INTRODUCTORY

A) A Short Survey of the Modern Drama:

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of drama, which had been neglected by the Victorians, as a powerful literary force. All the conditions operating against the development of Drama during the Victorian age were gradually removed, and hard efforts were taken by actors, play-goers and theatre managers in popularising drama and making it a force to reckon within the field of literature. So many new trends were introduced in drama and dramatists tried a lot to make drama life-like, realistic and appealing to the common man. The new social problems created in the new social set up of values cried for solution, and drama was the fitting medium in which justice could be done in solving the social and economic problems of the time.

English poetic drama in the twentieth century arose as a reaction to the naturalistic prose drama of Ibsen, Shaw and Galsworthy. The drama in their hands ceased to be the representation of ‘emotional reality’ and became a handmaid of social criticism. The language used by the dramatist while presenting social problems was tough and because of that drama was prosaic rather than poetic in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Twentieth century poetic drama has assumed different forms and shapes in the hands of different dramatists. Poetic dramas have been written on a variety of subjects, like exaltation of religion and the church, glorification and denunciation of God etc. Some poetic plays are symbolic and mystical in character and a number of them have Celtic Mythology and Irish life as their subjects.

Synge (1871-1909), T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), W.H. Auden (1907-1973), Christopher Isherwood (1904-86), Stephen Spender, Sean O’Casey (1884-1964), Christopher Fry, all these dramatists played a significant part in the movement for the revival of verse play.

The researcher discusses here shortly the contribution of the above dramatists.

Stephen Phillips was among the earliest of the poetical dramatists of the modern age. He wrote five poetical plays. His main works are Herod, Ulysses, Nero, Faust, and Paola and Francesca. He tried to revive the old Elizabethan traditions in poetic dramas.

Oscar Wilde developed a new spurt to poetic drama by making it symbolic and aesthetic in character. His claim as a writer of poetic drama has to be recognized particularly by his two plays Salome and The Duchess of Pauda.

John Davidson also enriched poetic drama by his The Theatocrat and Mannon Trilogy. He developed his fascination for matter, and denounced dogmas and principles of the Church. He felt a repulsion towards religion, and glorified the individual and sex impulses.

John Masefield too experimented in poetic drama but had only a limited success. His plays, Good Friday, The Trial of Jesus, Easter : A Play for Singers and A Play of St. George are religious plays. These religious plays are very interesting as far as the treatment of well-known theme of the trial and crucification of Christ is concerned.

Laurence Binyon reviewed the old Greek world of romance and loveliness in his poetic plays. He goes back to the ancient world of Homer and revives the love of Helen, Paris and Oenone. His greatness lies in introducing the old classicism in modern plays particularly in its theme. His most famous poetic play is Ayuli.

John Drinkwater began his career with poetic dramas and achieved popularity with such plays as The Storm, The God of Quiet
and X=0 or A Night of Trojan War. His play The Storm deals with country life, and X=0 or A Night of Trojan War is concerned with the horrors of war. The poetic plays of Drinkwater have their own place in modern poetic drama.

J. M. Synge has achieved great fame by his Riders to the Sea, a prose play. This play is deeply moving tragedy in one act, which deals with the toll taken by the sea in the lives of the fisher-folk of the West Coast of Ireland. The play has a grand, stark simplicity and a controlled intensity of feeling, which is most impressive. Later on he produced The Playboy of the Western World and The Shadow of the Glen, and in these two plays he presented the world of nature and outdoor life in the best way possible. In The Playboy of the Western World, Synge reached the pinnacle of his achievement. This play is based on an old legend, but it is altogether broader in scope than his other work, and the subtle study of the development of the central character, Christy Mahon is the theme around which Synge builds a riotously funny comedy, full of spontaneous. Vitality, which gives an excellent, if satirical, picture of the Irish character. Synge had a sure dramatic instinct and a keen insight into the motives of human nature. His plays are rich in presenting pathetic thoughts in poetic language. Synge and Yeats are very famous figures in the modern poetic drama.

