

July 20th

(1) B.A. Part III Eng (Hons)

The Tower .  
By W. B. Yeats . Paper VI<sup>th</sup>

Introduction .

The Tower, published in 1928, is probably Yeats' most important single volume. Certainly it contains many of his most famous, most widely read, ~~anthologized~~ anthologized, quoted, studied and explicated poems, major works like "Sailing to Byzantium," "Leda and the Swan," "The Tower" and "Among the Children".

Indeed as one leafs through this section in the Collected Poems, one is ~~soon~~ struck by the consistently high - brilliant the level of achievement that the poet was able to maintain throughout. Yeats, of course, was as

(2)

Date

Page

~~skillfull~~ skillful and careful a ~~craftman~~ craftsman as there was has been in this century, but even he, especially in earlier volumes, had off moments. Yet in The Tower it seems as though each poem is succeeded by one as great or greater, as though Yeats had found a kind of philosopher's stone of poetry, a magic talisman which enabled him to transmute whatever dross he happened upon into the purest literary gold.

The role of magic talisman was, as we have noted before, played at least in part by the system of metaphors and symbols that was Vision.

P.T.D.

'Leda and Swan' for instance, was written deliberately to illustrate Book V of that work.

But what of ~~that~~ the poems in 'The Tower' and they are many — which were not directly related to a 'set vision' — what magic talisman, ~~and~~ what philosopher's stone marks them —

Meditations in the Time of Civil Wars, "Nineteen hundred and Nine to Nineteen hundred", "The Tower", "Among the Children" — such towering masterpieces? The answer is that, while the first group of poems, the Vision imagination, this second group seems to stem more ~~or~~ directly from the other side of

4

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Page \_\_\_\_\_

his poetic genius, his  
brilliant sense of  
autobiography, his confe-  
ssional intensity.

To be continued  
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