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Making Interpretations: Digitally Adapting Yeats's 'Ego Dominus Tuus' as a Digital Comic

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MAKING INTERPRETATIONS: DIGITALLY ADAPTING YEATS'S "EGO
DOMINUS TUUS" AS A DIGITAL COMIC

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
English

by
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ABSTRACT

Through adapting Yeats's "Ego Dominus Tuus" as a digital comic the close ties between the act of interpretation and the creative process are showcased. The process explores how collaborating with those from other disciplines, in this case graphic arts, can benefit humanities scholars by not only allowing them to bring their interpretations to life through creative means but also by helping them to build and develop those interpretations in ways that may not have been otherwise apparent. In assessing this experience, a strong case can be made for viewing interpretive skills as creative devices, implementing interdisciplinary collaboration within humanities-based instruction, and recognizing the potential of digital technology as an easily accessible and efficient platform for the production of these types of collaborative projects.

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INTRODUCTION

As Kathleen Fitzpatrick aptly states in her essay “The Humanities Done Digitally,” one way to think of the digital humanities is as a “space within the academy where the divide between making and interpreting might be bridged” (14). It is with this particular type of bridge-building in mind that this work ensues. That is, this project aims to merge the creative with the interpretive process by utilizing technology for the adaptation of poetry as a digital comic. More specifically, this project adapts William Butler Yeats’s poem “Ego Dominus Tuus” to the comic form. The hope is that adapting this text, one considered as notoriously difficult because of its obscure content, will make it more accessible to wider audiences through the implementation of interactivity and visual representation. Tracing the production process throughout the creation of this project shows the reader the intermingling of literary analysis with digital production and graphic arts firsthand—showcasing the fragile balance between creation and interpretation.

To interpret is simply to assign meaning to objects of perception. So, whereas the sculptor creates a sculpture based on a driving concept, the interpretive act considers what meaning that sculpture communicates. Singular definitions of interpretation aside however, this work follows that of Linda Hutcheon, who writes in *A Theory of Adaptation*, “As a *process of creation* the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation” (8). The purpose of this essay and the project it describes, then, is to present a study of just such a *process*, from its conception to the completion of a working prototype. The questions this work revolves around are twofold: First, how does interpretation play a productive role in an adaptive process, and second, what does that role suggest about the value of critical study in the humanities when it is enacted in production?

Beyond these two central questions, there are more bounding on the periphery, questions that will likely cross readers' minds as they assess this project and its results, such as why Yeats and his "Ego Dominus Tuus" were chosen for adaptation in the first place and how adapting this poem offers any new means for its interpretation.

First, let's address the question of why Yeats's work makes good fodder for adaptation. For one, Yeats was a widely lauded and hugely influential figure who led the way into the modernist movement while becoming somewhat of a political and cultural force. As evidenced by his Nobel Prize-winning status, the statue erected in his memory in County Sligo, Ireland, and his placement within the canon of English literature as a major figure, he is often regarded as one of the greatest poets to have ever lived. The poet's legendary status alone then makes him a worthwhile subject for adaptation, but another reason Yeats fits with this project is that much of his writing exhibits special qualities that make it particularly ripe for adaptation—intertextuality and esotericism.

By invoking the term *intertextuality* here, I am borrowing from the work of Julia Kristeva, who wrote in "Word, Dialogue, and Novel" that "each word (text) is an intersection of word[s] (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" (37). The intertextuality that Kristeva, in building off of the earlier ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, is describing then demonstrates why Yeats's texts can be better understood in a format (e.g., a comic adaptation) that allows for visual representations of his writing to coincide with his words: the images can depict and make visible aspects of these intersecting texts that would otherwise not be immediately apparent. Adding to this, Yeats's works often exhibit commonly held and masterfully woven strands of thematic, symbolic, and philosophic elements, all of which seem connected to certain real-world contexts from his life experience

(e.g., the poet's involvement with the occult). The robust fictional world that Yeats created with his writing, then, provides a setting for these various texts (i.e., his life, the lives of his characters, his narratives, his symbology, etc.) to intertwine and interact at multiple levels of meaning, which results in, through this quality of polyvalence, there being ample sources of artistic inspiration for any prospective adaptation to draw from.

The above mentioned adaptable nature of Yeats's work has not gone unnoticed by others either, as evidenced by the multiple productions of Yeats's plays, which are still performed today, and the lengthy list of musical adaptations of his poetry. In fact, there have been well over sixty musical adaptations of Yeats's work professionally recorded since 1990 (Yeats Society). Remarkably enough, despite this long-standing tradition of Yeats adaptations, "Ego Dominus Tuus," for whatever reason, remains untouched.

Why, then, should "Ego Dominus Tuus" be chosen when so many others have ignored this text in favor of the poet's other writing? One reason is that the dialogic structure of the poem gives it a performative nature that lends itself nicely to various formats (i.e., theatrical, audible, or cinematic). Another reason is that the poet's heavy use of occult symbolism leaves plenty of room for the interpretive (or [re-]interpretive as Hutcheon would say) efforts of the would-be adapter. And, in light of the above discussion of Yeatsian intertextuality, "Ego," though it is a relatively short poem, is packed with enough intertextual links to make it a prime text for introducing readers to some of the ideas that recur throughout Yeats's corpus.

INTERPRETATIONS

This section offers readers a brief summary of "Ego" and details my interpretive approach to the poem with the main subjects of discussion being the poem's dialogic

structure, esoteric imagery, and allusory qualities. I assessed each of these features to develop an interpretation that could not only highlight the intertextual links found in “Ego” but also drive the creative process behind the adaptation of the poem.

SYNOPSIS

“Ego Dominus Tuus” is set on the “grey sand beside the shallow stream / Under [an] old wind-beaten tower” (lines 1–2), where Hic and Ille, the two speakers in the poem, converse about their mutual interest in the pursuit of mystical knowledge. In the opening lines, Hic approaches Ille, who is drawing mysterious symbols in the sand by the stream. When Hic speaks, he suggests that Ille’s time would be better used studying the texts that have been provided to him saying,

A lamp burns on beside the open book
That Michael Robartes left, [yet] you walk in the moon,
And, though you have passed the best of life, still trace,
Enthralled by the unconquerable delusion,
Magical shapes. (lines 3–7)

Ille replies to Hic’s words by offering an explanation of his practices: “By the help of an image / I call to my own opposite, summon all / That I have handled least, least looked upon” (lines 8–10). The rest of the poem is dedicated to the continuance of this discussion, with Hic taking the stance that “I would find myself and not an image” (line 11) and Ille refusing, all the way until the end, to accept that the acquisition of earthly knowledge that Hic champions is sufficient for any sort of real fulfillment:

... I seek an *image*, not a book.

.....

I call on the mysterious one who yet
Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream
And look most like me, being indeed my double,
And prove of all imaginable things
The most unlike, being my *anti-self*. (lines 73–80; emphasis added)

Over the course of Hic and Ille's debate, many of the philosophical and esoteric concepts that are common to Yeats's writing come into play.

