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W. B. Yeats' revision of his lyric poetry

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W. B. YEATS' REVISION OF HIS LYRIC POETRY

by

William Parker Keen

A THESIS
Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of Lehigh University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Lehigh University

1960 - 1961
This thesis is accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

1 Dec. 1960
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Contents

Introduction .............................................. 1
I. Revision of the Early Poetry ..................... 5
II. Revision of the Later Poetry .................... 21
Conclusion .............................................. 72
Notes ..................................................... 75
Bibliography .......................................... 82
Introduction

Writing of Yeats' revision practices, Lady Gregory once exclaimed that the great Irish poet was "working over those old poems as if for a competition for eternity." The publication of The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats by Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach in 1957, definitely established the length to which Yeats revised in his quest for perfection and clearly indicated that his 'competition for eternity' was based not merely on 'those old poems'—most probably meant to refer to the poems included in Yeats' first two published volumes of poetry, Crossways and The Rose— but on the totality of his poetic output. Evidently, revision was an important aspect of the craftsmanship of William Butler Yeats; and on the basis of this assumption, I intend to make a thorough study of his revisions in an attempt to define their role in his craftsmanship and in his stylistic development.

Perhaps the best advance may be made by the enumeration of the total variety of changes to be found in the poetry of William Butler Yeats. There are five basic categories of alterations: (1) variations in the spellings of words; (2) variations in the mode of punctuation; (3) variations in calligraphy; (4) variations which slightly alter the sense of the text; and (5) variations which greatly alter the text.
Close examination of these groups, in the light of scholarly research, will demonstrate which are conscious alterations and thereby direct my approach to the study of Yeats' revision of his lyric poetry.

Of the variations in the spelling of words there are two types: "certain Irish names and words of Gaelic origin; and certain common words of general use." These variations seem to be unregulated; in fact, as G. D. P. Allt has pointed out, Yeats was a poor speller. Allan Wade, the editor of Yeats' letters, has made the following comments on the matter of Yeats' spelling:

Yeats was an uncertain and erratic speller, as he was always ready to admit. In his earlier letters spelling mistakes are, on the whole, infrequent, but as he grew older his spelling deteriorated. Mrs. Yeats says that it was always at his worst when he was over-tired, ill or worried. It was not necessarily difficult words over which he came to grief; so simple a word as 'indeed' will sometimes be written 'endeed,' and he was capable of spelling his daughter's name 'Ann' and 'Anne' in the same letter.

Illustration of Yeats' unusual spelling in old age is found in the following excerpt from a letter which Yeats wrote to Dorothy Wellesley in 1936:

The Swami is a constant instruction and delight.

He puts sugger in his soup, in his salad, in his
vegetables, and then unexpectedly puts salt on stewed pares. Sometimes he mixes salt, sugar and pepper merely I think because his eyes light upon them. He says 'I like all the six flavours but prefer sugar'.

The variant spellings of Irish words are not so much Yeats' fault as the result of the generally unregulated state of the spelling of those words at the time that Yeats was writing; according to Allan Wade, regarding the spelling of Irish names, "there seems to have been little agreement in the earlier days of the Gaelic revival."  

Of the variations in the mode of punctuation, Allt has written: "These occur for every poem [in Crossways and The Rose] and in almost every edition: but they appear to have been caused by the printer's whims and not by the poet's wishes." Allt has substantiated his position by references to a conversation with Mrs. W. B. Yeats who explained that the poet had avowed, "I know nothing about punctuation.... I never know when I should use a semicolon or a colon."

Marion Witt has produced convincing evidence for the unimportance of Yeats' changes in punctuation:

...editors or printers pointed the work to suit themselves. Yeats's holograph of Easter, 1916, for example, sent to Clement Shorter, who published it in a pamphlet for his friends, is punctuated little and quite differently from the printed poem. That Yeats did not correct the poem in proof is suggested by the covering
letter to Shorter, who apparently was to see the poem through the press. 

Whether or not the changes in calligraphy, which, according to Allt, are quite varied, are a matter of interest in the study of Yeats' conscious artistry is not definite; only the testimony of more manuscripts than are now available to the general scholarly public will answer this question. Since I have not been able to examine Yeats' manuscripts, I intend to ignore these changes. Therefore, my study will be confined to (1) changes which slightly alter the sense of the text and (2) changes which greatly alter the text.

An introductory outline of organization and procedure remains to be made. The first chapter has for its subject Yeats' revision of his early poetry (poems included in Crossways and The Rose); emphasis is placed upon those revision tendencies which appear exclusively in connection with the early poetry and upon those poems which, written early but revised late in life, underwent major revision. The second chapter undertakes a study of the remaining revisions; however, emphasis is placed upon alterations made in the poetry beginning with The Wind Among the Reeds and extending through Last Poems.
Chapter I

Thomas Parkinson has made a concentrated analysis of "four phases in Yeats' development," in which he stresses the poet's revision of his early poetry, particularly as it was influenced by the years of writing dramas for the Abbey Theater. According to Parkinson,

In the first phase (1889-1901) he [Yeats] corrected the style of his early poems, established his basic subject matter, and refined his manner of treatment. In the second phase (1899-1911) he extended his early manner and matter by amplifying his poetics to suit the needs of the theatre and eventually--in his Plays for an Irish Theatre--succeeded in transcending the limits of his early verse which he had once so consciously established and accepted. Then from 1903-1921 he applied to his lyric verse the lessons learned from the stage. Each of the first three phases was a progressive step toward satisfying some necessity of his art by perfecting or extending its possibilities. The fourth phase, on the other hand, is a stopping point, and the revisions made between 1925 and 1933 are more negative. From them Yeats attained no new knowledge; he merely expressed his sense of the superiority of his later style. 2

I believe it is clear from this brief introduction that the
importance of Parkinson's work is sufficient to warrant initial consideration.

Yeats' description of his poetry in the preface to Poems, published in London in 1895, is "as a work intended to convey a single effect."³ Here are the poet's words:

This book contains all the writer cares to preserve out of his previous volumes of verse. He has revised, and to a large extent re-written, The Wanderings of Usheen and the lyrics and ballads from the same volume, and expanded and, he hopes, strengthened The Countess Cathleen. He has, however, been compelled to leave unchanged many lines he would gladly have rewritten, because his present skill is not great enough to separate them from thoughts and expressions which seem to him worth preserving.

Yeats goes on to describe the volume included. The Crossways lyrics were so named, he says, "because in them he tried many pathways;"⁵ and The Rose lyrics so called, "for in them he... found...the only pathway whereon he can hope to see with his own eyes the Eternal Rose of Beauty and of Peace."⁶ Parkinson has argued that between 1889 and 1892, Yeats "had discovered in the Celtic and occult the area of his true concern [these forces bore fruit in The Rose poems], but before making those discoveries he had explored various possibilities offered to him by the general stream of European culture and the qualities of his personal experience [these motives lie behind the
Thus, The Rose lyrics had become Yeats' standard of evaluation.

Parkinson has assigned three reasons for Yeats' exclusion of seventeen of the 1889 poems from the 1895 volume: (1) by 1895, Yeats disliked the manner of some of the poems and had not skill to salvage them; (2) in some cases, other poems more adequately treated the subject matter; and (3) some poems treated at length matters too far removed from Yeats' Irishism. Since my paper does not deal directly with exclusions (which, strictly speaking, are not revisions), rather than treat them at length, I will hasten to more relevant matters.

A. Minor Revisions. Yeats' revisions of 1895, Parkinson has ascertained, "worked toward a few primary ends." principally correction of things that were obviously wrong and the purging of Pre-Raphaelite elements from his style, a phenomenon which has been observed in the first important study of Yeats' revisions, made by G. D. P. Allt in 1944 and 1945, on the basis of the first two volumes of poetry. From his studies, Allt has determined that the revision of these lyrics illustrates a "...revolt against the 'poetic' and the cult of 'art for art's sake'; and a revolt against a sentimental cult of the antique;..." These revisions are limited, by and large, to the first two volumes of poetry and generate from a vital change which Yeats' was forcing himself to make near the end of the century—to break away from Pre-Raphaelite influences.
It has often been said that some men are born poets and some men make poets of themselves; it might be said of Yeats that he was born one kind of poet and made of himself another, very different kind. That Yeats' early poetry shows strong Pre-Raphaelite influences is not at all surprising, for Yeats, who was born on June 13, 1865, grew to young manhood in the household of his father, J. B. Yeats, a Pre-Raphaelite painter, during the ascendancy of Rossetti, Swinburne, and Pater in the world of literature. In London in the 1890's he associated himself with admirers "of Rossetti in verse and of Pater in prose" and largely by his own efforts organized the Rhymer's Club which came to include Richard Le Gallienne, Aubrey Beardsley, John Davidson, Lionel Johnson, Arthur Symons, Ernest Rhys, Victor Plarr, and Ernest Dowson. Ellman asserts that Yeats "was certainly impressed by the artistic skill of some of them, especially Dowson and Johnson, and a little awed by them." I cannot help thinking that Dowson in particular was of considerable influence on the early, immature poetic manner of W. B. Yeats, for stylistically their work has much in common: abundance of inversion and enjambment, superfluous use of traditionally poetic language, and even an insistent use of the rose as symbol of shifting meaning.

By 1895, Yeats had become dissatisfied with the image cast by the early poems, and decided to remake himself by revising the poems in Crossways and The Rose. The process of his disillusionment with Pre-Raphaelitism is too complex
to be traced here, but it should be stated that new forces were driving him, principally his interests in Ireland and the Irish theater and his desire to mold a distinctive style. Consequently, he explained that the 1895 edition of Poems contained all he cared to preserve, many of them "to a large extent rewritten." Allt has listed as changes resulting from his revolt against aestheticism and the antique: (1) the elimination of archaic and conventionally poetic words; (2) the elimination of poetic contractions; (3) the elimination of grammatical inversion; (4) the elimination of unnecessary repetition and superfluous metaphor; and (5) the substitution of formal for merely ornamental repetition.

One of Yeats' early teachers was the poet W. E. Henley, who acted as a literary adviser for a group of young poets who met with him to discuss literary issues at his home in Richmond in the late eighteen-eighties and early eighteen-nineties. Yeats has recorded that Henley was inclined to revise much of the verse which Yeats wrote for the National Observer, even to the extent of "crossing out a line or a stanza and writing in one of his own...." Yeats was ashamed of being rewritten, but feeling that he owed a debt to Henley he did not resist:

if he [Henley] had changed every 'has' to 'hath' I would have let him, for had we not sunned ourselves in his generosity? 'My young men out do me and they write better than I,' he wrote in some letter praising
Charles Whibley's work, and to another friend with a copy of my Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland: 'See what a fine thing has been written by one of my lads.' Yeats' statement indicates that Henley was partially responsible for the abundance of conventionally poetic language in the younger poet's work; however, it is curious that an examination of Henley's poetry fails to uncover the use of hath or any other such archaic poeticism. Possibly the older man preached what he did not care to practice, but had Yeats never referred to Henley's editing, these conventional poeticisms would have seemed the natural imprints of Pre-Raphaelite and decadent poets, particularly of Dowson. In this connection, it is significant that the revision away from conventionally poetic language occurs in verses written before 1900 and that after that date Yeats hesitated to use this Romantic diction. In the greatest number of instances he simply converted terms such as ye, nay, hath, thy, and thee to their modern equivalents, you, no, has, your, and you, respectively.

