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JOYCE, YEATS, AND THE REVIVAL

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John McCourt

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INTRODUCTION: JOYCE, YEATS, AND THE REVIVAL

In 2015 the 150th anniversary of William Butler Yeats's birth was celebrated at readings, conferences, summer schools, exhibitions, performances held in Ireland and throughout the world, many under the official banner of "Yeats 2015".¹ Rome, or better the Università Roma Tre and the Italian James Joyce Foundation participated in this global event through the Eighth Annual James Joyce Birthday conference which was entitled "Joyce, Yeats, and the Revival". The articles in this volume represent a rich selection of the papers given at this gathering. Two further essays, by Edna Longley and Barry Devine, were originally given as lectures at the Trieste Joyce School, which also marked the important Yeats anniversary at its annual summer gathering at the Università di Trieste. Collectively, the essays that make up this volume seek to investigate the complex relationship between Yeats and Joyce, both seen against the ever widening backdrop of the Irish literary Revival. While it is true, as standard literary histories attest, that the Irish Revival took place in the tumultuous thirty-year period between 1891 and 1922, it can also be seen from a broader perspective as having been a longer and more variegated event that stretched through time for almost a century from the time of Mangan and Ferguson before finally and definitively

¹ <http://yeats2015.com/>

grinding to a halt with the occasionally great but ultimately underachieving tail-enders, Flann O'Brien and Brendan Behan, both of whom, unlike many core Revivalists, were at home or made themselves at home in the Irish as well as in the English language.

Increasingly, the Revival is studied and celebrated for its plurality and variety (Kelleher 2003, Kiberd and Mathews 2015) and, indeed, for its lack of uniformity. The expanding textual corpus that is studied under the banner of the Irish Revival is of course composed of writings that are far from uniform; collectively they do not form a chorus but a cacophony of consenting and dissenting voices - literary, economic, political - some of which can be considered as internal and indeed integral to a tight-knit movement, others of which consciously cast themselves beyond the reach of what Joyce cleverly but cattily termed the "cultic twalette" (*FW* 344.12) but which increasingly are seen to fall within the widening reach of the broader Revival. Part of the enduring fascination of the Revival is that it was rife with contradictions: at once it looked back longingly to an earlier "heroic" or "primitive" period while at the same time it sought to propel Ireland into the future, despite Yeats's denunciation in "The Statues" of "this filthy modern tide" and his recoil from the "leprosy of the modern" (Yeats 1970: 104). As is increasingly clear, the tension arising from the pull of the past and the inexorable draw of what we now call modernism provided much of the energy at the heart of the Revival.

This expanded vision offers space for the inclusion of (among others) Joyce who defined the Revival as "the Irish nation's insistence on developing its own culture" and as "the Irish nation's desire to create its own civilization [which is] not so much the desire of a young nation wishing to link itself to Europe's concert, but the desire by an ancient nation to renew in a modern form the glories of a past civilization" (*OCPW*, 111). At the same time he consciously and loudly cast himself beyond the confines of the Revival (being more concerned, perhaps, with "Europe's concert") with the result that he

would be seen, for many decades, as being irretrievably beyond its fold. Often, Joyce (and many of his early followers) exaggerated the assumed provincialism of the Revival. Enrico Reggiani in his essay “An Irish Literary Bayreuth. Yeats, Joyce And The Revivalist Wagner”, usefully shows that the Revival could be open to outside influence. He does so through a nuanced study of the knowledge and influence of Wagner and Wagnerism among a substantial coterie of literary figures who contributed to the Irish cultural renaissance. Reggiani shows a continuity of awareness of Wagner and his writings that stretched from Thomas Davis to Patrick Pearse but also, crucially included both Joyce (as is well known) and Yeats, whose Wagnerism, usually gets very little attention. Yeats conceived the Abbey as embodying the heart of the nation, as a sort of Irish Bayreuth capable of absorbing Irish myth and turning it into total theatre. In the eyes of Joyce and others it of course fell well short.

However, in the early years of his exile in Trieste and Rome, Joyce clearly yearned to be part of the Revival events unfolding in Dublin and he was particularly upset at missing the uproar that accompanied performances of *The Playboy of the Western World*. Joyce suffered, as Shovlin writes, from “a distinct sense of exasperation at being out of the literary loop” (Shovlin 2012: 108). As he told Stanislaus:

This whole affair has upset me. I feel like a man in a house who hears a row in the street and voices he knows shouting but can't get out to see what the hell is going on. It has put me off the story I was 'going to write' – to wit, 'The Dead'.

Thus Joyce became one of the best-read Revival dissenters, ordering as many (and often more) of the new Irish writings that were being published in Dublin or London as he could afford while at the same time setting himself up in opposition to the literary movement which both fascinated and irritated him, publicly and privately insisting on his differences with Yeats and his followers.

A number of entries in Stanislaus Joyce's *Triestine Book of Days* for the autumn of 1907, reveal Joyce's disdain for the writers he believed were in vogue in Dublin. In August, referring to Padraic Colum's successful 1905 play *The Land*, Joyce complained:

"Ah, the fellow can't write. You know, these gentlemen want to be inspired, to write without ever having taken the trouble to learn how. And they'll never do anything. Yeats, who is certainly mentally deficient, wouldn't have written such very good verse unless all his life he had taken ceaseless trouble, insomma, to write well. Colum has taken no trouble. I suppose he wrote it in six weeks. The fellow has something in him but he's spoiled in Dublin by all those imbeciles pottering about him" (*Book of Days*, 13 August 1907).

Joyce probably had no idea that Yeats also had his doubts about the characters in Colum's plays or that he felt that "[they] were not the true folk. They are the peasant as he is being transformed by modern life. [...]". Furthermore, for Yeats, the language of Colum's peasants was a contaminated one, that of people who think in English, and "shows the influence of the newspaper and the national schools" (Yeats 1962: 183). Joyce was aware, however, that Colum was often at odds with Yeats and had told Stanislaus in a letter written in February 1907: "I believe Colum [sic] and the Irish Theatre will beat Y and L.G. and Miss H: which will please me greatly, as Yeats cannot well hawk his theatre over to London" (*L II*, 208).

Joyce also dismissed George Moore – a "repugnant personality" (*Books of Days* 25 April 1907) – and his novel, *The Lake*, to Stanislaus (who dutifully transposed his brother's comments into his still unpublished daily diary):

He said that it was full of mistakes and dropped characters and tiresome picturesque writing – the easiest thing in the world – about the lake... He was disgusted by the account of the priest's apostasy... "Ah he's a snob like his old father" said Jim, "and he has a most irritating style, a cockahoopy, supercilious, self-sufficient style, not at all justified by the merits of the book itself. I supposed before it was published Gogarty was going about town telling everyone of the book that was going to overthrow the Catholic

Church in Ireland". There was one well-written paragraph in the book, he said [...] about the journalist who is sent to interview Ellis after the publication of his book. [...] "But one well-written paragraph doesn't redeem a book" said Jim. "I think it was written simply to make money" (*Book of Days*, 25 August 1907).

Equally sententious judgment was leveled at "Yeats and his 'claque'" accused of "trying to make bricks without straw, to make an Irish revival out of a company of young men who have neither character, courage, intellect, perseverance or talent" (Joyce, cited in *Book of Days*, 6 September 1906). There is not a little envy in Joyce's home thoughts from abroad in this period but also some truth in his view that the Revival was, among other things, a mutual admiration society in which Yeats, Gregory, Synge, and Russell too easily offered validation of each others' work and of that of their younger followers.

In terming Yeats "mentally deficient" Joyce was evidently referring to the more eccentric parts of the older poet's personality. At the same time, even if Joyce feels that he falls somewhat short of the heights reached by Mangan as a poet, he still places Yeats on a level altogether superior to that of his literary followers and contemporaries (with the exception of Synge) and somewhat begrudgingly admits that he has written "such very good verse". But feeling himself shut out of the Yeatsian party, Joyce loudly refutes the romantic impulse that lies at the base of Yeats's writing and of the Revivalist aesthetic more generally and, in his Trieste, "Irlanda: isola dei santi e dei savi", "Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages" lecture, contradicts the Revivalist view that a link was possible with a far-off Golden Age and that there was, as Justin McCarthy extravagantly put it, "a continuity of the Irish genius in its literature for nearly two thousand years" (McCarthy 1904: xviii). He questions the revivalist assertion of continuity and dismisses the assertion that the echoes of ancient Ireland could still be heard. For Joyce, the venerable tradition of Irish bardic poetry died with James Clarence Mangan (whom he

championed in opposition to Yeats who favoured Samuel Ferguson). For Joyce, the Revivalists had arrived fifty years too late and were seeking to resuscitate a tradition that was dead and buried:

It is vain to boast that Irish works such as *The Book of Kells*, *The Yellow Books of Leccan* [sic], *The Book of the Dun Cow*, which date back to a time when England was still an uncivilized country, are as old as the Chinese in the art of miniaturization; or that Ireland used to make and export textiles to Europe generations before the first Fleming arrived in London to teach the English how to make cloth. If it were valid to appeal to the past in this fashion, the fellahins of Cairo would have every right in the world proudly to refuse to act as porters for English tourists. Just as ancient Ireland is dead just as ancient Egypt is dead. Its dirge has been sung and the seal set upon its gravestone. The ancient national spirit that spoke throughout the centuries through the mouths of fabulous seers, wandering minstrels, and Jacobin poets has vanished from the world with the death of James Clarence Mangan (*OCPW*: 125).

