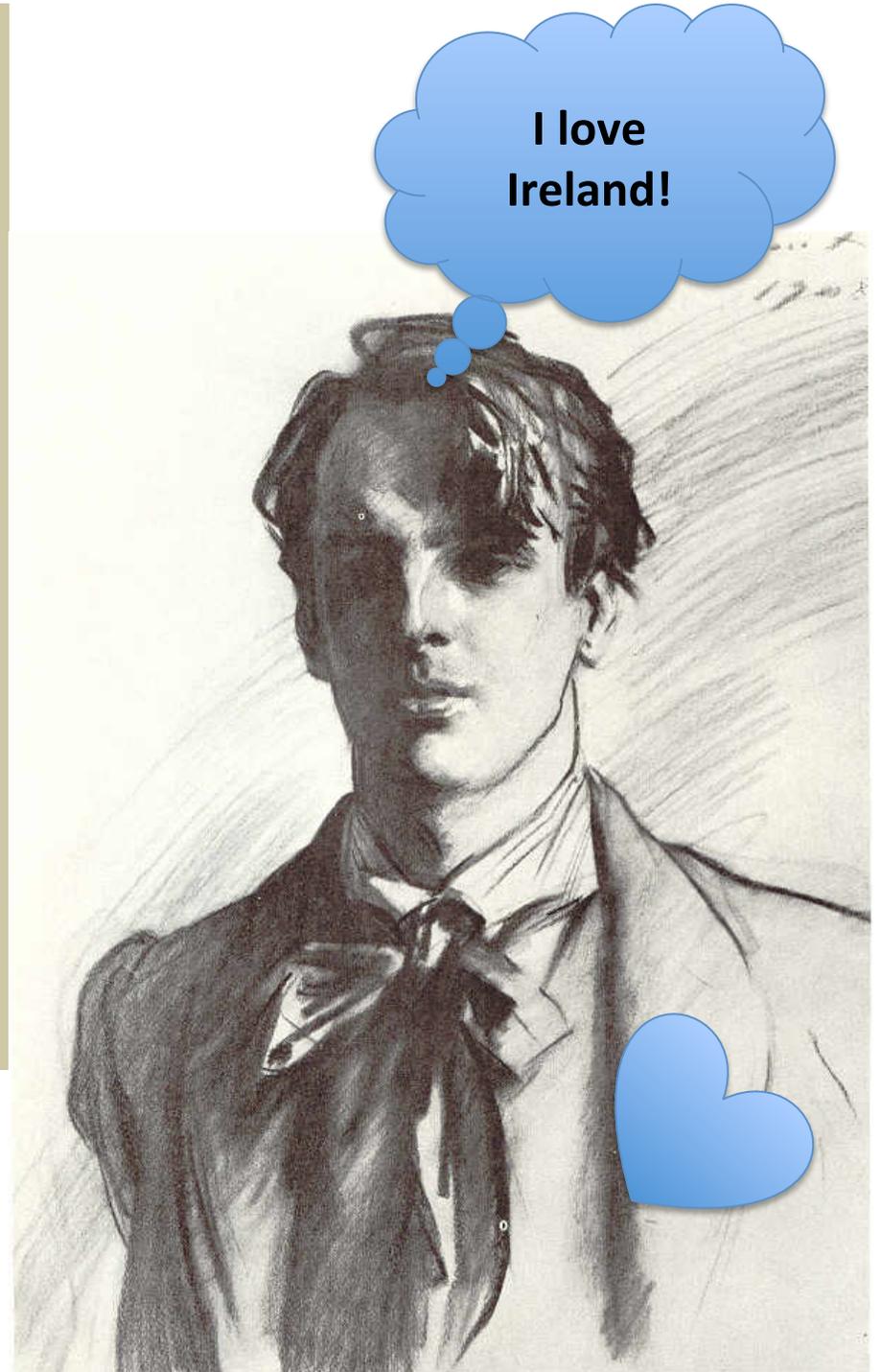


Ms BT's - Poetry

William
Butler
Yeats

Irish Revival



William Butler Yeats

- Born in Dublin, Ireland, 1865
- Poet, playwright, philosopher
- Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923
- Well known for symbolism employed in his poetry

Introductory Notes

- The Second Coming suggests that the Second Coming of Christ will bring about a state of anarchy on earth instead of bringing good will
- The title is derived from the Bible – Matthew 24 and Saint John's description of the Beast of the Apocalypse in Revelation
- Stanza 1: conditions present in the world: anarchy, things falling apart
- Stanza 2: proposes that these conditions foretell of a monstrous Second Coming

Yeats was part of the Irish or Celtic Revival

also known as the *Irish Literary Revival* and *Irish Literary Renaissance*

- Yeats was an Irish and British Literary figure
- He was a strong political nationalist, connecting with his Irish and Celtic past
- The image of the Cross symbol to the right (shows a circle and cross; this is a mix of *Jesus* and the Pagan *Son god*)



Yeats *looked back* for enlightenment to Irish Druidism and folk tales

- Druid belief comes from Celtic/Gaelic religion or ideology
- A *Druid* was a member of the educated professional class
- *Druids* were law speakers, poets, philosophers, and doctors
- The Romans accused the Druids of human sacrifices, but there are no chronicles of this outside of *biased* Roman accounts



Yeats' culture:

Late 1900 early 2000 *Modernism*

There were many Wide scale changes in Western society:

- Modern industrial societies experienced the wealthy buying up farms, rapid city growth, factories, population growth centering in cities, and the horrors of war

So *Modernists* like William Yeats...

