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इतिहासाचार्य वि. का. राजवाडे संशोधन मंडळ, धुळे



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## NARRATION OF IRISH NATIONALISM IN W. B. YEATS'S POEMS

- Dr. Tabbasum Inamdar, Gevrai, Beed

### Abstract :

W.B. Yeats is a great poet in the history of Ireland and probably the distinguished poet to write in English during twentieth century. He is very well known as a nationalist poet for his literary work. Yeats has devoted his spirit for his motherland and wrote many poems based on its tradition, culture, mythology, politics, history, love, individual friends and distinct events. In 1923 Yeats received a noble prize for literature. Yeats was always different in subject matter than his contemporaries. Yeats was a founding member of Dublin Hermetic society and center of the Irish Literary movement and indispensable to its existence. Present paper is an analysis of Yeats's poems based on the theme of Irish nationalism.

**Key words** - Mythology, Nationalism, spiritualism, tradition, Folklore, Patriotic, Political.

W.B. Yeats's early poetry narrated Irish myth, folklore, tradition, and expressions of Ireland's natural imagery. These poems include "The Wanderings of Oisín" (1888), "The Madness of King Goll" (1888), "The Stolen Child" (1889), "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (1890), and "Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea" (1893). This particular poetic style made Yeats' contribution to the Irish Literary Renaissance. His poems are based on the creation of Celtic mythology, imagery, his poems "To Ireland in the coming times, Easter 1916, The Second Coming" etc. were the good examples of political affairs and nationalism. Literature is the efflorescence of culture and culture has its roots in the mythology of a nation. In all nations myths have entered largely into literature.



Yeats is generally considered as one of the twentieth century key poets in English literature. Yeats, Shaw and Rabindranath Tagore are so different in their attitudes about life and art.

In association with Lady Augusta Gregory, Yeats created the Irish Literary Theatre and this theatre produced performances that were representative of Yeats' nationalistic ideal. The main theme of these plays was the occurrence of Gaelic mythology and non-denominational folklore in contemporary times. In spite of the critical and public success for most of the Theatre's productions, it was during this period when Yeats began to come in divergence with the morals of Ireland's Catholic middle class. Shortly he was an art student in Dublin. Throughout this period he became a Nationalist. The leader Yeats had friends among Unionists and Nationalists alike, and, well aware with the liberal English notions of his time, passionately advocated the source of Home Rule.

Yeats had a lasting interest in mysticism, spiritualism, Occultism and astrology. The main period of Yeats' development was effortlessly distinguished. The earliest is one of self consciousness, romantic, is influenced by Blake and Shelly, Dublin literary groups drew him to a study of the heroic period of Irish history to engrossing the power of Gaelic poetry (from the translation of Douglas Hyde) he plays with new platonic imagery (The Rose of the world) linked with New Platonic heroic themes and Irish folklore and tradition

Come away o human child to the waters and the wild  
With a fairy, hand in hand for the worlds more full of  
Weeping then you understand. (Yeats W.B. 1957, p 87)

W.B. Yeats loved Maud Gonne the woman significantly concerned with Irish nationalist movements a zealous nationalist. Gonne combined beauty with nationalist passion. She was a radical woman. Lady Augusta Gregory encouraged to W.B. Yeats and persuaded him to focus on an Irish content and its inclination was reinforced by his participation with

a new generation of younger and rising Irish writers. jointly with lady Gregory Martyn and other writers with J.M.Synge, Sean o'Casey and Padric Colum Yeats was one of the accountable for the establishment of the Irish Literary Revival Movement; Lady Gregory had political and poetical influence on Yeats. Yeats' poems mainly divided into three parts Irish Mythological poems, Political poems, Symbolic poems. Almost all of his poems are having concern and name and fame of his motherland, he represented the variety of realism of his nation throughout his creative writing and stimulate the spirits of common people. Yeats writes in his poem The Madness of King Goll, which is a distinctive illustration by him. All the lunatics of Ireland would carry collectively if they were free in Yeats 'poem the story imagine a new spiritual association-

"These hands won many a torque of gold

They will not hush, the leaves a flutter

Round me the beech leaves old." (Yeats W.B. 1957p 83)

In 1923 Yeats was awarded with the Nobel Prize for literature. He was aware of the symbolic worth of an Irish winner so soon after Ireland's sovereignty and he wanted to highlight the realism at each accessible chance as he said -

"I consider that this honor has come to me less as an individual than as a representative of Irish literature

It is part of Europe's welcome to the free state". (Foster R.F., 2003 p.59.)

