

## ***Resistance to British Cultural Imperialism in the Poetry of Allama Iqbal and W.B. Yeats***

***Dr. Sardar Muhammad***

Assistant Professor

Department of Humanities

COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad Campus, KPK, Pakistan

### **ABSTRACT**

*The article examines the views of Allama Iqbal and W.B. Yeats, against British Cultural imperialism. Through juxtaposing the poets from two different languages, different religious and cultural backgrounds, identical resistance has been traced against British colonizers' cultural expansion through religion, education, denouncing local history, and anglicizing social norms. It adds slightly to existing scholarship on comparative literature, literature of resistance, and post-colonial literature. To make a comparison of both poets, Zepetnek's model of thematic inclusion has been followed. It has been concluded that, despite racial, religious, and linguistic differences, the poetic resistance to alien culture by both poets has been almost similar, and natural agreement in their perspectives exists.*

***Keywords:*** Iqbal, Yeats, Cultural Imperialism, Civilization, Education.

### **Introduction**

Having intuitive sense of right and wrong, poets are usually perceived to be more sensitive about social, cultural, and political matters of a nation than other people. They are supposed to be gifted thinkers, talented analysts, careful observers, skillful communicators, and the men of letters equipped with all the dexterity of scholars and sages. They may be anticipated to realize their social responsibility of raising voice for protection and promotion of social values of their respective communities. They must highlight the peoples' apprehensions about the future of their culture. Their special talent as a seer is usually accepted as God gifted, and their leading role in the society is overwhelmingly appreciated. It gives them a sense of social responsibility, and moral duty to lead the people in the war against cultural

onslaught by an alien power. Allama Iqbal and W.B. Yeats are such poets who led their nations to safeguard their culture against British cultural imperialism.

Their comparison may give an insight to understand the nature of reaction by Indian and Irish people against onslaught of British culture. Although British rulers have been exercising control over the natural resources, means of living, social and political institutions, but the most alarming situation one can apprehend from the poetry of both poets is the dominance of British culture through education. The poets seem to resist against diminishing of their social values with a slogan of modernization, weakening their relation to religion, language, and history. The poets seem to respond in a similar way to Cultural imperialism in the form of Westernization for Iqbal and Anglicization for Yeats. Affinity in their way to resist British Cultural imperialism gives them a platform to come closer to each other from two different continents for a common cause and resist poetically to the loss of their identity at the hands of imperialists.

To facilitate the process of comparison, Zepetnek's theory of comparative literature has been followed to develop necessary framework to put the Poets side by side and investigate their poetry for identical points. Zepetnek's model provides practical guidelines for juxtaposing Iqbal and Yeats. Zepetnek as a theorist claims that Comparative Literature is "theoretical, methodological as well as ideological and political approach of inclusion."<sup>1</sup> Through thematic inclusion, the views of Iqbal and Yeats have been closely studied for finding out the points on which agreement between the poets naturally exists.

### **Review of Literature**

A variety of opinions about the poetry of both poets reflects major efforts in construing their poetry from different angles. Through sifting the sources of information available in libraries and internet it appears that existing research on comparative study of Iqbal and Yeats is not much higher. Ideological comparison of Iqbal and Yeats with other poets published in research articles is not even much in number. If one tries to find out existing study on juxtaposing them with other poets on cultural imperialism, it will not even then be considerable.

In Pakistan, the poetry of Allama Iqbal is usually regarded as a sacred word and majority of Pakistani scholars and teachers quote Iqbal's words to ensure authenticity of their literary and political claims. There is a general perception that Iqbal's poetry provided political awareness and foundation for the Muslim struggle for independence against British cultural dominance through various tools like, western democracy, English language and literature, modern western education, negation of Islamic way of life, and renunciation of Muslim culture and history through highly privileged Christian missionaries.

