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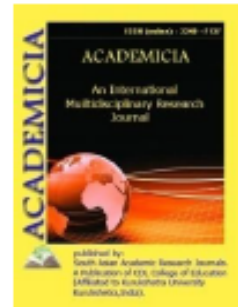
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## EARLY PERIOD OF WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS' POETRY

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### ABSTRACT

*William Butler Yeats is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets of the XX century. He was one of the modern poets, who influenced his contemporaries as well as successors. A traditionalist, constantly ahead of his contemporaries, Yeats is rightfully considered one of the major poets of XX century world literature. In this article we are intended to learn and form early background of the author's individual poetic career. Sense of moral wholeness and humanity of the prominent poet is discussed. Through analysis of his poems creative way, peculiarities of his style, and interpretation of symbols, their connection with the author's intellectual condition have been studied. While commenting on his poetry we have tried to realize his early individual poetic style and the evolutionary path to its formation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Early poetry, Poetic sensibility, Tradition, Individuality, Symbolism, Mysticism, Mythology, Individual style, Poetry analyses, Interpretation of poetic images.*

### INTRODUCTION

The early period of the creative career of the Irish poet, playwright, and essayist William Butler Yeats passed under the sign of symbolism and myth-making. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Yeats poetry to Irish and European culture in the late XIX and early XX centuries. Yeats' works raised the importance of Irish literature in English as both national and universal literature. The merit of Yeats was a kind of "creative translation" of the culture that has survived in the folk environment of Ireland into the common European language. Yeats strove to make Irish culture a part of the global process, and he succeeded.

A figure like Yeats was impossible to replace. He could be worshiped or he could be resisted, but not indifferent in any way. The poet's death was responded to by Auden, a modernist who belonged to the "other camp" - a camp in which Yeats was considered an old-fashioned

eccentric, who in the "age of steam and electricity" seriously believed in mysticism and magic and continued to write "traditional" poetry.

Nevertheless, many critics underestimate the first period of Yeats's work, the period that most contain the poet's interest in symbol and myth. In most Western works, early collections are only mentioned to show how the foundations of mature creativity were laid. The fact that Yeats in 1903 (the beginning of the second period) defiantly proclaimed the abandonment of the early manner of writing, allowed many researchers not to attach much importance to those motifs in the works of the first period, which remained key for Yeats throughout his life.

### MAIN PART

The poet's family resided permanently in London, but as a child, he often spent the summer at the estate where his mother, Susan Mary Pollexfen, was born, in Sligo, a small town in the northwest of Ireland. In the future, in his works, the poet will repeatedly return to the beloved beauties of County Sligo, and his early works will be imbued with motives of Celtic folklore.

Yeats was one of the founders of the Irish National Theater (along with John Millington Synge and Lady Gregory). In Irish poetry, after Yeats, a whole school of followers was created (the most prominent can be considered Austin Clark and John Montague). Joyce's early lyrics are also influenced by Yeats. The poet and eminent literary critic of the late XIX century, Arthur Symonds, called Yeats the first Symbolist to write in English rather than French.

We would like to show the independent significance of the early creative system of the poet, which is of separate interest. Rich symbolism borrowed from various areas of human experience (mythologies of different cultures, occultism, and other philosophical systems), the atmosphere of Celtic twilight with its own unique flavor - all this is woven into a harmonious unity, which is, in the highest sense, a poetic unity.

### DISCUSSION

As a teenager, Yeats began writing poetry in imitation of P.B. Shelley and Edmund Spenser. The poet believed that it was Shelley's aesthetic position that determines the state of his contemporary poetry. Yeats' early interest in Shelley is traced, for example, in the motif of the lake island in the poem "The Lake Isle of Innisfree". Allusions to Shelley's lines in Yeats's early poems are very numerous; among them: "I hear in the very depths of my heart" ("heart's core" - Innisfree Lake Island) from Shelley's Adonais; refer to "Alastor" swans in love one after another ("over by lover").

The imitation of Shelley and Spenser was quite deliberate. Following the traditions of Romanticism, Yeats matched the knowledge gained with his own ideas. So, he correlated Shelley's concept of "intellectual beauty" with the Rosicrucian "Divine Rose". Despite the fact that the poetics of the great romantic eventually ceased to fit into Yeats' aesthetic program, Shelley remained his favorite poet forever.

