CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A study of the theme of alienation in the poetry of W.B. Yeats has brought out many a significant detail about the present apocalyptic age characterized by irrational passions, moral deficiency, divided consciousness, distance between the citizen and the locus of major events, emotional impoverishment, poor communication, industrialization and urbanization, centralization of authority, search for psychological security, political instability, totalitarianism, possible threat to individual liberty, allegiance to plurality and externalization of virtue. For Yeats alienation implies meaninglessness, estrangement, normlessness, rootlessness, instrumentalization, de-spiritualization, de-humanization, apathy and separatedness.

Yeats finds the human spirit subject to terrible agonies, frustrations and predicaments. There is a confrontation between the simple cultures and the complex technological civilizations. There is a collision between the values of tradition and modernity. An acute sense of antagonism, contradiction, resentment and struggle has made man believe in a philosophy of denial. Man, who has been discussing the emotional and moral forces, the dynamics and fluctuations of his temporal development and the nature and
significance of the different historical stages and periods of progress and growth, has failed to come to the front and provide an understanding and diagnosis of the contemporary crisis.

Yeats finds that in modern times alienation has become a dominant theme on account of the splitting of the personal into the objective social and the subjective social. The powers of human impression and sensibility are at their sharpest. The loosening of social and moral bonds has triggered of a process of alienated thinking. It is this sensibility to alienation set in emotional and moral aloofness, that has made possible innumerable insights into the microscopic estrangements that are to be found in even the most durable relationships of love, faithfulness and gratitude. The psychological basis of intense individualism consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli. The modern mind has, therefore, become evenmore calculating, precise, and regimented. But the same factors that lead to a regimentation of the mind and a blunting of its sense of individuality lead also "the hovering, piteous, penentential throng"¹ to a withdrawl from the outer

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¹ The Poems of W.B. Yeats, p.173.
world. From the same pressure comes the individual's protective reserve, which is also a means of seclusion from stimuli, of withdrawal from excitements too frequent and too intense to support specific and appropriate response to each and every one.

Yeats finds that a system of society dedicated ostensibly to the individual ends by diminishing his stature and latitude. The individual is lost or overwhelmed by the conflicting streams of opposing ideologies. Thus, man freed from traditional authorities has become isolated, powerless, and an instrument of purpose outside himself, alienated from himself and others. This state undermines his self, weakens and frightens him, and makes him ready for submission to new kinds of bondage.

Thus, the study of Yeats' poetry deepens our insight into one of the baffling problems of our time—a sense of alienation that is eating into the vitals of human mind. It brightens our understanding of the nature of man, his search for spiritual experience, his relationship to the world around and his intense desire to live a life of creative endeavours, purposefulness, joy and freedom because, as he believes, no work can be "so great/As that which cleans man's dirty slate."

1. The Poems of W.B. Yeats, p. 632.