

Q. Describe two epigraphs in Eliot's *The Hollow Men*.

Eliot openly described himself as classicist in literature and always believed in the need of literary echoes or intertextuality. Critics describe the poetry of T. S. Eliot as allusive, reinforcing the value of culture as well as validating the literariness of his poems.

Eliot wisely splices together two entirely separate allusions to make the epigraph to *The Hollow Man* seem to be two consecutive sentences: "**Mistah Kurtz—he dead. / A penny for the Old Guy.**" The two sentences come from two entirely different sources. The source for the first part of the epigraph "**Mistah Kurtz—he dead**" is Conrad's novella "**Heart of Darkness**", in which the dying Kurtz, the mysterious idealistic trader turned moral monster and is heard to utter the words "**The horror, the horror!**". The second part of Eliot's epigraph, "**A penny for the Old Guy**", finds its origins in a centuries-old English celebration, variously called **Guy Fawkes Day**, **Bonfire Night**, and **Pope Day**. The festivities, find their origin in the discovery and suppression of the infamous **Gunpowder Plot**, a conspiracy among a band of English Roman Catholics to blow up Parliament and, with it, **King James I**. As part of the celebration, stuffed straw effigies of **Fawkes** are burned on bonfires.

The first epigraph shows a basic contrast and the second points to a basic resemblance with the Hollow Men. The Hollow Men are antithetic to Mistah Kurtz, but they resemble the 'Old Guy'. Mistah Kurtz is better than the Hollow Men because, though negative, he was a man of action. The end of Guy Fawkes's plot resembles the ending of Hollow Men. The inactivity and emptiness of Hollow Men go well the effigies of Guy Fawkes. The image of straw men and their death is central to Eliot's poem.

Q. The Mirror imagery in *The Lady of Shalott* .

In Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem **The Lady of Shalott**, the lady suffers from a mysterious a curse and views the world through her mirror, quite similar to Plato's "**Myth of the Cave**".

"She knows not what the curse may be,

And so she weaveth steadily."

The mirror shapes her view of the world outside her castle. Although the mirror brings the world to the Lady, it's nothing like the real thing. She sees images, shadows, a sort of half-world. The Lady sees the world but

she can't interact with it. When Lancelot comes trotting into the mirror, everything changes for the Lady. Even a shadow of him in a mirror is enough to let her know she has to change her life:

**'Out flew the web and floated wide-
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me", cried
The Lady of Shalott**

The mirror becomes a powerful symbol in the poem, and its meaning can be ascertained from the ending of the poem. The Lady of Shalott's view of reality depends on the reflection she perceives in her mirror. Images in mirrors are different than reality. The Lady's talent is that she can turn the sights of the mirror into an image in her web. It is her delight "**[t]o weave the mirror's magic sights**". The Lady is thus presented as an artist, more involved in her creative version of her indirect experience than with life experience itself. Breaking of the mirror signifies the idea of interaction with the reality shattering the ivory tower the artist lives in. Mirrors have associations with femininity. In that way the mirror becomes **symbol** of intense, terrible isolation of women from the world.

POETRY OF W. B. YEATS

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Basic Information

- Born: In Sandymount, Ireland on June 13, 1865
- Father: John Butler Yeats
- Mother: Susan Mary Pollexfen
- Studied: Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, Ireland
- Married: George Hyde-Less
- Nobel Prize: 1923
- Died: January 28, 1939

Different Aspects of Yeats's Poetry

- **Against Modernism**
- **Symbolism**
- **Irish Independence Movement**
- **Orientalism**

Modernism

The term Modernism is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts, and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the twentieth century, but especially after World War I (1914-18). The specific features signified by “modernism” vary with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but of Western culture in general. (Abrams 176)

Influence of Modernism

- Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882):

The Origin of Species (1859)

- Karl Marx (1818 – 1883):

The Communist Manifesto (1848)

Das Kapital (Thus Capital) (1867)

Influence of Modernism

- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900):
Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883)
- Sigmund Freud (1856-1939):
The Interpretation of Dreams (1899)
- Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955):
The Theory of Relativity

Yeats's approach towards Modernism

To stop Chaotic Situation, Yeats wanted to go back to the tradition of Aristocracy.

Example: *Sailing to Byzantium* (1928)

Sailing to Byzantium

I

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire

As in the gold mosaic of a wall,

Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,

And be the singing-masters of my soul.

Consume my heart away; sick with desire

And fastened to a dying animal

It knows not what it is; and gather me

Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

Once out of nature I shall never take

My bodily form from any natural thing,

But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make

Of hammered gold and gold enamelling

To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;

Or set upon a golden bough to sing

To lords and ladies of Byzantium

Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Symbolism

Symbolism is a major way of conveying Yeats's ideas who wants to say more than what meets the eye , wants to suggest something beyond the expressed meaning.... The symbols of Yeats are all-pervasive. There are certain key-symbols round which a number of poems are arranged, and each poem that follows in succeeding order throws light on foregoing ones and illuminates their sense. For example, in The Rose Volume of Verses, rose is the key-symbol. In these poems, rose symbolically stands for intellectual beauty, beauty of woman, austerity and also Ireland. (Sharma No Page)

Two Types of Symbols

- Traditional Symbol:

Traditional Symbols are such stock symbols as have been in general use. For instance, 'rose' is a traditional symbol of beauty and has been in use in poetry from the earliest times.