A significant exception (which Allt has not noted) to this practice is the retaining of the conventionally poetic when it lends an archaic or colloquial flavor appropriate to the subject matter, as in "The Ballad of Moll Magee" where Yeats retained ye in lines 18 and 54, as well as in line 2 of "The Ballad of The Foxhunter," which though changed to you in Poems (1895) was changed back to ye in the 1927 reprint,
in which form it remained. The colloquial flavor of "The Ballad of Moll Magee" is enhanced by the change of husband to man in lines 5, 22, and 41; and of forth to out in line 25; "The Meditation of the Old Fisherman" shows a similar change—fish to take—in line 7. 19

A less frequent but closely related tendency in revision, the elimination of contractions, occurs in the early poetry, particularly in the Crossways volume. The best examples of this type of revision are found in "The Song of the Happy Shepherd" from which follow variant readings of several lines: "Mid clanging space a moment heard" became "In clanging space a moment heard" (2 - l. 20); and "Walking ghostly 'mong the dew" was altered to "Walking ghostly in the dew" (l. 52). 20

The natural order of speech became one of Yeats' touchstones; over and over he proclaimed it, as in this letter to Dorothy Wellesley: "the natural words in the natural order is the formula." 21 In the revising of his early poetry, grammatical inversion was scrapped in order to comply with this formula. Speaking of "Innisfree" Yeats, in his Autobiography says, "A couple of years later I would not have written that first line with its conventional archaisme—'Arise and go'—nor the inversion in the last stanza." 22 Sometimes the inversion was erased by changing the sense, as in line 17 of "The Ballad of the Old Foxhunter," which first read, "His Lollard lead they round the lawn," but which was altered to "Brown Lollard treads upon the lawn" (17 - l. 17). More often the inversion
was erased by retaining the same words but in a different order; line 5 of "The Ballad of Moll Magee" affords an example: "My husband was a fisher poor" was revised to "My man was a poor fisher" (16 - l. 5). The Rose poems, too, have been rid of inversions; revised to "A king is but a foolish labourer," the line originally ran, "A wild and foolish labourer is a king" (19 - l. 27). Originally, the lover was asked to murmur in his old age, "From us fled love." Later he was allowed a syntactically more natural musing: "how love fled" (29 - l. 10).

Though approximately three quarters of the revisions away from inversion occur in these two volumes, similar changes are found in six of the ten remaining volumes, including the Last Poems. However, revision of the later poems generally required the change of adjective, noun, and verb positions but not the reshuffling of major sentence elements as was often the case in the earlier poems; for example, "And stars like moths were shining out," became "And moth-like stars were flickering out," and line 15 of "Sailing to Byzantium," "And therefore have I sailed the seas and come / To the holy city of Byzantium," was altered to "And therefore I have sailed the seas and come / To the holy city of Byzantium" (211 - ll. 15-16). Thus, where Yeats' conscious effort after 1895 to avoid inversion did lapse, at least fewer major contortions of syntax were committed.

Though the erasure of repetition occurs throughout the poetry, only in the early lyrics is there a substantial enough
number of changes to warrant serious consideration as the result of a conscious drive to rid the poetry of that particular element. This type of revision generally consists of the changing or dropping of one word which originally occurred twice within the space of one or two lines: the third and in three consecutive lines was changed to am (237 - l. 10; 11); the second all in as many lines was dropped (357 - l. 1h). Occasionally rewriting was necessary: "Hid in the earth's most hidden part," became "Hid under quiet bows apart," (7 - l. 12). Surprisingly, the sparsely revised Last Poems volume contains three such changes (345 - l. 11, 357 - l. 1h, and 370 - l. 20). 25

The substitution of formal for merely ornamental repetition occurs less frequently than the erasure of repetition; however, in several instances the results are striking in that musical refrains are created. Line 38 of "Stolen Child" was first written, "Come, 0 human child!" but was later regularized with lines 9 and 25; the alteration extended to the third stanza of the poem an exact refrain which previously the first two stanzas shared:

Come away, 0 human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.

(11 - l. 9-12, 24-27, and 38-41).

Through the use of artistic repetition a rather fortunate effect was obtained in "The Scholars," which shows Yeats' characteristic abhorrence for the tediousness of scholarship; Yeats'
feelings are conveyed clearly enough in these lines:

They'll cough in ink to the world's end;
Wear out the carpet with their shoes
Earning respect; have no strange friend;
If they have sinned nobody knows.

In changing the stanza to the description of the scholars' haunt, he enforced the drudgery through repetitions of word and sentence structure, thereby uniting sound and sense:

All shuffle there; all cough in ink;
All wear the carpet with their shoes;
All think what other people think;
All know the man their neighbor knows.

(161 - 11. 7-10). 26

With Yeats' activities during the second phase, between 1899 and 1911, we need spend little time; it is sufficient to emphasize Parkinson's points that Yeats spent these years learning stagecraft, principally through the writing and revising of his play *The Shadowy Waters*, and that when he returned to the writing of lyric poetry, he brought with him knowledge gathered through a rich dramatic experience, principally a poetic approach suited to the needs of the theater.

In the third phase, 1903-1921, the years of dramatic work slowly bore a hybrid fruit, the dramatic lyric which pictured a natural world, in natural, personal speech which dramatized "the tension generated by conflict between temporal demands and eternal values." 27

According to Parkinson, the fourth and final phase of Yeats' revision of the early verse brought the experiences of
the Abbey Theatre and the writing of dramatic lyrics to bear.

Yeats had mastered

The tendency of his early verse toward speech patterns
[which] was fulfilled in the vocabulary of common speech,
in rhythms emulating the actual movement of the speaking
voice. With the discovery that the gesture, speech,
thought and feeling of an actual man who would be exciting
if met in daily life was what appealed to the Abbey
audience, Yeats deliberately went about the task of
writing lyric poems in which he could dramatize the
variety of his personal experience and of his response
to that experience. 28

As Parkinson has pointed out, while Yeats was developing the
manner of the dramatic lyric, he attempted little detailed
revision of his early verse; the 1908 and 1912 editions of his
poetry contain only "very mild changes in diction and more
extensive changes in punctuation." 29 However, when Yeats be-
came sure of his methods "he was more willing to revise." 30

The prefaces to his 1925 volume of Early Poems and Stories and
the 1927 edition of Poems 1895 contain announcements of re-
vision, the latter containing what he hoped to be a last will
and testament for the early poetry:

This volume contains what is, I hope, the final text of
the poems of my youth; and yet it may not be, seeing —
that in it are not only the revisions from my "Early
Poems and Stories," published last year, but quite new
revisions on which my heart is greatly set. One is always

cutting out the dead wood. 31

And in 1933 he made further revisions.

In all of the later revisions Yeats' avowed intent was to
express better the poems of youth. Parkinson has pointed out
that, "As long as the revisions were confined to one line or
two, the intent and effect of the later revisions are identical." 32
The most significant result of such changes is clarity; for ex-
ample, "The kings of the old time are fled," which had vaguely
taken the monarchs off the scene for an indeterminate length of
time, was revised to this definite statement of their situation:
"The kings of the old time are dead," (2 - l. 17).

B. Major Revisions. Thus far I have endeavored to demon-
strate the efficacy of Yeats' minor revisions. However, when
Yeats made more extensive changes, the result often differed
from the professed intent; and it is on this account that a
substantial part of the critical comment regarding his early
revisions has been uttered. A number of poems have been men-
tioned in this light by various critics, 33 but the revision of
one poem, "The Sorrow of Love," has received extensive review.
For the convenience of the reader the 1895 and the 1933 versions
of the poem are printed here:

1895

The quarrel of the sparrows in the eaves
The full round moon and the star-laden sky,
And the loud song of the ever-singing leaves
Had hid away earth's old and weary cry.
And then you came with those red mournful lips,
And with you came the whole of the world's tears,
And all the sorrows of her labouring ships,
And all the burden of her myriad years.

And now the sparrows waring in the eaves,
The curd-pale moon, the white stars in the sky,
And the loud chanting of the unquiet leaves,
Are shaken with earth's old and weary cry.

1933

The brawling of a sparrow in the eaves,
The brilliant moon and all the milky sky,
And all that famous harmony of leaves,
Had blotted out man's image and his cry.

A girl arose that had red mournful lips
And seemed the greatness of the world in tears,
Doomed like Odysseus and the labouring ships
And proud as Pirem murdered with his peers;

Arose, and on the instant clamorous eaves,
A climbing moon upon an empty sky,
And all that lamentation of the leaves,
Could but compose man's image and his cry.

George Russell, Yeats' friend and fellow poet, who deplored many
of Yeats' revisions, preferred the later version of this poem:

I feel a little sad sometimes that the later self-conscious
artist could not let the earlier half-conscious artist be.

Often I have to admit that the change is better. "The
Sorrows [sic] of Love," one of the weaker lyrics in The Rose,
is here rewritten and gets a new distinction.34

Joseph Hone agrees with Russell on both points, that the later
revisions are not always successful and that the final version
of "The Sorrow of Love" is superior to the original. On the
first account he has written:

Yeats made his most drastic revisions of his earlier
lyrics quite late in life. He was an elderly man when
he turned "The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner" from "early Yeats" into "late Yeats," leaving nothing of the original except the title, and yet allowing it to retain its place among the "Rose" poems of 1889-1893, an outrage comparable to George Moore's rewriting of the *Confessions of a Young Man* in the style (the style is the man!) acquired in middle age. 35

John Unterecker agrees with Hone that the revisions are successful; he thinks that the poem's "impressive structure is achieved through great craftsmanship. The revisions reveal it." 36 Lewis Mac Neice, on the other hand, judges the final revision inferior to the original.

There is no law which demands that all poems should be closeknit or vigorous or virile. The poem is no longer languid but it no longer rings true. Yeats, with a different poem in his mind's eye, has distorted it. It has become neither one thing nor the other. 37

An examination of the two versions is in order. Firstly, "the sparrows" becomes "a sparrow"; thus the cry of line four is belittled, a process which is heightened by the change of "earth's old and weary cry" (one thing) to "man's image and his cry" (two things); one sparrow blots out not only man's cry but also his image. If Yeats moved toward the specific in changing earth's to man's, he (at least temporarily) moved away from the specific and personal in changing, "And then you came with those red mournful lips," to "A girl arose that had
red mournful lips." Lines 7-8 of the revision heighten the situation by remolding this inclusive but vague version of the world's plight, "And all the sorrows of her labouring ships, /
And all the burden of her myriad years" into concrete drama, "Doomed like Odysseus and the labouring ships / And proud as Priam murdered with his peers," which, built as it is around tremendous human beings, increases the "greatness of the world in tears" and establishes the girl as Helen. The result of her arising is to intensify man's image and cry to the point where "all that lamentation of leaves, / Could but compose man's image and his cry." Structurally, the poem has been revised so that we see "man's image and cry" at two extremes; we have a before and after picture which pivots on stanza two, the catalyst of change. Yeats' deletion of adjectives has led Parkinson to surmise that

Originally Yeats had attempted to make his delineation of experience convincing by the weight of accumulation of epithets. In revising, with half of the adjectives struck out, he could see that his early version had not presented his theme clearly, had almost misrepresented it; hence he changed "earth's old and weary cry" to "man's image and his cry." Perhaps a desire to rid the poem of "old and weary" first revealed to Yeats the deficiency of the early version. However, the effect of this change was to reveal the original tendency of the material and allow him to realize that meaning in the revision.
With the general meaning more clear to his mind, he went about the task of executing his conception in the plain, forceful language of his dramatic lyrics while changing the general imagistic pattern of the early version.

Perhaps more could be said about Yeats' revisions of his early verse, but further comment would seem only to second what has already been declared. In this section I have attempted to do three things: first, in dealing with those changes which are uniquely characteristic of the early poetry, I have attempted to show what forces (revolt against Pre-Raphaelite influences and work in the theater) have occasioned those revisions; secondly, I have tried to demonstrate the extent to which these poems have been worked over; and thirdly, I have essayed to point out what happened to an early poem when it was revised late in the poet's life. However, since in this section I have been treading on well-worked ground, my findings are, for the most part, reaffirmations of the work of other students, particularly Messrs. Allt and Parkinson, and, in small part, qualifications to their conclusions.
Chapter II

Though the total of the revisions in the poetry beginning with *The Wind Among the Reeds* volume of 1899 and extending through the *Last Poems* volume of 1936-1939 is vastly greater than the sum of alterations in the early poetry, no other book of Yeatsian lyrics has undergone as extensive, as concentrated, revision over as long a period of time as either *Crossways* or the *Rose*. The widespread scholarly attention which Yeats' revision of his first two volumes attracted has been indicated in the previous chapter; by way of contrast, the only noteworthy study of the latter revisions is Marion A. Witt's article which appeared in *MLA* in 1949, eight years before Russell K. Alspach completed the Variorum edition of Yeats' poetry. Marion Witt has done an enviable job of pointing out striking revisions of key poems, but, having written before the arrival of Messrs. Allt and Alspach's valuable contribution to scholarship, Witt has not attempted to compile an exhaustive list of the types of revision in the later poetry and, in fact, ends the piece with a plea for a variorum which would make such a study possible. Therefore, my intention is to devote this second chapter to the task of a close study of the changes which Yeats wrought in his later poetry. Since the task promises to be a lengthy one, I find it advisable to begin by presenting an outline of the path I will follow. The major types of changes will be developed in
the following order: A. Erasure of blemishes; B. Changes toward economy of expression; C. Changes which alter diction; D. Changes which alter structure; E. Changes which alter rhythm; and F. Changes which appear to issue from a dramatic instinct to develop concreteness.

