UDC 821.111.09-1 Јејтс В. Б.

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THE "DIALOGIC" YEATS: A BAKHTINIAN READING OF YEATS'S "SAILING TO BYZANTIUM"

Abstract
Yeats's love for words and spoken language of the common people in general coupled with his intrinsic moorings in Irish dialect directed his focus on the conversational and the colloquial. The influence of William Blake on Yeats, among other factors, whetted his dialectic sensibility. Finally, his innate love for drama and the dramatic led him to fiddle with both conflict and dialogue. Yeats's very penchant for the dramatic triggered off his fascination with conflict which, in turn, precipitated his dialectical sensibility couched through the 'dialogic', both in its neutral sense, and also in a Bakhtinian sense of the term. Using the theoretical tools of Bakhtin's "Dialogism", this paper examines Yeats's poem "Sailing to Byzantium" as a "dialogic" poem in general, and "polyphonic" poem in particular.

Keywords: "Sailing to Byzantium", dialogic, dialogue, addressivity, polyphony, voices, heteroglossia, W. B. Yeats, M. M. Bakhtin, dialectic.

In his poem "The Players Ask for a Blessing on the Psalteries and on Themselves" taken from his anthology *In the Seven Woods* (1903) W. B. Yeats resorts to a wonderful conversation among three voices. Almost after three decades the more mature Yeats wrote "A Dialogue of Soul and Self" included in *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933). If we consider the nature of these two poems, what strikes us at first glance is Yeats's

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inclination for the dialogic and his propensity to dramatize the conflict of multiple voices. One may also notice Yeats's conspicuous penchant for the dialogic in such poems as "The Grey Rock", "Michael Robartes and the Dancer", "The Three Hermits", "The Phases of the Moon", "Owen Aherne and His Dancers", "The Seven Sages", "Vacillation", "Parting", "The Man and The Echo", among others. Given Yeats's penchant for the dialogic, the dramatic, and the conflict of voices, it is seemly that I might venture to explore the possibility of reading Yeats with the theoretical tools provided by M. M. Bakhtin. But since Bakhtin's primary theoretical focus lay in novel, and W. B. Yeats was primarily a poet, it would appear absurd to examine the latter with the insights provided by the former. Yet, my humble submission in this paper is to show the interface shared by them, and to re-read Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" from a Bakhtinian angle. I have also chosen this poem because here the conflict of voices operates covertly, at a deeper level, within the same speaker. My further claim in this paper is that Yeats's inclination for the dialogic may be traced to his love for words in general, and to that of the oral and the conversational, in particular. Hence a nodding acquaintance with Yeats's concept on language is as much imperative as it is invaluable to substantiate my claim.

Yeats's enormous faith in the efficacy of words may be noticed in his poem "The Song of the Happy Shepherd":

> For words alone are certain good:
> Sing, then, for this is also sooth.

Yeats's poetic secret lay in his effort to compose poetry through his assiduous "stitching and unstitching" of and grappling with words:

> I said: 'A line will take us hours maybe;
> Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
> Our stitching and unstitching has been naught…'
>
> ("Adam's Curse")

Having claimed that "I have spent my life in clearing out of poetry every phrase written for the eye, and bringing all back to syntax that is for ear alone," (1961: 529), Yeats created what Michael J. Sidnell[1] identified as

[1] Michael J. Sidnell, 'Yeats's "Written Speech": Writing, Hearing and Performance', in *Yeats's Poetry, Drama, and Prose*, ed. James Pethica (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000). 366-369. Hereafter all the references to this book will be cited as 'Norton'.

the "trope of speech within speech" (367) or what Yeats himself called "the speech of a man" (O'Driscoll & Reynolds 1975: 74). Sidnell in his criticism of Yeats's "Adam's Curse" argues that Yeats's penchant for "colloquial phrases" conduced to the elevated effect engendered by his poetry, for "it is in them, rather than in the syntactical order of phrases that the effect mostly resides … these features of direct speech and regular versification together constitute the acoustic representation of an elevated kind of conversation" (Pethica 2000: 367). The thrust towards the conversational (or the 'dialogic', to use the word in its neutral sense of the term) pervaded the Yeatsian consciousness, inasmuch as dialogue offered him the medium to put forward his dialectic vision evinced in the conflict between opposite entities. As Marjorie Howes has so cogently pointed out Yeats's preoccupation with dialogue in the "Introduction" to *The Cambridge Companion to W. B. Yeats*, "Throughout his career, dialogue appealed to him (Yeats) because it allowed him to stage conflicts between opposing principles, voices, or moods" (Howes & Kelly: 2006: 2).

