


<p>LANGUAGE AND STYLE IN WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS'S SELECTED POEMS: "Adam's Curse", "Easter, 1916", "The Second Coming" and "Sailing to Byzantium"</p>		<p>Victorian Literature</p> <p>Keywords: William.B.Yeats, poems, style, language, etc.</p>
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>This research demonstrates an in-depth investigation of William Butler Yeats's key poems, his language, and his distinctive writing style. We've selected four of his well-known poems for this essay: "Adam's Curse," "The Second Coming," "Easter, 1916," and "Sailing to Byzantium." Each of them is a different aspect of William's creative work, incorporating motifs and topics that relate to the historical context and the author's inner life. The clashing currents of the Victorian era and modernism, which William Butler Yeats stood at, affected his poetry. His poetry continue to serve as a bridge for aspiring modern poets, guiding them to perfection from such expressions of beauty, art in nature, politics, and everything around him.</p>		

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most dramatic writers of the 20th century was William Butler Yeats. Yeats spent a lot of creative time composing plays in addition to poetry. The greatest poet in Irish history, Yeats is also arguably the greatest English-language poet of the 20th century. His themes, pictures, symbols, metaphors, and poetic sensibility cover the range of both his own experience as well as that of his country through one of its most trying periods.

Yeats's major artistic endeavor was to reify his own life—his ideas, feelings, suppositions, conclusions, and dreams—into poetry; to convert all of himself into art, but not in a purely confessional or autobiographical sense; he was not interested in the banal. No poet of the 20th century was more effective in using his craft to persuade people to pay attention to his personal experience; no poet was more successful in exploring the realities that were within his "deep heart's core," even when they threatened to make his poetry sound clichéd or silly. His honesty and fierce dedication to creating in accordance with his own vision shield his poetry from all of these criticisms.

Yeats can be perplexing to readers today because he resisted the age of science, progress, democracy, and modernization. His esoteric and mythical solutions to these issues might also appear dreadfully out of date for a poet who passed away only sixty years ago. But despite his profound individualism, Yeats consistently seeks to reach personal truth, making him one of the most universal authors to have ever lived.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Analysis of William B. Yeats's Poems, Style and Language

“Being Irish, he had an abiding sense of tragedy, which sustained him through temporary periods of joy” ~ W. B. Yeats¹

The intricacy and depth of William Butler Yeats's imaginative thought more than equaled the complexity and depth of his existence. Few English-language poets produce work that is more challenging to comprehend or analyze. The reader has frequently been more hurt than helped by the whims of criticism and exegesis, and the fundamental issues are the variety and complexity of Yeats's own preoccupations and poetic approaches.

The incredibly allusive and profoundly symbolic style in which Yeats so frequently expressed himself is probably the biggest cause of difficulty. Another is without a doubt his lifelong habit of incorporating parts of theory, religion, or purported belief from the different occult sources with which he was so deeply saturated into many of his poetry and plays. In terms of ideology or belief, Yeats was also continually either actually or allegedly modifying his position. For instance, ‘Vacillation’ and ‘A Dialogue of Self and Soul,’ are two of his better-known poetries. He develops and maintains ongoing arguments between opposing viewpoints on a subject or between opposing facets of his own truth-seeking mind in these and numerous other instances, frequently without offering a definitive answer or taking a definitive position.

The fact that Yeats had a tendency to shift his philosophical or metaphysical ideas over the course of a lengthy career—again, either actually or apparently, and, again, sometimes more apparently than actually—is related to this but not quite the same.

However, if Yeats' more than moderate remarks on such topics in prose are taken at anything like to face value, to quarrel at great length about his dominating metaphysical perspective is to engage in evasive sophistry. The prose effectively makes the claim that the poet created his own theistic ‘religion’ after rejecting traditional Christianity.

Yeats continued to live into the increasingly positivistic and empirically focused twentieth century, yet he remained a romantic and a spiritualist of the nineteenth century in spirit, ideology, or belief. Although he rejected free poetry and never fully let go of his commitment to numerous conventional literary genres, he progressively let himself to develop in line with his times in terms of form rather than content. He embraced or used at various points erratic rhythms, approximative rhymes, colloquial language, some ‘metaphysical’ traits, and, most importantly, symbolic techniques like those of the French movement, but not solely as a result of their influence. Yeats'

¹<http://www.brainyquote.com>

unmistakable trademark, though, remained a particular romantic rhetorical character, or what he termed passionate syntax, that extraordinary talent for exactly the right amount of passion.

