CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

W.B. Yeats, one of the most versatile and prolific poets of the world, emerged on the international literary scene with a highly developed sensiveness to modern malady - always a background of indecision, incertitude, futility and boredom. He portrays "rainless lands" ¹ where "the days pass by like a wayward tune"² and "where broken faith has never been known"³ and the "blushes of first love never have flown"⁴. The world he portrays is in many ways an abnormal world- a world at times festering, rotting, putrescent, wrapped up in the stench of decay and decomposition. The repugnance to the world of actuality is there in The Song of the Happy Shepherd:

"The woods of Arcady are dead
And over is their antique joy"⁵

Across this rotten world the imagination itself turns morbid and mordent. Granted that there is an excess of lust and violence in Yeats's work, there is nothing, however, to warrant the inference that he is attracted towards evil for its own sake

². Ibid., p.8
³. Ibid., p.8
⁴. Ibid., p.8
⁵. Ibid., p.64
or that he just wants to cash in on man's depravity. To stop short at the melodramatic and the sensational and not to see beyond it is to fail Yeats, who, like Spenser's physician, must first take a good hard look to complete his diagnosis. An acute and poignant sense of terror, agony, and excitement mark the life of man:

The red Sun Falls and the world grows dim.¹

He finds men weeping and raising "their lamenting hands".² The "drooping head"³ of the mourning men, their "pensive laughter"⁴, "Unhuman sound"⁵ and "lulled weariness"⁶ on their faces express the "human sorrow"⁷. The tormenting sense of "weariness"⁸ emptiness, envy, "bitternes"⁹ self-contempt, religious idiosy, frustration and restlessness "human tyranny"¹⁰, "idleness"¹¹ are the result of man's callous indifference to the fundamental values of life. The baffling complexities of disintegrating civilization create in him anguish and emotional tension:

But now hearts cry that hearts are slaves
And toss and turn in narrow caves"¹²

¹. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 9
². Ibid., p. 10
³. Ibid., p. 11
⁴. Ibid., p. 11
⁵. Ibid., p. 11
⁶. Ibid., p. 11
⁷. Ibid., p. 11
⁸. Ibid., p. 122
⁹. Ibid., p. 130
¹⁰. Ibid., p. 131
¹¹. Ibid., p. 151
¹². Ibid., p. 19
In *The Stolen Child* the poet sees this world so 'Full of troubles'¹ and hence his exhortation to the child:

Come away, O human child:
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping
than you can understand.²

"The wandering water" of the "young streams" gushing from "the hills" no longer cheer and inspire the heart of the "solemn eyed man"³. The modern scientific and materialistic civilization has dried up "the fountain of love" in his heart. The modern man is incapable of listening to the lowing/ of the calves on the warm hill/ side/ or kettle on the hob. He can no longer "sing peace into his breast/or see the brown mice bob/ Round and round the Oatmeal chest."⁴ Likewise in *The Ballad of Foxhunter* the old hunter laments the loss of the "golden Age" and wishes to pass from the "earthly bounds"⁵:

His eyelids droop, his head falls low,
His old eyes cloud with dreams;

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1. Yeats, W.B., *The Complete Poems*, p. 87
There is "Fire"\(^1\) in the old man's eyes. He finds the Huntsman "weep and sigh"\(^2\). His servants too are wrung with a "new sorrow"\(^3\). The poet finds man growing into "nothing"\(^4\). The great webs of sorrow lie hidden in the heart of men. Thus the picture of the man that emerges from his poems is that of "the sad, the lonely, the insatiable"\(^5\) person. The mechanical progress man has been so justly proud of is for Yeats a progress toward junkyard, the vicious struggle for power. What man signifies as free enterprize is for Yeats a long stride away from basic courtesy, a retrogation towards- "the weasel's twist, the weasel's tooth"\(^6\). According to Yeats we are living in a world heading toward explosive chaos, a world in which "days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare/Rides upon sleep,"\(^7\) a world in which "things fall apart, the centre cannot hold,"\(^8\) a world in which "man is lost amid the labyrinth that he has made/ In art or politics"\(^9\). The poet finds men "wearied running round and round in their courses"\(^10\). A "sudden blast of dusty wind"\(^11\) has made man "blind"\(^12\).

