

The tension displayed in w.b yeats' poetry

Profession, Poet



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When one hears the name 'Yeats', one most likely thinks of the man many consider to be Ireland's greatest ever poet. However, if you were to ask these poets to discuss their favourite aspects of his poetry, I am sure that the response would amount to little more than some 'umming' and 'erring' and the occasional 'his alliteration' from those who remember their days at school. I must admit, I was the same before I began studying his work. Now, however, I consider myself well versed on the subject of Yeats' poetry. I can identify, as many others can, with his longing to escape the pressures of civilisation and with his desire to possess the courage his heroes did. Above all, I can identify with his wish for an ideal world. Quite frankly, Yeats was a bitter, arrogant and cynical man who, despite his riches and comfortable lifestyle, never seemed happy. An Anglo-Irish descendant, he spent part of his childhood in England, before returning to Dublin for the later part of his education. He was greatly influenced by Maud Gonne, his unrequited lover, and Lady Augusta Gregory, an old friend of his. Yeats spent his life moaning about the problems with the modern world and with his own body. He longed to escape to his ideal world, where he could be young and carefree once again, and be free of the pressures that so irritated him during his life. Many themes are evident throughout Yeats' work. He displays themes of nature, pacifism and of immortality through art. However, the most visible theme presented in his work is his desire to live in the ideal world. The manner in which his poetry is driven by a tension between the real world in which he lives and his ideal world he imagines is fascinating. The late great Seamus Heaney (another personal favourite) described Yeats as 'a dreamer, an idealist'. It is hard to

disagree with him. Perhaps the clearest example of Yeats' ideal world is shown in one of his most well-known...