

## THE 'RELIGIOUS' DIMENSION

In an essay entitled 'Religion?'<sup>1</sup> Desmond Egan wrote of the impact of an intense religious doctrination on the mind of the poet,

'If you are a believer [he might equally have said, a non-believer] it will affect your sense of form, it will influence the very sentence you write, its rhythm, structure, energy as much as its content ...'

I agree totally with this view as the following pages will illustrate.

As Christianity is the primary contextual milieu in which my work is created, it is to be expected, therefore, that its 'mythos' figures most prominently in my work. Actual Christian beliefs, also by association, permeate even 'non-religious' poems, providing a basic ontological world view.

For example, the 'mythos' of The Fortunate Fall (in conjunction with the 'mythos' of Ascensions) features as recurrent theme incorporating associated images of death, near-death (literal or symbolical), falling and drowning. Examples include the following poems:

### Poem

### Recurrent Patterns

'Bright Days'<sup>2</sup>  
'Hart Crane'<sup>3</sup>

'On the edge' theme.  
Last purported address - 'Chagrin Falls, Ohio' from original sequence 'The Darkening Fathoms.'

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<sup>1</sup> Egan, 'Religion?' *Irish Writers and Religion*, R. Welch, Ed., *Irish Literary Studies* 37, p. 190. The religious aspect of my poetry has been specifically referred to by J. Goodby, Review, 'Declassified', *Graph*, Summer/Autumn, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 57-58.

‘Villanelle’ <sup>4</sup>	(Deirdre’s) Suicide.
‘Fatality at Dunmore’ <sup>5</sup>	‘Death by Drowning’ theme.
‘Watching the Descent of Yuichiro Miura’ <sup>6</sup>	Death, or failure, of the Artistic Act.
‘Aengus on Aran’ <sup>7</sup>	Incipient fate, or death of the hero.
‘Berryman Falling’ <sup>8</sup>	‘Art Thou There?’ Address to Creator, Berryman’s Suicide.
‘Father Hopkins in Old Age’ <sup>9</sup>	‘O the mind, mind has cliffs’ ... Hopkins’ sense of falling.
‘Michelangelo’ <sup>10</sup>	(His actual fall is taken as a metaphor for his spiritual obsession. Note film of the same name starring Charles Heston).
‘Hang by Me’ <sup>11</sup>	Combination of ‘Good Thief’ and lyric ‘Stand by Me’. Type of Calvary Death.
‘Céli Dé in Hibernation’ <sup>12</sup>	Winter ‘death’.
‘A Father to Son’ <sup>13</sup>	Second stanza. The Creator is seen as ‘dying’ all eternity to see his son in the Jordan.
‘Esparto Man’ <sup>14</sup>	Type of Everyman pendant on cliff face: ‘Hanging Man’.
‘Nirvana’ <sup>15</sup>	‘Only a season after all this fall’ - Reincarnative imperative.

Certain images, motifs and ceremonials, then, drawing on the Christian ‘mythos’ appear consistently in my work. These include:

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<sup>4</sup> Ennis, *Dolmen Hill*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>6</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>7</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

<sup>14</sup> Ennis, *Telling the Bees*, pp. 85-90.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 91-100.

1. *The Fall*: (as outlined) which may be designated as the Fortunate Fall (*Felix Culpa* of Easter Liturgy), almost as prerequisite to the Ascension theme.
2. *Resurrection, Ascension*.
3. *Rites and Rituals*: Pilgrimage, Baptism, Filial, Meal, Gardening, Spring and Harvest, funereal, Regeneration, Sacrificial, Liturgical and Suppliant Rituals. One might also cite the 'rituals' of Science and Industry as well as those of Commerce in some poems.

In his book, *Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall*, Herbert Weisinger traces the development of the Fall Archetype through the Ancient Near East, Hebrew Thought, Christian Thought and their associations with Shakespearean Tragedy. In the Christian 'mythos', the death of Christ followed quickly by his resurrection found a ready image in the Paschal candle which being extinguished can be re-lit.<sup>16</sup> The Christian view of the Fall may be termed paradoxical because while on the one hand Adam's sin occasioned the bitter sorrows of humankind, on the other hand it also generated the Incarnation and Redemption and the Communion of Saints. A central concept is that man, in his deepest despair, is at that moment made aware of the possibility of rising to the greatest good attainable. People proceed from despair to joy: the spirit of humanity overcomes the emptiness of meaningless existence. Order and design succeed chaos; light succeeds ignorance.

The Fall and Resurrection/Ascension archetypes are thus intimately related and man exists at the fulcrum between. Ritual enables humanity to negotiate between the two.

