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## **W. B. YEAT'S PRESENCE IN JAMES JOYCE'S A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN**

### **Abstract**

In the context of scholarly re-evaluations of James Joyce's relation to the literary revival in Ireland at the start of the twentieth century, this essay examines the significance of W.B. Yeats to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It traces some of the debates around Celtic and Irish identity within the literary revival as a context for understanding the pre-occupations evident in Joyce's novel, noting the significance of Yeats's mysticism to the protagonist of *Stephen Hero*, and its persistence in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* later. The essay considers the theme of flight in relation to the poetry volume that is addressed directly in the novel, Yeats's 1899 collection, *The Wind Among the Reeds*. In the process, the influence of Yeats's thought and style is observed both in Stephen Dedalus's forms of expression and in the means through which Joyce conveys them. Particular attention is drawn to the notion of enchantment in the novel, and its relation to the literature of the Irish Revival. The later part of the essay turns to the 1899 performance of Yeats's play, *The Countess Cathleen*, at the Antient Concert Rooms in Dublin, and Joyce's memory of the performance as represented through Stephen towards the end of the novel. Here, attention is given to the mystical and esoteric aspects of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, aspects that the novel shares with the poetry and drama of Yeats.

**Key words:** Joyce, Yeats, Irish Revival, Celtic mysticism, esoteric enchantment, flight, Swedenborg, smithy

James Joyce's sarcasm towards the Irish literary movement in Dublin in the 1890s has long been acknowledged, but the interpretation of its significance has shifted profoundly over the course of the past twenty-five years. Under the influence of postcolonial and postmodernist theories of literature, Joyce's work is no longer assumed to represent a cosmopolitan rejection of history and tradition in an assertion of individual artistic creativity free from all duty to represent anything in the service of a political or a cultural objective. Alistair Cormack contends that an American liberal tradition of interpreting Joyce as a cosmopolitan literary modernist has been replaced by post-colonial assessments in Irish historical frameworks (Cormack 2008: 1). Important critical re-evaluations of Joyce's relation to the Irish Literary Revival by Emer Nolan and Declan Kiberd have re-cast his attitudes in a new light. Nolan in particular has excavated the operation of structures of national-consciousness formation within the literary media that Joyce employs in his writing prior to *Ulysses*. Challenging what seems to be the self-evident fact of Stephen Dedalus's quest for artistic and individual freedom in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* — in which he seeks release from the constraints of Irish Catholic nationalism — Nolan proposes that Stephen's "self-fashioning" is deeply ironic, in that it re-enacts at the level of artistic form what it rejects at the level of cultural value. Her argument implies that Stephen's desire to create 'Mé Féin' (Myself Alone) repeats the aspiration of 'Sinn Féin' (Ourselves Alone) at the level of structure, even as Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* refuses to engage in the political activities that were promoted in real life through Arthur Griffith's nationalist party, Sinn Féin. In this way, Nolan is able to assert that Dedalus "re-enacts the self-making and self-discovery of the nationalist cultural project" in the era of the Irish Literary Revival (Nolan 1995: 38).

Famously, Joyce caricatured the movement that was once coined the "Celtic Twilight" as "the Cultic Twalette" in *Finnegans Wake* (Joyce 1939: 344). The satirical pun has become the stuff of Joycean legend, James Fairhall alluding to it in the course of his important reconsideration of Joyce's relation to cultural nationalism in Ireland (Fairhall 1993: 45). Interestingly, Heyward Ehrlich identifies W.B. Yeats and his work *The Celtic Twilight* — first published in 1893 and republished as an expanded edition in 1902 — as the specific target, reading "Twalette" as a merger of the French-perfumed "toilette" with the idiomatic common-English insult "twat" (Ehrlich 1999: 146). That Joyce may have had Yeats specifically in mind for

caricature here is significant, raising the matter of how to characterise his own relation to Ireland's foremost poet of his time. Cormack's more recent study of the connections between the work of Yeats and Joyce illustrates the depth and the complexity of Yeats's influence on Joyce and the direction in which Joyce took Yeats's esoteric philosophies in his own mature works, particularly *Finnegans Wake*. He identifies the significance of *Stephen Hero* in this respect, the manuscript composed between 1904 and 1906, in which Stephen Dedalus walks the streets of Dublin at night repeating to himself Yeats's stories, *The Tables of the Law* and *The Adoration of the Magi* (Joyce 1977: 160). Along with *Rosa Alchemica*, these stories were first published in a single volume in 1897 (Yeats 1952b: 267-318). Cormack contends that Joyce replaced Stephen Dedalus's admiration — in *Stephen Hero* — for the heretical mysticism that Yeats's stories proclaim, with “the defence of a new outlaw” in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Cormack 2008: 41). This assertion, that the influence of Yeats's heterodoxy did not survive the transition from the 1904-1906 manuscript to the published novel of 1916, is open to question, however, as my discussion below of esotericism in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* illustrates.

