

**Ministry of Higher Education
and Scientific Research
University of Misan
College of Basic Education
English Department**



**W. B Yeat's The Responsibility of The
Poet “The New Aesthetic”**

**Written by
Mohammed Ali Amin Mohsin**

Moaml Taresh Maziad

**Supervised by
Asst.Prof.Hussain J. Al-Husseiny**

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Quranic Verse

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿رَفَعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾

صدق الله العلي العظيم

Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to my parents. To my all family who helped me and my friends. And to everyone who contributed to my learning even with one letter.

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Abstract

This research paper explores W.B. Yeats' influential essay, "The Responsibility of the Poet," examining its themes and arguments within the context of contemporary discussions surrounding "The New Aesthetic." Yeats articulates a compelling vision of the poet as both a visionary and a moral guide, emphasizing the importance of imagination and social engagement in the creation of poetry. This paper analyzes Yeats' perspective on the relationship between art and society, highlighting his belief that poets have a duty to address societal issues and inspire change. By situating Yeats' ideas within the framework of modern poetry, the paper investigates how contemporary poets interpret and reflect upon the responsibilities of their craft. Through case studies of notable modern poets, the research reveals the enduring relevance of Yeats' vision, illustrating how his insights continue to resonate in today's literary landscape. Ultimately, this study underscores the transformative power of poetry as a means of both personal expression and societal commentary, affirming the significance of Yeats' contributions to the art form.

Introduction

The role of the poet has undergone significant transformation throughout history, reflecting the complexities of society, culture, and politics. Poets have often found themselves at the intersection of artistic expression and societal responsibility, tasked with the challenge of articulating the human experience in ways that resonate with their audiences. In the early 20th century, W.B. Yeats emerged as a pivotal figure in this evolution, presenting a compelling vision of the poet's role that continues to influence contemporary discourse. His essay, "The Responsibility of the Poet," articulates a profound understanding of the responsibilities inherent in the poetic craft, emphasizing the need for poets to engage deeply with the world around them.

In "The Responsibility of the Poet," Yeats asserts that poets possess a unique capacity not only to reflect the human experience but also to shape it through their art. He contends that poetry should transcend mere personal expression, urging poets to consider the moral implications of their work. Yeats challenges his contemporaries to embrace their obligations as artists, suggesting that poetry has the potential to inspire change and provoke thought in society. His call for poets to serve as moral guides is rooted in the belief that art can illuminate truths, provoke critical reflection, and foster a sense of community among individuals.

Yeats wrote this essay during a time of profound societal upheaval, including the aftermath of World War I and the struggle for Irish independence. This historical context is crucial for understanding the urgency of his arguments. The poet's responsibility, as Yeats sees it, is intertwined with the political and social landscapes of their time; poetry must respond to the pressing issues of the day and resonate with the collective consciousness. For Yeats, poetry is not a solitary pursuit but a communal dialogue that bridges the gap between the individual and society.

Moreover, Yeats emphasizes the importance of imagination and creativity in the poetic process. He argues that poets must harness their imaginative faculties to explore the depths of human experience, transcending the limitations of rationality and societal conventions. Through the lens of imagination, poets can articulate visions of possibility and hope, inviting their audiences to engage with the world in new ways. This emphasis on creativity is particularly relevant in the context of "The New Aesthetic," a contemporary movement that seeks to redefine artistic expression in the age of technology and digital media.

"The New Aesthetic" challenges traditional notions of art by incorporating elements of the digital and the ephemeral, reflecting the complexities of modern existence. In this context, Yeats' assertions about the responsibilities of the poet resonate powerfully, as contemporary artists grapple with their roles in a rapidly changing landscape. The dialogue between Yeats' vision and the principles of "The New Aesthetic" raises important questions about the nature of art and its impact on society.

This paper seeks to explore the themes and arguments presented in Yeats' "The Responsibility of the Poet" while situating them within the framework of modern poetry and the evolving concept of artistic responsibility. By analyzing Yeats' perspective on the relationship between art and society, this research will highlight the enduring relevance of his ideas in contemporary discussions surrounding the role of the poet. Through case studies of notable modern poets who embody Yeats' vision, the paper will illustrate how the responsibilities of poetry continue to manifest in diverse ways, affirming the transformative power of the art form.

Ultimately, this exploration aims to demonstrate that Yeats' insights into the poet's role remain vital in today's literary landscape, encouraging poets to engage with their work as a means of both personal expression and societal commentary. By embracing their responsibilities, poets have the potential to

inspire change, provoke thought, and foster a deeper understanding of the human condition, ensuring that poetry remains a relevant and powerful force in the world.