STRUCTURE

The two-part dialogic structure of "Ego" seems designed to pit each of the poem's personae against the other. In this way, Yeats creates a poetic scenario that emphasizes the conflict between the two stances that his personae take more than the individual natures of their characters. For Yeats, this conflict is symbolic of the opposition between the concepts of the *primary* and *antithetical* self, concepts that Yeats himself developed to describe the two opposed components of the soul. An understanding of this Yeatsian opposition is necessary for a reader to clearly evaluate the lines of "Ego," and it should be noted here that although "Ego" was originally published in 1917 in *Poetry* magazine (Allt and Alspach 367), this interpretation relies heavily on the fact that "Ego Dominus Tuus" was also published later, in 1918, as an introductory piece for the larger prose-work *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, which further expounds on this crucial primary/antithetical conflict.

In fact, it is within the pages of *Per Amica* that Yeats begins recording his exploration of the concepts of primary and antithetical. Yeats writes in *Per Amica*, "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry," and it was with a conscious bent toward the expression of this conflict that Yeats set out with when he wrote

“Ego Dominus Tuus.” This “quarrel with ourselves” seems to suggest that the conflict in “Ego,” though embodied by two separate personae, is one that takes place within an individual—two sides of the same coin. This is where the concepts of primary and antithetical become so vital, and where the symbolic nature and depth of “Ego” start to become visible.

The powerful connections between these terms are more fully elaborated in Yeats’s later writing, particularly in *A Vision* (both the 1925 and the 1937 edition), but their foregrounding in *Per Amica* provided a clearly visible link that aided this project’s goal of expressing the intertextuality of Yeats’s work. *A Vision*, like “Ego,” is largely dedicated to an assessment and exploration of the conflict between the primary and antithetical self and how an understanding of this conflict relates to humanity’s existential and metaphysical condition. In this way, “Ego,” as it is packaged with *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, can be seen as an early manifestation of the ideas central to *A Vision*.

“Ego” is also associated with *A Vision* in another way that helps substantiate the two texts’ relationship. Packaged not only with *Per Amica* in 1918, but also with a collection of poems titled *The Wild Swans at Coole* in 1919, “Ego” finds itself neighboring a poem titled “Phases of the Moon,” a poem featured prominently in both editions of *A Vision*. “Phases of the Moon” was one of the few other poems in that collection that featured the dialogic structure consistent with “Ego” (the only others being “The Sad Shepherd” and “The Saint and the Hunchback”). Additionally, “Phases of the Moon” seems to work within the context of *A Vision* in much the same way that “Ego” works for *Per Amica*. Just as “Ego” situates the concepts of primary and antithetical by personifying them in Hic and Ille, “Phases” presents its reader with a brief overview of how the internal conflicts of the soul (primary

and antithetical) play out at various different phases. Following this poem, Yeats introduces his reader to his concept of the *Great Wheel*, an apparatus designed by the poet to parallel the phases of the soul's internal conflict with that of the twenty-eight lunar phases. By associating "Ego" with "Phases" in this way, "Ego" seems to serve as the original node of an intertextual network. Because the pathways between "Ego" and *A Vision* seem so well-hewn, then, the adoption of some of the symbolism found in *A Vision* for an adaptation of "Ego" can be justified as a means for cementing the intertextual link between the two while also priming the reader to better understand the concepts, symbolism, and circumstances of both texts.

To clarify the meanings of *primary* and *antithetical*, Yeats uses these terms interchangeably with the words *objective* and *subjective*, but while these terms may be more familiar to readers, they could still benefit from some elaboration. Aware of this need, Yeats, citing the *Oxford English Dictionary*, defines objective as "Dealing with or laying stress upon that which is external to the mind, treating of outward things and events rather than inward thought," and then, later, writes about the subjective, "[It] is contrary to 'objective' it needs no further definition" (*A Vision* 14). Though this definition is a bit vague, I believe Yeats means for his reader to understand the concept of subjective as being internal to the mind, focused on inward thought rather than outward things, which would be an exact opposite of the definition he offers for objective. The terms become easier to visualize as diametrically opposed when Yeats also connects objective and subjective to their "solar" and "lunar" properties. He writes, "The Sun is objective man and the Moon subjective man, or more properly the Sun is primary man and the Moon subjective man" (*A Vision* 13). So, by applying the concepts of primary and antithetical (objective and subjective) to the personae

of Hic and Ille and then understanding each of those concepts as distinct components of the same mechanism of the soul, one sees how the two-part dialogic structure of “Ego” works to exhibit this conflict and place it at the center of this interpretation of the poem.

USE OF SETTING

The setting of “Ego” is somewhat vague; although, there are some clues given in the earlier mentioned opening lines of the poem: “On the grey sand beside the shallow stream, / Under your old wind-beaten tower . . .” (lines 1–2). This brief description leaves the setting largely undefined in terms of a specific locale, yet it is the poem’s only reference to place, leaving the setting in a more idealized and ambiguous state. However, for the sake of this adaptation, an interpretive leap has been made, which situates the poem in both the fictive world created by Yeats and the real world that he lived in. The “old wind-beaten tower” from line two of the poem offers the strongest connection to Yeats’s life in that he owned and lived periodically in a tower called Thoor Ballylee in County Galway, Ireland. Yeats’s tower was both “old,” being constructed in the Anglo-Norman style from the medieval period, and, as it stands to reason, very “wind-beaten,” given its age. Considering that Yeats bought the property in 1917 (Gordon 25), the time in which Yeats acquired the property coincides with the time in which he published “Ego.” Based on this information, when deciding how to visually represent an adaptation of “Ego,” it was clear that including the image of Yeats’s own residence would help to connect both the poet to the poem and the fictive world to the real. The term *feature* is here used because it was not the goal of this project to completely situate the poem in reality but instead to sew together an adaptive mesh of the real and the imaginary—a state between sleeping and waking.

This interpretation of the poem's setting is not, however, inherent to the text, and without the imposition of the interpretive act there is left only the shadow of a place, a hazy fog of landscape where the dialogue is the only vessel of clarity. In other words, one could read "Ego" without any knowledge of Yeats's real-world tower, and such a reading would not necessarily detract from the overall impact of the poem. By incorporating Yeats's tower as part of the fictive landscape described in the verse, the visual interpretation of the poem is extended as a display of how Yeats's fictional worlds collided with his personal philosophies and circumstances. Of course, this extension of meaning aside, the lines exchanged by the personae of the poem are much more important to its effect than the material circumstances in which it is set. The interactions between Hic and Ille, the two speakers, take center-stage here, and the interchange of their words therefore become the driving mechanism of the piece. As mentioned earlier, each of these personae represent one side of the primary/antithetical dichotomy. In my interpretation, Hic has been read as aligned with the primary while Ille is aligned with the antithetical.

