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Ashim Dutta

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INDIA IN YEATS'S EARLY IMAGINATION: MOHINI CHATTERJEE AND KĀLIDĀSA

Ashim Dutta

This essay examines Yeats's initiatory interest in Indian lore and literature, and their importance to his creative imagination. Rather than functioning as an amateurish poetic experimentation leading to a fuller understanding of India in his late years, or to his "real" pursuits of Irish and modernist subjects, Yeats's early preoccupation with India remains fundamental to the syncretic spirituality of his thought, blending into the larger literary, cultural, and philosophical enterprises of his life. India, for Yeats, was brought to life for the first time by the Dublin visit of the Bengali Theosophist and Vedāntist Mohini Chatterjee in the mid-1880s. While Chatterjee was a key philosophical influence on Indian matters early in his career, Yeats at that time seems to have also been an enthusiastic reader of the works of the fifth-century Indian poet-playwright Kālidāsa. Although Harbans Rai Bachchan and Naresh Guha published substantial works on these topics in the 1960s, Yeats's creative interaction with Indian subjects has been generally neglected in western scholarship until quite recently.¹ There is, however, still need for an in-depth study of Yeats's early Indophilia that explores the connection between the disparate Indian materials he came across in the 1880s and their imaginative transformation in his poetry. With that gap in mind, this essay shows how the Theosophical-Vedāntist India of Chatterjee was conflated with Kālidāsa's mytho-poetic India in the creative imagination of Yeats's early youth. This collation notwithstanding, in Yeats's works these two Indias still retain their distinctive temperaments, namely that of an ascetic purity and an aesthetic in which spirituality and sensuality seamlessly fuse into one another.

I

The 1880s were a foundational period in terms of Yeats's mystic-occultist orientation in general and his first serious interest in Indian thoughts in particular. It was during this decade that Yeats was exposed to a variety of inter-cultural currents which stimulated his mystical temperaments. Yeats first became interested in India through the activities of the Dublin Hermetic Society (of which he was elected President at the first meeting) and the Dublin Theosophical Society.² In an 1898 newspaper article entitled "The Poetry of AE," Yeats describes a typical meeting of the Hermetic Society. Gathered in a rented room of York Street, Dublin, a small group of young enthusiasts

“began to read papers to one another on the Vedas, and the Upanishads, and the Neoplatonists, and on modern mystics and spiritualists” (*UP2* 121). Such a conflation of eastern and western schools of thought as well as of ancient and “modern” mysticisms suggests a multi-layered syncretism, characteristic not only of the Hermetic Society but of Yeats’s mysticism in general. Yeats’s fascination with eastern spirituality was shared by his friends such as Charles Johnston, John Eglinton, Charles Weekes, and, most significantly, George Russell (AE), a visionary artist and poet (*YAE*³ 1–20).⁴ A century after the first flowering of European fascination with Sanskrit texts,⁵ a host of eastern texts were being translated (or retranslated) into English during the early 1880s, as part of the fifty-volume *The Sacred Books of the East* edited by Max Müller. This series included such texts as *The Bhagavad Gita* and *The Upanishads* (*IA*⁶ 30–31). Apart from these, R. F. Foster particularly mentions A. P. Sinnett’s *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883) as “a founding text of the fashionable New Age religion, Theosophy, blending East and West in a spiritual synthesis readily absorbed by its devotees” (*Life* 1 45). Despite Yeats’s uncertainty about Theosophy, the orientation it provided and the connections it helped forge had abiding impacts on him.⁷

All these cultural crosscurrents set the stage for Yeats’s first significant encounter with an Indian personality in the figure of Chatterjee, a disciple of the Theosophical Society’s co-founder, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Chatterjee came to Dublin as a representative of the Society in April 1886 (*Life* 1 48).⁸ Coming from a sophisticated Bengali Brahmin family, descending from Raja Ram Mohun Roy,⁹ Chatterjee was a graduate from the University of Calcutta and a lawyer by profession. Attracted by Theosophy’s interest in Hinduism, he became a member of the Theosophical Society in 1882. However, on his European tour accompanying Henry Steele Olcott and Blavatsky, starting in 1884, he was expected to cater to “Western expectations about the mysterious East.”¹⁰ Yeats’s retrospective records are also rife with orientaling gestures. At one moment Chatterjee was “[a] handsome young man with the typical face of Christ” (*CW3* 98),¹¹ and at another he is idealistically “Eastern”: “He sat there beautiful, as only an Eastern is beautiful, making little gestures with his delicate hands” (“*WW*”¹² 40). Yeats, it seems, was equally attracted by the “Eastern” charm of the man and the wisdom he taught.

Chatterjee became an authority in the west so far as Indian philosophical matters were concerned. In the grand reception given to Blavatsky and Olcott in London, Chatterjee was one of the key speakers (alongside Olcott and Sinnett) and he spoke on “the relationship India bears to the Theosophical movement and why Europe should take an interest in it.” In the account of Francesca Arundale, Blavatsky’s London hostess, “[v]ery often Mohini Chatterji [sic] would answer questions on Indian philosophy. I have rarely met with

anyone who could give such clear and forcible explanations clothed in such beautiful language.” His talks were indeed so popular that Arundale remembers having “rarely closed our doors till one or two o’clock in the morning.”¹³ The pitch of Arundale’s recollection matches that of Yeats, who recalls that during Chatterjee’s momentous stay in Dublin he used to come to Chatterjee early in the morning with some question and stayed “till ten or eleven at night” to ask it, due to frequent interruptions by other visitors (CW3 98).