Chapter One

Understanding Yeats' Poetic Philosophy

1.1 Introduction to W.B. Yeats

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) is recognized as one of the most significant poets of the 20th century, not only for his artistic innovation but also for his profound engagement with the cultural and political currents of his time. Born in Dublin, Ireland, during a period marked by a burgeoning sense of national identity, Yeats was deeply influenced by the rich folklore, mythology, and history of his homeland (Yeats, 1996). His early poetry reflects a romantic idealism, characterized by a longing for an idyllic past and a fascination with the natural world. In pieces such as "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," Yeats evokes a yearning for peace and simplicity, symbolizing a deeper desire for connection to his Irish roots (Haffenden, 1985).

As Yeats matured, his poetry evolved in response to the rapidly changing socio-political landscape of early 20th-century Ireland, which included the struggle for independence and the impact of global conflicts. Implicitly, this evolution serves as a dialogue between his longing for a cohesive Irish identity and the fragmented realities of modern existence. His quest for identity becomes intricately tied to the exploration of the poet's role in society, which he articulates with both passion and urgency throughout his oeuvre (Bloom, 1987).

In addition to his cultural context, Yeats' exposure to various philosophical and spiritual systems, including Theosophy and mysticism, influenced his worldview and poetic output. He believed that poetry should not only reflect personal truths but also serve as a means of exploring larger metaphysical questions (McGann, 1989). This belief underscores the depth of his poetic philosophy, marking him as a poet deeply aware of the implications of his craft.

1.2 The Concept of the Poet's Responsibility

In his seminal essay "The Responsibility of the Poet," Yeats articulates a compelling vision of the poet's role that transcends the mere act of writing. He posits that poets must engage with the pressing issues of their time, wielding their words as instruments of reflection and action (McCormack, 2005). For Yeats, the poet's responsibility is to illuminate truths that might otherwise remain obscured in the chaos of society. This notion is not merely a personal conviction but reflects a broader philosophical inquiry into the ethical dimensions of art.

Implicit in Yeats' assertions is a critique of the aestheticism movement of the late 19th century, which often prioritized beauty over social engagement. While aestheticism celebrated art for art's sake, Yeats championed a more integrated approach, one that recognized the poet's duty to engage with the socio-political landscape (Hutchinson, 1995). His belief that poetry should resonate with the lived experiences of individuals and communities speaks to the transformative power of art in shaping societal values and fostering empathy.

Moreover, Yeats' exploration of the poet's responsibility can be understood within the context of the historical events of his time. The early 20th century was marked by significant upheaval in Ireland, including the Irish War of Independence and the broader implications of World War I. Yeats' work reflects a consciousness of these events, suggesting that the poet must bear witness to history and engage with its moral complexities. This tension between personal expression and social responsibility becomes a recurring motif in Yeats' poetry, inviting readers to contemplate the implications of artistic creation in a world marked by strife (Gibbons, 1996).

1.3 The New Aesthetic Movement

While Yeats is often associated with the Symbolist movement, his work also intersects with The New Aesthetic, which encapsulates a broader shift in artistic sensibility during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The New Aesthetic emphasized individual expression, innovation, and a departure from traditional artistic conventions. Yeats embodies this spirit through his willingness to experiment with form and content in his poetry (Widdowson, 1999).

Implicitly, Yeats' engagement with The New Aesthetic reflects his desire to push the boundaries of poetic expression. He draws on rich symbolism and mythological references, weaving together personal and collective narratives that resonate with the human experience (McGann, 1989). This blending of the personal and the universal invites readers to engage with the complexities of identity, culture, and spirituality—core tenets of The New Aesthetic that continue to resonate with contemporary audiences (Haffenden, 1985).

Furthermore, Yeats' exploration of themes such as nationalism and the spiritual dimensions of existence aligns with the broader cultural currents of The New Aesthetic, which sought to redefine the purpose and scope of art. His poetry often grapples with the tension between the ideal and the real, the ephemeral and the eternal—an implicit reflection of the modernist concerns that would later dominate the literary landscape (Hutchinson, 1995). By positioning himself at the intersection of these movements, Yeats not only expands the possibilities of poetic expression but also asserts the relevance of the poet's voice in navigating the complexities of contemporary life.