ALLUSORY QUALITIES

Derived from Latin, the title "Ego Dominus Tuus," translates as "I am your master" and is taken directly from Dante Alighieri's *Vita Nuova*. There is a scene in that epic poem where Dante encounters "The Lord of Terrible Aspect." Recalling this passage, Yeats recants Dante's response to this sighting: "to rejoice inwardly that it was a marvel to see, speaking, [The Lord of Terrible Aspect] said, many things among the which I could understand but few, and of these this: ego dominus tuus" (*Per Amica* 19). This passage from *Per Amica* is reminiscent of the anti-self that Ille seeks in "Ego" when he says, ". . . my anti-self, / . . . standing by these characters, disclos[ing] / All that I seek . . ." (lines 80–82). Just

as Dante inwardly rejoices at the sight of The Lord of Great and Terrible Aspect, Ille too looks forward to an encounter with a mysterious being who can reveal the secrets of his existence. In both instances, Dante's and Ille's, there is an other-worldly being that seems to take on the role of master, suggesting that both characters are subject to their desires for a supreme knowledge of existence and that their real-world actions are somehow dictated by their pursuits of this knowledge, dictated by the superior beings that inhabit some sphere of existence other than their own. It could be argued, then, that Hic is also enslaved to the pursuit of some greater meta-physical truth, but his actions are determined by his attempts to "imitat[e] . . . great masters" (line 72) that came before him, making him forever subject to the past. In this way, understanding both the translation of the title of "Ego" as well as the allusion contained within it becomes vital to an interpretation of the poem.

Continuing the trend of an understanding of Latin being important to an interpretation of the poem, translation is again important when considering the names of the two personae in "Ego": Hic and Ille. The Latin words *hic* and *ille* translate, respectively, as *this* and *that* (*The Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary*). Bringing this translation into play, the duality of inherent to each of these personae becomes apparent in that the words Hic and Ille serve as both names and, when translated as this or that, states of being. Adding to this, being that this and that, when taken together, work as opposed terms, the personae of Hic and Ille can then be viewed as inherently opposed to one another. It should be no surprise then that the dialogue between them is so argumentative.

Because of the natural opposition reflected in the meaning of their names and the debate-like qualities of their dialogue, it made sense to interpret Hic and Ille as each being reflective of one or the other side of Yeats's primary/antithetical dichotomy. Here, Hic, has

been interpreted as being aligned with the primary/objective qualities of the soul due to his reliance on the works, as they exist in the material world in the form of books, of those writers and visionaries past for his understanding of himself and his world. Hic's dependence on formerly established and documented knowledge is indicative of the objective perspective that he is only able to find enlightenment through external sources. Hic corroborates this view with his repeated questioning of Ille's neglect of textual studies, which he first mentions in lines 3–7 and then again in lines 68–72 saying,

Why should you leave the lamp
Burning alone beside an open book,
And trace these characters upon the sand?
A style is found by sedentary toil,
And by the imitation of great masters.

In these lines, Hic again chides Ille for his lack of dedication to what Hic considers proper study. These lines solidify Hic's intellectual stance as contrary to Ille's, and it is here that one can find Yeats in sympathy with Ille's point of view, which becomes especially apparent when looking to another of Yeats's writings—this time a correspondence written long before the lines of "Ego." In 1892, in a letter to one John O'leary, Yeats wrote, "The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write. . . . I have always considered myself a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance—the revolt of the soul against the intellect" (Wade 14). In this letter, Yeats clearly lays out his philosophical stance and authorial goals as being a spiritual "revolt . . . against the intellect." This definitively positions the poet on the side of Ille, and reinforces the interpretation of Ille being depicted as having the superior perspective.

Ille poses a more nuanced character than Hic. Being, in my interpretation, aligned with the antithetical/subjective side of Yeats's dichotomy, Ille's character is a bit more complicated and mysterious due to the complex and mystical nature of the Yeatsian concept that he embodies. Consider Ille's words,

. . . I seek an image, not a book;
Those men that in their writings are most wise
Own nothing but their blind, stupefied hearts.
I call to the mysterious one who yet
Shall walk the wet sand by the water's edge,
And look most like me, being indeed my double,
And prove of all imaginable things

The most unlike, being my anti-self . . . ("Ego" lines 73–80)

Ille clearly desires a break from Hic's traditions, and in declaring the "anti-self" as his preferred means of understanding, he clearly reflects the antithetical/subjective category. It's no coincidence that Ille dominates the dialogue, speaking fifty-nine of the eighty-five lines. This, in conjunction with the fact that Ille gets the last word in the debate, suggests that Ille takes the upper hand in the exchange between the two personae. In sum, then, "Ego" presents an interesting argument between two opposed perspectives concerning the existence and direction of humanity, with the more immaterial, subjective, and mystical viewpoints being the victors in this "quarrel with ourself."

METHODS

PRELIMINARIES

The planning stages for the adaptation of “Ego” relied mainly on two techniques: *storyboarding* and *concepting*. By *storyboarding*, I refer to the act of roughly sketching, in simplistic style, a scene-by-scene depiction of the project. Each scene from the story is given its own space, or panel, as an individual component of the larger visual frame, or board. *Concepting* refers to the systematic development of the overall look of a character, object, or setting by drawing different versions of that subject and then building off each version toward a final, completed concept. Concepting was not only utilized in these preparatory phases but also employed throughout the production phases. Together, concepting and storyboarding produced a solid foundation for the adaptation.

From the outset, it was apparent that the visual art component of this project necessitated its being a collaborative endeavor as I lacked the artistic ability to render the adaptation I envisioned alone. So, it was crucial for planning to be done in such a way as to facilitate clear communication of the over-arching vision to collaborating artists Philip Simmons and Jeremy Washington. Mapping out the “Ego” adaptation by constructing a storyboard, then, was the obvious choice because storyboarding could serve as the primary outline of the project for all those involved.

Storyboarding also served practical purposes. For instance, by counting the number of panels in the finished storyboard, the total number of drawings necessary to complete the adaptation would be clear. This type of information gave the production team a clear indication of what was required of each collaborator and how much time should be invested in each portion of the project. In that same vein, by counting the figures in each of the

storyboard's panels, the total number of distinct figure drawings needed was known from the start.

The finished storyboard for “Ego” consisted of only fifteen panels and fourteen distinct figure drawings. In terms of production, this meant that the project would require fifteen separate drawings, and by looking at the different levels of detail that would be required for each image, a rough approximation of the necessary production time required could be determined. See Figure 1 for a digital facsimile of the storyboard.

