Sense in the Void and Out: T. S.Eliot and W. B. Yeats

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> The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living. (T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent")

> This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. (Yeats's claim for the publication of his *Collected Poems*, printed on the copyright page)

The main concern of this paper is to explore the intricate issue of de-traditionalization in the modern era and the artistic or poetic response to it as revealed differently and respectively in W. B. Yeats's and T. S. Eliot's poetry. My hypothesis holds that culture in general, or the Symbolic in the Lacanian sense as the socio-symbolic mediating structure, is, among other things, a defense-mechanism against the brutal forces from the immediate reality. The latter can be taken either as the natural

forces or *mana* which the primitives "tamed" by means of mimetic cults and which the Greeks rationalized in various allegories, or as the psychic immediate stimuli which are prohibited to the consciousness by the unconscious as a structure of, in Freud's terms, *Bahnungen* or concatenations. De-traditionalization designates the collapse and ruination of these cultural, Symbolic structures, which modernization has triggered. That means, what the modern man has experienced, aside from violence from the Real, is the Symbolic violence done to tradition. And my discussion dwells on the artistic or Symbolic conception and configuration which may not directly relate to real violence but necessarily involve with it. To make a reductionist and binary distinction, what I attempt to deal with in this paper is form rather than content. Of course, content and form, or structure, cannot be completely separated because of their mutual determination and interpenetration. But this temporary distinction is necessary; otherwise art and reality, or the Symbolic and the Real, would lose their relative autonomy and we would regress to the "vulgar" direct determination of one field by the other.

Before directly "dissecting" Yeats's and Eliot's poms, I would like to begin with the issue of cultural conditions of modernism and the modern era in general. It is well accepted that modern experience has undergone tremendous transmutations in the twentieth century. Changes in the field of experience influence and transform people's conception of external reality and culture. According to Kant, our experiences and perceptions of reality are conditioned by two basic factors, space and time (1952: 43, 99). The emergence of a different, if not completely new, historical structure brings about corresponding mutations to the two structuring or regulating principles of our experiences. As far as space is concerned, the radical alterations of urban and rural landscapes are conspicuous in many modernists' poems. Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" can be regarded as a modernist manifesto in articulating the spatial disorientation in a dark night: "And we are

here as on a darkling plain / Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, / Where ignorant armies clash by night" (lines 35-37). The light which should illuminate the spatial environs is fading. The retreat of the Hellenistic point of light illustrates the destitution of the spatial axis of experience. This spatial desolation is especially stunning in Eliot's poems. Images of the "dead land," the desert landscape, or the polluted riverbank or Thames in *The Waste Land* surely contain dense symbolic implications. This "architectonic" devastation, of course, signifies cultural, Symbolic corruption.

The other axis, time, one of my main concerns, plays a critical, structuring role in the formation of a community. In Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Anderson even regards the construction of a "homogeneous, empty time" (Anderson 1991: 26) by press capitalism, such as novels and newspapers, as the determining factor in the formation of a nation in the eighteenth century (25). In Thomas Hardy's "Midnight on the Great Western," we see the fragmentation and breakdown of traditional communitarian links. A little "journeying boy" takes the train, the Great Western, alone at midnight. It seems that a traditionally densely "bewrapt" element is dissolved from and split out of its layer-upon-layer connections and links, and is cast out into an amorphous place. Hardy's phrases to describe this out-of-jointedness are: "whence he came" (line 5), and "What past can be yours" (line 11). "Whence" and "past" are words used repetitively by Hardy to imply the dissolved traditional links, the "*Heimat*" /homeland or original belonging. They are the categories of space and time repeated in the poem. It is no wonder that Hardy can compose such a line in "The Photograph" when the narrator burns out a photograph: "But I felt as if I had put her to death that night" (line 20). If photographs represent the characteristics of modern recorded image memories, the burning of photographs indicates the destruction of memories. But, Hardy's turn of the screw in the last stanza suggests that there are corporeal relationships between the burning of the photograph and its impact on the real

woman:

> - Well; she knew nothing thereof did she survive,
> And suffered nothing if numbered among the dead;
> Yet - yet - if on earth alive
> Did she feel a smart, and with vague strange anguish strive?
> If in heaven, did she smile at me sadly and shake her head?
> (line 21-25)

This stanza may be regarded as redundant and thus as a failure to the poem as a whole because the poet or the narrator has added some personal emotions to the scene. But, the structural principles of memories actually regulate not only our sense of reality but also our management of it. That is, changes of the temporal and spatial principles or axes can cause corporeal transformations of external reality. If the structure of memories is the main theme of the poem, the structural mutations actually correspond to changes of external reality. What is destroyed is not merely the content of memories but also historical "actualities," or cultural and social realities. Though the causal relations between the Symbolic, poetic realm and reality are not direct, they are, nonetheless, obliquely intertwined. Hardy's ingenuity is also revealed by his intentional insertion of a line of ellipsis to separate the last stanza from the rest of the poem. To put it more succinctly, both the aesthetic and the actual domain have their own relative autonomy and thus are not directly influenced by each other, but a complex mediation exists between them. I will return to this latter in my discussion of Yeats's poetry.

Along with the radical alterations of history and culture, the temporal orientation and schematization of experience are affected or even crumble. What remains is dismembered cultural fragments, "for you know only / A heap of broken images" (*The Waste Land*, line 21-22). It seems that these cultural contents dissolved of traditional links are free from constraints and

bounds, and are thus susceptible to be manipulated in free will. The modernist artistic techniques of pastiche, montage, or collage seem to testify to this artistic freedom. But, it is merely a secondary consequence.The primary effect is epitomized by the metaphor of the "living dead" which represents the state of Symbolic existence in a vacuum, that is, the dissolution of cultural and historical links.This state can be described as a limbo stuck between the already-dead links and the not-yet-born ones. This kind of in-betweenness and suspension is especially obvious in Eliot's poetry. In *The Hollow Men*, these hollow, "stuffed men" cannot cross "to death's other kingdom." They are suspended

> Between the idea
> And the reality
> Between the motion
> And the act
> . . . . . .
> Between the conception
> And the creation
> Between the emotion
> And the response
> . . . . . .
> Between the desire
> And the spasm
> Between the potency
> And the existence . . . .
> (*The Hollow Men*, section V, line 72-87)

Here, it is important to see that the loss of sight, which, as we have seen in previous discussion of the spatial principle, is so central to many Eliot's poems (see Scofield 1988: 141). In *The Waste Land*, the drowned Phoenician sailor's eyes are said to be pearls. That means, among other things, they cannot see. And in the Hyacinth garden, the speaker says, "my eyes failed, I was neither / Living nor dead" (*The Waste Land*, line 39-40). Though we do not have sufficient space in this paper to discuss the Imagist poetry, it is still worth mentioning a curious

coincidence in the Imagists' tendency to freeze the temporal flow in order to render a moment's scene. We can regard this as the suspension in the temporal axis. Here the intricate relationships between the space and time are exposed to the extreme: the loss and dissolution of sight or the spatial axis leads to the cessation of time. If we accept the thesis that the constitution of the geometric space and perspective is tantamount to the institution of the Cartesian, ocularcentric subject of Enlightenment as the center of the visible world (see Jay 1993: 69-82), the "blackout" of the "enlightened" spatial construction somehow, as we have noted, implies the collapse of the representational structure of reality and, of course, our sense of reality. What Eliot reveals in his poems is that temporalization is concurrent with spatialization because what is frozen in the loss of sight is the flow of "Symbolic" life. This is what Lacan's theory of gaze intends to delineate. When we say that the dissolution of the cultural or Symbolic structure is exemplified by the spatial disorientation, that means, this is also the case for the blind. If we recognize the fact that the blind man has not the less an accurate sense of space, that he can perceive very clearly the spatial organization of his surroundings, we must admit that what concerns space is not vision as such (see Lacan 1978: 86-87, 94). On the one hand, the constitution of perspectival or geometric space hinges upon the pre-existence of a center, for example, the blind man's staff, to measure space in a "point-by-point" manner (see **Zupančič** 1996: 33-34). The constitution of this center, the Cartesian subject, and its "abstraction" or distantiation from its environs already implies the existence and functioning of the Symbolic structure. But this constitution is unperceived or unknown to the geometric subject's consciousness. This is why Lacan designates this Symbolic structure as the "unconscious." On the other, that implies that the subject has to renounce its "involvement" in the immediate surroundings and recognize, or receive, the call, or "interpellation," of the Symbolic Other in order to be constituted as a subject and to inaugurate his "other"

life, the Symbolic life. That is, a part of the subject has to be separated, renounced, or "castrated" in exchange for this other life. This illustrates the function of castration in the scopic field (see Lacan 1978: 89), and the exchange between the Real and the Symbolic. The inauguration of Symbolic life is exactly what we mean here by "temporalization." And what is elided or separated from the scopic involvement is "gaze" as such (Lacan 1978: 73-75). The subject cannot see the gaze so that, by means of a call or "voice," he can see and live his Symbolic life: "voice vivifies, whereas gaze mortifies" (**Žižek 1996a: 94). That** means, though space and time are concurrent as Eliot's poems illustrate, there is a fundamental antagonism between seeing, or petrifying, and temporalizing (see Lacan 1978: 116-18).

