W. B. YEATS'S "THE CAP AND BELLS": ITS SOURCES IN OCCULTISM

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas

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While it may seem that "The Cap and Bells" finds its primary source in Yeats's love for Maud Gonne, the poem is also symbolic of his search for truth in occultism. In the 1880s and 90s Yeats coupled his reading of Shelley with a formal study of magic in the Golden Dawn, and the poem is a blend of Shelleyan and occult influences.

The essay explores the Shelleyan/occult motif of death and rebirth through examining the poem's relation to the rituals, teachings, and symbols of the Golden Dawn. The essay examines the poem's relation to the Cabalistic Tree of Life, the Hanged Man of the Tarot, two Golden Dawn diagrams on the Garden of Eden, and the concept of Kundalini.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the surface it may seem that W. B. Yeats's poem "The Cap and Bells" finds its primary source in his unrequited love for Maud Gonne. One recent scholar who holds this viewpoint is Margaret Hamlin, who writes that even though in 1899, the year in which the final draft of the poem was published, "Maud Gonne did reject one of his several proposals of marriage, 'The Cap and Bells' reveals that Yeats apparently still dreamed he would be able to reach her through his verse" (205). While it is likely that Yeats had Gonne in mind, she is only one of the numerous thematic elements of the poem, which is also a symbolic account of Yeats's philosophical and religious search for truth within the occult tradition.

While it has been noted by a few scholars that the poem may have sources in the occult, there has not been a thorough account of the poem's actual relationship to occultism. This may be the result of the general closed-mindedness toward the occult that has been characteristic of much modernist scholarship. Leon Surette writes that

> scholarship has now reached the point where the question of the relevance of occultism to Yeats, Pound, Lawrence and even Eliot is no longer open.

> . . . If we cannot expunge the occult from the history of modernism (and we cannot), then the sensible thing is to learn more about the occult so that we can not only recognize it when we meet it in a literary setting, but also have a clearer sense of what it is that mainstream literary criticism has been avoiding for the past fifty years and more. (10)

"The Cap and Bells" has several sources in occultism, and in making an examination of the poem's relation to Yeats's magical studies one may not only understand the poem more fully, but also see the extent to which occultism influenced Yeats's entire career.

While Yeats was already somewhat familiar with both the theme of magic and the idea of mystical death and rebirth in the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, in the 1880s and '90s he encountered the idea of death and rebirth as an initiate in the magical order of the Golden Dawn, and in these two decades he coupled his formal study of magic and mysticism with his reading of Shelley. While "The Cap and Bells" incorporates this Shelleyan influence, the main concern of this essay is in exploring the magical and occult sources from which Yeats derived the poem. The theme and ideas of the poem, which Yeats expanded throughout his career, are largely an outgrowth of his involvement with the occult, and the themes and content of the poem are related to the rituals, teachings, and symbols of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. These Golden Dawn sources reveal that the jester in the poem is the Hanged Man of the Tarot series, who

has an occult correspondence to the sphere of Tiphareth on the Cabalistic Tree of Life and is analagous to Carl Jung's archetype of the hanged god, and also that the blue and red garments of the jester correspond to the spheres of Chesed and Geburah, two opposing forces which are reconciled through the alchemical union of opposites. The poem also seems to find a source in two important Golden Dawn diagrams called "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall" and "The Garden of Eden After the Fall." The symbolism of these two diagrams, their purpose in the initiation ceremonies of the Golden Dawn, and their kinship with the themes and content of the poem provide a framework within which all of the above mentioned influences rest, and this essay is an attempt to place "The Cap and Bells" within that framework. In so doing, a discussion of the concept of Kundalini is essential. Although the poem is, on the surface, a love poem, it will become evident in the course of the discussion that scholarship linking "The Cap and Bells" with Yeats's love for Maud Gonne must fit within this structure.

CHAPTER 2

OCCULT SOURCES FOR "THE CAP AND BELLS"

"The Cap and Bells" was written in 1893 (Ellmann 287). Its first version was published in 1894 (Coltrane 129), and the final draft, again, was published in 1899. The existing scholarship on the poem and occultism is often incomplete or inaccurate. For example, Fred L. Milne mentions that Yeats's choice of the red and blue to signify the jester's heart and soul may have been influenced by the Rosicrucian attribution of the colors to matter and spirit (77); and Robert Coltrane makes reference to Milne's speculation in a note (142). However, little has been done to locate the actual source of these colors in Yeats's occult study. Milne suggests that the red is associated with the sphere of Tiphareth, the sixth Sephirah on the Cabalistic Tree of Life, because of Tiphareth's association with the heart and Yeats's usage of the Rosy Cross as a cover design, in which the rose is located at the point of Tiphareth (74). But while Milne is on the right track, the red must be associated with the fifth Sephirah, Geburah, in order to be thematically consistent. Coltrane records Milne's point about the Rosy Cross, and while he then writes that the red and blue have an "occult significance" (131), he does not

pursue this significance to its source, merely quoting Yeats's statement concerning the Dublin Hermetic Society that "every organ of the body had its correspondences in the heavens, and the seven principles which made the human soul and body correspond to the seven colours of the planets and the notes of the musical scale" (Memoirs 23).

It does not seem likely, however, that these colors find their source in the Dublin Hermetic Society. According to Morton Irving Seiden, the Dublin Hermetic society was founded by Yeats, George Russell (A.E.), Charles Johnston and some others in 1886 for the purpose of discussing Theosophy (35). While Theosophy was a major influence on Yeats, he ceased outward involvement with theosophical organizations in 1890 when he joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (40-41). Again, the poem was written in 1893, and it is essential to an understanding of the poem's "occult significance" to trace the red and blue, through reference to Golden Dawn literature, to their proper places on the Tree of Life, and thus to their functions in the alchemical union of opposites. Before discussing these elements of opposition within the poem, it is necessary to give a brief overview of Yeats's involvement with Theosophy and with the Golden Dawn and make some general observations about the nature of these two schools of thought and the differences between them.

According to Seiden, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy, held that all religions have their

source in a "secret doctrine" that had been passed down orally since ancient times, and she claimed to have received this doctrine telepathically through contact with two masters of a brotherhood from Tibet (34). Yeats was introduced to Theosophy in Dublin by George Russell and Charles Johnston, met Blavatsky when he moved to London in 1887, joined the Blavatsky Lodge, progressed to the Lodge's Esoteric Section in 1888, and read Blavatsky's books, Isis Unveiled and The Secret Doctrine (35). Much of The Secret Doctrine's philosophy confirms what Yeats later learned from the Golden Dawn, and the influence of these two schools of thought can be found in "The Cap and Bells." Seiden suggests that Yeats was attracted to the Theosophists because they studied comparative religion, they identified poetic imagination with the spiritual life, and their teachings agreed with Shelley's Prometheus Unbound and Blake's Prophetic Books (34-35). Although the Blavatsky Lodge and the Golden Dawn were quite similar "in their interpretations of man and nature and of God and the phenomenal universe," Yeats joined the Isis-Urania Temple of the Hermetic Students of the Golden Dawn in 1890 upon meeting one of its founders, S. L. MacGregor Mathers, to study ritual and magic, of which Theosophy had no part (40-41).

The Golden Dawn had as its focus the study of the "Alchemical Qabalah" (Fortune 38). Its major symbol was the Tree of Life, borrowed from the Jewish mystical tradition of

the Cabala. In the "Alchemical Qabalah," the initiate's gradual symbolic journey up the Tree can be seen as representing the alchemical process of the union of matter and spirit. Tradition has it that Cabalistic principles were first given by God to his angels before man's fall, and then taught by the angels to Adam so that mankind could recapture its lost innocence (Hall 113). Cabalists held that the universe issued forth from "Ain Soph Aour," or "Limitless Light;" and the Tree of Life is a glyph representing the manifestation of this Limitless Light, having "ten numerations or Sephiroth which are the branches of that Tree growing or evolving within space, ten different modes of the manifestation of its radiation--ten varying degrees of but one ubiquitous substance-principle" (Regardie 18-19). According to Seiden, "the farther the Sephiroth emanate from their source, the closer they are to crude spirit or matter; and the closer they are to their source, the closer they come to pure spirit, light, and God" (42).

The order was divided into ten grades, each grade corresponding to one of the Sephiroth, and the occult aspirant went through a series of initiation ceremonies in which one worked his or her way up from the first and lowest grade, corresponding with the tenth Sephirah, to the tenth grade, corresponding with the first Sephirah (21). The ten grades are identical with the grades of Rosicrucianism (Case, True 155). In meditation on the Tree of Life diagram the ten

Sephiroth are accessible to the initiate through twenty-two connecting lines called paths (Regardie 61), and to each path is assigned one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and one of the twenty-two major Tarot cards (71). According to Golden Dawn initiates Chic and Sandra Cicero, "the Paths are subjective passages of human consciousness which lead to the objective centers or emanations of energy known as Sephiroth" (21).

The subject of the initiate's symbolic climb up the Tree of Life toward the alchemical union of opposites leads to a discussion of the elements of opposition within "The Cap and Bells". In the poem, Yeats writes that the jester offers first his soul, in a "straight blue garment" (5), and then his heart, in a "red and quivering garment" (15), in gestures of love to a queen. She will not accept his gifts, and rejects him until, as Richard Ellmann points out, "the jester sends what is most essential and individual in him" (251), his cap and bells. The poem's jester then dies a sacrificial death for the queen, and the result is that the red heart and blue soul come "to her right hand" (31) and "to her left hand" (32), respectively. While Harold Bloom holds that "this is not to say that she revives the presumably deceased jester" (129), I agree with Milne that the reappearance of the red and blue at the end is symbolic of the jester's resurrection (76).

