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見る女（ひと） W.B. Yeats's "The Wind among the Reeds"

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The Female Gaze in W.B. Yeats's "The Wind among the Reeds"

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The affinity and love of women was indispensable for the poetical creativity of W.B. Yeats. As T.R. Henn succinctly summarizes, every tread in his pilgrimage along with women denotes a pivotal turn in his creative development:

[. . .] adoration, the taking fire of the mind at women's beauty; the recoil from disappointment and frustration into affairs that were unsatisfactory in varying degrees; a return to his idealized portrait, and a desperate attempt to rediscover it in the next generation; his marriage, and its overwhelming consequences in his philosophy; parenthood, and a certain stability; then (after the pattern of the lives of poets), a growing excitement and intensity as the imagination seized new significance in the elements which it could now combine. (Henn 51)

At one time as his muse and at another his subject matters, the women Yeats associated with kept instigating his poetical inspiration during the whole course of his life.

This paper aims to investigate the significance of the female gaze in a series of love poems in "The Wind among the Reeds" (*The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats: A New Edition* 53-74) "The Wind among the Reeds" assembles the love poems that collectively mark one of the crucial moments of Yeats's love affairs (A. Norman Jeffares 100-103). After Maud Gonne had refused Yeats's marriage proposal, he fell in love with

Olivia Shakespeare. But Mrs. Shakespeare realized Yeats still loved Maud Gonne and their relationship broke up. As a matter of course, the poems do not directly describe the details of the fact. They, however, disclose a truth in it. It is a development in Yeats's self-recognition. Women's gazes play vital roles in the development.

Writing at the close of the nineteenth century, Yeats instilled "The Wind Among the Reeds" with the hope that a tragic generation declines and a newly blessed era emerges (Harold Bloom 121-23). It was a common sense among those who were living in *fin de siècle*. What is peculiar to Yeats, however, is to link the outlook to his creating of the image of ideal woman or perfect beauty. Although his marriage proposal was refused, his passion toward Maud Gonne never ceased. In fact, he proposed many times. Meanwhile, Maud Gonne was transformed into an archetypal figure of ideal beauty.

His creating and praising of the ideal female figure becomes the focus of radical feminist criticism. In its context, praising of female beauty is presumed to represent the essentialization of female difference. In "A Poet to his Beloved," Yeats sublimated Maud Gonne in the occult figure of white goddess:

I bring you with reverent hands
The books of my numberless dreams,
White woman that passion has worn
As the tide wears the dove-grey sands,
And with heart more old than the horn
That is brimmed from the pale fire of time:
White woman with numberless dreams,
I bring you my passionate rhyme.

(*The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats: A New Edition* 63)

The "numberless dreams" stand for the actual verses in "The Wind

among the Reeds." They are dreams because they depict the ideal beauty that cannot be found in reality. The courtly offering of his rhyme can be interpreted as a plain homage.

Homage to women should be celebrated even by feminists as long as it offers women power and respect. But anti-essentialists never admit such a delusive compliment. Worship of goddess is no solution to the patriarchy. It just stabilizes the difference of previously inferior being in the patriarchal order rather than overthrowing it.

Radical feminists assert that worship of the goddess leads to women's "re-imprisonment." Elizabeth Butler Cullingford argues as follows:

The task is the creation of a culture in which polarized sexual difference will disappear in the play of multiple differences. Anti-essentialists wish to disengage from metaphor and myth, even from myths that present the female principle triumphant. Arguing that it is largely a product of the male imagination, they reject the concept of a female principle altogether. (37)

Anti-essentialists claim that woman should not be respected from the perspective of biological womanhood. Even a goddess in a myth is a product of essentialistic worship, that is, "male imagination."