Maria Tymoczko expresses her surprise that Joyce's earliest publications — the short stories, ‘The Sisters’, ‘Eveline’, ‘After the Race’ — should even have been considered for publication in *The Irish Homestead* in 1904, the newspaper of the Irish Co-operative Movement that had a direct link to the Literary Revival through George Russell (A.E.) (Tymoczko 1994: 251). Mystic, poet and painter of the Revival, Russell makes his appearance in the “Scylla and Charbydis” episode of *Ulysses* that Kiberd regards as Joyce's critical judgement upon academicism: the “endless quotations from the dead authors” that pickle the conversation in the National Library of Ireland (Kiberd 1995: 349). Tymoczko misses the point that the literary scene in Dublin of the early years of the twentieth century was, as Emer Nolan has illustrated, by no means homogenous. Yeats's notion of “Celtic Twilight” was a contested aspect of the Literary Revival in Ireland, one that drew its influence as much from French Symbolism, the London Pre-Raphaelites and Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Gods* as it did from Irish folk-stories and heroic mythology. Indeed, Yeats himself publicly rejected the idea that he was advocating a “Celtic Twilight” movement or a “Celtic renaissance” in modern Irish literature. Writing in 1900 in Denis Patrick Moran's newspaper, *The Leader*, Yeats repudiated Moran's attack on the “Celtic Twilight” by claiming that he never used the phrases “Celtic note” or

“Celtic Renaissance” except when quoting from others, and that he actually disagreed with Matthew Arnold’s idea of “the Celt.” Indeed, Yeats expressed his dislike of the phrases here, partly because he found them vague and partly because they had entered into the mainstream press, where they became effectively meaningless (Yeats 1993: 279). As testimony to the absence of consensus among writers and intellectuals in Dublin at the time of the Irish Revival, we need only look at *Literary Ideals in Ireland* of 1899, in which essays — by Yeats, John Eglinton, A.E., and William Larminie — discuss the direction of a new Irish Literary movement, with particular concern around the influence of Wagner, English Romanticism, and the French “Decadence” on shaping directions for modern Irish literature in English (Eglinton 1899). These discussions were extended in 1901 with the publication of *Ideals in Ireland*, edited by Lady Augusta Gregory and containing important political and cultural essays by Russell, George Moore, Denis Patrick Moran, Douglas Hyde, Standish O’Grady and Yeats (Gregory 1901).

First published in book form in 1916 at a stage when Joyce had been living in continental Europe for over thirteen years, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* measures in the quality of its language and style the distance that separates him from the protagonist of the novel, Stephen Dedalus, who moves impressionistically from childhood to early adulthood in preparation for a final departure from the environment that has shaped him. One would assume that this distance would include distance from Yeats and his desire to recover a mythical Irish past that might counter the direction in which the country had been moving for some time: towards a petty bourgeois norm overseen by a clergy largely suspicious of intellectualism (notable exceptions included the Jesuit priest Thomas P. Finlay, the prolific novelist Canon Sheehan, and the writer Jeremiah O’Donovan, who eventually left the priesthood and authored the best-seller, *Fr. Ralph*, in 1911). A diary entry for April 6 towards the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* seems to confirm that such a distance has, indeed, been marked. Here, Stephen Dedalus makes reference to Yeats’s fictional persona Michael Robartes and a poem from Yeats’s 1899 collection, *The Wind Among the Reeds*. Stephen rejects the speaker’s lament for a loveliness “long faded from the world,” desiring instead a loveliness “which has not yet come into the world” (Joyce 1992a: 273). Of course, Stephen’s rejection of what Frank O’Connor would later call “the backward look” is already undercut ironically by the fact that Joyce himself is looking

back to a much earlier phase of his life as he prepared the final manuscript of his novel for publication in the mid-1910s (O'Connor 1967). Critical readings of Yeats's influence on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which Joyce is seen to look to the future as Yeats looks to the past, often fail to take Joyce's own retrospection into account. Like Yeats through Michael Robartes, Joyce too was adopting a mask in doing so, the mask of Stephen Dedalus.

The motif of flight is central to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and another apparent basis upon which to distinguish the novel from the kind of literature that Yeats desired both in his poetry and drama. One of the most well-known lines from the novel identifies flight specifically in relation to the traditional pre-occupations of Irish society that Stephen is determined to escape: "You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets (Joyce 1992a: 220)". Critics have underplayed the fact that this sentence is an aspiration rather than a determination: Stephen is well aware that there is no guarantee that he will succeed in his efforts. Joyce's own perpetual return to the memories of his earlier life in Ireland as the inspiration for his writing while living in Italy suggests that his literary creation, Stephen, fails to escape those nets. More significantly, Stephen's declaration actually *repeats* the call in one of Yeats's most "Cultic Twalette" poems, "Into The Twilight," again from *The Wind Among the Reeds*:

Out-worn heart, in a time out-worn,  
Come clear of the nets of wrong and right; (Yeats 1950: 65)

Yeats's poem looks towards an eternally youthful "mother Eire", "a mystic brotherhood" and a state in which "time and the world are ever in flight." This is certainly not what Stephen Dedalus has in mind, though the mystical dimension to flight here is evoked dramatically in the later stages of Joyce's novel. More importantly, Yeats's desire to develop an Irish Literary Movement — beyond the marked political divisions between Nationalists and Unionists, and the religious divisions between Catholics and Protestants — aligns his "nets of wrong and right" with those nets of nationality, religion and politics that Stephen desires to escape in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Strengthening the case for the specific influence of Yeats's poem on Stephen's celebrated declaration, soon after uttering the line Stephen explains to Cranly that Thomas Aquinas's word

*visa* is “clear enough to keep away good and evil which excite desire and loathing” (Joyce 1992a: 223). This echoes once more the image of those “nets of wrong and right” in Yeats’s “Into The Twilight” from which the voice in the poem implores the human heart to “come clear,” the “dew ever shining” in the second verse anticipating in its luminosity the idea of *visa* that Stephen derives from Aquinas during his conversation with Cranly.