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1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p.98
2. Ibid., p. 99
3. Ibid., p. 99
4. Ibid., p. 104
5. Ibid., p. 104
6. Ibid., p. 431
7. Ibid., p. 429
8. Ibid., p. 402
9. Ibid., p. 431
10. Ibid., p. 433
11. Ibid., p. 433
12. Ibid., p. 433
The Green Helmet expresses the bitterness and disillusion of a man who has struggled and been frustrated:

"The fascination of what's difficult
Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent
Spontaneous joy and natural content
Out of my heart .........."  

It is true that the struggles he mentions here belong to the practical world, to this blind bitter land:

My curse on plays
That have to be set up in fifty ways,
On the day's war with every knave and goit,
Theatre business, management of men."  

The Coming of Wisdom with Time expresses in ironic and epigrammatic terseness the sour maturity of the poet regarding the contemporary disintegrated society:

Though leaves are many, the root is one;
Through all the lying days of my youth
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
Now I may wither into the truth.

The poet finds that the great and glorious values of life have been mercilessly thrown to the winds in these broken

2. Ibid., p. 260
3. Ibid., p. 261
sordid and tragic times. They are ridiculed by the unworthy, the mean and the low, who are hollow from within and reflect no values of life.

The holy centaurs of the hills are vanished;
I have nothing but the embittered sun;
Banished heroic mother moon and vanished,
And now that I have come to fifty years
I must endure the timid sun.  

The poet, thus, recognises the real world and finds it difficult to adjust himself with it:

But I grow old among dreams,
A weather-worn, marble triton
Among the streams.

His poetry calls attention to the way in which man is running after the shadow leaving the substance behind:

We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love:

Yeats, like us, is faced with the modern problem of living in a society in which men are no longer supported by tradition

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 344
2. Ibid., p. 329
3. Ibid., p. 425
and in which every individual who wishes to bring order and coherence into stream of sensations, emotions and ideas is forced to do for himself what in previous ages had been done for him by family, custom, church and state. Yeats boldly accepts the fact that we have lost the old harmony of the mind. Man is simply:

Timid, entangled, empty and abashed,
Lacking the countenance of our friends.  

Yeats believes that materialistic civilization has brought man's moral degeneration. It has dried up the fountain of love in the heart of man. It has made man cold, callous and indifferent to the fundamental values of life. The world has become a "lifeless waste", a "hollow place". The following lines convey the idea:

An old man stirs the fire to a blaze,
In the house of a child, of a friend, of a brother.
He has over-lingered this welcome; the days,
Grown desolate, whisper and sigh to each other;
He hears the storm in the chimney above,
And bends to the fire and shakes with the cold.

He believes that the unavoidable consequences of science and technology have made man crippled and almost paralysed. Man

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 368
2. Ibid., p. 13
3. Ibid., p. 26
has fallen a miserable victim of "hatred and hope and desire and fear". Man is emotionally overwrought, bewildered, and absolutely unsure of himself. No where does he find any spiritual sustenance; he is first baffled and then scandalized. The biblical ideal of converting the instruments of war into the implements of peace—turning the "cannon" into a "plough share" has neither been understood nor realized by the modern man.

Yeats finds that man is no longer in a mood to temper the inherent streak of ignorance and folly. He finds man "earless, nerveless blind"

The memory of the bygone days, calm, serene and tranquil hounds the mind of the poet and makes him look at the "dreadful Singh" prevailing all around. He portrays a land:

Where shadowy face flowed into shadowy face,
Looked down on me: and in the self-same place
I waited hour by hour, and the high dome,
Of faces, waited; and the liesured gaze
Was loaded with the memory of days
Buried and mighty.

The night has lost its peace and people "Sweat with terror" cannot sleep as if civilization has relapsed to the state of barbarism and naked savagery. Not been able to square his conduct in the defeated and depleted society with the standard of those who have gone before him, his is a state of emotional crisis:

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 36
2. Ibid., p. 38
3. Ibid., p. 39
Ancestral pearls all pitched into a sty,
Heroic reverie mocked by clown and knave
And wondered what was left for massacre to save. T619

Yeats reflects upon the unfortunate life of the unbelieving creatures the wretched generation of enlightened men.