Yeats's strong inclination for the conversational may also be traced to his love for the local Irish dialect which he felt to be the essential medium of self-expression. An undeviating devotee of Irish culture and Irish nationalism, Yeats lamented the fact that Ireland could not produce such great poets as Burns or Dickens simply because of the lack of the Irish writers in their mother tongue:

> …no man can write well except in the language he has been born and bred to, and no man, as I think, becomes perfectly cultivated except through the influence of that language… I believe that Ireland cannot have a Burns or a Dickens, because the mass of the people cease to understand any poetry when they cease to understand the Irish language, which is the language of their imagination…(269).[2]

That is why in his criticism of Synge's plays[3] Yeats argued that Synge fared badly whenever he resorted to writing plays sans dialect (243).

One may note that drama and dialogue are intrinsically, inalienably related to each other. Yeats's love for drama and the dramatic form is not dehydrated of his passion for the living speech of the common men and

[2] W.B.Yeats, "Irish language and Irish Literature", reprinted in 'Norton', 269-271.

[3] W.B.Yeats, *The Trembling of the Veil*, reprinted in 'Norton', 240-24.

women. As he puts it in "The Reform of Theatre" (1903):[4] "…if one is not love with words it will lack the delicate movement of living speech that is the chief garment of life; … (277)."

Like Wordsworth, Yeats preferred the common living speech, sometime bordering on the dialect, of common people. He harped on the same string in his essay "The Bounty of Sweden" (1925):[5]

> When I begin to write I have no object but to find for them some natural speech, rhythm and syntax, and to set it out in some pattern, so seeming old that it may seem all men's speech,…(292).

In his essay "A General Introduction for My Work" (1937) Yeats expressed his poetic credo in the normal natural speech being the proper stuff of poetry: "I tried to make the language of poetry coincide with that of passionate normal speech. I wanted to write in whatever language comes most naturally… (Yeats 1961: 521)."

A. Norman Jeffares in *W.B.Yeats: A New Biography* notes how in Ashfield Terrace young Yeats had the habit of reciting his own composition and how "he betook to himself to the study of verse, murmuring over to himself the lines as he made them…only his voice would grow louder and louder till at last it filled the room" (Jeffares 1988: 18). While this simple anecdote only attests to his love for spoken words since his childhood, one may also note that like Wordsworth, he stressed the necessity of using natural speech. His observation made in his "Introduction" to the Scribner's Edition to his *Collected Works* (1937)[6] bespeaks his choice for the natural and the dramatic:

> I planned to write short lyrics or poetic drama where every speech would be short and concentrated, knit by dramatic tension,… Then, and in this English poetry has followed my lead, I tried to make the language of poetry coincide with that of passionate, normal speech (308).

Praising the peasants whose speech captures the real flavor of Irish folk culture, Yeats wrote to George Moore that from their speech "one could learn to write, their speech being living speech following out of the habits

[4] Originally published in *Samhain*, an annual journal issued by Yeats between 1901 and 1904, reprinted in 'Norton', 277-78.

[5] In 'Norton', 292-93.

[6] In 'Norton',300-11.

of their lives, struck out of life itself" (Ellman 1958: 147-8). His astonishing revelation made to Olivia Shakespear in 1932, similarly, bespeaks his fascination of speech over writing: "I have just finished the first volume,… and am greatly astonished at myself, as it is all speech rather than writing (*Ibid*: 272) ." His wish that all his poetry "be spoken on a stage or sung"[7] prioritizes the oral over the orthographic, the auditory over the visible (314).

Arthur Symons in his Review[8] of Yeats's *Poems* and *The Wind Among the Reeds* points out the essential inextricability of the poetic and the dramatic in these anthologies:

> And here it is the poetry that makes the drama, or I might say equally the drama which makes the poetry; for the finest writing is always part of the dramatic action,…(322).

One may well argue that this pattern is also perspicaciously evident in Yeats's other anthologies, as well. Similarly, Harold Bloom in *Yeats* observed that "Yeats's most typical poem is a dramatic lyric that behaves as though it were a fragment in a mythological romance" (1970: 70). Yeats's own claim of being at once a dramatic poet, a dramatist, and a drama critic may be evinced in his famous Nobel Prize address delivered on "The Irish Dramatic Movement":

> Perhaps the English committees would never have sent you my name if I had written no plays, no dramatic criticism, if my lyric poetry had not a quality of speech practiced upon the stage. (O'Donnell & Archibald 1999: 410).

