

A Post-Colonial Look : Yeats And War Poems

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Abstracts :- Yeats *The Tower* contains some of his best-known works. Even while its name suggests the poet's willed isolation, Yeats could not escape the radical changes that his country underwent in the 1920s. Written in 1928; the collection serves as a type of retrospective on Ireland's tumultuous decade, the two major events of which were the Anglo-Irish war (1919-1921) and the Irish Civil war (1922-1923). Of all Yeats' poetry "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" is perhaps the most personal in its explanation of his protestant ascendancy past. Especially in the first section, the speaker seems ambivalent about his family history and his place in the civil war. "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*" was originally titled "*Thoughts Upon The Present State of World*" and then Yeats changed it to *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*. The title of this poem is the year in which the Anglo-Irish war began. It signals the beginning of a new era after the Great War and marks the first year of that struggle. In both these poems, Yeats's position is to live in an in-between status. Two key elements in Bhabha's writing, when it comes to describing the colonial identities of both the colonized and the colonizer, are the concepts of ambivalence and hybridity. This study attempts to examine Bhabha's views on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized to evince this relationship in Yeats's "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" and "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*".

I. Introduction

a. Statement of the problem:

Yeats *The Tower* contains some of his best-known works. Even while its name suggests the poet's willed isolation, Yeats could not escape the radical changes that his country underwent in the 1920s. Written in 1928; the collection serves as a type of retrospective on Ireland's tumultuous decade, the two major events of which were the Anglo-Irish war (1919-1921) and the Irish Civil war (1922-1923). Of all Yeats' poetry "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" is perhaps the most personal in its explanation of his protestant ascendancy past. Especially in the first section, the speaker seems ambivalent about his family history and his place in the civil war. "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*" was originally titled "*Thoughts Upon The Present State of World*" and then Yeats changed it to *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*. The title of this poem is the year in which the Anglo-Irish war began. It signals the beginning of a new era after the Great War and marks the first year of that struggle. In both these poems, Yeats's position is to live in an in-between status. Two key elements in Bhabha's writing, when it comes to describing the colonial identities of both the colonized and the colonizer, are the concepts of ambivalence and hybridity. A study in the light of post colonialism and relying upon the Bhabha's views on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is likely to evince this relationship in Yeats's "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" and "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*".

b. Purpose of study:

This study attempts to examine how Bhabha's views on the complicated relationship between the colonized and colonizer can be traced in William Butler Yeats "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" and "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*". Yeats as part of English canon, and at once its other in these poems used the outbreaks of violence in Ireland as a starting point. These poems are meditations influenced by the times, by the violence, by the private matters that weighed on Yeats's mind as he looked back to past traditions that had gone or were dying and forward to a future filled with uncertainties. this study also intend to show how Yeats thinks about either side of the conflicts both in Anglo-Irish war (colonizing England and colonized Ireland) and in the Civil war (Republicans or Free state supporters).

c. Significance of Study:

The present study gains significance as the findings can shed more light upon William Butler Yeats complex

interactions with Irish nationalism and British colonialism, because in addition to describing the outside wars in "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" and "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*", they also show an internal war which goes on in the speaker's psyche and his dual attitudes toward both sides in these two poems. Of these two poems, "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*" is a very reflective piece. It looks back on the history of the world and the destruction that has taken place in war-torn Ireland. "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" sets out to map an Ireland which would enable the poet to delineate his nation's pride and destiny at a time when its citizens were locked in civil war. A study of these poems in the light of Bhabha's views is likely to indicate the complicate relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

d. Hypotheses/ Research Questions

This study goes through the Homi Bhabha's views, and is due to test and answer the following questions:

1. Is there any relationship between post colonialism, Ireland and Yeats?
2. Is there any traces have been left about Yeats siding with Irish nationalism or British colonialism?
3. What is Yeats's stance toward conflicting sides in "*Meditation in Time of Civil War*" and "*Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*"?