At the conclusion, the opposition established throughout the poem between soul and heart, blue and red, and wise and sweet is reconciled in the union of queen and reborn jester, as the red and blue "set up a noise like crickets, / a chattering wise and sweet" (33-34). J. H. Natterstad notes this reconciliation of opposing forces within "The Cap and Bells" in his statement that "art has reconciled the opposites and, in doing so, has merged with the beautiful" (75). Again, this union of opposites is distinctly alchemical and finds its place in the Cabalistic Tree of Life.

But before examining Yeats's alchemical and Cabalistic studies and explicating the poem in light of them, it is necessary to establish the likelihood that the poem originated from these studies, and in doing so I shall explore the subject of visions and symbols. In Yeats's note to "The Cap and Bells," he writes:

> I dreamed this story exactly as I have written it, and dreamed another long dream after it, trying to make out its meaning, and whether I was to write it in prose or verse. The first dream was more a vision than a dream, for it was beautiful and coherent, and gave me the sense of illumination and exaltation that one gets from visions, while the second dream was confused and meaningless. The poem has always meant a great deal to me, though, as is the way with symbolic poems, it has not always meant the same thing. Blake would have said, "The authors are in eternity," and I am quite sure they can only be questioned in dreams. (Poems 593)

Yeats wrote the poem in 1893, three years after his Golden Dawn initiation. Lawrence W. Fennelly writes that in 1890 Golden Dawn Chief S. L. MacGregor Mathers "taught Yeats the use of symbols to induce visions" (295), and it is highly likely that Yeats may have considered his vision of the jester one such vision, which, judging from the poem's elements, may have been induced by meditation on the Tree of Life and the Tarot. The poem's symbolic content, coming as it did from Yeats's own dream, should be analyzed as much as possible in terms of the archetypes that it reveals, and these archetypes find their source in the occult.

Here it is worth noting the similarity between Yeats's account and Carl Jung's statement that the "main source" for the archetypes of the collective unconscious is "in dreams, which have the advantage of being involuntary, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche and are therefore pure products of nature" (Archetypes 48). Of his theory of the archetypes of the collective unconscious, Jung states that in addition to the personal consciousness "there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals" and consists of "pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily" (43). Although Yeats had not yet been exposed to Jung, his Anima Mundi closely resembles Jung's theory of the collective unconscious:

> I believe in three doctrines . . .

> 1) That the borders of our minds are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
> 2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
> 3)That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols. (Essays 33)

The jester of "The Cap and Bells" bears a strong similarity to the Tarot card the Hanged Man, which is analagous to Jung's archetype of the hanged or sacrificed god. It seems that the poem has resulted from Yeats's dream of this archetype of the collective unconscious, or in Yeatsian terms, this magical image from the Anima Mundi. James Olney writes that "Yeats was being a good, if unconscious Jungian" with his concept of the Anima Mundi, while "Jung was perfectly Yeatsian" with his concept of the collective unconscious (42).

Yeats first encountered the idea of the Anima Mundi in Theosophical works. In The Secret Doctrine Blavatsky refers to the Anima Mundi as an "Astral Light," which is "dual and bisexual," the male part "purely divine and spiritual," and the female part "tainted, in one sense, with matter" (1: 196). According to Blavatsky, psyche, the human soul, is the lower portion of Anima Mundi (1: 194). She writes that matter and spirit are two poles of the same thing, in the same way that Satan and God are "the same thing seen from two aspects" (1: 197). Yeats would most likely have claimed that

his vision came from the vast storehouse of this Anima Mundi. Although its similarity to Jung's collective unconscious is notable, James Lovic Allen has rightly stated in his discussion of Yeats and archetypal criticism that "Jung is obviously too much the scientist for his final views or conceptualizations to accord well with those of the passionately anti-scientific Yeats" ("Archetypal" 55), and calls for interpretations of Yeats which are not only archetypal but also take into account Yeats's "simple dualistic cosmology and belief in a supernatural divinity that is related to life of the spirit after death" (62). In my explication I have chosen to note this likeness, while emphasizing the system Yeats learned from the Golden Dawn, for the symbolism of the poem has its source in the occult, not in Jungian archetypal theory. Before exploring the poem's relation to the Tree of Life and to Tarot, it is necessary to show that the theme of "The Cap and Bells" is alchemical in nature, and to clarify the connection between alchemy and the Cabala in Yeats's magical system.

Jung offers the information that "the alchemist saw the union of opposites under the symbol of the tree" (Archetypes 109) and that "in the history of symbols this tree is described as the way of life itself, a growing into that which eternally is and does not change; which springs from the union of opposites and, by its eternal presence, also

makes that union possible" (110). Allen has written that Yeats's Tree of Life is "a major symbol that is as alchemical as it is cabalistic" ("Life" 28). In the Golden Dawn the Cabalistic Tree of Life plays an alchemical role in providing the initiate a path toward union with the divine, and "The Cap and Bells" is a symbol of this process. Allen writes of Yeats's alchemical ideas that the union of man and the divine, "the union of male and female," and the "motif of death and rebirth" are the main elements ("Life" 27). Coltrane briefly notes these elements in a discussion of "The Cap and Bells" with his statement that the Golden Dawn initiate must bring "contrary principles" together (132), with his mention of the union of queen and reborn jester through the jester's death and rebirth (133), and with his discussion of the union of the "sensual" and the "spiritual" (137). However, a full discussion of Yeats's alchemical ideas requires an account of their sources in Golden Dawn literature concerning the Tree of Life.

CHAPTER 3

"THE CAP AND BELLS," THE TREE OF LIFE, AND THE HANGED MAN

The union of opposites within "The Cap and Bells" is found in the Tree of Life, as reference to S. L. MacGregor Mathers' The Kabbalah Unveiled, a translation from the Latin "Kabbala Denudata," will show. Lawrence W. Fennelly writes of the likelihood that Yeats read Mathers's book before meeting him in 1890, stating that The Kabbalah Unveiled is "the basis for many Golden Dawn rituals" (289). Mathers writes in his introduction that "the term balance is applied to the two opposite natures in each triad of the Sephiroth, their equilibrium forming the third Sephira in each ternary" (16). In the second triad of Sephiroth on the Tree, the opposing forces of the "masculine potency" in the fourth Sephirah, which is called "Chesed," and the "feminine passive potency" of the fifth Sephirah, called "Geburah," are united in the sixth Sephirah, "Tiphereth" (25). Mathers also writes that Tiphareth is the central Sephirah of what Cabalists call Microprosopus, or the Lesser Countenance, which consists of all the Sephiroth on the second and third triads of the Tree (26). Tiphareth, or Microprosopus, is the antithesis of the first Sephirah, Kether, called Macroprosopus, or the Vast Countenance (26). The tenth and last Sephirah, Malkuth, is

called "the Inferior Mother" (25), "the Queen," and "the Bride of Microprosopus" (26). This information from Mathers is essential in structuring an argument that "The Cap and Bells" finds its place on the Tree and in Tarot. An examination of the information reveals the roles each Sephirah plays in the alchemical union.

In her book, The Mystical Qabalah, Golden Dawn initiate Dion Fortune writes that the magical image of Tiphareth is "a sacrificed god," and that one of its symbols is the "Rosy Cross" (188). Here one may find the source of Milne and Coltrane's claim that the red in Yeats's poem corresponds, through the color of the rose, to Tiphareth. However, Fortune writes that the red rose is the symbol of Geburah (185), and it is more likely that the opposing forces of the masculine Chesed and the feminine Geburah are the blue and red garments of the jester, who is Tiphareth or Microprosopus, sacrificing himself to Malkuth, the Queen or Bride of Microprosopus, in order to bring about the alchemical union of male and female, and thus of man and the divine, through death and rebirth. The likelihood that Yeats's queen refers to Malkuth is increased when one considers that the word "Queen" was capitalized in the 1894 version of the poem (qtd. in Coltrane 138). A further examination of the Tree and of Golden Dawn literature will help to establish the poem's relation to the Tree and to the Tarot card, the Hanged Man.

Fortune writes that when the Cabalist views the Tree subjectively rather than objectively, taking it to symbolize not, as it sometimes does, "the cosmos in its entirety," but "the soul of man as related thereto" (37), then "Geburah equates with the right arm" (56). For the majority of his life after 1890, Yeats was interested in the branch of the Golden Dawn that would come to be known as the Stella Matutina (Harper, Yeats's 125), which branched off from the Isis-Urania Temple in 1900 (Regardie 272). The teachings, rites and ceremonies of the Isis-Urania Temple and the Stella Matutina have been preserved by Israel Regardie in his book, The Golden Dawn. In a color diagram of the Tree in that book, Chesed is blue, Geburah red, and Tiphareth yellow (plate 4). Thus it may be seen that when the jester of "The Cap and Bells" sacrifices his red and blue garments to the queen, the red goes to Geburah, and the blue to Chesed. The poem's phrase "To her right hand came the red one, / To her left hand came the blue" (31-32) would be correctly attributed to his act of sacrifice, since the queen, as I shall show, is the embodiment of the Tree.

