

The Embroidered Poetry: change in the work of W.B. Yeats

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1 Foreword

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), Nobel Laureate in 1923, is today widely recognised as Ireland's national poet. Probably best known as a leading icon of the 'Celtic Revival' literary movement of late nineteenth-century Ireland, Yeats's output included many poems and dramas based on Celtic myth and legend. He also played a leading role in forming civic and intellectual societies,¹ and his efforts in collaboration with those of other notable Anglo-Irish writers culminated in the establishment of the Irish national theatre, the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, in 1904.²

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), the prominent Modernist poet of the twentieth century, was perhaps one of the first to note what made Yeats 'the greatest poet of our time'.³ He found in Yeats's works 'an exceptional honesty and courage to face the change'.⁴ In a lecture delivered at the Abbey Theatre in 1940, a year after Yeats's death, Eliot stated that :

Now, in theory, there is no reason why a poet's inspiration or material should fail, in middle age or at any time before senility. For a man who is capable of experience finds himself in a different world in every decade of his life; as he sees it with different eyes, the material of his art is continually renewed. But in fact, very few poets have shown this capacity of adaptation to the years. It requires, indeed, an exceptional honesty and courage to face the change. Most men either cling to the experiences of youth, so that their writing becomes an insincere mimicry of their earlier work, or they leave their passion behind, and write only from the head, with a hollow and wasted virtuosity.⁵

Quoting from Eliot's lecture, Yukio Oura pointed out in 1959 that the remarkable change in Yeats's poetry-writing was the result of his continuous humble search for a way of

¹ For example, the Irish Literary Society was established in London in 1891. The following year the National Literary Society was founded in Dublin. Another cultural group, the Irish Literary Theatre, was formed in 1899 and four years later became the basis of the Irish National Theatre Society.

² Yeats's literary fellows included Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932), who wrote plays based on her translations of Celtic legend and folklore into English, and the dramatist John Millington Synge (1871-1909), who was inspired by the wild nature of Aran Island in the west of Ireland and portrayed Irish peasant life.

³ James Hall and Martin Steinmann, eds., *The Permanence of Yeats: Selected Criticism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), 331.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁵ *Ibid.*

poetic expression, and that this was what made him a great poet.⁶ Today, it is a common understanding amongst scholars and students of Yeats that the poet in youth, as *fin-de-siècle*, Celtic Revivalist, sought to create an ethereal, mythical world, but after the turn of the century he turned his poetic attention towards the real contemporary society.

In order to illustrate how this change was manifested in Yeats's work, this article focuses on a particular motif frequently employed by the poet, that of embroidery. Along with literary activity, Yeats maintained a keen interest in the visual arts, including not only fine arts such as painting and sculpture, but also craft arts produced for daily use. Born into a painter's family and educated at art school,⁷ Yeats noted that it was natural for him to see poetry as analogous to the visual arts.⁸ Amongst the wide variety of craft genres, it is perhaps textile works, especially embroidery with its decorative and symbolic motifs, that can be seen as most analogous with Yeats's poetry. His younger sister was a skilled embroiderer, and it was Yeats who gave her the opportunity to master the art. It is also evident from biographical research that Yeats had a keen, observant eye for embroidery. His appreciation was not limited to the finished product, but also included the process of its creation.

Taking these backgrounds into account and with a focus on 'embroidery' as a keyword in Yeats's poetry, this article attempts to show how he sought to invest this material object with spiritual meanings; how he endeavoured to craft words into a higher form of poetic expression, and further developed the poetic embroidery in his later works.

