

Sailing to Transcendence: Reading Yeats's Byzantium Poems as Conceptual Sequel

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Abstract

*This study re-examines the relationship between W.B. Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" (1927) and "Byzantium" (1930), challenging the conventional view that they are thematically parallel. It argues that the poems form a definitive conceptual sequel. By applying Christopher Paul Richards's theory of the sequel, tracing the progression through Yeats's own ontological system in *A Vision*, and incorporating insights from Suchismita Sarkar's article on Yeats's Eastern philosophy and biography, this analysis demonstrates that both poems constitute a linear single narrative. The first poem portrays the soul's passionate attachment to the mortal body and its desire for aesthetic immortality in Byzantium, while the second narrates the soul's transcendence in Byzantium toward celestial purification and achieved immortality in eternal intellect and Byzantine art. Through Peircean semiotic analysis informed by Yeats's *A Vision*, biography, and Eastern philosophical thought, this study reveals a coherent spiritual continuum, establishing both poems as a conceptual sequel.*

Key Words: *Passionate Body, Celestial Body, Sequel, Immortality*

1. Introduction

W.B. Yeats's twin poems "Sailing to Byzantium" (1927) and "Byzantium" (1930) are among the most symbolically complex expressions of his spiritual philosophy. The poems' pivotal focus on gaining perpetuity through art has been emphasized by many intellectuals from Harold Bloom to Helen Vendler. They have frequently been considered as expressing a solitary metaphysical theme: the conflict of the soul between the waxing and waning mortal physical realm and the imperishable domain of art and intellect. Critics have treated them as twin pillars supporting a single thematic structure. While the poems present different states within similar realms—the generative, decaying natural world and the eternal world of the soul with metaphysical implications of art and divine intellect—this reading, though valuable, obscures a more dynamic and fundamental relationship: that of sequel. This paper argues that Yeats's Byzantium poems represent two successive stages in the soul's journey—from the passionate body to the celestial body—forming a philosophical and poetic sequel rather than two parallel meditations.

The concept of the sequel, as defined by Christopher Paul Richards in *The Idea of the Sequel* (1989), is applied here. Richards moves beyond simplistic plot continuation to describe a sequel as a work that "extends and deepens the thematic and philosophical concerns of its predecessor." It is a work that logically and ontologically depends on the completion of the first to begin and complete its own further development. Applying this model, "Sailing to Byzantium" constitutes the initial act: a dramatic monologue of the soul's agonized awareness of its mortal confinement and its fervent voyage toward an idealized paradigm of immortality. "Byzantium," then, serves as the indispensable second act, depicting the soul's arrival and its subsequent, often tormented, transformation within the realm envisioned by Yeats in his prose work *A Vision*.

This sequential interpretation finds its foundation in the cartography of Yeats's own elaborate cosmological treatise, *A Vision*, which outlines the soul's states in the forms of the passionate and celestial body. Furthermore, the argument is enriched by considering Yeats's engagement with amalgamated Eastern thought, particularly the concepts of cyclical reincarnation and purification found in the works of S. Radhakrishnan and Heinrich Zimmer, as solidified by Suchismita Sarkar's article (2017). By semiotically analyzing both poems' seven stanzas collectively as a sequence and as an autobiographical record of Yeats's own evolving spiritual understanding, this article establishes their status as a definitive conceptual sequel. This study ultimately depicts the soul's arduous passage from lamentation to purgation, offering a more complete understanding of Yeats's poetic vision of the afterlife.

2. Review of Related Literature

1. Early Critical Views

Extensive critical conversation surrounds Yeats's Byzantium poems, yet scholarship has fallen short of defining their relationship as a true sequel. Early and mid-twentieth-century criticism largely focused on symbolic interpretations and thematic contrast. T.R. Henn (1965) in *The Lonely Tower*, for instance, explored the poems as visions of the same ideal, while Cleanth Brooks in *A Shaping Joy* (1971) emphasized their shared metaphysical concerns. These critics identified a tendency toward temporary escape rather than viewing the poems as consecutive stages of a single process.