In Regardie's The Golden Dawn it is written that after the fall of man

> it became necessary that a Second ADAM should arise to restore the System, and thus, as ADAM had been spread on the Cross of the Four Rivers, so the Second ADAM should be crucified on the Infernal Rivers of the four armed Cross of DEATH--yet to do this he must descend into the lowest, even MALKUTH the Earth, and be born of her. (76)

In a diagram of the book which corresponds to this last quote, named "The Garden of Eden After the Fall," a cross with the yellow of Tiphareth as its base, the red of Geburah as its right arm, and the blue of Chesed as its left arm is shown with the figure of a man placed in the region of Tiphareth (plate 1). That Yeats knew this diagram is evidenced both by its appearance in the Golden Dawn folder of Georgie Hyde-Lees (Harper, plate 8) and its use in the initiatory ceremony for the fourth grade of the order, Philosophus (Regardie 32). "The Garden of Eden After the Fall" is a continuation of the symbolism begun in a diagram entitled "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall," which is shown in the ritual for the third grade, Practicus (32). Yeats achieved both of these grades, and in 1893 he also achieved the fifth grade, which corresponds on the Tree to the Sephirah of Tiphareth (Harper, "Zelator" 82). Significantly, this was the year in which "The Cap and Bells" was written. According to Mathers's explanation of the triads quoted above, Tiphareth is formed by the equilibrium of Geburah and Chesed, and likewise in "The Cap and Bells" the jester's sacrificial act equilibrates heart and soul. In the Practicus ritual the Cross of the Four Rivers on which Adam was spread is described as consisting of four heads corresponding to Geburah, Chesed, Tiphareth and Malkuth (Regardie 177). The River of Fire flows into Geburah, the

River of Waters into Chesed, the River of Air into Tiphareth, and "the fourth . . . receiveth the virtues of the other three" and "floweth down upon the Earth" (177), which is Malkuth. Once the fall occurs, the crucifixion of Tiphareth shown in the Philosophus ritual is necessary to restore the balance, and to sacrifice himself the Second Adam must return to his Mother and Bride, Malkuth, and be born of her. That Yeats had the symbolism of these two diagrams in mind for "The Cap and Bells" is suggested by the two opening lines of the poem, "The jester walked in the garden: / The garden had fallen still" (1-2).

It is through a further look at occult symbolism that the poem's relation to the Tarot card, the Hanged Man is revealed. A central alchemical symbol of the Golden Dawn is the hexagram. In The Golden Dawn it is written that

> the hexagram of Tiphareth is formed from the Pillars on each side. In Chesed is the Water triangle, in Geburah the Fire triangle. And Tiphareth unites and reconciles them so as to form a reconciliation between them in the form of the hexagram. (84)

Mathers wrote that Microprosopus, or Tiphareth, "inherits the double qualities of the Father and the Mother" in the union of the triangles of fire and water (331). Here it is useful to note that Paul Case, once Supreme Chief of the Golden Dawn for the U. S. and Canada, writes of the figure in the Tarot card, the Hanged Man that "his legs are red, color of fire, and his jacket is blue, color of water" (Tarot 138). Yeats's fellow Golden Dawn initiate, A. E. Waite, also captured this

idea in his depiction of the sacrificed figure as wearing red pants and blue jacket, and wrote of his card that it "expresses the relation . . . between the Divine and the Universe," and concerns the "Mystery of Death" and the "Mystery of Resurrection" (119). Yeats scholar Kathleen Raine notes in her discussion of the Tarot that the Hanged Man is not just "another Dying God but may be taken to represent, in a particular aspect, all those myths of sacrifice" (138). Thus, in one sense, the Hanged Man may be taken to represent the sacrifice of Tiphareth, by which the occult initiate redeems himself from the fall.

In "The Cap and Bells" the jester's soul wears "a straight blue garment" (5) and his heart wears "a red and quivering garment" (15). If these garments are taken to be contrary garments of water and fire worn by the Hanged Man, and the jester's intention is to reconcile the two and unite the masculine and the feminine, then he does so by hanging himself from the Tree, and being born of Malkuth the Earth, or the Queen. The likelihood that Yeats was referring to the blue of Chesed and the red of Geburah in his poem is increased when one considers that the jester offers first his red garment and then his blue garment to the queen, just as the red Sephirah follows the blue Sephirah in numerical sequence toward the last Sephirah, Malkuth. As a result of the jester's act of sacrifice, the queen receives his gifts and he is resurrected. Before his death the jester presents

first his soul and then his heart, but when he is reborn the queen receives them in reverse order, as Yeats writes that "the heart and the soul came through" (30). That Yeats reverses the order and mentions the red first and the blue last after the jester's rebirth may relate to the fact that the Hanged Man signifies reversal, as he hangs upside down (Case, Tarot 187).

Case also writes that "it is evident that the legs of the Hanged Man form a cross, and that lines drawn from his elbows to the point formed by his hair will form the sides of a reversed triangle having his arms for its base" (Tarot 136) He writes that "the cross is the number 4, and the triangle is the number 3" (136). Of the upside down triangle, he writes that it "is one of the ancient ways of writing the letter Daleth, which corresponds to the Empress, numbered 3 in Tarot," and of the legs that they "may be taken to represent the Emperor, since they indicate the number 4" (136). This seems relevant to "The Cap and Bells" in that the Hebrew letter name Daleth means "door" (57) and Heh, which is assigned to the Emperor, means "window" (65). Yeats writes first of the jester that "He bade his soul rise upward / And stand on her window-sill" (3-4), and then of the jester's heart that "In a red and quivering garment / It sang to her through the door" (15-16). Here the element of reversal enters again, in that when the heart and soul are received by the queen after the jester's sacrifice, Yeats

mentions the door first instead of the window: "She opened her door and her window" (29).

Considering the jester's sacrifice in light of the Hanged Man and the "sacrificed god" of Tiphareth, and recalling that in the Cabala the Queen is also called the Mother, it is useful to note the similarity between Yeats's poem and Jung's archetype of the hanged god, for Jung recognized the Tarot as a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious minds (Van der Post xiv-xv). In his discussion of the hanged god Jung wrote that "the tree is predominantly a mother-symbol," and that "the dead are delivered back to the mother for rebirth" (Symbols 233). Brenda S. Webster, in a psychoanalytic study, writes of the jester's sacrifice of his cap and bells that it "causes death and is a symbolic castration" (113); and David Cowart, in a study of the poem, notes Webster's recognition of the "phallic significance" of the poem's imagery (42). Cowart suggests that the poem is motivated to some extent both by Oedipal fantasy and a desire to "return to the primal intrauterine oneness," the latter desire depicted in the poem as the queen's hair "becomes the 'folded flower' with the dreamer-fool inside" (43). Webster's viewpoint is not much different from Sallie Nichols' Jungian analysis of the Hanged Man, in which she writes of his death and rebirth in the Great Mother that the "lopped off branches of [the tree]

. . . symbolized both the castration of the son (masculine ego consciousness) and also the possibility of new growth--or rebirth--into a larger sphere of awareness" (217). This idea brings me to my discussion of the motif of mystical death and rebirth in "The Cap and Bells" and the various elements that comprise it.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEATH AND REBIRTH MOTIF IN "THE CAP AND BELLS"

Seiden writes that the "rebirth initiation" was central to the Golden Dawn, that the initiate "symbolically died or killed himself, whereupon he was spiritually reborn as Osiris, Orpheus, Dionysus, Christ, or a fourteenth-century adept by the name of Father Christian Rosenkreuz" (44). He also notes that "the rebirth symbolized the alchemist's transmutation of matter into its divine or supernatural counterparts, as well as his own ascent of the Sephirotic Tree of Life to God" (44). This death and rebirth motif also surfaces in conjunction with Yeats's study of Shelley. George Bornstein writes that Yeats found in Shelley "a justification for taking magic seriously in his own writing, for to him Shelley provided an example of a great poet who regarded magic as a fit poetic theme" (20). Yeats himself writes of Shelley in "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" that his poetry and early romances "show how strong a fascination the traditions of magic and of the magical philosophy had cast over his mind, and one can hardly suppose that he had not brooded over their doctrine of symbols" (Ideas 112). Yeats almost seems to be placing his own belief in the Anima Mundi on Shelley when he writes that "what

[Shelley] says of the eternity of beautiful things and of the influence of the dead" indicates his understanding that "our thoughts are not, as we suppose, the deep but a little foam upon the deep" (113). Here, too, his discussion of symbols seems relevant to his note on the vision of "The Cap and Bells":

> Any one who has any experience of any mystical state of the soul knows how there float up in the mind profound symbols, whose meaning, if indeed they do not delude one into the dream that they are meaningless, one does not perhaps understand for years. (112-113)

His discussion of these ideas exposes his eagerness to impose his own experience on Shelley. Bornstein writes that "a concern with magic and the occult found its way into [Yeats's] first imitations of Shelley" (20).

While Yeats "had imagined himself a Shelleyan magician even as a boy," his own "formal interest in magic" did not begin to surface until the 1880s, and this is when he began to write Shelleyan verse dramas (Bornstein 20). Bornstein writes that these dramas "emphasized love and magic," and that "Yeats followed Shelley in treating love as a continuous quest, ending in death and symbolized by star imagery" (13-14). Although Bornstein does not mention it, it seems likely that this Shelleyan motif influenced "The Cap and Bells." In the poem, the jester's quest for love leads him to give up his cap and bells and die, and when the queen receives his cap and bells there is star imagery. This star imagery,

being absent from the 1894 text (qtd. in Coltrane 139), is peculiar to the final version of the poem. Yeats writes: "She laid them upon her bosom, / Under a cloud of her hair, / And her red lips sang them a love-song / Till stars grew out of the air" (25-28).