A. **Erasure of Blemishes.** As we will see, many of Yeats' revisions were the results of changes in the man; for as the man grew, he became dissatisfied with earlier matter and method. However, there exists a great body of alterations, made throughout the poetry and throughout the years, which did not result from a change of attitude. These are the changes which all poets make—to correct blemishes, to express an idea better. Usually they were made early in a poem's career, in a great many cases when, after a lyric had been published once or twice in periodicals, the poet decided to put it into one of his twelve volumes of lyrics. Many, though not all, are minute changes; yet smallness does not diminish their importance because collectively they emphasize the care with which the poet went about his craft and several attest to the working of a keen critical eye; finally, they represent a type of revision which, all in all, repaid the craftsman with singularly happy results.

In the heat of composition poets often commit errors in grammar or information which pass unnoticed into print and subsequently must be revised; Yeats is no exceptions—Though it is not my intention to dwell upon his unusual spellings, at least one instance of the confusion of two words which are
phonologically identical but far apart in meaning will be mentioned in this connection. Yeats originally wrote, "A doll in the doll-maker's house / Looks at the cradle and balls: 'That is an insult to us,'" (11.7 - ll. 1-3). Perhaps it could be argued that the doll was looking at a cradle and balls; however, since it was Yeats' practice to use a strong vocal verb before a line of dialogue, I believe that he had in mind the word *bawls* (in the sense of *cries out*) all the while and merely misspelled it. Later he inserted *bawls*.

Grammatical corrections compose a rather substantial group of changes. The line that read "They are neither paid or praised" was revised to the conventional "They are neither paid nor praised" (21.7 - 1. 76). Verbs, which seem to have given Yeats considerable trouble, have undergone changes in form, agreement, and tense. "The Song of the Wandering Angus" originally contained this line: "When I had lain it on a stool" (1. 9); in revision *lain* was corrected to *laid*. In "A Bronze Head," this passage originally stood: "Or maybe substance can be composite, / Profound Mc Taggart thought so, and in a breath / A mouthful hold the extreme of life and death" (371 - ll. 12-14). Later, *held* was substituted for the *hold* of line 14. Finally, this poor sequence of tenses,

You gave, but will not give again
Until enough of Paddeen's pence
By Biddy's half pennies have lain
To be 'some sort of evidence',


Before you’ve put your guineas down, (121 - ll. 1-5) was improved by the alteration of you’ve to you’ll.

His most striking corrections are those made in allusions of central importance in communicating the meaning of the poem. The poem "Vacillations," which develops the conflicts among body, soul, and heart, originally contained the following passage:

The Soul: Seek out reality, Leave things that seem.
The Heart: What, be a singer born and lack a theme?
The Soul: Ezekiel’s coal, what more can man desire?

(270 - ll. 72-74).

The lines made little sense because the passage to which Yeats was alluding, hazily remembered, concerned Isaiah not Ezekiel:

And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'

Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven.' (Isaiah 7:5-6)

This is the basis of the argument appropriate to the soul; realizing his mistake, Yeats substituted Isaiah for Ezekiel.¹

Quite prevalent throughout the poetry is the reworking of a line or passage in order to bring forth clarity from confusion.
Some of these cases, it should be emphasized, were originally so confused, so absurd, that they arouse suspicions against the printer rather than the poet. However, since my basic assumption in using the variorum edition has been that, unless evidence can be produced to the contrary, the variant readings are the poet's responsibility, I give the following examples of the confusion caused by possible misprints and the resulting clarity of Yeats' revisions. Stanza one of the twelve line poem "Church and State" develops the idea (ll. 1-6) that only through their might do Church and State control their respective mobs, and states, in lines which employ sacramental imagery, that the final result of these powers will be efficacious: "O but heart's wine shall run pure, / Mind's bread grow sweet." In the second stanza a new, rather horrifying thought occurs to the poet, that possibly "the Church and the State / Are the mob that howls at the door!" Originally the concluding couplet, "Wind shall run thick to the end, / Bread taste sour," made little sense; however, it seems likely that Wind is a misprint for Wine because Yeats revised accordingly, thus utilizing the sacramental imagery to end both stanzas. 

Of larger consequence is the following confusion (almost positively a misprint). In the New Republic of 22 October 1930, "His Bargain" was published in precisely this form:

Who talks of Plato's spindle;
What set it whirling round.
Eternity may dwindle,
Time is unwound,
Dan and Jerry tout
Change their loves about.

Abashed by that report
For the heart cannot lie
I knelt in the dirt,
And all shall bend the knee
To my offended heart
Until it pardon me.

However they may take it,
Before the thread began
I made, and may not break it
When the last thread has run,
A bargain with that hair
And all the windings there. (289)

Not only is the poem's continuity of meaning and rhythm broken
(by the intrusion of stanza two) but there seem to be two
climaxes. I am almost certain that the explanation is that
stanza two was misplaced, that it belonged to "Young Man's
Song" which was first published in the same issue of The New
Republic in this form:

'She will change,' I cried,
---'Into a withered crone.'

The heart in my side
That so still had lain,
In noble rage replied
And beat upon the bone.

'Uplift those eyes and throw
Those glances unafraid;
She would as bravely show
Did all the fabric fade;
No withered crone I saw
Before the world was made.'

Though it is entirely possible that the poem was meant to close abruptly, attaching stanza two of "His Bargain" rounds it out nicely. Furthermore, Yeats switched the stanza accordingly.

Hardly as spectacular but more likely a case of Yeats' clarifying his own confusingly expressed idea occurs in "All Things Can Tempt Me." The poem first began with the poet's telling of all the things that have kept him from writing poetry and explaining that in his youth he "had not given a penny for a song. / Did not the poet carry him with such airs / As though to say 'It is the sword elsewhere'," (116 - 11. 6-8), which makes no sense. Later Yeats brought forth the potential of the sword image: "When I was young, / I had not given a penny for a song. / Did not the poet sing with such airs / That one believed he had a sword upstairs."  

B. Changes toward economy of expression. Results of Yeats' desire to economize, to speak without waste, are found throughout his poetry. The Crossways and The Rose lyrics
particularly have been systematically cut and compressed (to say nothing of the poems which have been omitted from these volumes). To state the case briefly, the process of elimination was of primary importance to William Butler Yeats. By comparing Yeats' elimination of unnecessary with his addition of necessary material, an interesting fact may be observed: far fewer instances—about one fifth as many—of the latter type of revision exist. For this situation two possible explanations come to mind: Yeats was more interested in deleting undesirable elements than in rounding out incompletely expressed elements; or Yeats, interested in correcting both, had tended more to clutter up his verse with unnecessary elements (before 1895, at least) than to express his thoughts incompletely. I am inclined to believe that the latter is true, for it seems to be the type of difficulty which would harass a young poet who was following many diverse paths in his search for a distinctive style and who was often carried away with sound alone. Moreover, Yeats did add to some of the poems material which was necessary; the final form of these poems (particularly the ones in Crossways) indicates that the few changes he did make represent all that were required.

A comparison of early and late changes toward economy is equally interesting. Considering Yeats' whole poetic output, one finds that there are three major types of elimination of waste material: (1) dropping (without replacing) a word or words from a line; (2) compressing a line or passage through rephrasing; and (3) dropping (without replacing) entire lines or passages. The
significant fact is that the latter two courses of action are almost exclusively confined to the Crossways and Rose lyrics. The point to be made, then, is that, though Yeats needed to cut from his later works, the cutting was confined; his judgment seems to have developed, possibly allowing him to reject uneconomical passages before they got onto paper, and definitely producing a poetry of increased intensity.

Exemplification of the first of these methods of selection will be brief; it is sufficient to illustrate Yeats' omission of duplication of function words (e.g., the and his); thus, "With his snipe marsh and his trout" became "And his own snipe and trout" (15 - 1. b) in which line the first his performs double service.

Yeats' revision of a long poem, "Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea," illustrates the development of compressed expression through major rephrasing. The poem, which was extensively revised on no less than four different occasions, originally began (W-56):

A man came slowly from the setting sun
To Emer of Borda, in her clay-piled dun
And found her dying cloth with subtle care,
And said, casting aside his dragging hair,
'I am Aleel, the smith, whom you bid
Go dwell upon the sea cliffs vapour hid
But now my years of watching are no more.'

The first revision substituted more extensive identification for adjectival ornateness in this version of line 2: "To Forgail's
daughter, Emer, in her dun." The second revision cut out more adjectives in favor of fuller information concerning the swineherd's task and his present business, all in five lines:

A man came slowly from the setting sun,
To Emer, raddling raiment in her dun,
And said, 'I am that swineherd, whom you bid
Go dwell upon the cliffs and watch the tide;
But now I have no need to watch it more.

The final revision changed the fourth line only by emphasizing and expanding his task, "Go watch the road between the wood and tide," without expanding the number of lines.5

The practice of deleting an entire passage is happily illustrated by the revision of "The Host of the Air." The argument of the poem in its last state follows: O'Driscoll, while on the edge of the dreary lake, dreamed of his bride. He heard a piper and, subsequently, saw young men and girls dancing and Bridget his bride with them (though sadly). They surrounded him and brought him wine and bread; but Bridget led him away to where old men played cards. The fare caused him to dream, "for these were the host of the air;" He gamed with the cardsters, while a young man bore Bridget away. "O'Driscoll scattered the cards" and awoke, but all were gone. To this point, the poem is suggestive; one is encouraged to imagine O'Driscoll's reaction. However, the original version added these four superfluous lines:

He knew now the folk of the air,
And his heart was blackened with dread.
And he ran to the door of his house;  
Old women were keening the dead, (hl - 11. h0 a-d) which are followed by this quatrain, present in both workings: 
But he heard high up in the air  
A piper piping away,  
And never a piping so sad  
And never a piping so gay. (h5 - 11. h1-h4) 

When the deletion was made, this repeated refrain became charged with ambiguity.  

Considerably less frequent than the pruning of unnecessary verbiage, but similar in its production of packed intensity is the reworking of lines in order to express more vocabulary meaning without increasing (apparently, at least) the length of the poem. In the poem "Pardon Old Fathers," Yeats effectively builds a feeling of past and passing time by cumulative emphasis on the word old; in tune with this development was the insertion of old in "Old country scholar, Robert Emmet's friend," in place of the bare connective and which originally headed the line. In an early version of "Three Songs to the Same Tune, III," the Irish poet had exhorted his comrades to sing: "Lift, every mother's son, / Lift, lift, lift up the tune." But later he encouraged two activities: "March, march--How does it run?--/ 0 any old words to a tune" (313 - III, 11. 15-16).  

C. Changes which alter diction. In 1936, when Yeats had become Dorothy Wellesley's poetic master, he said, in connection with some criticism which he was levelling at her choice of words,
that "Our words must seem to be inevitable." Coming near the end of his life, this statement might be taken as his own epitaph--voiced by himself--for it epitomizes the drive which occasioned more revisions, excepting punctuation, than any other force. Therefore, it is surprising that G. D. P. Allt's only statement in this direction was that in certain cases "Some new word [had] taken his [Yeats'] fancy." Perhaps I can make up for the oversight by including a liberal number of illustrations.

Frequently, the revision, on first glance, seemed to be too slight to make much difference in the meaning of the line. Such was the case when "the sad dweller by the sea ways lone" who had originally "changed all his words to inarticulate moan" was said to have "changed all he sang to inarticulate moan" (3 - l. 27). Yet close scrutiny of the poem reveals at least two reasons for the alteration. First, sang, it is clear from line 25, "Then he sang softly nigh the pearly rim," is the precise word to describe his activity. Secondly, juxtaposition of "he sang" and "inarticulate moan" creates a greater contrast than juxtaposition of "his words" and "inarticulate moan."