In *Meru* the poet presents a very unfortunate and lamentable aspect of the life of man moving without direction and hence without any principle of conduct. It records the frustration of man and the illusion he has been living under since the dawn of civilization:

Civilization is hooped together, brought
Under a fule, under the semblance of peace
By manifold illusion; but man's life is thought,
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
Ravening through century after century,
Ravening, raging, and uprooting that he may come
Into the desolation of reality:

A paradoxical reversal in traditional human values has led man to a state of complete ignorance:

"A greater, a more gracious time has gone."²

Yeats views them as poor drudges who "look on" but "laugh in tragic joy", their "conduct and work grow coarse" and thus "coarse the soul"³. The poet sees the physical and moral downfall of man:

What matter though numb nightmare ride on top,⁴
And blood and mire the sensitive body stain?

2. Ibid., p. 564
3. Ibid., p. 564
4. Ibid., p. 564
Aware of a central joy in the heart of emptiness he cannot help his certainty that the values he loves will spring again from an inexhaustable fountain. The pulls and pressures of the material world have bedimmed the possibilities of a glorious future. The knowledge of the material world is futile, fraught with curse and woe. There is a persistent doubt in the mind of the poet whether the present will grow into a definite future:

What matter though numb nightmare ride on top,
And blood and mire the sensitive body stain?
What matter? Heave no sigh, let no tear drop,
A greater, a more gracious time has gone;
For painted forms of boxes of make-up
In ancient tombs I sighed, but not again;
What matter? Out of cavern comes a voice,
And all it knows is that one word 'Rejoice!'

Conduct and work grow coarse, and coarse the soul,
What matter? Those that Rocky Face holds dear,
Lovers of horses and of women, shall,
From marble of a broken sepulchre,
Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl,
Or any rich, dark nothing disinter
The workman, noble and saint, and all things run
On that unfashionable gyre again.

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 564
In *Lapis Lazuli*, a piece of chinese carved stone sets his thought moving. Here is art like "Rocky Face" aware of human suffering and still rejoicing. The opening lines express his impatience for something drastic to be done lest the entire civilization is reduced to ashes:

I have heard that hysterical women say
They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow,
Of poets that are alwasy gay,
For everybody knows or lest should know
That if nothing drastic is done
Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out,
Pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in
Until the town lie beaten flat.

In *The Municipal Gallery Revisited* he portrays man’s callous indifference towards man:

Around me the images of thirty years:
An ambush; pilgrims at the water-side:
Casement upon trial, half hidden by the bars,
Guarded; Griffith stairing in hysterical pride;
Kevin O’Higgins; countenance that wears
A gentle questioning look that can not hide
A soul incapable of remorse or rest;
A revolutionary soldier kneeling to be blessed;

Men, according to Yeats, are self-deceivers taking infinite pains, exhausting their energy yet never quite successful:

"Hurrah for revolution and more cannon-shot:
A beggar upon horseback lashes a beggar on foot.
Hurrah for revolution and cannon come again:
The beggars have changed places, but the lash goes on."¹

In Under Ben Bulben the poet invokes the ancient inhabitants of the country. In the first song the theme is the decay of the Ancient Irish tradition:

"Swear by those horsemen, by those women
Complexion and form prove superhuman,
That pale, long-visaged company
Completeness of their passions won;
That air in immortality
Now they ride the wintry dawn
Where Ben Bulben sets the scene.
Here's the gist of what they mean."²

In The Black Tower Yeats presents before us some "Oath bound" defenders of a by gone heroic tradition resist the present but refuse to believe their cook when he "swears that he hears the King's horn"³. The refrain hints at some sort of violent revival or renewal:

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 590
2. Ibid., p. 637
3. Ibid., p. 636
"There in the tomb drops the faint moonlight,
But wind comes up from the shore:
They shake when the winds roar,
Old bones upon the mountain shake."\(^1\)

It confirms Yeats's belief that moments of glory are characteristically very rare:

"There in the tomb the dark grows blacker,
But wind comes up from the shore:
They shake when the winds roar,
Old bones upon the mountain shake."\(^2\)