Yeats has no shortage of critics who believe that he is more than capable of producing subpar poetry. Although his most famous poems are difficult to grasp, even those are masterpieces and the foundation of his art.²

2.2 Analysis of “Adam’s Curse”

*We sat together at one summer’s end,
That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
And you and I, and talked of poetry.
I said, ‘A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment’s thought,*

William Butler Yeats wrote “Adam’s Curse” during the period after his first love, Maud Gonne, wed Major John MacBride. Yeats might have had severe suffering as a result of this, and he might have felt cursed like Adam did when God expelled man from the Garden of Eden. This poem is a reflection of his memories of his happier moments with Maud and serves as a representation of his suffering and loss of the love he once had.

Yeats describes a wonderful time he had with Maud in the beginning of the poem. Yeats recalled falling in love with Maud, and it has been suggested that poetry is akin to the language of love. He is thinking back on the time he spent wooing her, but because of the curse God placed on Adam, falling in love is not as easy as it once was. Yeats then sees this love as broken and meaningless because he is unable to win over Maud. Both falling in and out of love were difficult for Yeats to experience. He is putting his feelings about losing his first love, Maud, into a poem right now. This is how he puts it in a poem where he likens poetry to falling in love. God has cursed all men with this. He wants everyone to know that trying to court Maud is difficult, much like trying to create poetry.

A martyr is someone who endures enormous hardship, as Yeats has done in his brief time with Maud and during his career as a poet, and he mentions this at the very end of the first line of the poem. He is undoubtedly drawing a comparison between his brief time with Maud and his poems. He thinks that falling in love with Maud is very comparable to the effort he puts into writing his poems. One would actually completely miss this if they didn't read the poem carefully.

² <http://www.enotes.com>

Yeats did not recognize Maud's shortcomings till now since he felt she was attractive. It is sad because Yeats has come to the tragic conclusion that, just as God has cursed men, he has also cursed women.

He is certain that neither a perfect relationship nor a perfect lady exist.

According to him, it must be laborious like the rest of life. Yeats discusses the customs he adhered to whilst courting Maud. He adhered to the rules that men have established for how to fall in love. He no longer cares about them, therefore they now seem trivial to him. He lost his affection since they did not work for him. He feels a little resentful that he had the audacity to think they might function. He understands that falling in love is a messy process that demands effort once more.

Yeats discusses the breakdown of his relationship with Maud in the final two stanzas of the poem. He talks about how much time he has spent with her and how one day it will all end with the setting sun. He talks about how their time together has transformed the moon into a shell and the stars they once gazed into the days and years they shared. He remembered falling in love and doing in all the conventional ways.

Yeats is well renowned for his use of symbolism and religious overtones in his poetry. This poem's title guarantees a biblical allusion. Before Eve convinced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve coexisted peacefully. Life changed drastically from how it had been before this. God punished them for their transgression, and as a result, the rest of the world also suffered. Our forebears made a mistake that has caused us to endure constant misery. As wonderful as Yeats' poem is, the biblical allusions to Genesis are.³

Many people think Yeats is berating Adam for succumbing to a woman. This is not true, in my opinion because Yeats believes that if Adam and Eve hadn't sinned, love could have been simpler to achieve. Therefore, the researcher believes that he is merely contrasting life now with life before Adam and Eve sinned. Everything has turned into a fight, including love. Perhaps Yeats believes that he may have acted improperly in his relationship with Maud Gonne and that, like Adam in the Bible, he is now suffering consequences as a result. This poem is a lovely reminder of love and how challenging it is to find in today's society. Yeats feels God's curse on men, but he doesn't appear upset that he lost Maud. He appears to be unsure of the existence of true love and believes that he has come the closest he will ever come to finding it. Yeats felt the need to express himself through this poem since he was unable to receive the love he craved from Maud. Perhaps Yeats' healing journey started with this poem. He had to express himself through

³Pierce, David, *Yeats's Worlds: Ireland, England and the Poetic Imagination*. – New Haven : Yale University Press, 1995

his poetry because he was unable to do so with Maud. His poetry was equally challenging to create as his love for Maud was. By the time his poem comes to a close, Yeats is just worn out.⁴

2.2.1 Themes

The Relationship between Art and Politics

Yeats, who held that art and politics were inextricably linked, utilized his writing to share his opinions about Irish politics and to inform readers about the country's cultural history. Yeats believed that British rule had a negative impact on Irish politics and social life because he had a strong sense of connection to Ireland and his national identity since a young age. His early poems were odes to the beauty and mystique of the Irish countryside, and his early collection of folklore attempted to educate a literary past that had been suppressed by British occupation. Through his connections with the Irish National Theatre, the Irish Literary Society, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and Maud Gonne, Yeats grew more and more interested in Irish politics, and his poetry started to resemble political manifestos. Yeats believed that poetry had the power to both remark on and critique political events as well as to enlighten and inform a society.⁵