Earlier in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as Stephen slowly comes to feel the strength of his personality moving against the authoritarian form of religious practice into which he is being inculcated, Joyce imitates the style of Yeats’s prose strikingly. “A certain pride, a certain awe,” holds Stephen back from prayer; at the risk of eternal damnation, as he believes it at the time (Joyce 1992a: 111). The rhythm here recalls a passage from Yeats’s 1901 essay, “Magic,” where he speaks of “a certain evil, a certain ugliness” that Yeats observes throughout the social environment of his day (Yeats 1961: 28). Yeats’s sentiment derives strongly from the influence of William Morris in the late nineteenth-century, and Morris’s desire to beautify the domestic and public spaces of industrial England through his Arts and Crafts movement. Equating ugliness with evil, Yeats also owes a debt to Oscar Wilde (another devotee of Morris) and his Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from 1891: “Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault (Wilde 1994: xxiii).”<sup>1</sup> Dedalus’s feelings of “pride” and “awe” in risking God’s condemnation, however, owe more to the cult of Baudelaire and its Luciferian veneer among *The Yellow Book* circle in 1890s London, than they do to Morris’s neo-feudal socialist group at Hammersmith in London.

This being said, a “Vision of Evil” was just as important to the literary undertaking of Yeats — under Morris’s influence — as it was to the aspirations of Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In volume two of his *Autobiographies*, *The Trembling of the Veil*, Yeats was dismayed at a superficial quality in the mystical poetry of A.E. that he traced to the influence of the American transcendentalist poets Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson, deriving from a lack of “the Vision of Evil” in their work (Yeats 1955: 246). In a letter to Florence Farr in August 1905, Yeats suggested

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<sup>1</sup> Yeats’s review of William Morris’s Arts and Crafts Exhibition in the *Providence Sunday Journal* of October 26, 1890 is a measure of his admiration for Morris, finding in it “much that is best and most thoughtful in London Society” (Frayne 1970: 183). Later in 1896, he praised Morris in *The Bookman*, “for he more than any man of modern days tried to change the life of his time into the life of his dream” (Frayne 1970: 419).

that had William Morris followed the idealism of his *Earthly Paradise* with a bawdy, dirty story — in the way that Chaucer had followed “The Knight’s Tale” with “The Miller’s Tale” — his beautiful original story would have been remembered forever (Kelly and Schuchard 2005: 152). There is a perpetual tension throughout Yeats’s poetry and drama between the concept of art as a spiritual ideal of beauty — set against the dirt and ugliness of modern daily life — in opposition to the idea that art must, like human love, dwell in the “place of excrement,” as Crazy Jane declares to the Bishop in Yeats’s 1933 sequence, “Words For Music Perhaps” (Yeats 1950: 65). *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* plays out this same conflict. Stephen searches for an artistic ideal that might raise him above the shabby, sordid environment of which he becomes increasingly conscious as the novel progresses. At the same time, the stench of hypocrisy at home and at school, intensified through Stephen’s exploration of Dublin’s red-light district as a form of grotesque, becomes a necessary quality for the work of art into which Stephen’s experiences are shaped. Beauty and filth combine. Richard Ellmann notes this importance of dirt to Joyce’s work: “What other hero in the novel has, like Stephen Dedalus, lice (Ellmann 1966: 6)?”

Yeats’s presence in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* becomes discernible in the final part of the novel, as Stephen reaches the point in his life in which he becomes aware of his literary vocation. It is evident in the first instance in the villanelle that Stephen composes. Scholars have examined the range of possible influences on this poem and have debated the extent to which Joyce was presenting the villanelle as worthy of literary merit in its own right or else as Joyce’s slightly mocking judgement on Stephen’s immaturity as a writer. Wayne Booth is particularly keen to emphasise the issue of Joyce’s distance from Stephen in reading the literary merit of the poem (Booth 1983: 328-330; Bowen 1980: 63-67; Adams Day 1987: 69-85). Two words in this six-verse poem that Stephen employs, in the lines that are repeated from verse to verse, suggest how the Literary Revival in Ireland and Yeats in particular exercised an influence on the composition of the villanelle: “weary” and “enchanted”. In four of the six verses, the following question is repeated: “Are you not weary of ardent ways?” (Joyce 1992a: 242-243). The significance of the word is emphasised when he repeats it in exasperation in the process of composing the poem: “Weary! Weary! He too was weary of ardent ways (Joyce 1992a: 241)”. The note of weariness pervades Yeats’s “Celtic Twilight” phase in his poetry of the 1880s and 1890s. In Part III of “The Wanderings of Oisín,”