2 Yeats and the Art of Embroidery

References to embroidery can be found in several of Yeats's works, especially those written after the late 1880s. But before examining his poetry, it will be helpful to trace how the art and craft of embroidery came to be familiar to Yeats. Here, Yeats's friendship with William Morris (1834-1896), the socialist designer and artist who advocated 'applying art to articles of utility',⁹ was particularly important. They met first in 1886 at the Contemporary Club, an intellectual circle in Dublin.¹⁰ The next year, when Yeats moved to London, he attended

⁶ Yukio Oura, 'kokoh no Shijin Yeats' [Yeats the Poet of Proud Independence], *Eibungaku Hyoron* [*English Literature Criticism*], vol. 6 (Kyoto University Research Information Repository, 1959), 73-74. https://doi.org/10.14989/RevEL_6_72

⁷ Yeats's father, John Butler Yeats (1839-1922) was a portrait painter (formerly a barrister) whose early works were greatly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in Britain. Jack Butler Yeats (1871-1957), the youngest son of Yeats's family, was regarded during his lifetime as the most prominent painter in Ireland, and his reputation remains high today. Yeats's younger sister Elizabeth Corbet 'Lollie' Yeats (1868-1940) was a water colourist and for several years taught painting to children in London.

⁸ Elizabeth Bergman Loizeaux, *Yeats and the Visual Arts* (London: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 36. The influence of visual arts in Yeats's literary creation has also been demonstrated by other scholars, such as Giorgio Melchiori and Edward Engelberg.

⁹ William Morris, 'The Arts and Crafts of To-Day' (1889), *The Collected Works of William Morris: with introductions by His Daughter May Morris*, vol. XXII (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 356.

¹⁰ It was founded in 1885 for the purpose of stimulating debate among Dublin intellectuals. The Club later founded the *Dublin University Review*, which was responsible for publishing Yeats's first work. See Robin Skelton and Ann Saddlemyer, eds., *The World of W.B. Yeats: Essays in Perspective*, rept. (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1965), 37.

Socialist League meetings at Morris's Kelmscott House in Hammersmith. There he met many leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement,¹¹ whose reaction against Victorian capitalism had a lasting influence on Yeats. Through his interactions with Morris and his fellow artists, the poet learned a possible way to mitigate the negative impacts of commercialistic materialism by bringing artistic, handcrafted beauty into people's everyday lives. In an essay written in 1901 Yeats emphasised that craft workers like Morris 'tried to unite the arts once more to life by uniting them to use',¹² and that 'they advised painters to paint fewer pictures upon canvas, and to burn more of them on plates; and they tried to persuade sculptors that a candlestick might be as beautiful as a statue'.¹³ Years later, in 1927, Yeats stated that Morris was still his 'chief of men'.¹⁴

In 1888, Yeats introduced his younger sister, Suzan Mary 'Lily' Yeats (1866-1949, hereafter Lily) to Morris's daughter May (1868-1938), a renowned embroiderer in the London-based Arts and Crafts scene. For the next 6 years Lily worked as salaried employee and trainee under the instruction of May in the Morris family's Kelmscott atelier. During this period Lily worked with Kelmscott colleagues on projects including an extra-sized bedcover, designed by May Morris and featuring motifs of fruit trees, flowers and animals, which was displayed in the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in 1893. Yeats would later recall that the verse stitched into the fabric was 'about lying happily in bed when "all birds sing in the town of the tree"' and that the work was 'from her [Lily's] needle, though not from her design'.¹⁵

After leaving Kelmscott, Lily based her life and activity in Dublin. In 1902, she became co-founder of the Dun Emer Guild craft industry,¹⁶ with responsibility for producing embroidered decorations of items such as cradle quilts, cushion covers, and portières. The Guild first found fame with the ecclesiastical banners commissioned by Loughrea Cathedral in county Galway.¹⁷ Throughout Lily's activity in Ireland, Yeats was not a bystander but worked as a powerful advisor, particularly regarding her embroidery designs. Records of his correspondence show that Yeats took every opportunity to seek support for Lily among his acquaintances in the British Arts and Crafts movement. His occasional letters addressed to Lily also reveal that he was a sharp critic of her work, while at the same time intent upon

¹¹ For example, the designer and art lecturer Walter Crane (1845-1915) was influential in Britain and Scotland. Emery Walker (1851-1933) was a process engraver and typographical expert known as a specialist in book-printing; together he and Cobden Sanderson (1840-1922) set up Doves Press. Yeats was also acquainted with the clergyman Selwyn Image (1849-1930), illustrator and designer of stained glass.