The poet looks into the sky and imagines the disembodied figures of the Magi waiting for a second coming which would signal the loss of control western civilization was bringing on itself: The valley of the Black Pig presents a sunset in terms of emotional values which have been put to utter disgrace in modern age:

In The Tower Yeats seems to believe that poet cannot accept permanently an escape into the intellectual solution offered in Sailing to Byzantium. In a society marked by conflicts and confusion one has to plunge into that invigorated domain where the emotions are nurtured and renewed. One has to drink from the pool of blood if the land is to be set in order:

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1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 636
2. Ibid., p. 636
"Now shall I make my soul,
Compelling it to study
In a learned school
Till the wreck of body,
Slow decay of blood,
Tasty delirium
Or dull decrepitude,
Or what worse evil come—
The death of friends, or death
Of every brilliant eye
That made a catch in the breath—
Seem but the clouds of the sky
When the horizon fades,
Or a bird's sleepy cry
Among the deepening shades."¹

Yeat's social awareness grows primarily out of the idea that the 20th Century is a time of utter chaos and continual disruption both spiritual and material or as Yeats describes it in a note to his poem The Second Coming. It is scientific democratic, fact accumulating heterogeneous civilization. Yeats is aware of the need to synthesize chaotic and disruptive elements in our civilization in order to attain perfection and therefore order.

In News For the Delphic Oracle the "Innocents"² belong to an age not corrupted by heterogeneity. They are again discovered in the Delphic oracle upon Plotinus as they are about to make a journey through the "blood dimmed tide"³ described in The Second Coming.

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 416
2. Ibid., p. 612
3. Ibid., p. 402
When the Innocents set out on their journey they are faced with a "Golden Race"\(^1\) which "Looks dim"\(^2\). Moreover "Salt blood"\(^3\) blocks Plotinus's eyes. Like wise in *News For the Delphic Oracle* Plotinus has "salt Flakes"\(^4\) on his breast and he is seen "sighing like the rest"\(^5\). Even the Post classical age with its unresolved heterogenieties represents a stumbling block to perfection. This is the point at which:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The stumbling block itself is represented in terms of blood and its attendant brutishness. There is the blood that blocks Plotinus's eyes, "the blood dimmed tide"\(^6\) and the innocents reopen their "wounds"\(^7\) as they pass through the "ecstatic waters"\(^8\). The "brute dolphins"\(^9\) are presented in sharp contrast with the immortal innocents. Peleus stares at Thetis naked body, her limbs which are as "delicate as an eyelid"\(^10\). In the meantime:

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1. Yeats, W.B., *The Complete Poems*, p. 530
2. Ibid., p. 530
3. Ibid., p. 530
4. Ibid., p. 612
5. Ibid., p. 612
6. Ibid., p. 402
7. Ibid., p. 402
8. Ibid., p. 612
9. Ibid., p. 612
10. Ibid., p. 612
11. Ibid., p. 612
"Foul goat-head, brutal arm appear,
Belly, shoulder, bum,
Flash fishlike; nymphs and satyrs
Copulate in the foam."\(^1\)

Like wise in The Second Coming "a shape with lion body and the head of a man"\(^2\) "a gaze blank and pitiless as the sun"\(^3\) and the "reel shadows of the indignant desert birds"\(^4\) point a decadent age so brutally stripped off the human values. This also reminds us of "The frog spawn of a blind man's ditch"\(^5\) or "a blind man bettering men"\(^6\) or "the most fecund ditch of all"\(^7\). Thus Yeats' awareness of modern civilization as the pragmatistical, prosperous pig of a world shows his keen desire for the redemption and regeneration of the mankind so brutally condemned by the curses of modern scientific culture.