Harold Bloom (1970) also treated the poems as powerful parallels exploring Yeats's symbolic landscape, where the permanent symbol of Byzantium serves as an image of the achieved aesthetic ideal. Helen Vendler's analysis of poetic structure further strengthened understanding of their internal connection but maintained the view of them as distinct, albeit closely related, artistic units. Critical consensus has thus settled on a dialectical or comparative model, where "Sailing" and "Byzantium" are contrasted to highlight their different tonalities and emphases: "Sailing" is personal and passionate, while "Byzantium" is impersonal and cosmic.

2.2 Theoretical Gap and Philosophical Context

The application of sequel theory, particularly the framework proposed by Christopher Paul Richards, reveals a significant gap in the literature. Furthermore, while the influence of Yeats's philosophical prose work *A Vision* on the poems is widely acknowledged, its specific framing of purgatorial stages as a blueprint for the poems' narrative has been overlooked. Through a formalist lens, critics have treated each poem as self-contained, which obscures the ontological dependency of the second poem. As a result, the poems have been explained through shared imagery rather than as a chart of a linear journey. Similarly, the permeating Eastern philosophical concepts drawn from Yeats's readings of Radhakrishnan and Zimmer provide a crucial lens for considering the cyclical, non-Christian nature of the journey—an underplayed aspect in earlier, Eurocentric critiques.

Suchismita Sarkar's article (2017) contends that Yeats's engagement with Hindu thought was syncretic, drawing selectively on Indian spiritual concepts rather than adopting them fully. When he met Mohini Chatterji in India and came under her influence, he created "The Indian Upon God" (1889), "Anashuya and Vijaya" (1892), "The Indian to His Love" (1890), "The Dialogue of Self and Soul" (1927), "Sailing to Byzantium" (1927), and "Byzantium" (1930); these works present an amalgamated Hindu philosophy. Despite extensive critical attention, few studies have considered the two Byzantium poems as a unified spiritual narrative that reflects Yeats's cosmological and Eastern philosophical synthesis. Without a lens like Richardson's sequential theory and with traditional Western literary analysis, both poems have remained like a DNA double helical structure instead of being understood as a cyclical purgatorial narrative. This study seeks to integrate these elements—sequel theory, Yeats's

esoteric system, and the implementation of Eastern philosophy—to advance the critical conversation beyond parallelism toward a synthetic framework of sequential progression.

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3. Theoretical Model

The argument for interpreting "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium" as a conceptual sequel is supported by a tripartite theoretical framework, combining semiotic analysis of Yeats's own cosmological system, relevant Eastern philosophical conceptual amalgamation, and biographical evidence.

I. The Sequel as Philosophical Form

Christopher Paul Richards's theory of the sequel provides the primary structural lens. Richards, moving beyond the simplistic notion of plot continuation, defines a sequel as a text that extends and deepens the philosophical concerns of its predecessor. Richards argues that a true sequel involves a connected shift in ontological state, as he demonstrates with the pairing of *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Paradise Regained* (1671) (p. 12). The second work is not a mere addendum but a continuation that presupposes and is determined to alter the events of the first. The central character enters the sequel already transformed by prior events. This framework perfectly corresponds to the relationship between the two Yeats poems. The speaker of "Sailing" is an aged man whose soul is a "paltry thing," agonizingly tethered to a "dying animal," actively yearning for a transformation it has not yet undergone. In stark contrast, the speaker of "Byzantium" appears already situated within the transcendent realm—a state the passionate body sought in "Sailing"—observing purgatorial mechanics with impersonal authority. The latter poem cannot logically exist without the completed voyage pleaded for in the former; thus, "Byzantium" portrays the direct consequence and continuation of that initial act.