Further, when we dwell on modern drama, as distinct from both classical and Elizabethan plays, we notice that dramatic form in the twentieth century prefers the conversational and the colloquial to the lyrical. Yeats was no exception to it. One may pertinently refer to his exhortation found in the manifestoes for the National Theatre:[9]

> Let us get back in everything the spoken word (2000: 371).

Finally, if conflict is the *raison d'être* of drama, this conflict is perspicaciously evinced in his dialectic vision. As he recorded his dialectic vision in *A Vision*:

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[7] W. B. Yeats, "Introduction to Plays", reprinted in Norton, 313-15.

[8] Reprinted in Norton, 321-22.

[9] Quoted in Lucy McDiarmid,"Yeats and the Lettered Page", reprinted in Norton, 370-78.

"I had never read Hegel, but my mind had been full of Blake…and I saw the world as a conflict…and could distinguish between a contrary and a negation (1978: 72)."

Similarly, reflecting on Yeats's choice of images, Helen Vendler rightly points out:

> Yeats's images usually appear to him in the form of Blakean antinomies or opposites. They structure Yeats's work in Heraclitean fashion, as they die each other's life, live each other's death. But the nature of such antinomies is intensely queried in the later work (2004: 93).

If drama becomes an invaluable vehicle to engender this conflict, it gets wonderfully assimilated in the Yeatsian dialectic sensibility. Adducing Yeats's "Ego Dominus Tuus" as a paradigmatic "dialogic" poem, James Pethica, in his brilliant "Introduction" to the Norton Critical Edition of *Yeats's Poetry, Drama, and Prose* argues: "Dialogic poems as this proliferate in his canon after 1917, serving as a forum for the dramatization of his inner debates (2000: xvii)."

But my basic argument in this paper is less to point out this explicit dialogue in Yeats's poetry than to trace the intrinsic voices clashing and coalescing internally in his poems. Rather than examining the clash of voices among different characters present in his poems, I propose to examine the presence of multiple voices, usually within the same character. It is this inner conflict within the same persona dramatized through some of his representative poems that lends them a sharp dialogic aspect. And it is precisely because of this that Yeats's poems become highly amenable to a Bakhtinian reading. But in this paper I would like to reread his famous poem "Sailing to Byzantium" from a Bakhtinian angle in general and try to bring out the polyphonic nature of the poem in particular.

II

It was M. M. Bakhtin who in his *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1986) pointed out the dialogic nature and inherent addressivity of language, stressing that "word is a two-sided act." It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and for whom it is meant. As word, it is precisely, "*the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser*

and addressee" (*Ibid:* 86). It is interesting to note that every utterance is conditioned as much by the speaker as by the expectant listener. Thus every word becomes, as it were, a bridge between the speaker and the listener. He claimed that no word is original in that the same words which are used by a speaker at the present moment have already been used by several sets of speakers on different occasions. As Bakhtin puts it in his chapter "Discourse in the Novel" included in *The Dialogic Imagination*:

> The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance, it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines (1981: 276-77).

Thus language becomes 'contaminated', as it were, through their passage from one set of speakers to another. In his study *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* Bakhtin reiterated the dialogic nature of language:

> In reality …any utterance, in addition to its own theme, always responds (in the broad sense of the word) in one form or another to others' utterances that precede it … The utterance is addressed not only to its object, but also to others' speech about it (1986: 93-94).

In his seminal work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin introduces his concept of polyphony. Bakhtin argues that rather than creating a dominant authorial voice, Dostoevsky creates a polyphonic discourse in which all the voices coexist. No voice becomes subservient to a predominant authorial voice, and multiple voices clash and coalesce within the same discourse:

> *A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels*. What unfolds in his words is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event (1984: 6).

But one should note that unlike the exchange of dialogues in a play, dialogism is not the literal exchange of dialogues between characters in a novel. *A la* Bakhtin, the "dialogic relationships can permeate inside the utterance, even inside the individual word, as long as two voices collide within it dialogically" (Bakhtin 1984:184). Interestingly, while Bakhtin's theories were essentially oriented towards novel, my claim in this paper is to apply the same insights into the reading of a poem, for what is applicable to one genre, may be applied *mutatis mutandis*, to any literary genre. Thus Aristotle in *Poetics* used the word "poet" to imply any literary artist. And when we come to Bakhtin, we may safely shift his theoretical tools of novel to the analysis of poetry, for, as R. B. Kreshner[10] has rightly argued, "Bakhtin admits that poetry, like other genres, is susceptible to *novelization*, which can also render the poetic world dialogical" (Taneja 2005: 107). In fact, in "Discourse in the Novel" Bakhtin himself referred to it. Reflecting on the use of "dialogized image" in "novelistic prose", he claimed, "Such a dialogized image can occur in all the poetic genres as well, even in the lyric…" (1981: 278).