Yeats is equally aware of the "toil of growing up"\(^8\) and "the distress of boyhood"\(^9\) changing into man. Likewise the "unfinished man and his pain/Brought Face to face with his own clumsiness"\(^10\) makes him gloomy at heart. In an era

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1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 612
2. Ibid., p. 402
3. Ibid., p. 404
4. Ibid., p. 402
5. Ibid., p. 479
6. Ibid., p. 479
7. Ibid., p. 479
8. Ibid., p. 478
9. Ibid., p. 478
10. Ibid., p. 479
of seedy culture the "funished man"\(^1\) cannot escape "malicious eyes."\(^2\) In his professional life Yeats experienced in the first years of this century the frustration of seeing hopes for the cultural Renaissance of Ireland dashed to pieces. In *Fragments* the fall from the Renaissance becomes metaphorically the fall of man from the garden. This time the villain is played by John Locke who sank into a swoon. This shows his awareness of the rise of Industrialism and the economic division of man from himself and man from man; a result of the specialization of the labour. In his other poem on Lady Gregory's illness, *A Friend's Illness*, Yeats again uses the Renaissance tradition of analogies. 

Sickness brought me this  
Thought, in that scale of his:  
Why should I be dismayed  
Though flame had burned the whole  
World, as it were a coal,  
Now I have seen it weighed  
Against a soul?

There is, thus, throughout his poems a very strong vein of malicious and passionate contempt for the curses of modern civilization for the New Ireland that might correspond to the

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poet's imagination. Hence the Fire's indictment:

We Irish, born into that ancient sect
But thrown upon this filthy modern tide
And by its formless spawning fury wrecked
Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace,
The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.  

Yeats is aware of the opposites life is so ironically characterised with. Yeats develops opposites to convey through disguise those aspects of his experience which were "painful or in bad taste"\(^2\). His belief that opposites such as Youth and Age are always: "Each living the others death, dying the others"\(^3\). Life illuminates his keen prevailing insight into the duality of life. The "Yolk and white of the one shell"\(^4\) or "dancer" and "dance"\(^5\) of *Among School Children*, the "oil and wick" which are "burned in one"\(^6\) in *Solomon and the Witch* and the gyre or cone whose widest point contains its narrowest-these are the blended primary and antethetical qualities which in *The Tower* make "the moon and sunlight seem One in extricable beam"\(^7\). All these things represent motion of life with its opposite. Introductory

\(^{1}\) Yeats, W.B., *The Complete Poems*, p. 611
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 434
\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 434
\(^{4}\) Ibid., p. 443
\(^{5}\) Ibid., p. 446
\(^{6}\) Ibid., p. 388
\(^{7}\) Ibid., p. 411
Iymes to Responsibilities present the "Skipper" limiting his failure to maintain the solid virtues and to transmit yet further his inheritory stamina for his "barren passion" is itself a wasteful virtue and a result of the "die's cast". Even his wastefulness has a peculiar solidity the deprecated 'book' makes articulate the hitherto silent gesture of soldiers and skippers and even the undefined daily spectacles of the "Silent and fierce old man".

Meditation in the Time of Civil War is a complex act of self judgement in the realm of the spiritualized soil where:

Life overflows without ambitious pains.

Gradually the image of the Fountain emerges establishing the correspondence of spirit and soil which underlies the entire poem. But the pale abstractness of the setting in which the fountain alone "rains down life" calls into question the reality of that social ideal. The retort is deserved:

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 270
2. Ibid., p. 270
3. Ibid., p. 269
4. Ibid., p. 270
5. Ibid., p. 270
6. Ibid., p. 417
7. Ibid., p. 417
Mere dreams! Mere dreams!

But a surprising counter assertion allows:

"Yet Homer had not sung
Had he not found it certain beyond dreams
That out of life's own self-delight had sprung
The abounding glittering jet"

The illusion to Homer suggests the reason for the inadequacy:
"The sweetness" that all long for "night and day" must come from strength. "The abounding glittering jet" must result from a pent up force. The speaker then turns from the world dreamed of to the world possessed, from Ancestral House to My House. In My House the poet presents the wilderness and violence that have crept into the social life:

An ancient bridge, and a more ancient tower,
A farmhouse that is sheltered by its wall,
An acre of stony ground,
Where the symbolic rose can break in flower,
Old ragged elms, old thorns innumerable,
The sound of the rain or sound
Of every wind that blows;

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 417
2. Ibid., p. 418
3. Ibid., p. 418
4. Ibid., p. 417
5. Ibid., p. 419
His re-enacting the founding of the house is indicative of the efforts to build a social order in "This tumultuous spot"¹ a befitting emblem of "adversity":