the ancient Irish warrior describes the ethereal world with Niamh on the Island of Forgetfulness: “Wrapt in the wave of that music, with weariness more than of earth (Yeats 1950: 436)”. In verse two of “The White Birds” from Yeats’s 1893 collection, *The Rose*, a poem that is a gloss on the Irish legend of the children of Lir, the speaker encourages the one he loves to forget about flowers (and their mystical significance): “A weariness comes from those dreamers, dew-dabbled, the lily and rose (Yeats 1950: 47)”. “Into the Twilight” from *The Wind Among the Reeds* opens as follows: “Out-worn heart, in a time out-worn (Yeats 1950: 65)”.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen uses the word “enchantment” in the villanelle out of admiration for a phrase that derived from an eighteenth-century Italian physiologist, Luigi Galvani: “the enchantment of the heart” (Joyce 1992a: 231). As a notion, enchantment was an important feature in Standish O’Grady’s version of the ancient Irish legend of the war of the Bull of Cooley that he first published in two volumes in 1878 and 1880. In second volume, *History of Ireland: Cuchulain and his Contemporaries*, O’Grady includes a chapter in which it is revealed that the Red Branch knights of Ulster have fallen into a state of enchantment under a spell cast by the wizard of Queen Maeve of Connacht, Cailitin (O’Grady 1970: 184-185). In the series of articles that he published from January to June 1900 under the title “The Great Enchantment” in his own newspaper, *All-Ireland Review*, O’Grady adapted this idea of enchantment to criticism of modern Irish history since the Williamite wars and to the Ireland of his own day. Of some significance to Joyce’s representation of Irish society as a still-birth in *Dubliners*, and of Stephen’s own frustration with Irish life in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, O’Grady equates the enchantments in ancient Irish legend with states of paralysis. Interestingly, Galvani’s phrase that Stephen admires describes a creature for medical experiment being brought to a state of paralysis. In January 1900, O’Grady argued that political understanding in modern Ireland was “under a spell, and its will paralysed” (O’Grady 1900: 1). The idea of enchantment pervades Yeats poetry and drama in the 1890s and 1900s: it receives its most memorable expression years later in “Easter 1916”:

Hearts with one purpose alone  
Through summer and winter seem  
Enchanted to a stone  
To trouble the living stream. (Yeats 1950: 204)

Stephen's attraction to the sound and meaning of "enchantment" in his villanelle is symptomatic of the wide influence of Yeats in Ireland in the years leading up to Stephen's final, permanent departure in 1904, and to the legacy of Standish O'Grady's revival of Irish mythology in the early 1880s.

The other explicit instance of Yeats's presence in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is Stephen attending Yeats's play, *The Countess Cathleen*. Ellmann writes of Joyce himself attending the premiere of the play in May 1899 at the Antient Concert Rooms in Dublin, applauding enthusiastically against the booing and hissing that rose up at the conclusion from students of the University College (Ellmann 1966: 67). A story of a noble lady who offers to sell her soul to demons in order to discourage the starving people living on her land from doing likewise for gold, the play provoked ire for depicting Irish natives willing to sell their souls for money. The most vociferous public criticism came from Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party who was aggrieved not to have become its leader in 1880, when Charles Stewart Parnell succeeded William Shaw. Circulated as a pamphlet condemning the play in May 1899, O'Donnell's *Souls For Gold* illustrated Catholic sensitivities to depictions of the native Irish descending to materialism and diabolism in desperate circumstances, sensitivities amplified by the Irish Unionist opposition to Home Rule at the time (O'Donnell 1899).<sup>2</sup>

Stephen's response to the play itself is noteworthy. Just before her death, the Countess Cathleen utters the following before Oona, Aileel and the group of half-starved people around her, believing as they do that the demons have taken her soul to Hell:

Bend down your faces, Oona and Aleel;  
I gaze upon them as the swallow gazes  
Upon the nest under the eave before  
He wander the loud waters (Yeats 1952a: 245).

Of particular note here is the bird's flight as an image for the flight of the soul: its significance to the imminent conclusion of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* hardly needs elaboration. As with Goethe's *Faust*,

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<sup>2</sup> Joan FitzPatrick Dean provides a detailed account of the criticism that Yeats's play provoked in Irish newspapers of the day and of Catholic Cardinal Logue's public criticism (FitzPatrick Dean 2004: 52-56).

Cathleen's soul is redeemed in the last instance: an army of angels appear to announce that she has been taken to Heaven for the love that prompted her action: "The Light of Lights" looks "always on the motive, not the deed" (Yeats 1952a: 50). Cathleen's willingness to risk eternal damnation for a virtuous ideal anticipates Stephen himself risking heresy in Joyce's novel. As I point out below, the figure of the angel is of immense significance to the epiphany of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: Stephen apprehending the young woman standing in the waves, evocatively described towards the end of the fourth chapter.

Certainly Stephen is already bored with Dublin life at the opening night's performance of *The Countess Cathleen*: with "jaded eyes" he looks from the balcony upon "the tawdry scene-clothes and human dolls framed by the garish lamps of the stage" (Joyce 1992a: 245). Defying the outrage of Frank Hugh O'Donnell and the protests of Joyce's fellow students who took offence at depictions of superstition and materialism among the rural Irish in the play, he nonetheless adapts Stephen in this instance to cast his mordant eye on the shabby condition of cultural life in Dublin at the end of the nineteenth century. In October 1901 Joyce denounced what he regarded as the vulgarity of popular opinion in Dublin society in his essay, "The Day of the Rabblement." His detestation of Irish life was never more "stridently expressed," as Alistair Cormack puts it, noting Joyce's warning that Yeats's association through the Irish Literary Theatre with a mob mentality in Ireland ran the risk of damaging his talent as an artist (Joyce 1901: 7-8; Cormack 2008: 12). Joyce's respect for Yeats is evident in the essay when he admires *The Wind Among the Reeds* as "poetry of the highest order" and "The Adoration of the Magi" as "a story which one of the great Russians might have written" (Joyce 1901: 8). In judging *The Countess Cathleen* as no more than a miracle play and by insisting that the artist must look outside Ireland to Ibsen and Hauptmann for his models and influences, however, Joyce was dismissing the Irish Theatre project as a failure almost before it had begun. Emer Nolan suggests that this has to do with the fact that Yeats did not approach Irish mythology and folklore with a sense of burden – as did Joyce – but with a sense of discovery: "for Yeats, 'Irishness' is an aspect of the identity he desires to create; for Stephen, it is the identity he wishes to escape" (Nolan 1995: 37). True as this may be, it still leaves hanging in the air a question that the ending of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* provokes. If Joyce was so anxious to get away from the Irish "rabblement" in 1901 to the cultivation of continental European

writers, why was he even bothered about fashioning that “uncreated conscience of my race?” (Joyce 1992a: 276).