On the other hand, immediately striking for its aptness is the alteration of went to wandered in "He wandered by the sands of Lissadell" (34 - l. 13), because "he" is the man who dreamed of fairyland and "he" is blindly searching for the land of his dream. Further on in the same poem Yeats made more changes, striking ones. The inhabitants of fairyland had been called a "lonely folk," but later became the "chosen race" (34 - l. 31);
and one of the attractions of the land, that "All their trouble die[s] into its peace," was altered to "And lover there by lover be at peace." In both cases Yeats has made the picture more desirable, an eminently well considered move in a poem concerning a man's fixation for a seemingly unattainable goal.

Another striking revision combines meaning and sound with great effectiveness. In "The Seven Sages," after each of the first six sages had praised a heroic figure of the past, not infrequently because he withstood Whiggery, the seventh observed that "All's Whiggery now" (l. 13) and strongly affirmed: "But we old men are out against the world." Later the line was made even more powerful by the insertion of massed, which semantically emphasizes the idea of collective strength and represents a strong phonetic combination of a historically long vowel and an explosive d, in place of are out.10

In discussing the revision of "Sailing to Byzantium," Marion Witt has touched on an important aspect of the diction revisions; Yeats had first exhorted the sages in "God's holy fire" to "Consume my heart away; sick with desire / And fastened to this dying animal," (211 - 11. 21-22). His later alteration of this to a, according to Witt, "greatly increases the objectivity of the lines." Since most of the noun determiners which Yeats used were of one syllable (the, a, this, that), in the rush of composition one would do as well as another to occupy a beat in the metrical pattern which he was in the process of clothing with words; however, his later revision of many of these noun
determiners affords plentiful examples of the care and precision
which lay behind his quest for the right word, even to the
smallest detail. Accordingly, the dreamer in "His Dream" has
been made more appropriately to see a vague "Crowd upon a shore"
rather than the original definite "Men upon the shore" (97 - 1. 4).
These opening lines indecorously called up an association of the
Mother of Jesus with Pagan rites: "I saw that staring, [sic]
virgin stand / Where holy Dionysus died, / And tear the heart
from out of his side" (225 - 11. 1-3). The small change to "I
saw a staring virgin stand" erases the difficulty.\[12\]

Marion Witt, who has found that a Yeatsian revision fre-
quently increases "the accuracy of a picture,"\[13\] selects two
examples for illustration. Witt finds the revision of "Where
stone is dark with froth" to "Where stone is dark under froth"
(167 - 1. 32) a fortunate one because "Obviously water, not
froth darkens stone."\[14\] And the revision of the number of cows
(which by their splashing scare the water hen) from 100 to "a
dozen cows" (214 - 1. 10) pleases Witt. Naturally, Yeats was
concerned with presenting accurate pictures and, on one oc-
casion went to great lengths to defend a scene he had painted;
to the Freeman reviewer's slur at the line, "The peahens dance,
in crimson feather" in "The Indian to His Love," Yeats replied:
"The Freeman reviewer is wrong about peahens, they dance
throughout the whole of Indian poetry. If I had Kaledasa by
me I could find many such dancings. As to the poultry yards,
with them I have no concern. The wild peahen dances or all
Indian poets lie. Yeats stood firmly behind his line, and though he later changed "in crimson feather" to "on a smooth lawn," the peahens continued to dance throughout his poem. Further, his concern has brought about striking results beyond those mentioned by Marion Witt. Originally Yeats had written, "A parrot sways upon a tree, / Raging at his own image in the dim enamelled sea" (7 - ll. 4-5). Truth to the terms of his image moved Yeats to drop dim from his watery mirror. The time span starting with the birth of Christ and extending to the present day is referred to in these famous lines: "but now I know / That twenty centuries of stony sleep / Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle," (207 - ll. 18-20). The first printing had read, "thirty centuries."16

Writing of his early style in 1919, Yeats characterized it as "that extravagant style / He had learnt from Pater.17 His revolt against the conventionally poetic has been mentioned in connection with the revision of his early verse where, it will be remembered, he deleted poeticisms, poetic contractions, and archaisms. At the time of this break, he was formulating a new view of poetic diction which he was to continue developing until the end of his life and to talk about or write about. It was a diction which was to give the "impression of an active man speaking";18 and it was created through the use of the "natural words in the natural order.19 His practice clears up any vagueness which "active" and "natural" may have created; generally, either one of two courses is taken. The first, the
use of colloquial language, seems to have developed during the period when he was revising the early poems; and its use as a replacement for less colorful words has been pointed out. 20

The second, the use of natural though not necessarily colloquial language, will be treated here. For example, "what need that you should dread" sounds rather stuffy; so it was changed to "What need have you to dread," (138 - l. 11). When one speaks naturally, he is not "out of heart at Government" but, more intensely involving himself, "out of heart with Government," (145 - l. 1). "And my foreknowledge of the future vexed" seems to have combined all of the faults of diction and syntax which Yeats was revolting against; it became, "And knowing that the future would be vexed," (247 - l. 14). The "natural", "active" man might have a touch of the Irish peasant in his speech; but he would not speak a language extremely affected by education, and, most of all, he would not sound like a Pater or a Swinburne. His speech, and Yeats' style would be conversational.

At the same time, other changes in style were coming about. Colloquial usage itself often created concreteness and inclusiveness: for example, the very forceful eighth line of "Solomon and the Witch" was not added until 1924, three years after the poem was written:

And thus declared that Arab lady:

'Last night, where under the wild moon

On grassy mattress I had laid me,

Within my arms great Solomon,
I suddenly cried out in a strange tongue
Not his, not mine.'

Who understood
Whatever has been said, sighed, sung,
Howled, miau’d, barked, brayed, belled,
yelled, cried, croued, (197 - ll. 1-8)

Particularly effective is the concreteness, immediacy, and forcefulness of "The riders upon the galloping horses," in "At Galway Races" which originally perched "the riders upon" abstract "swift horses" (ll. 4 - ll. 3). The change indicates that the tendency which Allt found in the early poetry, to replace abstract terms with active, verbal nouns, is present throughout Yeats' revisions.22

Marion Witt has discussed the revision of "Among School Children," emphasizing the increase in suggestivity which Yeats obtains through reworking. For the second appearance of the poem, in the 1927 London Mercury, Yeats changed the original, "And I though never of Ledaean kind / Had pretty plumage once" (230 - ll. 29-30). Witt calls this phrase "pungent" on the basis that it makes the lines less abstract, "brilliantly suggestive and lightly humorous, and extends in the poem the important metaphor of the swan."23 Moreover, Witt has commented on the change of

And further add to that
That, being dead; we rise,
Dream and so create
The final Paradise.

(212 - ll. 153-156)

to "Translunar Paradise." Translunar, Witt feels, "beautiful in
sound and complex in association, climaxes a passage which needs one richly connotative word.  

Examples of changes which produce more suggestive lines are numerous, but with these particularly striking ones sufficing to illustrate the general tendency, I hasten to a bevy of lines which are made more suggestive by being transformed from their native condition as plain, unadorned statements into metaphorical dress. Along these lines, Fergus, who first told the Druids that a king is a person who is "To do and do and do and never dream." changed his definition of a monarch to one "Who wastes his blood to be another's dream" (19 - l. 28). However, sometimes the effect was not merely more suggestive but also more unique expression of wider applicability; for example, the women who pray "Till Mary of the wounded heart cry a sweet cry," finally plead "Till the Attorney for lost Soul's cry her sweet cry," (72 - l. 6). 

Particularly significant are changes toward immediacy. Though no such change was made in either Crossways or The Rose, though but six such changes were made between 1899 (at which time the first of them occurred) and 1917, the alteration of verbs from less to more immediate forms represents a substantial, significant revision practice which Marion Witt has failed to mention, a practice which flourished, perhaps as a result of Yeats' dramatic efforts, in the twenties and thirties and is observable in no less than a dozen changes made between 1922 and 1936. The tenses concerned in Yeats' revisions toward immediacy (beginning with the least and working toward the most immediate)
are: (1) past perfect; (2) past; (3) present perfect; and (4) present. To avoid use of the past perfect tense Yeats changed "When he had heard that story told" to the past tense, "When he heard that story told," (358 - 1. 7). In other cases, the past perfect was altered to a present perfect form. "Blood and the Moon" affords an example; originally Yeats wrote that the moon "Had flung its arrowshaft upon the floor" but later he changed the line to "Has flung its arrow shaft upon the floor," (251 - 1. 32).

The past tense was gotten rid of in various ways. "Who lived in shameless joy and laughed into the face of death" was altered to utilize the present perfect tense: "Who have lived in joy and laughed into the face of death," (186 - 1. 10). More often the change was from past to present tense: "I turned about and looked where branches broke" became "I turned about and looked where branches break," (262 - 1. 13).

One change from past to present saves the poem "Broken Dreams" from being a mere reminiscence. For three stanzas the poet alternately described an aged woman and recollected her former charms. Originally, the fourth stanza threatened to continue along this tack with the following line to head it off: "You were more beautiful than any one." Then Yeats changed the line to "You are more beautiful than any one," (174 - 1. 27), thus declaring that all the beauty has not faded into the past to be recalled only by fading memory, but that it still exists as an immediate reality; consequently, the following critical
lines become more powerful: "And yet your body had a flaw: / Your small hands were not beautiful," (174 - ll. 28-29).

Sometimes the process of revision involved not only a change in tense but also the substitution of a new idea; along these lines, "I heard under a ragged hollow wood" evolved into "O hurrying where by water among the trees," (90 - ll. 1). The poet is no longer relating a past occurrence but exhorting an immediate action.

Several early uses of the present perfect gave way in later editions to the present tense. These lines from "Crazy Jane on God" are doubly illustrative; Crazy Jane originally boasted that "Though like a road / Men have passed over / My body has not moaned." Later her statement, no less significant for increased clarity than increased immediacy and a feeling of eternity read, "Though like a road / That men pass over / My body makes no moan," (280- ll. 21-22).

Finally, in at least two cases, immediacy was achieved through changes from the iterative to the progressive aspect of the verb. The most striking of these first read: "I leave both faith and pride / To young upstanding men, / That climb the mountainside." Here the feeling of a repeated, habitual action cannot be avoided; and its presence clouds the closeness of the poet (and through him the reader) to the action mentioned. The revised lines present no such problem, for the poet has cast the verb in the most immediate, progressive aspect: "I leave both faith and pride / To young upstanding men / Climbing the
mountain-side," (212 - l. 173-175).

To be perfectly fair, it is necessary to mention two instances in which verb forms were made less immediate. The women of "Presences," Yeats first wrote, "had read / All I have rhymed." While the revised version, "They had read / All that I had rhymed," (176 - l. 6-7), is no less immediate, it dispenses with the erroneous idea that Yeats' entire poetic output was in the past, further in the past than the time at which those women completed that reading. "The Stare's Nest by the Window" is a description of the nest-building activities of bees taking place in ruins made in 1922, during the civil war. The fourth stanza of the poem projects backward into the past and states a reason for the bloodshed and slaughter; therefore, the past perfect tense of the revision, "We had fed the heart on fantasies," though less immediate, is more precisely accurate than the original's present perfect tense, "We have fed the heart on fantasies" (218 - l. 16).