As Yeats recollects in a 1900 newspaper article “The Way of Wisdom,” in his very first talk, Chatterjee “overthrew or awed into silence whatever metaphysics the town had” (“WW” 40). So far as Yeats and his other “initiated” fellow mystics were concerned, though, the effect was not subversive but reassuring: “It was my first meeting with a philosophy that confirmed my vague speculations and seemed at once logical and boundless” (CW3 98). The core of Chatterjee’s teaching of Indian philosophy seems to have been based on Śaṅkarācārya’s sect of Advaita (non-dualist) Vedānta, a major philosophical school of classical Hinduism. Peter Kuch tells us that, despite being asked to dwell on *Esoteric Buddhism*, Chatterjee “went beyond it to discuss his own study of the Indian philosophy of Sankara” (YAE 17). However, the relationship between Buddhism and Śaṅkara’s Advaita Vedānta is not an oppositional but a complementary one. As S. Radhakrishnan has observed, the similarities between the two “is not surprising in view of the fact that both these systems had for their background the Upaniṣads.” For all their differences in concepts and/or approaches to the same concepts, the Buddhist views of phenomenalism and *nirvāṇa* are similar to the Advaita Vedāntic concepts of *māyā* and *mokṣa* respectively.¹⁴ Despite holding “the Tibetan Brotherhood” to be higher in grade than any of the other “occult fraternities” in the world, Sinnett admits at the start of *Esoteric Buddhism* that “Brahminical philosophy, in ages before Buddha, embodied the identical doctrine which may now be described as Esoteric Buddhism.”¹⁵ As for Chatterjee, Neil Mann has observed that despite being “a trusted spokesman for Theosophy when he visited Dublin in 1886, [...] his Theosophy was closely linked with Vedantic philosophy, and the two strands are evident in his written work,” such as *Man: Fragments of Forgotten History* (1884), co-written with Laura Holloway, and the *Dublin University Review* article “The Common Sense of Theosophy” (1886).¹⁶ Chatterjee’s other publications include a pamphlet for the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, entitled “A Paper on Krishna” (1886), and edited volumes of *The Bhagwad Gita* (Boston, 1887) and *Viveka-Chudamani of Sri Sankaracharya* (Adyar, 1932) (WBYO¹⁷ 20, 275, 280). Familiarity with some basic premises of relevant Hindu philosophical doctrines, therefore, helps us better appreciate Yeats’s initial response to and later revision of Chatterjee’s teaching.

Śaṅkara is said to have summed up the quintessential wisdom of his Advaita Vedānta in the following epigram: “*brahma satyam, jagan mithya, jivo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*” (“the *brahman* is the truth, the world is false, and the finite individual [or living being] is none other than the *brahman*”).¹⁸ Radhakrishnan summarizes some key points of Śaṅkara’s conceptualization of *brahman* as follows:

Brahman has no *genus*, possesses no qualities, does not act, and is related to nothing else. [...] As it is opposed to all empirical existence, it is given to us as the negative of everything that is positively known. [...] It is non-being, since it is not the being which we attribute to the world of experience.¹⁹

Maintaining that the external, physical, or phenomenal world has but a deceptive reality, this particular school of Vedānta often uses the rope-snake metaphor to indicate the relation between *brahman* and the world of experience: “Brahman appears as the world, even as the rope appears as the snake.”²⁰ Such false appearance happens because of *adhyāsa* (or the attribution of one object’s properties to a different object). *Adhyāsa* thus leads to *avidyā* (“non-knowledge,” or false knowledge).²¹ Another concept that is often associated with this imposition of false reality on what is truly real is *māyā*, which is the power that sustains the world of empirical experience or phenomena.²² At the dawning of supreme wisdom, the individual self and the phenomenal world disappear, revealing nothing but *brahman*, the supreme reality. Hence the ultimate superfluity of all worldly activities.

Chatterjee, recalls Yeats, found “even prayer” to be “too full of hope, of desire, of life, to have any part in that acquiescence that was his beginning of wisdom,” contending that “even our desire of immortality was no better than our other desires” (“WW” 40). It is, however, worth noting that in this view of life and reality, there are two perspectives working simultaneously. As Matthew R. Dasti and Edwin F. Bryant observe, “[t]he meta-narrative of Advaita, that all that exists is the Brahman alone and there is no action or agency” works only “at the absolute level.” But, “at the phenomenal level,” the self has got quite a powerful agency over its life and destiny, which are determined by “the karma generated by its own acts.”²³ The latter view is particularly pertinent given that the attainment of wisdom is not accomplished in a single birth. In Chatterjee’s translation, a verse in Śaṅkarācārya’s *Crest-Jewel of Wisdom* maintains that “the spiritual knowledge which discriminates between spirit and non-spirit, the practical realisation of the merging of oneself in Brahmātmā and final emancipation from the bonds of matter are unattainable except by the good karma of hundreds of crores of incarnations.”²⁴ This brings us to the notion of reincarnation, which is crucial to Yeats’s creative transformation of Chatterjee’s teaching.

Seemingly owing its origin to the pre-Aryan aboriginal faiths, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is shared by all schools of Indian philosophy with the sole exception of the Materialist school of Cārvāka.²⁵ In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, Śaṅkara stresses the unreality of “transmigration,” since neither the “changeless” Supreme Self nor the unreal phenomenal self can be said to “transmigrate.”²⁶ In *The Bhagavadgītā*, a text which was recognized as one of the key authorities by the proponents of Vedānta (including Śaṅkara whose commentary on it is the oldest of those extant), Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna with a view to ridding him of his delusion: “Never was there a time when I was not, nor thou, nor these lords of men, nor will there ever be a time hereafter when we shall cease to be” (2:12).²⁷ However, from a less absolute perspective, each self, although essentially eternal, is doomed to take multiple bodies, as emphasized by the verse that follows the one quoted above: “As the soul passes in this body through childhood, youth and age, even so is its taking on of another body. The sage is not perplexed by this” (2:13).²⁸ Despite upholding such realization of self as not-body, *The Bhagavadgītā* does not promote inaction; delivered at the battlefield, the ostensible purpose of Kṛṣṇa’s advice is to propel the warrior Arjuna to action, albeit with detachment.²⁹ The gist of the third chapter of *The Bhagavadgītā*, entitled “Karma Yoga or the Method of Work,” is that a self-conscious renunciation of action is as delusory as performing action with desire. What is to be shunned is not action in itself—which is impossible for the finite beings—but the sense of self or ego in its performance (3: 6–9, 19).³⁰ By performing selfless action, the wise let their “*karma*” be “dissolved” (4: 23),³¹ and thus progress towards the ultimate goal of wisdom, namely freedom from the cycle of reincarnation.

Although Blavatsky maintained that the theory of reincarnation was “taught by all major thinkers and scriptures, particularly Jesus in the New Testament,”³² much of her argument in *The Key to Theosophy* deeply resembles Indian thought, such as her distinction between the “*false* (because so finite and evanescent) *personality*” and the “*true individuality*” that “plays, like an actor, many parts on the stage of life.”³³ Another leading Theosophist Annie Besant argues that, while from the “mortal” perspective of man reincarnation means “a succession of lives,” viewed from the perspective of “the Eternal Man,” it is non-existent “unless we say that a tree reincarnates with each spring when it puts out a new crop of leaves, or a man reincarnates when he puts on a new coat.”³⁴ This distinction between temporal and eternal perspectives resonates with the Indian scriptures discussed above. In at least a couple of the 1884 meetings of the Theosophical Society’s London Lodge, as Shalini Sikka has noted, Chatterjee spoke on the concepts of karma and rebirth as well as the role of desire in the latter (*WBYU*³⁵ 78, 82, 94). From Yeats’s autobiographical and poetic accounts, it appears that Chatterjee dwelt upon these concepts in his Dublin talks, too.