Iqbal truly represented Muslims of India through using poetry as a mode of

resistance. Iqbal was educated through western education system and was aware of positive and negative aspects of western culture. In this way, he could raise a voice against it. Uzma Qazi claims that "Iqbal's Urdu political poems can be viewed as literary resistance to the hegemony of imperial power. It is a resistance, embedded in a text, to a definable set of power relations and "all literary writing which emerges from these cultural locations will be understood as carrying a radical and contestatory content and this gives away the rather important point that subjected peoples are sometimes capable of producing reactionary literary documents."<sup>2</sup>

Iqbal's poetry seems to be partially composed under the influence of European poets including German, French and particularly, the English poet Milton. S.A. Vahid (1959) refers to Milton's influence on his poetry: "For a long time, wrote Iqbal to a friend as early as 1903, "I have been yearning to write in the manner of Milton (Paradise Lost, etc.) and the time for that seems to be fast approaching, because in these days there is hardly a moment when I am not thinking seriously of this."<sup>3</sup>

Annemarie Schimmel's comparison of Iqbal's Eastern spirit with Goethe's creativity in her well-known essay "Iqbal and Goethe"<sup>4</sup> gives an impression that Iqbal learnt much about western culture from the writings of poets. Iqbal's poetic development through penetrating into the spirit of western culture is perhaps the outcome of Goethe's influence, which is stated by Iqbal, "I confess, I owe a great deal to Hegel, Goethe, Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth. The first two led me into the "inside" of things; the third and fourth taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days."<sup>5</sup>

An inter-textual study of Yeats and Robert Bridges by Marcus and Nicholls <sup>6</sup> shows Robert Bridges's inspirational role in developing Yeats's anti-imperialist views. Robert Bridges's drama, *The Return of Ulysses* (1890) perhaps derived from the typical romance, *The Odyssey*, presents Penelope's suitors as imperialists. They compare Yeats's role to that of Ulysses who tries to recover his country from imperialists. Like Ulysses, to overthrow them, he disguised as a poet (to avoid any direct conflict) and exerted all of his energies to achieve his goal.

Ali Yigit's article on interpreting imperialism in selected poems of Mehmet Akif Ersoy and W. B. Yeats is a step forward in the direction of understanding Yeats's patriotism and nationalism as major motives behind his literary struggle against imperialism. Yigit aptly concludes that, "Yeats tried to awaken the sense of patriotism and nationalism in the Irish people thus gaining them a national spirit and identity that were necessary for independence. This was because British imperialism was systematically isolating the Irish from their core values."<sup>7</sup> Although it deliberates similarities of resistance in Turkey and Ireland, however, Turkish poet resisted overall western imperialism, but Yeats is focused on only British imperialism

### **Nature of Cultural Imperialism**

The term, Imperialism, has been a great topic for debate since later period of nineteenth century. Its multifaceted nature has however, made it more complex to understand. The ruthlessness that comes out of such a self-centered system of dominance may have the people victims of abuse and exploitation. A.P. Thornton claims that, "an imperial policy is one that enables a metropolis to create and maintain an external system of effective control. The control may be exerted by political, economic, strategic, cultural, religious, or ideological means, or by a combination of some or all of these."<sup>8</sup> The character of imperialism in this way becomes more amiable and appealing to its victims:

It sets up new social and economic structures and, quite literally, dislocates and disorients those who had their place in the old social and economic structures. While doing this, it presents for the first time both a set of alternatives and a frame of mind that can recognize them, and so the possibilities of freedom, or at least of movement, insert themselves into areas of life which had never known them.<sup>9</sup>

Thornton's interpretation of Imperialism gives some basic clues about understanding the onslaught of culture through removing or replacing existing social values and predominant way of life through popular tools of imperialism like indigenous elites, educated for specific purpose. A clear majority of the people is forced to adapt new beliefs to adjust in the new system and institutions for the sake of their own survival. The people in dominated societies are always expected to show reluctance in adopting new culture they have never been exposed to.