The total denial of men's engagement to women is a characteristic of anti-essentialists. Let alone men's disdain, they even denounce their applause of women. At any rate, they reject all that men do for women. The total denial brings about the break off of the intersexual communication. Men and women respectively confine themselves to their own homosexual realms. If anti-essentialists ultimately aim to extinguish the "polarized sexual difference," they seem to move backward because the break up of their communication accentuates their difference. Men's engagement to women, either applause or disdain as its extreme form,

must be approved "in the play of multiple differences." But anti-essentialists exclude it from their play.

Their rejection of men's engagement originates from the resistance to the male subjectivity. Traditionally the subject of social structure is considered to be masculine. Men have been organizing societies for their convenience by laws, rules and disciplines that form frames of reference of given social existences. As the founders and rulers of the frames, men have been holding women down. It is not surprising, then, to find that women are taken to be mere objects of men's egotistical imagination and desire.

The renunciation of the male subjectivity was finally combined with the rejection of the male gaze. The link between ocluarcentrism and phallocentrism has been receiving increasing attention in international feminist debate since 1968 (Martin Jay 526). The male gaze is the integrated concept of ocluarcentrism and phallocentrism. As Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard observe, the concept of "male gaze" was inaugurated by Laura Mulvey (Garrard 7). Mulvey explains the concept as follows:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. (Mulvey 19)

As Mulvey argues, women are forced to play the roles of "*to-be-looked-at-ness*." The world order is fundamentally unfair which is unreasonably rewarding to one sex, male, and unjustly relentless to the other, female.

Thus a unilateral contract is established between them, and it enables men to exploit women at their pleasure. The male gaze figuratively represents the exploitation.

Women's passivity is originated from men's subjectivity. Women's roles are always imposed. They never choose them by themselves. Meanwhile, the imposed roles become internalized and automatized in them. Finally women begin to take over them as if they were willing to. The male gaze is the cue of the unconscious domination that is integrated into the Name of the Father.

Not only men, however, gaze but women do as well. E. Ann Kaplan calls men's monopoly of gaze into question. But she cannot deny the essential masculinity of gaze:

We have thus arrived at a point where we must question the necessity for the dominance-submission structure. The gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze, given our language and the structure of the unconscious, is to be in the "masculine" position. (Kaplan 30)

Kaplan just casts doubt upon men's exclusive possession of gaze and no mention is made of "female gaze." She faintly shows the possibility of the other of male gaze but closes her eyes toward the unrevealed sanctuary. Her argument encloses itself within the social framework that is already dominated by men and turns on the established but prosaic conclusion of the male subjectivity.

What Kaplan refers to is a limited domain of human beings where the gaze of human beings works as an agent of social and political schema. From this perspective, the female gaze cannot be differentiated from the male gaze. As Stephen Kern points out Kaplan "did not ask 'What is the female gaze?'"(12). In fact, what Kaplan assumes is not the female gaze but women's gaze. Their gaze is collectively impersonalized by and

reimprisoned into the male subjectivity. As far as every social element is reduced into the Name of the Father, the female gaze cannot reveal itself.

The simple reduction of all the human affairs under the Name of the Father has little explanatory power. The range of human experiences is very wide and their aspects are too manifold to be shoved into a monopolized frame of reference. In short, men cannot rule everything. Against simplistic feminist debate in which ocularcentrism and phallogentrism are integrated into the omnipotent male gaze, Kern explains as follows:

Men did have privileged licence to enjoy the erotically intended gaze (often it seemed to own them); but women's objectification under that gaze was not even close to being complete, because the eroticism of the gaze encompassed only a limited aspect of women's as well as men's experience, because women's subjectivity was energized by men's failure to recognize their humanity, and because women could always look away and think of something else. Victorian art is full of women looking away from gazing man, even if it is just to consider his amorous intentions. Arguments about woman's objectification under a determining male gaze are more plausible when applied to the female nude, but even the female nude is not, as Broude and Garrard phrase it, 'primarily object, stripped of access to subjectivity.' Female nudes express a rich subjectivity that most scholars have failed to note. (14)

Kern plainly points out the limited aspects of human experience to which the domination of male gaze is applied. Even in the nudes that are supposed to be typical evidence of women's objectification, women

claim their subjectivity. And the female gaze is the metonymy of their claims.