3.2 The Cartography of the Afterlife in *A Vision*

Yeats's *A Vision* provides the specific mythological cartography for this sequential journey. Its complex system describes the soul's posthumous progress through multiple phases, named "Dreaming Back," "Purification," and "Return," where the soul is purified from its mundane ties before a new incarnation. "Sailing to Byzantium" represents the volitional stage of this process, when the soul violently rejects "sensual music" and pleads with the "sages in the holy fire" to join the "artifice of eternity." However, "Byzantium" plunges the reader into the later, involuntary stage of purification. The imagery of the soul being forged on a "marble floor" and the "smithies" breaking the "flood" of incoming spirits directly portrays the purgatorial processes in *A Vision*, where the spirit is stripped of "All complexities of the fury and the mire of human veins."

3.3 The Eastern Inflection: Cyclical Rebirth and Purification

Yeats's system is distinctly non-Christian, aligning more closely with Eastern concepts of Hinduism in amalgamated form regarding cyclical rebirth. His documented study of philosophies presented by S. Radhakrishnan and Heinrich Zimmer provided a philosophical lexicon for this understanding. Radhakrishnan's description of karma and the process of spiritual refinement resonates with the poems' progression from impurity to purity. Zimmer's interpretation of symbolic birds, especially the Hamsa—a mythical bird-soul that possesses the discernment to separate milk from water (essence from dross)—is reflected in the symbol of the golden bird. The journey to Byzantium, therefore, is not a linear ascent to a Christian heaven but a passage to a sublime state within a cyclic process. This Eastern inflection deepens the sequel's meaning, framing it not as a final ending but as a transformative phase within a metaphysical, recurring spiritual journey.

4. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative Peircean analysis, supported by philosophical and biographical interpretation. The objective is to build a convincing case for the sequential relationship between the two poems by interpreting key symbols and verses according to literary theory, amalgamated philosophy, and Yeats's biography, synthesizing them in a semiotic sequential interpretation.

The primary methodology is a Peircean semiotic analysis of the seven stanzas of "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium" treated as a single, continuous versified unit. This approach involves close analysis of the poems to trace the evolution of key images across the stanzaic sequence. Yeats distinguishes between the passionate body, which binds the soul to mortal longing and sensory pleasure, and the celestial body, which liberates it into spiritual harmony. The soul's voyage from "Sailing to Byzantium" to "Byzantium" follows seven evolving stages from physical aspiration and declination to ultimate purification and reincarnation. The passionate body dissolves through successive refinements until it merges with the celestial form, completing the full circle of existence. In this circular scheme, the soul circulates endlessly through states of incarnation, purification, illumination, and repose, achieving momentary perfection in the form of art and divine intellect in Byzantium before beginning its journey anew. The analysis tracks how central images such as the "dying animal," the "holy fire," the "golden bird," the "dolphin-torn sea," and "Hades' Bobbin" function as markers of narrative progression from the earthly world to the purgatorial realm. This method allows for the demonstration of a symbolic arc that transcends the artificial boundary of the two separate poems.

The study also includes autobiographical contextualization. This methodological strand examines Yeats's letters, essays, and the revisions to *A Vision* from the period between the compositions of the two poems (1927-1930). This research bolsters the sequel argument by contextualizing the poems within Yeats's own life: his physical decline, spiritual anxieties,

and intellectual consolidation. It argues that the shift from the personal yearning of "Sailing" to the cosmic vision of "Byzantium" parallels Yeats's own evolution as an artist-philosopher, adding a layer of biographical evidence to the theoretical argument.

Finally, through a Peircean semiotic framework, Yeats's seven stanzas move from indexical and iconic representation of bodily life to fully symbolic expressions of spiritual eternity. This progression mirrors *A Vision's* cyclical metaphysics and demonstrates Yeats's deep engagement with amalgamated Eastern Hindu philosophy.

5. Critical Analysis

A Peircean semiotic analysis of the seven stanzas makes it clear that both poems are parts of a single narrative of the soul's journey, divided into two distinct but connected poems.

The Lure and the Appeal, followed by the Arrival and the Purge' is the central process through following images.

