Review of literature:

Review of the Related Literature

Unterecker, John Eugene: A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats (1959). This study gives general information about William Butler Yeats, his life and works. Apart from that the book also highlights how Yeats was interested in Irish folklore and mythology which ultimately led him to associate them with Indian folklore and legends. Yeats: A Collection of Critical Essays ed. by John Untercker (1963). This book is a general collection of critical essays on Yeats. These essays make Yeats’s aesthetic and philosophical stance quite clear. They also throw light on Yeats’s concept of poetry, art, philosophy and his “New” religion. Parkinson, Thomas: W.B. Yeats: the Later Poetry (1964). As the title suggests, this book relates to Yeats’s poetry written during the later part of his life. It clearly captures the transformation in Yeats’s poetry due to maturing of intelligence. Besides, the book also illustrates how Yeats shifted from worldly to spiritual and philosophical aspirations. W. B. Yeats: the Critical Heritage ed. by A. Norman Jeffares(1977). The book truly reveals Yeats as a link between 19th and 20th century. It also expresses some of the attitudes and stance adopted by Yeats in tune with the critical and intellectual legacy of his times. He was the supreme artist and a critic. Bramsäck, Birgit: Folklore and W. B. Yeats: the Function of Folklore Elements in Three Early Plays (1984). This book reveals the Irishness of Yeats. His childhood memories of Sligo haunted him during his entire life. He was extremely interested in old Celtic culture with its folklore and a saga which is aptly expressed not only his poems but also in his plays. In fact, it was this instinct that led him to set up Abbey Theatre to revive old Gaelic literature. Jeffares, Alexander Norman: W.B. Yeats: a New Biography (1988). The biography aptly captures the details of incidents and events in the life of Yeats. It shows how Yeats entangled with women in
his life and could not satisfy his wish to elicit love from Maud Gonne leading to a great frustration in life. It also reveals how despite of unrequited love and frustration, Yeats continued his literary journey of writing and publishing a number of works. **Pierce, David: Yeats’s Worlds: Ireland, England and the Poetic Imagination (1995).** According to David Pierce, Yeats lived in Ireland and adopted some literary tendencies of English literature, but his imagination was in search of something else that was always unknown, mysterious and abstract. In fact, it was this attitude that led Yeats to find suitable symbols in French Symbolism, Caballah and Occultism. A number of poets, critics and scholars from India have found in Yeats’s poetry a strong response to India and Indian philosophy. The most influential are the famous Hindi poet **Harivanshrai Bachchan (W.B.Yeats and the Occult), Shankar Ravindran (W.B.Yeats and the Indian Tradition) Naresh Guha (W.B.Yeats: An Indian Approach), Mokashi-Punekar, Shankar (The Later Phase in the Development of W.B.Yeats), V.Y. Kantak (Yeats’s Indian Experience), Coomaraswamy, Ananda (The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays), Shah, Rameshchandra (Yeats and Eliot: Perspectives on India)** and a number of works written by non-Indians speak volumes for the influence of Hinduism in the poetry of Yeats. Yeats ‘the most learned of Poets’ was learned in the profoundest sense, in the religious sense. Deeply influenced by Hinduism all his life, his later poems are colored by the Upanishad, and in those imaginary people, created out of the deepest instinct of man to be his measure and his norm. Unlike T.S. Eliot, who was to identify himself with the European religion, Christianity, W.B. Yeats identified himself with that ‘Oriental’ philosophy the Vedantic tradition, that to the Unity of Being, which the Upanishad have named Self. The supernatural Songs move from a line in Latin about Divine Love, through human love, through Greek myth, into a kind of Hindu ecstasy of being. It then leads into the final two songs, which concern themselves with death, again seen through that
fountainhead of spiritual knowledge that it is the heart of Vedic metaphysics. **Dillon, Myles** in his book *Celts and Aryans* nicely compares the similarities between the cultures of Ireland with Indian. Apart from the striking resemblance of syntax, morphology and vocabulary, Vedic Sanskrit and old Irish have similar prosodic features. Dillon notes that Clavert Watkins, a scholar of Indo-European prosody has compared the metres of Gaelic and Sanskrit (Dillon 17). Dillon cites many examples of similarities and also earlier works of comparison between the two languages. He highlights the similarities in the court poetry and the heroic tradition of the two cultures. **Rig-Veda** mentions "Sutas", professional court poets who enjoyed a position next to the king's brother. Their function was the preserve the genealogies of the gods, rishies and the kings. Ireland and its Druids who also enjoyed a position of great privilege. They could even persuade the kings to stop wars. The tradition of professional bards who preserve the genealogies through their songs is kept alive in India even today by the Bhats and Charans in some Indian states like Punjab and Rajasthan, Jhaervchand Meghani, a Gujarati writer of folk literature has called the Irish bards European Charans and discussed the similarities between the two traditions at length (Meghani 32-33). Thus, in India and Ireland the poet was also the historian.