A favorite pastime of Yeatsian critics has been to point to the critical importance of desire as the force behind and within the poems; in tune with these critical commonplaces is Donald A. Stauffer's judgment that "The Movement of Yeats' thought is always 'I will arise and go now,' and not 'I have arrived.' A Vision is shot through with the tensions and tractions of desire.... In its simplest terms, Yeats sees life as desire." It is not surprising that Yeats' desire often led him to paint somewhat tenuous imaginings and to protect himself (as any poet
does) by use of the language of possibility—that is, to advance his thoughts as possibilities rather than actualities; and it is not unusual for the student of revision to come across statements of fact changed to statements of possibility. What is surprising—at least on first glance—is the greater number of changes in the opposite direction, that is, toward certainty, toward a more positive attitude. I do not mean to imply that the critics who talk of Yeats' lyrics as poetry of desire and possibility are wrong; the alterations support no such rebuttal. I do believe that Yeats, as much aware that his poetry expressed desire in the cloth of possibility as any of his critics have been, also became increasingly conscious of what could and should be expressed with positive force. Moreover, in his active life as well as in the writing of poetry he had ample opportunity to develop necessary confidence in forceful assertion. Events during the eleven years preceding 1929, when these revisions began to occur with frequency, point to a resolution of some of Yeats' major frustrations and are ample explanation for a growth of confidence in his own capabilities. In 1914, at the age of 68, Yeats had expressed perhaps the major frustration of his life: "Although I have come close on forty-nine, / I have no child, I have nothing but a book, / Nothing but that to prove your blood and mine." (118 - ll. 20-22) Three years later a partial remedy was achieved when he finally put Naud Conno out of his mind long enough to marry Miss Hyde-Lees. On their honeymoon, at Forest Row in Sussex, Mrs. Yeats attempted automatic writing,
an activity which she continued in for some years while the poet attempted to surmount another frustration by the formulation of a mystical philosophy from the messages she received. In 1922, two encouraging incidents took place: he was invited to become a member of the Senate, and in December he received a D. Litt. from Trinity College. November of the following year brought to him the Nobel Prize. From 1925 to 1928 he made important speeches in the Senate, lectured about Europe (both activities required a positive approach), and saw the Abbey Theatre begin to prosper.29

On looking at the changes it is interesting to note that in an early alteration he merely changed the statement of possibility, "That I may soothe the hopeless faun" to the assertion of desire, "And I would please the hopeless faun." (2 - 1. 47). Later changes, made between 1929 and his death, are much more forceful. The question, "And are we now in the tenth year?" reworded, became the assertion, "Yesterday in the tenth year" (180 - 1. 27). Line 18 of "The Indian to His Love" became positive through the change of may to will, and there is no reason why it should not be positively stated. The same tendency is observable in the alteration of "How Time may never mar their faery vows" to "That Time can never mar a lover's vows" (34 - 1. 10). And most emphatic are the changes from statements of possibility or fact to commands; for example: "Mine would wait—being dead" became "Mine must walk being dead" (279 - 1. 16); and the question whether "Images ride, I heard a man say," is a statement of fact or a command is resolved in this revision which powerfully trig-
gers the poem: "Saddle and ride, I heard a man say," (314 - l. 1).

In order not to overemphasize these changes, it is advisable to qualify their effect by giving examples of alterations in the opposite direction, that is, from positive to possible. Thus, Mohini Chatterjee was made to say, "Old lovers yet may have / All that time denied," (267 - l. 17) instead of "Old lovers yet shall have / All that time denied." In a similar change, the urgency of "Decided he must journey home," was toned down to an unemphatic "Decided he would journey home!" (180 - l. 30). The lackluster comment, however, better fits the character who had been described as "A humorous, unambitious man, / ... who had been contented long, / A nobody in a great throng" (180 - 11. 25, 28-29). In several cases statements of fact were changed to rhetorical questions; for example, "We were not born in the peasant's cot" was rearranged to "Were we not born in the peasant's cot?" (369 - l. 13). Finally, a very striking alteration which seems to share with the last but one above the motive of fitting the comment to the character or situation is found in "The Heart of the Woman." The first seven lines produce a definite impression of hopelessness:

O what to me the little room
That was brimmed up with prayer and rest;
He bade me out into the gloom,
And my breast lies upon his breast.

O what to me my mother's care,
The house where I was soft and warm;
The shadowy blossom of my hair... (51 - 11. 1-7)
Originally, line 8 ran, "Shall hide us from the bitter storm."

Though the distinction is fading fast, in Yeats' day the cultured reader would have understood the determination indicated by shall, and very likely would have felt the change in mood which it unhappily produces. The revision smoothens the consistency of the mood by substituting will, indicating simple futurity without an overtone of determination, for shall.30

During the same time period another related revision tendency, hitherto unnoticed, the alteration toward inclusiveness of expression, was being made. A 1922 printing witnessed the revision of "But have you known a dog to praise his fleas?" to "But was there ever dog that praised his fleas?" (109 - 1. 4); in 1927, "Man makes a superman" became the slightly more inclusive, "Man makes a superhuman" (212 - 1. 614); and 1930 saw "Hoping more substantial joy" evolve from "Hoping a more substantial joy" (265 - 1. 9). A cluster of changes are found in 1932 and 1933: "Where very foot obeyed her glance!" changed to "Where every foot obeyed her glance!" (260 - 1. 11), represents a particular desire to rid the poetry of words of little vocabulary meaning which were originally utilized merely to fill out syllables. Particularly striking is the leap from "But fashion's changed" to "But all is changed" (262 - 1. 46).31

D. Changes which alter structure. As a result of many of the revisions, sentence structure was altered; two tendencies stand out significantly: (1) the reshaping of sentences for the purpose of eliminating enjambment; and (2) the working toward
parallel sentence structure. Enjambment, which was a characteristic of Pre-Raphaelite poetry as well as early Yeatsian lyrics, was the subject of early revision; Allt has noted the change of "From ferns that drop their tears / Of dew in the young streams," to "From ferns that drop their tears / Over the young streams" (ll - l. 36-37) and of "He called aloud to all the stars to lend / Their hearing, and some comfort give," to "And he called loudly to the stars to bend / From their pale thrones and comfort him" (3 - ll. 5-6). Unlike other traditional elements which Yeats had rid himself of by 1900, the victory over enjambment was a gradual one, for as late as 1932 he wrote, "Everything that has lived / Lives; that much is certain." The lines were later revised to "All lives that has lived; / So much is certain" (271 - ll. 9-10). 32

The second tendency is more noticeable, particularly after 1900. Examplifying this particular revision process is line 11 of "From Oedipus at Colonus" which first read, "Never to have drunk the breath of life at all nor looked into the eye of day" which was altered to "Never to have drawn the breath of life, never to have looked into the eye of day" (244 - l. 11). Equally illustrative is the refashioning of "Justify all that have fled or have stood" into "Justify all that have fled, that have stood" (313 - l. 14). 33

A more momentous structural phenomenon, which occurs only in the poetry written after 1928, is the regularization of rhyme and stanza form. Yeats' concern for such matters,
obvious to the reader of his poetry, is made explicit in a letter written to Dorothy Wellesley on 26 July 1936, to criticize a poem she had sent him:34

Regular rhyme is needed in this kind of work [ballad]. The swing of the sentence makes the reader expect it. 'Said lover to the serving maid', 'This sweetly done', 'tis easy done.' and so on are ballad cadences, and then the six line stanzas suggest ballad stanzas. There is another reason. In narrative verse we want to concentrate the attention on the fact or the story, not on the form. The form must be present as something we all accept--'the fundamental sing-song.' I do not know a single example of good narrative where the rhyme scheme is varied.35

And leaving out a line from a stanza varies the rhyme scheme; thus Yeats added, "Of hammered gold and gold enameling" to stanza IV of "Sailing to Byzantium," which addition rounds out that final stanza to eight lines, the length of the previous three, and regularizes the rhyme scheme to that of the stanzas it follows (ababacdd). The same intention seems to be behind the addition of line 5, "Upon the star that marks the hidden pole" to "A Dialogue of Self and Soul." Thus, Stanza One is regularized with those which follow it in number of lines (eight) and in rhyme scheme (ababacdd).36 It is interesting to note in this connection that Yeats very rarely added to his poems when revising; his concern for form must truly have been great to
motivate frequent changes which are essentially opposed to his natural inclination.

In his quest for unity, Yeats has made various structural alterations. "He Wishes His Beloved Were Dead" has these opening lines:

"Were you but lying cold and dead,
And lights were paling out of the West,
You would come hither, and bend your head,
And I would lay my head on your breast."

After an enumeration of her activities which live in his fancy, the speaker had originally ended the poem thus: "O would beloved that you lay / Under the dock-leaves in the ground, / While birds grew silent one by one." Later, Yeats changed the last line to "While lights were paling one by one" (74 - l. 13) which, through its closeness to the time of the opening scene (as set in line two), triggers a recapitulation which fixes the poem as a totality in the reader's mind.

Another striking revision is the deletion of a ten line philosophical passage from "My House." The poem as first printed follows:

An ancient bridge, and a more ancient tower,
A farm-house that is sheltered by its wall,
An acre of stony ground,
Where the symbolic rose can break in flower,
Old ragged elms, old thorns innumerable,
The sound of the rain or sound
Of every wind that blows,
The stilted water-hen
That plunged in stream
Scared by the splashing of a hundred cows;

A winding stair, a chamber arched with stone,
A grey stone fire-place with an open hearth,
A candle, and written page.

Il Penseroso's Platonist toiled on
In some like chamber, shadowing forth
How the demonic rage
Imagined everything.
Benighted travellers
From markets and from fairs
Had seen his midnight candle glimmering.

The river rises, and it sinks again;
One hears the rumble of it far below
Under its rocky hole.

What Median, Persian, Babylonian,
In reverie, or in vision, saw
Symbols of the soul,
Mind from mind has caught:
The subterranean streams,
Tower where the candle gleams
A suffering passion and a labouring thought?

Two men have found it here. A man-at-arms.
Gathered a score of horse and spent his days
In this tumultuous spot,
Where through long wars and sudden night alarums
His dwindling score and he seemed cast-a-ways
Forgetting and forgot;
And I, that after me
My bodily heirs may find,
To exalt a lonely mind,
Befitting emblems of adversity. (214)

Perhaps a close examination of the structure will expose Yeats' reason for removing the passage in question (Stanza III). Stanza I, which treats the scene surrounding the house, initiates an ascending order of development; from a starting point of inanimate structure and field (ll. 1-3), the focus shifts first to surrounding vegetable life (ll. 4-5) which, through the use of where, is made to grow out of the stony background; lines 6 and 7 introduce the powerful forces of nature which are linked to all that has gone before by implication (e.g. rain must fall upon something—a tower or stony ground—to make a noise); finally, linked to line 6 by association (concretely, water), lines 8 through 10 introduce members of the animal kingdom, both bird and beast. Thus far the movement has been quite natural. Stanza II moves the focus to within the house; here, too, there is an observable order, though this time the images develop from the large fundamental elements of the house (a stair, a chamber, a fire-place, ll. 11-12) to focus on
smaller, less integral furnishings (a candle--linked to lines 11 and 12 through association with the fireplace--and the written page, ((1. 31)), which suggests an author, Milton). Here a digression occurs, the imagining of Milton at work, which is, nonetheless, structurally purposeful in that it helps to characterize the chamber Yeats has led us to; moreover, the connection of the imagined Milton and the present chamber is strengthened by the mention of his candle, seen by midnight travellers. Like the preceding one, this stanza has grown naturally; and furthermore, it has reached a climactic moment, for the poet has aroused an intense interest in the identity of the human(s) who could excite even an oblique comparison to Milton. But here Yeats faltered; he allowed Stanza III to break the unity of the dramatic scene by shifting once again outside of the house where the river's roaring stirred philosophical musings about those who had heard it in the past, their visions, and their arduous task which links them and the stanza to Milton and Stanza III. All of this is perfectly good poetry; but it is out of place. Ten lines too late, Stanza IV introduces the actors we have overanticipated, a warrior who with his band had held out here and Yeats (ll. 21-27), both linked to stanza III by their own arduous tasks. However, that this last could just as easily grow out of Stanza II and Milton-ordour, Yeats later sensed, aided perhaps by a heightened sense of the dramatic; and he deleted Stanza III. Yet the operation was not a total success for in stitching up the incision Yeats changed line 11 to "Two men have
founded here." The syntax urges the question, founded what?37

We have been viewing a poem which Yeats remoulded structurally by dropping a stanza; in other cases he shifted structural elements about without omitting any appreciable amount from the poetry. Though these changes are considerably numerous, I have selected the most striking, found in "The Song of the Old Mother," to stand for its paler relatives; the first printing follows:

I rise at the dawn, and I kneel and blow
Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow,
And then I must mend and scrub and bake and sweep
Till stars are beginning to blink and peep;
While the young lie long and dream in their bed
Of the matching of ribbons the blue and the red,
And their day goes over in idleness,
And they sigh if the wind but lift up a tress;
But the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold,
And I must work because I am old. (50)

In this version, line 9 unifies the poem by linking together beginning and ending. That in each case the fire is intended as a literal one is made clear by Yeats' reference to line 9 of this version only that "The 'seed of the fire' is the Irish phrase for the little fragment of burning turf and hot ashes which remains in the hearth from the day before."38 However, in a later version the last two lines are shifted about: "While I must work because I am old, / And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold." In this new order the new line 10 increases in richness
as it takes on the additional suggestion of her own burnt out
condition.  39