Yeats's association of love and death, then, finds one source in Shelley (Bornstein 16). Discussing Shelley's Rosalind and Helen, Yeats quotes Lionel's dying words, "'Heardst thou not that those who die / Awake in a world of ecstasy?'" (Ideas 101). The motif of death and rebirth is on Yeats's mind when he writes of Shelley's Intellectual Beauty in a discussion of Prometheus Unbound, that "This beauty, this divine order, whereof all things shall become a part in a kind of resurrection of the body, is already visible to the dead and to souls in ecstasy, for ecstasy is a kind of death" (101). Bornstein notes that by the time Yeats wrote this essay he "found that Shelley not only associated love with death but also developed this quest in an image pattern based on the morning and evening star" (17). The essay appears in Yeats's Ideas of Good and Evil, published in 1903, four years after "The Cap and Bells" (Ellmann 85). Bornstein writes of Yeats's work that although the star "appears in association with love and death as early as the eighties," it "assumes the greatest importance for Yeats during the nineties" (18). Yeats wrote and revised "The Cap and Bells" between 1893 and 1899, and it is likely that the importance this star assumed

for Yeats in the '90s was fueled by his initiation into the Isis-Urania Temple of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1890. According to Regardie's The Golden Dawn, "Isis-Urania is Venus, and she is the occult planet which represents the Genius of this Order--Venus, the Evening and Morning Star, presaging the rising of the Sun of ineffable Light" (272). Bornstein writes that Yeats "observed, too, Shelley's tendency to move from earthly to heavenly love and was aware that the projected ending of Prince Athanase involved the hero's rejection of Pandemos in favor of Venus Urania" (18). This idea of the dual Venus, her earthly aspect represented in Pandemos and her heavenly aspect in Urania, can be linked to "The Cap and Bells." The poem can be seen as Yeats's own move away from the earthly beauty of Pandemos toward the Intellectual Beauty of Urania. As Bornstein writes, "Yeats understood the conjunction of love and death implied by the star, with the lover finding the goal of his quest 'as the day finds the Star at evening'" (18).

Finally, Shelley's Prometheus Unbound is of importance to the analysis of "The Cap and Bells." Bornstein writes that "what [Yeats] found in Shelley did not always coincide with what was there to be found" (14). Of Prometheus Unbound, he writes that "we may imagine [it] hovering over Yeats's juvenilia like a benignant deity sadly puzzled by the antics of its progeny" (14). In the essay on Shelley quoted

above, Yeats writes of Shelley's vision in that poem that "the regeneration he foresaw was so much more than the regeneration many political dreamers have foreseen" (Ideas 93). He quotes Mrs. Shelley's statement that "it requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as [Shelley's] own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem" (92), and writes that he has re-read the poem, "and it seems to me to have an even more certain place than I had thought, among the sacred books of the world" (91). Of Shelley's Intellectual Beauty, Yeats writes that Shelley "does not believe that the reformation of society can bring this beauty, this divine order, among men without the regeneration of the hearts of men" (98). This regeneration is characterized by "'pure desire and universal love'" (98). It is likely that the regeneration Yeats saw in Prometheus Unbound was more Yeatsian than Shelleyan, and finding out a clearer definition of this regeneration and its relevance to "The Cap and Bells" requires a closer look at the rituals of the Golden Dawn.

The first five ritual grades of the order are relevant to the argument. According to The Golden Dawn,

> The initiation ceremonies of the Zelator, Theoricus, Practicus and Philosophus grades are each referred to one of the four elements of Tetragrammaton--YHVH--beginning with the last, Earth, Air, Water and Fire respectively. As a whole, these grades represent the fundamental work of the outer order which is to equilibrate the elemental forces in the working temple and in the psyches of individuals. (135)

Regardie writes that "the four Grades of Earth, Air, Water and Fire plant the seeds of the microcosmic Pentagram, and above them is placed, in the Portal ceremony, the Crown of the Spirit, the quintessence" (29). Yeats scholar Virginia Moore, in her discussion of these rituals, notes the relevance of the Hanged Man to the Portal ritual, which represents the "fifth prong of the Pentagram," (145) and writes that this ritual, which is preparatory to the initiate's achievement of the grade of Tiphareth, "explained how the Cross became a Pentacle--that is, how the four elements are exalted by the spirit" (145). Moore notes that in the ritual the initiate says the words, "I seek the Path of Mem, the Path of Sacrifice;" and the ritual explains that the Path of Mem rules the Hanged Man (Regardie 212). Moore writes that after Yeats completed the Portal ritual he waited nine months before achieving the grade of Tiphareth (145), referring to a passage in the ritual which notes that "nine lunar months are the period of gestation before birth" (Regardie 219). In the ritual it is written,

> Now you must labor to establish the Pentagram in yourself. That it be the Pentagram of Good, upright and balanced, not the evil and reversed Pentagram . . . to make yourself truly a Microcosm reflecting the Macrocosm whose symbolic Hexagram of Tiphareth presides above you. (Regardie 217)

Here the initiate is being prepared for the sacrifice of Tiphareth, in which the reversal of the Hanged Man turns the symbolic Pentagram right side up, so that it points toward

the pure spirit of Macroprosopus. Yet, for Microprosopus to achieve the alchemical union of matter and spirit he must return to his Bride and Mother, Malkuth, to die and be reborn. He must hang himself from the Tree of Life, symbolic of the Mother. He must reconcile the opposites of fire and water by reflecting the Hexagram of Tiphareth, the macrocosmic symbol of their union. It is likely that, to Yeats, the rebirth of Tiphareth symbolized the achievement of Shelley's Intellectual Beauty, a movement away from the earthly beauty of Pandemos to the heavenly beauty of Urania. This theme may be clarified by turning to Regardie's discussion of the diagrams of "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall" and "The Garden of Eden After the Fall," which, as I have noted above, appear in the rituals of Practicus and Philosophus respectively. These two grades precede the Portal ritual, Practicus being the grade of Water, and Philosophus being the grade of Fire (Regardie 21).

CHAPTER 5

"THE CAP AND BELLS" AND THE DIAGRAMS OF "THE GARDEN OF EDEN BEFORE THE FALL" AND "THE GARDEN OF EDEN AFTER THE FALL"

Regardie writes that "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall" depicts a state "when peace and harmony prevailed both within and without by right of heritage rather than through personal labour," and that it appears in the grade of Water "since Water is a fitting representation of this placid peace" (32). In his description of the diagram, he writes,

> At the summit of the diagram stands the Apocalyptic woman clothed with the Sun of glory, crowned with the twelve stars, and the moon lying at her feet. . . . At the base of the tree stands Eve, the Nephesch or unconscious who, in opposition to this divine Genius, stands for the dark, "earthborn, feminine principle with its emotionality and instinctiveness reaching far back into the depths of time." (32-33)

Here one might recall the distinction between Urania and Pandemos, as Regardie writes that "Between the two stands Adam, supported by the fundamental strength of Eve, the Ruach or Ego not yet awakened to a realisation of its innate power and possibility" (33). Finally, "Beneath these three figures sleeps a coiled dragon, silent, unawakened. None it would seem is aware of that latent power centered in man, his libido, neutral, of vast potentialites but neither good nor evil in itself" (33).

Here one begins to see the theme which is central to the practice of magic, to Yeats's reading of Shelley, and to "The Cap and Bells," and the situation which calls for this death and rebirth is depicted in the diagram of "The Garden of Eden After the Fall." In this diagram, corresponding to the Fire grade, "the power of Fire is shown to have called forth catastrophe" (33). Regardie writes that,

> Formerly coiled beneath the tree, the hydra-headed dragon in this diagram has usurped its proper place. Its several horned heads wind their way up into the very structure of the tree. . . . Eve, the lower self, ceases to give support to Adam. (33)

Finally, Regardie writes that, while the fall is a catastrophe, "The awareness of the rise of the dragon endows man also with the consciousness of power" (33). In his fallen state, the initiate must redirect his libido, neither intrinsically good nor evil, from the lower expression to the higher. He must effect the reversal of the Hanged Man. As Moore writes, "Eve, tempted by the Tree of Knowledge . . . has stretched her hands down to grasp forbidden fruit and so let the great pillars and the Sephirotic System and Adam which they supported crash" (144). It is up to the initiate to re-establish the equilibrium between the fiery pillar of Geburah and the watery pillar of Chesed. The jester in "The Cap and Bells," equilibrating the red and blue of the heart and soul through sacrificing his cap and bells to the queen, may be seen as a symbol of the occult initiate. The likelihood that the jester's sacrifice effects the alchemical

union of matter and spirit is increased when it is shown that the four alchemical elements, fire, water, air, and earth are symbolized in the poem's imagery.

As mentioned above, the Cross of the Four Rivers in the Practicus ritual consists of the Sephiroth Geburah, Chesed, Tiphareth, and Malkuth, and the four rivers flowing into them are the rivers of fire, water, air, and earth respectively. Referring to the diagram of "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall," the Practicus ritual reads,

> And thus do the Rivers of Eden form a Cross, and on that Cross the Great Adam, the Son who was to rule the Nations with a Rod of Iron, is extended from Tiphareth and his arms outstretch to Gedulah [Chesed] and Geburah, and in Malkuth is Eve, the Mother of all. (Regardie 178)

Thus, if the jester is making the sacrifice of Tiphareth necessitated by the fall, then on the Tree of Life the red and blue of his heart and soul would be Geburah and Chesed, and the queen would be Malkuth, the Queen, below him, to whom he must descend for rebirth. Thus, the jester would be the element of air, the queen that of earth, and heart and soul, fire and water. The further significance of the diagrams of "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall" and "The Garden of Eden After the Fall" to Yeats's study of Shelley and to "The Cap and Bells" may be found through reference to Regardie's discussion of the diagrams.