Yeats translated Chatterjee's philosophical wisdom into "Kanva on Himself," an undated poem that he must have written after the Theosophist-Vedāntist's visit in Dublin. Published in *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889), the poem was later excluded from the "definitive edition of his poetry" (VP 641–42; CCP³⁶ 7). Yeats does not offer any specific reason for the poem's exclusion in his 1894 correspondences with T. Fisher Unwin as to the content of the edition, except for saying that he would keep only "the best lyrics from the 'Oisín' volume," among other works (CL1 402, 411–12). Thus the poem simply suffered the same fate of abandonment from *Poems* (1895) as did fifteen other lyrics from the 1889 volume (EP2³⁷ 16). Taking its speaker from Kālidāsa's play *Śakuntalā* (both the play and the character Kanva will be discussed in the second section, below), the poem "Kanva on Himself" deals with the idea of reincarnation in a fairly straightforward manner:

Hast thou not sat of yore upon the knees
Of myriads of beloveds, and on thine
Have not a myriad swayed below strange trees
In other lives? (VP 724)

Much before the poem's creative transformation into "Mohini Chatterjee" (which will be discussed further on) in "The Way of Wisdom" (1900), Yeats remembers Chatterjee suggesting that one should say to oneself every night at bed: "I have lived many lives. It may be that I have been a slave and a prince. Many a beloved has sat upon my knees, and I have sat upon the knees of many a beloved. Everything that has been shall be again" ("WW" 40). In its concluding quatrain, "Kanva on Himself" strikes a note of passivity, changelessness, and resignation:

Then wherefore fear the usury of Time,
Or Death that cometh with the next life-key?
Nay, rise and flatter her with golden rhyme,
For as things were so shall things ever be. (VP 724)

The poem is written from the point of view of the eternal self of man which is unaffected by the power of death and hence indifferent to the "myriad" births it has undergone. Yeats recalls in "The Way of Wisdom" how, pressed by others to name his "own religion," Chatterjee "would look embarrassed and say 'this body is a Brahmin'" ("WW" 40), thus dissociating his real self, which is eternal, from his mortal body which is identifiable as belonging to the Brahmin caste.³⁸

At the end of the article, Yeats seems to confuse Chatterjee's wisdom of detachment with some kind of philosophical passivity:

Alcibiades fled from Socrates lest he might do nothing but listen to him all his life, and certainly there were few among us who did not think that to listen to this man who threw the enchantment of power about silent and gentle things, and at last to think as he did, was the one thing worth doing; and that all action and all words that lead to action were a little vulgar, a little trivial; nor am I quite certain that any among us has quite awoke out of the dreams he brought among us. (“WW” 41)

If the idea of waking up from a “dream” is uncertain at the end of this article, this is not so in its 1908 version which was included, in a slightly revised form, in the collected edition of his writings under the new title “The Pathway.” There the ending of the essay was significantly altered by turning the uncertain final clause of the previous version into a more unequivocal statement: “Ah, how many years it has taken me to awake out of that dream!” (CW4 291). This subtle change, one might argue, points the direction that the 1929 poem “Mohini Chatterjee” would take. Let us, however, stay a little longer with the 1900 article.

Underscoring the importance of enlightened silence and inaction, “The Way of Wisdom” captures Yeats’s fin de siècle impression of Chatterjee’s teaching. As the above allusion to Alcibiades and Socrates suggests, for all his awed fascination for Chatterjee and his wisdom, Yeats in 1900 may have felt the urge to cast off the spell of what appeared to him to be a thoughtful, meditative calm. He was by that time tilting more and more towards cultural-nationalist activism, as attested by such journalistic writing as “The De-Anglicising of Ireland” (1892) and the founding of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1899 (*UPI* 255–56; *Life* 1 205–10). His mystic-spiritual interest had also undergone significant reorientation. Having joined the Blavatsky Lodge in 1887, Yeats was compelled to resign from the Theosophical Society in 1890 due to his involvement in some “empirical experiment” to verify the truth of some of the Society’s teachings. He was then drawn to the “Western ceremonial magic” and joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in the same year, remaining with it until 1923 (*Life* 1 62, 103; *MM*³⁹ 62).⁴⁰ It is not therefore surprising that he would get over his initial fascination for Advaita Vedāntic philosophy as he understood it from Chatterjee’s interpretation. This sense of overcoming his youthful infatuation with his Indian master is further extended in the 1929 poem “Mohini Chatterjee,” from *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933).

While in the 1900 article Yeats presents himself as a silent listener, in “Mohini Chatterjee” he takes up the more active role of a commentator. Divided into two stanzas, the poem has a dialogic structure. The first stanza reports what “the Brahmin said” having been asked whether he would recommend praying to the poet-speaker. The Brahmin bade his disciple to “[p]ray for nothing,” but to daily remind himself of his “myriad” previous incarnations:

I have been a king,
 I have been a slave,
 Nor is there anything,
 Fool, rascal, knave,
 That I have not been,
 And yet upon my breast
 A myriad heads have lain. (*VP* 495–96)

In the second stanza, Yeats dissociates himself from the “boy” that he was while receiving the above advice (given to “set at rest | A boy’s turbulent days”) and assumes some agency by “add[ing]” his own “commentary” to the above wisdom:

Old lovers yet may have
 All that time denied –
 Grave is heaped on grave
 That they be satisfied – (*VP* 496)

Unlike the resignation implied in the last line of “Kanva on Himself”—“as things were so shall things ever be”—here the speaker-Yeats’s “commentary” provides a subtle twist on the doctrine of reincarnation. Rather than preaching the value of renunciation of desire, the modification in the “commentary” emphasizes the desire itself and its satisfaction. Instead of calmly accepting the workings of time and death, this poem presumes to “thunder [them] away”:

Birth is heaped on birth
 That such cannonade
 May thunder time away,
 Birth-hour and death-hour meet,
 Or, as great sages say,
 Men dance on deathless feet. (*VP* 496)

While the note of energy in words such as “cannonade” and “thunder” is unmissable, the above lines are ambiguous. That is to say, they do not essentially contradict the theory of reincarnation: that the cycle of birth-death-rebirth will be repeated until desire (born of misconception of the true nature of self and reality) is completely extinguished. The exhaustion of desire means liberation from a time-bound existence, and hence the possibility of “thunder[ing] time away” after multiple births. Read in this way, the meeting of the “birth-hour” and the “death-hour” may mean the arrest of the cycle of reincarnation, and hence an uninterrupted spiritual existence: “Men dance on deathless feet.”