Kern's assertion is fairly moderate in contrast with the furious debate of radical feminists against which he argues. He does not intend to reject the male subjectivity itself but merely decline the exclusive perspective from which every human experience is taken to be a representation of the Name of the Father. As restrained is his argument, he does not discuss the unilateral superiority of either masculinity or femininity. He just maintains that there is some sphere in human experience where the male subjectivity cannot exercise its power and the female subjectivity plays an important role. And the sphere, Kern argues, is "love."

He claims that, in the sphere of love, the femininity is superior to the masculinity. He exemplifies the ineptitude of masculinity in the sphere by quoting abundant evidence from the pictures and novels in the Victorian Age. He puts into question the validity of the two dichotomies in the sphere of love: "man-culture versus woman-nature" and "double standard." Before discussing "double standard," the dichotomy of "man-culture versus woman-nature" must be examined.

The dichotomy of man-culture versus woman-nature is a concept convenient to the male dominance in which women are kept in the second-class status (Sherry B. Ortner, 72-73). Needless to say, social structures are cultural products estranged from nature. It is not hard to understand men who have been traditionally responsible for them are associated with "culture." When it comes to the morality in the sphere of love, however, women must be linked to "culture." By defining "culture" as the resistance to natural impulse, Kern explains as follows: "[. . .] although men resist natural impulse in order to paint or write, they did not resist natural impulse in loving women as well as women resisted it in loving them" (21). Although women tend to be associated

with nature for their biologically destined function like bearing and nursing of children, when they fall in love, they make moral judgments resisting their natural impulse.

Thus, in the sphere of love, women are more cultural than men. Their moral decisions are more difficult to be made than the judgments in a court because there is no legislation in the sphere of love. Women's decisions are extremely self-conscious in the sense that they have to create the frame of reference by themselves. Self-conscious creation is the clear evidence of their subjectivity. Women are not passive any longer. On the contrary, men fall passive being enslaved to their natural impulse. In this regard, women deconstruct the dichotomy of "man-culture versus woman-nature" and assert their outstanding subjectivity.

Kern disputes the double standard in conventional social norms as well. The double standard is not so much as omnicompetent as the dichotomy of "man-culture versus woman-nature" is. Keith Thomas describes the double standard as follows:

Stated simply, it is the view that unchastity, in the sense of sexual relations before marriage or outside marriage, is for a man, if an offense, none the less a mild and pardonable one, but for a woman a matter of the utmost gravity. This view is popularly known as the double standard. (195)

Evidently, conventional social norms have been very strict with woman whereas they have been sympathetic to men to some extent. Women have been restricted of their freedom of loving and submitted to the men's desire.

The double standard, as Kern argues again, is invalid in the sphere of love. Indeed, if women have sexual relations before or outside marriage, they must be punished. But they often do so from their loyalty to someone they truthfully love. When they fall in love, women

less worry about social punishments than men do. All the severer the social punishment might be, their love should be proved sincere. In this sense, at least for women, there is only the single standard in the sphere of love. Women under the single standard forcefully attract artists' attention:

Victorian society was full of examples of men capitalizing on the double standard, but within the frame of a loving relationship the duplicity of the double standard was unacceptable to men and women alike. That frame was what artists used literally (and novelists used figuratively) to *frame out* the world of the double standard and to *frame in* the subjects of their creations, which took place in the private sphere of the courtship scenario and the home. (Kern 19)

The reason why the artists were willing to describe the women who are anguished but, at the same time, energetic in the frame of single standard is not that they intend to fabricate their images at men's convenience but that they are moved by women's single-mindedness. Their single-mindedness in the single standard is legible evidence of their subjectivity.