Dillon draws interesting parallels between Irish and Indian Legends. King Cormac macAirt, for example has an adventure similar to that of kind Dushyant. Just as Dushyant meets Shakuntala, Cormac also meets Buchet in the forest by chance and marries her; Parashuram like the Irish Tuirbe Tragmar throws his axe against the tide in the sea and stays the tide. The Adventures of Nerac' opens with a thirsty corpse, similar to king Vikrama's Vetala, the ghost. Nerac sees a blind man with a lame man on his back going to a well. Lady Gregory has recorded this in *cuchullin* of Muirthemme and Yeats used this idea but replaced the lame man by a fool in *On Baile's Strand* and some other works. In the Sankhya philosophy, Purusa and Prakruti are presented as the
physical and spiritual elements in nature. The one is blind energy and the other is cripple consciousness. Their union like the lame man on a blind man’s shoulders can be creative. Though there is no parallel to the Nala and Damayanti story in Irish, many of the motifs are commonly found in Irish sagas. Nala and Damayanti are in love though they have not seen each other, the swan carriers the message of love, four gods disguise as Nala to confuse Damayanti in the Swayamvara and it is the making of four true statements (an Act of Truth) that moves the gods to ultimately put off their disguises. Love for the unseen (Grad Ecmaise meaning love in absence) is very common in Irish sagas. It is found in Tain Bo travich, tale of Cano, son of Grathan. In the Irish mythological tale Wooing of Etain, we find fifty girls in the disguise of Etain and the king is faced with the task of choosing the real Etain. In many Irish tales a person can work miracles by an Act of Truth, a recitation or pronouncement of truth. That truth has miraculous powers is a common Irish belief reflected in the story of Cormac’s Adventures in the Promised Land and another story about how he became the kind of Ireland. Truth was considered the life giving principle, the sustaining power of the universe. The Testament of Morand (Sixth century) exalts truth in an Upanishadic tone. For the Indians traditionally God is Truth and Truth is Beauty (Satyam Shivam Sundaram). In an Irish story, the poet Athirne asks the one-eyed king Echaid for his only eye and when the king gives it, the gods restore both his eyes. In the Indian parallel, a Brahman asks King Sibi for one of his eyes and when the king gives both his eyes, Indra the king of the gods restores them. The concept of Shravana Fala (Reward for listening to a tale) is found in the Mahabharata as well as some Irish tales. One who hears The Cattle Raid of Colley is guaranteed protection for a year, and as many as thirty virtues are attached to the story of The Vision of Maccon Glinne (Dillon 81-90). Ancient Ireland had its spirits much like the Devas of India. Yeats in his essay "The philosophy of Shelley's Poetry" says,
"Intellectual beauty has not only the happy dead to do her will but ministering spirits who correspond to the Devas of the East and the Elemental Spirits of Medieval Europe and the Sidhe of ancient Ireland" (E & I 74).

When old country people see leaves whirling they bless themselves because they think Sidhe to be passing by. Indian country folk also believe whirlwinds to be caused by spirits. The mythological conflict between Devas and Asuras (gods and demons) is comparable to the struggle between Tuatha De Danann and Fir Bolg. The Irish god of the dead Donn, the first to die, the father of all men and women is very similar to the Indian god of death Yama. The Irish word Sidhe may be from the same origin as the Sanskrit word Siddhi. In 1890s Yeats began to compare Irish, Assyrian and Indian symbols and wanted to set up an Irish mystical order using the Indian concept of Tattwas.