Cultural imperialism in India has been recognized with the label of Westernization and in Ireland, Anglicization. The meaning of these two terms in two different societies has been almost identical. The people in majority have never been inclined to accept the religion, ideals, and social values imported from England under the umbrella of education. The people of India and Ireland have perhaps presented the best example of resistance to external culture. In both societies, resistance has been shown by common people, educated in local institutions but it has been promoted to its ultimate stage by the leaders educated in British universities.

Allama Iqbal and W.B. Yeats were poet- philosophers and leaders, who led resistance to Cultural imperialism to its ultimate end. Both were educated by British teachers in England. They remained a part of British society for some time. They equally appreciated the worth of British lifestyle, English language and literature, British social and political system, art and architecture, ideology of religion and dress. That is why, they could seriously realize their destructive impact on Indian

and Irish culture. They could mobilize the people against British cultural dominance through pleading a case against it and they were in comparatively better position to fight against it. It was perhaps, their literary resistance to the dominance of alien culture which turned out to be a political war against British empire and ultimately resulted in political freedom of both countries.

### **Iqbal and Yeats on Cultural Imperialism**

Imperial authorities in England, to expand the horizons of their culture in India and Ireland, negated and overtly denounced cultural values of Indian and Irish people. A humiliating term, 'marginalized', was coined to promote a sense of inferiority among the people of both regions colonized by Great Britain. Religion (denouncing local religion), education (rejecting local system of education), history (disregarding local history), and British civilization (renouncing local lifestyle) have been some of the major tools of British cultural imperialism. Iqbal and Yeats have shown, resistance through their poetry, against these tools of cultural expansion.

#### **1. Religion**

If one goes through the history of India and Ireland, it becomes evident that religion has been a part of both cultures. The customs and traditions followed in both societies have roots in their religion. Denunciation of their religion by foreign rulers and replacing it with something new and entirely unknown to local population pushed them in the doldrums. Iqbal gives clear picture of Islam in the eyes of cultural invaders in "The Satan's Conference" by saying: "Knows he whom are revealed the inner secrets of time, not Mazdakism, but Islam is to be the trouble of the morrow."<sup>10</sup>

It gives an impression that Iqbal has clear view of real intentions behind the criticism and rejection of Islam. The imperial mind tries to weaken the roots of Islam and replace it with Christianity through indoctrination by Christian Missionaries. Iqbal's criticism of westerners' hypocrisy about separation of church from politics<sup>11</sup> seems to be logically convincing that the ruler is free from refraining Church, the politics of Westerners is like unchained monster, whenever they have an eye on others' wealth, the ambassadors of church play their role as front men. Their role is, in this way, minimized to mere propaganda agents.

Iqbal presents both faces of imperial authorities, i.e., how they think and how they act against subjected nations. In Iqbal's poem, Satan's Conference, the Devil who is a mouthpiece of imperial authorities acknowledges lack of conviction in Muslims but gives clear instructions about extermination of Islam from Indian society:

الحزر! أنین پیغمبر سے سو بار الحزر  
حافظ ناموس زن، مرد آزما، مرد آفریں  
چشم عالم سے رہے پوشیدہ یہ أنین تو خوب  
یہ عنیمت ہے کہ خود مومن ہے محروم یقین

Beware, a hundred times beware, of the law of the Prophet! The protector of women's

honor, the tester of men's capacities, the rearer of worthy men, Better, if this law be kept hidden from the world's eye, so much the better, the Believer himself is deprived of inner conviction.<sup>12</sup>

Through expressing concern about religion (Islam) as a real threat to imperial hegemony because of its valuable feature including, protection of women's honor, test of men's moral strength, and raising the levels of worthy men, the need for keeping the law of the Prophet hidden from the eyes of the people becomes necessary. It may help to keep the Muslim deprived of inner conviction. It may produce a nation of believers who look chanting religious slogans, but their words would be lacking true spirit of Islam.