On another reading, however, “dance on deathless feet” might imply the dynamic continuity of the cycle of reincarnation where “death-hour” is followed

by another “birth-hour.” The dynamism of this poem must have been owing in part to the dialectical energy of Yeats’s own mystic-philosophic system *A Vision*; the 1925 version of the book had already been published and Yeats had started to work on the revised version of the same, which would arrive in print in 1937. In fact, the poem that we know as “Mohini Chatterjee” was first included in the Cuala Press edition of *A Packet for Ezra Pound* (1929), where it appears as one of the two lyrics under the umbrella title “Meditations upon Death” (PEP⁴¹ 9–11). Although none of these poems is included in *A Packet for Ezra Pound* that crowns the 1937 version of *A Vision*, “Mohini Chatterjee” might be read as Yeats’s creative appropriation of the Indian thoughts imparted by Chatterjee for his own system. *A Vision* views human life and history to be cyclical and dialectical in nature, involving multiple incarnations. As Yeats writes in *AVB*, “all the symbolism of this book applies to begetting and birth, for all things are a single form which has divided and multiplied in time and space” (CW14 156). Yeats prefers division and multiplicity to “a single form,” whether Platonic, Neo-Platonic/Plotinian, Vedāntic, or any other of the plethora of sources that he distills into his system. He recounts in the introduction to *AVA* how, while contemplating nature the day before, he “murmured, as I have countless times, ‘I have been part of it always and there is maybe no escape, forgetting and returning life after life like an insect in the roots of the grass.’ But murmured it without terror, in exultation almost” (CW13 lvi).

It is possible to hear in the above quotation an echo of what Chatterjee asked his disciples to mutter at bedtime as an alternative to prayer. Yet, this is a very different kind of reincarnation from what Chatterjee may have taught Yeats; the ideal purpose of reincarnation in Hinduism and Theosophy would be perfection and escape, whereas Yeats here seems to subscribe to the Nietzschean idea of “eternal recurrence”: “Everything becomes and recurs eternally—escape is impossible!”⁴² Yeats was reading Friedrich Nietzsche from as early as 1896 (CB⁴³ 150–51). Writing to Lady Gregory in 1902, he calls Nietzsche “that strong enchanter” and claims to have found in him a “curious astringent joy” (December 26, 1902, *CL InteLex*). In *Vision*-ary terms, strength and astringency would be considered “*antithetical*” qualities (CW14 192) and hence more attuned to Yeats’s own personality. As Mann writes, “[i]t is possible that the end of time and life is the beginning of fuller being but that is not where Yeats’s interests lie. He [Yeats] is happy to be an *antithetical* man, acknowledging his partiality and incompleteness, without any desire to rid himself of it.”⁴⁴ However, for all his subjective preference, Mann notes elsewhere, “Yeats certainly sees release from the wheel of rebirth as not only possible but inevitable, though only after a full series of incarnations, paradigmatically twelve rounds of twenty-eight lives,” with some possible modifications.⁴⁵ Therefore, Nietzschean “eternal

recurrence" and Hindu liberatory reincarnation might be seen as emblematic of the dialectics of the phenomenal and the transcendental in Yeats's system.

Yeats's attitude towards eastern spirituality is eloquently expressed in a much earlier letter to Florence Farr. Informing her of his undertaking of "eastern meditations," Yeats adds that his objective is "to lay hands upon some dynamic and substantialising force as distinguished from the eastern quiescent and supersensualizing [*sic*] state of the soul—a movement downwards upon life not upwards out of life" (February 6, 1906, *CL IntelLex* 343). Similarly, in "Mohini Chatterjee" Yeats seems to be more interested in the process of reincarnation than in its end-purpose in orthodox Indian theory: liberation. The self-surrendering quiescent of the earlier "Kanva on Himself" is replaced by the later poem's exultant passion. Yet, the relation between these two Chatterjee poems—or rather the two versions of the same poem—is not one of subversion, but one of *revision* in all senses of the term. The latter poem reads as a retrospective reconstruction of the former.

The form of "Mohini Chatterjee" reflects its revisionary aspect and hence merits close analysis. In contrast to the neatly rhymed quatrains of "Kanva on Himself," this poem has two uneven stanzas of eleven and seventeen lines respectively. The regularly, albeit abortively, rhymed (abab cdcd efe) first stanza narrates the dialogue between the poet and the Brahmin in the past: "I asked" and "the Brahmin said" (*VP* 495). This part of the narrative is fairly unchanged from the earlier prose and verse manifestations of the material. However, the second and longer stanza names the Bengali Theosophist and makes clear the shifting of time from the past—"Mohini Chatterjee | Spoke these"—to the present: "I add in commentary" (*VP* 496). Beginning with a five-line interval of a prosaic reporting speech, this stanza resumes and completes the regular rhyming pattern in the twelve-line reported speech (the poet's "commentary") that follows, rhyming abab cdcd efef. Given that the rhyme scheme of the commentary section invites association with the quatrains of English sonnet, one might be tempted to read the poem with its twenty-eight lines (two sonnets put together?) as a reworking of the English sonnet form. The first stanza's incomplete pattern of abab cdcd efe could be seen as a deliberate rupture, suggesting a discontinuity between the stanzas and what they contain, namely Chatterjee's teaching and Yeats's "commentary" respectively. The first line of the second stanza ends with "rest," which could very well have rhymed with "breast" of the tenth line of the first stanza, thereby completing its efef pattern. Thus, the formal structure of the poem represents the process of revision, recreating the past experience in the first stanza, and revising and improvising upon it in the second. The incompletely rhymed wisdom of the first stanza (abab cdcd efe) needed to be completed, as it were, by the "commentary" of the poet: abab cdcd efef. And if such patterning evokes a desire for resolution that the missing

concluding couplet (gg) of the English sonnet form might well have provided, the lack of such a closure is befitting for a poem that is interested in the dynamic power of reincarnation—the abab scheme of the quatrains simulating the birth-death-birth-death pattern of the reincarnative cycle—rather than any transcendental resolution.

The fact that Yeats in the late 1920s creatively reengaged with a previously discarded Indian poem attests to the continued importance of his early engagement with Indian material. It is true that Yeats himself downplays the worthiness of his early Indian poems in a 1925 note: “Many of the poems in *Crossways*, certainly those upon Indian subjects or upon shepherds and fauns, must have been written before I was twenty, for from the moment when I began *The Wanderings of Oisín*, which I did at that age, I believe, my subject-matter became Irish” (CCP 3). Written between 1886 and 1887, the early Indian poems were, in fact, contemporaneous with that of *The Wanderings of Oisín* (CCP 6–8, 521). Although the “subject-matter” had indeed become more distinctively “Irish” since then, Yeats did not abandon the Indian thoughts or motifs, instead incorporating or fusing them into his other interests—magical, aesthetic-symbolist, or cultural-nationalist. Read as part of his intellectual and creative explorations of India, the Indian poems of *Crossways* gather more nuances than they do by their otherwise-isolated presence in a volume dominated by Irish-themed poems.