e. Definition of Key Terms

Postcolonialism: It refers to the period following the decline of colonialism, e.g., the end or lessening of domination by European empires. Although the term Postcolonialism generally refers to the period after colonialism, the distinction is not always made. In its use as a critical approach, Post colonialism refers to "a collection of theoretical and critical strategies used to examine the culture (literature, politics, history, and so forth) of former colonies of the European empires, and their relation to the rest of the world" (Makaryk 155). Hybridity: one of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory; hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. The term 'Hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K.Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and mutual construction of their subjectivities. Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation'. It is the 'in-between space' that

carries the burden and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important. (Post-colonial studies the Key concepts, Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin 108-9). Ambivalence: A term first developed in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (Young 1995:161). Adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer. Rather than assuming that some colonized subjects are 'complicit' and some 'resistant', ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject. Ambivalence also characterizes the way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time. Most importantly in Bhabha's theory, however, ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized. Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer. The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values- that is 'mimic' the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. (Post-colonial studies the Key concepts, Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin 10). Mimicry: an increasingly important term in post-colonial theory, because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. When colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. The term mimicry has been crucial in Homi Bhabha's view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse. For him, the copying of the colonizing culture, behaviour, manners and values by colonized contains both mockery and a certain 'menace', so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace. (Post-colonial studies the Key concepts, Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin 124-5).

f) Limitations/Delimitation

The present study in its own right faces some limitations and delimitations as it's so in every research project. The limitations come across in this project is as follows. The present study encounters the lack of access to the published books related to the Homi Bhabha's views on the relationship between colonized and colonizer. Moreover, most of the web sites and links that can surely help to search related issues are not free; thus the high amount of the registration is considered another hindrance. On the other hand, the self-imposed delimitations of the present study are as follows. In order to be able to manage the project within the boundaries of time and facilities, the present study limits itself to two poems of Yeats *The Tower* due to the fact that it would be beyond the scope of the study to go through other works of Yeats, also the present

study limits itself only to Bhabha's views and not other postcolonial critics.

II. Review of Related Literature

The field of postcolonial studies has been gaining prominence since the 1970s. Some would date its rise in the western academy from the publication of Edward Said's influential critique of western constructions of the Orient in his 1978 book, *Orientalism*. The growing currency of the term postcolonial was consolidated by the appearance in 1989 of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature* by Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. Since then, the use of cognate terms "commonwealth" and "Third World" that were used to describe the literature of Europe's former colonies has become rarer. Although there is considerable debate over the precise parameters of the field and definitions of the term postcolonial in a very general sense, it is the study of the interactions between European nations and the societies they colonized in the modern period. It would be true to say that Said, Bhabha and Spivak constitute the Holy Trinity of post colonialism, and have to be acknowledge as central to the field. The theoretical basis of this study is grounded in the complicated relationship between the colonizer and the colonized identities expounded by Homi k. Bhabha, one of the influential postcolonial critics. These concepts have been studied and reviewed widely by critics including Edward said, Albert Memmi, Frantz Fanon, Abdul JanMohamed and a host of others. The most influential and the most complete critique on post colonialism came in 1989 with Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back, Theory and Practice in post colonial literature*. Written by people formerly colonized by Britain, this book was the first major theoretical account of a wide range of post colonial texts and their relation to the larger issues of postcolonial culture, and one of the most significant works in this field. In *The Post colonial Studies Reader* (2006) Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin offer an essential introduction to the most important texts in post colonial theory and criticism. Leading figures in the areas of post colonial writing such as Said, Bhabha and Spivak, Fanon and parry are represented as are critics who are as yet less well known. The one hundred twenty one extracts in this reader are designed to introduce the major issues and debates in the field of postcolonial literary studies. In her 1998 book *Post Colonial Theory* Leela Gandhi attempts to name post colonialism to delineate the academic and cultural conditions under which it first emerged and thereby to point to its major preoccupations and areas of concern. She clearly map out this field in terms of its wider philosophical and intellectual context, drawing important connections between post colonial theory and poststructuralism, postmodernism, Marxism and feminism. She assesses the contribution of major theorists such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, and also points to post colonialism's relationship to earlier thinkers such as Frantz Fanon and others. Ania Loomba in *Colonialism/postcolonialism* (2009) takes complex and nuanced concepts, as well as notoriously difficult figures like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Foucault, and transforms both the theorist and theories into easily comprehensible components of a wider critical