T. S. Eliot took a considerable step forward towards establishing tradition of poetic drama in the twentieth century. His fame as a dramatist rests entirely upon the Murder in the Cathedral (1935) and four plays in contemporary setting, which followed each other in quick succession. These plays are The Family Reunion (1939), The Cocktail Party (1949), The Confidential Clerk (1956), and The Elder Statesman (1958).

In Murder in the Cathedral, the spiritual note ringing throughout this play and the poetic choruses and their mystical words, have won for the play a name in the world of poetic drama. Even for
this play he has chosen his subject from a remote historical period, and solved the problem of language and Versification by using a neutral style. His next play *The Family Reunion* deals with the problem of sin and its expiation. The setting is one of English aristocratic country house and the scenes are the familiar drawing-rooms of naturalism. The theme or the plot takes it cue from the furies who pursued Orestes and never let him have the rest till he had committed the crime. The play, *The Cocktail Party* is based on the idea of atonement and is in the tradition of certain Catholic conceptions, but it can not be accepted on aesthetic grounds in the play. This play accentuates the inhumanity of despair and makes a tragic reading.

His next play, *Confidential Clerk* is a pessimistic and depressing play. His *The Elder Statesman* directs our attention to an elder statesman in his retired life.

Eliot has dealt with religious, secular and psychological themes in his plays in a poetic style.

W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood have collaborated to write plays. Their joint plays are *The Dog Beneath the Skin or Where Is Francis?* (1935), *The Ascent of F 6* (1936) and *On the Frontier* (1938). The first play *The Dog Beneath the Skin* has a mythical theme. *In Ascent of F 6* there is a mythical atmosphere and they created myth out of contemporary elements. These dramatists have raised social issues to a mythological plane. Some of his plays reflect the disillusionment and despair of man in the face of the stark realities of life.

Stephen Spender is the famous communist playwright of modern poetical plays. His play *The Trial of a Judge* is the best play. The theme is a best representation of the fate of Liberals and Communists in the hands of Hitler’s Nazism. He represents the bad effects of Nazism in Germany.

Sean O’ Casey is the prominent dramatist of the “Expressionistic School”. His plays *The shadow of a Gunman, Juno and the Paycock* and
Plough and the Stars have themes thrilling enough to be poetic. He has presented the slum life in his plays.

The plays of Christopher Fry are philosophical. He has shown that modern verse drama need not be confined to the presentation of tragic and religious themes. His play Lady is not for Burning is the best poetic drama. The play deals with the life of a young girl who is condemned to be burned at the stake for she is convicted of witchcraft. Fry’s verse plays are creations of mood and have a wonderful resplendence of language.

In modern poetical plays myths, religion, politics, modern life have been well represented. Radio programmes are given further impetus to poetical plays.

After the discussion of above dramatist and their contribution to poetic drama, Yeats’s position among them is very significant and remarkable. Yeats succeeded in imparting lyricism and symbolism to poetic drama of the twentieth century.

B) Introduction to W.B. Yeats:

I) Yeats’s Growth as Man and Writer:

In this section the researcher wants to discuss, Yeats's growth as man and writer, Irish dramatic movement, and Yeats as a dramatist.

William Butler Yeats was born in Sandymount Dublin on June 13, 1865 in the family of John But Yeats and Susan Pollexfen. John Butler Yeats (1839-1922) was an artist of some merit, a friend of Henry Irving and number of other Pre-Raphaelite painters. He gave up law in order to devote himself to painting. His pencil sketches reveal a fine control of line. He also wrote essays and has left a large body of letters. He was a strong influence on William who remained very close to his father.

William inherited his life long love for the “west country” of Ireland from his mother Susan, emotional lady, whose family lived in
Sligo. In his early childhood he spent a great deal of time with his grandparents.