Let us look at more descriptions in Eliot's poems of this state of life's termination. As we have seen, the direct effect of de-traditionalization is the state of in-betweenness, which causes the petrifaction and inaction of the subject as the living dead in Eliot's poetry. The example directly coming to mind is Mr. Prufrock who imagines himself as a specimen "sprawling on a pin, / When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall" (line 57-58). This is the moment when the subject is under the gaze and thus cannot "see" because he cannot recognize his "identity" in the intersubjective socio-symbolic network. That means, he cannot be properly called or "interpellated" into that social milieu. The destruction of tradition and cultural contents leads to the impotence and thus de-substantiation of culture. What we have is the image of sterility and spiritual emptiness. In that sense, the stupefied state of in-betweenness is the same in both "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and *The Hollow Men*. In the former, "the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherized upon a table" (line 2-3), and in the latter these hollow men are "Shape without form, shade without colour, / Paralysed force, gesture without motion" (line 11-12). It is also notable that the last two lines lack a verb. What we have is the collage of pictures or images, that is, static "gesture without motion" because temporalization of Symbolic or cultural identification is

suspended or arrested. "Stupefaction" is the perfectly exact word to describe this state because it is the conscious Cartesian subject that withers away. What I mean by de-substantiation is not actually the disappearance of all contents but of the structural relations and interconnections. The out-of-joint contents without Symbolic articulations can be regarded as dispersed and fragmented elements which happen to be put together without producing any significatory links. This is the state of the hollow men whose contents become the stuffed matters without any symbolic significance. One of the epitaphs of *The Hollow Men*, "*Mistah Kurtz - he dead*," is cited from Joseph Conrad's novel *The Heart of Darkness* in which a black page boy announces the death of Kurtz, the white European colonialist who came to Congo, was initiated into the indigenous mythic ritual, and became a god of Congo (see Smith 1956: 103-04). Kurtz is described by Marlow, the storyteller in *The Heart of Darkness*, as "hollow at the core" (cited in Smith 1956: 103). We can say that Kurtz has undergone the same Symbolic violence, the dissolution of cultural significatory links or fabric as a viable distance from the truth of horror, when he confronts it deep within the dark continent and his heart. But, according to Smith, Kurtz is not so much hollow as Eliot's hollow men because Kurtz "attains an affirmative victory by recognizing the horror" (103). Among other reasons, it is this final recognition which distinguishes Kurtz from other, no less hollow, European colonialists, one of whom is similarly described by Marlow as "papier-mâché Mephistopheles, and it seemed to me that if I tried I could poke my forefinger through him and would find nothing inside but a little loose dirt, maybe" (Conrad 1988: 29).

The other epitaph of *The Hollow Men*, "*A penny for the Old Guy*," alludes to the Guy Fawkes Day, the fifth of November, when scarecrows are gathered to be burned as a sacrifice in order to ensure fertility (Smith 1956: 105), though, as Gerald Hammond has personally informed me, the real significance for Eliot may be the anti-Catholic development in English history. And the speaker is one among the scarecrows (Smith 1956:

103). But, with the allusion to the Guy Fawkes Day, there is no image or mentioning of fire and burning in the poem. The disappearance of fire may indicate that these hollow men cannot enter "death's other kingdom" but are merely stuck in this realm of in-betweenness. The lack of a "fire sermon" makes their state "sightless" and voiceless -- "We . . . avoid speech" (line 58-59). This lack also renders as suspended their state of existence:

> *This is the way the world ends*
> *This is the way the world ends*
> *This is the way the world ends*
> *Not with a bang but a whimper.*
> (line 95-98, italics original)

The repetition of the same sentence without punctuation carries the sense of slowness and insignificance, which is also implied in the last quoted line by the contrast between "bang" and "whimper." This is the horror of slowly dying in the state of paralyzed living dead. The sense of suspension and slow ending without significant "end" or aim is especially obvious in the preceding stanza: "For Thine is / Life is / For Thine is the" (line 92-94). The definite concluding term is omitted.

From the above discussion, we can see that what Eliot tries to depict is the "death of the subject" because of the dissolution of tradition and cultural values. This is almost the most hackneyed conclusion that can be drawn from Eliot's poetry in general. But there is an obvious fundamental aporia this is often neglected, which is perhaps inescapable to cultural or artistic representations as such. The problem lies in the antagonism between the delicate construction of the "framing" form and the destitution of the "framed" content: how can such pompous, well-constructed poetry convey the sense of cultural death and emptiness? As far as spatial axis is concerned, no matter to what extent the framed contents of the poetic world or the world of "writing" are ruined, this world is always a Symbolic world or "construction" that opposes or confronts the Real. In the case of Eliot, the more threatening the real ruination is, the more refined

and sophisticated is the poetic construction. Kafka is mostly aware of this fact when he recognizes his writings as the sole salvation to keep him from being devoured. Though the grounded, vertical architecture falls down, he, as the animal in his short story "The Burrow," constructs an underground, rhizomic horizontal burrow protecting him from the intrusion of the Real threats. In the critical terminology, we have on the one hand the referent, the referred state of real destitute life, and the signifying structure, the world of poetic or Symbolic construction. But, between these two levels, there is an elusive interface which is the work as such. Following Bühler's definition of the sign -- "*aliquid stat pro aliquo*" (one thing stands for another) (see Bühler 1990: 47-49) -- and Lacan's definition of the signifier -- "a signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier" (Lacan 1977: 316) --, we can say, the work is both a sign and a signifier, which, as a sign, points to the real object of referent,and, as a signifier, represents or assumes the referent back into the Symbolic world of signifiers. The work stands between the two. Its existence determines the life and, of course, death of the Symbolic.

The situation is the same in the case of time. As we have seen earlier, the termination of time or life is exemplified in the living dead who suffer de-traditionalization or Symbolic death. How can such a Symbolic death be represented and thus receive Symbolic life in the poem as a flow of rhymes and verses? If the gaze emerges to mortify the subject because of the lack of the subject's separation and distance from it, that means, the exchange between the Real and the Symbolic is suspended. But how can the poet exchange the subject's death with his Symbolic construction, represent what is expelled out of representation, re-signifierize the death, and re-temporalize the arrested movement? It is also out of the existence of the interface that the subject can "see" the gaze, witness his own death, and temporalize the arrested. That means, this interface is both a-spatial and a-temporal. But it is also the condition or pre-condition of spatialization and temporalization. In other

words, this elusive interface is at one and the same time "positing" and "de-positing," or is positing (the Symbolic) because it de-posits (the Real) (see Hamacher 1993: 112-15, 130n-31n). In this interface, de-traditionalization or de-symbolization as the real state of modern man's existence has already been inscribed as an "event" which, since it has become a sign distinct from a real state in itself, procures its own independent existence; but this event also resists signification because symbolization is not yet instituted. That is, it resists symbolization, but it is already within the Symbolic and guarantees the existence of the Symbolic and symbolization. In other words, it is nothing but what Deleuze has termed as the pure "Event" or the pure "Sense" which retains "impassivity in relation to states of affairs [i.e., reality] and neutrality in relation to propositions [i.e., language]" (Deleuze 1989: 96), that is, the independence from the referential plane of the Real and significatory plane of the Symbolic. This pure interface between the event and the sense represents the abolition of both the denotation or referential function and the signification. In the plane of sense, it appears as the event's "position in the void," and represents "the identity of form and void" (136).