The imperialists' design to curb the dynamic role of religion in society and negating it through promoting mystical aspect of religion confined to poetry, music, and whirling, but rejecting active life in material world. Iqbal resists against such a political propaganda against Islam. Through the speech of Satan (Mouthpiece of imperialism) he exposes the real face of defaming literature against Islam. The use of colonizers' whole machinery against Islam reveals the fact that Islam is the only hurdle on the way of disseminating and promoting the roots of western culture in Indian society. Iqbal says:

ہے وہی شعرو تصوف اس کے حق میں خوب تر  
جو چھپا دے اس کی آنکھوں سے تماشائے حیات  
ہر نفس ڈرتا ہوں اس امت کی بیداری سے میں  
ہے حقیقت جس کے دین کی احتساب کائنات

What is good in his case is that poetry and mysticism, which may keep hidden from his eyes the game of life, every moment do I dread the awakening of this community, whose religion is nothing but taking account of the universe.<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, W.B. Yeats, the poet of Irish resistance against the Church of England's penetration into Irish society through creating rift among catholic majority and Protestants, rejects its infiltration and expansion Anglican culture. To unite different religious sects, he provides mystical platform. In his poem "Vacillation",<sup>14</sup> he supports Christian mystical tradition through speaking about the body of Saint Teresa, which, according to Catholic tradition lies in the tomb without decaying.

Yeats seems to believe in restricting the influence of cultural imperialists in Irish society through uniting religious sects with diverse ideological backgrounds. In his well-known poem "To Ireland in the Coming Times" he professes his views as :

Know, that I would accounted be  
True brother of a company  
That sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong,  
Because, to him who ponders well,  
My rhymes more than their rhyming tell  
Of things discovered in the deep,

Where only body's laid asleep.<sup>15</sup>

He presents himself as a savior, and true brother, of the people of Ireland. He claims to save the people of his Ireland through correcting the path of their salvation. He claims to have discovered the right path for them. If the people, follow his views, their ultimate destination could be easier to achieve.

Yeats raises voice against Christianity as a tool to serve imperial designs of England. In his most commented and criticized poem, "The Wanderings of Oisín"<sup>16</sup> he advises his compatriots to stand against it. The poem is in the form of a dialogue between Oisín (Irish hero) and St. Patrick (the man supposed to convert Ireland to Christianity). In the last lines of book-iii, Oisín comes back to Ireland, his warrior companions are dead, and Patrick's Christianity has replaced pagan faith of Ireland. To challenge Christianity in the presence of English rule is perhaps a dangerous act on the part of W.B. Yeats.

## **2. Education**

Education has been another tool of British cultural imperialism. Right from Kipling's "Whiteman's burden", through whole colonial history, civilizing the uncivilized, has been an assumption most popularly disseminated and advocated throughout the world. Through teaching British literature commonly composed in English language the imperialists may be in a safer position, however, the people being civilized had to learn English language before they could study British Literature. In this way, it became almost a challenge to learn a foreign language to be able to study their literature. The imperialists perhaps realizing their duty, occupied India and Ireland to let the people be educated and civilized.

Apparently, it seems to be funny, a little bit surprising and extremely shocking, but the mindset of imperialists can think nothing more than achieving their goals by hook or by crook. Iqbal's response represents his serious concern over the use of education as a tool of imperial design. He construes imperialists' approach and expresses in his own words:

سینے میں رہے راز ملوکانہ تو بہتر  
کرتے نہیں محکوم کو تیغوں سے کبھی زیر  
تعلیم کے تیزاب میں ڈال اس کی خودی کو  
بو جائے ملائم تو جدھر چاہے اسے پھیر

It is better to keep the secret of imperialism in your bosom, Swords are not used ever to subjugate the people previously subjected, put his self-respect into acid of education (use education to deaden his self-respect), once it is softened, you can shape it as you desire.<sup>17</sup>