Part of the answer may lie in an inverse correspondence between Stephen's response to *The Countess Cathleen* (ratified by Joyce himself in his 1901 essay) and Yeats's own reaction to Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* just three years previously. On December 10, 1896, Yeats attended the opening performance of Jarry's play at Lugné-Poë's *Théâtre de l'Œuvre* on rue de Clichy in Paris ninth district. Like Joyce on the night of the performance of *The Countess Cathleen* at the Antient Concert Rooms, Yeats stood up for *Ubu Roi* against many in the audience who shouted the performers down in outrage, Yeats defending it in the debate that immediately followed in the auditorium. He was, however, standing up for a play that he actually regarded as vulgar, saddened by its revival of a spirit of “comedy, objectivity” as he saw it (Yeats 1955: 79). The opening line of *Ubu Roi*, “merdre”, combines the French “merde” (shit) and “meurtre” (death), provoking immediate disturbances on the first night. In this reaction to the 1896 Paris production of *Ubu Roi* and in Joyce's response to the 1899 Dublin production of *The Countess Cathleen*, both Yeats and Joyce felt driven to defend robustly two very different performances that each found vulgar in their own way.

Although he presents the memory of Stephen attending the opening performance of *The Countess Cathleen* in 1899 through terms like “garish” and “tawdry” in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce corresponded with Yeats about the possibility of making an Italian translation of the play as late as December 1912 (Ellmann 1966: 348-349). *The Countess Cathleen*, and one of the lyrics included alongside the first published version of the play in 1892, leaves a durable imprint in Stephen Dedalus's memory. Early into the opening scene of *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan bellows out lines from Yeats's poem “Who Goes with Fergus?” from Yeats's 1892 collection, *The Countess Cathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics*, a poem that was republished the following year in Yeats's third poetry collection, *The Rose*:

And no more turn aside and brood  
Upon love's bitter mystery  
For Fergus rules the brazen cars (Joyce 1992b: 9).

This triggers in Stephen his memory of singing the lyric to his mother upon her request as she approached her death. This is based on Joyce's actual

memory of her mother's passing, as Ellmann records it (Ellmann 1966: 135-136). "Silent with awe and with pity," Stephen recollects at the start of *Ulysses* going to the room in which his dying mother lay. The intimacy of Yeats's influence on Joyce is evident in the evocation of his "Fergus" lyric in association with this episode, one of the most significant experiences for Joyce in 1903, the year before that in which *Ulysses* is set. The association of Yeats's lyric with Stephen's memory of his mother's death in the opening episode of *Ulysses* was motivated by Joyce meeting Yeats in Dublin in April 1903, following the family summons to Joyce to return from Paris because of the critical stage that his mother's cancer had reached. Yeats refers to the meeting with Joyce in a letter to Lady Gregory in April 1903 (Wade 1954: 399). The memory of the lyric persists, a line popping into Stephen's head again as he stretches out on the rocks on Sandymount Strand to take the sun in the "Proteus" episode of *Ulysses*: "And no more turn aside and brood (Joyce 1992b: 62)."

The penultimate line of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* contains one of the most widely known phrases of Joyce's entire work, and one of the most famous in modern literature; Stephen announcing in his diary entry of April 26 his intention "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race (Joyce 1992a: 276)". In the voluminous attention that the phrase has been afforded in modernist and post-colonial accounts of Joyce, little consideration has been given to its anticipation of the imagery in Yeats's "Byzantium" poems from 1928 and 1933. In "Sailing to Byzantium" from Yeats's collection, *The Tower* of 1928, the speaker declares that he will take for his body beyond nature "such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make / of hammered gold and gold enamelling" while "Byzantium" from *The Winding Stair* of 1933 is ecstatic at "the smithies" that "break the flood:" "the golden smithies of the Emperor!" (Yeats 1950: 218, 281). These images have long been taken as expressing an old man's desire to retreat completely into the world of art as he grows ever more repulsed by "the filthy modern tide" as Yeats puts it in "The Statues" in 1938 (Yeats 1950: 376). This reading, however, does not take into account three important factors playing into the image of forging that Yeats employed: his long interest in coinage, his chair of a committee set up to create new Irish coinage in 1926, and his inadvertent anticipation of the 1929 world economic crisis as a crisis of monetary value itself.<sup>3</sup> In a letter to Ezra Pound

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<sup>3</sup> The meeting of the coinage committee took place in June 1926, less than six months after the first publication of *A Vision*. Mapped according to his esoteric system of

published in the 1937 edition of *A Vision*, Yeats recalls an incident from the Civil War period in Ireland in the 1920s which oddly foresees in a single experience the much greater calamity of the Wall Street crash of 1929: a consequence of the incubation of financial capitalism from immediate political upheavals. Gun fire breaking out all round the bank, Yeats cannot leave the premises for a few hours and is invited to dine with the directors. As the shooting continues all round, the bankers sit down to lunch: "The bankers talked their ordinary affairs, not one went to the window or asked whether a particular shot was fired by the young soldier or at him; they had to raise their voices a little as we do when we have selected by accident a restaurant where there is an orchestra (Yeats 2015: 20)."