Joyce also rejected the idealization of the Irish peasantry that was a staple ingredient of much Revivalist writing and later told his Paris-based Irish friend, Arthur Power, that the Irish peasants were a “hard crafty and matter-of-fact lot” (Power 1999: 42). At the same time, he suffered at not being able to see *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907 and immediately ordered himself a copy of the play. Before long he was praising Synge to Stanislaus, who noted in his diary: “Jim found something in Synge’s mind akin to his own. The heroics and heroic poetry, that the Irish clique delight in, had no more significance for Synge than for him” (*Book of Days*, 5 May 1907). He appreciated Synge’s more realistic revision of Yeats’s spiritualised peasant and his focus on individual violence and cruelty rather than on idealised heroicism. But Joyce would seek to go further. At the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man*, he evokes an image of an old Irish peasant from whom Stephen recoils:

14 April: John Alphonsus Mulrennan has just returned from the west of Ireland. (European and Asiatic papers please copy.) He told us he met an old man there in a mountain cabin. Old man had red eyes and short pipe. Old

man spoke Irish. Mulrennan spoke Irish. Then old man and Mulrennan spoke English. Mulrennan spoke to him about universe and stars. Old man sat, listened, smoked, spat. Then said:

Ah, there must be terrible queer creatures at the latter end of the world.

I fear him. I fear his red rimmed horny eyes. It is with him I must struggle all through this night till day come, till he or I lie dead, gripping him by the sinewy throat till... Till what? Till he yield to me? No. I mean him no harm (P 251).

The passage expresses (among other things) Stephen's mockery of the attempts by Revivalists, such as Douglas Hyde, Lady Gregory and Synge, to capture a version of authentic peasant speech that they believed was somehow inflected with the rhythms of a primitive past (and of Gaelic). It also resonates with Joyce's opinion that "The Irish peasant of Russell or Yeats or Colum [...] is all sheer nonsense" (*Book of Days*, May 1906) and with his critique of Yeats's belief that the remnants of Celtic culture could be found and heard among the peasants living in the west of Ireland, that those same peasants were receptacles of simple but profound wisdom and that the nurturing of the remnants they possessed could effect a revival of this ancient culture, of its language and folklore. Joyce, in his scathing early review of *Poets and Dreamers: Studies and Translations from the Irish by Lady Gregory*, makes no secret of his hostility to such assertions, arguing that what Lady Gregory sees as the Celtic wisdom of the old people should, more accurately be seen as their "senility" (almost as if they were reminiscent of the Struldbrugs, Swift's senile immortals in *Gulliver's Travels*, who prove that age does not bring wisdom):

Lady Gregory has truly set forth the old age of her country. In her new book she has left legends and heroic youth far behind, and has explored a land almost fabulous in its sorrow and senility. Half of her book is an account of old men and old women in the West of Ireland. These old people are full of stories about giants and witches, and dogs and black-handled knives (*OCPW* 74).

Joyce would later replay his harshly negative views in *Ulysses*, where Lady's Gregory's work is defined as "drivel" in a passage which includes another swipe at Yeats and recalls the fury of the Daily Express editor, Ernest Longworth, at Joyce's ungrateful and disrespectful review:

Longworth is awfully sick, he said, after what you wrote about that old hake Gregory. O you inquisitional drunken jewjesuit! She gets you a job on the paper and then you go and slate her drivel to Jaysus. Couldn't you do the Yeats touch? (U 9.1157-1160)

In his introduction to Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) a version of the *Táin Bo Cuailnge*, Yeats had offered a patently over-the-top endorsement of his great friend's work ("the best that has come out of Ireland in my time"), one diametrically opposed to Joyce's criticism and which goes so far as to connect the religious primitivism of the church which "taught learned and unlearned to climb, as it were, to the great moral realities through hierarchies of Cherubim and Seraphim" with that of the "story-tellers of Ireland, perhaps of every primitive country. [...] They created for learned and unlearned alike, a communion of heroes, a cloud of stalwart witnesses":

They shared their characters and their stories, their very images, with one another, and banded them down from generation to generation; for nobody, even when he had added some new trait, or some new incident, thought of claiming for himself what so obviously lived its own merry or mournful life. The image-maker or worker in mosaic who first put Christ upon the Cross would have as soon claimed as his own a thought which was perhaps put into his mind by Christ himself. The Irish poets had also, it may be, what seemed a supernatural sanction, for a chief poet had to understand not only innumerable kinds of poetry, but how to keep himself for nine days in a trance. Surely they believed or half-believed in the historical reality of their wildest imaginations. And as soon as Christianity made their hearers desire a chronology that would run side by side with that of the Bible, they delighted in arranging their Kings and Queens, the shadows of forgotten mythologies, in long lines that ascended to Adam and his Garden. Those who listened to

them must have felt as if the living were like rabbits digging their burrows under walls that had been built by Gods and Giants, or like swallows building their nests in the stone mouths of immense images, carved by nobody knows who. It is no wonder that we sometimes hear about men who saw in a vision ivy-leaves that were greater than shields, and blackbirds whose thighs were like the thighs of oxen. The fruit of all those stories, unless indeed the finest activities of the mind are but a pastime, is the quick intelligence, the abundant imagination, the courtly manners of the Irish country people (Yeats 1911: x-xi).

Joyce would later come up with a distinctly alternative version of so-called “courtly manners of the Irish country people”. The words spoken by the “old man” of the vignette in *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man*, betray his sardonic attitude towards Yeats’s calls to “listen humbly to the old people telling their stories, and perhaps God will send the primitive excellent imagination into the midst of us again” (Yeats 1970: 288), towards what Joyce considers to be the futile attempts to give new life to a moribund culture. The old man’s words are not so much the voice of authenticity but a performance designed to take in the gullible listener, in this case, Mulrennan. Earlier, in *Stephen Hero*, Joyce had shown, however, how Stephen could be attracted by the idea of such a figure:

It would be lovely to sleep for one night in that cottage before the fire of smoking turf, in the dark lit by the fire, in the warm dark, breathing the smell of peasants, air and rain and turf and corduroy. But, O, the road there between the trees was dark! You would be lost in the dark. It made him afraid to think how it was” (*SH* 18).

But the fire and the initial light it suggests is soon overpowered by images of darkness and the fear of being enveloped in such darkness. Later in the same novel, during the pivotal argument with Madden, his nationalist friend, Stephen voices his refusal of the idea of the idealised, uniquely spiritual Irish peasant, seeing them as empty shells rather than as cherubim-like manifestations of imaginative power: “One would imagine the country was inhabited by cherubim.

Damme if I see much difference in peasants: they all seem to me as like one another as a peascod is like another peascod...” (SH, 54). This is a consciously ironic echo of Yeats’s lines in *The Hour-Glass* (1903):

WISE MAN. He believes! I am saved! Help me. The sand has run out. I am dying. ... [FOOL helps him to his chair.] I am going from the country of the seven wandering stars, and I am going to the country of the fixed stars! Ring the bell. [FOOL rings the bell.] Are they coming? Ah! now I hear their feet. ... I will speak to them. I understand it all now. One sinks in on God: we do not see the truth; God sees the truth in us. I cannot speak, I am too weak. Tell them, Fool, that when the life and the mind are broken, *the truth comes through them like peas through a broken peascod*. But no, I will pray—yet I cannot pray. Pray Fool, that they may be given a sign and save their souls alive. Your prayers are better than mine (Yeats 1904: 43-4, italics mine).

All of which might lead us to believe that the Yeats-Joyce twain shall never meet. And indeed for decades they were seen as having almost entirely separate agendas, visions, and styles, and as antagonists that could not be reconciled. Both writers contributed, consciously, to underlining the differences and gaps rather than the connections between them. In their wake, it was only the occasional scholar who published on both and even those that did tended to reinforce the divide. This is particularly true of Richard Ellmann, whose biography of Yeats dominated the field for decades until it was surpassed by Roy Foster’s double volume opus. Ellmann’s much acclaimed life of Joyce continues today (despite its great age, many errors, and limitations) to be the preeminent biographical reference point in Joyce Studies.² Ellmann effectively institutionalised the rivalry and distance between the two writers. In a broader sense, even if there are and were necessary distinctions to be drawn between these two very different giants of Irish literature, keeping them apart was symptomatic of a forced and sometimes false Irish academic or

² See, among others, Finn Fordham 2009: 17-26, John McCourt 2012: 97-110.

cultural politics that seemed to ensure multiply motivated division rather than connection. Thus they were divided on grounds of class: Yeats was portioned off among the Anglo-Irish while Joyce belonged to the more “authentically native” Dublin Irish; religion: Yeats, the defector from the Irish Anglican Church, contrasted with Joyce a lapsed Catholic who could not get his religion out of his system; residence: Yeats was connected intermittently with London and with the pure landscape of the Irish West and of Sligo in particular – which he admitted was “the place that has really influenced my life most” (Yeats 1986: 195), later with Thoor Ballylee and only intermittently situated abroad; Joyce was an inveterate exile who berated his country while at the same time celebrating his native “Hibernian Metropolis” of Dublin within his fiction and non-fiction writings penned in his various adopted homes in Europe. Roy Foster’s synoptic description of the famous 1902 Joyce-Yeats Dublin encounter carries much of the received shorthand about their differences: “More immediately apparent was the mutual suspicion between an established Irish Protestant aesthete and a Jesuit-educated Catholic Dubliner with a preternaturally mordant eye for social pretensions” (Foster 1997: 276). Here, as elsewhere, there is a sense of an unbridgeable divide which, consequentially led to a distance that endured between some Yeats and Joyce scholars and critics and has only, rather recently, been adequately addressed, challenged and partly corrected.