> Across the abolished significations and the lost denotations, the void is the site of sense or of the event which harmonizes with its own nonsense, in the place where the place only takes place (*là où n'a plus lieu que le lieu*). The void is itself the paradoxical element, the surface nonsense, or the always displaced point whence the event bursts forth as sense. . . . To paint without painting, non-thought, shooting which becomes non-shooting, to speak without speaking: this is not at all the ineffable up above or down below, but rather the frontier and the surface where language becomes possible. (Deleuze 1989:

137)

This existence of a pure form with its content as void is irreducible to any instituted/symbolized contents and pre- or extra-Symbolic existence, and has already been a Symbolic object. With regard to signification, it is lacking because it is nonsense, or has no sense; but it is also an excess pertaining to every significatory event/sense: it is both lack and excess at one and the same time (see Deleuze 1989: 49-50). More precisely, it is what Lacan has termed as the "phallus" (Deleuze 1989: 210-11), that privileged empty signifier as a pure form without content or signified. In order to make clearer this pure lack or void, I would like to cite Laclau and Zac who explicate the function of representation as the filling function which fills the form with Symbolic contents:

> The filling function requires an empty place, and the latter is, to some extent, indifferent to the content of the filling, though this filling function has to be incarnated in *some* concrete contents, whatever those contents might be. This is the originary split constitutive of all representation . . . . Now, this means that between the filling function and the concrete content that actualizes it, there is a constitutive incommensurability. (Laclau and Zac 1994: 15, italics original)

This incommensurability or inadequacy between the filling function and the filled content makes incomplete and unfulfilled the filling (16). And thus, either excess or lack necessarily ensues: excess because of an unfulfilled form, and lack because of the lack of an adequate filling content.

In the case of temporality, this pure form as void appears as the "pure empty form of time" (Deleuze 1989: 165), or the "Aion," which is "never present, but always already in the past and yet to come" (136). This Aion is the most narrow, the most

contracted, the most instantaneous, and the most punctual. It is the point on a straight line which divides the line endlessly, and is itself divided into past-future. . . . [I]nstead of the most profound, the most fully present, the present which spreads out and comprehends the future and the past, an unlimited past-future rises up here reflected in an empty present which has no more thickness than the mirror. (150)

It resists symbolization, actualization, or temporalization but is already itself in time. That is, for the content to be temporalized, to become present, and to unfold in a linear sequence of past, present, and future, a pure becoming must first be instituted. But since it is pure becoming, it cannot be present or become present, otherwise it would pass into the past or remain in the future. In that sense, this pure empty form of time is always in/within the process of happening or actualizing, but it is also counter-actualization and exists as "impassability."

From our discussions above, we can see that, quite paradoxically, what Eliot's poetry attempts to convey is exactly this state of pure Event or pure surface as the dissolution of the spatial and termination of the temporal: the "representation" of the subject who is seeing but cannot see and of the living dead who is dying but cannot die. It is from this pure Event that construction and temporalization ensue. The framed object of reference and signification becomes the framing condition and pre-condition which enables symbolization as such (see **Žižek** 1996b: 202). This inversion between the frame and the framed is specific to Eliot because the framed "event," the state of de-traditionalization he attempts to describe, coincides with the framing pure Event, the void. But it is also at the same time that the pure void is, to a certain extent, concretized or embodied, and is thus rendered almost invisible to Eliot. In his poetry, the "cause" -- the reality of modern man's destitute existence -- and the "quasi-cause" -- the symbolic destitution or voidance as the pre-condition of representation -- are conflated so that the interface as pure void is elided. That is to say, the in-between

living dead do not undergo symbolic death because the latter is inverted as the represented or the actualized. Even though they suffer de-traditionalization, that is still a fact or pertains to the level of reality, and thus does not yet enter the void as such, which is pure linguistic or symbolic event. When they enter the frame and are represented by Eliot, they, as the denoted real existence, do not enjoy what this process of symbolization or representation should confer upon them: symbolic de-substantiation or de-realization. They are indeed caught "between the two deaths," to use Lacan's phrase: the real spiritual death of their life and the symbolic death of that death as a reality. That is why they do not come into the pure void even though they have represented that void or have come into representation through it. This also explains why de-traditionalization or de-substantiation, which should bring about the productive void engendering unceasing symbolization and temporalization in the Symbolic domain, merely renders them as lifeless and voiceless. What is more important is that Eliot has to, inevitably, make that symbolic death happen again, turn it into a represented content, repeat what has already happened: the "fire sermon" or the further burning of the hollow men in order for them to enter that "death's other kingdom" is to repeat the framing voidance on the level of the framed or represented. These hollow men or the poet himself have to re-encounter with their symbolic cause or "quasi-cause" which is "the pure form of the Aion" (Deleuze 1989: 180) wherein diverse, multiple beings converge and communicate. That is, the symbolic subject has to re-encounter his pure existence as void, lack, or "nothing" which "is tantamount to a 'severing of relations'" (Hamacher 1994: 121), even though the real subject has already undergone that process of de-traditionalization.

The return or re-return of the framing instance into the framed can account for a no less paradoxical coincidence between knowledge and non-knowledge in Eliot. On the one hand, Eliot must have known the redeeming potency of the symbolic death because he keeps emphasizing a further

destruction or death for his subjects. But, if he has already known or perceived the pre-condition of his poetic construction or representation, why does he repeat it in such a tautological, redundant gesture? If he has already known it, he would just have had it in those living dead, and repetition or having it again would be completely unnecessary. If he has already perceived it, he does not need to liberate the living dead since they have already been liberated into representation. But the fact is that Eliot cannot possibly affirm or endure this state of destitution, de-substantiation, or de-traditionalization. That means, the return of the framing condition has to be taken as the return of the repressed: repression as the condition of the subject's constitution returns as a repressed real content or experience. In other terms, Eliot must have not known it so that he has to realize it as his poetic object of representation. That also proves that his knowledge of it is indeed an unconscious knowledge or non-knowledge. This shift, for those living dead as well as for Eliot's poetic world, is from having to being, from having the non-knowledge to being the knowledge, or acting it out into represented reality. In that case, having is again impossible, and knowledge is again inverted or returns into non-knowledge. The antagonism between this pure surface as void and the subject is explicit here: the subject chases it just like Achilles chases the tortoise in Zeno's paradox. Achilles can never "catch" up with the tortoise because he either outsteps or lags behind it. The reason is that, as **Žižek points out, he cannot** "attain" it because it is his cause as void which "eludes our grasp no matter what we do to attain it" (1991: 4). Or, this cause can be the cause only because it disappears as the "missing cause": its disappearance engenders the subject. Therefore, where it exists is the place the subject is not, and where there is the subject there it is not. When it exists as knowledge or frame for Eliot, he cannot represent it; when he represents it, it ceases to be knowledge any more. Either it appears as absence to the subject, or the subject disappears in order to meet it. Their encounter is destined to be fatal. Only the subject's death can

be adequate to it. But Eliot always misses it because this death is always for others, not for him. As Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, he surely witnesses and recognizes the horror of "subjective destitution" (see **Žižek 1992: 173-84) as the historical and** existential limit of modern man. But, unlike Marlow, Eliot does not identify with Kurtz as the symbol of death or the voice of death. Eliot wants to eradicate this nothing as real and to be delivered from the horror. Rather than Kurtz's voice of/from the horror -- "The horror! The Horror!" (Conrad 1988b: 68) --, what he wants to hear is the voice which announces the end of the horror and of that voice of/from the horror -- "Mistah Kurtz - he dead." Indeed, Eliot can only see hope in the abolition of this real state of in-betweenness, and the result is the fleeing of the in-betweenness as pure interface or voiding/voided Event.