Radical feminists have overlooked women's subjectivity for so long because they have observed human affairs resorting to extremely deductive dichotomies discussed so far. Calvin O. Schrag discredits such simple dichotomies that ignore empirical substantiality of human life and calls them "bogus dichotomies" (4-6). As mentioned before, the range of human experiences is very wide and their aspects are too manifold to be categorized into simple dichotomies.

Easy application of bogus dichotomies is caused by the overmagnification of masculinity. The Name of the Father is the primal cause of social structure but is castrated. It cannot and must not be

identified with living men. The mis-identification of the Name of the Father and actual men entails the over-magnification of men and male subjectivity. Kaja Silverman argues as follows:

It is imperative that we understand that when the Name-of-the-father organizes the rules determining marriage, reproduction, lineality, abode, and inheritance, the Law of Kinship Structure exists in a contradictory relationship to the Law of Language. The Law of Language dictates universal castration, whereas our Law of Kinship Structure equates the father with the Law, and hence exempts him from it. Our dominant fiction effects an imaginary resolution of this contradiction by radically reconceiving what it means to be castrated.

When I say "imaginary resolution," I mean to suggest not only that it is fictive, and that it involves the production of images, but that it turns upon *méconnaissance*. Our dominant fiction calls upon the male subject to see himself, and the female subject to recognize and desire him, only through the mediation of images of an impaired masculinity. It urges both the male and the female subject, that is, to deny all knowledge of male castration by believing in the commensurability of penis and phallus, actual and symbolic father. (42)

By the term, "*méconnaissance*," Silverman means self-recognition and self-definition of both men and women. But as long as the self-recognition is made through "an impaired masculinity," it remains to be mere self-delusion.

The male gaze has been working based on such "imaginary resolutions" and self-resolution. As Kern points out, a theoretical source for the radical feminist debate is Michel Foucault's *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison* (Kern 11). Foucault discusses how

effectively prisoners can be controlled by a structural device, "the Panopticon," which is originally contrived by Jeremy Bentham. Foucault's main argument is the scheme by which the gazing subject keeps the gazed object under control. The gazing subject, however, is no particular person but an inhuman power.

In truth, the male subjectivity in the public sphere cannot be denied when men serve as the agents of law and order. But it happens to be that the actual men represent the symbolical father. The authority is not theirs but the omnipotent father's. No, men cannot be omnipotent in their actual livings. Men are often overwhelmed with women particularly in the sphere of love. As Kern neatly proves it, men cannot be the sole masters of gazing. Of course, they gaze but women gaze as well. The female gaze is not dominated by male subjectivity and asserts women's subjectivity.

W.B. Yeats's ideal image of women in "The Wind among the Reeds" is indeed a reflection of his desire in the sense that it is not the real image of Maud Gonne. But Yeats's image is not a means of dominating women but the culmination of his praise. According to the debate of radical feminists quoted at the beginning of this discussion, a praise of women, specifically when it turns upon their beauty, can be taken to lead to a disdain of them. Now, no worries about such excessively sensitive attentiveness! It is only in the phase of love where Yeats's praise of a woman makes sense. Law, order and authority in the public affairs are of no concern. Actually, he was refused by Maud many times. In this context, the male authority is completely out of place.

Yeats's creation of the ideal image of a woman is not a simple engraving of a desirable object like Pygmalion's. In the first place, his creation is frustrated from the beginning. The difficulty Yeats found

is observed in "The Lover Tells of the Rose in his Heart":

All things uncomely and broken, all things worn out and old,
The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a lumbering
cart,

The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the wintry mould,
Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of
my heart.

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be
told;

I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green knoll apart,
With the earth and the sky and the water, re-made, like a
casket of gold

For my dreams of your image that blossoms a rose in the
deeps of my heart. (56)

It is clear, in this poem, the poet subordinates the reality to his ideal in the Platonic manner. He tries to have everyday events "re-made anew" because they are "wrong." But the lover declares his distress that he cannot create his ideal image at his pleasure since the trivial things in his daily life get in his way. All he can do is to go down into "the deeps" of his heart.