The Impact of Fate and the Divine on History

Yeats's devotion to mysticism resulted in the creation of a distinctive religious and philosophical philosophy that placed a strong emphasis on the role of fate and historical determinism, or the idea that certain things have already been decided upon. Despite Yeats' early rejection of Christianity, his lifelong study of mythology, Theosophy, spiritualism, philosophy, and the occult reveal his intense fascination with the supernatural and how it interacts with people. He developed a sophisticated spirituality over the course of his life, employing the metaphor of interlocking to depict the growth and rebirth of the soul. Yeats held that fate determined history and that fate was revealed in instances where the divine and human worlds came together. His poetry has a tone of historically defined inevitableness throughout, especially when describing instances of divine and human interaction. In Yeats' poetry, the divine can be seen in a variety of ways, sometimes literally and other times abstractly.⁶

The Transition from Romanticism to Modernism

Yeats began his protracted creative career as a romantic poet before transitioning over time to become a modernist poet. His poems had a lyrical, romantic style when he first started writing them in the 1880s, and they mostly dealt with love, longing and loss, as well as Irish myths. His early poetry adheres to the romantic verse traditions, making use of well-known rhyme schemes, metric patterns, and poetic structures. His early poetry is nevertheless intelligent and accomplished, despite being lighter than his later works. His interest in mysticism and the occult

⁴Jeffares, Alexander Norman, *W.B. Yeats : a New Biography*. – London : Hutchinson, 1988

⁵Kelly, John S., *A W. B. Yeats Chronology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

⁶<http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

propelled him to investigate spiritually and philosophically challenging topics, which was one of many influences that influenced his literary development.⁷

The starry-eyed romantic idealism of Yeats' early work evolved into more knowing and cynical writing as a result of his unhappy romantic relationship with Maud Gonne. Additionally, as he got more firmly associated with nationalist political activities, his concern for Irish subjects grew. In order to portray the political agitation and instability in Ireland and abroad, Yeats turned his attention from myth and folklore to modern politics, frequently combining the two. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Yeats adopted some of the motifs and forms of the modernist poets as a result of his involvement with the transformation of literary culture at the beginning of the twentieth century. The modernists rejected the idea that poetry should only be lyrical and beautiful, actively engaged with current politics, experimented with verse forms, and opposed literary conventions in general. His poetry changed as a result, becoming sharper, shorter, and darker. There is nevertheless a discernible movement in style and tone over the course of his career, despite the fact that he never abandoned the verse forms that gave the sounds and rhythms of his earlier work.

2.2.2. *Symbols*

The Beautiful, Mild Woman

- The speaker describes the second woman in line 2 as the “beautiful, mild woman,” referring to her as his love interest and her friend respectively. The woman stands for someone who still values both, which is ironic considering that the poem laments the lack of ‘fine’ items that need effort to create. In line 16, she compares the labor that goes into poetry to the labor that goes into maintaining physical beauty, which she refers to as a labor. She doesn’t speak again for the rest of the poem, as do the others when love is mentioned. However, Yeats utilizes her as a representation of beautiful things that take hard to create but also perish with the passage of time by highlighting their pleasing, gorgeous attributes.⁸

Poetry and Love

- The opening stanza’s speaker claims that poetry is difficult; line 6 mentions the need for “stitching and unstitching” to perfect the lines. But it can’t appear that hard work was involved. The speaker states in line 5 that a poem should appear to have been written “a moment’s thought.” He claims that love is the same, and he emphasizes this in the second stanza. According to the speaker, it should be a laborious task requiring research and memory. Old-fashioned lovers would “sigh and quote with learned looks” from “beautiful old books” while they were together. The

⁷W. B. Yeats : *the Critical Heritage* / ed. by A. Norman Jeffares. London : Routledge & Kegan, 1977

⁸Pierce, David, *Yeats's Worlds: Ireland, England and the Poetic Imagination*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1995

speaker respects both poetry and the work of Love and this appreciation is reflected throughout the entire poem.⁹

The Moon

- He notices the moon “in the wavering blue-green of the sky” as the speaker and the two women grow silent at hearing the word ‘love.’ It appears weathered, like a conch that has been “washed by time’s waters,” as he states in lines 32–33. This is similar to how he thinks about his love life, which has been severely impacted by time. The speaker of the poem claims to be “as weary-hearted as that hollow moon” on line 29, where the poem concludes. In this way, Yeats is using the moon as a representation of a heart that has aged.¹⁰

Work and idle play

- We have all had to strive for the nice things in life since the fall of man, the speaker claims in line 23. However, some of those beautiful things, such as poetry, call for labor that, at least in comparison to physical labor, doesn’t appear to be work. The speaker claims in lines 8–9 that it would be better for poets to “scrub a kitchen pavement and break stones” since society values this work more than “articulating sweet sounds” the way poets do. The so-called “genuine employees” are regarded as being “bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen.” However, as the speaker contends in lines 22–23, since Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden, people have had to work to create something ‘fine’ and lovely. Therefore, even though the world considers poetry to be a ‘idle trade,’ poetry demands labor in order to be something lovely.¹¹