In 1874, Yeats was only nine years old the family moved to London, where he received his early education. In 1776, he was put to Godolphin School Hammarsmith. Yeats’s father’s income declined due to land war, and he was forced to return to Ireland in 1881, and occupy a rented house, Balscadden cottage at Howth Dublin. Here Yeats was admitted in high school at Harcourt Street and he remained there till 1883. But before that, that is in 1882, the family once again moved to a small house, Ireland View, overlooking Howth Harbour. Yeats was then 17 and had the experience of first love with his cousin Laura Armstrong. In 1884, Yeats left the general school and entered the School of Arts in Dublin, when he was 19. But he did not find a vocation of choice even in the School of Art, for he felt an attraction to creative writing, and he actually began working on creative writing. Yeats meeting with George Russell (A-E) was remarkable Yeats and Russell developed interest in mysticism. Yeats’s interest in mysticism led him to found the Dublin Lodge of the Hermetic Society. His father returned to England in 1887 and Yeats followed him soon. There in England Yeats joined the Rhymer’s club, and under the influence of Madame Blavatsky, became deeply involved and interested in mysticism and occultism. He also became the member of Mac Gregor’s Hermetic order of the Golden Dawn. On January 1889 a very happy thing happened in his life. Maud Gonne, a beauty incarnation, came to his house and he fell in love with her at first sight. Later when he expressed his love and proposed to her but she just laughed away the idea. Her fairy-like appearance proved to be elusive and delusive in Yeats’s life. Though Maud Gonne was out of his hand, he never missed chances to pursue and propose to her, but all in vain or only in brain. In 1894 he fell in love with ‘Diana Vernon; this affair was terminated in 1896, after their stay together for about a year. In November 1903 he
went to America on a Lecture tour. Since 1908 his father lived in New York and refused to come home. Frustrated, at last he married George-Hyde Less on October 21, 1917. In the next four years two children, Anne and John, were born to them. In 1922 his father died. In this year President Cosgrave conferred on him the Irish senatorship. He was awarded, in 1923, the Nobel Prize for poetry and his name as a leading European poet spread everywhere. From 1926-1932, he was almost at the door of death; in 1928 he suffered from malta fever. On January 28, 1939 the world lost a great poet in his death at Roquebrume in France where he was buried. After nine years his dead body was exhumed and buried again at Drumcliffe in Ireland in 1948.

Looking at his life, we come to know that Yeats was a man of various interests. He was an ambitious person, aspiring for great and heroic things. In order to fulfill his ambitious and aspirations, and while playing various roles in life he had to take several poses, assume various masks. Hence the doctrine of mask, which includes one's social self, the other self, or the anti-self, becomes central and significant in Yeats’s life and poetry. Richard Ellman comments on it thus:

The doctrine of the mask is so complex and so central in Yeats that we can hardly attend to it too closely. Even at this early stage of its development it has multiple meanings and is a variable concept. To start with its simplest meaning, the mask is the social self. Browning had spoken of ‘two soul-sides, one to face the world with’ and one to show the beloved. But Yeats’s doctrine assumes that we face with a mask both the world and the beloved. A closely related meaning is that the mask includes all the differences between one’s own and other people’s conception of one’s personality. To be conscious of the discrepancy which makes a mask of this sort is to look at oneself as if one were some body else. In addition, the
mask is defensive armour: we wear it, like the light lover, to keep from being hurt. So protected, we are only slightly involved no matter what happens. This theory seems to assume that we can be detached from experience like actors from a play. Finally the mask is a weapon of attack, we put it on to keep up a noble conception of ourselves; it is a heroic ideal which we try to live up to. (175-176)

Yeats's childhood was spent in poverty. At school in London he felt himself inferior to other children, as he was weak and tender and dark in complexion. At High School he was almost good for nothing in the eyes of his teachers. At home his father was affectionate and intellectually dominating; he was caught between mother's theism and father's atheism. The total family atmosphere, as far as religion is concerned, was to a young boy, much of confusion, ultimately resulting in his self-alienation, knowing not what course he should take.