In the fourth section of *The Hollow Men*, Eliot suggests a hope for the hollow men: "Sightless, unless / The eyes reappear / As the perpetual star / Multifoliate rose / Of death's twilight kingdom / The hope only / Of empty men" (line 61-67). It is only by entering the death's other kingdom that they can meet the eyes and hear the voices, the "Annunciation" in "The Dry Salvages" of the *Four Quartets* or the "human voices" in "The Love Song." That is, the living dead have to undergo further destruction, to be burnt by the never-appearing fire in *The Hollow Men*. For Eliot, further Symbolic violence is required, which reveals his decadentist philosophy of extreme annihilation. In the *Four Quartets*, he says:

> But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,
> And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.
> ("East Coker," section IV, Eliot 1963: 202)

> What we call the beginning is often the end
> And to make an end is to make a beginning.
> The end is where we start from . . . .
> ("Little Gidding," section V, Eliot 1963: 221)

In *Sweeney Agonistes*, the same violence is also the main theme. "Life is death" ("Fragment of an Agon," Eliot 1963: 133) represents the same living-dead condition of the hollow men. The man who "once did a girl in" is also transfixed in the state of in-betweenness. What he can hope for is the coming of the "hoo-ha" or the "hangman" who hits the living dead "in the head"

> When you're alone in the middle of the night and
> you wake in a sweat and a hell of a fright.
> ("Fragment of an Agon," Eliot 1963: 136)

We can say that Eliot's decadentist flavour is meant to approximate the pure void or death of the subject, and thus testifies to his identification with the Symbolic death or nonsense. That is, he tries to evacuate the embodied void because he wants to maintain the state of de-substantiation or pure Event, because he knows that life/beginning is in death/end. But the outcome is the sudden awakening "in a sweat and a hell of fright." The living dead suddenly finds himself in dying and is awakened into life. Here we find the distinction or splitting between death in living and life out of death, or dreaming in waking and awakening out of dreaming. This inversion is like "the turning inside-out of the finger of a glove" (Lacan 1978: 82). That is, the subject has to be abstracted out of himself, the dying self, so that he can see himself as dying, and the seeing subject turns out to be living: "consciousness, in its illusion of *seeing itself seeing itself*, finds its basis in the inside-out structure of the gaze" (82). At that moment, the subject is split or abstracted out of itself and sees itself. That means, he becomes the ever-seeing/-living consciousness even though the seen self is dying. As we have seen before, this is the moment when the subject renounces pure seeing or gaze -- the state of being seen by or being imbedded in his immediate environs --, procures a Symbolic life, and is thus temporalized.

As Sartre's voyeur who suddenly hears the rustling and perceives the other's gaze, that is, who suddenly recognizes the existence of an other subject who might have seen or found his

peeping and thus reduce him to shame (see Lacan 1978: 84), Eliot's subject also has to be awakened by an other, the "hangman." This introduction of an other -- his voice or eyes -- is very significant in Eliot's poetry. He is acutely aware of the vivifying function of voice when in the last part of *The Waste Land*, "What the Thunder said," the voice or the thunder is required to deliver the subject from the termination of the Symbolic life, and, in *The Hollow Men*, this saving hope appears as the "eyes." And, of course, this other is nothing but the Symbolic order which interpellates and saves the subject by endowing him with consciousness as the representational center of thought, a thinking subject/cogito. It is the thunder that engenders thinking about the meaning of the voice. At this point, Derrida is perfectly justified to say that "logocentrism" is tantamount to or derived from "phonocentrism," with the proviso that this vivifying voice does not lead to the "metaphysics of presence" because the subject is abstracted from his immediate presence and because the other's voice procuring the subject's presence has to come from outside instead of from within the subject himself, that is, he cannot hear himself speaking (see also **Žižek** 1996a: 94-95). The voice from above is meant to abstract a kind of wholeness, completeness, or identity: the ego as a whole that, as a body without organs, rises out of the ever-fragmenting, partial body parts which, being unceasingly divided and dividing, can never add to a whole (Deleuze 1989: 188-89). The voice from above -- God's voice, the superegoic voice, or some Other's saving voice -- abstracts or appropriates the incorporeal form of the whole from this corporeal whole of body without organs, but removes its corporeal energies or desexualizes it (see 207-09).Thought or the thinking subject is subsequently and consequently engendered or "awakened." For the dreaming subjects, the three da's in *The Waste Land* are tantamount to mere noises or thunderbolts, but, for the thinking subject, they become the Other's voice full of senses. This process is similar to the child's initiation into the Symbolic: for him, the parents' voice is only recognized as a "voice" instead of

mere noises when he is ready to be interpellated, to receive the parents' role as his Other instead of taking them as mere partial objects without clear boundaries between the child and his parents. Boundary, limit, distance, and identity distinguish or "awaken" him from his environs and pave the way for him to decipher the senses contained in the Other's voice. Lacan's interpretation of these three da's as the power and significance of speech (see Lacan 1977: 106-07) is perfectly justified because what is at issue here is the procurement of the "human voices," speech, or the structure of language in order to derive or revive temporality and senses. That means, it is a process of re-symbolization. Let us assume that this is inevitable since cultural or historical process is always engaged in continuous symbolization and re-symbolization, and since the institution of subjectivity and the subject's entry into the Symbolic are necessary to a certain extent. Our question is how Eliot deals with the void as the inherent and internal condition in every production of senses, what the outcome is, and whether his escape into sense is but a mere repetition.

One possible reason that Eliot cannot write a successful modern drama is that the in-between void resists actualization and temporalization. His main concern is to explore into the chasm of terror, the state of the living-dead, so that the dramatic movement is impossible in this state of petrifaction. How can the termination or cessation of the temporal be "dramatized"? Benjamin has exquisitely described Kafka's literary world as caught between the mythic and the modern world, in which movement is almost impossible (1968: 141-42). Expanding Benjamin's view, Adorno further infers that dramatization is impossible in this state of in-betweenness because "Kafka's figures are struck by a fly-swatter even before they can make a move" (1981: 262n). I am not saying that Kafka's artistic world is completely the same as Eliot's (there are actually radical differences between them). My point is that actions are impossible in this in-between limbo. To solve the aporia, Eliot has to resort to archaic language and style, so he succeeds in

the *Four Quartets* to formulate and aestheticize the absolute and terminal resolution. We can infer the basic motif from its four minor sub-titles. "Burnt Norton" is the name of a country house at Ebrington in Gloucestershire, near the market town of Chipping Camden where Eliot had visited and stayed in the summer of 1934; "East Coker" is a village in southeast Somersetshire from which the Eliot family emigrated to America; "The Dry Salvage," as the notes attached under the title indicate, is a small group of rocks on the coast of Cape Ann in Massachusetts, which was remembered by Eliot from his child summer holidays; and "Little Gidding" is the seat, in Huntingdonshire, of an Anglican religious community established in 1625, which King Charles had visited for three times and was later desecrated by the Roundheads, and which Eliot had visited in the spring of 1936 (Smith 1956: 255). As Smith indicates, these four locations are related to Eliot's personal, his family, and the religious histories (255). The recent personal history in Burnt Norton, the history of the family's departure in East Coker, and the childhood memory in The Dry Salvage are all sublated and harmoniously integrated, by means of the pure Hegelian totalizing gesture of sublation/*Aufhebung*, in the religious site in Little Gidding, "Here, the intersection of the timeless moment / Is England and nowhere. Never and Always" ("Little Gidding," section I, Eliot 1963: 215). We can accept Smith's suggestion not to identify the "England" with the real existing England but regard it as "placeless eternity, in which all times become timeless" (287). It does not matter if the symbolic England is not the real England. What really matters is the totalizing Symbolic frame or scheme which abstracts a synthesizing whole sublating the three disjunctive sites and temporal layers. The symbolic England serves as Eliot's claim that "Only through time time is conquered" ("Burnt Norton," section II, Eliot 1963: 192). This claim clearly overlaps with one of the epitaphs, by St. John of the Cross, in *Sweeney Agonistes*: "*Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union, / until it has divested itself of the love of created beings.*" Both time and

the soul cannot rely upon external illumination or salvation: for redemption, or what we have been describing as sense or the Symbolic revival, to be possible, we can only count on an internal or inherent condition which, though still pertaining to the within, can lead to the without in a kind of magical leap. At first sight, it seems that Eliot is warning us of the great danger of direct and complete integration with the divine, or the danger of complete severance from the historical, secular, or Symbolic domain. Also, it is tempting to read the following lines in "Burnt Norton" as Eliot's defense of mortal values and the protection they provide:

> Yet the enchainment of past and future
> Woven in the weakness of the changing body,
> Protects mankind from heaven and damnation
> Which flesh cannot endure. (section II, Eliot 1963: 192)

If that is taken seriously, the mortal existence can be asserted as a resistance against the divine totalizing scheme. And the symbolic England can also be read as an unyielding figure against incorporation, integration, or sublation. But it turns out to be a pure alibi, "For liberation - not less of love but expanding / Of love beyond desire, and so liberation / From the future as well as the past" ("Little Gidding," section III, Eliot 1963: 219). The three temporal layers are actually integrated and contained in the present as the eternal and thus constitute a complete circle in which the beginning is the end. This is not just the cyclical view of time because different stages of the cyclical time still retain their respective independence and do not collapse into one single eternal present. This temporal pre-lapserian unity in the "time present" coincides with the spatial unity of the historical sites in the "here" in Little Gidding or England. The dissolved temporal and spatial planes are again re-sutured under the sublating scheme of poetic construction:

> Footfalls echo in the memory
> Down the passage which we did not take
> Towards the door we never opened

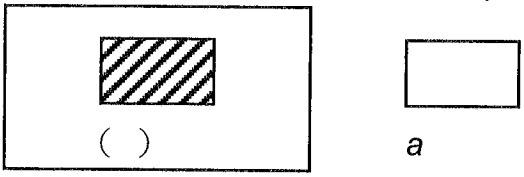
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.
("Burnt Norton," section I, Eliot 1963: 189)

These are things which "might have been" and "have been," and they are connected to the future generations of readers and, at last, integrated or sublated in the present construction, the poem itself. This is like the "stars" under which are "reconciled" "the boarhound and the boar" who "pursue their pattern as before" ("Burnt Norton," section II, Eliot 1963: 191). All the temporal events are, like the dance, gathered "at the still point, there the dance is, / But neither arrest nor movement" ("Burnt Norton," section II, Eliot 1963: 191). This is the perfect neo-Platonic, Plotinian time image in which things past and future constitute a total picture which itself contains all temporal contents but is not time itself. That is, when time becomes a whole, this whole is itself completely constituted by temporal contents, but is not time or within time. This whole is still the product of constitutive or internal contents, but suddenly accedes to another plane, a transcendental or metaphysical plane. Therefore, though history is constituted by temporal events, it is regarded by Eliot as a transmuted "form" or "pattern" of wholeness (see "Burnt Norton," section V, Eliot 1963: 194):

. . . A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern of
Timeless moments. . . .
History is now and England.
("Little Gidding," section V, Eliot 1963: 222)

Therefore, though Eliot claims the pattern of internal or inherent transcendence, he indeed only sees the objective transcendence (see Deleuze 1989: 113). There is a very elusive, subtle distinction between this internal or immanent transcendence and the objective transcendence. What makes possible the passage from the first to the second is what we have been repeatedly describing as the pure void or "Event" as nonsense. It is nothing but what Lacan has designated as the

phallus, that empty object or cause of desire, which is transformed into a signifier. This is the same with Eliot's conception of time. The present is merely one temporal element or layer among others, just like the penis which is only one erogenous zone among others. But, for a total temporal picture to be possible, the present has to be transmuted into an empty instant, the "Aion"; similarly, for the coordination of various erogenous zones to be possible, the penis has to be evacuated as the empty phallus so that the latter can function as an enabling instance of coordination. But this phallus is also at the same time the inherent hindrance that prevents the wholeness of the whole because the phallus is a lack in the whole and an excess to the whole. What Eliot has established is this whole, but he leaves out this inherent hindrance and limit. Let us use Jacques-Alain Miller's diagram for the *objet a*, the empty cause of desire, to illustrate the relationships between the Symbolic and this inherent empty form (see **Žižek 1991: 94-95):**



For us, we take the largest rectangle as the whole, the enveloped rectangle as the Aion or phallus, and the expelled *a* as the penis or the present before transmutation.

Therefore, instead of the Aion which, as the pure surface of nonsense, is unceasingly divided into past and future and thus can never absorb the past and future, Eliot conceives the whole or the "Chronos" in which

> Only the present exists in time. Past, present, and future are not three dimensions of time; only the present fills time, whereas past and future are two dimensions relative to the present in time. In other words, whatever is future or past in relation to a certain present (a

> certain extension or duration) belongs to a more vast present which has a greater extension or duration. There is always a more vast present which absorbs the past and the future. . . . God experiences as present that which for me is future or past, since I live inside more limited presents. Chronos is an encasement, a coiling up of relative presents, with God as the extreme circle or the external envelop. . . . [T]he divine present complicates or comprehends the future and the past. (Deleuze 1989: 162)

Under God's eyes, all time is co-present; that is, time is spatialized as a total picture so that, though time keeps unfolding and proceeding, this whole itself never changes.By imitating God's view, Eliot takes a far or high stance on the antique place, Little Gidding, to sublate the three sites or temporal layers. What is lost from view is just this too close and flat "aleatory point" of Aion. At last, Eliot leaves the pure surface of the a-temporal and the a-spatial non-sense and ascends to the height. This is his way out of the void, the pure surface. What is curious is that his flight does not procure him aesthetic relative autonomy because, when he regards his work itself as an absolute autonomy containing the past and the future, as we have noted above, the work itself coincides with English history as *Four Quartets* has claimed: absolute independence or autonomy leads to total loss of autonomy.

The breakdown of traditional links leads to what Walter Benjamin has called "the contemporary decay of the aura" in the work of art (1968: 223). According to him, the authority and authenticity of the work of art, and its resistance to being reproduced lie in its unique presence of "time and space" in history and tradition (220). The technical reproduction of artworks testifies to "a tremendous shattering of tradition" and "the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage"

(221). This specific de-auratization of artworks can be best grasped when Yeats describes as "an idle trade" those traditional deeds of lovers who "would sigh and quote with learned looks / Precedents out of beautiful old books" ("Adam's Curse," line 26-27). Yeats's cry can be regarded as reflection on the over-citation of cultural and poetic sources since the aura or light of the moon and love has been "worn as if it had been a shell / Washed by time's waters" (line 32-33), and since the speaker and the addressee are "As weary-hearted as that hollow moon" (line 39). But if we look more closely, there remains an ambiguous detail. The "you" in the first stanza is perhaps different from the "you" in the last stanza. The second you should be "That beautiful mild woman, your close friend" (line 2) in the first stanza, that is, the first you's friend. The other parts of the poem are unfolded between the two you's. If we take the first you as the direct addressee of the poem, the only way to address the destination, the last "you," is to go through the mediation or "labouring" work of discussing beauty and musing at love. After this mediation, the speaker can finally return to the "you" which, however, is never the first "you" in the very beginning. The disfiguration and transmutation of the artistic work turn out to be a distantiation from the direct object or addressee. This alienating and de-familiarizing effect of artistic work on its object, which is imbricated in "the fabric of tradition" (Benjamin 1968: 223), results from the mediation of culture or tradition, that is, the Symbolic structure. The poet's perception of this artistic distantiation is derived from his awareness of the existence of the mediating structure that defines the position of the object in time and space. Perhaps inevitably, his awareness leads to de-authentication, de-immediatization, and de-auratization. That is, when the poet feels that love is mediated, it ceases to be im-mediate. But Yeats does not devaluate love merely because of that (we will return to this point in subsequent discussions). On the contrary, he clings to the mere superficial and fictive.