III

If Bakhtin's dialogism delights in the inherent addressivity of language, "Sailing to Byzantium", the opening poem of Yeats's *The Tower*, follows suit. The first stanza, apparently addressed to his readers, also borders on a sense of tacit rejoinder to his contemporary young generation whom he consciously takes to task. Suffice it to say, the abrupt philosophical intrusion in the sixth line ("Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.") is conspicuously addressed to his younger generations who seem to have been oblivious of this basic truth under the mesmerizing spell of the "sensual music". Further, the addition of three words–"those dying generations" – to describe the singing "birds at the trees" seems to be a tacit rejoinder to John Keats's paradoxical observation about the nightingale bird in "Ode to a Nightingale":

> Thou was not born for death, immortal bird

[10] For details see R.B.Kreshner, "Yeats/Bakhtin/Orality/Dyslexia" in G.R.Taneja, ed., *W.B.Yeats: An Anthology of Recent Criticism* (New Delhi: Pencraft International,2005) 106-28.

What need had Yeats to mention that birds are part of "dying generations"? If every utterance according to Bakhtin evolves from a complex history of a series of utterances which precede it, Yeats's comment is conditioned by, as it were, Keats's Romantic vision which refuses to treat the bird mortally. In sharp contrast to his Romantic counterpart, the modern Yeats cannot but remind us of the birds being subject to mortality. Addressivity also operates at varied levels in different stanzas of the poem. For example, the ratiocinative syllogistic explanation he provides for undertaking his journey – "And therefore I have sailed the seas and come/ To the holy city of Byzantium" – presupposes a context and situation which impels him to justify the reason of his journey to a pre-conceived set of listeners. The address of the third stanza bordering on a sense of invocation, on the other hand, is directly meant for the "sages standing in God's holy fire" in the frescoes and portraits of St. Sophia's church in Byzantium.

One might also find how Bakhtin's notion of 'heteroglossia' operates within this short poem. Heteroglossia, according to Bakhtin, is differentiated speech. In his chapter "Discourse in the Novel" Bakhtin argues that heteroglossia

> represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing echoes of past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles, and so forth, all given a bodily form (1981: 291).

In "Sailing to Byzantium" the crux of the speaker's problem is generated by generation gap, or to borrow Bakhtin's words from above, by "contradictions between the present and the past": the speaker, being a representative of old age cannot come to terms with the unscrupulous amorous surge of his younger counterparts. The different and opposing "tendencies" that characterize the two generations keep them poles apart: while the young are engrossed in the symphony of sensuality at the cost of aesthetic veneration, the old speaker chooses to take the reverse path, and seek both spiritual bliss and aesthetic pleasure, supposed to be found in his self-projected utopia, Byzantium.

The poem also becomes highly amenable to a polyphonic reading. A representative doyen of old age, W. B.Yeats, was thoroughly vexed at his contemporaneous philistines and anti-cultural young generation engrossed in carnal carnival and sensual bacchanalia. While the young

people busy themselves with their amorous dalliance, even "birds in the trees" are "at their song". Yeats's comprehensive ken artistically embraces all the creatures and participants of this "sensual music" on land, water, and air by the use of the three words, 'fish', 'flesh' and 'fowl' respectively. What irks the cultured speaker is the sheer ignorance and obliviousness of "Monuments of unageing intellect" by his present generation. Thus at the outset the speaker ensconces a rejection of the material and carnal world out of disgust, chiefly out of his avowed penchant and inclination for art and culture represented by his dreamland, Byzantium, his aesthetic haven and spiritual heaven.