When examining the connection between Yeats and Joyce we cannot but be aware of complex questions of inheritance and resistance, perhaps almost inevitably so in this intergenerational relationship. Yeats was, undoubtedly, both an enabling and a frustrating presence for the younger Joyce who was already artistically self-sufficient and assured when he first encountered the older writer. What emerges from several of the essays in this volume is Joyce’s sincere and profound interest in Yeats’s writing, in Yeats as a late Romantic, a symbolist, a Celtic revivalist poet, a tireless wordsmith,

and the undisputed leader of the Revival. There is much truth in Len Platt's description of Joyce's response to revivalism, which, "far from being marginal, is actually fundamental to the quality of *Ulysses*, to the kind of text that *Ulysses* is" (Platt 1998: 7). So while there is debt, this is no guarantee of gratitude. As Clare Hutton puts it: "On the one hand Joyce learns craft and technique from writers involved in the Revival (especially Yeats); on the other hand, he parodies and ridicules the whole movement". Despite the ridicule, however, "careful study of Yeats' evolution enabled him [Joyce] to develop and refine his own aesthetic vision" (Hutton 2009: 197, 203).

Several of the contributors here have attempted to tease out out just how this happened and in doing so have challenged the too-often-trotted out Yeats-Joyce dichotomy, winningly described (and partly dismantled) by Alistair Cormack as "the Punch and Judy show of Irish modernism" (Cormack 2008:11), and they have pointed to a clear continuum of Yeatsian echoes – some apparent, others more stealthily disguised – in Joyce's writings from *Chamber Music* right through to *Finnegans Wake*. Thus they have contradicted the established wisdom that persists and is subscribed to by many, and was recently expressed neatly by Wim Van Mierlo who writes: "*Chamber Music* is full of echoes and allusions, but on closer inspection none are very specific or tangible, not even that of the early Yeats, whose alleged effect on Joyce has often been noted" (Van Mierlo 2010: 51). The "alleged effect" of Yeats on Joyce is at the core of this volume. A close reading of the textual echoes of Yeats's writings in *Chamber Music* is set out in Jolanta Wawrzycka's "Ghosting Hour": Young Joyce channeling Early Yeats", an essay that will challenge even the most robust doubters of a discernible influence or borrowing. This appropriately follows Edna Longley's essay which explores what she calls "the aesthetic intercourse (and mutual admiration) between Yeats and Joyce", many of the subtleties of which were lost in the polarising aftermath of 1916. Longley shortens the distance between the two

writers by exploring common ground initially spotted in 1941 by Louis MacNeice who highlighted the importance for both of “the 1890s” and pointed to their shared role as ‘spoilt priests’ with a fanatical devotion to style”, both indebted to Walter Pater. Longley successfully challenges the antagonistic tilt of so many readings of Joyce’s relationship with Yeats, and counters Andrew Gibson’s recent assertion: “Stephen finally ‘overcomes’ Yeats, the nineties, the backward look, and the tone and mood of the forlorn Anglo-Irish endgame” (Gibson 2012: 199). In Longley’s words “no literary game is zero-sum. Nor is the impulse behind Yeats’s poetry ever reducible to forlorn Anglo-Irishness”.

Matthew Campbell too ultimately finds more overlap than might previous have been thought, provocatively outlining Yeats’s conception of “epiphany” which he then contrasts with Joyce’s better-known theory. He also reads Yeats’s *Reveries Over Childhood and Youth* (1916) as a work that steps into what is more usually considered Joycean territory. Campbell suggests that Yeats might not, after all, have been too old to learn from Joyce and suggests that Yeats developed the fragmented style of *Reveries* after reading the early extracts of *A Portrait*, which had been serially published in *The Egoist* from 1914 to 1915. He also connects several of the poems in *Responsibilities* with Joyce, and indeed, the Yeats’s persona in *Responsibilities*, very much like that of Stephen in *Portrait*, is often that of the embattled artist-hero. Annalisa Federici suggests, again unexpectedly, connections and analogies between Yeats’s theatre practices and Joyce’s dramatic writings (both *Exiles*, and, perhaps more unexpectedly, the “Circe” episode of *Ulysses*). Another fascinating area of comparison is provided by Ariela Freedman in her “‘Yes I said Yes’”: Eros, Sexual Violence and Consent in Joyce and Yeats” which looks at the not often explored angle of freewill, sexual consent, and violence and contrasts treatments of both in Yeats and Joyce. While avoiding any straightforward contrast between Yeats’s

myth and Joyce's anti-allegorical representations of women, Freedman nonetheless attempts to address the "gendered nationalism of the Irish Revival", and shows that both Yeats and Joyce are both guilty and innocent, asserting that even Joyce's Molly Bloom monologue is not above reproach and has not always been read with the necessary caution in this sense.

In his essay, Barry Devine, counters another too-often stated opinion about Joyce's lack of interest in politics (as against Yeats's excessive interest). He focuses on Joyce's introduction of just one, seemingly innocuous word, "Balbriggan", into a section of "Cyclops", which originally appeared in *The Little Review* in 1919 as follows:

he wore trews of deerskin, roughly stitched with gut. His nether extremities were encased in high buskins dyed in lichen purple.

Two years later, in October 1921, Joyce amended it to:

he wore trews of deerskin, roughly stitched with gut. His nether extremities were encased in high Balbriggan buskins dyed in lichen purple.

Devine argues that by introducing the name "Balbriggan", Joyce was referring to the notorious sack of Balbriggan and inscribing into *Ulysses* a mention of the brutal reprisals carried out in 1921 against the Irish people at the hands of the Black and Tans. The events in Balbriggan play a far more prominent place in Yeats, who, in their wake, chose to gather four deeply political poems, including "The Rose Tree," "On a Political Prisoner," "A Meditation in Time of War," and "The Second Coming" for publication in *The Nation* magazine in London in what Devine describes as "a clear attempt to gain the sympathy of his British readers".

Like Devine, Enrico Terrinoni reveals the benefit of minute detective work into the sources of words or phrases that often go unnoticed in Joyce's texts. Terrinoni follows Joyce to the library, not so much to the National Library but to Marsh's Library (which Yeats may have suggested to him) and, for four consecutive days in 1902, to

the Franciscan library of the church of Adam and Eve. Such persistence suggests that Joyce had good reason to visit here. Terrinoni finds it in a phrase in *Finnegans Wake*: “timestone of Barnstaple by mortisection or vivisuture, splitten up or recompounded (*FW* 253.34). Challenging the standard annotations Terrinoni leads us on a journey back to Bram Stoker, and to his surgeon brother, Thornley whom Joyce sat beside at the Franciscan library in 1902 and who later became Gogarty’s mentor. Apart from illuminating a passage of *Finnegans Wake*, one gets, from this study, a sense of just how small the Dublin shared by Joyce and Yeats really was and how easy it would have been for one to tread on the toes of the other.

Thus it is easy to understand how Joyce’s admiration for Yeats cannot but have been undermined by his realisation that the Dublin literary stage was never going to be big enough for both of them or for their very different theatrical agendas (which are intriguingly juxtaposed and compared in this volume by Carla Marengo Vaglio). Nor, for that matter, was early twentieth century Irish poetry. It is not insignificant that Joyce’s first significant publication, the slim volume of verse that is his 1907 *Chamber Music*, singularly failed to satisfy him. Writing about this even, sometimes brilliant, sometimes derivative work in 1906, shortly before its publication, he voiced all this doubt to Stanislaus:

The reason that I dislike Chamber Music as a title is that it is too complacent. I should prefer a title which to a certain extent repudiated the book, without altogether disparaging it. [...] I went through the entire book of verses mentally on receipt of Symons’ letter and they nearly all seemed to me poor and trivial: some phrases and lines pleased me and no more (*L* II, 182).

Had Yeats, whose words, phrases, rhythms, lines are spectral presences in Joyce’s verse, perhaps inadvertently, contributed to Joyce’s lack of confidence in his collection? As early as 1902, Yeats had encouraged Joyce, telling him in a letter sent from Portman

Square in London:

The work which you have actually done is very remarkable for a man of your age who has lived away from the vital intellectual centres. Your technique in verse is very much better than the technique of any young Dublin man I have met during my time. (Yeats 1994: 249-250).

He also, however, signalled what he evidently considered the derivative nature of Joyce's early work. "It might have been the work of a young man who had lived in an Oxford literary set" (Yeats 1994: 250). This letter has been seen by many critics in a wholly positive key. Foster, for example, sees it as one of a series "of thoughtful letters of advice" that Yeats sent to younger Irish writers (Foster 1997: 277). Thus Yeats is cast as the wise and generous father-figure who is spurned and deprecated by the young, ungrateful Joyce who bites the hand that feeds him. It would be well to read Yeats's "praise" a little more critically. Elsewhere in the letter he advises Joyce against publishing one of his lyrics in the "Academy":

If I had all your MS I might have picked a little bundle of lyrics, but I think you had really better keep such things for the "Speaker", which makes rather a practice of publishing quite short scraps of verse. I think that the poem that you have sent me has a charming rhythm in the second stanza, but I think it is not one of the best of your lyrics as a whole. I think that the thought is a little thin (Yeats 1994: 249).

A lesser writer and a smaller ego than Joyce might well have been challenged if not broken by such ambivalent praise. Given his view of the Yeats's "claque", Joyce would have felt that the "best technique in Dublin" was not a description to get excited about especially if the competitors were competent but minor figures like Gogarty, James Starkey, or Colum. He would also have been well aware that most of the literary action was, in Yeats's mind, to be found in the West of Ireland or in London and perhaps this lies behind his own fictive journey west (as well as that of Gabriel Conroy, which is so out of keeping with the rest of *Dubliners*, in "The Dead"). The reference to

the “Oxford literary set” would have left him similarly unimpressed while the description of “short scraps” that were “a little thin” might well have caused not little umbrage.

