symbolism as a literary movement began in the nineteenth-century France and affected English poets; especially William Butler Yeats who became familiar with French symbolism through Arthur Symons whose *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* was dedicated to Yeats. Yeats took the definition of symbol from Romantics for whom "a rose, a flower, a mountain, a cave or a cloud are presented as