Yeats had read the cultural history of Ireland and was so much overwhelmed by the simple life of the past centuries that the existing society seemed far removed from the ideal, God bearing scrupulous men and women of the by gone era. The rich themes classification in Gaelic Greek and an Indian mythology gave him a boost up to write poems of epic stature. Tagore evaluates Yeats work to that of the best





ancient Indian poets and argued that Yeats was-

"Someone capable of comprehending the world through the untrammelled power of his soul". (Tagore R, 1912, p217)

As a writer Yeats dedicated himself to building Irish culture and literature. Yeats' position as a Post Colonial seems oblivious. At the same time he was a member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendency. Yeats was a genuine nationalist who tried to devise a substitute account of nationalism that keeps away from the problem to which so many of his generation succumbed. His poems the "Song of Happy Shephard, The Sad Shepherd, The Song of Wandering Oisin" etc. were published earlier-

"I was twenty far, from the moment when I began, The Wandering of Oisin which I did at that age. I believe which I did matter become Irish." (Yeats W.B. 1957, p 84)

By 1889 he had written Irish fairy and Irish folk tales; engross him in the rich and different world of Celtic myth and folklore. Yeats adds to the literary world his poems and plays that embrace his native legends while promoting his own sense of nationalism. As John Mantague has observed-

"The real position for a poet is to be a global regionalist. He is born into allegiances to particular areas or places and people, which he also happens to belong to an increasingly accessible world....so the position is actually local and international". - (Johnston D, 1985, P254)

Yeats was political nationalist too Ireland was closely identified with political nationalism. Historically Ireland had been a British colony but after getting political freedom Ireland had to sacrifice a part of its land. The northern part of Ireland is still under British rule this situation is like of India. In his Autobiography Yeats writes about the use of poetry as a political weapon he clarified why he had used myth in his poems. In a letter to George Russell in 1898 Yeats says-



"The poet must above all have an intimate knowledge of his own country; but remember always that you are face to face with Ireland, its tragedy and its poverty and if you would express Ireland. You must know her to the heart in all her moods." (Yeats W.B. 1954, pp 294-295)

The poem An Irishman foresees his death is a tribute to the Irish aviator Robert Gregory who chose heroes death in a war, Yeats wrote poem in his memory, Yeats was an optimist he apologize for that his countrymen had become disinterested in the cultural past of Ireland, he supposed that country draws its moral strength from its history and mythology. In the poem 'To Ireland in the coming Times' Yeats again draws upon Irish folklore and mythic symbols and sets them against a setting of national identity, and speaking about the effects of industrialized revolution he write

"When time began to rent and rage

The measure of her flying feet

Made Ireland's heart begin to beat" (Yeats W.B. 1957, p111)

Yeats poems Second Coming, Easter 1916, In September 1913, To Ireland in the coming times is also nationalistic in its fervor. To Ireland in the coming times is obviously a political poem. John Leary gave him and viewpoint of life and the dream of Ireland's sovereign individuality. His patriotism is crystal clear in his political poems. He wanted his Ireland to get freedom. Yeats has no other subject except his motherland every piece of art represents to his motherland, its past history its present and future also. Yeats writes about his nation and nationalistic spirit that-

Know that I would be accounted be

True brother of the company

Who sang to sweeten Irelands wrong

Ballad and story, ran and song;



*For he I any less of them  
 Because the red-rose bordered hem of her  
 Made the angelic clan  
 Trails all about the written page". (Yeats W.B. 1957 p137)*

Yeats was really a true patriotic spirit, through his creative writing he represented his nation all its tradition, culture, mythology and national movements. He devoted most of his poems to Ireland; he not only makes poetry his weapon but actively participated in many political and national activities of his nation. He dedicated his caliber for the sake of his motherland. Many of his poems were the wakeup call and encouragement to his countrymen. He dedicated his literary as well as individual life for the sake of his nation and its liberation so it is proved that Yeats is as an Irish nationalist poet.

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