Two men have founded here. A man-at-arms
Gathered a score of horse and spent his days
In this tumultuous spot,
Where through long wars and sudden night alarms
His dwindling score and he seemed castaways
Forgetting and forgot;
And I, that after me
My bodily heirs may find,
To exalt a lonely mind,
Befitting emblems of adversity. ²

The bitter violence and daemonic rage isolate him from the social stream. This world of adversity, isolation and cyclic change makes him still more conscious of his own "aimlessness."³ It is only "an aching heart"⁴ that can conceive "a changeless work of Art"⁵. It reveals a fallacious ideal, a static culture empty and unproductive. In the Ancestral House the inherited glory of the rich is merely an empty shell. In My Table the peacock does not merely stray with delicate feet upon old terraces"⁶ while Juno is ignored by "The indifferent garden deities."⁷ Here "Juno's peacock"⁸ actually screams. In My descendants the poet is haunted by the cyclic destruction.

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1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 420
2. Ibid., p. 420
3. Ibid., p. 421
4. Ibid., p. 421
5. Ibid., p. 421
6. Ibid., p. 418
7. Ibid., p. 418
8. Ibid., p. 422
Make this laborious stair and this stark tower
Become a roofless ruin that the owl
May build in the cracked masonry and cry
Her desolation to the desolate sky.

In glimpsing the depths of his isolation he tries to reach outward. The isolation itself is called into question, The speaker turns from House and Descendants to The Road at my Door:

An affable Irregular,
A heavily-built Falstaffian man,
Comes cracking jokes of civil war
As though to die by gunshot were
The finest play under the sun.
A brown Lieutent and his men,
Half dressed in national uniform,
Stand at my door, and I complain
Of the foul weather, hail and rain,
A pear-tree broken by the storm.

In the Stare’s Nest by my Window, the speaker presents a fusion of the visions of himself and of society:

We are closed in, and the key is turned
On our uncertainty somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned,
Yet no clear fact to be discerned:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 423
2. Ibid., p. 423
3. Ibid., p. 425
The poet then fuses the isolation sprung from his own mind and that imposed by violence from without. Here is an agonized perception of the moral identity between poet and the man at arms:

A barricade of stone or of wood;
Some fourteen days of civil war;
Last night they trundled down the road
That dead young soldier in his blood:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.  

and then:

We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love: 0 honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of the stare.  

The poet's self brutalization recalls to our mind that nationalist inspired civil war that raised about him. The poet thus finds himself at the top of a broken tower from where he casts a glance at the social scene, and the engulfing horror:

2. Ibid., p. 425
3. Ibid., p. 425
I climb to the tower-top and lean upon broken stone,
A mist that is like blown snow is sweeping over all,
Valley, river, and elms, under the light of a moon
That seems unlike itself, that seems unchangeable,
A glittering sword out of the east. A puff of wind
And those white glimmering fragments of the mist weep by.
Frenzies bewilder, reveries perturb the mind;
Monstrous familiar images swim to the mind's eye.¹

The poet finds that a "bloody arrogant power"² has risen "out of the race"³ concentrating all its energy at "mastering it"⁴

The "soldiers, assassin, executioners standing on "blood saturated ground"⁵ guided by "blind fear"⁶ and "abstract hatred"⁷ and confused by "odour of blood on the ancestral stair"⁸ make the poet doubt if every "modern nation" is like "The tower" that is "half at the Top".⁹ The brutality and hatred he finds rampant in society find expression in the following lines:

'Vengeance upon the murderers, 'the cry goes up,
'Vengeance for Jacques Molay. 'In cloud-pale rags, or in lace,
The rage-driven, rage-tormented, and rage-hungry troop,
Trooper belabouring trooper, biting at arm or at face,
Plunges towards nothing, arms and fingers spreading wide for the embrace of nothing; ¹⁰

¹. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 425
². Ibid., p. 482
³. Ibid., p. 482
⁴. Ibid., p. 480
⁵. Ibid., p. 482
⁶. Ibid., p. 482
⁷. Ibid., p. 482
⁸. Ibid., p. 482
⁹. Ibid., p. 482
¹⁰. Ibid., p. 426
"The senseless tumult"¹ he perceives in the life of man shows how keenly he is aware of the conflict and bitterness that taint, corrupt and vitiate the life of man. All Soul's night is a lamentation of human incompleteness:

I need some mind that, if the cannon sound
From every quarter of the world, can stay
Wound in mind's pondering
As mummies in the mummy-cloth are wound;
Because I have a marvellous thing to say,
A certain marvellous thing
None but the living mock,
Though not for sober ear;
It may be all that hear
Should laugh and weep an hour upon the clock. ²

In Mad as the Mist and Snow, the Poul winds³ testify to general decay that is perceptible in the life of man. The poet views that "everything outside us"⁴ is:

Mad as the Mist and snow.⁵

What makes him 'sigh'⁶ and 'shudder'⁷ is that even human beings have all along been irrational in their response to the situations of life.

1. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 426
2. Ibid., p. 471
3. Ibid., p. 523
4. Ibid., p. 523
5. Ibid., p. 523
6. Ibid., p. 524
7. Ibid., p. 524
In *A Full Moon in March*, the years are foul because they enforce decay brought about by 'the reversal of an age'\(^1\) All 'that was sung'\(^2\) and all 'that was said'\(^3\) in Ireland has become a 'lie'\(^4\).

The 'bitter wisdom'\(^5\) of the 'fanatics'\(^6\) has brought many a men 'to sorrow'\(^7\). The 'renowned generations'\(^8\) of the so called enlightened men have turned history into 'rubbish'\(^9\) and the great past to 'a trouble of Fools'\(^10\). He portrays a society where:

A slave bows down to slave\(^11\)

The 'Nations are empty'\(^12\) and 'order has weakened'\(^13\). The captains that are supposed to 'govern mankind'\(^14\) are no where to be seen.

Yeats is aware of the spiritual bankruptcy in modern mechanized society. Hence in *There* he advises man to fix up his gaze at that effulgent centre where:

There all the barrel-hoops are knit,
There all the serpent-tails are bit,
There all the gyres converge in one,
There all the planets drop in the Sun.\(^{15}\)

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1. Yeats, W.B., *The Complete Poems*, p. 312
Yeats sees people to whom nothing has ever happened and laments the incomprehensible dying of the spirit from day to day. He finds society full of 'passion driven' \textsuperscript{1} exultant men singing out their own misery.

"Easter 1916" \textsuperscript{2} presents the poet oscillating between extremes of public pride and public sorrow, between private feelings of guilt and hope. These extremes are wonderfully expressed by a symbolic transitional passage in section third of the poem in which our eyes are first directed upward from the road to the horse, to his rider, to the birds among the clouds, and then downward once more, by means of the shadow of the cloud on the stream, to the horses hoof plunging into the stream where the stone forever will "trouble the living stream".

\begin{itemize}
\item[] 1. Yeats, W.B., \textit{The Complete Poems}, p. 560
\item[] 2. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 392
\end{itemize}
The horse that comes from the road,  
The rider, the birds that range  
From cloud to tumbling cloud,  
Minute by minute they change;  
A shadow of cloud on the stream  
Changes minute by minute;  
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,  
And a horse plashes within it;  
The long-legged moor-hens dive,  
And hens to moor-cocks call;  
Minute by minute they live:  
The stone's in the midst of all.¹

Thus, Yeats aware of his own age, is struck by a sense of  
something old, having ended, and of something new being born:

"Now and in time to be,  
Wherever green is worn,  
Are changed, changed utterly:  
A terrible beauty is born."²

His enlightened but old fashioned gradualism in politics is  
confronted by the final unyielding extremism expressed by Maud  
Gonne and exemplified by the consequences in aroused Ireland when  
the rising began, Yeat's first impulse was to condemn the leader  
of the rebellion.

¹. Yeats, W.B., The Complete Poems, p. 393  
². Ibid, p. 394
of the rebellion as "innocent and patriotic theorists carried way by their belief that they must put their theories into practice. They would fail and pay the penalty for their rashness."¹

Thus, this study will enlighten us on the various aspects of human culture of the modern world. This will also give us an opportunity to study the Christian world against the different ideologies governing it. It would also help us know and recognise the universality of the conflict of our wishes with our will and of the desire for things affecting our senses with the purpose that is within our heart.