Yeats's involvement with the design of Irish coinage connects to a Byzantine ideal of art that can be traced back to his involvement, along with his sisters Lilly and Lolly, in William Morris's Arts and Crafts Movement in the 1880s. It echoes Morris's socialism in this regard, and the critical state of industrial England as a completely commercialised society. Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* were significant to Yeats in this respect as works of literature within which money, artistic ideals and the question of value itself become intertwined, against the backdrop of Western society in a profound state of political and economic turbulence. The ideal of the artistic life to which Stephen aspires in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* has to be set against the calamity of his family's financial downfall from which Stephen withdraws himself while yet drawing upon the impact of this experience. "Coining" the phrase "forging in the smithy of my soul," Stephen at once announces his departure from, and yet his "debt" to the particular material circumstances that have shaped his upbringing so deeply, "debt" being acutely double-edged in this respect. By the time of *Ulysses*, Joyce has magnified this polarity of departure and debt to the level of a mythology, and so it is unsurprising that he shows up alongside T.S. Eliot and Luigi Pirandello in Phase 23 of the lunar cycle

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historical cycles, *A Vision* testified Yeats's belief at the time that the crises of his day were symptomatic of the sudden emergence of a new historical epoch out of the ruins of the era inaugurated through the birth of the Christian religion. R.F. Foster provides a strong account of Yeats's steering of the coinage committee but ignores the fact that his first choice for the design of the new coins, Edmund Dulac, was passed over in favour of Percy Metcalfe (Foster 2003: 332-334).

in the 1925 edition of Yeats's *A Vision* (Mills Harper and Kelly Hood 1978: 211-212).<sup>4</sup>

If the "Byzantium" poems carry the residual influence of Joyce on the later Yeats, it is still important to recognise that Yeats had employed the image of the smithy much earlier in "The Secret Rose," a poem that appears in *The Wind Among the Reeds*, the 1899 volume that Dedalus is reading towards the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

When shall the stars be blown about the sky,  
Like the sparks blown out of a smithy, and die? (Yeats 1950: 78)

In 1897 Yeats published this poem at the start of his collection of stories carrying that same title, *The Secret Rose*. As an epitaph for this collection, he took an English translation of perhaps the most memorable line from Comte Villiers de l'Isle Adam's *Axël*, a play that he had attended in Paris with Maud Gonno in 1894: "Vivre? Les serviteurs feront cela pour nous" (De l'Isle Adam 1900: 60).<sup>5</sup> Joyce's familiarity with the play, and how it had influenced the mystical strand in the Irish Literary Revival, is made evident in "Sylla and Charbydis" when Stephen debates the relationship of Shakespeare to *Hamlet* with John Eglinton, A.E. and others. Considering the life of the writer to be irrelevant to the value of literature itself, A.E. cites the English translation of the line from *Axël* that Yeats had used (Joyce 1992b: 242). Villiers de l'Isle Adam's idea of earthly living as merely a matter for servants offers an esoteric perspective on the opinion that Stephen expresses to Mr. Deasy as he awaits payment for a class that he has just taught in Mr. Deasy's private school: human history as "a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (Joyce 1992b: 42). In the conversation over Shakespeare in the National Library of Ireland later on in *Ulysses*, the significance of *Axël* to the discussion arises not so much from the play itself as from the fact that it is A.E. who quotes from it, under the influence of Yeats. As well as taking the line from *Axël* as the epitaph for the short-story

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<sup>4</sup> By 1928, Yeats had placed a greater distance between himself and Joyce in the criticism that he directed again Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, a work that, by then, Yeats was setting alongside Joyce's *Ulysses* "and its dream association of words and images." Still, Yeats was intrigued by the peculiar mathematical system of the *Cantos* that Pound had elaborated to him; a system not only significant to the type that he himself elaborates in *A Vision*, but also to that which Joyce had employed for *Ulysses* (Yeats 2015: 3-5).

<sup>5</sup> "As for living, our servants will do that for us" (Yeats 1952b: 144).