The form of education introduced by the imperial authorities seems to be more harmful to the culture of colonized nations. Instead of empowering them, it makes them hollow from within. They lose their self-respect and become slaves, who perhaps, understand reason but possess no reason. Iqbal compares it to a trade, in

which the educators snatch the soul of the people being educated. They are forced to exchange their religion (root of their society) with goblets and ewers. Education is perhaps more effective tool of promoting and strengthening the roots of western culture in Indian society. Iqbal criticizes parasitic role of western education in weakening the people through depriving them of their lifeblood. Iqbal observes:

دیکھیے چلتی ہے مشرق کی تجارت کب تک  
شیشہ دیں گے عوض جام و سیو لیتا ہے  
بے مداوائے جنوں نشترِ تعلیم جدید  
میرا سرجن رگِ ملت سے لہو لیتا ہے

Let us see, how long the business of the East continues, in exchange with religion they receive nothing but goblets and ewers, modern education is an antidote against the excess of love, my surgeon (educator) sucks this nation's veins dry of its blood.<sup>18</sup>

Interpreting Iqbal's views about the impact of western education on Indian youth Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi claims that "Iqbal holds the modern educational system responsible for the moral and spiritual decay of the Muslims. He says that the younger generation is devoid of inner warmth and lacking in piety. Its tongue is sharp but there is not a tear of repentance in its eye nor the fear of God in its heart."<sup>19</sup>

They seem to be indifferent towards their loss of cultural identity through modern education. W.B. Yeats has almost similar problem to face in Ireland. Irish education system under English rule was more like an industry especially designed to produce officials to serve the purposes of British imperialism. The schools and colleges being run by missionaries, promoted a divided nation based on ideological differences. The syllabus taught at educational institutions disseminated material for propaganda against Irish history, Irish values, and culture, and termed them inferior and worthless. Yeats perhaps realized the need to educate the people through producing literature based on Irish nationalism. Boehmer observes: "his efforts to vivify Irish cultural traditions and build a new national literature, have more recently been rightly placed in a broadly postcolonial context of resistance to imperial hegemony."<sup>20</sup>

Yeats seems to be fully confident in the support of his people and realizes the worth of his movement. It gives him necessary strength to claim that he will be able to eliminate the damaging impact of literature produced under the patronage of English rulers. In a letter to Katharine Tynan he writes: "I feel more and more that we shall have a school of Irish Poetry, founded on Irish myth and history, a neo-romantic movement."<sup>21</sup> Yeats achieved initial success through founding Irish National Theatre Society with the help his trustworthy companions including Lady Gregory. It worked with great enthusiasm to educate the people to resist against British cultural expansion and protect Irish literary values.

### 3. Renunciation of History

Every nation has its roots in history. It gives reason for a nation to be proud of their

own past. Through renouncing the history of colonized nations and glorifying their own, the imperialists have been expanding the horizons of their culture in the target society. Through writing and teaching history for specific purposes, the imperial designers have been able to present glorious deeds of a nation's heroes in such negative way that they appear to be shameful. Iqbal rejects this despicable attitude through an address to the Muslim youth:

تجھے اس قوم نے پالا ہے آغوش محبت میں  
کچل ڈالا تھا جس نے پاؤں میں تاج سردارا  
غرض میں کیا کہوں تجھ سے کہ وہ صحرائیں کیا تھے  
جہاں گیر و جہاں دار و جہاں بان و جہاں آرا  
تجھے آبا سے اپنے کوئی نسبت ہو نہیں سکتی  
کہ تو گفتار وہ کردار، تو ثابت وہ سیارا  
مگر وہ علم کے موتی، کتابیں اپنے آبا کی  
جو دیکھیں ان کو یورپ میں تو دل ہوتا ہے سپارا

You came of a stock that nourishes you in the close embracing of love, a stock that trampled underfoot Dara who wore the crown. In short, in words can I tell you what were these desert men? Holders, Keepers, Saviors, Adorners of what we call the world. There is no standard by which to judge Yours and your father's worth. You utter words, but they did deeds. They roamed: you stay at home. Those pearls of learning's lore, those books our fathers wrote, we see in Europe; the heart is rent with grief.<sup>22</sup>