E. Changes which alter rhythm. In dealing with changes
in rhythm, I enter upon shaky ground, for several reasons.
First of all, though the effect or one of the effects of a
revision is a change in rhythm, it is often difficult to as-
certain whether Yeats made the alteration specifically to modify
the rhythm or whether the new metrical effect is a by-product of
another intention. For example, it is well known that Yeats
consciously worked away from the inversion of syntax so typical
of Pre-Raphaelite poetry and toward the word order of everyday
speech; at the same time, rhythm underwent changes. In "While
grows our love an Indian star," the heaviest stress fell on the
second syllable because of the primary importance of the verb.
When the syntax was changed to "While our love grows an Indian
star," (7 - l. 13) the verb still received the heaviest accent,
but, since it was placed differently, a difference in the
rhythm of the line was created. Secondly, though I am aware
of the recent studies which repudiate the stress-unstress system
of scanning poetry, particularly the accusation that this method
of graphic representation drastically oversimplifies the subtle
modulations of stress, I am not aware of any method endowed with
superior accuracy which has been proffered in its place; thus,
I have decided to use the stress (/) - unstress (x) system, whose
inaccuracy I will attempt to curb as much as possible by means of
additional symbols for extra or dramatic stress (/) and for
half-stress (\). Lastly, after witnessing the disagreement into which the most competent prosodists are often led by the ever present subjective element, I am painfully aware that my own scanning is open to the criticism of those who read Yeats' line differently than I have.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, I have chosen to devote considerable space to Yeats' revisions which result in changes in rhythm because, when taken as a group which includes the revisions which seem to stem from another desire than to change the rhythm, these alterations become more abundant than any other well-defined class. Moreover, the undertaking is given added plausibility by Yeats' intense concern with the rhythm of his lyrics, an interest which is reflected in the scores of comments he made in that direction.

Several safe generalizations may be made, the first by way of qualifying G. D. P. Alt's statement that "greater...variety of metre" has been introduced, which, as the following pages will show, though true, is only half of the story, for while some revisions introduce new rhythms, the largest single subgroup is entirely composed of alterations which create regular lines (for the most part, iambic) which hardly can be thought of as adding to a "greater...variety of metre" since close to half of the lines which Yeats never altered fit this description. In all fairness to Mr. Alt, it should be emphasized that he has based his study on two books of poetry, Crossways and The Rose, in which cases regularization is less prominent than in the
later poetry. Marion Witt, who has written on the revision of the later poetry, has passed over the rhythmic changes with a few striking but unrepresentative examples. 41

Secondly, Mr. Allt's generalization, that lines are often changed through the introduction of a hypermetric foot or feet 42 is equally true for the middle and later poetry. However, throughout the lyrics an opposite tendency exists, the taking out due to metrical regularization of hypermetric feet, particularly anapests; for example, "Or a young man old?" was altered to "Or young man old?" (283 - 1. 12). On the other hand, where regularization is not Yeats' concern, several novel metrical combinations are utilized for a variety of effects; rather prevalent in poems written and revised between 1914 and 1939, after the beginning of Yeats' theater experiences, is the addition of anapestic feet in order to obtain an enlivening effect, in order to quicken the movement of the line, as in "And / \ x / x / \ x / x / x / x / x with the heart more old than the horn" which was revised to "And / \ x / x / \ x / x / x / x with heart more old than the horn" (57 - 1. 5) 43 and in the revision of "But trod the road, or paddled by the shore," to "But trod the road, or splashed by the shore" (231 - 1. 21).

Equally prevalent, striking, and occurring at approximately the same time is the use of trochees, especially as introductory feet in which position they have no superior as far as the distribution of emphasis is concerned. "I have nothing but the embittered sun," emphasizes the pronoun I, both with metrical and visual stress by having I head off the line, much more than
had the original, "And I have nothing" (164 - l. 8).

One of the reasons for which we can expect any poet to make alterations affecting metre, "to reconcile the rhythm required by the metre with the rhythm imposed by the sense," was, according to Allt, a motivation for certain changes in Yeats' early poems. From the examples Allt cites, it is evident that he restricts such changes to rearrangements which bring proper word accents and metrical stress into agreement; for example, Allt explains the revision of "And every mumbling old man said" to "And every Ancient Ollave said" (10 - l. 9) thus:

In natural speech the phrase 'old man' would receive an equal stress on each syllable. The metre, however, exacts a greater and unnatural emphasis upon the former word: the phrase must be read as one would read such words as 'soldier,' 'postman.' The final version substitutes a word of which the rhythm is congenial to the metre.

If not an extension of this tendency, an at least closely related type of change is that which results in a rhythm appropriate to the action depicted; line 45 of "The Ballad of Moll Magee," originally written, "A-pilin' wood or pilin' turf," was later changed to "Pilin' the wood or pilin' the turf" the sing-song monotony of which admirably fits the action. Equally effective is the revamping of a passage in "The Scholars" which first ran as follows:

They'll cough in ink to the world's end;

Wear out the carpet with their shoes
Earning respect; have no strange friends.

If they have sinned nobody knows.

In this version the stresses are rather haphazardly distributed; however, Yeats recast the idea:

\[
\begin{align*}
&/ / x / / / x / \ \\
&\text{All shuffle there; all cough in ink;} \\
&/ / x / x / x / x / \ \\
&\text{All wear the carpet with their shoes,} \\
&/ / x / x / x / x / \ \\
&\text{All think what other people think,} \\
&/ / x / x / x / x / \ \\
&\text{All know the man their neighbour knows.} (161 - ll. 7-10)
\end{align*}
\]

The key to the success of this revision is repetition. The obvious repetition of the word all, occupying the same position in four different lines, the use of a verb as the second word of each clause (followed in three cases by the alliterative words there, the, and the), the repetition of think, the uninterrupted repetition of the same rhythmic pattern three times in the first line-and-one-half, and the duplication of the same rhythmic pattern in the third and fourth lines create a sameness, a monotony, which superbly fits the picture Yeats is drawing. 47

In Yeats' later revisions, particularly clustered in the span of years from 1925 to 1928, a tendency which may or may not be conscious occurs; at any rate, the effect is a subtle linking of metre and sense created by the use of feminine lines and feminine caesuras. In "The Hero, the Girl, and the Fool" the weak stress created by the feminine line is perfectly attuned to the word inserted to bring the effect about. Originally, the girl had rather strongly stated, "be warned and go / If you have seen that image and not my worth." In 1928, her warning was
softened, by the change of one word, almost to a plea: "be warned
and go / If you have seen that image and not the woman" (232 – 1.
8).

A feeling of habitual activity had been explicit in this line
as the poet described his constant desire to climb "Evening and
morning, the steep street of Urbino." Alteration of the masculine
to a feminine caesura more emphatically realizes this habitual
feeling as the poet's desire to climb becomes one of "Evening and
morning," (171 – 1. 12). A passage which disturbed Yeats because
he felt it was too strong ran, "I think it better that at times
like these / We poets keep our mouths shut." Finally he softened
the second line by use of a feminine caesura and a less forceful
word; his belief became, "A poet's mouth [should] be silent,"
(179 – 1. 2).

Concurrent with and often as a result of changes in rhythm
is the stressing of an important word or words. Generally, Yeats'
rearranged his lines so that the stress fell on words of high
vocabulary value (adjectives, pronouns, and verbs) rather than on
function words. Frequently adjectives were emphasized; for ex-
ex-ample, "A gay and wandering cry" was changed to "A gay, wandering
cry" (17 – 1. 28) in which version the emphatic caesura slows
the line and causes the reader to linger over the second
adjective. Altered to "And new friends are busy with your
praise," the line first ran, "And of new friends are glad with
your praise" (71 – 1. 3). Stress of the function word of is
sacrificed in order to emphasize new. A pronounced tendency is
to add a beat to a line; particularly effective was the revision in a line of "The Second Coming" which first stood, "The best lack conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity"; the revision emphasizes the totality of the loss by addition of a stressed syllable: "The best lack all conviction,"

(207 - 1. 7). In three poems, stress was shifted to pronouns. "With his snipe marsh and his trout" was revised to "And his own snipe and trout" (15 - 1. 4). "I am afraid that you will run," changed to place the stress unmistakably on I, became "And I am afraid that you will run." (171 - 1. 30). Similarly, "Decrepit age that has been tied upon me" became "Decrepit age that has been tied to me" (212 - 1. 3).

Most important of the stress redistributions are those which finally emphasize verbs. Often the position of the caesura figures in this emphasis. "What ever has been sighed, sung" evolved from "All sounds from bird or angel sung" (197 - 1. 7); not only are the verbs increased from one to two but both sighed and sung are emphasized, particularly because the caesura has been placed between them. A similar effect created by moving the caesura is observable in "That she might be that sprightly girl trodden by a bird" which generated from "That she might be that sprightly girl who was trodden by a bird" (172 - 1. 4).

Use of the spondaic foot composed of two verbs is not uncommon; along this line, "When my luck changed and they dared to meet my face," was reworked into "When my luck changed and they dared meet my face" (171 - 1. 25). It is interesting to note.
in this connection the typical Yeatsian phenomenon of a revision being suggested by an element already present in the line; thus, the spondee "luck changed" suggested "dared meet."

However, most frequent is the simple rearranging or dropping of syllables to insure stress of verb forms. "That is in the quick-lime laid" is a probable scansion; but "That is in quicklime laid" (317 - l. 24) leaves no doubt that it receives a stress. The contraction "tower's" in "I declare this tower's my symbol" had weakened the force of Yeats' proclamation; "I declare this tower is my symbol" (251 - l. 16) remedies the situation.

Similarly, the contraction in "And there's no singing school but studying," though there's is stressed, diminishes the emphasis of the verb; "Nor is there singing school but studying" (211 - l. 13) is open to no such objection.

Finally, revisions of stress play one more important role; they help to emphasize elements of sound, particularly alliterative syllables; these will be considered presently. Though the aural quality was ever present in Yeats' poetry, perhaps representing a carry-over from his Pre-Raphaelite beginnings, and though the changes which affect alliteration occur with as much frequency as those which affect rhythm, many of these new sound effects are by-products of other intentions. However, a very definite generalization may be made: the ratio of the alterations which increase alliteration to those which decrease it is almost five to one. Moreover, in a limited number of cases, alliteration is neither added nor deleted but rather the alliterative sounds are
changed; for example, "While wandering still to be a shade, with Grania's shade," which compounds the v sound, was altered to "Amid that first astonishment, with Grania's shade," (186 - l. 4) which contains the alliteration of a sounds.52

By far the most significant of the revisions involving alliteration are those which supply an alliterative syllable on which stress falls. "I have not a crumb of comfort, not a grain" evolved from "But heart there is no comfort, not a grain" (82 - l. 7); "And raising arms all raddled with the dye" first read, "And stretching out her arms, red with the dye" (20 - l. 7); and "That he may fight the waves of the loud sea" became "That he may fight the horses of the sea" (20 - l. 81).

F. Changes which appear to issue from a dramatic instinct to develop concreteness. Although a tendency to substitute concrete terms in place of vague and abstract ones was found in the early poetry by G. D. P. Allt, no substantial number of changes to later poems has been made in this direction; and the cumulative significance of those which are reworked toward the concrete is diminished by other lines which are made more abstract, less concrete. However, in connection with the setting of several of the later poems, increased concreteness is a noteworthy factor. The role of dramatic writing as an influence on Yeats' style has been discussed previously. I suspect that a plea can be made for its influence on the cases I am about to consider, for one of the lessons the theater surely taught him was that an audience has eyes which are satisfied best by concrete pictures, and the following changes are eloquent witnesses
to the effectiveness of that lesson.

The opening lines of "The Living Beauty" were a mixture of moods: "I'll say and maybe dream I have drawn content, / Seeing that time has frozen up the blood." In revision these lines were consistently concretized: "I bade, because the wick and oil are spent / And frozen are the channels of the blood," (157 – ll. 1-2). The original beginning of "All Soul's Night" which read, "It is all Soul's Night and, the great Christ Church bell / And many a lesser bell sound through the room," pales before the dramatic intensity of this more specific start: "Midnight has come, and the great Christ Church Bell / And many a lesser bell sound through the room" (247 – ll. 1-2).