Although Joyce’s early poetry is arguably on a level with Yeats’s own early efforts (and with that of other minor figures in or about to be in vogue in Dublin at the time, including James Starkey and Oliver St John Gogarty), Joyce’s attention had, in any case, already begun to be monopolized by prose, by the early drafts of *Stephen Hero* and the short stories of *Dubliners*. The daunting poetic presence of Yeats cannot but have been a factor in his decision to move to prose (however poetic) and to resist the impact and influence of the older poet, to refuse to become a second-hand Yeats. While appreciating how Yeats wrote “such very good verse” because of his relentless dedication to his art, Joyce refused to inherit the other side of the Yeats persona – his public, often political role, which Joyce harshly described as his “floating will”, his “treacherous instinct of adaptability”, his habit of courting “the favour of the multitude” (*OCPW*, 51-2). Joyce himself chose the most public means possible to express his distance from the Yeats group, that is, his 1901 broadside, *The Day of the Rabblement*. In it, he articulates the position of the true artist: “No man, said the Nolan, can be a lover of the true and the good unless he abhors the multitude, and the artist, though he may employ the crowd, is very careful to isolate himself” (*OCPW*, 50). He would later reinforce the distance in his “Gas from a Burner” broadside (which is analysed here by Matthew Campbell). The year after Joyce’s “Rabblement” essay saw the much mythologized Yeats-Joyce meeting take place. Their conversation appears to have been less than fruitful even if, as Ronan Crowley shows in this volume, it occupies a central place in Joyce criticism. Countless contrasting versions of what was actually said still circulate today. The Ellmann version suggests that that towards the end of the conversation, Joyce got up and, as he was going out, said, “I am twenty. How old are you?” Yeats quotes his own

answer as follows: “I told him, but I am afraid I said I was a year younger than I am”. He said with a sigh, “I thought as much. I have met you too late. You are too old” (Ellmann 1964: 86). Yeats later commented: “such a colossal self-conceit with such a Lilliputian literary genius I never saw combined in one person.” George Russell (AE) agreed, claiming that Joyce was “as proud as Lucifer” (*JJ*, 100). In later years, Joyce denied that he had responded to Yeats in this way but he did so, as Roy Foster comments, “at a stage of life when good manners meant more to him than they did in 1902” (Foster 1997: 276). There is reason to see Joyce’s retort, in whichever form it was delivered, as a response to Yeats who, at the end of the 1901 letter, had underlined his seniority and the generational gap that divided them:

I will do anything for you I can, but I am afraid that it will not be a great deal. The chief use I can be, though perhaps you will not believe this, will be by introducing you to some other writers, who are starting like yourself, one always learns one’s business from one’s fellow-workers, especially from those who are near enough one’s own age to understand one’s own difficulties.

Too much has been made of this by now almost mythical encounter which should not be allowed to obscure Yeats’s ongoing support of Joyce’s writings even if he only read him partially and sporadically (many of the pages of his copy of *Ulysses* are uncut) and, as early as 1904, rejected his translation of Gerhart Hauptmann for the Irish Literary theatre (*LII*, 58). This early rejection apart, Yeats was indeed interested in the Joycean project and told John Quinn that he thought Joyce “a most remarkable man” (Hassett 2013: 102). He told L.A.G. Strong that *Ulysses* was “a work perhaps of genius” (*JJ* 530) and he felt that *Anna Livia Plurabelle* was a work of “heroic sincerity” (Yeats 1968: 405). Joyce’s fascination with the older figure’s poetry endured throughout his life. *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are scattered with allusions to Yeats’s works which Joyce often read with his better language students in Trieste. He even had a hand in the first Italian

translation of *The Countess Cathleen* which he worked on with his friend, the multilingual Triestine lawyer, Nicolo Vidacovich – rare evidence, this, of respect, and of a certain degree of admiration if not influence. Later, when Joyce was engineering the writing of his first biography, penned by the obliging American, Herbert Gorman, he instructed Gorman to write of his immense admiration for Yeats as a poet.

As we have already seen in this introduction and will amply see in the essays that follow, Joyce, as Gregory Castle put it in his *Modernism and the Celtic Revival*, challenged the cultural assumptions of the Celtic revival and especially “its tendency to assume that the peasant somehow held out the hope of national virtue and cultural unity” (Castle 2001: 173), but he also played an important role in continuing the revivalist project by making the critique of its cultural practices one of the staples of all of his writings. Seamus Deane, who lists Joyce among the four main Revivalists, along with Moore, Yeats and Synge, describes the connection with typical elegance, writing: “Joyce remained faithful to the original conception of the Revival. His Dublin became the Holy City of which Yeats had despaired” (Deane 1987: 96). This volume hopes to contribute to an investigation of how he achieved this.

Joyce, back in 1907, had termed Yeats “mad”; Yeats later returned the compliment, describing *Ulysses* as “a mad book!” (*JJ*, 530). But mad is not necessarily bad. In their shared “fascination with what’s difficult”, in the sheer scope and ambition of their writings, they shared a madness that was both enabling and necessary, as suggested by the aging Yeats in “An Acre Of Grass” which he published in *New Poems* (1938):

Grant me an old man’s frenzy,
Myself I must remake
Till I am Timon and Lear
Or that William Blake

Who beat upon the wall
Till Truth obeyed his call.

Yeats's *A Vision* would be greeted by critics and readers as a work of madness. *Finnegans Wake* would fare little better. Among many others, Kerker Quinn opened his review of *A Vision* and *The Herne's Egg and Other plays* by telling readers: "Mr. Yeats's new volumes will convince many that he has gone unquestionably, though perhaps serviceably, mad" (Quinn 1938: 834). In a similar vein, Irish critic, John Garvin expressed the view that Joyce had his own neurosis and used "his art as a raft". Like Lucia, he too was "in a sea of madness" but his daughter "was sinking, whereas Joyce was diving", a rather contradictory claim, this, which suggests that Joyce was both mad and in control.³

Such "madness" was functional to both Yeats and Joyce as they sought to transform both inner chaos and the chaos of the outer world into lasting art. But it also served them in their attempts, as Giuseppe Serpillo has it in the closing essay to this volume, to address the needs of the Irish present through their representation of the past. Precisely through their literature that responded to one of its highest and most important callings - to suggest, articulate, arrange, and transmit change, and the possibility of change in Ireland and elsewhere. Thus through Stephen Dedalus, Joyce delves into the social construction of memory that is history and finds a nightmare there, while Yeats turns to myth rather than history and ultimately finds there metaphors for his poetry that would outlast the metaphors he found for the emerging nation. But both reached beyond an imagined Ireland seeking to somehow enclose what Joyce calls the "chaosmos of alle" in *Finnegans Wake*. They did so knowing it was to thread a tightrope, one which is well described in Edna O'Brien's affectionate,

³ As reported in an article entitled "John Garvin talks in Maynooth on Joyce", *Irish Times*, 17 June 1969, p.10.

sometimes insightful but often inaccurate biography of Joyce:

Madness he knew to be the secret of genius. Hamlet was mad in his opinion and it was that madness which induced the great drama. [...] He preferred the word “exaltation” which can merge into madness. All great men had that vein in them. The reasonable man, he insisted, achieves nothing (O’Brien: 148-9).

Ultimately, the Irish Revival (or the Yeatsian version, in all its “forlorn” – to use Gibson’s word as cited in this volume by Edna Longley – Anglo-Irishness), important though it was and is, yields before the wider artistic and spiritual concerns of these two writers who are united in their common, tireless dedication to their craft but also in the manner in which their art – albeit in profoundly different ways - never left Ireland but at the same time always managed to supersede and enlarge it.

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THINGS ACTUALLY SAID:
ON SOME VERSIONS OF JOYCE'S AND YEATS'S FIRST
MEETING*

I have met with you, bird, too late, or if not,
too worm and early. (*FW* 37.13-14)

We have meat two hourly, sang out El
Caplan Buycout, with the famous padre's
turrigur's capecast, meet too ourly,
matadear! (*FW* 60.29-31)

And I regret to proclaim that it is out of my
temporal to help you from being killed by
inchies, (what a thrust!), as we first met each
other newwhere so airly. (*FW* 155.10-12)

I met with whom it was too late. My fate! O
hate! (*FW* 345.13-14)

Weh is me, yeh is ye! I, the mightif beam
maircanny, which bit his mirth too early or
met his birth too late! (*FW* 408.15-17)

Studded across *Finnegans Wake*, a series of variations on a minor motif revisits and reworks Joyce's first meeting with W. B. Yeats in the autumn of 1902. These repetitions, sprinkled liberally over "Work

* This essay was completed during my term as Alexander von Humboldt postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Passau. Sincere thanks to Elizabeth M. Bonapfel for help and encouragement with an earlier version.

in Progress” from 1927 onward, might signal “no more than Joyce’s awareness of the legend”, as William York Tindall sensibly observes (Tindall 1954: 12), but their very plurality and variety also indicates the rich and varied textual life that the story of the encounter enjoyed during Joyce’s lifetime and since his death¹. “[A]sserted, denied, and reasserted”, in Richard M. Kain’s phrase (Kain 1962: 85), the first meeting figures prominently in histories of literary modernism and, naturally enough, occupies a central place in Joyce criticism². Indeed, for Richard Ellmann, it had “a symbolic significance in modern literature”, comparable with the meeting of the twenty-something Heinrich Heine with Goethe in 1824 (*JIII* 100). From its very first outing in print, however, the story of the meeting offered more than a choice tid-bit of literary gossip.