While in the first stanza the speaker rejects the sensual for the sensuous and the aesthetic, in the second he renounces the physical for the spiritual. The Manichaean body-soul dichotomy overtakes the speaker whose soul is exhilarated for "every tatter in its mortal dress". An abode of spiritual transcendence, Byzantium, thus, happens to be his cup of tea. Once this journey – this self-projected act of wistfulness – becomes a *fait accompli*, the drive from body to soul takes a tighter hold on the poet. Entering a church (possibly Saint Sophia's Church) in Byzantium, he invokes the sages portrayed in the frescoes and murals to come out of their "holy fire" and assist him achieve salvation. And yet, this passionate pilgrim fervidly in pursuit of spiritual realization is painfully aware of the hypocrisy and duplicity of his heart, already "sick with desire". This is not unlike Bakhtin's description of Dostoevsky's fictional corpus:

> In every voice he (Dostoevsky) could hear two contending voices, in every expression a crack, … in every gesture he detected confidence and lack of confidence simultaneously; he perceived the profound ambiguity, even multiple ambiguity of every phenomenon (1984: 3).

Ironically, the same speaker who had consciously castigated and rejected the luxuriance of the amorous world, and had preferred the soul to the body, the lustral to the luscious, cannot but take note of the earthly desires which have sickened his heart.

No wonder then, Yeats reveals himself to be a split personality endorsing two different voices: his inner self acknowledges the voice of libidinal drives and desires which his outer self wishes to shun. His inner strong pull towards the libidinal is counterpoised, as it were, by his equally strong pull towards the spiritual. Interestingly, these two different

voices of the speaker, antithetically poised against each other, remain "unmerged" in a polyphonic sense. That is to say, none of these voices is allowed to be prioritized over the other, or to altogether eliminate the other.

Further, the speaker's very choice of Byzantium as a space is not devoid of ambivalence, and in itself, engenders what Bakhtin calls "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses" (1984: 6). Byzantium is less a geographical locale than a symbolic space for Yeats for whom it is the *signified* of a host of possibilities: a mode of escape; a search for a better alternative than Ireland; a utopia of spiritual transcendence; a cultural abode; and finally, a means for aesthetic refinement. As David Young has rightly pointed out:

> The choice of "Byzantium" as the destination of an unidentified speaker, who may be the modern poet himself, becomes more mysterious; the city grows less historical and more symbolic (1987: 15).

The specificity of the *signified* of Byzantium is further blurred by the facts that in the third stanza he invokes the sages to gather him "Into the artifice of eternity", while in the final stanza the spiritual dimension of Byzantium is supplanted by a purely aesthetic one. As David Young has drawn our attention to it:

> The analogue to this situation is of course the Christian's prayer to be taken into heaven, but that this paradise is associated more with aesthetic than religious rewards is indicated by the fact that the sages seem to be part of a splendid mosaic, of the kind Yeats saw in Ravenna and associated with Byzantine art at its finest, and the fact that eternity itself is somehow an "artifice." Does that make eternity identical with Byzantium, or does it mean that only something as artificial as a city, one filled with artistic accomplishments, can even be the portal to a more perfect and less changeful world? The reader is invited to ponder these questions (*Ibid:* 16).

To Yeats Byzantium is, as David A. Ross points out, "less a place than a condition of triumph into which the imagination enters when it has finally thrown off all sense of its own limitation" (2009: 215). However

Yeats's own rationale behind his choice of Byzantium may be found in his admission made in *A Vision:*[11]

> I think if I be given a month of Antiquity, and leave to spend it where I chose, I would spend it in Byzantium a little before Justinian opened St Sophia and closed the Academy of Plato… I think that in early Byzantium, and maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, that architect and artificers … spoke to the multitude and the few alike.

Further, if the title of the poem presupposes a physical journey from Ireland to Byzantium, the poem itself embraces the possibility of multiple journeys: from country to city; from sensual to sensuous; from nature to structure; from body to soul; from gross to refined; from life to art; from evanescence to permanence; from mortality to eternity; and of course, from flux to fixity. No wonder then, the very title of the poem sparks off a wide ken of plurality of choices suited to the polyphonic orientation of the poem.

This polyphonic thrust of the poem, with its rich dialogic nature, sustains throughout the poem, culminating in a rich ambivalent open-endedness. In the final stanza the speaker rejects nature, lock, stock, and barrel:

> 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

Having rejected nature thus, he wishes to be converted into a golden bird perched on a golden bough, singing a song to entertain the "lords and ladies of Byzantium". It is also paradoxical that the same speaker whose soul exhilarates for "every tatter in its mortal dress" should wish to assume a shape of a golden bird made of "hammered gold and gold enamelling". While it is natural that his soul's rapture induced by the ruptures in his fleshy dress is perfectly attuned to his spirit of renunciation in the first stanza, the desire to assume an assiduously forged, gorgeous, golden bird by Grecian goldsmiths subverts and undermines this claim of renunciation. We come across yet another paradox when we notice that the same speaker

