

## CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON SYMBOLISM IN WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS' POETRY

**SCHOLASTICO-2021**

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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 critical review 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 literature concerning his poetry we have tried to realize his early individual poetic style and the evolutional path to its formation.

### Keywords:

Early poetry, poetic sensibility, symbolism, mysticism, mythology, individual style, interpretation of poetic images.

The early period of creativity 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 for Irish and Western 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 preserved 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. Yeats was one of the founders of the Irish National Theater (along with John Millington Sing 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 Simone, called Yeats the first Symbolist to write in English rather than French [1; 46].

The number of Western works on various aspects of the Irish poet's work is more extensive. In modern Ireland, the description of intra-literary, intra-textual phenomena through the external, socio-economic, political situation in the country is especially popular. The biographical method, which complements the social approach with its materials, is also actively involved by Irish researchers. One of the last major monographs on Yates is a biography written by Roy Foster, which in relation to Yates is quite justified, since the poet, constructing his poetic mythology, deliberately used autobiographical elements in it. One of Yeats' foremost biographers, Richard Ellman, wrote that "since he was a mythmaker, his autobiography was never simple" [1; 961]. Source study data are also involved in the sociobiographical analysis of Yeats's work. When describing symbolism and mythmaking in Yeats's works, these methods (biography, sociohistoricism, source study) are perhaps the most popular in Irish literary criticism at the present time.

Such famous poets and researchers as A. Simone, E. Pound, S.M. Bora (1962), N. Fry (1963), R. O'Driscoll (1975), Paul de Man (1984), A.R. Grossman (1986), S. Patzel (1986) wrote on both poetry and playwrighting of Yeats. Arthur Simone, being the first in this list, dedicated a collection of essays on French symbolists "The symbolist movement in literature" to his friend William Butler Yeats and named the Irish poet the first English-speaking symbolist. The commentary by Simone's on the Symbolist theories of Yeats, the first English-language poet to use the Symbolist technique, was not the only case of this kind.

In Russia, V.V. Khorolsky in the articles "Symbolism of Yeats" (1981), "Traditions of English Romanticism in the Worldview and Creative Method of Yeats "(1981), focusing on the continuity of Yeats' symbolism to English romanticism; K.O. Golubovich in his dissertation (1998) on this topic. In 1997, an article by A. Sarukhanyan was published, dedicated to mythology in the works of Yeats and J. Joyce [4; 20-32]. Nevertheless, the main attention in Russian literary criticism was paid to other aspects of the work of Yeats; in particular, the researchers addressed the problems of poetic creativity only fragmentarily. Despite the fact that Yeats was, first of all, a lyric poet, and not a dramatic one, and that it was poetry that brought the author world fame and the Nobel Prize, drama aroused greater interest in Russian literary criticism. So, until now, the largest work on Yeats is the monograph by V.A. Ryapolova "Yeats and Irish Artistic Culture "(1985), written from a theater standpoint and dedicated to drama. Works by N. Prozorova, M. Koreneva, N.V. Tishunina, T.M. Polyudova, G.Z.Melnitser also analyze Yeats's work as a playwright. In the bibliography of Russian criticism on Yeats' poetry, there are still blank spots.

The Symbolists willingly talked about their predecessors and about each other: in France, Mallarmé created literary portraits of Verlaine and Rimbaud, Huysmans assessed the figure of Mallarmé himself in the pages of the Symbolist novel "On the contrary"; in Russia A. Bely, A. Blok were the authors of articles on the French Symbolists; in Ireland, Yeats wrote about his compatriot, mystic and Symbolist George Russell. Following Simons, many Western literary scholars turned to symbolism in Yeats's work, among whom I would like to highlight Alain Grossman and Robert O'Driscoll. Grossman, in Poetic Knowledge in Early Yeats: A Study of Wind in the Reeds provides a detailed analysis of the sources that formed the basis of the symbolism of The Wind in the Reed (1899) by Yeats; these data served as a good factual basis for our work. Also noteworthy is O'Driscoll's interpretation of Yeats' symbolism. The Irish scholar explains in detail Yeats' own Symbolist theory, presented by the pioneer of the Irish Renaissance in some essays from the collection Ideas of Good and Evil (1896-1903), and found practical embodiment in The Celtic Twilight "-1893, 1902) and" The Wind in the Reeds ".

Nevertheless, many critics underestimate Yeats' first period, the period that most contains 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.

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, 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. Moreover, the Irish literary revival 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.

### List of used literature:

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2. Ellmann R. The Identity of Yeats. - NY, 1964.
3. Kenner, High. The Invisible Poet: T.S. Eliot. - NY, 1959.
4. Leavis F. R. New Bearings in the English Poetry. NY, 1964.
5. Tuma, Keith. Anthology of Twentieth-Century British and Irish Poetry. Oxford, 2001.
6. Yeats, William Butler; The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Twentieth Century and After. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: Norton. 2006