Yeats erected an eccentric faith somewhere between his grandfather's orthodox belief and his father's orthodox disbelief. J.B. Yeats had himself revolted against the standard values of the nineteenth century. The son was thrown into the position of a counter-revolutionary. Besides half of his life was spent in the nineteenth century in which the notion of self-hood had changed drastically and the dissociation of personality had been felt acutely by the writers. Yeats had a great trouble in finding a basis for self-expression. Richard Ellmann comments on Yeats's self-alienation in this way:

Yeats came to maturity in this atmosphere of doubling and splitting of the self, but his mental growth was parallel to that of other writers and did not derive from them---Yeats noted everywhere about him confirmation of his sense of internal division. But as we have seen that division had its origin in childhood with a revolt, which could only be a half-revolt, against his father and his father's world. He
sought in vain the unself-conscious life which he associated with his mother’s family. Hating his father’s scepticism, he still could not escape it; he would have liked to dream the days away, but he also wanted to be a success in the world. The inner struggle was dramatized by his difficulties with sexual desire; he had a continual battle with his senses and was filled with self-loathing at what he thought was an unnatural and horrible state of mind. Thus many personal factors and many examples, and beyond these the spirit of the times, made him see his life as a quarrel between two parts of his being. (20)

Even as a lover Yeats suffered from the pangs of self-alienation. In his teens he had the experience of first love with his cousin Laura Armstrong. Later on his first meeting with Maud Gonne in 1889 proved to be a turning-point in his life. His other strong love affairs with Diana Vernon and women in London were just temporary adjustments which where made for the sake of an emotional outlet. Yeats blamed himself for losing Maud Gonne. Too much of critical intellect and his timidity prevented him from acting on instinct. This sense of guilt at having separated himself from the normal, active man is expressed in his plays written between 1903 and 1910.

As is the nature of artistic creation, every artist feels the sense of being separated from his creation. As a poet Yeats also experienced the feeling of being alienated from his own work in which he has put his heart and mind. He wanted to be a painter but became a poet, and here also he was alienated from his own self.

Yeats was very shy and somewhat awkward in the company of women, despite having two sisters of his own. In his early years, for some time he lived the life of self-denial. Even in his old age he was shy and struggling with his shyness.
Yeats was fully aware of his own self as divided against itself. His letter to Lady Gregory written on June 27, 1907, speaks volumes for his torn, shaken and broken personality. He writes:

I feel that I have lost myself, my centre as it were, has shifted from its natural interests, and that it will take me a long time finding myself again.... (Ellmann 189)

Andrew Parkin also writes about Yeats:

Yeats felt very strongly the sense of isolation within a community which is the lot of artists in an age when art is often complex, abstruse difficult. He believed that in Ireland where the community was still closely knit and largely pre-industrial, a writer could reawaken an older imaginative tradition through legend and myth. (20)

The foregoing discussion with regard to Yeats as man, as lover and as an artist amply proves that he was a alienated personality.

Here the researcher would like to discuss Irish Dramatic Movement.

II

Irish Dramatic Movement:

Irish dramatists have played an important role in the history of English drama. From the middle of the eighteenth century down to the beginning of the twentieth, the chief additions of English drama were the work of great Irishmen, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw were great Irish dramatists but they had not dealt with Irish themes.

During the twentieth century there was a craze among Irish dramatists to revive old Irish drama and popularise Irish themes in dramatic works. It was the only intention to put Ireland distinctly on the map of British drama the Irish National Literary Society was formed in Ireland by W. B. Yeats and a few other leading Irish
dramatists in 1892. This society developed by 1903 into the Irish National Theatre Society and in the same year, The Abbey Theater was established with the aid of Miss A. E. Horniman, a rich English Lady of which Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory were directors. The dramatists who wrote for this theatre, Yeats and Synge looked on the drama as a thing of the emotions, and reacting against realism sought their themes among the legends, folklore and peasantry of Ireland. In the hands of Synge and Lady Gregory there redeveloped a new comedy. Lady Gregory cultivated a peculiarly Irish drama. A third stream in the Irish drama is represented by the work of Lennox Robinson, who wrote realistic plays.