In almost all biographies of Iqbal it is stated that in early 1930s Iqbal visited Europe to see the monuments of Muslim rule in Spain, which in majority lost their identity and became a part of Christian civilization of Europe. It gave Iqbal a new sense of nationalism. Iqbal realized a similar fate is waiting for Muslim culture in India. Uzma Qazi claims that, "Iqbal fears this type of future for the Indian Muslims. Despite the poignancy of the experience, the visit to the Mosque of Cordoba fills Iqbal's bosom with a desire to awaken his people by projecting Islam's earlier glory and kindling a desire for its renaissance."<sup>23</sup>

According to Javid Iqbal<sup>24</sup> the son and biographer of Allama Iqbal, during his prayer in the mosque of Cordoba Iqbal asked God about the Muslims who ruled for centuries, and established universities to impart knowledge in that land, the entire Europe owes its civilization to Muslim rulers of Spain. A Muslim from the same nation is bound to seek permission to offer prayer in a mosque built by his forefathers. Iqbal raised a voice to let his nation avoid its culture from being absorbed in the culture of imperial designers.

Like Iqbal, Yeats also rejected the impression of poor historical background of Ireland. Under British rule it was projected with greater force of logic that Irish people have no history to inspire them for realizing their national character. Yeats has not only refuted this notion but also proved through his writings that Irish

people have rich history to be proud of. Sander Feys rightly observes:

Yeats creates a vision that needs to help Ireland attain the independence it has been fighting for. Through his literature, he undertakes to construct a national identity that has its roots in ancient Ireland, a time when the Irish people were still free and a place where legendary heroes fought for the nation's honour and glory. Yeats hopes these tales will inspire the nation and address the crisis of representation in which the Irish found themselves.<sup>25</sup>

Yeats, through poetry tries to revive old traditions to give a message to his nation that their past was glorious, the tales from the past makes them feel proud of what was prevalent in the land where they are suffering from a sense of inferiority and lack of resourcefulness. If they look at their bright past they would be able to regain the lost grandeur and national pride back in near future. "Yeats, known as one of the Irish national poets, used his pen to restore the Irish culture, old Celtic traditions, folklore and myth. The ideal of Yeats was to add Irish national and literary values into the British literature, mainly dominant on the island."<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. British Civilization

Iqbal's response to British or western civilization is based on his minute study of British society, its norms and values. Iqbal believes that, western civilization is a trap for Muslims. As much as they adopt so-called western refinement, the roots of their belief in Islamic culture will be weakened. It will help western imperialists to promote their culture in Indian society. British model of democracy is perhaps the best tool of cultural imperialism. Iqbal, fully focusing on its ulterior motives, rejects electoral democracy introduced by the colonizers in Indian environment:

اٹھا کر پھینک دو باہر گلی میں  
نئی تہذیب کے انڈے ہیں گندے  
الکشن، ممبری، کونسل، صدارت  
بنائے خوب آزادی نے پھندے

Throw them out in the street, the eggs of new civilization are rotten, election, membership, council, presidency, the traps of liberation are very strange.<sup>27</sup>

Iqbal realizes the worth and real face of democracy. He strongly believes that western democracy is nothing but a garb to cover the darker face of western culture. The man with little knowledge of the world and political wisdom may be easily convinced to appreciate it without bothering much about its undesirable consequences. Iqbal is convinced that the darker side of this system is more a poison than blessing for Islamic way of life:

ہم نے خود شاہی کو پہنایا ہے جمہوری لباس  
جب ذرا آدم ہوا ہے خود شناس و خود نگر

تو نے کیا دیکھا نہیں مغرب کا جمہوری نظام  
چہرہ روشن، اندروں چنگیز سے تاریک تر

We ourselves have dressed imperialism in the garb of democracy, when man has grown to be a little self-conscious and self-observant. Have you not observed the democratic system of the West? with a brilliant exterior, its interior is darker than that of Changez.<sup>28</sup>

However, Iqbal knows that it is not an easier task to defuse the impact of western civilization. The fool who considers it to be mere glasswork, let him dare smash the goblets and ewers of this Civilization.<sup>29</sup> In this way, it appears that, although Iqbal is aware of the power inherent in western civilization, he believes in raising voice against it.