The sheer presence of reality oppresses the lover's mind and obstructs his alchemical art. His attempt at creating the ideal image in his mind is just an excuse of regression from the reality. When the lover for the first time mentions a "rose" which is the metonymy of his ideal image, he says "your image" begets the rose. But when he mentions it next, he says his "dreams of image" do. No doubt, while the first reference to the rose denotes his decisive denial of the reality, the second diminishes his decisiveness. His willingness is overwhelmed by the indubitable reality and withdrawn into dreamy assumption.

Thus his creating of the ideal image is no simple projection of his desire but an afflicted dialectics of the ideal and the real.

Even if it is a guiltless and innocent homage to the beloved, it cannot be denied that the lover's ideal image is a self-satisfied fantasy. When the collapsed relationship with Maud Gonne became a well-known fact, much less his homage could arouse one's sympathy. What unmasks his innocent blindness is the female gaze:

Pale brows, still hands and dim hair,
I had a beautiful friend
And dreamed that the old despair
Would end in love in the end:
She looked in my heart one day
And saw your image was there;
She has gone weeping away. ("The Lover Mourns for the
Loss of Love" 61)

Yeats's love affair with Olivia Shakespeare is behind the scene in this poem. She exerted no less influence on Yeats throughout his life than Maud Gonne. When he was stricken with grief over the break-up with Gonne, she gave a temporal relief to him and he had believed that his mental scar would have been cured in the meantime. The very cause of the closing of their relationship was the shadow of Maud Gonne who is Yeats's eternal beloved.

Since this poem is concluded with another break-up, apparently who suffers seems to be "the friend" weeping. But what the friend observes in the lover's heart is not only the image of his ideal beloved but also his optimistic resolution of "the old despair." Her gaze singles out his self-centered fantasy and thrusts this fact in his face. Now, in the dialectics of the real and the ideal, the former outweighs the latter. The gaze alienates the lover farther from the ideal image. In "The Song

of Wandering Aengus," another poem from "The Wind among the Reeds," his alienation from the image is observed:

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the fire aflame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And some one called me by name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun. (60)

Aengus is a popular figure in Irish folklore. He is the god of youth and poetry. Yeats as the speaker of the poem identifies himself with

Aengus and tries a poetical evocation of a “glimmering girl” which is another figure of Maud Gonne. Aengus hopes to see the girl again but he cannot. As the future tense of “will” indicates, his wish is being pended for good.

Thus Yeats's desire is interrupted and isolated from its object. He cannot attain his ideal woman even by applying the folklore framework to his pursuit. The reality that the female gaze thrusts in his face restrains him from having his wish fulfilled. As Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel states in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, through the medium of the other's gaze, he has re-cognized himself (142-43). As if Yeats avoided such self-recognition, he tended to keep away from women's gazes. This fact suggests that he was fully aware of the significance of the female gaze. He avoids the female gazes, particularly when he desires comfortable moments with them. In “He Tells of a Valley full of Lovers,” the speaker avoids a woman's gaze exactly when he dreams of his lost love:

I dreamed that I stood in a valley, and amid sighs,
For happy lovers passed two by two where I stood;
And I dreamed my lost love came stealthily out of the wood
With her cloud-pale eyelids falling on dream-dimmed eyes:
I cried in my dream, *O women, bid the young men lay
Their heads on your knees, and drown their eyes with your
hair, Or remembering hers they will find no other face fair
Till all the valleys of the world have been withered away.* (67)

The woman's eyes are concealed behind her eyelids. Moreover, in the latter half of this poem, young men's eyes are “drowned” by women's hair not to see their faces directly. Thus women's gazes are often kept away.

