This study is a minor addition to the great mass of literature on Yeats. Its chief aim is to present a compact and reasonably comprehensive account of political influences on Yeats's development as a poet. Yeats, like other major poets, went through many changes in his views on the nature of poetry, and in this respect political influences were of cardinal importance. The political situation of Ireland as well as of Europe, the family tradition, public leaders and the political philosophies of Castiglione, Swift, Burke and Berkeley constantly influenced the bulk of his poetry. In the beginning of his poetical career Yeats wrote poetry in imitation of Spenser, Shelley, Morris and Pater. It was because of the influence of politics that he left the world of Arcadia and wrote poems that deal with contemporary problems of Ireland. The poetry he wrote after 1889 has a great deal of political inspiration behind it though it deals with values and eternal problems of human life.

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The editions of the books I have quoted from and referred to, are mentioned in the Bibliography. In case, where two editions are mentioned, references are made to the revised editions.