But most fortunate of all is the addition of a passage at the head of "A Song from 'The Player Queen'" which first appeared in this form:

'He went away,' my mother sang,

'When I was brought to bed,'

And all the while her needle pulled

The gold and silver thread.

She pulled the thread and bit the thread

And made a golden gown,

And wept because she'd dreamt that I

Was born to wear a crown.

'When she was got,' my mother sang,

'I heard a sea-mew cry,
'I saw a flake of the yellow foam
That dropped upon my thigh.'

How therefore could she help but braid
The gold, upon my hair,
And dream that I should carry
The golden top of care?

After revision the scene was dramatically set by these lines:

My mother dandled me and sang,
'How young it is, how young!' And made a golden cradle
That on a willow swung.

Here the reader is enabled to approach the poem with a clearer conception of the speaker.

It will be noticed that all of the foregoing revisions are at the beginning of poems and not unreasonably so, because Yeats, like Milton and Keats, was aware of the primary and supreme importance of a poem's beginning; yet, one of his most extensive revisions tacks two stanzas onto what was originally a one stanza poem; here is the poem as it finally stood (ll. 1-5 comprised the original poem):

'Put off that mask of burning gold
With emerald eyes.'

'O no, my dear; my dear, you make so bold To find if hearts be wild and wise, And yet not cold;'
'I would but find what's there to find, Love or deceit.'
'It was the mask engaged your mind, And after set your heart to beat, Not what's behind.'
'But lest you are my enemy, I must enquire.'
'O no, my dear, let all that be; What matter, so there is but fire In you, in me?'

The obvious result is a more thorough development of the potential situation embodied in stanza one. A second outcome is that the poem finally developed along a favorite Yeatsian poetic technique—the dramatic dialogue—which like so many previously mentioned developments gained impetus if not genesis from his Abbey Theatre endeavors. And thirdly, if one allows that the second speaker bears close resemblance to Yeats, the poem becomes a convenient key to one aspect of his complex makeup.

The impulse for the following considerable group of changes requires introduction. When it came to music, Yeats was somewhat of a paradox. On one hand, he said, "I have always known that there was something I disliked about singing, and I naturally dislike print and paper." And he refused to write for music because, he said, "when I heard anything sung I did not hear the words, or if I did their natural pronunciation was altered and
their natural music altered, or it was drowned in another music which I did not understand." On the other hand, he wanted to find a method of writing music and poetry, an endeavor which occupied him around the turn of the century after he, in 1885, first met Katherine Tynan who was to become his instrument for speaking to the psaltery. During the middle years, Yeats curtailed his psalteryian activities but late in life a new fervor developed. Along with a renewed interest in speaking to the psaltery, Yeats hoped to create ballads which would be sung by Irishmen long after his death. Whether ballad writing came hard to Yeats or his standard of perfection was raised is difficult to determine. Perhaps the antipathy he bore to singing created a barrier to composition of verses which were to be sung; at any rate, these ballads show very extensive and very intriguing revisions. Yeats' note after the title of "Three Songs to the Same Tune" explains the genesis of their argument, form, and revision:

In politics I have but one passion and one thought, rancour against all who, except under the most dire necessity, disturb public order, a conviction that public order cannot long persist without the rule of educated and able men. That order was everywhere their work, is still as much a part of their tradition as the Iliad or the Republic of Plato; their rule once gone, it lies an empty shell for the passing fool to kick in pieces. Some months ago that passion laid hold upon me
with the violence which unfits the poet for all politics but his own. While the mood lasted, it seemed that our growing disorder, the fanaticism that inflamed it like some old bullet embedded in the flesh, was about to turn our noble history into an ignoble farce. For the first time in my life I wanted to write what some crowd in the street might understand and sing; I asked my friends for a tune; they recommended that old march 'O'Donnell Abu.' I first got my chorus, 'Down the fanatic, down the clown,' then the rest of the first song. But I soon tired of its rhetorical vehemence, thought that others would tire of it unless I found some gay playing upon its theme, some half-serious exaggeration and defence of its rancorous chorus, and therefore I made the second version. Then I put into a simple song a commendation of the rule of the able and educated man's old delight in submission; I wrote round the line 'The soldier takes pride in saluting his captain,' thinking the while of a Gaelic poet's lament for his last masters: 'My fathers served their fathers before Christ was crucified.' I read my songs to friends, they talked to others, those others talked, and now companions march to the words 'Blue shirt Abu,' and a song that is all about shamrocks and harps or seems all about them, because its words have the particular variation upon the cadence of 'Yankee Doodle' Young Ireland reserved for that theme. I did not write that song; I could not if I had tried. Here
are my songs. Anybody may sing them, choosing 'clown' and 'fanatic' for himself, if they are singable--musicians say they are, but may flatter--and worth singing.

In the interest of clarity I have chosen to parallel the original forms of the three songs with the final revisions. In all three cases the left hand columns represent the versions published in The Spectator, Feb. 23, 1934, and the right hand columns, the variants in the versions printed in "A Full Moon in March" during the following year.

Three Songs to the Same Tune

I

Grandfather said in the great Rebellion:
'Hear gentlemen, ladies and all mankind
Money is good and a girl
might be better
But good strong blows
are delights to the mind.'
Come march, singing this song,
Swinging, swinging along.

Those fanatics all that we do
would undo;
Down the fanatic, down the clown,
Down, down, hammer them down,
Down to the tune of O'Donnel Abu.

'A girl I had, but she followed another;
Money I had and it went in the night;
Strong drink I had, and it brought me to sorrow;
But a good strong cause and the blows are delight.'
Come march, singing this song,
Swinging, swinging along.

Grandfather sang it under the gallows:
...ladies, and ...
...better,
...
There, standing on the cart,
He sang it from his heart.

... ...clown;
...
...
...
...another,
...had,...night,
...sorrow,
...cause and blows...

All there caught up the tune: 'On, on, my darling man'.

67
Those fanatics all that we do would undo...

'Money is good, and a girl might be better
No matter what happens or who takes the fall,
But a good strong cause—
the rope gave a jerk there
He said no more for his throat was too small.
Come march, singing this song,
Swinging, swinging alone.

Those fanatics all that we do would undo...

Money is good, and a girl might be better,
...good and...better,
...happens and...
...there,
No more said he, for his throat was too small;
But he kicked before he died,
He did it out of pride.

II

Justify all those renowned generations;
They left their bodies to fatten the wolves,
They left their homesteads to shelter the foxes,
Fled to far countries, or sheltered themselves
In cavern, crevice or hole,
Defending Ireland's soul.

Justify all those renowned generations;
Justify all that have sunk in their blood,
Justify all that have died on the scaffold,
Justify all that have fled or have stood,
Or have marched the might long,
Singing, singing a song.

'Drown all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman,
'They killed my goose and a cat.
Drown, drown in the water-butt,
Drown all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman.

'Drown all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman,
'They killed my goose and a cat.
Drown, drown in the water-butt,
Drown all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman.
Those fanatics all that we do would undo...

Fail, and that history turns into rubbish,
All that great past to a trouble of fools;
Those that come after shall mock O'Donnell,
Mock at the memory of both O'Neills,
Mock Emmet, mock Parnell,
All the renown that fell.

Those fanatics all that we do would undo...

'Abroad all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman,
'They killed my goose and a cat.
Drown, drown in the water-butt,
Drown all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman.

Drown all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman,
'They killed my goose and a cat.
Drown, drown in the water-butt,
Drown all the dogs,' said the fierce young woman.

III

Soldiers take pride in saluting their Captain,
The devotee proffers a knee to his Lord,
Some take delight in adoring a woman.
What's equality?—Muck in the yard:
Historic Nations grow from above to below.

Those fanatics all that we do would undo;
Down the fanatic, down the clown;
Down, down, hammer them down,
Down to the tune of O'Donnell Abu.

When Nations are empty up there at the top,

The soldier takes pride in saluting his Captain,

Some back a mare thrown from a thoroughbred,
Troy backed its Helen; Troy died and adored;
Great nations blossom above;
A slave bows down to a slave.

'Who'd care to dig 'em,' said the old, old man,
'Those six feet marked in chalk?
Much I talk, more I walk;
Time I was buried,' said the old, old man.

...nations...
When order has weakened or faction is strong,
Time for us all boys, to hit on a tune boys,
Take to the roads and go marching along;
Lift, every mother's son,
Lift, lift, lift up the tune.

Those fanatics all that we do would undo;

... Time for us all to pick out a good tune,
... along.
March, march--How does it run?--
0 any old words to a tune.

'Who'd care to dig 'em,' said the old, old man;
'Those six feet marked in chalk?'

Much I talk, more I walk;
Time I were buried,' said the old, old man.

Soldiers take pride in saluting their captain,
Where are the Captains that govern mankind?
What happens to a tree that has nothing within it?
0 marching wind, 0 blast of the wind
Marching, marching along,
Lift, lift, lift up the song.

Those fanatics all that we do would undo;

... Captain,
... captains...
... happens a tree...
... wind,
... along.
March, march, lift up the song;

'Those six feet marked in chalk?'

Much I talk, more I walk;
Time I were buried,' said the old, old man.

Once again, the key to the major alterations is the dramatic influence at work, creating specific, concrete scenes. Let us begin by considering Part I. Yeats was writing a ballad, but in the process he slightly overused choruses, actually using two repeated choruses—(1) ll. 5-6, 15-16, and 25-26; and (2) ll. 7-10, 17-20, and 27-30—where one would have been sufficient.

However, his critical awareness would not let such waste of words go unmended; thus, attending to his dramatic instincts, he turned
lines 5-6, 15-16, and 25-26 as well as line 1 into specific, concrete scenes: line 1 now sets the action under the very gallows the speaker was to be hanged on rather than at a vague somewhere in the vast ocean of the Revolution; lines 5 and 6 introduce the cart the doomed man was standing upon; lines 15 and 16 capture the crowd's mass emotion; and lines 25 and 26 emphasize the pride of the Irish, even in execution. The skeletal drama of the early version has been given flesh and life.

This approach was then extended to the choruses of the two remaining songs. Granted, the repetition of one chorus throughout the three ballads had helped to unify the parts; however, the continuity of rhythm and the common revolutionary subject matter provides sufficient mortar. Conversely, much in the way of setting particularized concrete scenes was gained through Yeats' writing two new choruses, and, at the same time, the fervor of three distant characters, Yeats' old grandfather, the fierce young woman, and the old, old man is emphasized through unique choric repetitions within each unit.
In this thesis a study of William Butler Yeats' revisions of his lyric poetry has been undertaken. The task of summarizing findings remains. The subject of Chapter One has been the revisions in Yeats' early poetry, contained in Crossways and The Rose; two matters have been emphasized. Firstly, it has been demonstrated that the primary force behind his early revisions was a desire to rid his style of elements which had grown distasteful to him. At least five characteristics were the subjects of this revision: (1) archaic and conventionally poetic words, (2) poetic contractions, (3) grammatical inversion and (4) unnecessary repetition and superfluous metaphor were eliminated, while (5) merely ornamental repetition was replaced by formal repetition. Collectively, these had been the result of strong Pre-Raphaelite influences in the poet's youth; and their deletion represents his break away from the style of Swinburne, Rossetti, and the decadent Dowson, to name but a few.

Secondly, that Yeats was unsatisfied with one revision of these early poems and, consequently, continued to change some of them for the better part of his life, has been pointed out. In this connection the reaction of critics to Yeats' constant reworking has been surveyed; and in the case of one poem, "Sorrow of Love" the critical response to the final revision, ranging from mild approbation to partial censure, has been summarized.
In Chapter Two, a study centered in Yeats' revision of his later poetry has determined six general categories of changes. First, the efficacy with which Yeats corrected errors in grammar and information, reworked poems for the sake of clarity, and cut lines and passages in order to create intensity through economy of expression, has been illustrated.

A thorough examination of the changes in diction has shown Yeats' fervor in his search for the right, the "inevitable" word, his desire to paint accurate pictures, his use of colloquial language, and his quest for suggestivity. Moreover, much has been made of revisions, probably an outgrowth of his work in the theater and his growing confidence, which create immediacy of scene, certainty of statement, and inclusiveness of generalization.