Yeats was the first prominent figure among the dramatist of the Irish literary theatre movement. He was a great poet. He apprenticed himself to stage technique, and he was strong belief that theatre as the vehicle of poetry. Yeats wrote nearly thirty plays. His *The Countess Cathleen* and *The Land of Heart’s Desire* became widely known, but their popularity depended more upon poetic charm. They devote spiritual experience and appealed to the audiences imagination not to recognition of everyday manners or events. Norman Jeffares writes about Yeats:

He wrote plays to express romantic love, to give life to literary and philosophical ideas, and to restate the heroic ideal. His desire to believe, to create the great moments of tragedy, to convey something of his sardonic as well as his profoundly serious attitude to life resulted in many plays of great beauty and emotional intensity. (Matter on the book cover page).

His characters are his own mouthpieces giving expression to his poetic ideas in a dignified manner. He has handled different types of themes, still his plays present a love for old Irish legends and folk songs, tales of supernaturalism, angles and demons.
Finally in this section (B) the researcher will discuss Yeats as a dramatist.

III

Yeats as a Dramatist:

Yeats is perhaps one of the greatest poets in English literature and he is the connecting link between the 19th and the 20th century literature. His dramatic accompaniment is diversional. A. C. Ward rightly points out: “But it still seems impossible that Yeats can be established as a play-wright for the living stage” (Sarker 305). Nevertheless, of recent years, some critics are of the opinion that Yeats’s plays were not properly, seriously judged by his contemporary critics, dramatists and historians, and that therefore they should be re-evaluated afresh. The popularity of Yeats is steadily on the increase, particularly in academic circles. Russell Taylor writes:

In recent years Yeats’s drama has been widely studied and revealed, and it is possible that some at least of it will find its way back into a theatre which was not ready for it at the time. (Sarker 305)

In this connection it is essential to remember that no English dramatist since Dryden, was so much acquainted with the theatre as Yeats had been. Vinod Sena writes:

Since Ireland locked a theatre of its own and one could take nothing for granted, and since Yeats was not just the Irish Dramatic Movement’s chief propagandist, but the Abbey’s manager, director and playwright, his writings cover the entire range of the arts of theater and drama, their relevance to society, their governing principles and their priorities as perhaps no other critic's have ever done. (93)

After taking hard efforts Yeats achieved best dramatic techniques. He was always intent upon perfection and he was always
ready to take hard labour for it. His one-act plays are short but by no means thin. Their rich texture is a major achievement. He has strong mastery of language. His dialogues have a depth and weight, Vinod Sena writes about it:

When the Irish theatre was founded and the problem was still one of building up an audience, the company could not afford to put up full-length verse-plays. Yeats turned this necessity into a virtue for as he explained in a letter to Michael Field (Katherine Bradley), the one-act form permitted one the best possible training in dramatic structure. His experiments with a prose medium, he went on to note, were meant to serve the same end. He may have added, ‘but I suppose every play-writer finds out the method that suits him best.’ (108)

He introduced the poetic drama and inducted a semblance of the Japanese Noh drama in the Irish theatre. The Japanese Noh is a lyrical drama that evolved in the fifteenth century. It is played principally by two actors: the first actor or the shite and the second actor or the waki. The play is shown on a square stage slightly raised from the ground. The audience are not separated from the actors, but they occupy a portion of the same stage on which the drama takes place. The stage is almost bare: no decoration and scenery are necessary. Masks and dances are frequently used. The themes are generally based on mythology. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Noh drama is its simplicity, and this simplicity and the woven mythology or the Noh drama attracted Yeats so much that he himself produced some plays keeping the Noh drama as his model. These Noh plays are essentially masculine in nature: females do not appear on the stage. Their parts are performed by males who do not attempt to imitate them. These plays, says Paul Harvey in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature:*
are a form of traditional, ceremonial, or ritualistic drama peculiar to Japan, symbolical and spiritual in character. It was evolved from religious rites of Shinto worship, was perfected in the fifteenth century and flourished during the Tokugawa period (1652-1868). It has since been revived. The plays are short (one or two acts), in prose and verse, and a chorus contributes poetical comments. They were formerly acted as a rule one at the Shogun’s court, five or six in succession, presenting a complete life drama, beginning with a play of the divine age, then a battle piece, a “play of women”, a psychological piece (dealing with the sins and struggles of mortals a morality, and finally a congratulatory piece, praising the lords and the reign. The text was helped out by symbolic gestures chanting. About two hundred Noh Plays are extant -----. In various respects the Noh Plays are comparable with the early Greek drama. (Gill 39-40)