Of the diagrams, Regardie writes that "They should be carefully studied and receive long meditation, for in them

are many clues to the spiritual and psychological problems which beset the traveller on the Path, and they resume the entire philosophy of Magic" (32). As a student of the Golden Dawn, Yeats would have paid much attention to these diagrams, and what he learned from them would confirm the knowledge he gained previously from his theosophical studies, for, as Regardie writes of the diagrams,

> Many hints, moreover, which may be found useful as assisting meditation are contained in The 'Curse' from a Philosophical Point of View in the second volume of Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine in connection with the Prometheus myth and the awakening of Manas, mind. (32)

Blavatsky's passage sheds much light on the nature of the dilemma shown in the two diagrams. Of the "arts" which man has learned through the use of Prometheus's gift of the "fire" of "creative power," Blavatsky writes that with them, "the fire received has turned into the greatest curse: the animal element, and consciousness of its possession, has changed periodical instinct into chronic animalism and sensuality" (2:412). She writes that "the curse of KARMA" was given to Adam and Eve not because they sought "natural union," but "for abusing the creative power, for desecrating the divine gift, and wasting the life-essence for no purpose except bestial personal gratification" (2:410). Prometheus "endowed man" with this "wisdom," but "the lower aspect of Manas or the animal (Kama) having remained unchanged . . . there was created the eternal vulture of the ever unsatisfied

desire . . . unto the day when Prometheus is released by his heaven-appointed deliverer" (2:413). The plight the occult initiate faces in redirecting the libido can thus be seen in Blavatsky's interpretation of the myth of Adam and Eve. It is necessary to move away from worldly conceptions of desire if one wishes to regain mankind's original state and use the gift of the creative fire wisely. Here one can see the likelihood that Yeats's interest in Shelley's Intellectual Beauty was fueled and influenced by his studies in Theosophy and the Golden Dawn. A further look at Blavatsky's The Secret Doctrine reinforces this connection.

In 1893, the year "The Cap and Bells" was written, Yeats achieved the grade of Tiphareth, or Adeptus Minor (Harper, "Zelator" 82) having completed the fifth prong of the upright Pentagram, symbolic of his reversal of the libido away from its fallen state and toward spiritual union. In conjunction with this achievement, Yeats also took in 1893 the magical motto, "Demon Est Deus Inversus" (82). Marie Roberts notes that the phrase means "the Devil is God inverted" and was likely borrowed by Yeats from Blavatsky's The Secret Doctrine (131), in which it appears as a section heading. In this section Blavatsky characterizes Satan as "the opposing Power required by equilibrium and harmony of things in Nature," and notes that

> if the homogeneous One and Absolute is no mere figure of speech, and if heterogeneity in its dualistic aspect is its offspring--its bifurcated

> shadow or reflection--then even that divine Homogeneity must contain in itself the essence of both good and evil. (1:411)

One can see the relevance of both of the above passages from Blavatsky's work to Regardie's treatment of the two diagrams in discussion and also to Yeats's poem. The jester of "The Cap and Bells" cannot win the queen with heart or soul alone, for these opposites must be equilibrated and unified through a symbolic death which resolves the imbalance and restores equilibrium. In the unification of opposites he achieves rebirth in a monistic Eden of the mind, and leaves behind worldly conceptions of love.

These ideas, which are, again, largely a result of Yeats's study of occultism, influenced his entire career. The two diagrams of "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall" and "The Garden of Eden After the Fall" may be seen as an influence both in "The Cap and Bells" and in a much wider sphere. Harper writes of Yeats that "in one sense his entire creative life represents a concrete projection of his quest for Eden, a desire to regain 'the simplicity of the first ages'" (Quest 291). While Harper's study does not mention occult influences, it is evident that Yeats's concept of Eden was shaped by his studies in the Golden Dawn and, to a lesser extent, Theosophy. Harper writes that Yeats's quest resolves "itself finally in the magnificent union of contraries which he described as 'radical innocence'" (291). He goes on to quote Yeats's statement that artists, as the new Adams, are

"to take upon their shoulders the burdens that have fallen from the shoulders of priests, and to lead us back upon our journey by filling our thoughts with the essences of things, and not with things" (Yeats, E & I 193). It is likely that this statement has its source in Golden Dawn literature, for, as is quoted above from The Golden Dawn in Chapter Two, after Adam's fall came the need for a new Adam to restore mankind's lost estate.

While Harper mentions William Blake as a major influence in Yeats's quest for "radical innocence," Yeats's studies both in occultism and in the poetry of Shelley should be seen as equally important to this search. Harper writes that what Yeats "said of Blake's search is surely more characteristic of his own," (315) and goes on to quote a passage by Yeats on Blake. Yeats writes of Blake that

> instead of seeking God in the deserts of time and space, in exterior immensities, in what he called "the abstract void", he believed that the further he dropped behind him memory of time and space, reason builded upon sensation, morality founded for the ordering of the world; and the more he was absorbed in emotion; and, above all, in emotion escaped from the impulse of bodily longing and the restraints of bodily reason, in artistic emotion; the nearer did he come to Eden's "breathing garden", to use his beautiful phrase, and to the unveiled face of God. (E & I 133)

In this passage one can see Yeats's own longing, in Shelleyan terms, to renounce Venus Pandemos in favor of Venus Urania, or in Golden Dawn terms, to establish in himself the upright Pentagram. One recalls the phrase "Demon Est Deus Inversus"

when Harper writes that, for Yeats, an understanding of both good and evil is a necessity in achieving "radical innocence" (324). As Regardie has written, the libido is a neutral force that may be turned toward good or evil. The upright Pentagram, and the Hanged Man which symbolizes the reversal whereby it is turned upright, are key concepts in Yeats's search. Harper quotes Yeats's question, "Is not all spiritual knowledge perhaps a reversal, a return?" (E & I 416) This question, which seems profoundly Cabalistic, and Yeats's belief that an understanding of both good and evil is necessary to the search, are suggested by Harper to have their source, again, in Blake. Harper reprints Yeats's quotation of Blake:

> Men are admitted into Heaven not because they have curbed and governed their passions, but because they have cultivated their understandings. The treasures of Heaven are not negations of passion, but realities of intellect, from which the passions emanate uncurbed in their eternal glory. (E & I 137-8)

Thus it is through an understanding that the libido has the potential for both good and evil that one begins to desire intelligently, and return, in a sense, to Eden. This Eden, as Harper writes, "represents man's longing for a state of mind rather than a place or a historical fact" (309).

The distinction of Eden as a state of mind recalls Yeats's statement above concerning Shelley's Intellectual Beauty, that his vision was more than any foreseen political

regeneration because it transformed not society but the hearts of men. Harper discusses Yeats's tendency to contrast those who search for an Eden of "intellectual innocence" and those who "search for Eden in utopian and social orders of the future" (317). While, as Harper notes, by the time Yeats wrote "A Prayer for My Daughter," he had sadly placed Maud Gonne in the latter category (317), it is likely that at the time "The Cap and Bells" was composed he thought otherwise. In his study of "The Cap and Bells," Coltrane writes that "Yeats's desire to be united spiritually with Maud Gonne through their mutual interest in the occult is a sublimated expression of his desire to be united with her sexually" (133). Coltrane's concentration on the sublimation of desire is appropriate in a study of "The Cap and Bells," but the scope and gravity of occult themes and ideas in the poem seem to outweigh the possibility that Maud Gonne is its central focus. Before fully discussing the occult concept of desire and its application to the poem, it is necessary to focus on the meaning and function of two of the poem's symbols, the star and the rose.

CHAPTER 6

THE STAR AND THE ROSE IN "THE CAP AND BELLS"

Yeats may have been suggesting his symbol of the Rose in "The Cap and Bells" with his usage of the word "rose" twice as a verb. Yeats writes first of the jester's soul that "It rose in a straight blue garment," (5) and then of the queen that "She rose in her pale night-gown" (10). In the 1894 version, although the soul goes up, the word "rose" is used only once, in reference to the queen (qtd. in Coltrane 139). Again, while I agree with Milne and Coltrane that the rose is important in discussing the poem, I have argued that the color red in the poem is associated more with Geburah than with Tiphareth, for the rose is a symbol of Geburah and the red and blue of Geburah and Chesed (heart and soul) must be equilibrated by Tiphareth (the jester).

In addition to having an occult significance, Yeats's Rose is linked with the symbolism of Shelley. Bornstein writes that "to trace the profound impact of Shelley on Yeats we must turn . . . to the poems about the Rose" (45). He writes that Yeats has "identified his Rose as Intellectual Beauty," and suggests that Yeats means "Intellect" to "signify the divine mind or suprasensible intelligible world. Intellectual Beauty would then be the beauty of that world

manifesting itself in ordinary materiality, the spiritual and eternal in the physical and transitory" (45).

Bornstein writes that "Yeats in the 1890s was much more closely identified with Shelley than he later cared to admit" (50). Yeats eventually came to believe that his idea of Intellectual Beauty differed from Shelley's. In a 1925 note to The Rose, he wrote "that the quality symbolized as The Rose differs from the Intellectual Beauty of Shelley and of Spenser in that I have imagined it as suffering with man and not as something pursued and seen from afar" (Poems 591). Using "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time" as an example, Bornstein suggests that by his statement Yeats means that "he wants beauty to return but not to engulf him so completely that he forsakes the world of 'common things'" (53). He also writes that Yeats's contrast between his own idea and Shelley's "holds true only for some of the poems" (50), and uses "The Secret Rose" as an example of a poem in which Yeats has changed his mind and wants the Rose "to 'enfold' him in its power" (54). Unlike the majority of Yeats's Rose poems, "The Secret Rose" appears in The Wind Among the Reeds. "The Cap and Bells" is another poem in this volume, and while the Rose is not the major focus of its imagery, the poem does seem to share this Shelleyan influence.

Ellmann writes that "the rose, lily, meteor, and evening star are so insistently and oddly linked as to make the reader ask what their relation is" (70). Bornstein reveals a

connection between rose and star in writing that "Shelley symbolized Intellectual Beauty by the morning and evening star," and that Yeats put his Rose "in place of Shelley's star" (48). "The Cap and Bells" has both star and rose imagery, and is a blend of occult and Shelleyan influences. The rose is a traditional symbol of desire and a flower sacred to Venus, and Venus, who is the Genius of the Isis-Urania Temple of the Golden Dawn, is symbolized by the morning and evening star. "The Cap and Bells" symbolizes the sacrifice of the occult initiate, whereby the libido is redirected and the Intellectual Beauty of Venus Urania, or consciousness of the "suprasensible intelligible world," is achieved. The upright Pentagram, the occult star symbolic of this reversal, reveals another connection between the rose and the star.