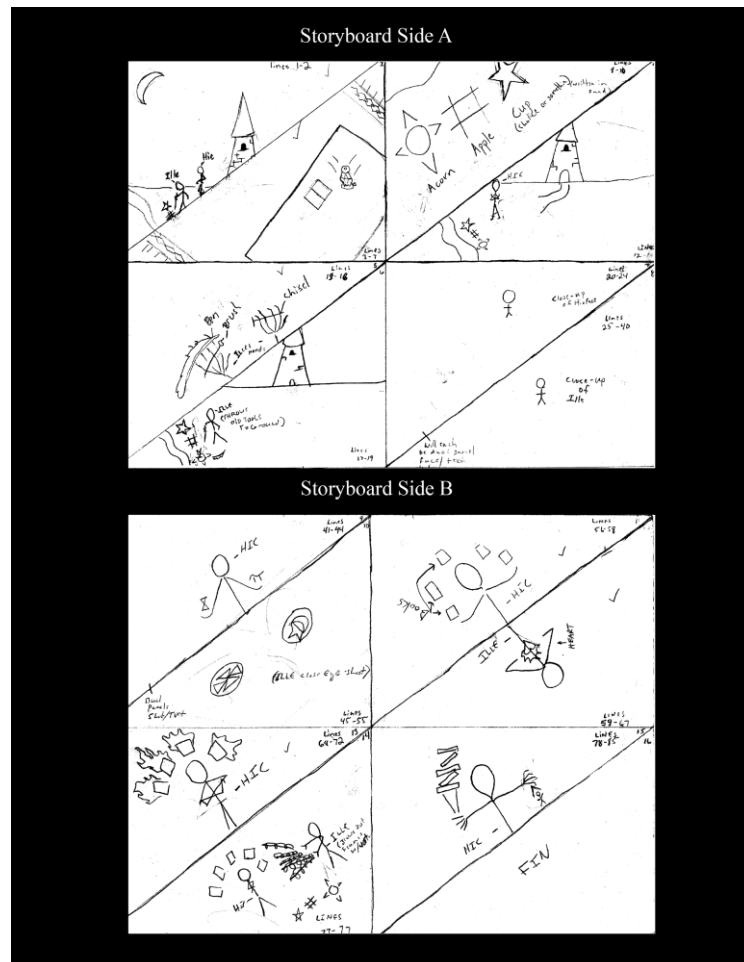


FIGURE 1. Both sides of the original scene-by-scene storyboard that served as the foundation for the adaptations creative direction.

Once I completed the storyboard, I then drew rough character concepts for Hic and Ille. These early sketches were just as vital for successful collaboration as the storyboard, but for different reasons. The sketches enabled the depiction of something the storyboard could not accommodate with any great depth: aesthetic direction. While the storyboard reflected simplistic sketches for the positioning of figures within a scene and the placement of those figures against a backdrop, these initial concept sketches expressed the overall look and feel envisioned for the project. In other words, the storyboard served as a rough outline and quantitative reference, and the first sketches as means for communicating the desired style and design of the characters.

For the preliminary mock-up, I created two sketches, one for each character. Each sketch highlighted the most important elements of the two personae as far as reflecting my interpretation and visually representing Yeatsian intertextuality were concerned. Because the subject matter of the poem so closely related to occult philosophies and practices, Hic and Ille's depiction as dark, mysterious characters with strong visual connections to magic and mysticism seemed fitting. So, in the initial rendering of Hic and Ille, their distinct symbolic resonances in "Ego" suggested their cloaked, esoteric natures. In the poem, aside from their insinuated symbolic values, both characters' identities are relatively ambiguous with no clues as to their physical appearance. The verse never revealed where these speakers came from or anything else about their histories. This presented an interesting challenge when trying to create visually appealing and identifiable representations of them. For these reasons, each character design featured a mask that hid each's face. This choice gelled perfectly with the framework of a digital comic (i.e., the staple comic icon of the masked man), but it also

worked with Yeats's writing because it displays the poet's affinity for masks, a prominent feature in various other of Yeats's works.

Yeats often employed masks as dramatic devices to express symbolic character attributes in his dramatic works. His plays based on the Noh genre of Japanese drama were particularly good examples of this technique. This use of masks, because of its relationships to so many other of Yeats's writings, blended easily with Hic and Ille's character models, obscuring identity in an expressive way by obfuscating the reality of physical appearance while still visually suggesting what these personas represent. In "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" (1916), Yeats wrote approvingly of the Japanese use of masks:

A mask will enable me to substitute for the face of some common-place player, or for that face repainted to suit his own vulgar fancy, the fine invention of a sculptor, and to bring the audience close enough to the play to hear every inflection of the voice. A mask never seems but a dirty face, and no matter how close you go is still a work of art. (166)

Here, Yeats articulated his views on masks as expressive tools for character development, and it was in this tradition that I designed Hic and Ille's masks. Their masks' designs develop them as embodiments of the primary and the antithetical by incorporating the occult symbology that Yeats assigned to each of these traits (e.g., the sun and moon). So, by visually representing these symbols, I attempted to render Hic and Ille the way Yeats himself may have—masked and expressive through their adorned imagery.

As an extension of this mask concept, I needed to consider additional ways to distinguish Hic and Ille from one another since they were so vaguely portrayed in the source material. I combed through the lines of "Ego" looking for clues as to how I might do this. I

kept returning to the idea that Hic's portion of the dialogue aligned best with Yeats's conception of the primary while Ille aligned with the antithetical. To make this distinction visually recognizable, then, a creative eye was turned to the solar and lunar attributes associated with primary and antithetical in *A Vision*. My hope was that Hic and Ille could be individualized by emphasizing their primary/antithetical associations through the incorporation of Sun and Moon imagery in their character designs that would simultaneously cement some of the intertextual links between "Ego," *Per Amica*, and *A Vision*. This aspect of their designs was most visible in the solar and lunar features on their masks, which seemed an appropriate location for symbolic expression especially when considering Yeats's earlier cited comments from "Certain Noble Plays." See Figure 2 for digital facsimiles of the original character sketches.

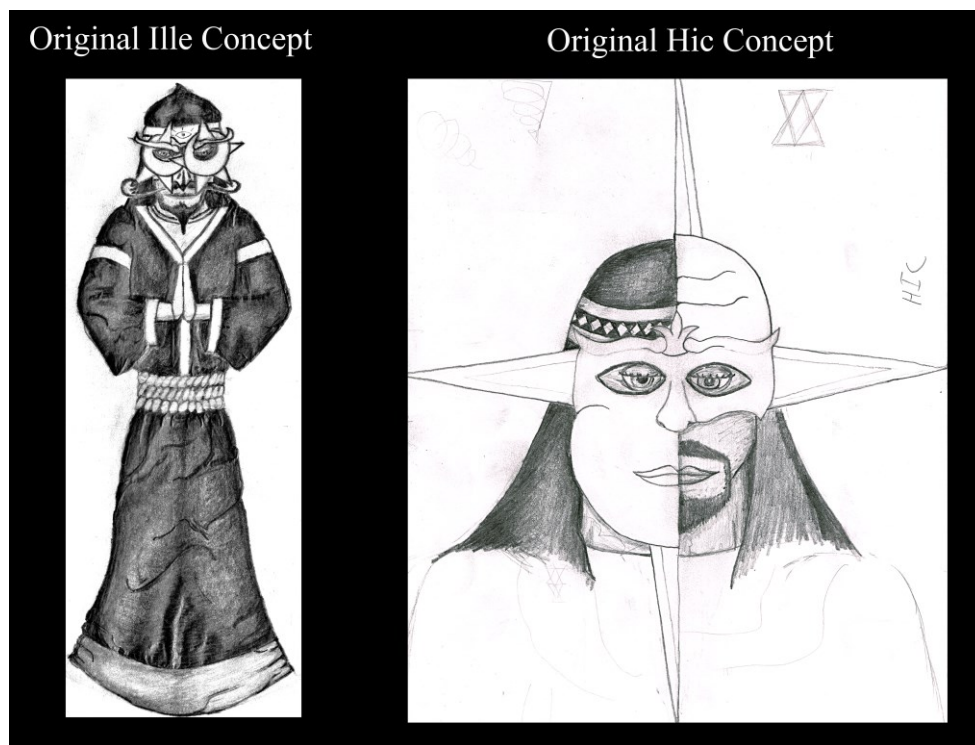


FIGURE 2. My original character sketches for Ille and Hic.