[11] Quoted in A. Norman Jeffares (ed.), *W.B.Yeats: A New Biography,* London & New York: Continuum, 1988, p.230.

who had stressed the mortal existence of the "birds in the tress" in the first stanza, and one who had particularly wanted to be subsumed within "the artifice of eternity" should express his desire to be transformed into a bird. But unlike Keats's natural nightingale singing in a spontaneous, natural way in "full-throated ease", Yeats's artificial golden bird – his projected *alter ego* – is supposed to sing an artificial song to a preconceived set of audience. And yet, the very subject of this object of art veers around the warm shores of natural life which it had relinquished:

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

Ironically, the golden bird's singing panegyric on the very flux of life it has consciously shunned heightens the paradox of both the speaker and the poem. This final drive towards life itself poses the speaker in a duplicitous, dichotomous situation, engendering the opposite voice of the speaker thereby. His disgust with the "sensual music" of life in the first stanza, his elation for "every tatter in its mortal dress" in the second, his invocation to the sages to help him achieve spiritual salvation and self-realization in the third, and his climactic rejection of life for art in the fourth, ultimately revert to the same paths celebrating the flux of physical and sensual life. The poem which had begun with some snapshots of the flux of natural sensual life, evoking images of wooing, meeting, mating, and breeding, harks back to the same. It is because of this ambivalent ending that "Sailing to Byzantium", very much like Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale", deconstructs itself, creating an *aporia* in which the same speaker simultaneously cleaves from and cleaves to life. The host of opposite voices poised evenly towards and veering around the body/soul, sensual/spiritual, nature/structure, life/art, and flux/fixity binaries attest to the polyphonic nature of the poem, and also create what Bakhtin calls a "double-voiced discourse". Any perceptive reader may not fail to notice how the word 'song' and its derivatives are used with nuanced meanings, both positive and negative, in different stanzas.

One may also note that Bakhtin's concept of polyphony delights not only in the collision and co-existence of multiple unmerged voices, but also in what he calls 'orchestration' and 'collaboration' of them. While Maurice Merleau-Ponty points out that in the ideal dialogic experience all the disparate subjects are "collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 354), one may examine the same collaborative reciprocity in the poem which strikes a balance between

each of these opposite voices, none of which is subjugated to a single powerful voice. Rather than privileging one voice over the other, he negotiates between these dichotomous voices, allowing their fullest play and coexistence with their antithetical counterparts within the poem.

Yeats's love for words and spoken language of the common people in general coupled with his intrinsic moorings in Irish dialect directed his focus on the conversational and the colloquial. The influence of William Blake on Yeats, among other factors, whetted his dialectic sensibility. Finally, his innate love for drama and the dramatic led him to fiddle with both conflict and dialogue. Yeats's very penchant for the dramatic triggered off his fascination with conflict which, in turn, precipitated his dialectical sensibility couched through the 'dialogic', both in its neutral sense, as also in a Bakhtinian sense of the term. All these aspects get harmoniously assimilated into "Sailing to Byzantium", where Yeats has internalized the innate conflict within the same speaker. The poem wonderfully dramatizes this internal clash of these multiple voices of the same persona in a true Bakhtinian sense.

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Received: 29 June, 2013
Accepted for publication: 1 October, 2013

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„ДИЈАЛОШКИ“ ЈЕЈТС: БАХТИНОВСКО ЧИТАЊЕ ЈЕЈТСОВЕ ПОЕМЕ „ПЛОВИДБА У ВИЗАНТИЈУ“

Сажетак

Јејтсова љубав према речима и говорном језику обичних људи као и утемељењем његовог језика у ирском дијалекту усмерили су дискурс његовог песништва према говорном језику и колоквијалном изразу. Утицај Вилијама Блејка на Јејтса, између осталих фактора изоштрили су његов дијалектички сензибилитет. Коначно, његова дубоко укорењена склоност драми и драмском изразу навела га је да испитује поетски потенцијал конфликта и дијалога. Јејтсов драмски сензибилитет условио је његово интересовање за конфликт које је, заузврат довело до дијалектичке истанчаности која се испољила као „дијалошка“, како у уобичајеном, тако и у бахтиновском смислу речи. Користећи бахтиновски „дијалогизам“, у есеју се испитује Јејтсова поема „Пловидба у Византију“ као „дијалошка“ и „полифона“ поема.

Кључне речи: „Пловидба у Византију“, дијалошки, дијалог, полифонија, гласови, хетероглосија, В. Б. Јејтс, М. М. Бахтин, дијалектика.