STANZA 1 — *Sailing to Byzantium*

Stage: Yearning of the Soul

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
"No country for old men" Symbol	The poem begins with the poet's vision of passionate body which is present with the material world. In <i>A Vision</i> , Yeats presented old age as a phase of spiritual ripening, when the soul must turn inward toward immortality rather than earthly charms.
"The young in one another's arms" Index (points to desire)	The young represent passionate life when body is driven by desire and feelings. It has been analyzed as passionate phase, in soul's cycle, which is fascinated for the physical body but neglected by the soul's higher purpose; is the phase Yeats keeps in binary opposition with spiritual height.
"The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas" Icon (resembles life-cycle)	These images according to the view of Yeats point of view in <i>A Vision</i> present the natural cycle of birth and decay. The lively seas portray the endless rhythm of life and death, a process the soul must transcend
"Whatever is begotten, born, and dies" Symbol	Interpretation of these symbols reveals passionate body's cycle. Yeats believed, as in <i>A Vision</i> , that everything physical passes through cycles of incarnation and dissipation in great wheel.
"Sensual music all neglect" Index	"Sensual Music" represents for the charm of worldly beauty. Those who follow it forget "unageing intellect," the eternal intellect that Yeats mentioned.
"Unageing intellect" Symbol	In view of <i>A Vision</i> , it is interpreted as immortal consciousness. In <i>A Vision</i> , Yeats links it to the soul's ultimate goal which is divine wisdom a metaphysical state of mind.

Passionate Body is indulged in earthly affairs and soul is in agitation.

STANZA 2 — *Sailing to Byzantium*

Stage: Lure → Turning Toward Purgation

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
"An aged man is but a paltry thing" Symbol	It is interpreted as poet's lamentation for a state of passionate body when a man who clings only to the body becomes a husk instead of a illuminated celestial

	being after neglecting his soul's growth.
"A tattered coat upon a stick"	Yeats presents it as a vivid metaphor of bodily decay, emblematic of soul's need for transcendence.
Icon	
"I have sailed the seas"	The voyage symbolizes the soul's spiritual journey away from the world of senses toward the Byzantium.
Index	In A Vision, this movement represents the passionate body's passage to the celestial phase.
"Holy city of Byzantium"	Byzantium is a symbol of eternal art and divine order. For Yeats it is a state of perfect harmony between soul and mind, where the spirit is immortal.
Symbol	
"Singing masters of my soul"	These are analyzed as divine guiders or enlightened souls who guide the bodies toward eternity. They according to Yeats exist in higher spheres during intellectual journey.
Symbol	
"Holy fire"	It has been analyzed as divine energy that purifies the spirit. In A Vision, it corresponds to the purgative flame make the soul spiritually perfect.
Index	
"Gold mosaic of a wall"	The mosaic symbolizes immortality of art; as the golden tesserae in Byzantine art is immortal.
Icon+ Sybol	

Summary: The soul is agitated and about to leave earthly affairs.

STANZA 3 — *Sailing to Byzantium*

Stage: Purgation

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
"Dying animal"	Fastening of dying animal would be analyzed as the mortal body enslaved by desire. Yeats portrays it as the temporary cage of the immortal soul that must be shed for regeneration into pure form
Index	
"Artifice of eternity"	Artifice is the human art that mirrors divine permanence. According to Yeats art could preserve the essence of the soul beyond death.
Symbol	
"My bodily form from any natural thing"	It has been analyzed as poet realized that reincarnation in the material world could be possible just after a transformation into an artistic, immortal form.
Symbol	
"Hammered gold and gold enameling"	This process analyzes as the meticulous process of artistic creation. Yeats puts it here to the soul's purification through suffering and discipline. It is stated in A Vision as a state of purgation.
Index	
"Golden bough"	This process is analyzed as the meticulous process of artistic creation. Yeats puts it here to the soul's purification through suffering and discipline. It is stated in A Vision as a state of purgation.
Symbol	
"Drowsy Emperor"	Drowsy Emperors have been considered worldly rulers lulled by art. In A Vision a crafted bird awakens celestial consciousness to make souls immortal.
Index	

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Summary: The soul is being cleansed.