His shunning of women's eyes indicates that he realizes the

impossibility of complete escape from them. It is nothing but his self-recognition of being looked at. This is, at the same time, liberation from the enclosed circle of self-definition into the open network of the other. It is a Sartrean self-realization. In his *L'Être et le Néant: Essai d'Ontology Phénoménologique*, Jean Paul Satre argues one's existential mode in relation to the other as follows:

L' «être-vu-par-autrui» est la *vérité* du «voir-autrui», Ainsi, la notion d'autrui ne saurait, en aucun cas, viser une conscience solitaire et extra-mondaine que je ne puis même pas penser: l'homme se définit par rapport au monde et par rapport à moi-même: il est cet objet du monde qui détermine un écoulement interne de l'univers, une hémorragie interne; il est le sujet qui se découvre à moi dans cette fuite de moi-même vers l'objectivation. Mais la relation originelle de moi-même à autrui n'est pas seulement une vérité absente visée à travers la présence concrète d'un objet dans mon univers; elle est aussi un rapport concret et quotidien dont je fais à chaque instant l'expérience: à chaque instant autrui *me regarde*: il nous est donc facile de tenter, sur des exemples concrets, la description de cette liaison fondamentale qui doit faire la base de toute théorie d'autrui; si autrui est, par principe, *celui qui me regarde*, nous devons pouvoir expliciter le sens du regard d'autrui. (303)

"L' «être-vu-par-autrui»," that is "to be seen by the other," is not to have one's given self seen by other people but to be conscious of one's existential meaning in relation to the other. By being looked at, one re-defines oneself. In this existential mode, there is no absolute self. One's self flows in the network with the others and transforms itself being seen from varied perspectives.

Yeats's evasion of women's eyes indicates his worry about and hesitation in exposing himself among the other. But when he directly encounters the female gaze, his subjective self that has toiled over creating the ideal beauty is totally dismissed:

O cloud-pale eyelids, dream-dimmed eyes,
The poets labouring all their days
To build a perfect beauty in rhyme
Are overthrown by a woman's gaze
And by the unlabouring brood of the skies:
And therefore my heart will bow, when dew
Is dropping sleep, until God burn time,
Before the unlabouring stars and you. ("He Tells of the
Perfect Beauty" 67)

In this poem, Yeats's self is disseminated into generic beings of poets but, no doubt, it is at the center of them. His long labouring is not rewarded eventually. Now he is going to subordinate himself to the female gaze.

The poetical self-recognition that Yeats has tried to complete in creating the ideal woman is overthrown. In reality, the self-recognition is an illusion. The self-delusion has been pursued even though it was obstructed by the gaze of his new "friend." But the moment of its completion, it is shattered because the final object of his pursuit itself is proved to be the most destructive gaze for him. He can never dominate the gaze. This is partly because he does not have enough mental sturdiness to do so but mainly because the gaze itself asserts unconquerable subjectivity. Of course the gaze is primarily a product of Yeats's writing but resultantly functions as the vanishing point of his construing frame of reference. He cannot attain the point that is an ever receding void. The female gaze casts a reverse stare through the

void and opens the closing door.

It cannot be said that to pursue one's ideal is useless. On the contrary, it is very significant to make one's hope and desire explicit. Only when one's hope becomes a mere self-satisfied demand, it suppresses and ignores the other. As observed in the discussion of Hegel and Sartre, such self-righteous arrogance leads to self-delusion. But what the love poems in "The Wind among the Reeds" represent is the process of Yeats's self-recognition, not self-delusion. Self-righteous arrogance cannot be observed in them. It is certain that he pursued his ideal image so enthusiastically that he sometimes showed self-centeredness. But it is not an egotistic self-assertion but a helpless reaction to the loss of his beloved. He was merely absorbed in recovering from its severe aftermath.

At the same time, it is also evident that he should have been more considerate to the other, specifically to the "friend" in "The Lover Mourns for the Loss of Love." His less considerate self-absorption gave her a deep sorrow. But as the life-long mutual trust between Yeats and Olivia Shakespeare proves, their sorrowful break-up is not an end but a step in the process of dialectic self-recognition.