- Rejected the *certainty* of Enlightenment thinkers (who believed in liberty, tolerance, and progress)
- Rejected religious beliefs



Irish Modernists were drawn to Celtic and Gaelic ways: Neo Druidism

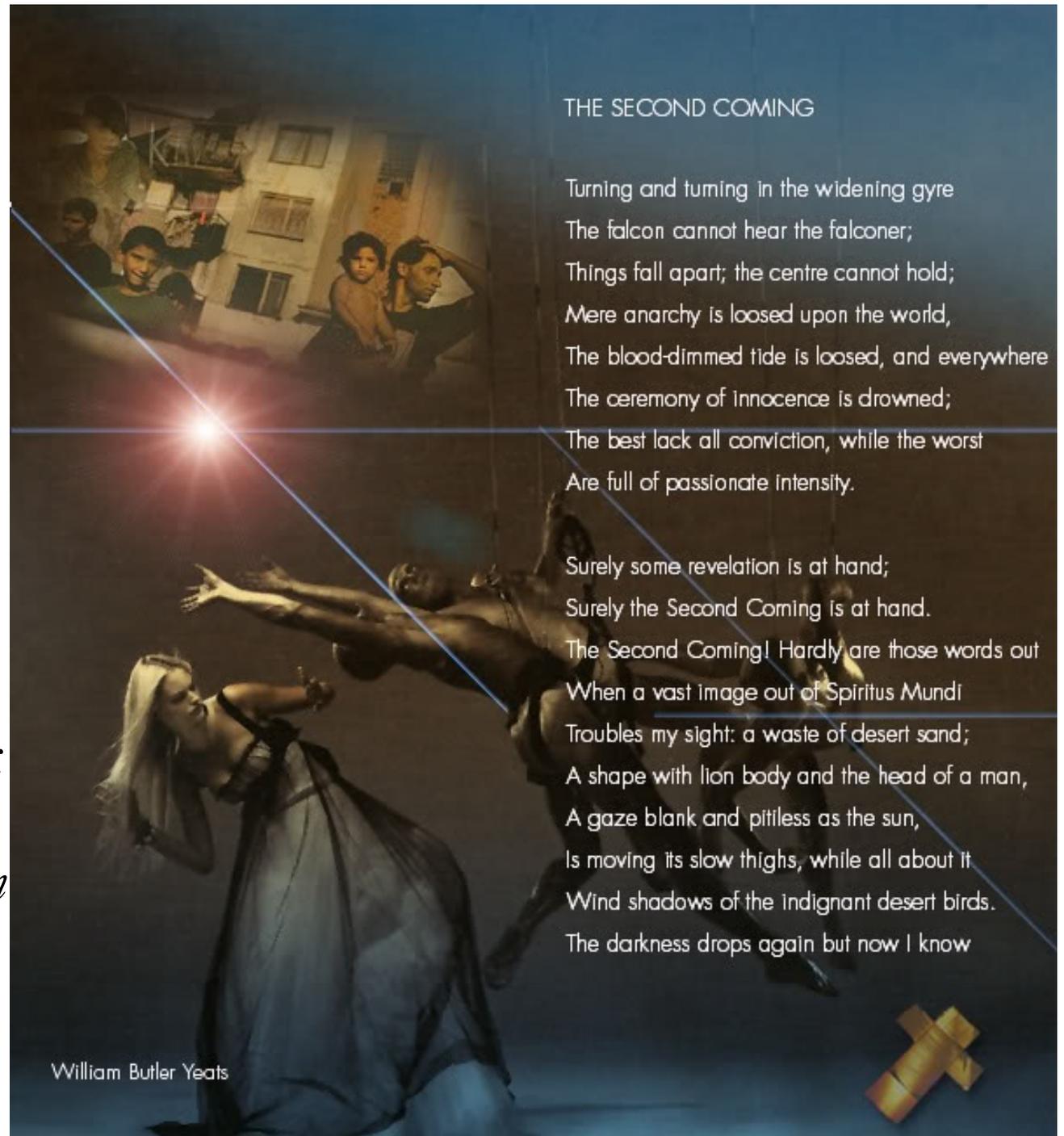
- Neo Druidism was a new form of spirituality or religion that generally promoted harmony and worship of nature
- It was a respect for all beings including the environment
- Many forms of Druidry are *Neopagan* and have some similarities with our environmentalists



Yeats fed off this rise of Nationalism

His writing

- Poetry, art, songs, folktales
- Yeats was a dramatist, a poet, and a prose writer who protested against the *Modern* or *Enlightened* world



THE SECOND COMING

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again but now I know

William Butler Yeats