II

In *Reveries Over Childhood and Youth*, Yeats remembers asking his friends in the Hermetic Society to consider the proposition “that whatever the great poets had affirmed in their finest moments was the nearest we could come to an authoritative religion, and that their mythology, their spirits of water and wind, were but literal truth” (CW3 97). In the 1880s, he seems to have taken a serious interest in a fifth-century north Indian poet-playwright, whose texts were marked by elemental simplicity and mythological sophistication: Kālidāsa. Scholars vary in their accounts of how and when Yeats came across Kālidāsa’s works. Both Bachchan and Sushil Kumar Jain think that it was Chatterjee who recommended Kālidāsa to Yeats, while Lennon maintains that Yeats had read and written in imitation of Kālidāsa before he met Chatterjee.⁴⁶ Whichever is the case, the three Indian poems in *Crossways* (1889), originally published in *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889) along with “Kanva on Himself,” certainly carry the mark of Kālidāsa’s influence, particularly that of his renowned play *Śakuntalā*. As two of these poems were written in 1886 (the year of Chatterjee’s visit) and the third in 1887, it seems that Yeats was exposed to the twin influences of Kālidāsa and Chatterjee roughly around

the same time. "The Indian upon God" (1886) had "Kaṇva, the Indian, on God" as one of its previous titles (*P*⁴⁷ 418). Kaṇva, as already mentioned, is an important character of *Śakuntalā*. "Anashuya and Vijaya" (1887) takes one of its titular characters from the Sanskrit play: Anasūyā is one of *Śakuntalā*'s two closest friends. The connection between "The Indian to His Love" (1886) and *Kālidāsa* is revealed in a letter by Yeats. Writing to John O'Leary, he vents his irritation caused by a critical review referring to the poem: "The Freeman reviewer is wrong about peahens[;] they dance throughout the whole of Indian poetry. If I had *Kālidāsa* by me I could find many such dancings. As to the poultry yards, with them I have no concern—The wild peahen dances or all Indian poets lie" (February 3, [1889], *CL IntelLex*). Here one finds an instance of Yeats's taking the words of the "great poets" as "literal truth." Whether the wild peahen dances or not, the confidence betrayed in this letter suggests Yeats's careful reading of *Kālidāsa*.

By the 1880s, *Kālidāsa*'s *Śakuntalā* had already been acclaimed by many European writers and scholars for a century. William Jones's 1789 English translation of the play was an epoch-making Orientalist phenomenon, which led to the play being translated into twelve other languages within a century.⁴⁸ Georg Forster's 1791 German translation made it available for enthusiasts like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schlegel. Goethe was profoundly moved by the play and found in it a model for the on-stage prologue of his *Faust* (1797).⁴⁹ Michael Franklin in his chapter "Europe Falls in Love with *Śakuntalā*" refers to "the *Śakuntalā* fever that gripped Europe in the early 1790s." He adds that *Kālidāsa*'s play, along with Jones's other translations of Indian materials, stimulated Romantic Orientalism in Britain in the last decade of the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ Yeats's early interest in Indian literature, then, was consonant with a long-standing European enthusiasm for Indian literature and culture.

Yeats apparently synthesized *Kālidāsa* and Chatterjee in his poetic imagination. Kaṇva, we have seen, became the poetic persona for Chatterjee in "Kaṇva on Himself." The foster-father of *Śakuntalā*, Kaṇva is an ascetic, sage character of *Kālidāsa*'s play. Before she leaves the forest-hermitage, *Śakuntalā* bemoans the fact that "[m]y father's body is already tortured by ascetic practices" (Act 4). But after a few pages, in response to King Duṣyanta's inquiry after "Father Kaṇva's health," we come to know that: "Saints control their own health" (Act 5).⁵¹ In the final scene of the play, sage Mārīca says that Kaṇva knows all about the positive turn of his daughter's fate without being told "through the power of his austerity" (Act 7).⁵² Kaṇva is thus a man of superhuman qualities of mind, achieved through the power of rigorous asceticism and "austerity." As Yeats recalls, Chatterjee dwelled upon a similarly penetrating power of mind or consciousness: "Consciousness, he taught, does not merely spread out its surface but has, in vision and in contemplation, another motion and can change in

height and in depth” (CW3 98). However, despite being a powerful ascetic, Kālidāsa’s Kaṇva is not immune to filial affection and worry. Scrutinizing his emotional suffering prior to Śakuntalā’s departure for her husband’s palace, he himself observes:

if a disciplined ascetic
suffers so deeply from love,
how do fathers bear the pain
of each daughter’s parting? (Act 4)⁵³

This compassionate side of his character makes Kaṇva a less ideal poetic persona for the stoical wisdom of “Kanva on Himself” than for the organic spirituality of “The Indian upon God,” which, too, had previously adopted Kaṇva as its speaker.

“The Indian upon God” upholds the notion of absolute harmony of spirit and form, in which each form represents God in its own self. Peacefully adopting the harmonized perspectives of the moorfowl, the lotus, the roebuck, and the peacock, the poem is true to the spirit of Kālidāsa’s play where Śakuntalā “feel[s] a sister’s love” for the trees in the forest hermitage (Act 1) and father Kaṇva does not distinguish between Śakuntalā and her jasmine vine (Act 4).⁵⁴ In Yeats’s poem the lotus, in a similar tone to that of Blake’s Child,⁵⁵ says: “*Who made the world and ruleth it, He hangeth on a stalk, | For I am in His image made.*” In the same way, the moorfowl conceives of God as “*an undying moorfowl,*” the roebuck, as “*a gentle roebuck,*” and the peacock, as “*a monstrous peacock*” (VP 76–77; italics in the original). Given that every existent being imposes its own self-image on God, it is possible to read the poem in terms of the Advaita Vedāntic distinction between the personal, subjective, and distorted perspective(s) of worldly existence, and the impersonal, objective condition of the transcendental reality. However, rather than upholding any objective metaphysical wisdom, the poem celebrates the play of perspectives on the phenomenal level and the subjective experiences of individual creatures. In this sense, the poem foreshadows Yeats’s later revision of Chatterjee’s Vedāntic wisdom as well as the predilection of his Visionary system for duality and multiplicity.