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<sup>16</sup> Weisinger, p. 227.

Weisinger states that the basis of man's faith in the *felix culpa* concept is twofold:

‘as much the result of intuition as of observation: first, that the most fundamental and significant rhythm of nature is the cycle of birth, death, and birth again; and second, that by mimetically reproducing this rhythm man can, to some degree, control nature and by so controlling it, if only for a moment, achieve a victory, fleeting and transitory as it may be ... over the forces of chaos and disorder ... The sun rises after the night: the grain sprouts after the winter; the waters run after the drought; the dead god lives again; and man falls, but not in vain’.<sup>17</sup>

My poems listed next are exercises in the above process and the above rhythm: the poems mimetically reproduce the rhythms contingent on these archetypes that are felt intuitively. The creative act ‘controls’ momentarily, like the brush of Van Gogh, the chaotic psychic forces. This control is as transitory and as fleeting as each poem is, yet each has ‘a local habitation and a name’.

Myths of Resurrection/Ascensions (and, by association re-birth).

Poem

Theme/Subject

‘The Day of the Swarms’<sup>18</sup>

Creation rising.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 271.

<sup>18</sup> Ennis, *Telling the Bees*, pp. 62-68.

‘Esparto Man’ <sup>19</sup>	Swarm returning to the bough: creation with all its inherent elements is seen recommencing, incorporating the ascension theme.
‘Allegro Maestoso’ <sup>20</sup>	Mahler’s ‘Resurrection’ - first movement, version from <i>Night on Hibernia</i> .
‘Paternity’ <sup>21</sup>	Easter Sunday reminiscence.
‘Listening to Mahler’s Resurrection’ <sup>22</sup>	Various sections - ‘Resurrection’.
‘Reaching for the Heavenly Foreigner’ <sup>23</sup>	Sonnet on the death of my mother, yet the ascension theme is dominant.
‘Little Ascension Day’ <sup>24</sup>	Scattering of my brother’s ashes ‘lifted’ by the wind: minimalist interpretation of ascension.
‘Montbretia Sunday’ <sup>25</sup>	Assumption Mother theme.
‘The Gentle Palm’ Sequence <sup>26</sup>	Elevation of spirit including ‘Quando Fiam Ceu Chelidon’, ‘The Open Palm’, ‘Aerial’, ‘Fragility’, ‘Skeptikos’, ‘Ash’, ‘Vedic’.
‘Letter to Connla’ <sup>27</sup>	‘Notion’ of ascension, though protagonist is momentarily deluded at death.
‘Against the Wood’ <sup>28</sup> ‘Suibne’ poems <sup>29</sup>	Associated state of ‘uplift’, equilibrium. Flight.
‘Passover Night’ <sup>30</sup>	The empty tomb, Magdalen ‘anima’: fulcrum between Death and Resurrection.

### Rites and Rituals:

These occur in my work on a consistent basis.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 85-90.

<sup>20</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, pp. 52-54.

<sup>21</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, p. 64.

<sup>22</sup> Ennis, *A Drink of Spring*, pp. 42-49.

<sup>23</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, p. 65.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>25</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 97-112.

<sup>27</sup> Ennis, *Telling the Bees*, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>29</sup> Ennis, *Near St. Mullins*, entire sequence.

<sup>30</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 105-107.

Pilgrimage Ritual: (theme as in Chaucer, Eliot)

- *Arboretum* (secular pilgrimage).
- 'Galaxy in White'<sup>31</sup>
- *Near St. Mullins*
- Doris and Ernst<sup>32</sup>
- 'Dolmen Hill', title poem<sup>33</sup>

Baptism Ritual:

- 'Atlantic Inlet'<sup>34</sup>

Filial Ritual:

- 'A Drink of Spring',<sup>35</sup> title poem
- 'Wheelchair Ride for Anchises'<sup>36</sup>
  - 'Coffee Jars'<sup>37</sup>
  - 'Family'<sup>38</sup>

Meal Ritual:

- *Arboretum*
- 'James'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>32</sup> Ennis, *Dolmen Hill*, p. 29.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>34</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, p. 26.

<sup>35</sup> Ennis, *A Drink of Spring*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, pp. 30-32.

<sup>37</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 109.

<sup>39</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 12.