Discussing the cover of The Secret Rose, Ellman writes of the rose that its "four petals are . . . the four elements," and adds that the "conjunction of the rose and cross which suggests the fifth element or quintessence is the central myth of Rosicrucianism" (64). The five elements are also symbolized in the Pentagram, and Geburah, the fifth Sephirah on the Tree, is symbolized by a red, five-petalled rose (Fortune 173). The relation of the rose and star to Geburah suggest another meaning behind Yeats's statement that his Rose represents "suffering with man."

Fortune characterizes the function of Geburah as a "sacrificial priest" (176), and writes that Geburah is the agent through which the "psychic energy" of that which one is sacrificing "is released for use in the chosen channel" (177). She writes that this sacrifice "means the deliberate and open-eyed choice of a greater good in preference to a lesser good" (176). The jester's sacrifice of his cap and bells in order to resolve the duality of heart and soul and to achieve union with the queen seems one such sacrifice. He is reconciling the duality of worldly love, leaving behind its heterogeneity to achieve union with what Blavatsky calls the "homogeneous One." Thus, the Rose is in one sense symbolic of the occult initiate's personal sacrifice and suffering in order to be reborn into a higher consciousness.

This sacrifice finds a symbol in the Rosy Cross, which is symbolic of Tiphareth. In his discussion of the conjunction of rose and cross, Ellmann points out that it can "be regarded as sexual symbolism," (66) an idea which seems appropriate to the process of sublimation depicted in "The Cap and Bells." However, he suggests that the cross is symbolic of a "masculine principle," (66) and it seems more likely that the cross is symbolic of Venus and the Cabalistic Tree of Life, which are paralleled in Yeats's poem by the queen. In the Golden Dawn ritual for the grade of Philosophus, the grade of fire, corresponding to the diagram of "The Garden of Eden After the Fall," the initiate is shown

the symbol of Venus on the Tree (Regardie 193), and is told, "This Grade is related to the Planet VENUS. . . . Its Symbol, when inscribed on the Tree of Life is shown in the East. It embraces the whole of the Sephiroth, and is therefore a fitting emblem of the Isis of Nature" (195).

Here it is useful to recall Jung's account of the tree as a symbol of the mother, and Nichols' Jungian discussion of the Hanged Man, in which she stated the severed tree branches depicted in the card were symbolic of the castration of the ego and a consequent rebirth in the consciousness of the Great Mother. The jester's surrender of his cap and bells, also noted above by Webster as a symbolic castration, offers some insight into the occult concept of desire Yeats presents in "The Cap and Bells," which is related to the idea of Kundalini. Case writes that the Kundalini is synonymous with what Blavatsky calls "Fohat," or "the Astral Light, symbolized by a coiled serpent," and is represented in Cabala by the Hebrew letter Teth (Tokens 95). The Kundalini bears a connection with the "fire" of Prometheus and the "dragon" or libido represented in the Golden Dawn diagrams of "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall" and "The Garden of Eden After the Fall." Case writes that the Kundalini uses its "power by drawing it off from the particular nerve center that energizes the sex organs and applying it to other kinds of work" (True 224). The Kundalini, which "is cosmic electricity, the universal life-principle, the conscious

energy which takes form as all things, and builds everything from within," (Tarot 103) also bears a connection with Blavatsky's Anima Mundi, for she characterizes it as an "Astral Light."

CHAPTER 7

THE OCCULT CONCEPT OF DESIRE IN "THE CAP AND BELLS"

In addition to having a theosophical significance, Yeats's occult motto, "Demon Est Deus Inversus" has a Cabalistic meaning which seems relevant to "The Cap and Bells." It is arrived at through the Cabalistic system known as Gematria, in which scriptural "spellings and phrasings" (since the Hebrew alphabet is not distinct from the numeral system) "throw light on one another because they have the same numeral values" (Case, True 33). Case writes that "the power that brought about the Fall is identical with that which is to bring about the Redemption" (173-4). This connection is revealed through the number 358, which is "common to Nachash and Messiach" (173). Case writes that Nachash indicates "the serpent who tempted Eve," and Messiach means "Redeemer," and notes that "Nachash also is one of the Hebrew words for copper, the metal of Venus" (173). This kinship is also revealed in Case's statement that, "according to the ideas of the old magicians, Lucifer presides over the East, which is also the direction attributed by Qabalists to the letter Daleth and so to Venus" (110).

The numerical connection between "serpent" and "messiah" is also discussed in Regardie's The Golden Dawn, in a passage concerning the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life, which is "the Path of the Redeemer or Messiah, the path of the Sushumna traversed by the Kundalini serpent" (276). This passage goes on to state that "Lucifer is Venus, the Redeemer" (276). The Golden Dawn elsewhere identifies Sushumna as the nerve force in the body between Ida, the left bronchus, and Pingala, the right bronchus (515). Interestingly, Case writes that the Kundalini force is identical with what Eliphas Levi calls "Astral Light" (True 300), and Blavatsky writes that Levi's astral light or "great magic agent" is "that which the Church calls Lucifer" (2: 511). According to Blavatsky, it is "mankind itself that determines the unavoidable action and reaction in the great magic agent. It is mankind which has become the 'Serpent of Genesis,' and thus causes daily and hourly the Fall and sin of the 'Celestial Virgin'" (2:512). As was indicated in the diagrams of "The Garden of Eden Before the Fall" and "The Garden of Eden After the Fall," it is up to the occult initiate, once the serpent is awakened and the Fall has occurred, to redirect the libido, neither good nor evil in itself, toward higher expression. Case touches on the sexual nature of the "magic force," stating that although "the power it employs is the power that peoples the world, the true esoteric doctrine points to the fact that there is evidently

very much more of this force available than is required for this one purpose" (True 224).

Again, Case writes that the Kundalini "is the serpent power represented by the letter Teth" (True 300). This calls to mind a passage from the Portal ritual concerning the Path on the Tree of Life corresponding to Sagittarius, the Archer, which reads

> For thus wilt thou cleave upward by the Path of Sagittarius, through the Sixth Sephirah into the Path of Teth, answering to Leo, the Lion--the reconciling Path between Mercy and Severity, Chesed and Geburah, beneath whose centre hangs the glorious Sun of Tiphareth. Therefore, by the straight and narrow Path of Sagittarius, let the Philosophus advance, like the arrow from the centre of Qesheth, the Bow. And as this Sign of Sagittarius lieth between the Sign of Scorpio--Death and Capricornus the devil, so had Jesus to pass through the Wilderness, tempted by Satan. (214)

The passage depicts the Kundalini force, represented by the Path of Teth which lies on the Middle Pillar of the Tree, as reconciling the opposing forces of Chesed and Geburah, and the arrow, or the straight and narrow Path, is depicted as rising along the Middle Pillar past Tiphareth and through the Path of Teth. The dual aspect of Kundalini as both tempting and redeeming is suggested by the passage's mention of Christ's temptation. Here the reversal and sacrifice of the Hanged Man seem relevant, for, as Case writes in his discussion of Nachash "the brazen serpent of Moses, lifted on a T-cross, was understood by the early Christians to be a foreshadowing of the crucifixion of Jesus," (True 215) and

the upside down figure in Waite's version of the Hanged Man, mentioned above, is shown suspended from a T-cross.

After the Fall, the Kundalini "cleaves upward" again. Of the Kundalini, Case writes "that it is not forced to rise," but "simply purified from the adulterations of heterogeneity, from the semblance of diversity that it presents to us in its ordinary manifestations" (True 300). Here one recalls the sacrifice of the jester (Tiphareth) in "The Cap and Bells," through which he reconciles the opposites of heart and soul (Geburah and Chesed) and approaches the "homogeneous One."

The dual aspect of Kundalini is also represented in the Caduceus of Hermes, in which the "Twin Serpents of Egypt" represent "the currents of the Astral Light" and "whose heads fall upon Chesed and Geburah" (Regardie 162). Case writes that these dual "serpents on the caduceus, or wand of Hermes, represent [the] law of endless transformation and conversion" (Tarot 103). These twin Kundalini serpents may be represented in the final version of "The Cap and Bells" through the serpentine images of the soul (the blue of Chesed) in its blue garment having grown "wise-tongued," (7) and the heart (the red of Geburah) in its red garment having grown "sweet-tongued" (17). In the 1894 version only one tongue is referred to, that of the jester's heart (qtd. in Coltrane 139). The likelihood that these images refer to Kundalini is increased when it is remembered that both heart

and soul are depicted in the action of rising, which would indicate the transformation of the serpent force as it rises away from diversity and toward the unity of spirit. Here it is useful to recall Blavatsky's statement, quoted above in Chapter One, that the Anima Mundi is an "Astral Light," both "dual and bisexual," whose male part is "purely divine and spiritual" and whose female part is "tainted, in one sense, with matter," and that matter and spirit, like Satan and God, are two poles of the same thing.

The motto, "Demon Est Deus Inversus," which Yeats, again, adopted the year "The Cap and Bells" was written, indicates his understanding of these concepts, which may be found in "The Cap and Bells." The jester's sacrifice of his cap and bells, with its sexual symbolism, indicates the reversal of the Hanged Man, desire redirected for spiritual union. The jester, in Shelleyan terms, is moving from the earthly beauty of Venus Pandemos toward the Intellectual Beauty of Venus Urania. In Golden Dawn terms, he is moving from the awareness of Nachash, the tempter, toward Messiach, the Redeemer.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The occult teachings which Yeats studied in the 1890s occupied his mind for many years thereafter. In his 1917 essay, "Anima Mundi," Yeats still seems occupied with the idea of transcending the duality of physical experience. He writes,

> There are two realities, the terrestrial and the condition of fire. All power is from the terrestrial condition, for there all opposites meet and there only is the extreme of choice possible, full freedom. And there the heterogeneous is, and evil, for evil is the strain one upon another of opposites; but in the condition of fire is all music and all rest. (Mythologies 356-7)

Yeats further states concerning the condition of fire that there is an "inflowing" which "falls upon the winding path called the Path of the Serpent, and that inflowing coming alike to men and to animals is called natural," and also that "there is another inflow which is not natural but intellectual, and is from the fire," which "falls principally upon straight paths" (361). He then writes that "in so far as a man is like all other men, the inflow finds him upon the winding path, and in so far as he is a saint or a sage, upon the straight path" (361). Again, he seems to be referring to

the shifting of desire from the natural world to the divine world, and also to the "straight and narrow path" of the arrow up the Middle Pillar of the Tree.