2.3 Analysis of “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.¹²*

The odd and ominous poem “The Second Coming,” which Yeats wrote in January 1919 and initially made public in 1920, is almost as closely associated with his name. One of Yeats’s rare unrhymed poems, it is written in very erratic blank verse, and the rhythms may help to

⁹Kelly, John S., *A W. B. Yeats Chronology*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

¹⁰Kelly, John S., *A W. B. Yeats Chronology*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

¹¹ <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

¹² <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

enhance the foreboding feeling that the diction and imagery generate¹³ The most obvious interpretations, which are commonly accepted, are those of disorder, particularly in the first segment where the falcon has lost contact with the falconer, and those of dread, particularly in the second piece where the pitiless brute is seen lumbering through the desert. The relevance of such subject components for Yeats and his audience is instantly clear in light of the composition date. After World War I, the Western world continued to feel hopeless, as expressed in the works of various writers.

History as spiral

The cyclical view of history that Yeats outlined in *A Vision* is intimately tied to “The Second Coming” on a deeper level. It is mostly focused with the inner self, and a full moon is its symbol. In contrast, the primary is anti-individualistic, pious, democratic, sensible, and moral. It is mostly connected to the outside world and is represented by either the sun or the moon’s dark side. Yeats equated many things he despised with the main and defined himself as the antithesis. As a result, he supported the polytheistic period of Homer and classical Greece while opposing or scorning the moral and anti-individualist religion that emerged with the birth of Christ.¹⁴

Although it may surprise some readers that Yeats would compare Christ to a beast and a political philosophy like Marxism, it is important to remember that while Christ may alternately be seen as sacred or secular in Yeats’ imaginative imagination; he is always the central figure. Christ’s primacy is made clear in *A Vision* at various points. Thus, the poem is about his second coming, albeit in a terrifyingly foreign secular form: a mass-oriented and anti-individualistic political materialism that paradoxically conforms to but also runs counter to his earlier mass-oriented and anti-individualistic spiritual teachings.¹⁵

2.3.1 Symbols

Medieval times

- Lines 1-2: Falconing has been a tradition since the Middle Ages. Wealthy people frequently built aviaries where they kept birds for hunting, such as feudal landlords. The most frequent birds were hawks and falcons. Therefore, this activity is associated with violence, albeit not the uncontrolled, chaotic violence that characterized World War I. Falconing, in which the master had total control over the bird, was a noble activity. It is clear that this is not the case. The mention of falconry also represents the ideals of the Middle Ages: order, tradition, deep religious belief, unified government, and ‘civilized’ warfare.

¹³Kelly, John S., *A W. B. Yeats Chronology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

¹⁴<http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

¹⁵Kelly, John S., *A W. B. Yeats Chronology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

- Line 19: The Middle Ages could be one of several meanings for the word ‘stony’ in this phrase. After all, when you think of a medieval building like a Gothic cathedral or a castle, you probably picture a massive, solid stone building. The adjective ‘stony’ in this context refers to something robust and long-lasting. But when someone is incapable of feeling or reacting, we sometimes refer to them as ‘stone-like.’ Yeats also compares the roughly 2,000 years that elapse between the First and Second Comings to a baby’s ‘sleep’. It’s easy to overlook the 800-1000-year duration of Europe’s Middle Ages, which roughly corresponded between the 5th and 15th centuries. It was the longest of the previous ‘twenty centuries’ as a result, and Yeats may have been referring to the time period as a whole.¹⁶

Biblical

- The reference to “The Second Coming” refers to the second coming of Christ, which was predicted in the Book of Revelation.

- Lines 4-6: The Bible is mentioned twice more in these words. First of all, the word ‘anarchy’ conjures up images of Satan’s rule before to the second coming of Christ. More specifically, it conjures up images of the Biblical flood, which prompted Noah to pack the ark with his family—wife, kids, and a few pets—in preparation for it. It’s noteworthy to note that every word of the Bible—from Genesis (the flood) through Revelation—is referenced in the poem. Compared to Yeats’ vision, the Bible is notably less violent. It is comparable to the Great Flood as observed by those who missed the ark. Another interesting characteristic of these lyrics is the use of the word ‘loosed,’ which approximately translates to ‘unleashed’ or “let free”. It’s a word that might be used to describe something like water while also connoting a more animalistic force. This prepares the reader for the “rough beast’s” eventual metaphorical release later on in the poem.