¹² W.B. Yeats, 'Ireland and Arts' (1901), *Essays and Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 204. Hereafter cited as *E&I*.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁴ Letter to May Morris, 2 April 1927. Allan Wade, ed., *The Letters of W.B. Yeats* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 724.

¹⁵ W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 144. Hereafter cited as *Au*.

¹⁶ The chief founder of the Dun Emer Guild was another textile artist, Evelyn Gleeson (1855-1944). Lily and her younger sister Lollie were co-founders. In 1908, the Yeats sisters set up Cuala Industries independently of Gleeson.

¹⁷ The banners of Loughrea Cathedral depicted several Irish patron saints. They were commissioned in 1902 and completed in 1904.

making it distinctive with high aesthetic value.¹⁸ Clearly, therefore, the art of embroidery was close to Yeats's heart, and its adoption as a motif in his poetry was based on keen and detailed observation.

3 Embroidery in Word-Painting in the 1880s

Yeats's first major work, the narrative poem 'The Wanderings of Oisín', came out in 1889. Based on the ancient legends known as 'The Ossianic Cycle', the poem tells how Oisín is enticed by Niamh the fairy queen of evergreen land, and travels back over 300 years of history, visiting strange islands. Its success prompted a re-evaluation of the cultural assets in Celtic mythology.

When the poem was published, Yeats was 25 years of age and still a part of Morris's circle. Morris's reaction, telling Yeats that 'you write my sort of poetry',¹⁹ delighted the young poet. Among other critics, Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), the powerful proponent of Aestheticism, asserted that Yeats's work was 'certainly full of promise'.²⁰ Although noting some defects, such as 'too fragmentary, too incorporate',²¹ Wilde concluded with the positive prediction that 'he [Yeats] will some day give us work of high import'.²²

In reviewing 'The Wanderings of Oisín', Wilde detected the author's 'romantic temper', which he thought derived from the influence of John Keats,²³ and stated that the work succeeded in 'out-glittering' Keats.²⁴ Yeats would probably have agreed with this point, as he admitted the poem was 'too full of the reds and yellows Shelley gathered in Italy'.²⁵ Such glittering brilliance of colour creates a striking image that is almost comparable to painting. It is noticeable from the beginning, as Niamh appears in the first scene:

And found on the dove-grey edge of the sea
A pearl-pale, high-born lady, who rode
On a horse with bridle of findrinny;
And like a sunset were her lips,
A stormy sunset on doomed ships;
A citron colour gloomed in her hair,

¹⁸ Yuki Takahashi, *W.B. Yeats in the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement* (Ph.D Dissertation, Aoyama Gakuin University, 2016), 76-82.

¹⁹ *Au*, 146.

²⁰ Oscar Wilde, 'Mr W.B. Yeats' in *Woman's World* (March 1889), collected in *A Critic in Pall Mall* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1919), 158.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 160.

²³ *Ibid.*, 158. John Keats (1795-1821) was an English Romantic poet, whose 'Endymion' (1818) included the line 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever'.

²⁴ Oscar Wilde, 'Mr Yeats's Wanderings of Oisín' in *Pall Mall Gazette* (12 July 1889), quoted in *Ibid.*, 160-61.

²⁵ W.B. Yeats, 'What is 'Popular Poetry'?' (1901), *E&I*, 5. A contemporary of Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) was a major Romantic poet who held radical political views. Influenced by Shelley's highly intellectual, sublime poetry and thought, Yeats wrote the essay 'The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry' (1900).