Yeats's poetic world is composed of "old bones, old rags"

("The Circus Animals' Desertion," line 37). Since "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone" ("September 1913," line 15), the poetic, aesthetic, or emotional "fire" can only be derived from the fictive mask: "It was the mask engaged your mind, / And after set your heart to beat, / Not what's behind" ("The Mask," line 8-10). Yeats's insistence on the "anti-self" ("Ego Dominus Tuus," line 74) is directly manifested in his "On being asked for a War Poem" and "Politics." In both poems, he claims his resistance to participate in politics. What he desires for his artistic production is emotional intensity, life energy, and pleasure. In "Easter, 1916," his poetic attitude actually contradicts the conventional praise in memorial elegies (Adams 1989: 139). And these sacrificed persons, especially MacBride, are not really treated by Yeats as national heroes in the traditional sense (138). Yeats's self-derided image as the "long-legged" moor characterizes his poetic indifferent attitude to politics. For him, the poet's task and share is to "murmur name upon name" ("Easter, 1916," line 61), to forge the stone-image of the brutal event in the changing temporal flow or the "living stream" (line 44). To shape the image of the terrible into a stone-beauty is to search for the image or the vision, which is the only significant task for Yeats. But, he does not regard the relationships between memory images or the poetic object, and poetic works as immediate and direct, as I have said about "Adam's Curse." His poetic work is caught between a momentary vision and the dramatization of it (Adams 1989: 142): "Being caught between the pull / Of the dark moon and the full" ("The Double Vision of Michael Robartes," line 59-60). His in-betweenness is never petrifying but productive merely because he pays his heed to the superficial, the "mask," and thus does not go to the extreme which "must make men mad" ("The Tower," line 56).

Yeats's insistence on the relative autonomy of art engages him in constructing poetic artifices to parry or resist the external reality or his contemporary trend. We can see this from his "Sailing to Byzantium." In that poem, Yeats asserts the value of pure artifice as resistant to the natural cycle of life and death.

The past, present, and future ("what is past, or passing, or to come" (line 32)) are configured in the poem as a time frame in which the artificial bird does not yield to its natural, temporal flow of dying. The "tattered coat" (line 10) can gain the resisting and persisting energy by becoming "fictive" entities. And the poet's aim is to "keep a drowsy Emperor awake" (line 29), to maintain the drowsy, dying resistance in the all-sweeping world. The tower, the stone, or the monuments are Yeats's frequent and familiar symbols for this resisting force constructed by artistic works. And the Ballylee Tower, a place full of dying or forgotten histories and memories, can also be identified as a fort for defiance (Adams 1989: 152). It is curious that Yeats favors these Western canonical Apollonian plastic arts when they are actually dying out during his time. We can say that he constellates and reworks these ruined fragments to resist the ruinous trend of the era. In that sense, he is quite ecological in the sphere of culture. But he clearly emphasizes these emblems as fictive images or constructs. Adams has recounted a curious history of Yeats's dating the poems in *The Tower* (145). The dating is for most poems in reverse order: the first poem "Sailing to Byzantium" was dated 1927 and the last poem "All Souls' Night" dated 1920. Besides, most of the datings are chronologically fictive. Yeats's design of "dreaming back" (Adams 1989: 146) provides us with temporal nuances and significance. The artistic work or even the readers' interpretation is always in a retroactive process; that is, we can get in touch with the past only via mediation of the present. In that sense, all historical recounting and reconstruction are destined to be "constructed" and mediated, and to fall between two extremes, the pure past and future, without the possibility of sublating them into a totalizing scheme. Rather, Yeats's aesthetic products are determined by the way they are arranged and composed, that is, by the process: "How can we know the dancer from the dance" ("Among School Children," line 64). In the process of actualization, the actor/dancer becomes that which resists actualization. Through the actor, temporalization is enacted, but he himself is

transformed as the pure form, the Aion, which insists and subsists within time as counter-actualization (see Deleuze 1989: 150). In this figure of the dancer or the "vanishing mediator" (see **Žižek** 1993: 33), who makes possible the actualization of the event or sense but itself has to disappear as/into the void, the work itself as a pure surface and non-actualizable present retains its immanent transcendence not merely with regard to his poetic constructions but also to the external world and temporality.

In "Meditations in Time of Civil War," a serial, seven group-poems, Yeats connects past, present, and future to resist the external violence of the war (Adams 1989: 159). In "Ancestral Houses," the first serial poem, Yeats meditates upon the cultural or traditional heritage which, if it was once full, becomes an "empty sea shell" in his contemporary era. Those invaluable and precious ancestral properties which represent historical and cultural trophies built upon violence and bitterness are now undergoing or have undergone the same violent treatment. Benjamin has worked out a fabulous formula for such a historical cycle:

> And all rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them. . . . Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate. According to traditional practice, the spoils are carried along in the procession. They are called cultural treasures . . . [which] have an origin which he [the historical materialist] cannot contemplate without horror. . . . There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. (1968: 256)

Among other things, it is this kind of horror which confronts Yeats, the poet, who resorts to the tower to search for the

"daemonic images" to resist the external, political violence. In "My Table," the third serial poem of the "Meditations," Sato's gift, the Japanese sword, as the symbol of inheritance from the resistant tradition represents the "emblem of adversity" ("My House," the second serial poem, line 30) which is filled with a different kind of violence, the violence of the terrible image or vision, the scream of the peacock (see "My Table," line 32). We will return to that.

In the last serial poem of the "Meditations" group, "I see Phantoms of Hatred and of the Heart's Fullness and of the Coming Emptiness" summaries the whole point of the "Meditations." We can even infer from the title that hatred represents the terrifying vengeance of the external world; the heart's fullness, the tranquil complete state of artistic perfection; and the coming emptiness, the insufficiency of the aesthetic illusive completeness (Levine 1970: 108-10). This illustrates the dialectical process of Yeats's reactions to politics and external reality. The crowd's furious cry "Vengeance for Jacques Molay" compels Yeats to turn away from reality and into his illusive world of "magical unicorns" and the ladies. These beautiful deceptive images again give way to "an indifferent multitude, give place / To brazen hawks" (line 28-29). So, the poet again turns back on the brutal reality and retreats into the tower. He thinks that he could have shared many things, for example politics, with the public. But that only makes him "pine the more" (line 38). What Yeats affirms at last is the "wisdom of daemonic images" (line 39), which suffices "the ageing man as once the growing boy" (line 40). His distaste for the mass and his insistence on the artistic solitary resistance are all the more prominent in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen."

From the above discussion, we can infer that Yeats's view of art or poetry basically pits art against action-oriented pragmatism (Adams 1989: 120). In Adams's terms, Yeats's artistic concern is "antitheticality" which opposes resistant artworks to external world of action (130). That means, his

artistic independence is not derived from mere passive distantiation or separation from reality; on the contrary, his task of configuring the momentary daemonic images, such as the artificial bird, the tower, the monuments, etc., requires a very powerful and forceful intervention into the temporal flow. He has to cut into time in order to derive a poetic space. Indeed, as we have said in the case of the artificial bird in "Sailing to Byzantium," he constructs another, artificial time to counter the temporal flow. In his poetry, we can see the strong antagonism between, at least, these two worlds. For him, history resembles a battlefield in which exist different temporalities. That implies, for him, the "natural" time is itself merely a version of history no less constructed than his artificial time. His artistic efforts are directed at terminating or arresting the former in order to release the latter. The historical heritages contain within themselves other histories and memories which are repressed, "encased," or forgotten by the "natural" time. In that sense, Yeats's poetic work is exactly what Benjamin has identified as the task of historical materialism:

> It blasts the epoch out of the reified "continuity of history." But it also blasts open the homogeneity of the epoch. It saturates it with *ecrasite*, i.e., the present. (Benjamin 1989: 65)

This "present" is not the mere present, but the Aion, the point of discontinuity that can leap from the continuum of history to the forgotten and imprisoned other times waiting to be read and recognized: the present is the "Now of recognizability" (Benjamin 1989: 50) in which "The Then (*das Gewesene*) and the Now (*das Jetzt*) come into a constellation like a flash of lightening" (49), and in which the Then breaks out of the crest or case of reified time and come into recollection or consciousness. The daemonic images preyed out of the temporal continuity can only be configured in the Aion as pure, empty instant "in which time stands still and has come to a stop" (Benjamin 1968: 262). These images are all formed from those historical heritages or

ruins in imminent danger of being forgotten. This is very significant because, that implies, Yeats's towers and spirals do not aim at what is high above but down below: they are passages which ascend to what lies dormant. The paradoxical topology in which ascent coincides with descent is the so-called Moebius band on which any point suddenly returns to the start when it is supposedly going the opposite direction. In that sense, Yeats's poetic world is indeed going around a circle, which, on the one hand, testifies to his cyclical view of history or civilization that the end of one "gyre" or "cone" is the beginning of another. But, on the other, this oppositional coincidence explicates Yeats's cultural or poetic attitude: the place where the auratic object resides is the place where its opposite, the repressed or forgotten, is to be born: "And what rough beast, its hour come around at last, / Slouched towards *Bethlehem* to be born" ("The Second Coming," line 21-22, italics added). At this point, we can return to the issue of aura and the significance for Yeats of the Apollonian historical monuments where historical reification should have been, if ever, the strongest.