Of the other English poets who had the greatest influence on William Butler Yeats, William Blake should be noted. Yeats knew Blake's poems from childhood, then, in his youth, together with Edwin Ellis, the closest follower of the Pre-Raphaelites, he created the work "The Works of William Blake, Poetic, Symbolic and Critical", 1893 ) in three volumes, commentaries on which are almost entirely Yeats's. In an essay accompanying Blake's edition, Yeats put forward Blake's



notion of "mood" as the basis of the entire symbolic system. In the same year that Blake was published, Yeats published the poem "Moods", which was included in the collection "The Wind in the Reeds" (1899). Then, in a small essay "Moods" (1895) proclaimed the artist's purpose - "to discover immortal moods in mortal desires", thus accepting this conceptual concept of symbolism. Yeats was close to Blake's vision, a combination of poetry and painting in his work. From the work of the great poet, Yeats brought out the idea of the inseparability of the material and spiritual worlds, the indivisibility of the soul and body of a person.

### ANALYSIS

In his first collection of poetry, the poet constantly turns to the natural world. Influenced by folklore traditions, as well as the poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites, Yeats animates nature. The lyrical hero, turning his prayers to nature, never finds response and understanding. The mysterious and otherworldly world of fairies ("The Stolen Child"), the world of his youthful dreams and memories ("The Lake Isle of Innisfree") can be contrasted with the reality surrounding the poet.

A characteristic feature of Yeats's early poetry is the appeal to the sagas of the Celtic pagan cycles. The main characters of his works are Eire (the goddess who gave the name to Ireland), Aengus (god of love), CúChulainn (brave warrior), Emer (wife of CúChulainn, a symbol of devotion and selfless love), Fergus (legendary wanderer king, burdened).

The fascination with Irish mythology was promoted by his acquaintance with Maud Gonne. Love for the beautiful Gonne became another motif of the poetry of W.B. Yeats. In the collection "The Rose" she appears before us in the form of a beautiful flower, a symbol of eternal beauty. Subsequently, the poet associates Gonne not only with the ideals of beauty but also with Ireland itself, for whose independence she fought.

Considering the subject basis of the poetic image, we note that the early period is characterized by the use of the symbol of the rose. The aesthetic role of the symbol consists in replacing a phenomenon or object in poetic speech allegorically, its conventional designation, something reminiscent of this life phenomenon [2; 88]. It was the rose in the early works that became the subject of various figurative associations. The poet creates a whole poetic cycle dedicated to the rose: "The Rose of the World", "The Rose of Peace", "The Rose of Battle", "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time". Rose in data works is the embodiment of the very essence of Beauty. True, spiritual beauty is like an eternity, it carries peace and wisdom. Thus, in the poem "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time", a number of images typical of the early period are created with the help of the rose symbol.

Rose is the poet's muse (Ah, leave those still / A little space for the rose-breath to fill). Her appearance is associated in the lyrical hero with the mythological past of Ireland (Cuchulain battling with the bitter tide; / The Druid, gray, wood-nurtured, quiet-eyed, / who cast round Fergus dreams, and ruin untold). The rose in the poet's mind is the embodiment of eternal beauty wandering on her way, the unquenchable power of reason (But seek alone to hear the strange things said by God to the bright hearts of those long dead).

### CONCLUSION

Throughout his creative career, Yeats was engaged in creating his own author's mythology. A significant role in the poet's work was played by his homeland, Ireland, with its mysterious, long-suffering history, shrouded in ancient legends and traditions. Changing, Yates did not disown the past but inscribed it in his mythology. In life, as in his work, Yates did not allow himself to forget about the past and in everything, he strove for certain aesthetic completeness. In his later poetry, one can hear an echo not only of his own early images and motives but along with them the images of his predecessors, which accompany him to the end.

Early Yeats was considered an incomparable lyricist. In that era, the poet was the creator of the poetry of essences: small in form, rhythmically tense poems often expressed one single, extremely intense emotion. "Victorian" by birth, Yates was implacable "anti-Victorian" in education and his own literary tastes. His criticism of Victorian poets was also based on the fact that their "famous poetic lines were usually excerpts from long poems, often very long and full of thoughts that could be expressed in prose" [1; 157]. In the 1920s he himself writes long poems as well, that remain "the poetry of essences", but express more than one "mood" (the concept of the early period), and contrasting feelings of regret and hopes, doubts and despair, conveyed by the complex rhythmic variations.

While concluding on the significance of the early creative system of the poet rich symbolism borrowed from various areas of human experience, the atmosphere of Celtic twilight with its own harmonious unity should be considered in the highest sense. Moreover, the Irish literary renaissance found its beginning precisely in these early works of Yeats, thanks to which for the first time interest in ancient Celtic legends and Irish literature, in general, was raised to the world level.

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