But down to her feet white vesture flowed,
And with the glimmering crimson glowed
Of many a figured embroidery;
And it was bound with a pearl-pale shell
That wavered like the summer streams,
As her soft bosom rose and fell.²⁶

In this description of Niamh, the ‘high-born lady’, the pattern of deliberately repeated words, such as ‘pearl-pale’ and ‘sunset’, creates a sense of otherworldliness. This effect is heightened by the carefully conceived colour scheme. The redness of Niamh’s lips is compared to a sunset that also reflects on ‘doomed ships’, as if to foretell the fate of Oisín at the end of the story. Considering the fact that Yeats in his early youth was deeply attracted by Pre-Raphaelite arts,²⁷ the ‘citron colour’ of Niamh’s abundant hair, as well as the brightness of her pearly-white skin, can be associated with female portraits painted by Pre-Raphaelite artists.²⁸ Indeed, the vivid expression and lavish use of colour in the poem could be described as painting with words. In this word-painting, the reference to ‘embroidery’ provides more detail and a strong visual image of Niamh’s garments. The ‘white vesture’ is embroidered with many figures stitched by ‘glimmering crimson’ threads. Here, the word ‘embroidery’ can be said to help create a distinctive poetic image.

Subsequently, however, despite the praise of those whom he had admired, Yeats sought to reduce what he considered to be an overabundance of colour description and to reshape this word-painting style. He recollected later that he had become dissatisfied with ‘overcharged colour inherited from the romantic movement’.²⁹ His search for a new form of literary expression at this stage may be comparable to his publication in 1914 of *Responsibilities*, which will be discussed later.

4 The Embroidered Poetry Stitched out of Dreams

In his poetical composition in the 1890s, Yeats’s interest in embroidered textiles is reflected by ever more ingenious modes of poetic expression. As William O’Donnell remarks, Yeats’s approach to the analysis of art was personal and idiosyncratic, and that personal experience provided ‘a significant portion of the material from which the poem is built’.³⁰ One outstanding example is found in ‘Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven’, collected in *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899). According to Roy Foster, this volume ‘carries a distinctly

²⁶ Peter Alt, and Russell K. Alspach, eds. *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 3-4. Hereafter cited as *VP*.

²⁷ *Au*, 114. In recollection of his young days, Yeats wrote ‘I was in all things Pre-Raphaelite.’

²⁸ These portraits, particularly those by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) often featured women with abundant hair and bright skin.

²⁹ *Au*, 74.

³⁰ William H. O’Donnell, ‘The Art of Yeats’s “Lapis Lazuli”’, *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 23, No.2 (Summer 1982), 353.

autobiographical implication', which is evident in the deliberate use of different personae, such as 'Aedh, Hanrahan, Michael Robertes, and Mongan'.³¹ In this volume the poems featuring Aedh suggest the desperation of unrequited love that Yeats experienced through his commitment to Maud Gonne (1866-1953), the Anglo-Irish actress, suffragette, and republican activist. Yeats met her in 1889 and loved her for decades. Although Gonne never accepted his proposals, they maintained a friendship based on deep mutual understanding.

In the poem, the narrator wishes for cloths embroidered with starlight to dedicate to the woman he loves, and in doing so he weaves them in his imagination with words, rhyme, and sound.

Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths,
 Enwrought with golden and silver light,
 The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
 Of night and light and the half-light,
 I would spread the cloths under your feet:
 But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
 I have spread my dreams under your feet;
 Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.³²

The golden and silver lights flickering in the dark blue can be understood as representing the pain of love. Structurally, the poem consists of two contrasting pairs of rhyming keywords, which denote substantiality and non-substantiality alternately.³³ Onto the 'cloths', which have substantial texture, the ethereal 'light' is stitched. Likewise, the fragility of 'dreams' is spread beneath the tread of the corporeal 'feet' of a person whom the poet loves. This repetitive pattern of rhyme creates a sense of weaving, evoking the warp and weft of cloth on a loom. Each sequence of the poem is designed to become an integral part of one entity, in the same way as individual threads make up a sheet of cloth. M.L. Rosenthal notes that the entire poem is narrated as one single sentence, and points out the poet's ingenuity in using a colon to connect the first five lines and the last three, which might otherwise have been separated from one another.³⁴ In the poet's imagination, the vision of celestial stars spread over the night sky makes a clear contrast with a solid image of a substantial embellishment, closely stitched to a sheet of cloth, implying that despite the hopelessness of the poet's love, and the impossibility of fulfilment, the emotion will endure. The brilliant colours of the night sky contribute to evoking the poet's fragile state. Thus the delicate but substantial texture of embroidery is assimilated into Yeats's subtle and emotive language, with its enduring connotations of

³¹ Roy Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life. Vol. I. The Apprentice Mage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 214. Yeats later revised the poems in this volume, removing most of these names and using instead the pronoun 'he'.