Similarly, Yeats has a view that instead of being part of Great Britain for long time Ireland is a separate country with its own long and rich history. Its culture is based on its own religion, literature, Celtic art and old European traditions. He raises voice against British civilization as a token of imperialism. His poetry disclosed the darker face of British civilization under the garb democracy, liberty, and humanitarian values. In "Leda and the Swan," Yeats tries to give a message that under the violent power of Imperialists, who least care for the life and sentiments of weaker nations, the right of self-determination can be nothing more than a dream.

Through making use of symbolism, he clearly states that British rule in Ireland is not based on mutual consent and reconciliation but an outcome of violent force. The physical features of the swan include, the beating wings, the dark webbed feet, the long neck and beak. In this way, the swan becomes a violent divine force (how a god can be violent?). Yeats uses the rape by god (Zeus) as a metaphor to define British domination and exploitation in Ireland:

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still  
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed  
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,  
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.<sup>30</sup>

Symbolic nature of the poem allows several interpretations. However, keeping in view the political conditions in Ireland, Leda's exploitation by greater power seems to be more relevant to Irish people's loss of cultural identity by British colonizers. If the series of exploitation does not come to end there is a possibility for bloodshed and extermination of European civilization. The depiction of violence in dominating the innocence shows serious concern about unpredictable future of Irish civilization.

In another poem "Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" Yeats shows his concern for the use of force to disrupt Irish civilization. He rejects undemocratic tactics used against Irish dreams of freedom and cultural exploitation. Reviving Irish culture, in the light of typical Irish way of life through Irish clothing style, expressing the pleasure and anguish in Irish style are dreams to be materialized:

Had I the heavens' 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.<sup>31</sup>

Yeats's criticism echoes his struggle against British civilization which he believes, is a tool of Cultural imperialism. It appears to be supported by clear majority of Irish people, who may think about fighting to safeguard their fundamental right to spend their life in accordance with Irish civilization. According to L.B Williams,<sup>32</sup> Yeats's participation in cultural associations like, Gaelic Athletic Association and Gaelic league is focused on promoting Irish language, and clothing style. Through such activities, the culture of Ireland is anticipated to be revived, popularized and promoted.

#### **Thematic Similarities**

The study of Religion, Education, History, and Civilization, as paraphernalia of British cultural imperialism, with reference to the poetry of Allama Iqbal and W.B.Yeats, shows major affinities in the views of both poets. Although the poets selected for this study come from two different races, religions, educational backgrounds, languages and cultures, yet the form of resistance to British cultural expansion in their respective communities is almost similar. The poetry of both poets provides necessary material for understanding the nature of cultural domination of Great Britain in India and Ireland.

The poetry of Iqbal and Yeats provides necessary information to form logical opinion about the tactics used by British colonizers to uproot the essence of religion, the use of education for the defacement of cultural values, renunciation of local history to promote a sense of racial inferiority among the people of colonized societies. The negation and replacement of Indian and Irish civilizations through applying modern tactics of British civilization including professionalism, electoral democracy, British style of clothing, British literature, print media, institutionalized racism, infrastructure development, and technological advancement.

To show resistance to British Cultural Imperialism, both poets have used similar technique of criticizing the role of imperialists at one hand and reviving the spirit of local culture at the other hand. It is also interesting to note that they wrote in two different languages but the level of their realization of the damaging impact of British culture is also similar. Both show equal level of understanding about the norms of British society, the mindset of British people, and defining features of their

culture. In this way, both poets have been equally successful in reviving the spirit of nationalism in their respective communities. It ultimately resulted in the freedom of India and Ireland from Great Britain.