Once I completed the initial character sketches, the next step in the planning phase was to meet with the collaborating artists for a concepting session, after which production of the adaptation could begin. Through that concepting session, the original Hic and Ille designs evolved, which led to final versions far different from and more refined than my first sketches. Figure 3 details the evolution of Ille's concept in digital facsimiles of the originals that have been ordered in the same sequence in which they were developed.



FIGURE 3. The progressive development of Ille's concept, which can be chronologically traced by starting at the top left and following the progression to the bottom of the pyramid.

Tracking the concepting session clearly shows the interpretive process merging with the creative. Notice how developing an effective adaptation of a previously existing work appears to be intrinsically tied to being creatively ambitious yet actively aware of the imagery presented in the original text. As Ille's face changed in each sketch, the visibility of the symbolic values associated with his character appeared to strengthen with each successive image. At the start, Ille's mask was made up of two crescent moons entangled with five-pointed stars, yet as his concept evolved, the stars disappear from his visage and the representation of the moon takes on a different shape altogether. By the time a final concept came to light, the crescent moons were replaced with multiple representations of the moon at different phases. On his chin, there was a crescent moon, above his nose a half moon, and on his forehead a full moon. This depiction reflected Yeats's later use of the lunar phases in *A Vision* and reinforces the structural relationship of "Ego" to the poem "Phases of the Moon."

There were other changes to the mask as well. One such change was its full-frontal construction as opposed to the smaller, partial covering rendered in the first sketch. This was not as inconsequential a decision as it may seem. In fact, the mask was fashioned to cover Ille's face as a means of character expression, specifically as it related to his implied introverted nature. The impression was further enhanced by the ever-present hood nestled atop Ille's head. In these subtle ways, the leading interpretation of Ille's subjective, internal, and antithetical nature was incorporated into his wardrobe.

Hic's character model also greatly evolved over the course of the concepting process, and a comparison model of the original sketch versus the final version is included in Figure 4. Unlike Ille's, though, Hic's development occurred most visibly in areas other than his

mask. As can be seen by the comparison, the final mask isn't that conceptually different from the first version. A basic representation of the sun was chosen as the predominant theme because of Hic's alignment with



FIGURE 4. A comparison of Hic's original and final versions.

the solar (or objective) man. Portions of the mask were left open so that Hic's facial features could impose themselves on the mask's design, suggesting the merger of the man with the external world. Hic's design also contains nods to his tendency toward the act of imitation. Recall Hic's words, "A style is found by sedentary toil, / And by the imitation of great masters" ("Ego" lines 71–72). In his design, this was represented by his conical hat that points upward and his downward-pointing beard that both "imitate" the spires of the sun that surround his mask. This was also suggested in the orange color of his garments that he wears in that they imitate the heat and coloration of the sun. These visual representations parallel Hic's speech in the poem where he uses heat-related words. For instance, Hic's reference to the "The chief imagination of Christendom / Dante Alighieri . . ." (lines 20–21),

which calls to mind the first part of that author's *Divine Comedy* that was titled *Inferno*, or the repeated questioning of Ille about "leav[ing] the lamp / *Burning* alone beside an open book" ("Ego" lines 68–69; emphasis added). This heat-referencing language supports the interpretation of Hic as aligned with the solar/objective properties of the soul and further suggests the character's extroversion metaphorically through the radiant quality of heat as it is absorbed by objects from external sources.

The quality of being extroverted is also visually represented in other aspects of Hic's attire. He is not hooded like Ille, and his robes are adorned with more decorative elements than Ille's. Hic's mask has two pointed triangles extending from each side that, as previously mentioned, combine with the triangular shapes of his upward-pointing cap and downward-pointing beard to imply visually both the heat radiating from the sun's surface and the character's tendency to point in all directions to the outside world as a source of answers to life's greatest mysteries. Thus, Hic's stark contrast from Ille was designed as a means to help readers grasp the meaning of the conflict between the two personas visually as they read through the dialog, and although these visual renditions are probably unlike anything Yeats himself ever imagined, the themes and imagery integral to "Ego" are still integral to these designs.

COLLABORATIONS

Choosing collaborative partners presented its own unique challenges, some of which will be discussed here to emphasize the intricacies of the collaborative process. Originally, there was only one artist assigned to the project. Philip Simmons, a highly trained graphic artist with nearly fifty years of experience who produced art for such notable projects as the South Carolina Educational Television Network's documentary *The Valley Speaks* and

contributed artwork for the design of Clemson University's tiger paw logo, was the first artist on board to create illustrations for this adaptation of "Ego." After meeting with Simmons and showing him the storyboard and character sketches, he suggested that a second artist be brought in to facilitate production, which led to my recruiting Jeremy Washington, an up-and-coming social media developer and graphic illustrator, who also joined the team to help with the initial production of this adaptation.

Once both artists were ready to begin, I delegated specific tasks to each of them. Simmons rendered the backgrounds while Washington did the figure drawings. Each artist was given a schedule of deadlines and asked to hand in graphite pencil drawings of all assignments. As for my part, I took on the duty of creative direction and, later, once Simmons and Washington completed their work, I combined the figures with their appropriate backdrops and added any necessary digital enhancements (including the coloration of the images). Over the course of this collaborative work, multiple meetings were held with each artist, either in person, over the phone, or via email. These conversations were where communicating the interpretive goals of the project to the artists took place. The results led to the visualizations described in the earlier overview of the concepting process.

When the artists began producing sketches, I constructed versions of finished panels piecemeal, as I received each drawing. Simmons' backdrops were the first necessary piece for constructing these panels, followed by the Washington's figures, which I would, upon receipt, digitize, combine, and enhance. Each person in the team's role was crucial for bringing the project together into a cohesive unit, and I am thankful for the work that Simmons and Washington both contributed toward this end.

PRODUCTION PHASES

DIGITIZATION. Digitization is the process of recreating a physical image as a digital file. In a way, the re-creation of line art as digital pixels is closely related to the process of reinterpretation that is involved in adapting another artist's work. I describe the relationship later, but for now the digitization process itself deserves its own analysis.

It is ironic that with the focus of “Ego” being on the search for one's soul that the art created for this project would undergo so many bodily transitions. Each individual piece would go from rough initial sketch to fully developed figure to placement against a backdrop to texturization to colorization, but the first step was to create a digital file from the physical, penciled sketches. As the team zeroed in on who Ille and Hic were as characters, their representations seemed to become more and more individualized and distinct from one another, and once the physical drawings were done, their digital counterparts needed to reflect all the details that went into that refinement. This is partly why a digital rendition of this art was so vital to the project, as it is through the use of digital technology that the art was stylized, shaped, re-shaped, and manipulated. Digitization offers a fluid canvas for the construction of liquid character models that can change along with the adapters' interpretations and goals. Digitization of the physical drawings was a process-heavy task, though. The finished product required several steps to ensure that it would be of the highest quality possible for the given circumstances. The following is an overview of those steps.