In his discussion of Yeats's Rose poems, Ellmann writes that "the love poems which he wrote are, in fact, love poems with a difference. The beloved hovers in them somewhere between an actual woman and a symbol" (72). Yeats's "The Cap and Bells" seems to be one such poem, for in addition to being a love poem it is an account of the symbolic death and rebirth of the occult initiate. While the poem is connected with Shelley's Intellectual Beauty or Venus Urania through its star imagery and its association of love and death, it also finds a source in the teachings of the Isis Urania Temple of the Golden Dawn. Yeats wrote the poem in 1893, the year he took the motto, "Demon Est Deus Inversus" and achieved the fifth initiatory grade of the Golden Dawn, the grade of Tiphareth, representing the sacrificed god and symbolic of his completion of the upright Pentagram, which points upward toward the spiritual union sought by the occult initiate. The jester of "The Cap and Bells" may be seen as the sacrificed god of Tiphareth, or the Hanged Man, and in the poem his red and blue garments of heart and soul may be seen as the red and blue garments of the Hanged Man and as the red and blue of Geburah and Chesed, the opposites which, through sacrifice, Tiphareth or the jester unifies. The serpentine images in "The Cap and Bells" of the soul being

"wise-tongued" and the heart being "sweet-tongued" may indicate the dual serpents of the Kundalini represented in the Caduceus of Hermes, whose heads fall upon Chesed and Geburah. The jester's sacrifice of his phallic cap and bells and the subsequent unification of these opposites may be taken to represent the reversal and rise of the Kundalini so that it is, in Case's terms, "purified from the adulterations of heterogeneity." "The Cap and Bells" may be seen as symbolic of the sacrifice of the Second Adam, who restores the equilibrium of the Tree of Life through symbolic crucifixion, and regains the innocence lost through Eve's temptation and the subsequent fall of the sexual force into misuse. Yeats's study of occultism in the 1880s and 90s played an important role in shaping the poem. Thus, in addition to being a love poem, "The Cap and Bells" is a blend of Shelleyan and occult influences.

APPENDIX A

AN EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE TREE OF LIFE AND KUNDALINI

The Cabalistic glyph known as the Tree of Life represents both the universe, or the macrocosm, and man, the microcosm or universe in miniature. The Tree consists of ten objective states known as Sephiroth, and twenty-two connecting paths which are subjective modes of reaching the ten Sephiroth, represented both by the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the twenty-two major Tarot cards. The first Sephirah, Kether, represents pure spirit, and the Sephiroth descend numerically from Kether toward the tenth Sephirah, Malkuth, representing crude matter. In the initiatory system of Alchemical Cabala, the occult aspirant unifies matter and spirit by progressing upward from Malkuth toward Kether through ten numerical grades corresponding to the Sephiroth:

Table 1

The Ten Initiatory Grades of the Golden Dawn

1.	Kether. The Crown. Spirit.	Ipsissmus	10=1
2.	Chokmah. Wisdom.	Magus	9=2
3.	Binah. Understanding.	Magister Templi	8=3
4.	Chesed. Mercy.	Adeptus Exemptus	7=4
5.	Geburah. Might.	Adeptus Major	6=5
6.	Tiphareth. Harmony	Adeptus Minor	5=6
7.	Netzach. Victory. Fire.	Philosophus	4=7
8.	Hod. Splendor. Water.	Practicus	3=8
9.	Yesod. Foundation. Air.	Theoricus	2=9

10. Malkuth. Kingodm. Earth. Zelator 1=10

Source: Regardie, Israel. The Golden Dawn. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1993. 21.

In addition, the Sephiroth are grouped into three triads, with one Sephirah in each triad balancing the opposing two. Kether balances Chokmah and Binah, Tiphareth balances Chesed and Geburah, and Yesod balances Netzach and Hod. Finally, they are grouped into three pillars. The opposing Sephiroth form the Pillar of Chesed, which is considered masculine, and the Pillar of Geburah, which is considered feminine. The balancing Sephiroth and Malkuth form the Middle Pillar.

The initiate's rise in consciousness is synonymous with the rise of the nerve force in the human body symbolized by a coiled serpent and known as Kundalini, or the Serpent Force. The "Serpent of Wisdom" winds up the twenty-two paths from Malkuth to Kether (Regardie 275), and the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life represents the path of the Kundalini in the Sushumna, or the nerve force in the body between the left and right bronchus. The Kundalini, or Serpent Force, is also known throughout occult texts as "the great magic agent" and the "Astral Light." Although there is no ritual in Theosophy, Blavatsky's identification of the Anima Mundi as an Astral Light which is dual and bisexual, the male part corresponding with spirit and the female with matter, hints at kinship with the idea of the Golden Dawn initiate's rise

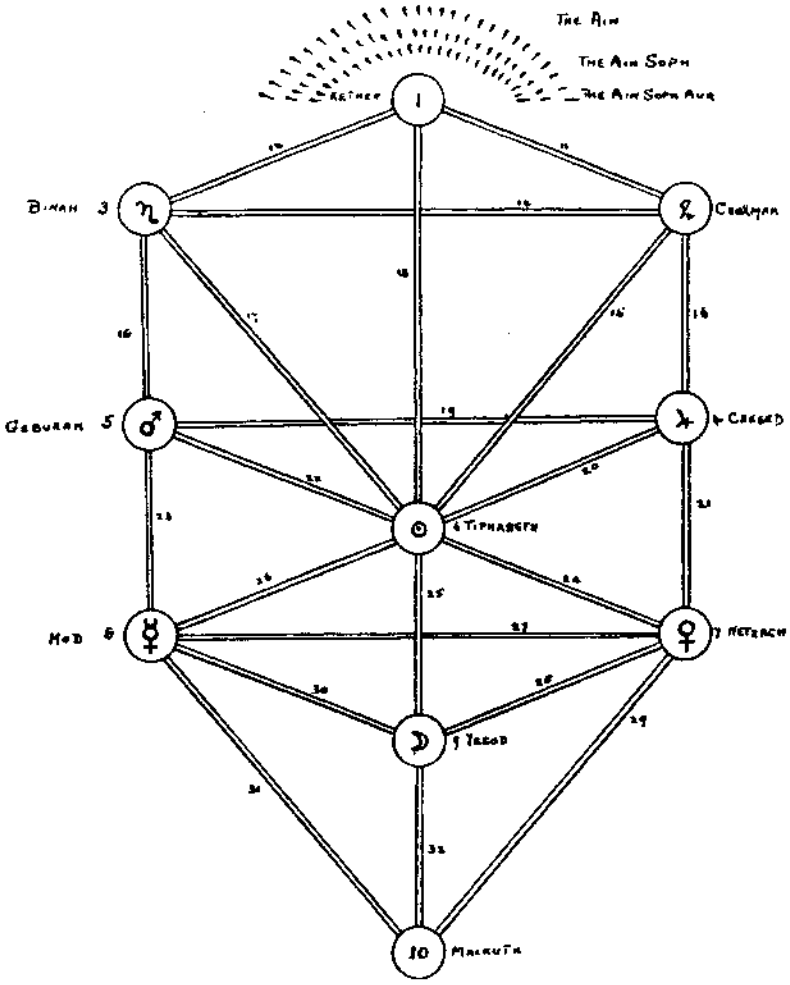
up the Tree through the twenty-two paths from matter to spirit. Case identifies Kundalini as a "universal life principle" that "takes form as all things," and, in a sense, the force used in magic is the same as that employed for sex, as he writes that the Kundalini draws energy from the "nerve center which energizes the sex organs" and apportions it for other work.