- Lines 13–14: There are several biblical concepts that come to mind when reading about the sphinx in the desert. These words also remind me of the story of Christ’s devil’s temptation in the wilderness. Thus, the desert might be thought of as the devil’s residence. Since the sphinx is a cross of two different animals, it can be compared to other species that are also perplexed in the Book of Revelation (a man and a lion).

- Line 19: A lengthy metaphor uses phrases like “stony sleep,” “nightmare,” and ‘rocking cradle’ to compare the “twenty centuries” between Christ and the Second Coming to just one night of a baby’s nap. If the Second Coming is close at hand, the picture of sleep represents either the state of general composure or the level of ignorance that prevailed throughout the ‘twenty centuries’ that separated the First and Second Comings.

- Line 22: In comparison to the odd images produced by the Book of Revelation, this one is straightforward. Bethlehem symbolizes the coming of absolute and messianic forces in the world because it is the location of Christ’s birth. In the case of Christ, there is only Good.¹⁷

¹⁶ <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

¹⁷ <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

Spiritus Mundi (the spirit of the world)

• Lines 12-17: These lines serve as an illustration of symbolism and include a number of symbols that are truly independent of one another. They essentially stand in for a confused, 'veiled,' vision of the 'rough beast' that will be discussed later in the poem. They are considered to have their origins in *Spiritus Mundi*, a 'spirit world' of pictures and symbols that Yeats thought the most sensitive people of history had historically had access to.

2.4 Analysis of "Easter 1916"

*I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.¹⁸*

A man who had mixed feelings about politics wrote one of the 20th century's most potent political poems. Yeats was captivated with the late Victorian era as his career got started. In general, art at that time was more romantic than worldly.¹⁹

Ireland at the time was rife with nationalism in all of its forms, but Yeats preferred the romantic nationalism of his literature to the new insurrectionary nationalism of his great love, the actress and activist Maud Gonne. He was equally drawn to and turned off by her attractiveness and zeal. Yeats spent the first 45 years of his life concentrating his nationalistic efforts on creating plays, songs, and collections of Irish folktales, but he wrote very little about Ireland's complex present or unsettling future.

¹⁸ <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

¹⁹ Jeffares, Alexander Norman, *W.B. Yeats : a New Biography*. – London : Hutchinson, 1988

Yeats' disillusionment or increased sensitivity to some facts occurred in his middle years. Yeats was prodded into a crisis by the unrelenting artistic revolutions of modernism, which finally led to a leaner style and a larger breadth. The poem's opening verse makes clear that the author is more interested in the Modernist Ireland than the idyllic one:

*I have met them at close of day
 Coming with vivid faces
 From counter or desk among grey
 Eighteenth-century houses.
 I have passed with a nod of the head
 Or polite meaningless words,
 Or have lingered awhile and said
 Polite meaningless words,
 And thought before I had done
 Of a mocking tale or a gibe
 To please a companion
 Around the fire at the club,
 Being certain that they and I
 But lived where motley is worn: ...²⁰*

2.4.1 Themes

Sacrifice

Yeats is aware that these people gave their lives for a cause they believed in, even though he is unsure whether he admires the Irish fighters. Yeats lacks the zeal and bravery that those folks displayed. He is pleased to observe everything around him and compose poetry about it.²¹

Immortality

Yeats has a manner of speaking about the deceased Irish soldiers in *Easter, 1916* as if their sacrifice will allow them to live eternally. On the other hand, he also acknowledges that they may have left without a reason. One of the primary places in this poem where Yeats really struggles to make sense of what transpired in the Easter Uprising is the discussion of eternity. It displayed the courage of those who sacrificed their lives in battle.²²

²⁰ <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

²¹ Jeffares, Alexander Norman, *W.B. Yeats: a New Biography*. – London : Hutchinson, 1988

²² *W. B. Yeats: the Critical Heritage* / ed. by A. Norman Jeffares. London : Routledge & Kegan, 1977

2.4.2 Symbols

Meaningless words

Yeats is rather upfront about the fact that he engages in a lot of pointless small conversation with the people he encounters on the streets of Dublin right from the beginning of the poem. He uses the same exact words, “Polite meaningless words,” over and over again to express how monotonous and repetitious this process may be for him. However, even though he's acting completely fake, the guy still needs to be nice.

- Lines 5-6: Yeats claims that he has seen people nodding their heads or uttering inane things in a nice manner as they leave their workplaces.
- Lines 7-8: Yeats doesn't always nod as he passes someone, though. He will occasionally even “linger awhile” and utter additional “polite meaningless words.”
- Lines 9-12: Yeats will even come up with a humorous “mocking tale” to amuse others “Around the fire at a club” if he truly, really tries. So, yes, he occasionally tells a funny anecdote. But to him, it still has no significance at all. Up until the Easter Uprising, when everything is “utterly transformed.” Then Yeats thinks he may need to treat these people with more respect.