The first step was to scan the images at high resolution. Various mediums require different resolutions for optimal viewing experiences, but because this project necessitated repeated re-sizing of the images to optimize them for viewing on a computer monitor, the

original resolution of the scans needed to exceed what would be needed in the finished images. For this project, initial scans were done at 1200 dpi (dots per inch).

Dots-per-inch refers to the number of pixels present in every square inch of an image, and the more pixels in each square inch, the higher definition the image becomes. To give the reader an idea of how high a resolution of 1200 dpi is, consider the following specifications for various mediums. An image for use on the web, for instance, only needs a resolution of 72 ppi (ppi [pixels-per-inch] being a web equivalent for dpi) to be displayed clearly. Some web-based images can be displayed at 150 ppi, but, since most monitor displays are optimized for 72 ppi, even an image set at 150 would display at 72. For print, the resolution requirements go up significantly. Since digital printers can maintain a high level of detail as images are transferred to paper, the requirement for print is 300 dpi. With these specs in mind, a resolution of 1200 dpi seems too high, but is it?

In a word: no. As mentioned earlier, since the images that were being scanned would be resized and manipulated multiple times, this resolution enables the image to withstand these changes with minimal loss of quality. Additionally, since these images would likely be used on a display where zooming into specific areas would be possible, the higher resolution helps maintain the quality of even small areas of the image. This technique is often referred to as *scaling*.

Dpi was not the only concern when digitizing the images, though. File formats also come into play. With various file formats available for digital images, choosing the right one is imperative for the maintenance of quality. For this project, original images were saved as .tiff files, which are uncompressed, loss-less file types that are mostly used for creating print-ready images. Once these files were saved as .tiff files, the image editing process could

commence. This is where the most substantial digital enhancements were made, and where, once again, file types would change. At this point, the pencil drawings being morphed into digital files created a new sort of canvas. This is not a blank canvas but much more like a highly advanced page from a digital coloring book where the look and feel of the pictures can be completely transformed. This is where the images come alive, and in terms of the debate between Yeats's personas, where the static, external material gives way to the development of the malleable, claylike internal structure of the inherent shapes.

The above describes the process used for the digitization of images for this project, but it should be mentioned here that, ideally, a project like this would use vector-based images as these types of images can be resized with no loss of quality. However, to create a vector image of a drawing, a graphic artist has to use a vector-rendering application such as Adobe Illustrator to recreate every image in a vector format. This is a time-consuming process that requires a high level of skill, and for those reasons, using vector-based images was beyond the scope of this project.

IMAGE EDITING. This project utilized both Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator for the editing of imagery. These applications were used in a variety of ways to enhance and develop the art created by Simmons and Washington, and by the end of each image's digital treatments their visual appeal dramatically changed. The remainder of this section explains some of the techniques used to achieve these significant changes.

The techniques in question—the adding of adjustment layers, the multi-layering of figures, and the overlaying of color—all share a common quality. Namely, these techniques all consist of adding new layers of imagery to the existing file. What is interesting is that with the addition of each new layer of visual enhancement, the underlying interpretation becomes

more clearly visible. It is as if each enhancement expresses its own bit of meaning. For example, consider the addition of adjustment layers. An adjustment layer is a layer added over the top of an image so that various adjustments (e.g., brightness, contrast, saturation, etc.) can be applied to specified areas of that image. To demonstrate these adjustments, the scene in Panel 2, titled the “book scene,” makes an excellent example.

The book scene was constructed to coincide with those lines in the poem that read, “Why should you leave the lamp / Burning alone beside an open book” (lines 68–69). This scene was the only one that did not require the addition of figures, but there were several adjustments that needed to be made nonetheless. Because the scene takes place in the interior of the tower and since the only source of light in the room was a burning lamp on the table beside the book, it was important that the room be depicted with a certain level of darkness. To achieve this darker look, the adjustment of choice was Photoshop’s *levels*. The levels adjustment controls the amount of shadows and highlights present in an image and adjusts the relative brightness or darkness of those areas. For the book scene, there were two elements that needed levels adjustments: the floor and the walls. In appropriately adjusting the levels for the floor and the walls, two effects were applied. The first created the look of a dimly lit room, but the second, because the levels were broken up into sections, added depth to the image. By breaking up the adjustments into two separate layers and making the floor darker, the perspective of the image becomes more three dimensional.

Interpretively speaking, the enhancement of shadows coincides with some of the poem’s thematic elements. “Ego” is a poem that concerns the illumination of hidden knowledge by either philosophical study (Hic) or mystical practice (Ille), and despite the differing viewpoints of the personas, their mutual goal is to better understand those bits of

hidden information. In the book scene, this effect was further communicated by the addition of a glowing halo of light around the lantern's flame and by letting the light emanating from that halo extend onto the pages of the book lying before it on the table. To set the tone of the image, before adding the halo and illuminating effect to the book, the rest of the image was given a cool, blue tone by applying a cooling filter to the image. Next, the halo for the flame was created in Illustrator and then added to the illustration, and an orange-toned warming filter was applied to the pages of the book in Photoshop. The two colors contrasted nicely, and the glowing of the candle in the middle of a dark shadowy room communicates the idea of illumination in the midst of darkness. The image also subtly suggests the conflict between the two personae by presenting the viewer with two sources of light in the dark room. The one, the flame lit by the internal mechanism of the lantern, and the other, the well-lit pages of an open text that highlight the source of external information. In these ways, the digital enhancements produce an extension of interpretive meaning for the viewer. A detailed, step-by-step production sequence for the book scene can be viewed in Figure 5.

Panel 1 consisted of a full backdrop shot with the insertion of Hic and Ille's figures as well as a drawing of the symbols in the sand. My description of the work on this panel will focus on multi-layering as the spotlight technique, so details about each adjustment made before adding the figures to the scene will be omitted for brevity's sake; just know that all of the same steps that were taken with the book scene were also applied to the landscape scene of Panel 1. The following passage discusses what came directly after that process.

Multi-layering is a standard technique in Photoshop that involves the addition of layers of other imagery on top of a source image. This technique is not so different than the

ones used by traditional graphic artists for decades. For instance, Phillip Simmons, in his long-standing career as a graphic artist, employed this technique many times. For him, doing this involved the use of transparent pages that could be “layered” over the top of an image, adding whatever was drawn onto the page but allowing the background of the original to show through. In the digital age, however, techniques may be similar but the process is automated, which makes the work faster, produces less material waste, and allows for the addition of digital filters to each layer. During this project, the clearest examples of the necessity of multi-layering came with the need to add the figures drawn by Washington to Simmons’s landscape.

