

## ABSTRACT

### NIETZSCHE'S INFLUENCE ON YEATS'S POETIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT

Yeats accepts Nietzsche's influence antithetically, that is, Yeats does not just borrow Nietzsche's ideas but also antithetically complements them. An overview of Yeats' contribution to the world of poetry, drama and philosophy brings forth so many facets of his art that Sean O'Faolain seems right in his claim: "There was no Yeats! I watched him invent himself." Yeats emerges to have an elusive personality mainly because of his "so many selves" politician, a philosopher, a poet and a mage—that he develops and exhibits in his writings at different stages in his life. This study of Yeats under Nietzsche's influence will show that behind every self Yeats seems to have struggled for one and the same self: the self of Overman containing all important features of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.

"Introduction", states that influence is a technically defined term. Bohiman intentionally evades "the tangled question of influence" in order to trace "distinct reverberations" of Nietzschean themes in Yeats. Harold Bloom on the other hand concentrates on the study of a "poet in a poet," and excludes from his *The Anxiety of Influence* the discussion of un-poetic influences on a poet. This research will contend Bohiman and provide a lucid definition of Influence. It will also contend Bloom by studying a philosopher in a poet. Chapter 1, "Symbols of Ascensionism" discusses that it is the imagery of height employed by Nietzsche in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1891) that hovers over Yeats' mind and art. Through an inter-textual analysis it is proved here that such imagery signifies the attributes of Overman both in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and Yeats' poetry. Chapter 2, "History as Gyre", makes an inter-textual analysis to illustrate that Nietzsche and Yeats share the belief in cyclical movement of history, and situate Overman in a historical context where history repeats itself and never dies. Chapter 3, "Overman as a Mage" offers a reading of Yeats' poetry and *Essays and Introductions* (1961) to demonstrate that as a mage Yeats conceives Overman who "had the look/Of those that are alive for ever and ever." "Conclusion" sums up that Yeats' movement towards a concrete version of Overman antithetically opposes Nietzsche's movement towards an idealized Overman. Through this antithetical opposition Yeats not only absorbs Nietzsche but also extends him.