- 'Letter to Connla'<sup>40</sup>
- 'Hibiscus'<sup>41</sup>
- 'Willow Pattern'<sup>42</sup>

Gardening Ritual: (Creator-caring role)

- 'Continue the Gardening'<sup>43</sup>
- 'September in Knockeen'<sup>44</sup>
- 'Homage to Wang Wei'<sup>45</sup>
- 'Deep Ploughing'<sup>46</sup>

Associated 'Vegetation' Myth Ritual:

- 'From Coolea to Cloone'<sup>47</sup>

Associated Harvesting Ritual:

- 'Winetown'<sup>48</sup>
- 'Illumination'<sup>49</sup>

Rites for the Dead: (Note title, 'The Nearer Obsequies')

- 'With Tutenkamen'<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ennis, *Telling the Bees*, p. 14-15.

<sup>41</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, p. 102.

<sup>42</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 69.

<sup>43</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>45</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 41.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

<sup>47</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>48</sup> Ennis, *A Drink of Spring*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>49</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 76.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 62-66.

- 'Exit' with various subsections, 'Bad Friday', 'All Over', 'Preparation', 'Mortuary', 'The Slow Bell', 'Roses At Corralstown'<sup>51</sup>
- 'First Movement' - Mahler's Resurrection (associated 'Phoenix' rituals)<sup>52</sup>
- 'Dolmen Hill'<sup>53</sup>
- Hades Section ('Orpheus')<sup>54</sup>
- 'Montbretia Sunday'<sup>55</sup>
- 'Devotees Gathering Round Jim Morrison's Grave'<sup>56</sup>

#### Regeneration Ritual:

- 'The Day of the Swarms'<sup>57</sup>
- 'White Hyacinth'<sup>58</sup>

#### Passover Ritual:

- 'Passover Night'<sup>59</sup>

#### Sacrificial Ritual:

- 'Run, Hare Run'<sup>60</sup>

#### Introibo Ritual:

- 'Opening the Diptych'<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ennis, *A Drink of Spring*, pp. 28-41.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>53</sup> Ennis, *Dolmen Hill*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 65-74.

<sup>55</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 92.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p.55.

<sup>57</sup> Ennis, *Telling the Bees*, pp. 62-68.

<sup>58</sup> Ennis, *Dolmen Hill*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>59</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 105-107.

<sup>60</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, pp. 41-43.

<sup>61</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 68-69.



- 'Litanies'<sup>62</sup>

- 'School Year Start'<sup>63</sup>

#### Suppliant Ritual:

- 'Bright Days'<sup>64</sup>

#### Rituals of Science and Industry:

- *The Burren Days* (Laboratory experiments done over and over again having the force of ritual, for example, the washing and cleansing of instruments).

#### Ritual of Commerce:

- 'To Market, To Market'<sup>65</sup>

#### Specific Prayer Rituals:

- Molly's Litany ('Fair City') - female celebrant type, gutting fish at a table, the fish symbolic of all humankind - termination in a Black Mass Scenario.<sup>66</sup>

- 'Votive'<sup>67</sup> (prayer to the vine of *John* 15: 1-8)

- 'Opening the Diptych'<sup>68</sup>

- 'Prayer for my sons'<sup>69</sup>

- 'Ladies in Stone'<sup>70</sup>

- 'To the Considerate Dead'<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 91.

<sup>63</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 67.

<sup>64</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 44-47.

<sup>66</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 91-93.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>69</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 110.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 86.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 81-83.

- ‘Reflection, Celi Dé’<sup>72</sup>
- ‘Miserere’<sup>73</sup>
- ‘Connla, After this Your Exile’ (Cf. Words of ‘Hail Holy Queen’)<sup>74</sup>
- ‘Mother’ Address in ‘Nirvana’<sup>75</sup>
- ‘Suibne Escaping his Captors, Attempting a Hymn’<sup>76</sup>

Associated Sunday Ritual:

- ‘Holy Hour’<sup>77</sup>

The Christian ‘Message’:

- Sermon on the Mount – ‘To the Considerate Dead’<sup>78</sup>
- Love/Agapé – ‘The Road to Patmos’,<sup>79</sup> ‘Passover Night’<sup>80</sup>

Pentecostal ‘Scene’:

- Concluding Stanza of ‘At the Irishtown Dump’.<sup>81</sup>

In his book, *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*, Alan W. Watts advocates a ‘Looking at the Christian Images’ from an outside-in point of view’. This is also my approach in the poems just listed. The ‘divine’ is tempted to become ‘incarnate’ again in the words of the poem.

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 89.

<sup>73</sup> Ennis, *Night on Hibernia*, p. 27.

<sup>74</sup> Ennis, *Telling the Bees*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 94-97.

<sup>76</sup> Ennis, *Near St. Mullins*, section XXXII, p. 45.

<sup>77</sup> Ennis, *A Drink of Spring*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>78</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, pp. 81-83.