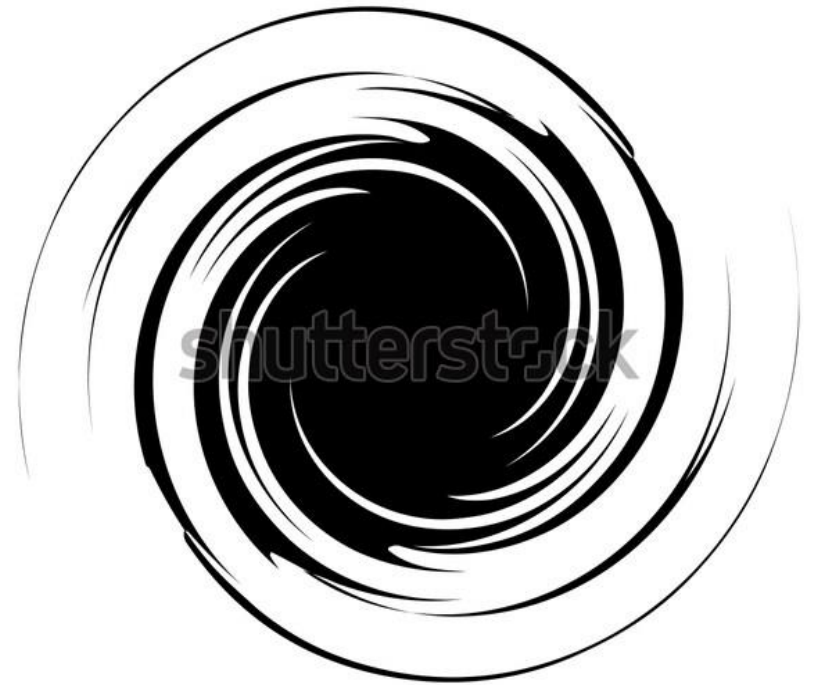
- Personal Symbol:

Personal Symbols are devised by the poet for his own purposes, to express the vague fleeting impressions passing through his mind, or to convey his own sense of the mystery of life.

Yeats's use of Personal Symbol

Gyre: A gyre in *The Second Coming* refers to a spiral or a circular motion, but it also stands for the larger cycles of history. Yeats believed that an orderly gyre or cycle of history that began with the birth of Christ was ending, about to be replaced with a new historical cycle of chaos and cruelty. According to Yeats:

The end of an age, which always receives the revelation of the character of the next age, is represented by the coming of one gyre to its place of greatest expansion and of the other to its place of greatest contraction... The revelation [that] approaches will... take its character from the contrary movement of the interior gyre...



The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the
worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those
words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands
of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a
man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about
it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert
birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I
know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking
cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come
round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Irish Independence Movement

Yeats was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival and, along with Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn had founded the *Abbey Theatre*, that had made important contributions to the Irish Revival, a resurgence of Irish drama, poetry and prose from the Victorian Period to the 1920s. He studied poetry in his youth and from an early age was fascinated by both Irish legends and occult. In 1924, he chaired a coinage committee charged with selecting a set of designs for the first currency of the Irish Free State. (Irish Nationalism in WB Yeats)

Irish Independence Movement

Yeats expresses the strong political passions that existed in Ireland during the first half of the twentieth century and convey the negative effects of the British political oppression over the Irish in his works. (Irish Nationalism in WB Yeats)

Irish Independence Movement

He wrote numerous poems about Ireland's involvement in World War-I –*An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*(1919), *A Meditation in Time of War*(1921); Irish nationalists and Political activists- *On a Political Prisoner*(1921), *In Memory of Eva Gore Booth and Con Mickiewicz* (1933); and the Easter Rebellion- *Easter '1916'* (1916). (Irish Nationalism in WB Yeats)

Easter, 1916

I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
.....
Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?

That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse—
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Orientalism

His (Yeats's) knowledge of Eastern occultism came mainly through his study of the Indian scriptures, particularly *The Upanishads* and from his contact with three eminent Indians – Mohini Chatterji, Rabindranath Tagore, and Purohit Swami. (Islam 283)

Orientalism

The poem “Chosen”, a celebration of the physical union of man and woman, is based on a subtle combination of three strands of Eastern thought: the belief in a pre-natal choice of lovers, the doctrine of samsara or transmigration of souls, and the Indo-Persian mystical cult of achieving union with the Absolute through the senses. (Islam 284)

Chosen

The lot of love is chosen. I learnt that much
Struggling for an image on the track
Of the whirling Zodiac.
Scarce did he my body touch,
Scarce sank he from the west
Or found a subtetranean rest
On the maternal midnight of my breast
Before I had marked him on his northern way,
And seemed to stand although in bed I lay.
I struggled with the horror of daybreak,
I chose it for my lot! If questioned on
My utmost pleasure with a man
By some new-married bride, I take
That stillness for a theme
Where his heart my heart did seem
And both adrift on the miraculous stream
Where -- wrote a learned astrologer --
The Zodiac is changed into a sphere.

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