movement. She also explores the historical dimensions and theoretical concepts associated with colonial and post colonial studies. In his 2000 book *Beginning Postcolonialism* John Mcleod provides an overview of the emergence of postcolonialism as a discipline and examines many of its important critical writings. Mcleod also offers a brief historical account of the field, and focuses on some important issues which concern postcolonialism, colonial discourse, nationalism and its critique. It concludes with a survey of some of the problematic aspects of theorising postcolonialism. Several of the key thinkers in the field are examined and each chapter concludes by looking at how we might read literary texts in the light of postcolonial theory. In *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory* (1997) Peter Child and R.J.Patrik Williams offer lucid and accessible summaries of the major work of key theorists such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Frantz Fanon. They also explore the lines of resistance against colonialism and highlights the theories of postcolonial identity that have been responsible for generating some of most influential and challenging critical work of recent decades. In her 2000 book *Postcolonialism, Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* Diana Bryden documents the scope of postcolonialism as a multidisciplinary project, re-examining the history and legacy of colonialism from perspective of the colonized as well as the colonizer. In this book Bryden gathered the most influential sources in postcolonial work from different disciplinary traditions. Ireland was a British colony for more than seven centuries, for this time it was hidden their native identity, as well as their language. The British colonizers imposed not only their language but also their culture. The Irish literature has been studied in various books within the framework of postcolonialism. In her 2001 book *Yeats and Postcolonialism* Deborah Fleming recognizes that as an Anglo-Irish protestant whose work swung between the revolutionary and reactionary, and who played a prominent role in the debates surrounding the issues of Ireland's cultural and political identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Yeats might seem an ideal subject for postcolonial criticism. This book consists of fifteen essays about Yeats. In his 1996 book *Inventing Ireland* Declan Kiberd argues that Irish literary revival of the 1890-1922 embodied a spirit and a revolutionary, generous vision of Irishness that is still relevant to post-colonial Ireland. He also offers a vivid account of the personalities and texts, English and Irish alike that reinvented the country after centuries of colonialism. The essential concern of this book is Irish nationalism, how it commenced, how it changed, and how it continues. *Anomalous States: Irish writing and postcolonial moment* David Lloyd's 1993 book is an archaeology of modern Irish writing. He commences with recent questioning of Irish identity in the wake of northern conflict and returns to the complex terrain of nineteenth century culture in which those questions of identity were first formed. In five linked essays, he explores modern Irish literature and its political contexts through the work of four Irish writers Heany, Beckett, Joyce and Yeats. *Anomalous States* stands at the intersection of two strands of debate that of culture and politics in contemporary Ireland and that of post-colonialism and cultural politics, for which Irish history furnish as an invaluable example. In her 1996 book *Yeats's Nations: Gender, Class, and Irishness* Marjorie

Howes attempts to examine Yeats's continuous search for political origins and cultural traditions through the most recent theoretical work on literature, gender and nationalism in post-colonial cultures. She explores the complex, often contradictory, ways Yeats's politics are refracted through his writing and shows his enthusiastic advocacy of the concept of nationality often clashed with his distaste for the dominant, often exclusive, forms of Irish identity surrounding him. Howes places Yeats at the center of debates on nationalism and gender that occupy critics in post-colonial studies. In his 2006 book *Deep-Rooted Things: Empire and Nation in poetry and Drama of William Butler Yeats*, Rob Doggett examines Yeats's shifting relationship with warring discourses of British cultural imperialism and Irish nationalism during Ireland's transition from colony to partially independent nation. By focusing on key historical events that Yeats witnessed and on the nationalist movement he both embraced and resisted, Doggett identifies the core features of Yeats's aesthetic program through new readings of central poems and plays in the Yeats canon. He reveals Yeats's deep and often conflicted response to issues of identity, history, and nationhood-issues always central to discourses of colonization, colonial resistance, and postcolonialism. In his 2001 book *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* Jahan Ramazani asks at the beginning why postcolonial poetry is so much less visible than fiction or drama. He argues that postcolonial poets have also dramatically expanded the atlas of literature in English, infusing modern and contemporary poetry with indigenous metaphors, rhythms and creoles. Starting with the complex case of Ireland, Ramazani closely analyzes the work of leading postcolonial poets and explores key questions about the relationship between poetry and postcolonialism. The first book of its kind, 'The Hybrid Muse' help internationalizing the study of poetry, and in turn, strengthen the place of poetry in postcolonial studies. In *The Colonizer and The Colonized* (1965), the Tunisian author, Albert Memmi describes the hypothetical positions of the colonizer and the colonized, trying to discern the options open to them. He invokes extensive use of psychoanalysis to paint generalized portraits of individuals falling into categories of colonizer and colonized and to explain their relationship within the context of colonialism. He pursues a largely deterministic approach in his argumentation, most succinctly depicted in his statement that 'man is a product of his objective situation. His portraits of colonizer and colonized emerge from this paradigm, as he maps out the influences of the colonial context on the ultimate psychological make-up of colonizer and colonized, and hence their reactions to colonialism. Meimandi, Mohammad Nabi in '*Just as strenuous a nationalist as ever*', *W.B. Yeats and postcolonialism: tensions, ambiguities, and uncertainties*, his 2008 Ph.D. thesis at University of Birmingham, investigates William Butler Yeats's relationship to the issues of colonialism and anti-colonialism and his stance as a postcolonial poet. A considerable part of Yeats criticism has read him either as a revolutionary and anti-colonial figure or a poet with reactionary and colonialist mentality. The main argument of this thesis is that in approaching Yeats's position as a (post)colonial poet, it is more fruitful to avoid an either / or criticism and instead to foreground the issues of change, circularity, and hybridity.