If Yeats attempts to redeem those forgotten past memories, why does he look for them in those most canonical, auratic objects? Should he not search for them in those least explored and revered sites? It is because on these auratic objects, the moment of danger and catastrophe constitutes the most intense temporal relations in which they threaten to "disappear irretrievably" (Benjamin 1968: 255). We have to keep in mind that those daemonic images, such as the beast in "The Second Coming," always irrupt into the poet's mind when culture threatens to fall apart, that is, when aura is about to disappear, and tradition to die out. Tradition as "handing down" contains two parts: the reified tradition and the handed-down historical truth (see Adorno 1993/1994).That means, though the reified crest/shell is to be destroyed, it also guarantees the existence and "translation" or "handing down" of the kernel: where there is the aura, there is the kernel. That is, the place where the auratic objects reside -- reified tradition -- is the place where Yeats

should go and do his redemptive work, another version of "*Wo es war, soll ich werden*."

What is to be remembered or redeemed is, of course, not the reified tradition, but what lies dormant within it. Tradition is itself also constituted by heterogeneous elements. Aura is ultimately the embeddedness of the kernel within the reified crest.Tradition and the past are the place where cultural or poetic redemption can be found and worked upon. That also means, tradition as a necessary veil or aura preserves the time kernel of truth, without which or without appealing to which redemptive hope is lost forever: historical truth is "bound to a time-kernel that is planted in both the knower [the poet or the materialist historian] and the known" (Benjamin 1989: 51). The preserving function of tradition is formulated in Benjamin's article "The Task of the Translator" in which translation is endowed with the mission of preserving and transmitting the "nucleus" which "goes beyond transmittal of subject matter" (1968: 75). The nucleus is not communicable or disclosable, but it can be conveyed by being enveloped by translation "like a royal robe with ample folds" (75). This function of translating and conveying the nucleus can be achieved by the translator's arrangement of syntactical constellation by means of which the truth content can be preserved. Thus, the translator's work is to know how to configure the "case" or the crest, or the "tower" for Yeats, for embedding so that the truth content can be preserved within and its translatability be achieved.

In short, translation is the way to produce aura. What really matters is the difference and distinction between mere semblance as pure deception and veiling, and the beautiful which "is not appearance but purely essence – one which, of course, remains essentially identical to itself *only when veiled*" (Benjamin 1996: 351, italics added). As Weber has noted, Benjamin's earliest reference to the aura depicts it as "an ornamental surrounding in which the thing of being lies embedded as in a case" (quoted in Weber 1996: 218n). This reveals the difficulty of the task for both Benjamin and Yeats

because, without destroying the tradition or veil, the historical truth cannot be redeemed, and the buried memories or other times be recollected and released. But to destroy the aura merely leads to the total loss of the kernel. This is why Yeats who has perceived the fictive mediation of "beautiful old books" ("Adam's Curse") cannot get in touch with love without the auratic shell. Yeats has already revealed to us the fictiveness of the shell, and thus has, to a certain extent, broken this case, not by lifting the veil because that would destroy the truth content, but by raising his poetry to "the true view of the beautiful as that which is secret" (Benjamin 1996: 351). This also applies to Benjamin's literary criticism which does not stop returning to the canonical works because their fixed reception and status in tradition are the most conspicuous. And since he intends to "pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura" (Benjamin 1968: 223), his criticism must enact "brutal grasp" to blast the content out of the continuum of time. This relation between embeddedness and destruction is also revealed in his distinction between the critique and the commentary of a literary work:

> Critique seeks the truth contents of a work; commentary, its material content. The relation between the two is determined by that basic law of literature according to which the more significant the work, the more inconspicuously and intimately its truth content is bound up with its material content. If, therefore, the works that prove enduring are precisely those whose truth is most deeply sunken in their material content, then, in the course of this duration, the concrete realities rise up before the eyes of the beholder all the more distinctly the more they die out in the world. With this, however, to judge by appearances, the material content and the truth content, united at the beginning of a work's history, set themselves apart from each other in the course of its duration,

> because the truth content always remains to
> the same extent hidden as the material content
> comes to the fore. (Benjamin 1996: 298)

That is why "the meaning of the concrete realities in the work will no doubt be hidden from the poet and the public of his time" (298). On the contrary, the truth content, the "eternal being" of the work is much more accessible to the readers and critics of a later time. It is because the work can be blasted out of its fixed structure that the time kernel or truth content can be blasted out of the case and examined "in one's own time" (326) and within another case since criticism is necessarily a secular mode of representation. Thus, in art or literary works, Benjamin always directs his gaze on those things or elements which, though still in a space of representation, unfold the process of decay and dying because they can present the instant when semblance is in the process of dissolution while the beautiful still remains, that is when the distance between the kernel and the shell is the largest.

It is at this last moment of (beautiful) life that the auratic experience becomes the keenest because we can indeed feel the crack in the surface/shell. If aura is usually taken as reification, the critic will have to re-reify the aura, to engage in an "intensification of universal fetishistic deception" in order to "see through the *auratic* as *reification of the thing*" (Schweppenhäuser 1988: 44, italics original). This is the moment when the narrator or the poet in "Sailing to Byzantium" identifies himself with the artificial, gold-enameled bird. In this process of intensification, the distance or auratization is enlarged to such an extent that the subject's self-obliteration coincides with sudden separation from the fixed frame of embeddedness. That is, in such a narcotic state, the subject is about to leave his own consciousness, the state of being embedded in space and time by the Symbolic. It is at this moment of the thinking subject's self-renunciation of his consciousness that the "anti-self" of the subject can come to life. In this moment of evanescence, it is as if the subject is about to

leave the picture, to be rid of any connectedness, and as if the subject is about to be photographed:

> What is ultimately arrested, "taken up,"
> broken down, spliced back together again
> and then let loose . . . is the moment itself.
> The time of reproducibility is the time of
> this . . . immobilized, dispersed, recollected,
> and finally forgotten, even on the verge,
> always coming to pass. (Weber 1996: 45)

The seeing subject sees his own death. His existence becomes a blind gaze, a void, or a stain in the picture. And what emerges in this picture is the true, historical time as the time of his death, "the passing moment in all its nakedness" (Benjamin 1968: 185). Though this time of death or arrest also leads to a seemingly whole picture of time, "Of what is past, or passing, or to come" ("Sailing to Byzantium," line 32), this pure present/Aion is the mere instant within, not the envelope without because the crack on the pure surface or this barely visible moment "in a lightening flash" (Yeats 1996: 493n), from which gush out the daemonic images, is nothing but the disappearance of the subject from the scene. And the time kernel can be barely read at this moment. Paraphrasing **Žižek's paraphrase of Eliot (see Žižek 1996: 102),** we can say, the time kernel amounts to nothing but the "objective correlative" to this moment of the subject's evanescence, when the pure artificial bird, being *dumb* and blind, appears to "*sings*" the "expressionless":