³² *VP*, 176.

³³ M.L. Rosenthal, *Running to Paradise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

craftsmanship.

5 Labour in Stitching Poetry

At the turn of the century, Yeats's poetic style began to take on a new aspect, not seen in his earlier works. The change became noticeable in the collection *In the Seven Woods*, published in 1903. As Thomas Parkinson remarks, whereas 'the early poems had expressed world-weariness; in the 1903 volume Yeats expresses a certain fairy-world-weariness'.³⁵ That is, in his earlier works Yeats had sought his poetic material in the imagined Celtic otherworldliness, but now he began to write of the actual world he lived in. In a letter to fellow writer George Russell (1867-1935),³⁶ he confessed that he struggled to get rid of 'exaggeration of sentiment and sentimental beauty'.³⁷ Quoting this admission, Foster emphasises, 'thus his poetry was beginning – if unevenly – to reflect his achieved personality. He was growing into his life.'³⁸

The distinctive feature indicating this change can be found particularly in the direct speech of 'Adam's Curse'. Here, Yeats compared his poetry-making to the process of stitching embroidery. It is worth noting that Yeats's keen sensibility viewed the painstaking effort of his poetry-making in the same light as that of needlework, which requires time-consuming toil. The poem is based on Yeats's recollection of a casual conversation that had actually taken place between himself, Maud Gonne, and her sister Kathleen Pilcher.

We sat together at one summer's end,
That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
And you and I, and talked of poetry.
I said: 'A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.
Better go down upon your marrow-bones
And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;
For to articulate sweet sounds together
Is to work harder than all these, and yet
Be thought an idler by the noisy set
Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
The martyrs call the world.'

³⁵ Thomas Parkinson, *W.B. Yeats: Self-Critic and the Later Poetry*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 96.

³⁶ George Russell, better known by his pseudonym AE, had been a classmate of Yeats at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art in 1884. Russell continued painting professionally alongside his literary activity. He was also a theosophist, and shared his thoughts on mysticism with Yeats.

³⁷ Foster, 302.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

And thereupon

That beautiful mild woman for whose sake
 There's many a one shall find out all heartache
 On finding that her voice is sweet and low
 Replied: 'To be born woman is to know –
 Although they do not talk of it at school –
 That we must labour to be beautiful.'

I said: 'It's certain there is no fine thing
 Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring...'³⁹

In their conversation, 'labour', required by Adam's fall, becomes a key concept. To the lady who says a woman's 'labour' is to be beautiful, the poet complains that his work of articulating 'sweet sounds' is harder than all the other occupations, even though he is regarded as an 'idler' by those working in the secular 'world'. His own 'labour' is as inevitable, in terms of creating noble and worthy poems, as the labour of a mother in giving birth to a child. Unlike in 'He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven', the focus of the embroidery metaphor is on the slow and laborious process of its making rather than the intricate appearance of its final elaboration. Such familiarity with the conception and knowledge of stitching and sewing craft could be related to Yeats's family background. The founding of the Dun Emer Guild and Lily Yeats's undertaking of her commission for Loughrea Cathedral, for which Yeats acted as an advisor, took place in the same year as the completion of 'Adam's Curse'. Therefore, his adoption of the craft of embroidery as material for his own creation could have been entirely natural and consistent with the circumstances of his life at that time.