Terrible beauty

Yeats uses the line “A terrible beauty is born” to finish a stanza three times in this poem. He even uses it as the final line of the poem, which should alert us to the fact that it's definitely a key word.

Yeats appears to be attempting to synthesize the various feelings he experiences when thinking about the Easter, 1916 Irish Uprising whenever he discusses dreadful beauty. On the one hand, the Uprising is beautiful because it will be remembered as a heroic struggle for Irish independence. On the other hand, a lot of people passed away. Yeats appears to be implying that the most cherished moments in history are frequently those that result in death when he uses the phrase “terrible beauty.”

- Lines 15-16: Yeats has been ranting about how he doesn't really care about his encounters with Dublin's working class up to this point. In contrast, he claims in lines 15 and 16 that “A terrible beauty is born” and that everything is immediately “changed, changed utterly.” Those who comprehend the poem's allusion to the Easter Uprising are likely aware of how daily life would have changed after hostilities broke out.²³

- Line 40: Yeats reiterates the line “A terrible beauty is born” after listing several people who perished in the Easter Uprising or were later killed. Again, it's a little difficult to understand what is so beautiful about everyone dying. However, Yeats is sort of hinting at the notion that

²³W. B. Yeats: *the Critical Heritage* / ed. by A. Norman Jeffares. London : Routledge & Kegan, 1977

there might be something lovely in the fact that these people will be remembered for the courageous things they did by this point.

- Lines 79-80: By the poem's conclusion, we have a better understanding of what Yeats meant when he repeatedly said, "A terrible beauty is born." He asserts that Irish citizens will always remember those who battled for their country's independence.

The Dead Fighters

In the second stanza of this poem, Yeats lists a few of the persons he knew who participated in the Easter Uprising and who were either put to death or sentenced to life in prison. It's unclear if he respects them or doesn't give a damn. He may not understand why, but one thing is certain—he feels the need to write about them.

- Lines 17-23: Yeats mentions a female participant in the Uprising; it is likely that he is referring to Countess Constance Markievicz. But it's not like he's portraying her in a favorable light. In essence, he claims that while she was once stunning, her voice has since become harsh due to her time spent in politics. Oh, and he claims that she has an attitude of "ignorant good will" in her political life. Please, Yeats, express your true feelings to us.

- Lines 24-30: Yeats continues by talking about some guys who he seems to have respected a little bit more than the Countess. First, he mentions a man who established a boys' school; in this instance, he probably refers to Padraic Pearse, a poet. Additionally, he cites a person who aided Pearse, who is possibly the poet and playwright Thomas MacDonagh. Even Yeats speculates that MacDonagh may have been passable if he hadn't become involved in the revolt.

- Lines 31-35: Yeats finally mentions a man who he didn't care for at all. In short, he thought the final guy was incredibly arrogant and unpleasant. He's undoubtedly referring to Major John MacBride, who was the husband of the woman Yeats admired. Yeats had some ulterior interests in this case, that much is true. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that he wishes to put MacBride in the poem because, whether or not you agree with him, MacBride sacrificed his life for Irish independence.

- Lines 74-77: Yeats lists the names of the deceased combatants he has been referring to in this poem at the conclusion. Although he is unsure whether or not he fully supports what they did, he can acknowledge that they did something—dying for a political cause—that he would never be able to do.

The Stone in the Stream

- Yeats discusses a stone that is lying at the bottom of a stream for the entirety of the third stanza of this poem. However, it becomes apparent quite quickly that he is equating the stone with the martyrs of the Easter Uprising. The idea that the Irish fighters, like the stone, cannot be altered

or moved despite the world changing around them is intriguing to Yeats. They have lost all enthusiasm for Irish independence, especially now that they are deceased. They are not a part of the changing world. In this instance, Yeats may be embarrassed by his willingness to follow the crowd in the eyes of the world.

- Lines 41-44: According to Yeats, those who participated in the Easter Uprising battled for “one purpose only / Through summer and winter.” To put it another way, their sense of purpose remained constant across time. It stayed steady and motionless. In the end, Yeats likens this kind of unwavering commitment to a stone that doesn't move in a ‘living stream.’

- Lines 55-56: Yeats tells us that while these things live “Minute by minute,” the stone remains unchanged “in the midst of all” after listing numerous descriptions of birds and horses galloping alongside the stream. Yeats is here contrasting the revolutionaries’ tenacity with the world around them, which is always evolving. However, the fighters ultimately share one more characteristic with the stone: they aren't living. Yeats once more resists the need to laud these folks unreservedly as heroes.²⁴

2.5 Analysis of “Sailing to Byzantium”

*That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
Those dying generations at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.*²⁵

The so-called poem “Sailing to Byzantium” has garnered more praise and sparked more debate than any other piece in Yeats’s canon.