Alterations in structure, both small changes in syntax and revision of the larger divisions of poems, have been demonstrated. In the first case, Yeats' erasure of enjambment as well as changes which create parallelism in sentence structure have been noticed; in the second, the regularization of rhyme scheme and stanza form, and the development of architectonic unity have been illustrated.

In dealing with changes in rhythm, an attempt has been made to look more closely at the particular alterations and their effects than have previous scholars: consequently, the enlivening effect of anapæstic feet and the emphatic role of trochees and spondees—all results of revision—have been mentioned; the drive to unify sound and sense has been abundantly illustrated.

Moreover, in conjunction with changes in rhythm, Yeats' redistribu-
tion of stress upon words of high vocabulary value, principally nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and upon alliterative syllables, has been demonstrated.

Finally, alterations which appear to issue from a dramatic instinct to develop concreteness have been studied. Along these lines, the minor reworking of opening scene-setting lines and the major reworking of refrains toward concreteness, and the attempt to individualize characters have been emphasized. Since it has not been stated before, it should be mentioned now that it is within this section of the chapter that major alterations most closely resembling those considered in the latter half of chapter one have been observed.

When one considers that many of the effects of revision enumerated here parallel some of the outstanding characteristics of Yeats' mature style—intensity, immediacy, and concreteness—the importance of revision in his stylistic development becomes apparent. This is not to say that through revision alone Yeats hammered out the hard, cold, chiseled style of Last Poems from the lush, over-ornamented style of Crossways; many other important factors, some of them touched upon in this paper (e.g. play writing and composing for the psaltery), figured in the poet's growth. Yet I believe that revision played a significant, if sometimes merely experimental role, in affording the opportunity to practice poetic composition in a light which constantly reminded him of his worst faults and, therefore, urged him all the more toward perfection.
Footnotes

Introduction


2 G. D. P. Allt, "Yeats and the Revision of His Early Verse," Hermathena, LXIV (1944), 96.


4 W. B. Yeats, Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley, ed. by Dorothy Wellesley (New York, 1940), p. 54.

5 Wade, p. 16.

6 Allt, LXIV, 96.

7 Allt, LXIV, 96-97.


Chapter I


2 Parkinson, p. vi.

3 Parkinson, p. 8.


5 Yeats, Variorum, p. 845.

6 Yeats, Variorum, p. 846.

7 Parkinson, p. 20.

8 Parkinson, p. 32.

Allt actually lists sixteen types of changes occurring in the Early Poetry, which are as follows: (1) correction of a former blunder or mistake—by emending syntax, removing ambiguity or eliminating bathos; (2) elimination of certain archaic words; (3) elimination of certain poetic forms of diction and certain conventional abbreviated forms; (4) elimination of grammatical inversion; (5) elimination of unnecessary repetition; (6) elimination of superfluous metaphor; (7) substitution of formal for merely ornamental repetition; (8) suppression of merely descriptive adjectives or replacement by active (verbal) adjectives; (9) suppression of vague or abstract terms or replacement by more specific, concrete terms; (10) reconciliation of the rhythm required by the meter with the rhythm required by the sense; (11) introduction of greater force and variety of meter; (12) introduction of an effect for the sake of sound alone; (13) introduction of some new word which has taken his fancy; (14) revision occasioned by a growing mastery of dramatic technique; (15) substitution of climax for anticlimax; (16) change occasioned by credal developments. However, in this section of my thesis I have chosen to consider only those listed in the text preceding this footnote because, unlike the remainder of the categories, they are found exclusively in the Early Poetry.


Yeats, Autobiography, p. 86.

See 5 - 11, 12, 18, 20, 22, 24, 11, 12, 13, and 15; 11 - 11, 1, 2, 3, 9, and 12; 23 - 11, 7-8; 11, 11, 5 and 7. Throughout poems are identified by the number assigned to them in the Variorum.
19See also 62 - 1. 7 and 315 - II, 1. 1, which constitute the nearest approximation of this revision practice to be found in the later poetry.

20See also 5 - 1. 13a; 9 - 1. 24j; and 10 - 11. 20, 32, and 50.

21Yeats, Letters to D. W., p. 62.

22Yeats, Autobiography, p. 90.

23See also 2 - 11. 13 and 49; 3 - 11. 6, 8, 9, 12, and 13; 4 - 11. 2, 7, and 12; 7 - 1. 13; 9 - 11. 11, 12, and 20; 10 - 11. 12, 24j, 36, 48, 55, 60, 62, and 72; 16 - 11. 10-12, and 34-36; 20 - 11. 22 and 62; and 23 - 11. 7 and 8.

24See also 49 - 1. 6; 82 - 1. 6j; 151 - 11. 34-35; 199 - 11. 3-5; 212 - 1. 76; 334 - 11. 29-30; and 363 - 1. 27.

25See also 2 - 11. 41-42; 7 - 1. 12; 86 - 1. 31; 141 - 1. 13;
116 - 1. 9j; 151 - 11. 30-31; 313 - 1. 13.

26See also 9 - 11. 5, 17; 103 - 11. 8, 9; 200 - 11. 48,
55; and 313 - 11. 2, 3.


28Parkinson, p. 126.

29Parkinson, p. 130.

30Parkinson, p. 130.

31Yeats, Variorum, p. 848.

32Parkinson, p. 138.

33"The Ballad of the Foxhunter," "The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland," "The Lamentation of the Old Pensioner," and "Dedication to a Book of Stories Selected from the Irish Novelists" are the poems enumerated by Parkinson who supplies the most complete list.


35Hone, p. 126.

Chapter II

1 See also 291 - 1. 17.

2 See also 260 - 1. 17; and 278 - 1. 10.

3 See also 16 - 1. 9; 115 - 1. 15; 200 - 11. 17-25; 213 - 1. 10; 218 - 11. 16-17; 247 - 11. 66-67; 311 - 11. 4, 8; 318 - 1. 1; 334 - 11. 29-30; 363 - 11. 37-38; and 374 - 1. 19.

4 See also 17 - 11. 1. 37, 39; 114 - 1. 1; 156 - 1. 7; 357 - 11. 17; and 382 - 1. 8.

5 See also 5 - 1. 16; 17 - 1. 18; and 118 - 1. 13.

6 See also 2 - 11. 13, 13a, 16a-d; 9-2ha-j; and 20 - 11. 16a-b.

7 See also 17 - 1. 3; 151 - 1. 31; 260 - 1. 11; and 376 - 11. 4-5.

8 Yeats, Letters to D. W., p. 68.

9 Alt, LXV, 51.

10 See also 3 - 1. 18; 34 - 11. 4; 50 - 1. 6; 62 - 1. 4; 164 - 1. 7; 220 - 11. 3-4; and 259 - 1. 11.

11 Witt, 45.

12 See also 134 - 1. 6; 155 - 1. 7; 211 - 1. 22; 230 - 1. 42; 265 - 11. 3. 5; 347 - 1. 24; 358 - 1. 28; 361 - 1. 35.

13 Witt, 44.

14 Witt, 44.


16 See also 34 - 1. 9; 133 - 1. 18; 150 - 1. 13; and 191 - 1. 18.

17 Yeats, Variorum, p. 373.


20. See above p.

21. See also 2 - 1. 47; 10 - 1. 13-23; 20 - 1. 61; 34 - 1. 65; 163 - 1. 65; 247 - 1. 84; 315 - 11, 1. 1.

22. See Allt, LXV, 46 and Variorum, 27 - 1. 10; and 35 - 1. 15. For other changes in the direction of concreteness and specificity see 2 - 1. 17; 19 - 1. 14; 233 - 1. 2; 363 - 11. 5-6, 36.

23. Witt, 45.

24. Witt, 45.

25. See also 2 - 11. 18, 33; 62 - 11. 5, 24; 82 - 1. 3; 202 - 1. 3; and 336 - 1. 18.

26. See also 20 - 11. 47-50, 81; 54 - 1. 6; and 202 - 1. 3.

27. See also 54 - 1. 12; 151 - 1. 1; 198 - 1. 2; 262 - 1. 12; and 358 - 11. 68-70.


29. See Wade, pp. 521-522 and 639-642.

30. See also 84 - 1. 11; 103 - 1. 1; 188 - 1. 22; 230 - 1. 26; and 322 - 1. 12.

31. See also 11 - 1. 34; 20 - 1. 62; 62 - 1. 23; 197 - 11. 6-7; 232 - 1. 7; 250 - 1. 41; and 265 - 1. 3.

32. See also 20 - 11. 17-21; and 315 - 1, 11. 7-8.

33. See also 20 - 11. 12-13; 270 - 1. 12; 282 - 11. 16, 18; 322 - 11. 11-12; and 386 - 1. 64.

34. See Yeats, *Letters to D. W.*, p. 82.


36. See also 224 - 11. 9-11, 21; and 333 - 1. 4.
37 For minor structural emendations which help unify poems see 151 - 1. 13; 216 - 1. 7; 250 - 1. 1; 264 - 1. 1; 299 - 1. 2; 316 - 1. 2; 315 - 1. 1; 11. 1-4 and 13-16.

38 Yeats, Variorum, p. 151.

39 See also 148 - 11. 10-12, 13-14; 220 - 11. 11-14; 291 - 11. 10-12; 313 - 11. 7-10, 17-20, and 27-30.

40 Allt, LXV, 51.

41 For examples of lines that become regular as result of revision see 15 - 1. 4; 34 - 1. 9; 82 - 11. 2, 3, and 13; 116 - 1. 7; 119 - 1. 10; 190 - 1. 7; 212 - 1. 39; 224 - 1. 84; 261 - 1. 2; 267 - 1. 12; 283 - 1. 12; and 357 - 1. 14.

42 Allt, LXV, 52.

43 See also 2 - 1. 33; 133 - 11. 11, 15; 159 - 11. 16-17; 179 - 1. 4; 200 - 1. 48; 213 - 1. 10; and 270 - 1. 9.

44 See also 16 - 1. 5; 71 - 1. 2; 214 - 1. 9; 224 - 1. 29; 291 - 1. 13; and 386 - 1. 64.

45 Allt, LXV, 59. See also 2 - 11. 5-6; 5 - 11. 4-5; 11 - 11. 36-37; 19 - 1. 6.

46 Allt, LXV, 59. See also 171 - 1. 12; 230 - 1. 63; 244 - 1. 66; and 315 - 1. 1. 16.

47 See also 19 - 1. 14; 212 - 1. 16; 232 - 1. 9; and 315 - 11. 1. 9. Changes in the opposite direction, from feminine to masculine, are far less frequent; however, see 190 - 1. 7; and 212 - 1. 3.

48 See also 20 - 1. 10; 63 - 1. 8; 161 - 11. 7-10; 265 - 1. 5; and 319 - 1. 3.

49 See also 7 - 1. 15; 161 - 11. 7-10; 212 - 1. 76; 265 - 1. 71; and 358 - 11. 68-69.

50 See also 7 - 1. 15; 161 - 11. 7-10; 212 - 1. 76; 265 - 1. 71; and 358 - 11. 68-69.

51 That the Pre-Raphaelites held high the importance of sound is well accepted. Dowson even proclaimed ye as in wine, violet, the most beautiful of sounds.

52 For examples of increases in alliteration see 2 - 11. 13, 16; 30 - 1. 2; 51 - 1. 14; 63 - 1. 7; 82 - 1. 7; 114 - 1. 10;
125 - l. 19; 227 - l. 5-7; 262 - l. 1; 314 - l. 7; and 357 - l. 21. For examples of decreases in alliteration see 2 - l. 20; 200 - l. 17-25; 315 - l. 1; 2; and 350 - l. 27. For further examples of changes in alliteration see 109 - l. 10; 85 - l. 5; 191 - l. 71.

53 See also 2 - l. 9; 30 - l. 2; and 62 - l. 22.

54 Allt, LXV, l. 7.

55 See also 163 - l. 10.

56 W. B. Yeats, Essays (New York, 1924), p. 15.

57 Yeats, Essays, p. 17.

58 Hone, p. 58.


60 Yeats, Letters to D. W., pp. 37-38. Many of the Cuala Broadsides poems were meant to be spoken to the psaltery.

61 Yeats, Variorum, pp. 543-544.

62 For further examples of Yeats' experimenting with refrains see 315 - l. 1, 11. 5-6, 11-12, 17-18; 358 - l. 9, 18, 27, 36, 45, 54, 63, and 72; and 360 - l. 23.
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