Chapter Two

Themes and Techniques in Yeats' Poetry

2.1 Major Themes in Yeats' Work

W.B. Yeats' poetry is characterized by a rich tapestry of themes that reflect the complexities of human experience. One of the most significant themes is the exploration of identity, particularly in relation to his Irish heritage. Yeats' work often grapples with the duality of his cultural identity, navigating tensions between his Irish nationalism and his English upbringing. This duality is evident in poems such as "The Stolen Child," where the allure of the faerie world symbolizes a longing for an idyllic past, contrasting with the harsh realities of modern life (Yeats, 1996). Implicitly, this theme invites readers to consider the broader implications of identity in a rapidly changing world, reflecting the struggles of a nation seeking to assert itself amid colonial influences (Hutchinson, 1995).

Another central theme in Yeats' poetry is the passage of time and the inevitability of aging. In "Sailing to Byzantium," Yeats contemplates the tension between the physical body and the enduring nature of the soul. The poem implicitly suggests that while the body succumbs to the ravages of time, the artist's creations can attain a form of immortality. This exploration of time not only speaks to Yeats' personal experiences but also resonates with universal human concerns regarding legacy and the quest for meaning (McCormack, 2005). By positioning the act of creation as a response to the passage of time, Yeats underscores the poet's role in capturing fleeting moments of beauty and wisdom.

Yeats also delves into themes of spirituality and mysticism, drawing on various philosophical and religious traditions. His fascination with the occult is evident in works such as "The Second Coming," where he grapples with apocalyptic visions and the cyclical nature of history. The imagery in this poem, particularly

the “rough beast” slouching towards Bethlehem, serves as an implicit commentary on the state of the world, suggesting that the poet must confront and interpret the profound uncertainties of existence (Gibbons, 1996). This theme aligns with Yeats’ belief that poetry can serve as a vehicle for exploring deeper truths that transcend everyday experience, reinforcing the responsibility of the poet to engage with the metaphysical dimensions of life.

2.2 Poetic Techniques and Styles

Yeats’ mastery of poetic technique is evident in his innovative use of language, form, and structure, which contribute significantly to the thematic depth of his work. In his earlier poetry, Yeats often employed traditional forms, such as the sonnet and ballad, reflecting the romantic influences of his youth. However, as his poetic voice matured, he began to experiment with free verse and varied structures, revealing a desire to capture the complexities of contemporary life (McGann, 1989). This evolution implicitly mirrors his thematic concerns, suggesting a rejection of rigid conventions in favor of a more fluid and expressive form.

Symbolism is a hallmark of Yeats’ poetry, allowing him to convey layered meanings and evoke rich imagery. The use of recurring symbols, such as the swan, the rose, and the harp, serves not only as a means of personal expression but also as a reflection of larger cultural narratives. For instance, the swan often represents beauty, love, and the possibility of transcendence, while simultaneously alluding to the duality of existence—between the ephemeral and the eternal (Haffenden, 1985). Through these symbols, Yeats engages readers in a deeper dialogue about the interplay of beauty and responsibility, prompting them to reflect on their interpretations of the text.

Imagery plays a crucial role in Yeats' ability to evoke emotional resonance within his poetry. His vivid descriptions of the Irish landscape, combined with the use of sensory details, transport readers into the world he inhabits. In poems like "The Wild Swans at Coole," the imagery not only reflects personal nostalgia but also serves as an implicit metaphor for change and the passage of time (Hutchinson, 1995). The stark contrast between the swans' beauty and the inevitable changes in the speaker's life underscores the transient nature of existence, inviting readers to contemplate their own experiences of loss and longing.

Yeats' attention to sound and rhythm further enhances the musicality of his poetry. The interplay of meter and rhyme creates a lyrical quality that draws readers into the emotional core of his work. This attention to sound implicitly reinforces the idea that poetry is not merely a visual art but also an auditory experience capable of evoking feelings that transcend language. In "The Tower," for example, the variations in rhythm mirror the poem's exploration of aging and memory, emphasizing the emotional weight of the speaker's reflections (Widdowson, 1999). text.

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2.3 Case Studies

To illustrate the themes and techniques discussed, a close reading of select poems is essential. In “The Stolen Child,” Yeats weaves together themes of innocence, nostalgia, and the allure of the supernatural. The poem’s refrain, echoing the call of the faeries, implicitly invites readers to consider the tension between the innocence of childhood and the harsh realities of adulthood. The pastoral imagery serves as a backdrop for this exploration, highlighting the poet’s role in capturing fleeting moments of beauty and wonder (Gibbons, 1996).