While there is no doubt that “Sailing to Byzantium” is a poem rich in symbolism, its origins appear to have entailed a more or less literal level that, while it has not been neglected, may not have received as much attention as it should have. By a wide margin, two symbolic readings of “Sailing to Byzantium” have predominated: either the poem is about the poet’s spirit or soul just before and after death, or it is about the artistic process and accomplishment. One could say that the decision between the two depends on the answer to the question, “How ideal is the ideal?” In other words, does Byzantium symbolize this aesthetic beauty of the world or a higher form of perfection in a higher plane of existence?

²⁴Jeffares, Alexander Norman, *W.B. Yeats : a New Biography*. – London : Hutchinson, 1988

²⁵<http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

A number of poems or passages written following “Sailing to Byzantium” seem to emphasize a plunge into the physicality of this world, even a celebration of earthly existence, but on the surface it may appear and sound like the culmination of a long series of escape poetry. Despite the fact that Yeats continued to write poems that were heavily influenced by transcendence, supernaturalism, and otherworldliness in his later years, he also created a “new” type of poem. These poems were generally brief, typically presented in sequences or series, and frequently, though not always, they dealt with a particularly physical aspect of life in the world.²⁶

2.6 Language

Yeats once said, “Hammer your thoughts into unity,” expressing the main focus of his imagination at the outset of his career. These sentences hint at the multiple perspectives Yeats had on the foundational elements of his poetry, as well as the sense of wholeness he hoped to glean from them. Personal history, family history, cultural history, ancient and current Irish history, friendship, mysticism, and personal and academic philosophy are some of Yeats’ primary sources. There is no disputing that some of Yeats’ poetry is complicated. His poems include some that encourage readers to learn more about Irish history and culture. But in many ways, the difficulty of Yeats’ poetry is similar to that of William Blake, whose poems demand that the reader simultaneously accept two contradictory views of the universe. Yeats battled conflicts between the concrete and the abstract, human similarities and Irish identity, and things coming together and falling apart over the course of his writing.

Yeats’ poetic resources span a wide range, and his work explores all of the potential that lyric poetry offers. Yeats’ poetry swiftly develops into sophisticated, multidimensional compositions after starting with ballads and songs that are almost naive in their depiction of simplicity. By the time of *The Green Helmet, and Other Poems (1910)*, for instance, the oblique symbolism of his collection *The Wind Among the Reeds (1899)* had made way for a more plain, personal tone that drew on more overtly autobiographical material. In the first collection of significant importance, this tone shifts to one that is more public and assertive. Yeats’ poetry uses rhyme, rhythm, and verse structure in growing more creative ways, which adds to its increasingly recognizable style.

Yeats’ evolution is especially notable for its revitalizing influence on specific poetry styles. Both Romantic and Victorian writers gave these genres, notably the elegy and the dramatic lyric, a great deal of consideration. Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake both had a significant impact on the young Yeats. Blake’s reformulation of lyric in terms of spirit and dream left a lasting mark on Yeats’ early attempts to forge a poetic identity. Yeats’ dramatic poems expand the potential of that particular form in a way that its primary proponent, Robert Browning, did not intend. Yeats’ attempts to slightly reduce the epic ambitions of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and William Morris

²⁶W. B. Yeats: *the Critical Heritage* / ed. by A. Norman Jeffares. London : Routledge & Kegan, 1977

reflect his often-overlooked interest in form, again from a formal position. His use of Irish sources in the elegy and the dramatic lyric is a crucial illustration of literary history's continuity and development.²⁷

It would be inaccurate to categorize Yeats as an experimental poet, despite the fact that he significantly updated several of the forms of English poem from the nineteenth century. By contrasting his work with those of his two most significant modernist colleagues, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, his conventional traits can be demonstrated. Yeats conveys a feeling of radical continuity through his use of form. This idea demonstrates the poet's comprehension of tradition, which serves as a significant source of duality in Yeats's thought. However, through balancing form and content, duality can be brought together in poetry. Additionally, highlighting the formal aspects of his work calls attention to the forms' restlessness as well as the forms themselves. Yeats' poetry is motivated by this restlessness and this arousal of psychic energy.