As Amanda Sigler has recently argued, the version of the encounter that Yeats set down in an aborted preface to *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903) not only served as the point of departure for Ellmann’s work on the Joyce biography but also shaped his interactions with such compères of the writer as Arthur Power and Frank Budgen. Viewed in the light of the unpublished preface,

¹ Tindall makes this observation on the strength of the “foody fragment” at *FW* 60.29-30 (12). The earliest instance of the motif to be written into “Work in Progress”, however, is also the first one encountered in the *Wake*. In 1927, Joyce made an addition to the first typescript of I.2: “I have met you either too late, or if not, too early” (*JJA* 45:55), which, by the time of its first publication (Joyce 1927: 99), read as it now appears at *FW* 37.13-14. Joyce would continue to pepper “Work in Progress” with variations on the phrase over the course of the next decade. The last instance to be added is the second one encountered in the *Wake*: “We have meat two hourly, sang out El Caplan Buycout, [...] meet too ourly, matadear!”. Joyce added it to a list of additions for Galley 33 of the Faber and Viking Press first edition in the late 1930s (see *JJA* 49:84).

² Kain errs surely in his claim that “amazingly enough, the story remains unchanged in all particulars” (85). For an example of the story’s enduring prominence, see Lewis 2007: 119.

Ellmann's Joyce "would always be rebellious, fascinating for the open challenges he posed to his literary predecessors" (Sigler 2010: 4). By the time of *Yeats and Joyce* (1967), however, the critic could afford to be more thoughtful, more circumspect. The meeting was now qualified as "[l]ike most Dublin encounters, [...] binomial, comprised of what was actually said and what was afterwards bruited" (456)³. But Ellmann had done so much in the preceding decade to whittle away that plurality, holding out the preface with its senior claim to fidelity as Yeats's "remarkably honest story of the interview" (Ellmann 1954: 86) and, thus, the lone authentic account on offer.

By canvassing some of the alternative versions of the encounter that circulated in the years preceding the publication of *James Joyce* (1959), this essay recuperates the varied ends to which the meeting and, in particular, Joyce's withering rejoinder were put in the early decades of his reception. Ellmann's account, the wellspring of the story for most present-day readers, was itself a significant latecomer. As early as 1927, it was already "the custom, even in the briefest account of Joyce, to tell this story" (Lewis 1927: 114)⁴. Not only do versions crop up in the writings of such intimates of the Dublin literary scene as A. E., Joseph Holloway, and L. A. G. Strong, or surface in accounts from those in Joyce's circle such as Herbert Gorman, Sisley Huddleston, and Wyndham Lewis, but they also appear as far afield as work by Hugh MacDairmid, Bertrand Russell, and Gore Vidal. This wide variety intimates just how biddable the story was in its first heyday, capable of being pressed into service for a startling range of causes, causeries, and contexts. Hereunder are ten versions of Joyce's put-down that were committed to print or to

³ The Dolmen publication was reproduced as a chapter in Ellmann's *Eminent Domain: Yeats among Wilde, Joyce, Pound, Eliot, and Auden* (1967).

⁴ In Wyndham Lewis's account, "[o]n learning the extent of Yeats's seniority, with a start of shocked surprise, [Joyce] mournfully shook his head, exclaimed, 'I fear I have come too late! I can do nothing to help you!'" (114).

holograph in the first half of the twentieth century, teasingly stripped (for now) of their source citations:

- I thought as much. I have met you too late. You are too old. (c. 1903)
We have met too late: you are too old to be influenced by me. (1918)
You're past developing – it is a pity we didn't meet early enough for me to be of help to you. (1919)
You are, alas, too old for me to make any impression upon you. (1919)
I fear I have come too late! I can do nothing to help you! (1927)
We have met too late. You are too old for me to have any effect on you. (c. 1928)
We have met too late; you can learn nothing from me. (1939)
I am sorry. You are too old for me to help you. (1941)
Sorry. You are too old for me to help. (1947)
I thought so. I have come too late to influence you. (1949)

With “too late” and “too old” frequent refrains, what unites these ten versions is Joyce’s reconfiguration of belatedness and the *chutzpah* of his parting sally. The reversals of literary succession and the usual direction of influence, by contrast, are expressed with varying degrees of explicitness. All but absent in the earliest rendering, these are variously couched as “influence”, “help”, “mak[ing] any impression”, or “hav[ing] any effect” over the first few decades of the line’s reiteration.

Reading “Scylla and Charybdis”, the episode of *Ulysses* in which he features as a character, John Eglinton experienced a “twinge of recollection of things actually said” (Eglinton 1935: 148). But ascription and misattribution, such powerful levers for the direct speech recorded in *Ulysses*, also operated in the Irish Literary Revival more generally as a means for writers to pinion their rivals or to exalt fellow practitioners. In this respect, the thousand-page “universe of talk” that comprises George Moore’s *Hail and Farewell* trilogy (Grubgeld 1994: 139), a vast stockpile alternately invented for his characters or collected from their real-life counterparts, or Holloway’s

massive “Impressions of a Dublin Playgoer” are each as representative a Revivalist project as anything proceeding from the ethnographic transcription of peasant speech. Attributing utterances to one’s fictionalised co-Revivalists or snatching authentic speech out of their mouths only to set it down on the page allowed practitioners to portray and lampoon the Revival unfolding around them and, moreover, to situate themselves and jockey for position in a burgeoning literary field. The multiple versions of Joyce’s rejoinder to Yeats that circulated in the period should be seen as an exemplary case of this wider practice.

The prick of conscience that Eglinton felt in the mid-1930s is unavailable to present-day readers of the Joyce-Yeats dossier. In recovering the alternative versions of the encounter that circulated the goal is not to substitute an alternate from the past for the now-dominant account. Neither does this essay propose to add to the facts of the meeting, so hotly contested⁵. Instead, it responds to the vibrant culture engendered by the story’s long transmission as a “standard biographical ‘fact’” (Mason 1981: 1). Within the plenum of retellings, what emerges most palpably is the slow spread of gossip, the exfoliation of a literary meme, conducted at the speed of print. Daniel M. Shea notes of the meeting:

An emphasis upon the actual words would suggest that it is the dates in the schoolbooks in Stephen’s class that are more important than the human conflicts held within. The anecdote is far more engaging and, indeed, edifying, than “what actually happened”, the rallying cry for historicists (Shea 2006: 81).

⁵ To give a single example of disputed particulars, Ellmann dates the meeting to October 1902 and places it “on the street near the National Library. They went from there to a café” (*JIII* 100), whereas Roy Foster specifies a café on O’Connell Street early the following month (Foster 1997: 276). For more recent attempts to pin down the exact details of the encounter, see Foster 2007 and Van Mierlo 2010.

Inasmuch as “what actually happened”, like “what was actually said” before it, is irrecoverable, the historicist’s rallying cry is more likely to be an appeal for the manner of the story’s circulation. And indeed, in the light of this tangled history, Yeats’s aborted preface, that putative originary document, emerges as itself a meditation on the forms of transmission and mediation that shaped the Irish literary field at the turn of the twentieth century.

*

The variations on Joyce’s alleged comeback refracted across the *Wake* also indicate the overdeterminedness of Wakean allusion. The notion of meeting too late, so resonant to the ears of Joyceans, recurs just as immediately to *De Profundis*, Oscar Wilde’s 1897 letter to Lord Alfred Douglas⁶. The playwright writes from Reading Gaol:

Of the appalling results of my friendship with you I don’t speak at present. I am thinking merely of its quality while it lasted. It was intellectually degrading to me. You had the rudiments of an artistic temperament in its germ. But I met you either too late or too soon. I don’t know which. (Wilde 2005: 40)

Intriguingly, literary history records Joyce slighting Yeats in terms remarkably similar to those that Wilde had employed writing to Douglas a mere five years earlier. It is surely impossible that either Joyce or Yeats could have had access to the letter by 1902, however. Omitted from Robert Ross’s first edition of *De Profundis* (1905), the lines quoted above were first published only when the excised portions of the letter appeared as an appendix to Frank Harris’s *Oscar Wilde: His Life and Confessions* (1916). That Joyce read the latter at least as early as 1923 has been conclusively demonstrated by Sam Slote, yet this volume’s presence among the books at the *Wake* should

⁶ Eschewing the Joyce-Yeats possibility entirely, Roland McHugh keys the instances to Wilde and *De Profundis* instead. See McHugh 2006: 37, 155, 345, 408. His annotation for *FW* 60.29-31 includes a cross-reference to *FW* 37.13-14.

not now be taken to exclude the meeting with Yeats as a possible referent⁷. At least as early as August of that same year, Joyce encountered a version in print when he read *The Doctor Looks at Literature* (1923), a study he dismissed as “Dr Collins’s pretentious book” (*L III* 80). Though Collins was an early relater of the story (Collins 1923: 40), by the early 1920s, it had already been appearing in print for some five years.

The now-standard account of the meeting, Yeats’s own, did not become widely available until the appearance of *James Joyce* in 1959. It was first published in 1950, however, in Ellmann’s “Joyce and Yeats” for the *Kenyon Review* and next reproduced in his *The Identity of Yeats* (1954). In the aborted preface, titled “The Younger Generation”, Yeats reports the unnamed Joyce saying, “with a sigh”, “I thought as much. I have met you too late. You are too old” (Yeats c. 1903: n. pag; cf. *JIII* 103). This rendering of the parting shot, familiar to us from its wide circulation, was until 1950 presumably unavailable to all but intimates of Yeats and, thereafter, of his widow⁸. For all the written accounts of the meeting that have come down to us, not one before the mid-century reproduces the rejoinder exactly as Yeats had recorded it in 1903. What this means is that statements ascribed to Joyce about the encounter need to be revisited. In what Ellmann terms “a middle-aged disclaimer dictated for his biographer Herbert Gorman” (Ellmann 1967A: 456), for example, Joyce attests that “though he did say the words or something to the effect attributed to him they were never said in the tone of contempt which is implied in

⁷ Slotte determines it was the second edition of 1918 that crossed Joyce’s desk. The volume contributed significant material, including “[t]he seeds for ‘Here Comes Everybody’”, to notebook VI.B.3, compiled between March and July 1923 (Slotte 1995: 104).