The atmosphere of idealized quietism that we have noticed in the previous poem also prevails in “The Indian to his Love.” Echoing the title of Christopher Marlowe’s “The Passionate Shepherd to his Love,”⁵⁶ this poem might underscore the similarity between Yeats’s Indian source material and the English pastoral tradition. The opening description of the “Indian” landscape is highly romanticized, verging on the exotic:

The island dreams under the dawn
 And great boughs drop tranquility;
 The peahens dance on a smooth lawn,
 A parrot sways upon a tree,
 Raging at his own image in the enamelled sea. (VP 77)

Fairly consistent use of iambic tetrameter in the first four lines of each stanza again inspires analogy with Marlowe's poem.⁵⁷ But, unlike the latter's quatrain form, this poem is written in four five-line stanzas with a regular ababb rhyme scheme. The longer fifth line of each stanza adds to the mood of dragging drowsiness that persists throughout the poem. Even the variations, such as the two stressed feet in "smooth lawn" in the third line above, emphasize the idyllic peacefulness of the situation. While the fifth lines of the first three stanzas start with an accented syllable ("Raging," "Murmuring," and "One"), in the fourth and final stanza, the fifth line starts with an unstressed "With," which intensifies the atmosphere of "hushed" silence: "With vapoury footsole by the water's drowsy blaze." The lovers' thoughts and actions are also in tune with the setting. As the speaker says in the second stanza, mooring their "lonely ship" in this island, they will "wander" with "woven hands" and murmur "softly lip to lip." The poem, furthermore, echoes "Kanva on Himself" when the speaker says to his beloved that "when we die our shades will rove" (VP 77-78).

The mood of shadowy serenity is continued into the 1887 poem "Anashuya and Vijaya." Set in a "little Indian temple in the Golden Age," this dramatic poem begins with the following prayer uttered by Anashuya "the young priestess":

Send peace on all the lands and flickering corn. –
 O may tranquillity walk by his elbow
 When wandering in the forest, if he love
 No other. – Hear, and may the indolent flocks
 Be plentiful. – And if he love another,
 May panthers end him. – Hear, and load our king
 With wisdom hour by hour. – May we two stand,
 When we are dead, beyond the setting suns,
 A little from the other shades apart,
 With mingling hair, and play upon one lute. (VP 70-71)

Despite similarities of imagery and diction ("tranquillity," "shades"), this is a very different poem from "The Indian to His Love." The peaceful atmosphere is undercut by the conflicted desire betrayed by Anashuya's conditional prayer for her lover Vijaya, depending on whether he "love[s] another" or not (lines 3-6, above). This is also far from the desireless prayer recommended by Chatterjee. Originally entitled "Jealousy" (P 417), the poem is built around the sexual

jealousy of Anashuya for Vijaya's other beloved, who is absent from the poem. Vijaya, of course, blurts out the name of another female character, Amrita. This slip on Vijaya's part introduces a tension into the poem, which is tentatively resolved by Vijaya's promise that he will not love the other girl.

Yeats later reveals that this poem "was meant to be the first scene of a play about a man loved by two women, who had the one soul between them, the one woman waking when the other slept, and knowing but daylight as the other only night" (*CCP* 6). As Albright points out in his note to the poem, this is an early version of "Yeats's doctrine of the anti-self" (*P* 417). A significant aspect of Yeatsian dialectics is thus rooted in Kālidāsa's play where, as Bachchan has noted, Śakuntalā is wooed by the married king Duṣyanta, who implores her not to indulge in the thought that he could love someone else.⁵⁸ Moreover, the idea of two diametrically opposite women with "the one soul between them" might be seen as symptomatic of the tension in Yeats's early understanding of India between the spiritual and the sensual, the ascetic and the aesthetic. If Chatterjee stands for a Vedāntic indifference to life for Yeats, Kālidāsa offers him a more balanced picture of life where one gets, in the words of Goethe, both "the spring's blossoms and the fruits of the maturer year."⁵⁹ In that spirit, "Anashuya and Vijaya" juxtaposes Brahma, the old god of creation, with Kama, the young god of love, and does not discriminate between the "sacred Himalay" and "the sacred [...] flamingoes." In her final prayer, Anashuya not only includes man and animal, but also does not distinguish between "The merry lambs and the complacent kine, | The flies below the leaves, and the young mice" (*VP* 72, 74, 75). This harmonious coexistence of men, animals, and gods is true to Yeats's source text.

Yeats's interest in the fusion or confusion of god and man, heaven and earth, the spiritual and the corporeal, which would be a key feature of his later mystic-spiritual formulations, finds fine expression in the poem's anthropomorphic description of "the parents of gods":

who dwell on sacred Himalay,
 On the far Golden Peak; enormous shapes,
 Who still were old when the great sea was young;
 On their vast faces mystery and dreams;
 Their hair along the mountains rolled and filled
 From year to year by the unnumbered nests
 Of aweless birds, and round their stirless feet
 The joyous flocks of deer and antelope,
 Who never hear the unforgiving hound. (*VP* 74–75)

Although Richard Ellmann thinks that these Himalayan gods are inspired by "the poorly drawn pictures of [Blavatsky's] masters, Koot-Hoomi and Morya"

on her door (*MM* 68–69), they seem more likely to have been modelled, as Bachchan has noted, on the description of the abode of the demigods in *Śakuntalā*.⁶⁰ On his way back to earth from heaven, where he went to fight a battle on behalf of god Indra, King Duṣyanta becomes curious about the gold-streaked mountain that he sees stretching below. Mātali, Indra's charioteer and the King's escort, responds thus: "Your Majesty, it is called the 'Golden Peak,' the mountain of the demigods, a place where austerities are practiced to perfection"; and a few lines down, pointing towards sage Mārīca's hermitage, says:

Where the sage stands staring at the sun,
as immobile as the trunk of a tree,
his body half-buried in an ant hill,
with a snake skin on his chest,
his throat pricked by a necklace
of withered thorny vines,
wearing a coil of long matted hair
filled with nests of śakunta birds. (Act 7)⁶¹

The similarity of these descriptions with Yeats's account of "the parents of gods" is too striking to be accidental. Thus, the theme, mood, and atmosphere of this poem are inflected by its poet's reading of Kālidāsa.

The three *Crossways* poems on India, true, betray a youthful fantasy about an exotic landscape, and such exoticism is all too common in Yeats's other early poems written about the west of Ireland. For one, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (written in 1888), a poem about an island in County Sligo, entertains the notion of "go[ing]" to a land of "peace," comparable to the sense in "The Indian to his Love" of having come "far away" from "the unquiet lands" (*VP* 117, 78). Yet, there is a more complicated cross-cultural identification going on in Yeats's "Indian" poems of the 1880s than in his poems about idyllic Ireland. With reference to "The Indian upon God," Elleke Boehmer views Yeats's "adoption of an Indian persona" in that poem as indicative of "a genuine openness [...] a desire not only to embrace but to internalize the other,"⁶² while Jahan Ramazani suggests a latent "connection" between the poem's "understanding of religion as projection of oneself onto the divine other and its own attribution of this perspectivist concept to the cultural other," essentially problematizing any "authentic" knowledge of that other.⁶³ (This might remind one of the Advaita Vedāntic concept of *adhyāsa*, discussed above.) Rather than being limited to only one poem, both of these readings are applicable to Yeats's early connection with literary and philosophical India. We have traced Chatterjee's periodical "reincarnations" in Yeats's oeuvre, seeing how in each of these cases Yeats seems to have projected a part of his own self on the Bengali Brahmin and his

wisdom. Kālidāsa's organic aestheticism, on the other hand, appears to have been largely internalized by the poetic sensibility of Yeats.