> What arrests this semblance, spellbinds the
> movement, and interrupts the harmony is the
> expressionless [*das Ausdruckslose*]. . . . Just
> as interruption by the commanding word is able
> to bring out the truth . . . the expressionless
> compels the trembling harmony to stop. . . .
> The expressionless is the critical violence
> which, while unable to separate semblance
> from essence in art, prevents them from
> mingling. It possesses this violence as a moral

> dictum. In the expressionless, the sublime violence of the true appears as that which determines the language of the real world according to the laws of the moral world. For it shatters whatever still survives as the legacy of chaos in all beautiful semblance: the false, errant totality – the absolute totality. Only the expressionless completes the work, by shattering it into a thing of shards, into a fragment of the true world, into the torso of a symbol.
> (Benjamin 1996: 340)

What the dumb and artificial bird sings is the image, the daemonic image which "de-posits" the voice.Voice is imagized, rendered as "expressionless," arrested, or terminated.This situation is completely the opposite of Eliot's. In Eliot, the voice is prohibited; in Yeats, it is articulated as silence. In Eliot, the out-bursting of the voice is predicated of the subject's further destruction and the introduction of the Other; in Yeats, the voice has already announced the entry of the Other, but this Other is castrated from within because his voice is terminated. Their opposition is between the complete absence of logos and the inherent destabilization of the logos. In Yeats's case, what we see is the Other's death planted into its center by the subject's disappearance or death. The subject's "suicidal" gesture cuts the crack into the Symbolic, and prevents every symbolization from becoming full. The crack on the surface indeed leads towards the repressed depth and helps to release it. When I say that Yeats's towers and spirals do not aim at what is high above but down below, I do not mean that Yeats emerges with depth, the world of corporeal intensities, affects or passions (see Deleuze 1989: 82-93). Rather, he breaks a crack or void on the pure surface to let the corporeal, digestive-destructive, and intermixing deep images to float to the surface, which are then transformed into neutral "phantasms" (see Deleuze 1989: 210-

16). Deep images, or what Deleuze designates as "simulacra" (1989: 187), essentially resist representation or language since they resist the institution of surfaces because, like partial, fragmented internal objects, they incorporate or devour words as things.The poetic languages or images are, after all, surface events. Yeats's refusal to politics or the world of action clearly explains his awareness of this fact. The daemonic image is neutralized phantasm in the sense that it does not pertain to the internal drives or the external realities. Rather it belongs to what Yeats has called the "intellect" ("Sailing to Byzantium," line 8):

> The phantasm, like the event which it represents, is a "noematic attribute" . . . . It transcends inside and outside, since its topological property is to bring "its" internal and external sides into contact, in order for them to unfold onto a single side. (Deleuze 1989: 211)

And,

> What appears in the phantasm is the movement by which the ego opens itself to the surface and liberates the a-cosmic, impersonal, and pre-individual singularities which it had imprisoned. . . . [Its'] neutrality, that is to say, this movement by which singularities are emitted, or rather restored by an ego which is dissolved or *ad*sorbed at the surface, belongs essentially to the phantasm. (213)

That means, Yeats's aesthetics of "daemonic images" reveals a specific kind of violence which is done to the Real and to the ego/subject because, at least, they must undergo de-substantialization. We have seen this violence in the dissolution of the subject in "Sailing to Byzantium" in which the subject or ego has undergone the process of de-subjectivization or of absorption by the pure surface-artifact in order that the "drowsy emperor" can be kept awake, that is, the pure surface of language or artifice can be maintained. We have to take Yeats

on his "words" when he says that "He knows death to the bone – / Man has created death" ("Death," line 11-12). Another kind of violence is done to the external reality or world of action. Yeats never renounces every opportunity to show his or his poetic independence from the external world: "I declare this tower is my symbol; I declare / This winding, gyring, spiring treadmill of a stair is my ancestral star" ("Blood and the Moon," line 16-17). As we have seen in our discussion of the void, it resists actualization and temporalization. This counter-actualization itself becomes a phantasm which confronts the Real. It shows the Real, reflects it, evacuates it, nullifies it, provokes it, collapses it, and makes nothing happen. The external reality is still the cause of linguistic event even though the quasi-cause, the pure void itself, is the real cause of language, which interfaces between the Real and the Symbolic. And since this void opens to the depth, it opens to the external passions and actions which might irrupt to the surface, subvert and devour it. Yeats's means to ward off the danger is to construct the images or phantasms of the Real itself , to let it recognize its own disabled, castrated true image in them. This reflectional or replicational violence is brought to the foreground in "Leda and the Swan." This polemic poem challenges our task of interpretation and understanding. First of all, we are not sure, directly from the poem itself, if Yeats shows his approval of the violent mythic origin of civilization even though he might or should have assert this kind of gyric origin of civilization in barbarism. But that belongs to the sphere of concepts or philosophy of history, and we still have to deal with the aesthetic or poetic aspect. To bracket the question of philosophy of history, we can say that this violent image or metaphor offends our sense and challenges the legitimate existence of civilization. That is, Yeats's image is a confrontation or "antitheticality" to external reality. And this violence of daemonic images represents Yeats's aesthetic attitude to resist the world by holding a mirror to reflect its own image. In fact, that coincides with Auden's view of art. In Yeats's artistic world, "poetry makes

nothing happen" (Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," line 36). This "making nothing happen" has to be taken in a very strong sense that poetry nullifies or voids the Real, and that Yeats's art is meant to counter the pragmatic ethics of action. It is just like Brueghel's painting, *Icarus*, as depicted by Auden in "Musée des Beaux Arts," which shows human suffering amid all other kinds of ordinary routines of everyday life or reality. This violence as presented in the artwork is a confrontation to the viewer and the world as another, external reality which is distinct from the internal, depicted reality of the painting. That is what Yeats has done. He should be included as one among Auden's "Old Masters" ("Musée des Beaux Arts," line 2). If the "flowering, silken, old embroidery, torn / From some court-lady's dress and round / The wooden scabbard bound and wound" perns around the violent Japanese sword ("A Dialogue of Self and Soul," line 13-15), Yeats's task is to unwind the "mummy-cloth" ("All Souls' Night," line 14) and to present the violent and horrible image to reality. As he expresses in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," he, unlike Eliot at least in his late life, refuses to take the easy way out of reality to assert pure aesthetic autonomy which deceptively "Deliver [him] from the crime of death and birth" (line 24). Rather, his artistic autonomy is completely derived from the antagonistic position of his poetry against reality. He chooses to ask for a "charter to commit the crime once more" ("A Dialogue of Self and Soul," line 31). Of course, this crime is never real because it pertains to another dimension, the surface of poetry and language. He chooses to take up the artistic work of resistance and to "refuse / A heavenly mansion" ("The Choice," line 3-4). With that refusal, he is determined to reply to the "Great Questioner," supposedly God or Death ("At Algeciras - a Meditation upon Death," line 16). His determination to take up the role is clearly revealed in "Vacillation." The refusal to dissolve the "antinomies" or his antithetical principle may condemn his heart to no peaceful resting or relief "in the tomb," but he still decides to "play a predestined part. / Homer is my example and his unchristened heart" ("Vacillation," line 86-87).

If Eliot turns out to take up a high-soaring totalizing project which subsumes all things, Yeats's choice to configure an opposing, antithetical site represents his identification, on the one hand, with the suffering or violated, destitute objects, and, on the other, with the pure void or negativity of the surface. If Eliot's way out of the void leads to the height, Yeats stays in the void of the pure surface. If Eliot's ultimate ascent produces a totalizing Symbolic scheme to sublate reality, Yeats's imagistic and symbolist violence reflects and comes from the external reality, and is converted as an aesthetic weapon to resist the brutal violence of reality. If Eliot's assertion of complete autonomy ends in loss of autonomy, Yeats's antithetical, relative autonomy procures him of absolute autonomy even though antitheticality implies being bound "negatively." If, after *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*, Yeats's confrontational power is mitigated, his "emphatic identification" (Adams 1989: 132) with the destitute persists to the very end as announced admirably in "The Circus Animals' Desertion":

> Those masterful images because complete
> Grew in pure mind but out of what began?
> A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
> Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
> Old irons, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
> Who keeps the till. . . . (line 33-38)

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