APPENDIX B

OCCULT DIAGRAMS AND SYMBOLS

Fig. 1

The Tree of Life

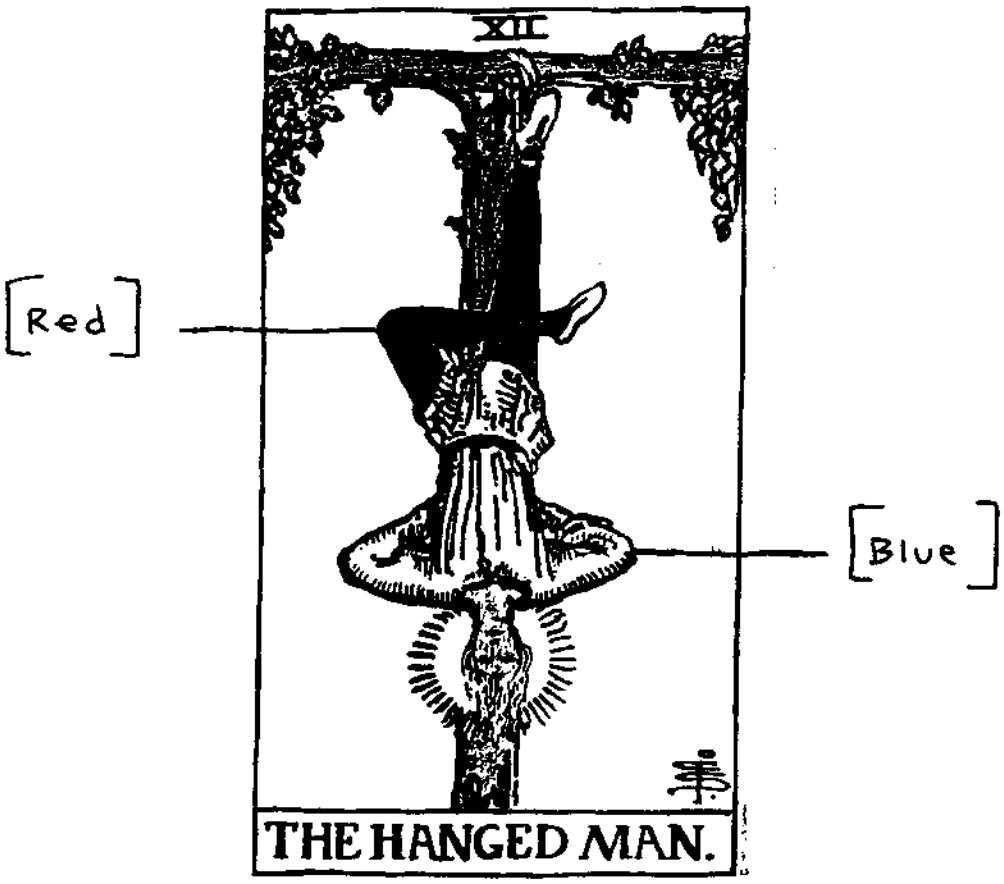


THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE THIRTY-TWO PATHS

Source: Fortune, Dion. The Mystical Qabalah. 1935. York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1991.

Fig. 2

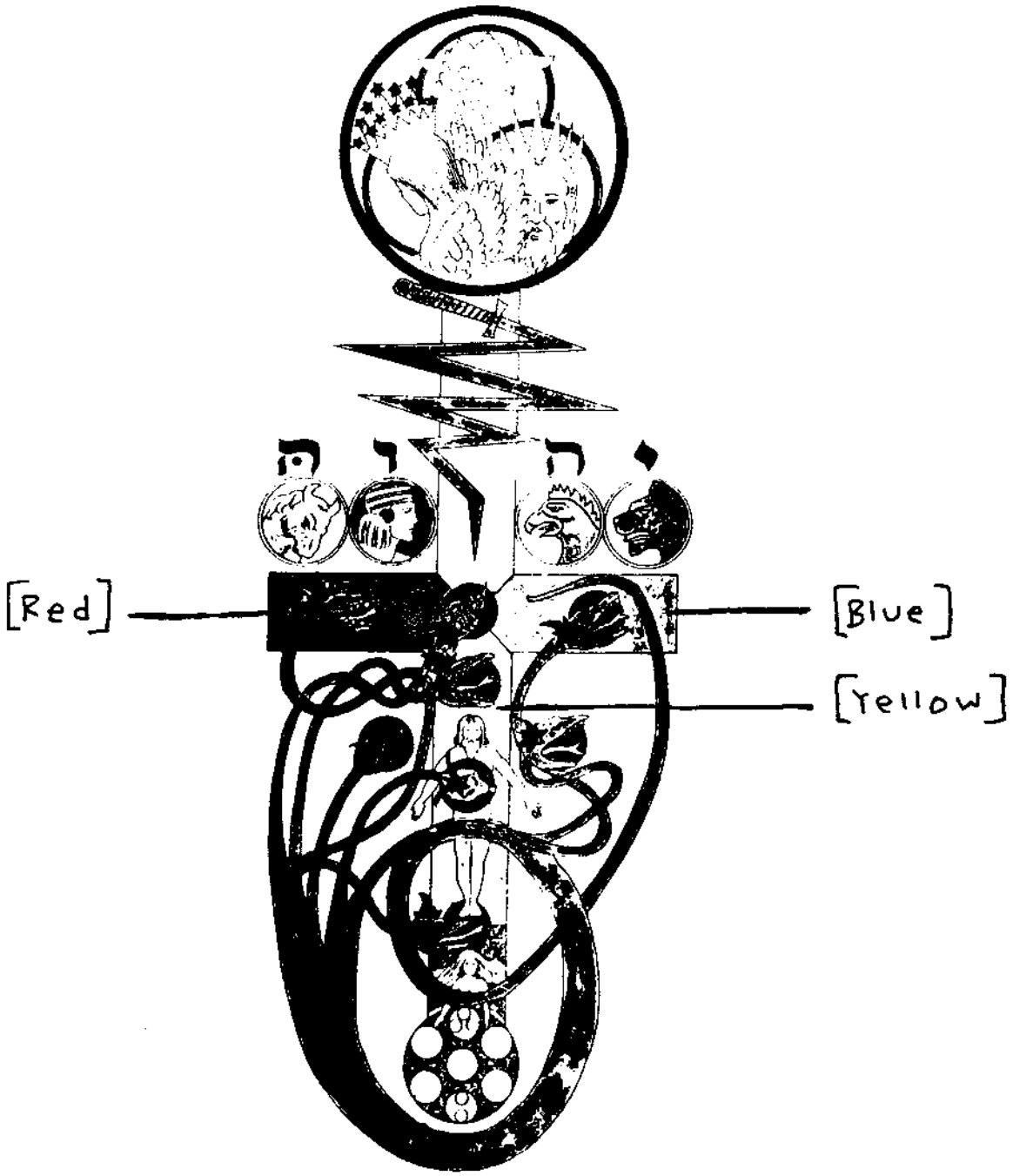
The Hanged Man



Source: Rider-Waite Tarot. New York: U. S. Games Systems, 1971.

Fig. 3

The Garden of Eden After the Fall

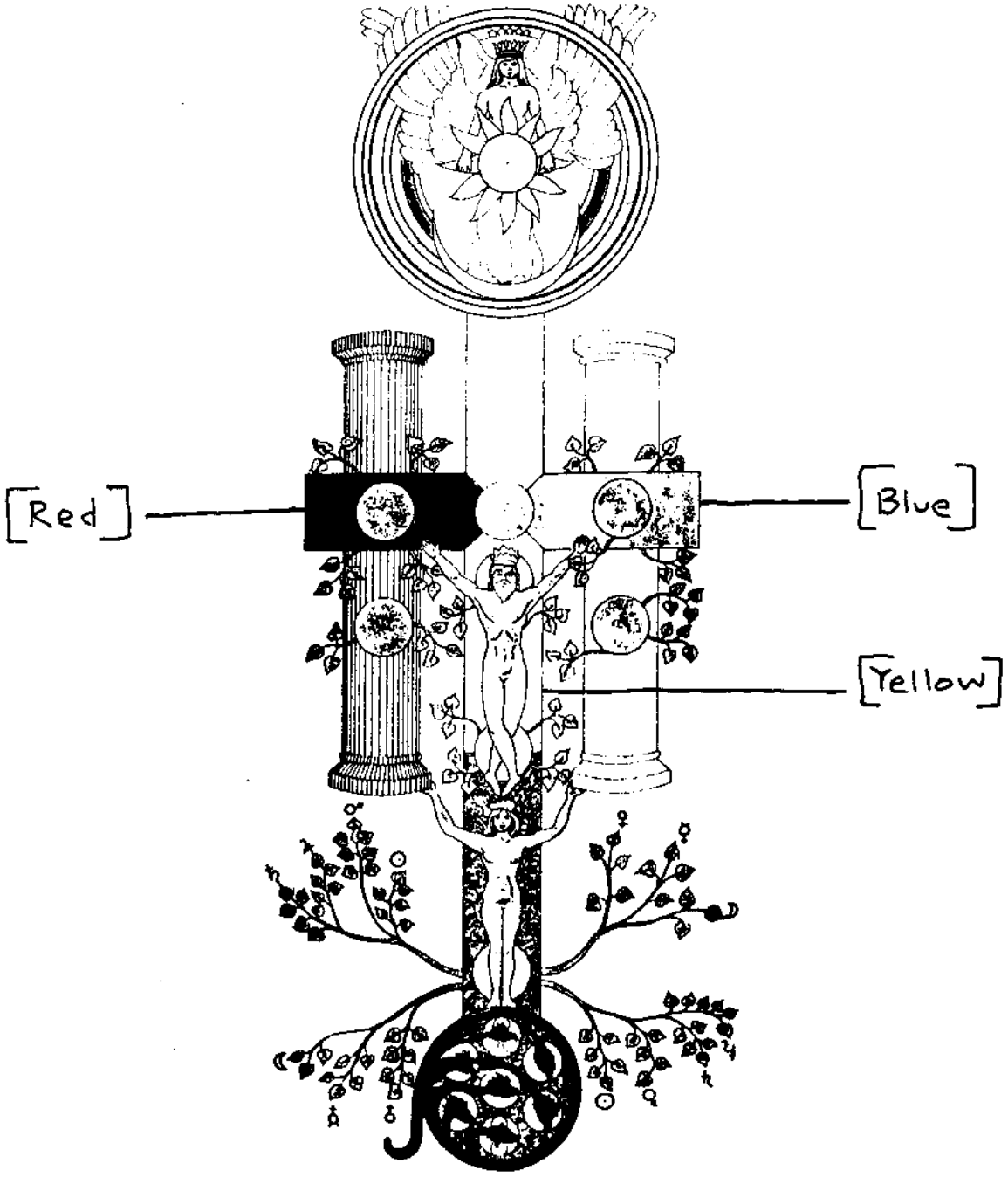


GARDEN OF EDEN AFTER THE FALL

Source: Regardie, Israel. The Golden Dawn. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1993.

Fig. 4

The Garden of Eden Before the Fall



GARDEN OF EDEN BEFORE THE FALL

Source: Regardie, Israel. The Golden Dawn. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1993.

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