collection, *The Secret Rose*, Yeats also dedicated it to A.E.. This specific connection to *The Secret Rose* in the “Scylla and Charbydis” episode of *Ulysses* strengthens the case for considering that image of the smithy in Yeats’s 1897 poem, “The Secret Rose,” as a precedent for the image of the smithy by which Joyce brings the narrative account of Stephen’s artistic development in Ireland to a conclusion in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Observing Yeats’s presence in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the extent to which Yeats’s mystical interests influenced Joyce’s characterisation of Stephen comes into question. It is certainly evident in the illumination of artistic self-consciousness that Stephen undergoes. Standing on the steps of the main entrance to the National Library of Ireland on Dublin’s Kildare Street, he observes a flock of birds darting in all directions in the sky above. The scene provides relief from the anguish of his mother’s “sobs and reproaches” still pressing on his mind: if not the period of her final illness, it anticipates the same (Joyce 1992a: 244). Most peculiar is Stephen’s attempt to count the birds in flight, wondering if they were odd or even in number. This brings to mind the opening verses of Yeats’s title poem from *The Wild Swans at Coole*, published in 1919, just three years after *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1919, in which the speaker counts the “nine-and-fifty swans” gathered on the surface of the lake at Coole Park, recollecting the first occasion on which he had done so, before they suddenly mounted into the air in a great cyclical movement (Yeats 1950: 147). This counting has numerological significance, made explicit in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as Stephen apprehends the image of the birds as a mystical portent, awakening in him a fear “of the hawklike man whose name he bore soaring out of his captivity on osierwoven wings, of Thoth, the god of writers, writing with a reed upon a tablet and bearing on his narrow ibis head the cusped moon” (Joyce 1992a: 244). Astrology, numeric symbolism, and the Hawk as deity were all features of the ancient Egyptian religion of the Pharaohs. Since Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt, a scientific archeological approach had developed for understanding the pyramids and their hieroglyphs. Egyptology grew in influence, and towards the end of the nineteenth century, moving between mysticism and archaeology. In 1902, for example, the Egypt Society was founded in London, with an inaugural performance of *The Shrine of the Golden Hawk* in which Florence Farr played the lead role. Both Yeats and Bernard Shaw were present: Egyptian symbols and beliefs exerted a major

influence in the rituals and ceremonies of *The Order of the Golden Dawn*, of which Yeats was a member (Kelly and Schuchard 1994: 121).

Following its serialisation in *The Egoist* in 1914-1915, the publication of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as a novel in December 1916 took place in the same year as the first performance of Yeats's first play in the style of medieval Japanese Noh Theatre, *At the Hawk's Well*. This is of immediate relevance to Stephen's sense of being taken over by a spirit of "the hawklike man" outside the National Library of Ireland in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Famed for the hawk dance that was performed by Michio Ito in the first production of *At the Hawk's Well* at the London drawing room of Lady Emerald Cunard in April 1916, Yeats's play was also concerned with spiritual possession. Ito's hawk dance, performed in a style customary to that of Japanese Noh drama, was intended to conjure the presence of a spirit in bird form, one who takes possession of the ancient Irish warrior Cuchulain. Actually a modified form of Noh dance (Ito had studied Kabuki, a style that was based on Noh), Ito's performance involved a greater speed of arm movement than the pure Japanese original, bringing to mind, as Helen Caldwell has observed, "Egyptian representations of the hawk with spread wings and giving a feeling of a great bird's gliding and wheeling" (Caldwell 1977: 45). Yeats simply names Cuchulain as "Young Man" throughout *At the Hawk's Well*, an echo of the "Young Man" of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In the years preceding the first performance of *At the Hawk's Well*, Yeats was in close contact with Ezra Pound, the two writers sharing a residence at Stone Cottage in Sussex in the winter of 1913-14. Looking to a passage from Pound's Canto LXXXIII, Daniel Albright sees Yeats as a ghost who haunted Pound and the English modernists: it was Pound who had *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* first serialised in *The Egoist* (Albright 2006: 62-63). Yeats himself had directed Ezra Pound to Joyce's work, as Pound's letter to Joyce of December 15 makes clear: a letter that triggered Joyce into sending *Dubliners* to Pound and a revised first chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Ellmann 1966: 349-350).

Yeats's time of residence with Pound at Stone Cottage also has an important connection to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in another respect: the idea of the angel. During this period, Yeats composed his essay "Swedenborg, Mediums, Desolate Places" that would not appear in published form until after the First World War in 1920, in Lady Gregory's edited volume, *Visions and Beliefs of the West of Ireland* (Yeats 1920:

295-342; Longenbach 1988: 225).<sup>6</sup> Swedenborg's major works, *Secrets of Heaven* and *Heaven and Hell*, were as important to Yeats as they had been to William Blake, the Romantic poet who influenced him the most. In 1766 Immanuel Kant published a volume in which he proposed that Swedenborg's writings on angelic revelations were nonsense, yet no more so than the major volumes of metaphysical philosophy; in later life, Kant would actually acknowledge the influence that Swedenborg's works had exerted upon him. "In these investigations", wrote Frank Sewall in his preface to a 1900 English translation of Kant's 1766 work *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*, "it comes to light that not only did Kant find in Swedenborg a system of spiritual philosophy so parallel to that of the philosophers in reasonableness that the validity of one could be measured by that of the other, but that the very system finally followed by Kant himself when he came, later in life, as a lecturer in the University on Psychology and Metaphysics, to enter upon the domain of these inquiries, and was largely identical with that of the "Dreams" he once affected to be amused at (Kant 1900: x)". By this account, the mystical reveries of Swedenborg could not be dismissed so lightly, given the significance that they would hold for one of the foremost philosophers of the European Enlightenment in his later years. Returning to the scene of Stephen Dedalus observing the flight of birds from the steps of the National Library in the final part of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, it is significant that Swedenborg comes to Stephen's mind: "on the correspondence of birds to things of the intellect and of how the creatures of the air have their knowledge and know the times and seasons because they, unlike man, are in the order of their life and have not perverted that order by reason" (Joyce 1992a: 244). In "Swedenborg, Mediums and Desolate Places," Yeats lays emphasis on Swedenborg as one who had discovered the essential humanity and earth-like qualities of the angelic realm, "a world of spirits where there was a scenery like that of earth, human forms, grotesque or beautiful, senses that knew pleasure and pain, marriage and war, all that could be painted upon canvas, or put into stories to make one's hair stand up" (Yeats 1920: 298).