Internalized or self-projected, India played a powerful role in Yeats's artistic as well as ideological self-construction at that formative phase of his career. The India he envisioned via these diverse materials was an India of poets, philosophers, and rishis, which chimes in with the Ireland of faeries, mystics, and bards that he imaginatively adored and desperately wanted to revive. Not only that, the high-cultural, intellectual elitism implied in Brahmanite asceticism would soon find its parallels in Yeats's pursuance of a cult of poetic Brahmanism after such figures as Blake, Walter Pater, and Arthur Symons. It is not in the least surprising, therefore, that the maxim he used as the epigraph for his 1900 article on Chatterjee was taken from Villiers de l'Isle Adam's play *Axël*: "As for living, our servants will do that for us" ("WW" 40). This "proud rejection of ordinary life," notes James Pethica, writing about Yeats's heightened aestheticism of the 1890s, was his "favourite maxim."⁶⁴ The fact that it finds its way into the retrospective essay on Chatterjee testifies to a collation of asceticism and aestheticism which in a sense characterizes Yeats's entire career. In "A Symbolic Artist and the Coming of Symbolic Art" (1898), he observes with reference to the predominance of "religious philosophy" in a group of mystically oriented Irish writers: "[t]his philosophy has changed its symbolism from time to time, being now a little Christian, now very Indian, now altogether Celtic and mythological; but it has never ceased to take a great part of its colour and character from one lofty imagination" (UP2 133). This "one lofty imagination" was the guiding principle of all the diverse poetic and cultural projects that Yeats undertook, and Indian philosophy and literature provided him with his first serious initiation into it.

Notes

1. Harbans Rai Bachchan, *W. B. Yeats and Occultism: A Study of his Works in Relation to Indian Lore, the Cabbala, Swedenborg, Boehme and Theosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965); Naresh Guha, *W. B. Yeats: An Indian Approach* (Calcutta: Jadavpur University Press, 1968). Of more recent works, P. S. Sri's essay "Yeats and Mohini Chatterjee," in *YA11* (1994), 61–76, offers some valuable insights into the Yeats-Chatterjee connection, while the monograph by Shalini Sikka, *W. B. Yeats and the Upanishads* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002), deals quite extensively with the role played by the *Upanishads* in Yeats's life and works. Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004) sets the paradigm for explorations of Celtic-Oriental connections and commonalities; despite the wide range of his concerns, his Yeats chapter follows in the footsteps of Bachchan and Guha in discussing the role of Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, and Shri Purohit Swāmī, as well as Kālidāsa's work on Yeats's creative imagination. W. David Soud's chapter on Yeats in his *Divine Cartographies: God, History, and Poesis in W. B. Yeats, David Jones, and T. S. Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) focuses on the poet's 1930s cooperation with Shri Purohit Swāmī and its repercussions. The 1930s also remains the focus

- of Charles I. Armstrong's chapter, "'Born Anew': W. B. Yeats's 'Eastern' Turn in the 1930s," in *Yeats, Philosophy, and the Occult*, eds. Matthew Gibson and Neil Mann (Clemson, S.C.: Clemson University Press, 2016), 83–106.
2. The Dublin Hermetic Society was launched on June 16, 1885, becoming the Dublin Theosophical Society in April 1886; see *Life 1*, 46–47; Ernest Boyd, *Ireland's Literary Renaissance* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), 214; and Susan Johnston Graf, "Heterodox Religion in Ireland: Theosophy, the Hermetic Society and the Castle of Heroes," *Irish Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (2003): 51.
 3. Peter Kuch, *Yeats and AE: 'the antagonism that unites dear friends'* (Buckinghamshire: Collyn, 1986).
 4. Boyd, *Literary Renaissance*, 213.
 5. European exploratory interest in Indian religious/philosophic and literary texts commenced in the late eighteenth century, leading to what is known as an "Oriental Renaissance" and feeding into German Romanticism. See Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 15–17, 24, 51–53.
 6. Guha, *Indian Approach*.
 7. Given the scope of this essay, it does not provide any extensive overview of the historical accounts of Yeats's complicated relationship with the Theosophical Society, but only draws upon Theosophy in so far as it illuminates Yeats's early relationship with Indian subject matter. For a more detailed narrative and analysis of Yeats's connection with the Theosophical Society, see Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: Man and the Masks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 56–69; and Ken Monteith, *Yeats and Theosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
 8. Scholars are divided as to the date of Chatterjee's trip to Dublin. Bachchan thinks that Chatterjee "came to Dublin towards the end of 1885" and quotes the evidence of *The Dublin University Review* (August 1885) that at the second meeting of the Dublin Hermetic Society announcement was made of the "possibility of the celebrated Mr Mohini visiting Dublin some time towards the end of the year" (Bachchan, *W. B. Yeats and Occultism* 17, 19). Guha also dates the trip to 1885 (*IA* 33). Sri echoes Bachchan, although he does not cite him, in stating that Chatterjee "came to Dublin towards the end of 1885" (*YA* 11 62). For Sushil Kumar Jain, "Yeats invited Chatterjee to come to Dublin in 1885 or 1886"; see Jain, "Indian Elements in the Poetry of Yeats: On Chatterjee and Tagore," *Comparative Literature Studies* 7, no.1 (1970): 82. Foster, on the other hand, gives the date as April 1886 and quotes Charles Hubert Oldham's postcard, "undated [...] but postmarked Apr. 1886," to Sarah Purser inviting her to "come and join" others in meeting "Mr Mohini the Theosophist in my rooms on Wednesday afternoon 4 o'clock" (*Life 1* 47–48, 552 n81). Lennon and Graf, too, hold that Yeats met Chatterjee in Dublin in 1886 (Lennon, *Irish Orientalism*, 256; Graf, "Heterodox Religion in Ireland," 51). It is likely that, despite the possibility of an earlier trip, Chatterjee eventually visited Dublin in April 1886.
 9. Sam McCready, *A William Butler Yeats Encyclopedia* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997), 75.
 10. Sarah Diane Sasson, *Yearning for the New Age: Laura Holloway-Langford and Late Victorian Spirituality (Religion in North America)* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012), 78–79, 81.
 11. For a discussion of Yeats's interest in the representation of Christ in Byzantine art, see Russell Elliott Murphy, "'Old Rocky Face, look forth': W. B. Yeats, the Christ Pantokrator, and the Soul's History (The Photographic Record)" in *Yeats: An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies*, vol. 14 (1996), ed. Richard J. Finneran (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 69–117.
 12. Yeats, "The Way of Wisdom," *The Speaker: The Liberal Review* 2 (1900), 40–41.