Yeats was completely dissatisfied with the naturalistic stage, and that caused him to drink deep at the fountain of Japanese plays. Pound was the first to introduce them to the English speaking people. There was also a strong influence of Ernest Fenollosa’s image of Noh on Yeats’s mind. Yeats took hints from Pound and developed a new technique to direct playwrights towards a new realm. Richard Ellmann writes, his performance for Japanese plays is clear when he states:

I want to create for myself an unpopular theatre and an audience like a secret society where admission is by favour and never to many... I desire a mysterious art, always reminding and half-reminding those who understand it of dearly loved things, doing its work by suggestion, not by direct statement, a complexity of rhythm, colour, gesture, not space-pervading like the intellect but a memory and a
prophecy: a made of drama Shelley and Keats could have used without ceasing to be themselves, and for which even Blake in the mood of the Book of Thell (sic) might not have been too obscure -----. I seek, not a theatre but the theatre’s anti-self, an art that can appease all within us that becomes uneasy as the curtain falls and the house breaks into applause. (Gill 40-41)

Yeats was not interested in the complexities of plots and the development of characters. His main concern was to catch the essence of a dramatic situation. Andrew Parkin writes, “According to Yeats, it is a first principle for the reading of his work that we realise, ‘A poet writes always of his personal life, in his finest work out of its tragedy, whatever it be, remorse, lost love, or mere loneliness, he never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table, there is always a phantasmagoria” (44). His plays are closer to the plays of Maeterlinck and of Villiers de L’Isle-Adam’s Axel, whose performance he saw in France Katherine Worth writes, the whole concept of capturing, “a moment of intense life and isolating it was what might have been expected of a symbolist drama” (Gill 6).

Eric Bentley in the article “Yeats as a Playwright” writes:

Being a poet, Yeats was not frightened by the prospect of isolation. He simply declared: ‘I want, not a theatre, but the theatre’s antiself’. And : I want.... an unpopular theatre since by this time – the time of the first World War –he had been thoroughly schooled in theatre practice, isolation would do him no harm, if he could stand it; the older Ibsen was almost as isolated. Indeed isolation meant to Yeats the freedom to work with the dramatic techniques he had acquired unhampered by the thousand bothersome circumstances of every actual theatre. (368)
Some critics strongly say that Yeats is a great dramatist. Eric Bentley writes:

Yet I am going to claim that Yeats is a considerable playwright, the only considerable verse playwright in English for several hundred years. Beside the solid achievement of his forty years in the theater, Eliot’s dramatic work seems merely suggestive and fragmentary. For Yeats composed dramas, as Eliot did not. In the first place, he was able to start from a genuinely dramatic conception and carry it through. In the second, he had at his command the essential, even if secondary and non-verbal arts of the theatre. (364)

Eric Bentley quotes from Mr. Ronald Peacock’s the best essay yet written on Yeats's plays:

Mr. Peacock is not contrasting Yeats with Eliot. He is defending him from the trite charge of being a pure lyrist. In every play of Yeats you can point to a central dramatic situation and that for the simple reason that pretty much everything else has been cut away. Yeats is not only a dramatist but a classic dramatist. As Mr. Peacock puts it, each play consists of a single knot, a rather loose one, which is united in a single movement. (364)