STANZA 4 — *Sailing to Byzantium*

Stage: Immortality in Byzantium

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
“Lords and ladies of Byzantium” Symbol	Analyzed as enlightened spirits who have become immortal being through art and wisdom. According to Yeats <i>A Vision</i> their company will lead souls towards perfection.
“What is past, or passing, or to come” Symbol	According to <i>A Vision</i> , true spiritual existence lies outside temporal cycles, at p-191 Yeats describes light as sensation which is spirit in future, passionate body in the present and husk in the past; in a changeless realm of eternity.
“Starlit golden bough” Symbol	It is found borrowed from Yeats myth in <i>A Vision</i> signifying passage to the divine eternal world; cyclic beyond birth and death.

Summary: The soul achieves immortality in artistic existence.

BYZANTIUM — STANZA 1

Stage: Purgation

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
“Unpurged images of day recede” Index	It has analyzed as in Byzantium the activities of the material world peter out. So, after passionate body’s stage soul is entering into a new phase.
“Emperor’s drunken soldiery are abed” Index	The drunken soldiers are analyzed as passionate body’s desires which are dimmed at night. Emperor’s drunken soldier’s sleep is the stilling of chaos before soul’s awakening.
“Night-walkers” Symbol	Analyzed as wandering souls between passionate body and celestial body in a astral world described in <i>A Vision</i> .
“Cathedral gong” Index	The cathedral gong has been analyzed as summoning to join divine rhythm. It points out the call for transition; from the passionate or mortal state to the immortal or celestial state of being.
“Moonlit dome” Symbol	According to Yeats <i>A Vision</i> it is a symbol of “divine intellect” luminous as the moon. Normally in literature spiritual light symbolizes eternal truth rather than the sunlight which is symbol of worldly life Yeats has implied that here.

Summary: The dissolution of earthly affairs marks the start of the passionate body's life in Byzantium.

BYZANTIUM — STANZA 2

Stage: Purgation

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
“Fury and the mire of human veins” Index	Verse has been analyzed as describing the turmoil of human emotions and eternity. In <i>A Vision</i> , it is the physical self-trapped in cycles of passionate body and its decay.
“Floats an image, man or shade” Icon	This verse is analyzed as symbolizing halfway between material and immortal existence during journey of soul.
“Hades’ bobbin” Symbol	Yeats uses it to depict that souls are bound by thread of fate even after death until they are purified.
“Mummy’s cloth” Icon	soul’s imprisonment with worldly memories.
“Winding path” Symbol	Winding path is the soul’s complicated journey through various rebirths. It is described through gyre in <i>A Vision</i> moving spirally toward divine unity.

Summary: Soul purification continues.

BYZANTIUM — STANZA 3

Stage: Immortality

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
“Mouth that has no moisture and no breath” Icon	It is haunting symbol of lifelessness. It shows a state towards art’s perfection without decay.
“Hail the superhuman” Symbol	Yeats described it as the purified soul that transcends mortality. So “superhuman” is the spirit with divine wisdom and to achieve this state is the goal of all spiritual evolution.
“Death-in-life and life-in-death” Symbol	This self-contradictory state reflects Yeats’s mythology of cyclical existence. Death and life both are intertwined.
“Bird or petal” Icon	Delicate creations of nature, yet transient; over them crafted art has been preferred by Yeats.

Summary: The soul enters a metaphysical world.