6 The Symbol of the Embroidered Coat

About a decade after 'Adam's Curse', a more distinct, deliberate change began to appear in Yeats's poetry. *Responsibilities* (1914), marked a departure from the style and themes of earlier works in favour of an 'elliptical, pared-down, colloquial' style.⁴⁰ The work was published after being revised (without Yeats's permission) by Ezra Pound (1885-1972), an influential American poet and critic then working as Yeats's secretary.⁴¹ The volume opens with an epigraph: 'In dreams begins responsibility'.⁴² Daniel Albright explains that this can be read as 'a capsule summary of Yeats's evolution as a poet between the 1880s and World War I: for Yeats began his career as a dreamer of mythologies and moved increasingly to a sort of art that shouldered the burden of public affairs'.⁴³ With regard to the title, Reiji Fujimoto points out

³⁹ *VP*, 204-05.

⁴⁰ Foster, 490.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 486, 490.

⁴² *VP*, 269.

⁴³ Daniel Albright, ed, *The Poems* (London: Everyman, 1990), 517.

that the word 'responsibility' derives from the Latin 'respondere', meaning 'to respond', and is therefore particularly suitable for a volume that encompasses not only the poet's 'responsibility' to his nation, society and himself, but also his determination to 'respond' to the various problems occurring around him.⁴⁴

Embroidery as poetic material appears in 'A Coat'. This poem was deliberately placed at the end of this volume's main part, out of chronological order of composition, as a clear signal of Yeats's determination to develop his creative approach.

I made my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat;
But the fools caught it,
Wore it in the world's eyes
As though they'd wrought it.
Song, let them take it,
For there's more enterprise
In walking naked.⁴⁵

The use of 'embroideries' in this poem is clearly different from that in 'The Wandering of Oisín'. The nature of the embroidery in the earlier work was substantial, and part of a detailed visual description. In 'A Coat' the 'embroideries' are made 'out of old mythologies', a metaphor alluding to Yeats's early literary style and conception that had established him as a successful poet. 'The fools' whom the poet disdains are the imitators exploiting his writing. The resolution to take off the coat and walk 'naked' refers to his determination to leave behind his previous path of poetic creation.

However, this is not a total renunciation. As Richard Ellmann points out, Yeats 'did not mean to give up his early symbols'.⁴⁶ In general, the coat is an outer garment that may be worn or easily taken off. Likewise, the poet can put on the coat of embroidered mythologies whenever he chooses, as he would do in *Last Poems* (1939), his final collection. For now, however, he finds 'more enterprise' in 'walking naked'. Rather than economic activity, the word 'enterprise' means 'disposition or readiness to engage in undertakings of difficulty, risk, or danger' and 'daring spirit'.⁴⁷ Here, the term can be taken to sum up the poet's readiness to undertake fresh and bold projects, as he announces that his subsequent creations will take a new and different form.

⁴⁴ Reiji Fujimoto, *Yeats: Anglo-Irish no Dilemma* [*Yeats: Dilemma of Anglo-Irish*] (Hiroshima: Keisui sha, 1997), 70-71.

⁴⁵ *VP*, 320.

⁴⁶ Richard Ellmann, *The Identity of Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1954), 38.

⁴⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 212.

7 Conclusion

Working variously as imagery, and metaphor, Yeats's 'embroidery' provides one means by which to trace the changes in his poetry-making from the 1880s to the 1910s. These changes can also be seen as a movement towards maturity. In the lecture mentioned earlier, T.S. Eliot explained Yeats in terms of a 'maturing artist':

There are two forms of impersonality: that which is natural to the mere skilful craftsman, and that which is more and more achieved by the maturing artist... The second impersonality is that of the poet who, out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol. And the strange thing is that Yeats, having been a great craftsman in the first kind, became a great poet in the second.⁴⁸

Yeats not only struggled for better poetic expression of his subjective emotion but also learned to leave behind the ivory tower of his youth and to respond to the world of real experience. By following this path tirelessly he was able to attain impersonality in his art and to prove himself a great poet of the twentieth century.

⁴⁸ Eliot, in *The Permanence of Yeats*, 335.