<sup>79</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 105-107.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

Christ walks from his tomb for a joyful reunion with Mary in the here and now. The 'Good Thief' hangs by 'Him' in a reworking of the lyric 'Stand by Me'. The divine is set free from an incarceration in the past. The poems 'break' the body again in a semi-sacramental way freed from rigid definitions, claims and counter claims. There is no 'anxious clinging to dogmatic rocks and doctrinal idols'.<sup>82</sup>

The poems assert, insofar as they can, variations on the Christian 'Mythos'. The word becomes 'living' insofar as it can.

Christianity, then, provides an ordering 'mythos' for my poems in the same way as it did for Hopkins and Jones, to mention just two twentieth-century poets. The 'mythos' makes known, as it were, recurring archetypal patterns of ritual and behaviour that govern the expression of sentiment and attitude. One's entire mode of feeling, or response, is conditioned for good or ill by these recurring patterns.

Poetically speaking, it would appear that one is blessed or cursed with consequentiality. As Egan remarks,

'we wander leaving footprints on everything we touch pursued by our destiny as any Greek hero.'<sup>83</sup>

Our poems, it seems, are made for us.

Egan discusses, also, in his essay how creative writing, like the Gospels, 'embodies an attitude towards living.'<sup>84</sup> Seamus Heaney had earlier discussed the concept of the 'the Poet as a Christian'.<sup>85</sup> By extension, we might also consider the poet as Jew, Moslem, Buddhist,

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<sup>82</sup> Watts, p. 235.

<sup>83</sup> Egan, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p. 190.

<sup>85</sup> S. Heaney, 'The Poet as a Christian', *The Furrow*, 1978.

Hindu, Confucian, Taoist, Shintoist or Mystic.<sup>86</sup> Whatever one's doctrination, or lack of it, one is impelled toward a sense of completeness or integration of the self, or the soul in the self, into the world of others. A useful corollary of the 'religious' sense in the writer can be, as Egan notes, a scepticism of accepted values be they literary, or academic, social or economic. A 'Religious' impulse will be concerned with a search for wholeness: it may well be obsessed with its roots and long for psychological and cultural individuality.<sup>87</sup>

From the discussion and analysis so far in this section, it will be obvious that the various uses of segments of the Christian 'mythos' will tell more about the writer, perhaps, than about any original founding intent of the religion itself. The various divisions of the 'Christian' material as outlined indicates a sense of individual classification, based on an individual 'mode of feeling'. I have been especially drawn by the *I-Thou* emphasis of Christianity: the Bible consistently speaks of revelation in *I-Thou* language, of the 'divine-human' encounter enhancing the freedom of man. On the human level, an *I-Thou* experience frees both individuals by aiding their self-fulfilment, whereas an *I-Thou-It* experience objectifies and dehumanises. An emphasis on the *I-Thou* character of religious and interpersonal experience gives a new prominence to love, producing a so-called agapistic ethic (Greek agapé, 'spiritual love'), which admits no other moral obligation than the prudent maximisation of love, defined in existentialist terms as personal fulfilment through an *I-Thou* relationship.

I have consistently explored this *I-Thou* relationship - the two primary examples (apart from the *Helicon* sonnets), in my view, being 'Passover Night' and 'The Road to Patmos'. In both the prudent maximisation of love is pushed to the limit in the persona of Mary Magdalen and

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<sup>86</sup> Ennis, cf. Appendix B for an outline of the influences of these religious, ethical and philosophical systems on my work.

<sup>87</sup> Egan, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

John the Apostle, the latter reputedly (in the Apostle's words) that one Apostle closest to Christ:

*'The Road to Patmos'*

'I knew his heart-beat better than most,  
Closer even than the Magdalen woman,  
The individual human scent that was his.  
His days consumed me like a lover.  
Me, the youngest whom he loved.'<sup>88</sup>

The central tenet of Agapè, 'Knowing Him in the Breaking of the Bread' is expressed in 'A Memory of Emmaus' with its bitterness over our long-standing human failure (in our retrogression to institutionalisation) to emulate this love in personal affairs:

'They have gone back again to their floodlit temples,  
To the darker recesses and the altars of stone.  
What god in his rights senses would want to live in such places?'<sup>89</sup>

My poems on religious themes may, therefore, be seen as an attempt, in the first instance, to sustain myself. Martin Heidegger, also, gives a central place to poetry as the means to the sustaining or the restoration of our spiritual vision.<sup>90</sup> Wallace Stevens thought that poetry must 'take the place/Of empty heaven and its hymns', and proposed that '[a]fter one has abandoned a belief in God, poetry is that essence which takes its place as life's redemption.'<sup>91</sup>

I believe, with Falck, that what is really called for in our time is an 'embodied or incarnational view of the human condition', one that is situated within the necessities of

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<sup>88</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, p. 108.