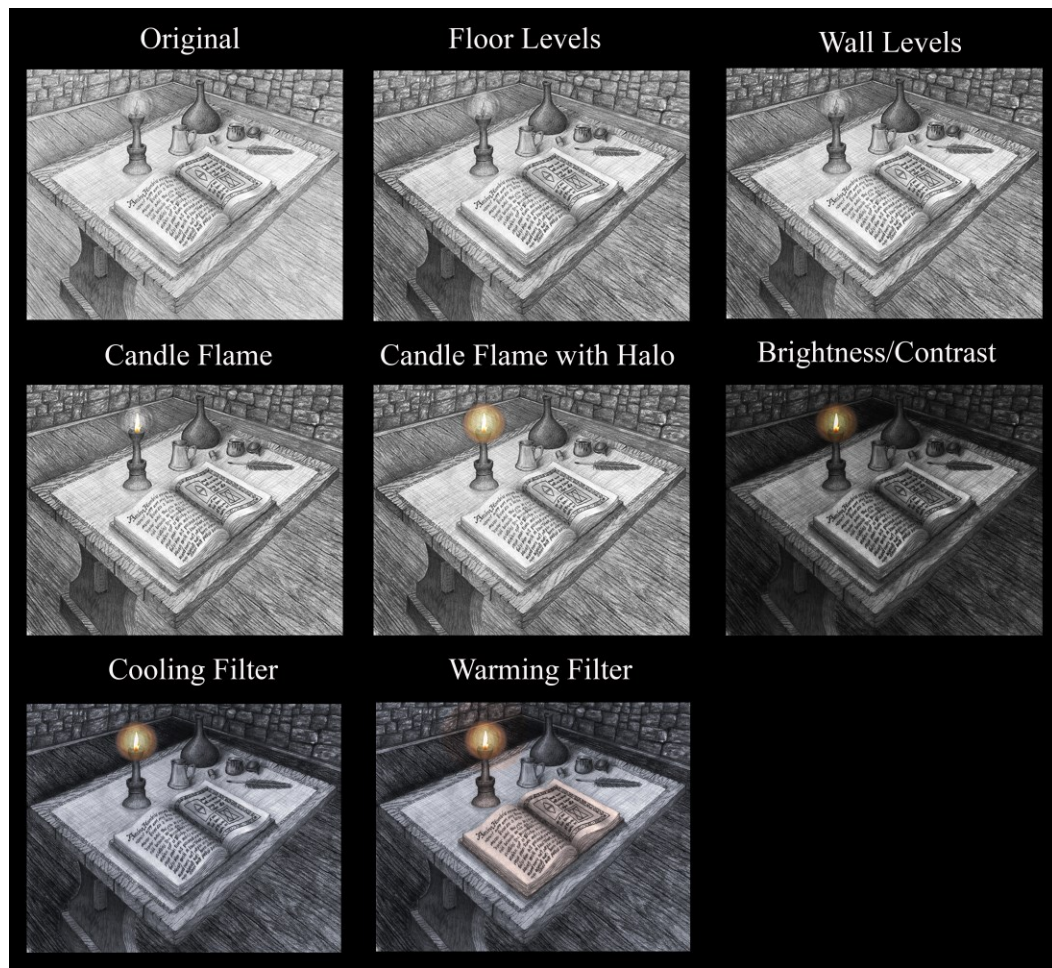


FIGURE 5. This chart details each step in editing the book scene.

With the fully adjusted and colorized backdrop scene open in Photoshop, getting Hic and Ille into the scene was as easy as opening the “File” menu, choosing “Place,” and then selecting the pre-adjusted images of Hic and Ille. As each figure was placed, it was adjusted using the free transform tool, which is found by selecting the rectangle tool and right-clicking. “Free Transform” mode gives the user the ability to scale, distort, warp, and rotate (among other options) the object being placed into the scene. This was especially helpful, for instance, when placing Hic into the scene, as he needed to be standing at a bit of an angle to make it appear as though he was looking at the symbols Ille had etched into the sand. By using the “distort” option in “free transform” mode, it became possible to pull on the corners of Hic’s shoulders by clicking the cursor in the top right corner of the placement box and dragging upward ever so slightly. This slight repositioning of the figure helps to enhance the illusion of his natural presence in the scene. Once both of the figures were properly positioned on the landscape, the symbols were also imported into the scene via the same mechanism as the figures. The difference here is that the symbols required the incorporation of multiple layers and the addition of special filters in order to make the imagery blend in with the grey sand of the background. Two extra layers were added in total to the symbols, one being a multiply layer to darken the outline and isolate the white light and the other being a difference layer that infused the black outline of the symbols with various shades of gray from the surroundings. Opacity of all layers was then adjusted and the symbols layers were all merged down to one layer. They were placed into the scene after rotating, distorting and warping them to fit the angle at which they would have been written by Ille. A detailed progression chart of this process has been included in Figure 6.

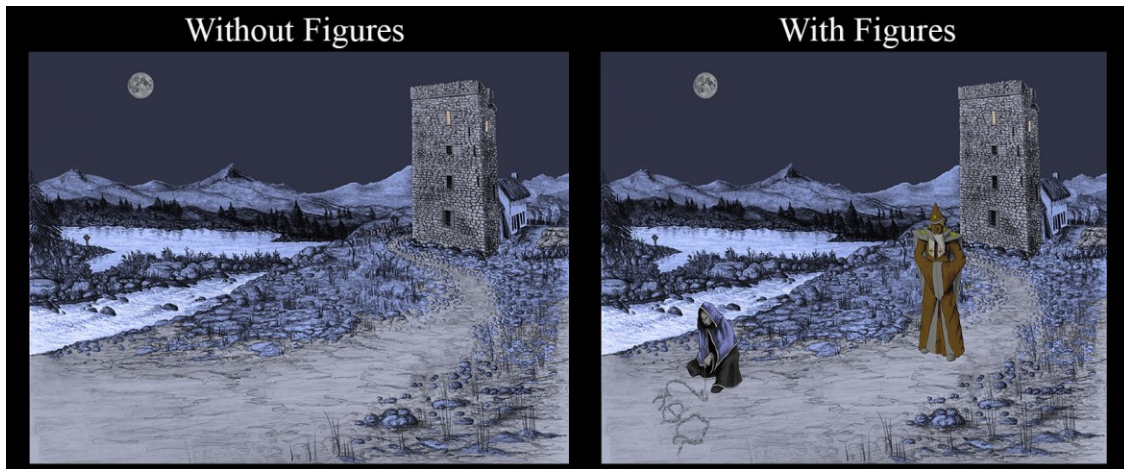


FIGURE 6. A comparison of the backdrop, with and without figures.

FORMATTING. Once the steps described above were applied to all of the images it was time to format the images for digital display. It is in the digital formatting of the images, as they go from being independent entities to being interconnected components of a textual body, that the true potential for the enhancement of a literary text through digital technology becomes visible. And although this project is not fully complete, enough of the project is finished to give a clear indication of how a completed version of an adaptation of “Ego” would function in terms of making the text accessible to a wider audience.