### **Conclusion**

Iqbal and Yeats have greatly contributed to promote cultural awareness in their people. As both are poets, they could express and educate the people without apparently offending the rivals. Their anger could be translated into a positive force to serve the interests of their own people. As both had been a part of British society for some time and developed better understanding of British culture. Their level of awareness about British culture was perhaps higher than other members of their communities which helped them to criticize and reject it. Through reposing indisputable confidence in their abilities as leaders, seers, and poets, their people gave them all rights to speak on their behalf, with their force, for their cause. It can be safely concluded that, under similar social and political conditions, the poetry as a mouthpiece of both poets i.e., Iqbal and Yeats, gave similar message to both colonizers and colonized.

### **References & Notes:**

1. S.T. Zepetnek, *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), 17.
2. Uzma Qazi, *Iqbal's Urdu Political Poems: The Writer Against Colonialism* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2013), 5.
3. Syed Abdul Wahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought* (London: John Murray, 1959), 5.
4. Annemarie Schimmel, "Iqbal and Goethe", *Iqbal. Essays and Studies*, ed. Asloob Ahmed Ansari (New Delhi: Ghalib Academy, 1978), 271-284.
5. Javid Iqbal, *Stray Reflections: The Private Notebook of Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2008), 53.
6. Marcus and Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of Twentieth Century English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 92.
7. Ali Yigit, "The Concept of Patriotism and Struggle against Imperialism in the Selected Poems of Mehmet Akif Ersoy and W. B. Yeats". *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies* 18, No.4(2012): 123.
8. A.P. Thornton, *Imperialism in the Twentieth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 3.
9. A.P. Thornton, *Imperialism in the Twentieth Century*, 49.
10. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *Kulyat-e-Iqbal(Urdu)* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1990), 709.
11. Ibid. 665.
12. Ibid. 710.
13. Ibid. 712.
14. W.B. Yeats, *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011)

15. Michael O' Neil, *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on the Poems of W.B. Yeats* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 102.
16. W.B. Yeats, *The Wanderings of Oisín, and other Poems*.
17. Iqbal, *Kulyat-e-Iqbal* (Urdu), 666.
18. Ibid. 320.
19. Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Glory of Iqbal*, Trans. Mohammad Asif Kidwai. (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1979), 64.
20. Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and Postcolonial, 1890-1920: Resistance in Interaction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 183.
21. W.B. Yeats, *The Letters of W. B. Yeats* ed. Allan Wade. (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 33.
22. Iqbal, *Kulyat-e-Iqbal* (Urdu), 207.
23. Uzma Qazi, *Iqbal's Urdu Political Poems: The Writer Against Colonialism* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2013), 70.
24. Javid Iqbal, *Zindarud: Allama Iqbal's Complete Biography* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2004), 556.
25. Sander Feys, *Cultural Nationalism in the Life and Work of W. B. Yeats: The Man Behind the Myth* (Ghent: Ghent University, 2010), 26.
26. L. B Williams, "Overcoming the Contagion of Mimicry: The Cosmopolitan Nationalism and Modernist History of Rabindranath Tagore and W. B. Yeats". *American Historical Review* (2007): 75
27. Iqbal, *Kulyat-e-Iqbal* (Urdu), 323.
28. Ibid. 704.
29. Ibid. 708.
30. W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Richard J. Finneran. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989)
31. W. B. Yeats, *The Wind Among the Reeds* (New York: John. Lane, 1899), No. 36. <https://www.bartleby.com/br/146.html>
32. L. B Williams, "Overcoming the Contagion of Mimicry: The Cosmopolitan Nationalism and Modernist History of Rabindranath Tagore and W. B. Yeats". *American Historical Review* (2007): 76.