The poet experiences loss, which gives him a sense of restlessness, ardor, passion, longing, and continuity. The most important moments in Yeats' life frequently involve loss. He grew up during a time when there was a general lack of faith in organized religion. During Yeats' lifetime, the landowner class's political and economic dominance, with which he associated, was overthrown. He lost his initial audience as his career developed, and he began to view the Ireland that his verse had partly inspired critically. In verse, his feeling of love is also described as a loss. Additionally, a lot of his most significant poems are elegies. Yeats does, however, acknowledge the anguish of loss and regularly uses violence and the end of the world to illustrate its repercussions. This dedication is where his creative rage for togetherness comes from.²⁸

Yeats frequently exhibits a creative tension between two aspects for his audience. These components might take on several forms. The consistency of masks serves as a counterbalance to personality whims. The constructive work of art counterbalances the destructive work of time. The power of a single personality can outweigh the collective energy of society. You can make peace between the aristocrat and the peasant. By reflecting on the hero's dedication, one can recover from defeat. Yeats creates what is essentially a poetry of potential out of these contradictions. This poetry reflects a longing for peace and harmony while also acknowledging how far off those objectives are. The sense of "tragic delight" that Yeats's verse is praised for expresses this insight. Yeats' poetry makes an effort to confront such facts of life, achieving grandeur through dedication rather than argument. He is aware of the fragmentary quality of modern experience, aware of the fatal nature of the human situation, and distrustful of his age's increasingly democratic trends.²⁹

²⁷W. B. Yeats : *the Critical Heritage* / ed. by A. Norman Jeffares. London : Routledge & Kegan, 1977

²⁸Jeffares, Alexander Norman, *W.B. Yeats: a New Biography*. London : Hutchinson, 1988

²⁹Jeffares, Alexander Norman, *W.B. Yeats : a New Biography*. – London : Hutchinson, 1988

2.7. Writing Style

“Yeats’ work transitions from the ornate, fantasy-centered early poems to the preoccupation with Irish myth and folklore, which developed into the concerns of the Celtic Revival and the acceptance of uniquely Irish culture. He became more interested in modern social issues as he got older and continued to be alone, but he never forgot the past that shaped them. His marriage later in life sparked a resurgence of his interest in mystical topics and a rush of imaginative creativity, most shown by the gyres in “The Second Coming.”³⁰

Yeats started writing in the romantic era as a young poet in the 1880s. These literary works adhered to the meter and rhyme schemes as well as other romantic poetry norms. He emphasized love, loss, and loneliness as well as Irish myth and folklore in his lyrical, mystical, and romantic poems. It has been suggested that some of his earliest poems were odes to the lovely and ethereal country of Ireland.

Yeats developed links with the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Irish National Theatre, Irish Literary Society, and even Maud Gonne as a poet and as a person. Yeats transformed into a romantic poet, shifting his attention from mythical odes to modern politics. This led to a clear political subject emerging in Yeats’ poetry at this point in his literary career, as seen in “The Second Coming.” It’s safe to say that Yeats’ early literary works drew heavily on the gorgeous, revolutionary, and Irish patriot Maud Gonne. Yeats fell in love with her the moment he saw her for the first time in 1889; sadly, she did not feel the same way. One could argue that Yeats invested his efforts in the Irish Revival and Irish Patriotism in the early years of his career because he loved the politically engaged Maud Gonne.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Yeats’ interaction with the evolving literary landscape at the turn of the 20th century led to the creation of a contemporary writer. He studied modernist forms and conventions as a poet and applied them to his own work. The modernist style, form, and forceful engagement with current issues had an impact on Yeats. The old literary traditions were questioned by modernist poets, and they rejected the notion that poetry should be lyrical and admirable. In the end, modernist literature had a significant influence on Yeats and his work; when his poetry is examined from this time in his career, it can be said that it is “edgier” and more condensed. Yeats’ poetry underwent a considerable transition in terms of tone and form, yet he never abandoned the traditions of his earlier work.

In conclusion, the researcher believes that Yeats’ poetry reflects a changing character, and we believe that this has helped him develop into the well-liked and respected poet that he is today. Yeats is one of researcher’s favorite Irish authors because of this special quality of his poetry, which also makes his writing intriguing and alluring. There are a variety of explanations for this shift in the poetic style, as it has been discussed in this article, but in the end, in the researcher’s opinion, life experience is what has really caused Yeats’ poetry to alter.

³⁰<http://www.ukessays.com>

Yeats' life grew more complicated as he grew older. But in a magical sense, Yeats' creative strength and his capacity as a poet to give majestic expression to all that he encountered developed as a result of the larger challenges he confronted and the more heinous and devastating the losses he endured.

III. CONCLUSION

Yeats envisioned poetry as addressing all of life's complexities, but only insofar as each poet's imagination had direct access to experience or idea and only insofar as those materials were altered by the force of artistic articulation. From the beginning to the end, he was a poet who sought to change the personal issues in his life by encapsulating them in the resonantly universal language of his poetry. His impressive rhythmic and lyrical phrase-making abilities have garnered appreciation from readers and, particularly, fellow poets for his remarkable rhetorical successes.

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