13. Sylvia Cranston, *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993), 261, 256.
14. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2 (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1927), 472–73. Yeats Library possesses the two volumes of this book: YL 1663; NLI 40,568/188; vols. 1–2, 21 and 3 sheets; envelope 1028A.
15. A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883), rev. ed. (London: The Theosophical Publishing House Ltd., 1972), 2, 6–7.
16. Neil Mann, “Indian Philosophy and Vedanta,” www.yeatsvision.com, accessed October 26, 2017, <http://www.yeatsvision.com/Vedanta.html>.
17. Bachchan, W. B. *Yeats and Occultism*, 20, 275, 280.
18. Bina Gupta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy: Perspectives on Reality, Knowledge, and Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 225.
19. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 535–36.
20. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 569, 571.
21. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 505–06.
22. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 565–66.
23. Matthew R. Dasti and Edwin F. Bryant, eds. *Free Will, Agency, and Selfhood in Indian Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 195–97.
24. Śaṅkarācārya, *Crest-Jewel of Wisdom and Charapatapanjari*, trans. Mohini M. Chatterji and J. N. Parmanand (Bombay: T.V. Press, 1904), 1.
25. Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (New York: Appleton, 1929), 386–87.
26. Karl H. Potter, ed., *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṅkara and His Pupils* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 82.
27. S. Radhakrishnan, ed., *The Bhagavadgītā*, trans. Radhakrishnan (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948), 16, 103.
28. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgītā*, 104.
29. For the context and setting of *The Bhagavadgītā*, see Gupta, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, Chapter 14.
30. Radhakrishnan, *Bhagavadgītā*, 134–35, 138.
31. Radhakrishnan, *Bhagavadgītā*, 165.
32. Ronald W. Neufeldt, “In Search of Utopia: Karma and Rebirth in the Theosophical Movement,” in *Karma and Rebirth: Post Classical Developments*, ed. Neufeldt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 241.
33. H. P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy: Being a Clear Exposition in the Form of Question and Answer of the Ethics, Science, and Philosophy for the Study of which the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society Has Been Founded* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1889), 34.
34. Annie Besant, *Theosophy* (London: T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1912), 61–62.
35. Shalini Sikka, W. B. *Yeats and the Upanishads* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002).
36. A. Norman Jeffares, *A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968).
37. George Bornstein, ed. *The Early Poetry*, vol. 2 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).
38. Here I disagree with P. S. Sri's reading of Chatterjee's “this body is a Brahmin” as a distortion of Śaṅkara's “*Aham Brahmasmi*—I, the *Atman* is *Brahman*—[...] partly due to Yeats's misunderstanding of the words *Brahman*—the Supreme Being—and *Brahmin*—Mohini Chatterjee's caste” (YA 11 65). Rather than seeing any distortion or misunderstanding involved in the statement concerned, I find it compatible with Śaṅkara's idea of “*Aham Brahmasmi*.” Claiming his “body” to be “a Brahmin” by caste, Chatterjee conceptually identifies his true self (the *Atman*) with *brahman*.
39. Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: Man and the Masks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

40. Graf, "Heterodox Religion in Ireland," 52–53.
41. W. B. Yeats, *A Packet for Ezra Pound* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1929).
42. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 545.
43. Terence Brown, *The Life of W. B. Yeats: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).
44. Neil Mann, "Everywhere that Antinomy of the One and the Many: The Foundations of *A Vision*," in *W. B. Yeats's A Vision: Explications and Contexts*, eds. Neil Mann, Matthew Gibson, and Claire V. Nally (Clemson, S.C.: Clemson University Digital Press, 2012), 10.
45. Neil Mann, "*The Thirteenth Cone*," in *W. B. Yeats's A Vision*, 168–69.
46. Bachchan, *W. B. Yeats and Occultism*, 64; Jain, "Indian Elements in the Poetry of Yeats," 86; Lennon, *Irish Orientalism*, 256. The divergence of scholarly opinion in this regard seems to have been partly due to the uncertainty about the date of Chatterjee's Dublin visit; see n8 above. And, as to the question of Chatterjee introducing Kālidāsa to Yeats, or Yeats having already incorporated Kālidāsa into his poetry by the time he met the Theosophist, it is hard to be certain given the fact that the poems concerned were written in 1886 and 1887.
47. W. B. Yeats, *The Poems*, ed. Daniel Albright (London: Everyman's Library, 1992).
48. Michael J. Franklin, *Orientalist Jones: Sir William Jones, Poet, Lawyer, and Linguist, 1746–1794* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 252.
49. Franklin, *Orientalist Jones*, 260; Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, 416.
50. Franklin, *Orientalist Jones*, 251, 284.
51. Kālidāsa, *Śakuntalā and the Ring of Recollection*, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller, in *Theater of Memory: The Plays of Kālidāsa*, ed. Barbara Stoler Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 132, 137–38.
52. Kālidāsa, *Śakuntalā*, 176.
53. Kālidāsa, *Śakuntalā*, 126.
54. Kālidāsa, *Śakuntalā*, 94, 128.
55. William Blake, "The Lamb," in *The Complete Poems*, ed. Alicia Ostriker (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 106.
56. Christopher Marlowe, *The Collected Poems of Christopher Marlowe*, eds. Patrick Cheney and Brian J. Striar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 157–58.
57. See, for example, the second stanza of Marlowe's poem: "And we will sit upon the rocks, | Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks | By shallow rivers, to whose falls | Melodious birds sing madrigals." Marlowe, *The Collected Poems*, 157.
58. Bachchan, *W. B. Yeats and Occultism*, 66.
59. Here is Goethe in Franklin's translation: "If you want the spring's blossoms and the fruits of the maturer year, | What is seductive and creates joy, or what is satisfying and nourishing, | If you want to encompass Heaven and Earth in one single name, | Then I name you, Sacontala, and everything is said." Franklin, *Orientalist Jones*, 251.
60. Bachchan, *W. B. Yeats and Occultism*, 66–67.
61. Kālidāsa, *Śakuntalā*, 164–65.
62. Elleke Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals 1870–1915: Networks of British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 116.
63. Jahan Ramazani, *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 36.
64. James Pethica, "Aesthetics," in *W. B. Yeats: In Context*, eds. David Holdeman and Ben Levittas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 205–06.