The moment of epiphany in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* may well correspond to one of the personal visions of angels of which

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<sup>6</sup> W.B. Yeats, "Swedenborg, Mediums, and the Desolate Places" (1914), *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*, arranged by Lady Gregory (London and New York: G. Putnam and Sons, 1920), pp. 295-342. James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats & Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), p. 225.

Swedenborg wrote. Three aspects of Swedenborg's writings on angels seem particularly relevant to the ecstasy that Stephen Dedalus experiences upon seeing the girl standing among the waves at the sea's edge. First is Swedenborg's claim that angels are completely human in their form. Second is his belief that people who have voluntarily wrapped themselves up in religious matters are prone to false visions (relevant to Stephen's rejection of traditional Catholic religious dogma). Third is Swedenborg's contention that "in heaven, all the directions are determined on the basis of the east" (Swedenborg 2000: 124; 212-213; 163). Stephen faces eastward as he gazes upon the girl, who mysteriously returns his look, holding it for an extended period. The language of elation through which Stephen tries to articulate the magnitude of the experience that he has just underwent is deeply consonant with Yeats's representation of Swedenborg's angelic mysticism: "A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory (Joyce 1992a: 186)".

In this way *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* testifies to the legacy of heterodox mysticism that Yeats bequeathed to the Irish Literary Revival when it got underway in Dublin just as Joyce was preparing his own departure to Paris, and further afield to Zurich and Trieste. Perhaps one of the reasons that scholars of Joyce and of Yeats have underplayed the extent to which *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* carries the influence of Yeats lies in the extent to which Yeats's gravitated more towards the literary scene in London than in Paris through the course of his life. The judgement is not entirely accurate: Paris was an important meeting point for Yeats in the 1890s, moving as he did frequently, between Dublin, London and Northern France during the decade. It was in the French capital that he met not only Synge, but August Strindberg also (Yeats 1955: 354). Yeats's memories of Parisien bohemian life return in his later esoteric drama *The Player Queen*, where the drunken poet Septimus speaks of the chastity of the unicorn as written in "The great Beastery of Paris". This play anticipates the mysticism and surrealist farce of Jean Cocteau's play *l'Orphée* from 1926 in several important respects (Yeats 1952a: 397). Whatever about the subsequent direction in which Joyce's writing develops, the presence of Yeats in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is both subtle and complex, certainly extending beyond Joyce's caricature in later writings of Yeats, A.E. and the Irish Revival as "the Cultic Twalette."

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ПРИСУСТВО ВИЉЕМА БАТЛЕРА ЈЕЈТСА  
У РОМАНУ *ПОРТРЕТ УМЕТНИКА У МЛАДОСТИ*  
ЏЕЈМСА ЏОЈСА

**Сажетак**

Овај есеј бави се свеколиким књижевним везама дела Виљема Батлера Јејтса и романа *Портрет уметника у младости* у светлу критичког преиспитивања односа Џејмса Џојса према књижевном препороду у Ирској на почетку двадесетог века. Есеј прати дебате о келтском и ирском идентитету у оквиру књижевне обнове, посматрајући их као контекст за разумевање тема које заокупљају Џејмса Џојса и указује на значај Јејтсових мистике за протагонисту романа *Јунак Стивен*, теме које ће се касније пренети у дело *Портрет уметника у младости*. Есеј се бави темом летења у вези са збирком Јејтсових песама коју Џојс поминје у роману – *Ветар међу путевима*, из 1899. Године. У склопу наведених разматрања, утицај Јејтсове филозофије и стила може се приметити како у начину изражавања Стивена Дедалуса тако и у књижевним техникама које Џојс користи као би испољио његов став. Посебна пажња посвећена је чину „очаравања“ у роману и повезаности овог појма са Ирским препородом. Други део есеја бави се извођењем Јејтсове драме *Грофица Катлин* из 1899. године у старом Концертном холу у Даблину и Џојсовим сећањем на овај догађај које се испољава кроз Стивена пред крај романа. Овде се пажња скреће на мистичне и езотеричне аспекте романа *Портрет уметника у младости* који се могу наћи како у Џојсовом делу тако и у Јејтсовој поезији, односно драми.

**Кључне речи:** Џојс, Јејтс, Ирска обнова, келтска мистична традиција, езотеријско очаравање, летење, Сведенборг, ковач

Complete summary of James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. eNotes plot summaries cover all the significant action of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. At a Glance. In A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Stephen Dedalus decides to leave Ireland and become an artist. As a child, he becomes interested in literature, though he's often bullied at school. In his teen years, he begins soliciting prostitutes. and cunning. James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. tags: novel, politics. 908 likes. I was a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me. would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. By James Joyce. Published by Planet eBook. Visit the site to download free eBooks of classic literature, books and novels. 4 A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. shouting and the prefects urged them on with strong cries. The evening air was pale and chilly and after every charge and thud of the footballers the greasy leather orb flew like a heavy bird through the grey light. He kept on the fringe of his line, out of sight of his prefect, out of the reach of the rude feet, feigning to run now and then. He felt his body small and weak amid the throng of the players and his eyes were weak and watery. Rody Kickham was not like that: he would be captain of the third line all the fellows said.