Finally Yeats presented his inner cry. R.K. Alspach writes:

Yet I need a theatre; I believe myself to be a dramatist, I desire to show events and not merely tell of them; and two of my best friends were won for me by my plays, and I seem to myself most alive at the moment when a room full of people share the one lofty emotion. (Sena 128)
C) **Critical Review of Literature:**

W. B. Yeats's genius was singularly one dimensional: it was only for poetry, his dramatic accompaniment being diversional. Yeats has handled different types of themse like the Cuchulain legend, tragedy of love, sex, the relation between the soul and God, political ideas, domestic ideas, hunger, fantasy, Irish issues etc.

The Cuchulain legend: with the perpetual image of that ‘amorous violent man’, contending with men and women, and with an ‘ungovernable sea’, which might represent ‘the many’ in conflict with the hero is reflected in Yeats's plays like *The Only Jealousy of Emer*, *Fighting the Waves*, *The Death of Cuchulain* and *On Baile’s Strand*. Critics like Harold Bloom, Stepehen Gill and Richard Eilmann commented on them.

The theme of the tragedy of love which is reflected in Yeats's plays like *The Countess Catheeen, The King’s Threshold, Deirdre, The Only Jealousy of Emer, At the Hawks Well, The Death of Cuchulain, A Full Moon in March, The King of the Great Clock Tower* and *The Heren’s Egg*. The critics like, Andrew Parkin, Balchandra Rajan, Stephen Gill, Sunil Kumar Sarkar, Peter Ure, Louis Macneice, T. R. Henn have commented on this theme in their works on Yeats.

After this, the theme of sex is reflected in Yeats’s plays like: *The Words Upon the Window Pane, A Full Moon in March, The Cat and Bells, Where There is Nothing, The Unicorn from the Stars, The Player Queen, The Countess Catheleen, The King’s Threshold* and *The Shadaoy Waters*. Critics like Brenda Webster and Harold Bloom have discussed this theme in their works on Yeats.

Another type of theme, that is, the relationship between the Soul and God: the perversity of the ‘irriational force’, the problems of Chance and Choice, and the Souls’s War with God are reflected in Yeats’s plays like *The Hour Glass, Calvary, The Resurrection* and *The Herne’s Egg.*
Peter Ure, F. A. C. Wilson, H. H. Vendler, T. R. Henn, Harold Bloom and Brenda Webster have commented on them.

The Theme of political ideas is also reflected in Yeats’s plays like *Cathleen ni Houlihan, Real Queen, The Dreaming of the Bones* and *The Death of Cuchulain*. Critics like Bulchanadra Rajan, Andrew Parkin, Brenda Webster have commented on them.

After thinking of the political plays, the domestic theme is also reflected in Yeats’s such plays as *Purgatory, The Only Jealousy of Emer* and *The King’s Threshold*. Critics like Peter Ure, T. R. Henn, David Lynch, Norman Jeffares and Andrew Parkin have dealt with this theme.

Brenda Webster has commented on the theme of hunger as reflected in Yeats’s plays like *The Countess Catheleen* and *The Shadowy Waters’*

The theme of fantasy is reflected in Yeats’s other plays like *In Where There is Nothing, The Unicorn From the Stars, Purgatory, The Shadowy Waters, On Bailes Strand, The Countess Catheleen and A Full Moon in March.*

Lastly the theme of Ireland is reflected in Yeats’s plays like *Cathleen ni Houlihan, The Land of Heart’s Desire, Purgatory and The Words Upon the Window Pane.*

Other themes like Death Union, Religion and Old Age are also reflected in Yeats’s plays.

After taking the survey of various types of themes reflected in Yeats’s plays, some critics have also commented on theme of alienation in his plays. We come across men and women separated from God, Nature, Society, Family and from their Self. There are characters like Cathleen, Mary, Lazarus, Judas, Christ, The Greek, Congal whose faith in God is shattered and broken. Many characters like Forgael, Seanchan, Blind Man, Dectora, Countess, face the consequences of social alienation.
There are critics like Maeve Good, Leonard Nathan, Richard Taylor, Emil Roy, James Flannery, Karen Doren, Norman Jeffares, Helen Vendler, T. R. Henn and F. R. Lucas who have discussed the theme of isolation, loneliness and alienation in their books, while discussing other themes in Yeats’s plays.