In “The Tower,” Yeats confronts the inevitability of aging and the search for meaning in the twilight years of life. The towering structure serves as a powerful metaphor for both personal and cultural legacy, implying that the artist's responsibility extends beyond individual existence to encompass the collective memory of a nation. The poem’s reflective tone and rich symbolism compel readers to grapple with their understanding of time and identity (McCormack, 2005).

Lastly, “The Second Coming” stands as a stark reflection of Yeats’ engagement with historical and political turmoil. The apocalyptic imagery and prophetic tone implicitly raise questions about the cyclical nature of history and the poet’s role in witnessing and interpreting these events. Yeats’ use of vivid symbols,

such as the “rough beast” and the “widening gyre,” invites readers to consider the responsibility of the poet in articulating the complexities of a world in crisis (Haffenden, 1985).

2.4 Impact on Modern Poetry

W.B. Yeats’ influence on modern poetry is profound and enduring, shaping the trajectory of literary movements that followed him. His innovative approach to form, coupled with his thematic explorations, paved the way for poets seeking to redefine the boundaries of poetic expression. Yeats’ emphasis on the poet’s responsibility resonates with contemporary writers grappling with similar questions about the role of art in society, as they navigate the complexities of identity, culture, and politics (Bloom, 1987).

Yeats’ engagement with modernist themes can be seen in the works of poets such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, who drew inspiration from his mastery of symbolism and layering of meaning. Eliot’s “The Waste Land” echoes Yeats’ themes of disillusionment and the cyclical nature of history, implicitly acknowledging the influence of Yeats’ philosophical inquiries on his own poetic vision (Haffenden, 1985). Additionally, the fragmented structures and diverse voices found in modernist poetry reflect Yeats’ own experiments with form, demonstrating how his legacy continues to inform contemporary poetic practices.

Moreover, Yeats’ exploration of national identity and cultural heritage resonates strongly within the context of postcolonial literature. Many contemporary poets from formerly colonized nations grapple with similar themes, seeking to reclaim and redefine their cultural narratives. Yeats’ ability to weave personal experience with broader cultural concerns serves as an implicit model for these writers, who often navigate the complexities of identity in their work (McCormack, 2005). The struggles reflected in Yeats’ poetry offer a framework

for understanding the ongoing quest for self-definition in a world marked by historical trauma and cultural dislocation (Gibbons, 1996).

2.5 The Relevance of Yeats Today

In today's globalized society, the themes present in Yeats' poetry remain strikingly relevant. His reflections on the human condition, the passage of time, and the quest for identity continue to resonate with readers navigating the complexities of modern life. Yeats' exploration of existential themes in poems like "Sailing to Byzantium" invites contemporary audiences to reflect on their own experiences of aging, creativity, and the search for meaning—a pursuit that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries (Hutchinson, 1995).

Additionally, Yeats' engagement with spirituality and the mystical dimensions of existence speaks to a growing interest in the metaphysical among contemporary readers and writers. In an age characterized by rapid technological advancement and existential uncertainty, Yeats' poetic inquiry into the nature of reality and the human spirit offers a contemplative lens through which to examine modern dilemmas (McGann, 1989). His exploration of the tension between the material and the spiritual realm invites readers to consider the deeper meanings of their existence and the role of art in grappling with these complexities.

Yeats' commitment to social and political responsibility also resonates with today's artists and activists. In an era marked by global crises—such as climate change, social inequality, and political unrest—poets are increasingly called upon to use their voices to advocate for change. Yeats' belief that the artist has a duty to engage with the pressing issues of their time serves as an implicit reminder of the power of poetry to inspire action and foster dialogue (Widdowson, 1999). Contemporary poets, such as Claudia Rankine and Ocean

Vuong, echo this sentiment through their work, addressing issues of race, identity, and belonging while invoking the spirit of Yeats' legacy.

Chapter Three

Analytical Approaches to Yeats' Poetry

3.1 Close Reading and Textual Analysis

Close reading is a fundamental method for analyzing W.B. Yeats' poetry, allowing readers to engage deeply with the language, imagery, and structure of his work. This approach emphasizes the significance of individual words, phrases, and symbols, facilitating a nuanced understanding of Yeats' thematic concerns and stylistic choices. For instance, in "The Second Coming," the haunting imagery of a "rough beast" slouching towards Bethlehem compels readers to grapple with the apocalyptic vision Yeats presents (Yeats, 1996). Such imagery not only evokes a sense of impending doom but also reflects the poet's anxieties about the political and social upheavals of his time (McCormack, 2005).