⁸ For some recent retellings of the encounter that quote the Yeats preface (often mediated through Ellmann), see Sean Latham 2003: 128; Spinks 2009: 17; Platt 2011: 145 n. 5.

the story”⁹. At no time before Joyce’s death, however, did the “words [...] attributed to him” in print accord precisely with Yeats’s version. For the first half of the twentieth century, then, “things actually said” took several significantly different forms.

After enjoying a long and distinguished career during Joyce’s lifetime, the comeback resurfaced with such frequency in the weeks following his death that Padraic Colum felt the need to protest “surely the time has come to expunge from the record the alleged remark of the youthful Joyce to Yeats” (Colum 1941: 11)¹⁰. The irony is that Colum was among the first to circulate the “alleged remark”. In a 1918 puff piece for the New York *Pearson’s Magazine* introducing Joyce, *Dubliners*, and *A Portrait*, he deploys the well-established Yeats to mediate the Irish newcomer for American audiences. The younger writer was “very noticeable amongst the crowd of students who frequented the National Library”:

Although he had a beautiful voice for singing or for repeating poetry, he spoke harshly in conversation, using many words of the purlieus. Stories were told about his arrogance. Did not this youth say to Yeats, “We have met too late: you are too old to be influenced by me”? And did he not laugh in derision when a celebrated critic spoke of Balzac as a great writer? (Colum 1918: 41)

⁹ Whereas Gorman accorded the story a prominent position in *James Joyce: His First Forty Years* (1924), by the time of *James Joyce* (1939) he had redacted the account entirely: “there have been false reports about the relations of the two men that might lead one to think that there was an element of contempt on the part of the younger for the older. This was never so” (80-81). A similar denial appears in the “Biografia essenziale” published with *Araby* (1935), Amalia Popper Risolo’s translations from *Dubliners*, in a footnote apparently authored by Joyce: “People have said that Joyce remarked in conclusion, ‘We met too late. You are too old to be influenced by me’. Joyce however denies the authenticity of the anecdote” (translated in Mahaffey 1995: 522 n. 40).

¹⁰ Colum here responds directly to Gogarty’s “The Joyce I Knew” in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, but the rejoinder had also appeared in the obituary of Joyce in the *New York Times*.

Enda Duffy has recently noted the importance of New York as a central hub in the reception of Irish modernism (Duffy 2014: 196). The story was first circulated in the American metropolis as part of a deliberate stratagem to cultivate Joyce's transatlantic reception, setting him off to advantage against the familiar Yeats. When Michael Mason draws attention to the anecdote's early appearance as "a definite piece of information" in Huddleston's *Paris Salons, Cafés, Studios* (1928), he marvels that the memoir was "written by an American thoroughly innocent of Dublin in 1902" (Mason 1981:1); yet Huddleston reproduces Colum's version word for word (Huddleston 1928: 219). Indeed, for over thirty years, this was the dominant text of the riposte, reiterated unfailingly in Colum's own writing on Joyce and picked up by writers as varied as Collins, Gorman, Gerald Griffin, MacDiarmid, Sean O'Casey, Horace Reynolds, Amalia Risolo (*née* Popper), Bertrand Russell, and Tindall¹¹. When L. A. G. Strong came to reproduce the story in *The Sacred River* (1949), he did so on the authority of Yeats – "Yeats himself told it to me at Oxford a year after the publication of *Ulysses*" – but clove to a version closer to Colum's than the poet's first-hand testimony: "I thought so," his Joyce says. "I have come too late to influence you" (16). This phrasing, which Tindall terms "the traditional story", was sufficiently well established that when Joyce's intimates wrote after his death to plead youthful politesse, they quoted the Colum version in their objections

¹¹ See, *inter alia*, Colum 1922: 52; Collins 1923: 40; Gorman 1924: 5; Colum 1926: 314; Hull 1930: 223; Kunitz 1931: 202; McCole 1934: 725; Joyce 1935; Fisher 1936: 222; McCole 1937: 85; Reynolds 1937: 104; Griffin 1938: 22; Finkelstein 1947: 208; Russell 1951: 38 ("I am afraid, sire, you are too old to be influenced by me"); Colum 1941: 11; "The Significance of Cunninghame Graham" [1952], in MacDiarmid 1970: 126 ("Joyce regretted he had not met Yeats twenty years earlier, since Yeats was now too old to be influenced by him"); Taylor 1954: 98; Tindall 1954: 12; O'Casey to William J. Maroldo, 9 April 1962, in O'Casey 1992: 298 ("I wasn't influenced by James Joyce any more than all who read him were. I was too old to be influenced by him (as Joyce is said to have remarked to Yeats)").

(McGreevy 1941: 43; Jolas 1941: 91). Even in his forthright rejection of the Yeats preface, and implicitly of Ellmann's narrative, it is the Colum version of the rejoinder that Stanislaus Joyce reproduces in *My Brother's Keeper* (1958):

It is reported that at their first meeting my brother said to Yeats, "I regret that you are too old to be influenced by me"; and it seems that my brother always denied the story. To the best of my recollection it is at least substantially correct, though perhaps Jim may have phrased it somewhat differently (179).¹²

What in 1918 was an entrée to an American readership for Joyce became by the following year just one more story told of Yeats. Katharine Tynan's vivid account of the war years in Ireland, *The Years of the Shadow* (1919), includes the anecdote – in which Joyce goes unnamed – among a series of affectionate, gossipy stories centred on the senior poet:

Another had a tale of him [Yeats] and an eccentric young Dublin poet who wrote one small volume of exquisite poetry and a book of prose which was banned by the libraries. The young poet turned up at W. B.'s lodgings.

"I came to see you," he explained, "because we are interested in the same subjects. I would like to explain to you my theories on the subject of poetry."

They talked a while, and he controverted and contradicted all W. B. said. Finally, he took his hat sadly, and said "I see I had better go. You are, alas, too old for me to make any impression upon you."

And he went. (31)

As Joyce's reputation grew, the story of the meeting and the text of his comeback served variously as an index of the younger writer's self-confidence (for Collins, it showed "belief in his own greatness" [40]); his arrogance (*TIME Magazine* 1930: 80; Kunitz 1931: 202); his "[u]nashamed candor" (Fisher 1936: 222); and, more generally, the

¹² Sigler reports that Ellmann sent Stanislaus a copy of the newly published *The Identity of Yeats* in August 1954, pressing the recipient for a response to Yeats's account of the meeting (Sigler 2010: 34).

self-preoccupation of the literary artist (Gorman in the earlier *James Joyce* interprets the remark as “a serious assertion by one who knew whereof he was speaking” [5]). Perhaps most intriguingly, the line was also deployed to stress both Joyce’s continuity with and radical departure from the Revival. When A. E. undertook a lecture tour of North America in early 1928 to raise funds for the *Irish Statesman*, he numbered Joyce among “Some Characters of the Irish Literary Movement”, Joyce who “parted with a last shaft directed at Yeats, ‘We have met too late. You are too old for me to have any effect on you’” (Russell c. 1928: n. pag)¹³. By contrast, the college anthology *This Generation* (1939), quoting the rejoinder as “We have met too late; you can learn nothing from me”, underlines Joyce’s general hostility “to the efforts of his fellow-countrymen” and “the opening of an unclosable breach in the relations of Joyce and his Irish contemporaries” (551). Even during Joyce’s lifetime, the story of the encounter had percolated down to the level of a textbook on literary modernism. Neither its meaning nor the very content of the response was stable, however, despite the reassuring presence of quotation marks that identified competing versions of the utterance as direct quoted speech.

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When Ellmann asked George Yeats about the meeting in 1947, he did not repeat the Colum text of Joyce’s parting shot. Appealing to a more diffuse authority in his “Joyce and Yeats” article, he writes “*Dublin* retailed the news” that Joyce had informed the poet “flatly”, “You are too old for me to help you” (Ellmann 1950: 623 [emphasis added])¹⁴. Ellen Carol Jones dubs this rendering “the Dublin street

¹³ A. E. delivered his lecture at Columbia University, Cornell University, and Swarthmore College between February and March 1928. An undated autograph manuscript of the lecture is now part of the James A. Healy Collection of Irish Literature, M0273, Stanford University Libraries. Box 12, Folder 197.

¹⁴ At a January 1960 awards luncheon honouring *James Joyce*, Ellmann said, “One

version” (Jones et al. 1986: 21); for Judit Nényei, it is a “well-known rumour” (Nényei 2002: 20). Certainly, this version improves on Colum’s, with the latter’s cumbersome passive construction, “to be influenced by me”, finessed into a more natural sounding “for me to help you”. But the repeated gestures toward wider circulation belie a pinpointable source – at least for the version’s first publication. Whatever about its usage in speech, this rendering was apparently not set down in print until the weeks after Joyce’s death and a scabrous account penned by Oliver St John Gogarty. The latter places Yeats at the Cavendish Hotel in Dublin on the occasion of his fortieth birthday:

Joyce sought audience with Yeats and obtained it because Yeats happened to answer the ring at the door.

It opened on Joyce.

“How old are you, Mr Yeats?” Taken by surprise Yeats answered:

“I am forty years old today.”

“I am sorry. You are too old for me to help you.”

The door was slowly closed in his face.

He recited this incident without comment to me just after it had happened. (Gogarty 1941: 15)

By 1947, when Ellmann was first meeting with Yeats’s widow, Gogarty had refined his version further: Joyce was now reported as saying “insolently”, “Sorry. You are too old for me to help” (Gogarty 1947: 22; cf. Gogarty 1948: 49). But in the year of Joyce’s death, the earlier Gogarty version began its wide dissemination, reiterated by Budgen in a rebuttal – “I said I thought we had had enough of the story of his rudeness to Yeats. (‘You are too old for me to help you.’) Joyce affirmed that the story was untrue” (Budgen 1941: 109) – and incorporated verbatim into Harry Levin’s *James Joyce: A Critical*

day in Yeats’s house in Dublin, I asked his widow if there was any truth to the story that when Joyce, then 20 years old, met Yeats, who was an established writer in his late thirties, Joyce said to him, ‘You are too old for me to help you’” (Ellmann quoted in *Publisher’s Weekly* 1960: 128).