<sup>89</sup> Ennis, *Down in the Deeper Helicon*, p. 88.

<sup>90</sup> Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', *Basic Writings*, Ed. D. F. Krell p. 198 ff.

<sup>91</sup> C. Falck., *Myth, Truth and Literature*, 'Spilt Religion' p. 144, includes a quotation from Stevens's *Opus Posthumous*, p. 158.

biological and cultural life. An authentic vision is needed which will be authenticated only through symbolic or mythic modes of expression and integration:

‘The embodied or incarnational position allows us to understand our human transcendence less as a war with nature and more as a purification or harmonising of our natural inclinations. Instead of fighting the beast within himself, man can set out to become an animal at a higher level.’<sup>92</sup>

This the final dream of the Unnamed in ‘Letter to Connla’ based on the philosophy of Eriugena:

‘Dear twin, true dissonance of forms  
Snakes into every imagined  
cranny of your gospel. Animal featured,  
spiralled with ecstasy, creation  
opens herself to the random muse  
delivers me in each laced initial’.<sup>93</sup>

The view holds that there is indeed a ‘human’ nature. This nature becomes one which needs to be embraced and explored, rather than one which we can arbitrarily decide to think ill of. What is needed is a ‘Religion’, a ‘mythos’ and a poetry of full meaning. This was the terminal cry of Yeats in his later poems. It is also the cry of Connla’s Unnamed twin to his ascetic brother.

The ascetic and the phallic will be balanced as in ‘The Day of the Swarms’ and the Shivan Sequence; the sensuous juices of the apple will be seen as baptismal white by more than the Unnamed twin of ‘Letter to Connla’. These full meanings exist in antithesis to the meanings

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<sup>92</sup> Falck, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.

<sup>93</sup> Ennis, *Telling the Bees*, p. 44. See, also, Appendix B for a fuller description of the influence of the philosophy of Eriugena on my poetry.

of the kinds of desert landscape which may appeal to those with reasons for wanting to repudiate the world.<sup>94</sup>

It is precisely against this narrow exclusive desert club that the Magdalen rails in 'Passover Night', in her interpretation of the Christian 'Mythos' -

'Fond words you spoke old crabbed men thrust to hand  
Witnesses to their own barren lights on empty sand.  
But I've no literate fist to write you the obvious!'<sup>95</sup>

Writers from the vantage point of the Christian 'mythos' may extend figurative hands to link that 'mythos' to others in kind. Note 'Opening the Diptych',<sup>96</sup> where both Christian and Buddhist interpretations of the same event sit side by side, one complementing the other, both of value in an individual way. Similarly, I have found of late the re-incarnative world-view 'mythos' of Hinduism more accessible and tolerable than the 'once-off' Christian eschatology; the former may be more reflective of the actual reality of the journey of both 'psyche' and 'societas'; it does seem, also, to offer greater creative possibilities. In this context, 'Telling the Bees' may be read as primarily a Hindu poem:

Section 1: 'The Day of the Swarms' as Brahma, Creator at work, a type of 'Creation hymn'.

Section 3: 'Torching the Hives' as Shiva destroying the old, a necessary prerequisite to creating the new: this section contains a lengthy address to Shiva (pp. 75, 76).

Shiva is also seen as Healer and God of Song in some Hindu sects.

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<sup>94</sup> Falck, *op. cit.*, pp. 146 and 170. Cf, also, *Telling the Bees*, pp. 68, 75 and 20.

<sup>95</sup> Ennis, *In a Green Shade*, p. 107.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 68-69.

Section 5: 'Nirvana' as Vishnu, the preserver, leads one to a kind of equilibrium.

Sections 2 and 4, 'Ultimata' and 'Esparto Man', may be read as Christian interjections -

Section 2, on the theme of Eschatology, 'Final Things'; Section 4, on the familiar hanging God, Christ, as every person on his or her tree of circumstance. The whole poem, then, aims at an overall synthesis of respective Christian and Hindu positions.<sup>97</sup>

Ultimately, though, I would tend to agree with Kavanagh, that rock of sense, that there is no such thing as religious poetry, only a poetry true to life as perceived by the individual.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Falck, *op. cit.*, p. 70. Falck advocates, in similar vein, that 'the tradition of Taoism and of Zen Buddhism, with its philosophy of the sacredness of ordinary life, must be helpful to us'.

<sup>98</sup> Egan, *op. cit.*, p. 191. Cf. Also, Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 199, for a discussion of the relationship of poetry and truth.