By examining the poem's diction, readers can uncover layers of meaning that reveal Yeats' complex relationship with history and time. The use of the word "slouching" connotes a sense of inevitability and decay, suggesting that the future is not only uncertain but also fraught with danger. This close reading reveals the interplay between language and meaning, highlighting how Yeats' word choices contribute to the poem's overall impact.

3.2 Historical and Cultural Context

Understanding the historical and cultural context of Yeats' poetry is essential for a comprehensive analysis of his work. Yeats was deeply influenced by the socio-political landscape of early 20th-century Ireland, including the struggle for independence and the effects of World War I. His poetry often reflects a response to these events, serving as both a commentary on and a reflection of the tumultuous atmosphere of his time (Hutchinson, 1995).

For example, Yeats' "Easter 1916" captures the spirit of the Irish nationalist movement, commemorating the leaders of the Easter Rising while grappling with the complexities of sacrifice and transformation. The poem's refrain, "All changed, changed utterly," implicitly acknowledges the profound impact of the uprising on both individual lives and the nation as a whole. By situating Yeats' work within this historical context, readers can better appreciate the ways in which his poetry engages with issues of identity, nationalism, and the search for meaning in a world marked by conflict (Gibbons, 1996).

3.3 Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis of Yeats' poetry reveals the intricate web of ideas that permeate his work. Major themes such as identity, time, and spirituality are woven throughout his oeuvre, providing a rich framework for exploration. Yeats' exploration of identity, particularly in relation to his Irish heritage, is evident in poems like "The Stolen Child," where the faerie world serves as a metaphor for the idealized past (Yeats, 1996). This theme invites readers to consider the complexities of cultural identity and the longing for a sense of belonging in a rapidly changing world (Haffenden, 1985).

Time is another central theme in Yeats' poetry, with his reflections on aging and mortality serving as a poignant reminder of the transient nature of existence. In "Sailing to Byzantium," Yeats contemplates the relationship between the physical body and the enduring essence of art, suggesting that while the body may decay, the artist's creations can achieve a form of immortality (McCormack, 2005). This thematic exploration encourages readers to reflect on their own experiences of time and the legacy they wish to leave behind.

Spirituality and the quest for deeper understanding are also prevalent themes in Yeats' work. His fascination with mysticism and the occult informs many of his poems, inviting readers to engage with the metaphysical dimensions of

existence. The use of symbols, such as the swan and the rose, often carries spiritual significance, representing beauty, love, and the possibility of transcendence (Widdowson, 1999).

This thematic analysis reveals how Yeats' poetry serves as a means of grappling with profound existential questions, encouraging readers to explore their own beliefs and understanding of the world.

3.4 Intertextuality and Influence

Yeats' poetry is marked by a rich intertextuality that reflects his engagement with various literary, philosophical, and cultural traditions. His work often draws on classical texts, folklore, and myth, creating a tapestry of references that enriches the reading experience. For instance, Yeats frequently incorporates elements of Irish mythology and folklore into his poetry, establishing a dialogue between the past and the present (McGann, 1989). This intertextuality not only enhances the thematic depth of his work but also situates Yeats within a larger literary canon.

The influence of other writers, such as William Blake and John Milton, is also evident in Yeats' poetry. Blake's exploration of the spiritual and the imaginative resonates with Yeats' own concerns about the nature of reality and the role of the artist (Bate, 2000). By examining these intertextual connections, readers can gain a deeper appreciation for Yeats' artistic vision and the ways in which he navigates the complexities of human experience.

Conclusion

Through implicit documentation references, this chapter underscores the significance of Yeats in shaping the landscape of modern poetry and the ongoing conversations surrounding the role of the poet in contemporary society.

As we reflect on Yeats' contributions, it becomes clear that his work transcends the boundaries of time and culture, inviting us to engage with the complexities of the human experience. By understanding the depth and breadth of Yeats' poetic philosophy, we are reminded of the transformative power of art and the enduring responsibility of poets to illuminate the world around them. In an ever-evolving landscape, Yeats' voice remains a guiding force, encouraging us to seek beauty, truth, and understanding in the intricacies of life.

In conclusion, W.B. Yeats' legacy is one of profound influence and enduring relevance. His exploration of the poet's responsibility, themes of identity, and the interplay of art and society continue to inspire generations of writers and readers alike.

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