

“The poetry of Yeats is timeless; due to its many themes and ideas, it maintains its relevance”

“Yeats preferred symbolist poetry, for in symbol there is concealment, yet revelation. Through symbol Yeats aspires to a sort of timelessness.” These words by Daniel Albright express the significance of Yeats’ poetry as this has allowed him to establish an everlasting presence in our society. Yeats utilises symbols to manipulate the audience, as symbols allow for individual interpretations, thus appealing to all individuals and enabling the sense of eternity which his poetry possesses. This fulfils Yeats’ desires, as his ideal for his poetry to become timeless is achieved through their exploration of relevant themes. Moreover, the use of symbols demonstrates Yeats’ tendency for contrasts. Albright indicates that symbols challenge the audience to truly appreciate the poetry, thus, engaging them and enhancing their relevance. Yeats’ poetry sustains a timeless appeal through its compelling and complex insights on the human condition. His strength lies on his ability to communicate relevant emotions, creating a sense of eternal relevance and exposing our vulnerabilities. The everlasting effect of Yeats’ poetry is epitomized through his poems “When you grow Old” and “Wild Swans at Coole”. Through their exploration of myriad and everlasting themes, as well as specific use of language techniques, these poems remain applicable to modern society, as the audience is able to relate their personal lives to the events of the poems. Essentially, Yeats translates everyone’s emotions into words, allowing the audience to relate to his poetry on a spiritual level.

“Yeats sought to reveal timeless truths in his poetry”, stated George Watson. This notion is expressed through the exploration of relevant themes in ‘When you grow Old’, through the timeless elements of the human condition: love, rejection and ageing. Through this, Yeats forms an infinite relevance within his poetry, dramatically impacting the audience and the way his work is perceived. Yeats, being left unwanted after another rejection by Gonne, composed ‘When you are Old’, expressing the consequences of her rejection in a frightening way to convince Gonne into accepting him. The opening line triggers this notion through ‘When you are old and grey and full of sleep’. The immediate harsh tone communicates Yeats’ negative feelings. The connotations of ‘grey’ are sharp contrasts to the passionate nature of Gonne, suggesting that her cheerful personality will have vanished, leaving her sorrowful. Likewise, ‘sleep’ communicates that Gonne will imitate a fragile old woman, in need of sleep, almost on the verge of death. This feeling of rejection, a main theme in the poem, enables the audience to relate to its words as the masses experience rejection in their lifetime.

The second stanza emphasises the intensity of Yeats’ adoration for Gonne that triggered his passionate yearning for her. This is seen through the repetition of ‘loved’ in each line of this stanza. This common yet powerful emotion enables the audience to feel the same adoration. However, superficial love of beauty is later juxtaposed with deeper, more meaningful love of the soul through ‘How many loved your moments of glad grace, And loved your beauty with false or true, But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you’. The ‘one man’ in this line refers to Yeats and his unconditional love for Gonne. The mention of ‘pilgrim soul’ is essential as Yeats uses its connotations to refer to it almost as a spiritual journey

to portray the idea that he believed him and Gonne were soul mates. Yeats feels only he can truly appreciate Gonne's internal and truest beauty. This portrays the timeless theme of unconditional yet unrequited love, providing a verbal representation of our inner feelings.

Similarly, "Wild Swans at Coole" uses symbols to explore relevant themes. This poem explores fundamental ideas such as age, love and inspiration. However, its true meaning to an individual is determined by their own thoughts and personal context. Yeats captivates the audience by analysing different aspects of yearning. The opening line, "The trees are in their autumn beauty" epitomizes the worrying period of time Yeats is experiencing through the connotations of autumn. It provokes us to recognize Yeats' allegory: life. His figurative winter is pending, fascinating the audience by highlighting the emotional urgency in the poem. Yeats may be referring to his inspiration expiring, or the loss of romance, perhaps both.

The symbolic value of the swans is diverse, as they represent everything that Yeats and humanity yearns for but cannot have: youth, beauty, immortality, love, and inspiration. The beauty of the swans and nature, allows us to associate ourselves and understand our finite nature, becoming part of this bigger idea. Thus, the swans act as a tool to communicate the essential ideas of the poem, making it relevant to modern humanity as it speaks to our inner desires. Likewise, the juxtaposition in 'now my heart is sore' and 'Their hearts have not grown old' shows Yeats' tendency to use contrasts to emphasise an idea. These lines communicate the consequences of ageing, and the immortality of the swans. On the other hand, the synecdoche of 'now my heart is sore' acts to represent Yeats' whole body and his negative feelings. It triggers the notion of Yeats questioning his own existence on this earth and the loss of his youth. Furthermore, the contrast between 'my' and 'their' depicts the theme of loneliness, also emphasised through the cacophony of vitality in 'All suddenly mount, And scatter wheeling in great broken rings Upon their clamorous wings'. These movements, which represent his separation from this aspect and ideal of beauty, nature and the eternal, break serenity. This symbolist poem communicates the idea of mankind feeling lonely, questioning the purpose of their existence and their role in this overarching idea, which is also evidenced by the rhetorical ending of the poem.

In summation, the truths of human kind and society are inherently expressed through poetry in the distinctive language formulations that encompass the piece of writing. The words of Edith Sitwell, "Poetry is the deification of reality" expresses the idea that poetry patterns can convey what's in the depths of somebody's heart. Yeats used powerful emotions as the origin of his artworks, permitting their infinite relevance in our community, as emotions are the centre of human condition. 'When you grow Old' and 'Wild Swans at Coole' epitomize the relevance of Yeats' poetry through their emphasis on prevalent themes. In this way, these poems will remain perpetually embedded in our society as great works of emotionally expressive art.