BYZANTIUM — STANZA 4

Stage: Immortality (Complete)

Images with Peircean signs	Analysis
“Emperor’s pavement flit” Index	The dance of spirits over the marble floor (i.e. symbol of immortality in normal romantic poetry) analyzed as eternal rhythmic movement to purify souls beyond decay in eternity.
“No faggot feeds” “Begotten spirits”	The fire that “no faggot feeds” is immortal and

come” “Complexities of fury leave” Symbol/ Index/ Index	spiritual, not worldly. The “begotten spirits” are purified souls entering into divine light, leaving behind all passions which are represented as “complexities of fury.
“Cocks of Hades crow” Index	“This eerie sound analyzed as reincarnation from the underworld’s signal. Marking transition of souls from darkness toward new eternal life.

Summary: The soul is immortal in Byzantium.

Textual Analysis Through the Lens of *A Vision* and Eastern Philosophy with Peircean Semiotics

Sailing to Byzantium

Stanza I (Sensuous World and the Lure of the Soul)

The first stanza constructs a world saturated with youth, music, and natural fertility. From a Peircean semiotic perspective, most signs function initially as icons and indices taken together make a symbolic system representing the dominance of the material world. While in *A Vision*, Yeats associates such absorption in nature with the Primary phases of the soul. And biographically he is writing in old age rejecting a world that privileges physical vitality over spiritual wisdom. Furthermore, Eastern philosophy implied the Hindu concept of Maya.

Stanza II (Self-awareness and Detachment from the Body)

With a shifting from immersion to reflection, Peircean icon, visually resembling bodily decay. In *A Vision*, Yeats sets old age as a turning point, not a failure. While Eastern notions of detachment (*vairāgya*), Yeats suggests that spiritual awakening begins when one recognizes the body as temporary. The “singing school” (Selected Poems W.B. Yeats, p. 256) functions as symbols of spiritual authority. Biographically, Yeats’s immersion with occult orders and automatic writing had persuaded him that wisdom emerges through inward discipline rather than external vitality. Semiotic analysis here becomes didactic, guiding the soul away from bodily illusion.

Stanza III (Purgation and Transmutation of the Soul)

This stanza introduces ritualistic image of fire, gold, and craftsmanship. In Peircean terms, “holy fire” operates as an index, pointing to purification, while “hammered gold” functions as an icon of refinement through labor. Combined, they become symbols of spiritual discipline. In *A Vision*, this stage corresponds to purgation, where emotional and carnal residues are burned away. Yeats’s rejection of reincarnation into “any natural thing” strongly echoes Buddhist liberation from *samsara*, the endless cycle of rebirth. Biographically, Yeats’s distrust of modern materialism and organic decay leads him to prefer crafted permanence over natural continuity. The stanza semiotically encodes transformation: signs no longer represent life but re-form the soul itself.

Stanza IV (Artistic Immortality and Transcendence)

The golden bird is the central image of this stanza. As a Peircean icon, it resembles a bird; as a symbol, it represents eternal consciousness fixed in artistic form. In *A Vision*, Yeats imagines liberation as existence outside the gyre of history. Eastern philosophy parallels this with *moksha* or *nirvana*, though Yeats deviates by insisting on form rather than formlessness. Immortality is achieved not through termination but through perfected art. Semiotically, this

stanza stabilizes meaning at the level of pure symbol, where the sign no longer points beyond itself but symbolizes eternity.

Byzantium:

Stanza V (Withdrawal of the Material World)

The opening movement of *Byzantium* depicts silence, night, and the fading of daytime images. These signs function primarily as indices. The cathedral gong, however, acts as a symbolic summons, culturally learned and spiritually charged. While in *A Vision*, this corresponds to the soul's separation from earthly impressions. Eastern contemplative traditions highlight silence and darkness as basics for transcendence, a belief Yeats absorbed through his study of mysticism. Semiotically, this stanza represents the emptying of signification, where material references dissolve to prepare for higher meaning.

Stanza VI (Liminal State and Astral Transition)

This stanza presents disturbing, half-formed images—shades, threads, winding paths. These signs operate largely as icons, resembling transitional states, while “Hades’ bobbin” functions as a symbol of karmic bondage. While in *A Vision*, Yeats describes this as the astral or intermediary phase, where souls remain bound by memory and desire. Peircean semiotics explains the vagueness of this stanza: signs fluctuate between icon and symbol, reflecting the soul's unstable condition.