Introduction (1941) as an index of “Joyce’s relations with the circle of Irish writers that had emerged during his school days” (7)¹⁵. E. M. Foster even recited this version as part of a radio programme for the BBC Eastern Service in 1944¹⁶.

As the genealogy plotted above adumbrates, Ellmann’s later admission that the story was “binomial” (Ellmann 1967A: 456) must admit of a certain polynomialism. The irrecoverable “what was actually said” stands in a house of mirrors that throws back giddy reflections of what afterwards circulated in Dublin oral culture and what afterwards circulated in print. Very occasionally the former have come down to us (even if in transcribed form). Holloway, collector and inveterate diarist, recorded a version of the encounter as told to him by A. E. in early 1919: “He asked Yeats about some of his poems & the poet went into an elaborate explanation of their meaning & all Joyce said was ‘You’re past developing – it is a pity we didn’t meet early enough for me to be of help to you’” (Holloway 1919: n. pag)¹⁷. By contrast, the Gogarty text, “You are too old for me to help you”, migrated in the opposite direction, escaping the pages of the *Saturday Review of Literature* and the authority of Gogarty’s by-line into the

¹⁵ Levin elsewhere interpolates Joyce’s comeback into a statement of the writer’s self-exclusion from the Revival: “He left too early for the Revolution; he arrived *too late* for the Renaissance” (Levin 1946: 126 [emphasis added]).

¹⁶ “He was also bitter against the Irish literary movement. He attacked Yeats (‘You are too old for me to help you’, he said), he called Irish art ‘the cracked looking glass of a servant’, and reserved his sharpest knives for the Celtic Twilight” (“Some Books”, a broadcast of 24 February 1944, in Forster 2008: 284).

¹⁷ A version of this diary entry, containing a number of departures from the manuscript, appears in O’Neill 1959: 108. A. E. seems to have been a frequent conduit for the story and served as fall guy in denials of its veracity. Thomas McGreevy, writing to the *TLS*, specified, “I frequently heard the story told by A. E., but I learned very early in my acquaintance with A. E. that his stories, especially those of men who had become more widely famous than he, tended to be somewhat out of character” (43).

secondary orality of 1940s literary Dublin, where it was later dismissed as “rumour” by Ellmann (Ellmann 1967A: 456) or as “Dublin folklore” by A. Walton Litz (Litz 1990: 83).

Intriguingly, this to-and-fro between speech and writing and between anonymous and authored transmission mirrors the arc of mediation that Yeats describes in the aborted preface. “The Younger Generation” records Joyce reading to Yeats “a beautiful though immature and eccentric harmony of little prose descriptions and meditations” – perhaps the early epiphanies – before insisting that his compositions owe “nothing to anything but his own mind which was much nearer to God than folklore” (Yeats c. 1903: n. pag; cf. *JIII* 102). Yeats counters by picking up the slim portfolio and, “pointing to a thought”, says, “You got that from somebody else who got it from the folk” (cf. *JIII* 103). Joyce’s crowning rebuff proliferated to such an extent in subsequent decades that versions of it would be attributed to a nameless “eccentric young Dublin poet” or taken for “Dublin folklore”. In this respect, “The Younger Generation” offers a metric by which to understand how the meeting it narrates will be further refracted, dispersed, and reiterated through retellings and strategic reworking.

Nowhere is this mediatedness exemplified more than in the fact that two versions of the preface have come down to us. The second, which to date remains unpublished, relocates the meeting from O’Connell Street to “a little town off the West coast of Ireland” where Yeats encounters Joyce’s stand-in in company with a second young man, both of whom, “strangers to the town”, have been attending a “Gaelic fete” (Yeats c. 1903: n. pag [unpublished version]). The Joyce figure, unnamed in this improbable scenario as in the version first published by Ellmann, is described as “a handsome young fellow [...] the youngest of our writers whom I had never met”. The thread of conversation is substantially that of the familiar version of the preface, albeit less developed, and at one juncture “the young man” begins to

praise “certain wild ‘Scandinavians’ heretical persons”. The draft breaks off before he can deliver any variation on the parting shot, but the very existence of this alternative version should give us pause. The doubling and divergence suggest that the familiar preface, as well as its West of Ireland variant, were less documentary than calculated exercises in self-presentation by Yeats – self-deprecating, to be sure, but turned and tuned to the end of furnishing an introductory note for *Ideas of Good and Evil*¹⁸.

This “treacherous [...] adaptability” is equally apparent in the earliest published version of the famous line¹⁹. Though unattributed to Joyce, it precedes Colum’s puff in *Pearson’s Magazine* by some three years. Moreover, it occurs in a literary work, as part of a heated exchange in Edward Martyn’s five-act play *The Dream Physician* (1914):

Otho. You are a mere aesthetic fop, Brummell. Your nature is too superficial –
BRUMMELL (screaming). Too superficial –? Go. How dare you?
OTHO (with a gesture of repudiation). Ah – I see you are too old for me to
influence you (Martyn c. 1915: 67).²⁰

The Dream Physician premiered in November 1914 as the first production of the Irish Theatre Company, a splinter group cofounded by Martyn, Joseph Plunkett, and Thomas MacDonagh after they broke with the Abbey Theatre. The central characters of the play, Colonel Gerrard of Knockroe, Shane Lester, George Augustus Moon, and Beau Brummell thinly fictionalise Martyn, Shane Leslie, George Augustus

¹⁸ Sigler reproduces a letter that Ellmann wrote to Stanislaus in January 1955 about “the number of stories I collected about [Yeats’s] delight in young men who disagreed with him, patronized him, corrected him” (Sigler 2010: 36).

¹⁹ Joyce castigates “Mr Yeats’s treacherous instinct of adaptability” in “The Day of the Rabbblement” [1901] (Joyce 2000: 51).

²⁰ And here my own sleight of hand is revealed. Though Colum had left Ireland for New York in September 1914, his version of Joyce’s rejoinder, not published until 1918, is suggestively close to Martyn’s rendering.

Moore, and Yeats, respectively, and each incorporates mannerisms and experiences derived from his original. As such, the play conforms to the Revivalist penchant for *à clef* writing, offering Martyn a forum in which to settle scores with Moore as the author of the “dear Edward” caricature in *Hail and Farewell* (Moore 1976: 52 and passim) and with Yeats – and Gregory, lampooned as Sister Farnan – for continuing to promote the peasant play over more continental fare. Clued-in audiences read through the thin dissembling to the characters’ real-life counterparts. Holloway spotted Moore in Moon (Holloway 1967: 168), but the *Irish Independent*, trumpeting the play as “a crushing satire on the character of a well-known Irish litterateur”, went further, outing Lester as “a name thinly concealing the identity of a well-known Irish politician” and Brummell as one “whose language and mannerisms are familiar to frequenters of a certain theatre in Dublin” (*Independent* 1914: 2).

In the 1914 initial run, Otho, Gerrard’s son, was played by the pseudonymous “Richard Sheridan”, whom William J. Feeney identifies as MacDonagh (Feeney 1984: 55). It is surely curious that a future signatory of the 1916 proclamation should utter a witticism attributed to Joyce on an Irish stage dedicated to Ibsenite drama, but Patricia McFate’s contention that the character is “a caricature of James Joyce” overstates the case (McFate 1972: 17). Otho’s Ascendancy background, unreconstructed unionism, and infatuation with Moon’s imaginary grand-niece *la Mayonnaise* militate against such a straightforward identification²¹. Rather, the appearance of the rejoinder should be read as analogous to its employment in Tynan’s *The Years of the Shadow*: less out of any intrinsic interest in Joyce than as evidence of the younger literary set’s high-handed disregard

²¹ On the other hand, it is tempting to interpret Otho’s offhand reference to “read[ing] a paper at the College” (Martyn c. 1915: 25) as an allusion to Joyce’s “Drama and Life”, delivered before the Literary and Historical Society in 1900.

for Yeats, which in *The Dream Physician* is post-dated to 1912. In its first outing, then, on the stage of the Little Theatre, 40 Upper O'Connell Street – and presumably not far from the café where Joyce and Yeats had first met one another – the comeback functioned as unattributed comic deflation, as a sly dig at the poet, which had then been circulating in Dublin oral culture for over a decade.

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At one level, this essay's genealogy of a literary meme conforms to what we know about the construction of Joyce's biography. John McCourt has recently noted of *James Joyce* that "Ellmann wrote in the belief that to admit holes, to not paint over cracks, to break, as it were, the illusion of a seamless whole was to play a risky game, to expose not so much the subject of the biography as the biographer himself" (McCourt 2012: 99). Perfecting "the illusion of total knowledge, definitive interpretation" (99), he continues, required judicious selection between competing versions of the events and incidents in Joyce's life. In the case of the much-mythologised first meeting with Yeats, however, that plurality threatened to overflow any semblance of truth or accuracy.

After more than a century of further proliferation, one would be forgiven therefore for wanting to locate in its first iterations an instance free of calculation or design. But from the very outset, the rejoinder was turned to ends and occasions as plural as its rapidly multiplying versions. In the Irish context, this versatility was of a piece with Revivalist practices of appropriation, borrowing, and misattribution more generally, in which the table talk of the era, whether jotted on shirt-cuffs, confided to diaries, or simply fabricated out of thin air, populated literary salons and the literature alike. Things actually said or else invented outright provided the motor force of the early reception, critical enshrinement, and institutionalisation of the Revival. It is telling, in this light, that a century after its first production, the response to Yeats is the only allusion shoe-horned into

The Dream Physician that enjoys any real currency. For the rest, authentic speech overheard and dreamt-up ascription join the general morass of raw material so vital to the Revival's programme and whose complexity and wider significance we are only beginning to reckon.