The current demo version of “Ego” is written in a combination of HTML, CSS, and Javascript, making it compatible with most up-to-date web browsers. The browser platform offers designers the ability to integrate interactivity within visual projects dependably and fairly easily. Being that an element of interactivity was one of the main features this adaptation was intended to introduce to “Ego,” the use of HTML-based image maps and certain Javascript functions allowed for the addition of pop-up boxes that give users detailed information whenever their mouse hovers over certain parts of the image. This allows users to further explore the visual world of the adaptation by giving them more in-depth

information on spots that pique their interest and offering clarity on aspects of the poem that they find puzzling. Figure 7 includes a sample of the Javascript used in the early development stages to create this type of effect.

```
<html>

<head>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="javascript">
Image1 = new Image(1024,768)
Image1.src = "panel_1_widget_test.gif"
Image2 = new Image(265,406)
Image2.src = "panel_2_widget_test.gif"
</SCRIPT>
</head>

<body>
<IMG NAME="emp" SRC="panel_1_widget_test.gif" USEMAP="#panel_1">
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="javascript">
function zoomout() {
document.emp.src = Image2.src; return true;
}
function original() {
document.emp.src = Image1.src; return true;
}
</SCRIPT>
<MAP NAME="panel_1">
<AREA SHAPE="rect" ALT="Enlarged right side" COORDS="117,70,160,119"
HREF="panel_2_widget_test.gif" onMouseOver="zoomout()"
onMouseOut="original()">
<AREA SHAPE="default" nohref>
</MAP>
</body>

</html>
```

FIGURE 7. A sample of the coding for the web-based version of the “Ego” adaptation.

This bit of code creates an image flip when the user moves the cursor over the tower in the image from Panel 1. In this code, pointing to the tower flips to Panel 2.

This code grew a great deal more complex as each panel was linked with extra *hidden* info panels. Each of these extra panels required the creation of a separate image to provide a space to contain the info. These extra panels were approached in different ways, but the goal was to be sure that wherever users pointed their cursors, the extra info appears somewhere else on the page where they could easily view it. Remember, the window only stays open for as long as the cursor is on a particular hotspot. As soon as the cursor moves, the info disappears.

Overall, the layout was presented as such: A full “page” is displayed in the browser window containing multiple panels on each page. Each panel is linked to an internal, full screen version of the panel selected, where the image flipping is programmed in to take effect. There are also links along the bottom of the window that allow the user to navigate through the pages of the comic adaptation intuitively. In the end, the HTML/CSS/Javascript framework employed in this project proved useful in its offering of a foundation for further platforming. From this basic format, converting to ibooks, epub, mobi, or even application formats can be more easily accomplished. All the base work is laid, and it becomes a task of fitting the piece into other formats so it functions properly.

RESULTS

From one perspective, this project is merely the catalyst of an ongoing work in progress that has much formatting, testing, and development left in its creative life before it can be considered finished. From another perspective, though, this project provides ample evidence of the guiding role of interpretation in the adaptive process and equally demonstrates ways that visual representation can add clarity to textually dense works of literature. This account of the work completed over the course of the project’s creation

documents how the interpretive act drove each separate component of artistic creation. Equally important here, this project also demonstrates how digital technology can facilitate the adaptation by making available means of production, communication, and distribution. Pertinent to this point, the hurdles that this project faced during the production stages display the limitations of the formats and technology being used, and it is only by testing these limits that improvements can be made for future developers.

Looking back on the production of this project, at least three important lessons can be found. First, digitally driven projects requiring the acquisition of creative assets as content are often of a fairly large scope, usually necessitating a collaborative environment for successful development. Second, when attempting to “enhance” a creative work by adding interactivity of some sort, the types of features and interactions that are desired may delimit the available formats that the end product will be compatible with. Third, file storage, in the sense of both management and available space, is always a concern for large-scale digital development and proper preparations should be made for the efficient handling of files if a project of this sort is undertaken. These are all points that developers and digital humanists should keep in mind as they embark on their various creative projects.

As far as the creation of assets is concerned, there are also valuable lessons to learn. For instance, the potential to create a functional digital product of any sort depends primarily on access to a sufficient means of production. In other words, the tools available to the developer for the creation, testing, and implementation of creative assets in a digital framework often determine the shape of the final product. This seems, at first glance, a fairly common-sense statement, but by looking at the processes involved with the creation of this project the importance of such “common-sense” considerations becomes clear in their

implications for future project planning and organization. Another key takeaway from this experience was that over and over again during the creative process interpretation proved to be a vital component of adaptation. Reconsider Figure 3 and the developmental line of concept sketches displayed there. While each sketch changes drastically from one rendering to the next, the interpretive anchor holding them each in place with the identity of the character is always visible. The moon is an ever-present symbol on Ille's mask, and the implementation of lunar phases adds depth to the symbolism while enhancing visual effect. Results-wise, this project's interpretation proved successful in guiding the creation of engaging, relevant, and accessible artwork, which even in its "work-in-progress" state suggests its potential as development continues to enrich this Yeatsian digital space where readers can interact with the text of "Ego" just as it interacts intertextually with other pieces of literature.

At this time, there is no established distribution model for this project. While there are plans for digital distribution in the near future, the development of the product must be further refined before this stage will be reached. It is worth noting that there are multiple outlets available for digital distribution for a product of this type, but distributive channels often necessitate particular formats. This means that until a product can be properly developed in a given format (i.e., epub or any other similar format) it cannot be placed in that particular distributive channel. Distributive channel here meaning a channel through which an independent publisher can reach available consumers such as Apple's App Store or other digital marketplaces like Amazon where electronic books can be uploaded and sold.

CONCLUSIONS

In “Beyond Metrics,” Kathleen Fitzpatrick comments on the current state of digital publishing within academia, writing that “anyone with the right hardware, software, and network connection could simply publish anything online. This promiscuity is precisely what makes the open web suspect for many academics” (454). As opposed to the quote from Fitzpatrick that opened this writing however, there is some disagreement with the above statement. That is, while no one would disagree with her that this is indeed the case when it comes to scholarly, peer-review (the issue that she is, in fact, discussing here), but it is, however, worthwhile to look at this issue through a broader scope. In other words, can it be that the fact that “anyone with the right hardware, software, and network connection could simply publish anything online” makes the Internet the perfect space for collaborative and creative digital experimentation in academic settings? If anything can be gained from attempting projects like these at this moment in time, it is to showcase how the dominant compositional space has shifted from print to digital in the technological age, and that this shift has made visible new ways in which innovative work can be practiced and presented

This work was carried on in the same tradition as that of those scholars at Yale who created an interactive map of the narrative in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* in 2011 (Lewis) and Sean Meredith’s 2007 adaptation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. The former of these was a strictly academic endeavor, and the latter a critically acclaimed independent venture. The driving purpose behind this project was to exhibit how these two differing approaches to the implementation of digital technology might be merged to widen the possible horizons for upcoming and current students and scholars in humanities fields.

In “Should Liberal Arts Campuses Do Digital Humanities? Process and Products in the Small College World,” Bryan Alexander and Rebecca Frost Davis argue that “at a time when the academic humanities seems otherwise threatened and contracting, the digital humanities remains a viable growth area, even a potential source of salvation for threatened disciplines” (368). This is an exciting time for humanities study, but many digital humanists still find themselves struggling to validate themselves in a sea of ongoing budget and departmental cuts. Not only this, but because projects like this one have not yet been taken up large-scale by students and scholars around the world, the adaptations of literary works like Dante’s *Divine Comedy* are left to all the Sean Merediths of the world. In closing, my hope is that this work will highlight for others the most valuable parts of this process and open a larger discussion about how digital production, literary arts, and the academic arena can combine to lead students and scholars of literature in new, exciting directions.

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