III. Methodology

The present study, as a qualitative and a descriptive one, embarks on library work and context analysis in order to answer the research questions. The underlying theoretical premise of this study is Bhabha's views on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Together with Said and Spivak, Bhabha lays much of the theoretical framework of Postcolonialism. "Postcolonialism" refers broadly to the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, and human identity itself are represented in the modern era, after many colonized countries gained their independence. However, some critics use the term to refer to all culture and cultural products influenced by imperialism from the moment of colonization until today. Postcolonial literature seeks to describe the interactions between European nations and the peoples they colonized. In his *Location of Culture* (1994), a collection of most important essays, Bhabha creates a series of concepts. These concepts describe ways in which colonized peoples have resisted the power of the colonizer, a power that is never as secure as it seems to be. The authority of dominant nations and ideas is never as complete as it seems, because it is always marked by anxiety, something that enables the dominated to fight back. To demonstrate this anxiety, Bhabha looks back to the histories of colonialism. In 1914, almost 85% of the world's land surface was under the control of mainly European colonial powers. Yet the consequence of this control was not simple domination. We should not see the colonial situation as one of straight forward oppression of colonized by the colonizer. In *Location of Culture*, Bhabha shows two connected things. First, it provides a conceptual vocabulary for the reading of colonial and postcolonial texts, this reading shows how rigid distinction between the colonizer and the colonized have always been impossible to maintain. Second, through its conceptual vocabulary his work demonstrates that the West is troubled by its double in particular the East. Considering Yeats as part of English canon, and at once its other and in order to investigate the work within the theoretical framework of postcolonialism with regarding Bhabha's views on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the present study is divided into the following chapters:

1. Yeats, Ireland and Postcolonialism: This chapter is preoccupied with postcolonialism, Ireland and Yeats because these issues are controversial. There are different views among critics about what is postcolonialism? Is Ireland a former colony of Britain or not, since some critics place Ireland as a postcolonial nation, while some critics exclude Ireland from the list of postcolonial nations, and whether Yeats is a postcolonial poet or not.
2. Irish nationalism or British colonialism: This chapter explores the connections between Yeats and nationalism. Interrogating Yeats's attitude towards British colonialism. Indeed, recent Yeats scholarship has been frequently emphasizing the degree to which his verse from 1920s to 1930s remains bound in idealizing those qualities of the Irish race that imperial discourse had used to mark the former colony as other.
3. Anglo-Irish and civil war, which side: this chapter will focus on a detailed reading of two poems,

which are written in a turbulent time when Ireland was passing from colonial period into a postcolonial one, in order to find Yeats's stance towards the conflicting warring sides.

IV. Outline and Organization of the Study

Introduction

Chapter I: Yeats, Ireland and Postcolonialism

Chapter II: Irish nationalism or British colonialism

Chapter III: Anglo-Irish and civil war, which side

Conclusion

V. Preliminary Bibliography

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