Stanza VII (Release into Eternal Order)

The final stanza presents purified spirits, rhythm, and fire that requires no fuel. These images function mostly as symbols, requiring abstract knowledge for interpretation. The fire signifies spiritual energy independent of matter. And in *A Vision*, this denotes final release from the cycle of incarnation. Eastern philosophy matches this state with liberation beyond desire, where passion (“complexities of fury”) dissolves. Semiotically, the poem achieves symbolic closure: signs no longer mediate experience but embody perfected spiritual meaning.

6. Findings

This analysis yields several key observations that solidify the core thesis. Firstly, the application of Richards's sequel theory proves implied here fully. Therefore, a robust theoretical model found convincingly; which explains the poems' relationship as one of ontological progression rather than thematic repetition. The poet's movement from a supplicant to an inhabitant of *Byzantium* fulfills the requirement in state that defines a sequel “a sequel responds to the most basic, child-like urges of both writer and reader to recover that lost experience (Richardson, 1989, p. 358).

Second, the Peircean semiotic analysis of all seven stanzas in sequence reveals an undeniable narrative arc. The journey begins with signs of old age and decay and the soul's aspiration (the “plea for holy fire”) and culminates in signs of achieved purification (“flames,” “self-born,” “star-lit golden handiwork”). This linear progression of symbols, indices, and icons forms a connected story of posthumous transition that is incomplete if the poems are read only in parallel.

Third, the model of *A Vision* and Eastern philosophy provides the necessary metaphysical and philosophical base for this sequence. The poems conscientiously track the soul's movement through the early volitional phases and the later reflexive stages of the Purification. A cyclical process which is refinement-oriented, mirroring Yeats Eastern concepts of rebirth under influence of Mohini Chatterji in an amalgamated form, according to Suchismita Sarkar totally different than a Western heaven-and-hell dichotomy.

Finally, the autobiographical evidences also verify that Yeats's own intellectual and spiritual journey between 1927 and 1930 is evident of a shift from the emotional longing of “Sailing”

to the confident, systemic description of "Byzantium." The sequel is, therefore, not only narration of a philosophical soul but also of Yeats the poet-philosopher himself.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that W.B. Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Byzantium" constitute a definitive conceptual sequel. The relationship between both poems has been misunderstood as merely thematic similarity. By applying Christopher Paul Richards's theory of the sequel, this analysis has moved beyond a comparative framework to establish a progressively dependent narrative structure. The first poem functions as the passionate prologue, where the soul declares its confinement and cries for deliverance from mortal limitation. "Byzantium" is the magnificent epilogue, expressing the stark reality of the purification sought in order to achieve cosmic eternity. In this way, a complete circular journey is realized.

The process mapped within the seven stanzas, when read sequentially, aligns precisely with the purgatorial stages outlined in Yeats's *A Vision*. *A Vision*'s philosophy is inflected by Eastern concepts of cyclical rebirth, informed by his meeting with Mohini Chatterji. The semiotic journey from the "dying animal" to the "self-born" flames, and from the desired "golden bird" to the achieved "golden handiwork," expresses a complete metamorphic process. Autobiographically, this sequence reveals Yeats's own deepening involvement with his esoteric system during a period of emotional decline and intellectual consolidation.

Ultimately, this research proves that the two poems are inseparable parts of a unified whole. "Sailing to Byzantium" begins a journey of the passionate body, which "Byzantium" completes through transcendence into a celestial body—a soul's journey Yeats presented previously in his prose work *A Vision*. Together, they form Yeats's most complete poetic vision of the soul's metaphysical voyage, synthesizing Western esoteric thought and amalgamated Eastern philosophy into a unique mythology of the afterlife. This sequential reading not only enhances our understanding of these individual poems but also provides a new critical lens through which to view other poetic pairs in the modernist tradition.

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