While the female gaze denounces his self-centeredness, it gives him "another perspective" from which he can objectify himself. Of course, the female gaze is not omniscient but merely the other of the male gaze. This is the most significant point of the female gaze. As discussed before, the female gaze makes sense in the sphere of love. In the minimal human relationship, his/her partner's view has the most significant impact on a person. Although the "friend" in "The Lover Mourns for the Loss of Love" weeps in grief, her tears let Yeats realize what he was really doing. It was a tiny but meaningful cue to the implementation of his self-recognition when he was about to lose sight

of himself. After encountering the first female gaze, Yeats's self-centered pursuit of his ideal image staggered. It is clear evidence of the impact the gaze had on him. As proved in his evasion of women's eyes, he had probably noticed the potency of the female gaze before. He feared and dreaded it. Such reaction of his is a perversive representation of admiration.

Finally, he was seized by the most authoritative gaze which entirely subverted his attempt at creating the ideal image. The gaze might well be identified with Maud Gonnet's. But its substantial part can never be revealed because, in the true sense, it is the symbolic mother in the sphere of love. It is just that, in Yeats's biographical context, it happens to be Maud Gonnet. Anyway, the female gaze interrupted the forming of Yeats's male-oriented delusion and gave a counter perspective to it.

Thus Yeats's self-recognition became an agonized but well-balanced dialectics.

As Gale C. Schricker points out, in "The Wind among the Reeds," "the 'I' awaits identity to be imposed from without rather than generating it from within, through 'thinking and feeling'" (139). Although it cannot be said the poetic persona in the collection does not generate his identity from within, it is evident that he has failed to accomplish it. His failure proves the weakness of the male subjectivity. But it is not "absence" but just "weakness." What is the most important is the fact there is a dialectics between "within" and "without." Yeats did not ignore the other that is the female gaze.

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見る^{ひと}女

W.B. Yeats's "Wind among the Reeds"

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1899年に発表された W.B. Yeats の詩集 "Wind among the Reeds" においては恋愛にまつわる詩がその大部分を占めている。この一連の恋愛詩は彼の自叙伝的事実に基づいている。Yeatsにとって生涯を通じての詩神であった Maud Gonne との実らぬ恋の果て、彼は1896年、Olivia Shakespeare と束の間の恋に落ちる。この刹那的な恋の始まり、そしてその終わりにも Maud Gonne の存在が大きな影を落としている。本論文では、この擬似三角関係を通じて Yeats の自己意識がいかに関われていくかが「女性の視線」を中心として論じられる。

Stephen Kern は、彼の著書 *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels 1840-1900* で、ビクトリア朝期の絵画、小説を題材に女性の視線、"the female gaze" について分析している。ビクトリア朝といえば父権制度が圧倒的権勢を誇り、その下で虐げられ、主体性を奪われていく女性の姿で溢れているかのようだが、Kern は敢えてそうした文脈に反証を突きつける。彼は社会制度を背景とした男性の優位性そのものを否定しているわけではない。ただその優位性を人間生活のすべての領域に敷衍して論じきってしまうことに異議を唱えているのである。

男性の優位性がもの見事にその効力を失ってしまう人間経験の局面として、Kern は愛の領域、"the sphere of love" を掲げる。そこでは男性の支配などものともしない女性の主体が、彼女達の視線を通して主張されるのである。19世紀末に発表された "Wind among the Reeds" の恋愛詩にもこの女性の視線が溢れている。本論で特に注目したのは Olivia Shakespeare の視線と、Maud Gonne をその典拠としながらも、より包括的な女性性を湛えた視線で

ある。理想の恋を虚構の中に再構築せんとする Yeats の自意識を、この2つの視線は見つめ、その欺瞞をたしなめる。やがてその自意識は自己完結を放棄し、新たな自己認識へと連れ出されるのである。