The present work attempts to be a full length work on the theme of alienation in W. B. Yeats’s plays.

Maeve Good in *W. B. Yeats and the Creation of a Tragic Universe* comments on the theme of alienation in Yeats’s plays like, *At the Hawks Well, The Only Jealousy of Emer, The Dreaming of the Bones, The Words Upon the Window Pane, Calvary and On Baile’s Strand.*

Leonard Nathan in his book *The Tragic Drama of William Butler Yeats’s : Figures in a Dance* comments on the theme of alienation, isolation in Yeats’s plays like, *The Countes Catheleen, The Land of Heart’s Desire, Where There is Nothing, On Baile’s Strand, Deirdre, At the Hawk’s Well, Calvary, The Words Upon the Window Pane, Purgatory and The Only Jealousy of Emer.* Nathan has also commented on alienation and frustration of characters.

Richard Taylor in his book *The Drama of W. B. Yeats – Irish Myth and the Japanese No* tries to show some sort of alienation in *The Shadoy Waters.*

Emil Roy in his book *British Drama Since Shaw* comments on Yeats’s characters, isolation, alienation and separation.

James Flannery in his book *W. B. Yeats and the Idea of a Theater* presents isolation in the play *Calvary, On Bailes Strand, Deirdre* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer.*

Karen Dorn comments on Yeats’s plays like *On Bailes Stand, At the Hawk’s Well* and *Calvary* and presents character’s isolation and solitude in his book *Players and Painted Stage- the Theatre of Yeats.*

Carmel Jordan in his book *A Terrible Beauty* comments on solitude of Yeats’s character in *The Only Jealousy of Emer.*
W. A. Armstrong presents Aleel’s solitude in his book *Classic Irish Drama*.

Norman Jeffares in his book *W. B. Yeats Selected Plays* presents Yeat’s characters isolation and solitude.

F.A.C. Wilson also presents spiritual loneliness in *The Shadoury Waters*.

Helen Vendler in his book *Yeats’s Vision and the Later Plays* very strongly comments on alienation, loneliness, isolation (some characters alienation) in Yeats’s plays like *The King of the Great Clock Tower*, *Calvary*, *On Bailes Strand* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer*.


The articles like “I Have Aimed at Tragic Ecstasy” by Liam Miller, “Yeats as a Playwright” by Eric Bentley and “Yeats and a New Tradition” by W. J. McCormack in their articles these writers commented on isolation in Yeats’s plays.

By taking the critical review of articles, outside research and thesis published on Yeats there is hardly any work done on the theme of alienation in W. B. Yeats’s plays, that’s why the researcher has undertaken this work.

**D) Hypothesis:-**

W. B. Yeats’s plays deal with the predominant modern theme of alienation.

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The researcher has concentrated on the following things:

i) Alienation in Yeats's life

ii) To study Yeats's plays through alienation point of view, that is, alienation from God, Nature, Society, Family and Self.

* * *

The thesis comprises five chapters. In the Introductory, a short survey of the modern drama, Yeats's growth as man and writer, Irish dramatic movement, Yeats as a dramatist, critical review of literature and hypothesis are discussed. The first chapter is theoretical framework; the concepts of alienation and five facts of alienation are discussed in this chapter. In chapter II alienation in the plays between 1982 and 1914 is discussed. In chapter III alienation in the plays between 1917 and 1920, and in chapter IV alienation in the plays between 1926 and 1939 is discussed. Chapter V is about conclusion. Lastly the researcher has given the selected list of works consulted.

Before the researcher discusses the theme of alienation in Yeats’s plays it would be better and more convenient to see the theoretical aspects of the theme of alienation.