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Some critics polarise Joyce and Yeats by invoking the Irish Literary Revival. I want to question this practice, of which the most extreme instance is Len Platt’s *Joyce and the Anglo-Irish* (1998):

The Joyce text ... is devoted to an undermining of revivalism’s status as cultural nationalism, and to a displacement of the Yeatsian Protestant tradition from the round tower of Irish literary culture ... The social and cultural gulf between Joyce and Yeats finds expression in two aesthetics so different as to be radically incompatible (Platt: 232).

Such binary readings often had a context in the Northern Irish Troubles, but their effect continues. In *The Strong Spirit* (2012) Andrew Gibson again sets Joyce against “the revivalism of the 1890s”, calling this “very much the preserve of a privileged class and thriving on its English connection” (Gibson: 150). Yet, as Clare Hutton has shown, the “Scylla and Charybdis” chapter of *Ulysses* provides a far more nuanced socio-cultural snapshot of Dublin literati circa 1900: here Joyce “acknowledg[es] the complexity of literary traditions in Ireland” (Hutton: 127). The catch-all (or catch-some) category ‘revivalism’ is a retrospective imposition. In *Stephen Hero* “the compact body of national revivalists” does not mean Yeats and co (SH 43).

‘Revivalism’, like the equally retrospective ‘post-colonial’ paradigm from which it derives, can over-determine narratives of Irish

literary history between 1890 and 1915.¹ Thus it tends to repress the aesthetic intercourse (and mutual admiration) between Yeats and Joyce, while magnifying their class or sectarian differences. This reprises the way in which the Easter Rising itself changed the literary past. Yeats immediately feared “that all the work of years has been overturned ... all the freeing of Irish literature and criticism from politics” (Yeats 1954: 613). In 1923 Ernest Boyd prefaced the revised edition of his book *Ireland’s Literary Renaissance* by lamenting:

Now that political preoccupations are supreme, literature in Ireland has been relegated to the second plane. There is no sign of the influence of James Joyce in his own country ... Irish criticism is too largely the monopoly of the patriotic, whose unimpeachable sentiments concerning Ireland are regarded as entitling them to pass judgment upon questions of aesthetics (Boyd: 7).

The historical problematics of “Irish criticism”, which include reluctance to accept the Literary Revival (a literary-critical revival too) as foundational, affect the deployment of categories and paradigms.² Further, as Yeats studies and Joyce studies developed, sometimes in tandem, usually segregated, often segregated from Ireland, some formative literary and critical contexts receded. *Fin-de-siècle* Aestheticism, twinned with Symbolism, is one such context. But other problems arise when critics translate Aestheticism and Symbolism into proto-‘modernism’ instead of approaching that multifarious matrix on its own terms.³ In 1941 a slightly closer

¹ For a summary and critique of this theoretical formation, see Gregory Castle, “Irish Revivalism: Critical Trends and New Directions”, *Literature Compass* [online] 8, 5 (2 May 2011), 291-303: “Irish Revivalism [...] [t]hrough a form of cultural nationalism and often regarded as a form of anticolonial resistance [...] has long been criticized for complicity with various forms of academic and political discourse connected with the British imperial state.”

² See Chapter 1 of my *Yeats and Modern Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

³ See Patrick McGuinness, ed., *Symbolism, Decadence and the Fin de Siecle* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000).

witness, Louis MacNeice, combated an earlier tendency to polarise Yeats and Joyce (as symbolist *versus* realist) by returning them to the 1890s, to the religion of art, to their common ground as “spoil priests” with “a fanatical devotion to style” (MacNeice 1967: 176).

‘Modernism’, another retrospective paradigm, sometimes conjoins Joyce and Yeats, sometimes splits them, neither plausibly. Between the 1920s and the 1960s, even the adjective ‘modernist’ was not attached to Anglophone modern poetry in the sense that now centres on the disjunctive poetics of Pound and Eliot. Yeats invariably distances his own structures from theirs, as when he attacks Poundian form in the introduction to his *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*: “[In *The Cantos*] I discover at present merely exquisite or grotesque fragments” (Yeats 1936: xxiv). Of course, Joyce’s relation to ‘modernism’, as an imposed or imported paradigm, has also been thrown into question. Twenty years ago, Emer Nolan’s *James Joyce and Nationalism* influentially repatriated him from its critical clutches. In *Yeats and Modern Poetry* (2013) I may have tried to do the same for Yeats; but in Joyce’s case the repatriation emphasises politics more than aesthetics: “far from being dominated by what was later constructed as an ahistorical and abstract modernist agenda, *Ulysses* [is] centrally concerned with British-Irish historical, political, and cultural relations” (Gibson: 1). That seems another binary proposition. It’s true that some critics conflate a “modernist agenda” with a nationalist or anti-colonial agenda. That is, they construe Joycean form as his means of annihilating the British Empire, the Irish Literary Revival, Eng. Lit. and possibly Yeats, in one fell stylistic swoop. Yet perhaps Joyce’s art is about more than this. Even careful formulations put the paradigmatic cart before Pegasus: “postcolonial studies offers ways of articulating nationalism, both imperialist and anti-imperialist, and modernism as interdependent rather than opposed phenomena” (Attridge and Howes 2000: 11). George O’Brien brilliantly remarks of some Joyce criticism: “The Ireland-of-the-Welcomes treatment

deprives us of his exile” (O’Brien 2004: 33). If there is also now an Irish critical climate more welcoming to Yeats, equally we should not deprive ourselves of Yeats’s inner exile: of its effects on his poetry, on modern poetry – and on Joyce. From one angle, ‘exile’ is the symbolic locus of art: a realm populated by artist-heroes, like the wandering Oisín or Stephen Dedalus, who incarnate their creators’ *fin de siècle* aesthetic self-consciousness.

Two “isms” that belong more precisely to this literary period are Parnellism and Paterism. The former category is familiar, but its intersection with the latter may be less so, and may tighten the *fin-de-siècle* bond between Yeats and Joyce. Yeats both grasped and represents the fall and death (1891) of Charles Stewart Parnell as a window of cultural opportunity. Glossing his poem “Parnell’s Funeral” (1933), he says: “This new dispute broke through all [party] walls ... we began to value truth ... free discussion appeared among us for the first time, bringing the passion for reality, the satiric genius that informs *Ulysses*, *The Playboy of the Western World* ...” (Yeats 1985: 674). Some might see this as Yeatsian ‘revivalism’ engrossing Joyce. Others might take Kevin Barry’s point that “Joyce’s international and cult status has concealed the ways in which his work is part of an articulate and broad debate within the Irish literary revival” (*OCPW* xxix). “Parnell’s Funeral” revisits 1890s “debate”:

Come, fix upon me that accusing eye.
I thirst for accusation. All that was sung,
All that was said in Ireland is a lie
Bred out of the contagion of the throng,
Saving the rhyme rats hear before they die ... (Yeats 1985: 285)

“Contagion of the throng” seems to remember “The Day of the Rabblement” (1901), where Joyce (a supporter of the literary theatre) accuses Yeats of betraying the *avant-garde* by seeking “popularity”: “If an artist courts the favour of the multitude he cannot escape the contagion of its fetishism and deliberate self-deception, and if he joins

in a popular movement he does so at his own risk" (*OCPW* 51). Yeats's seeming quotation implies that Joyce helped to stiffen his *avant-garde* backbone. In any case, "rabblement" and "contagion of the throng" give an Irish twist to the *fin-de-siècle* stand-off between artist and bourgeoisie. "Parnell's Funeral", while scorning other nationalist worthies, transforms Parnell into an artist-hero, artist-exile, artist-mask: "Their school a crowd, his master solitude" (Yeats 1985: 286). Perhaps "that accusing eye" is Joyce's or involves a Joycean "I told you so".

Parnellism, in the shape of a clash between artist and mob, has been attacked as anti-democratic, as patronising the Irish people. Thus Gibson thinks that Stephen's Parnellite "melancholia" subjugates his art to 'revivalism': "his proud aloofness emerges as a form of dependence" (Gibson: 153). Obviously Yeats can never win if Irish literary dynamics, under the sign of Parnell, are seen as a zero-sum political game rather than a matter of artistic cross-currents. Parnell's "solitude", which Gibson anachronistically attaches to Stephen, is a latterday mask for Yeats's disappointments. In "Parnell's Funeral" Parnell as artist-hero figures a complex literary moment and its dissolution. It was integral to this moment that Ireland's window of cultural opportunity opened when literature, partly under the influence of Walter Pater, had become unusually occupied with its own workings. It raised the stakes for literary values, possibilities and forms that the redemption of Irish culture from politics mapped onto the Symbolist revolt against 'exteriority' and 'rhetoric'. Since politics had not really gone away, Ireland constituted a crucible that peculiarly tested the high claims being made for art.

Similarly, Joyce tested, rather than displaced, Yeats's own claims. In one aspect, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* replays Yeats's culture wars during the 1890s. Joyce puts psychological and social flesh on intellectual or political positions with which Yeats had to contend during his crusade for Irish literature and criticism. It's

significant that the novel revisits the turbulent reception of Yeats's play *The Countess Cathleen*: "A libel on Ireland! ... Blasphemy!" (P V: 1454-5). Joyce introduced the play to students in Trieste, along with other plays by Yeats and plays by Synge. He translated it into Italian, and was obsessed by a song from the play: "Who goes with Fergus?" (perhaps construed as an artistic-heroic summons). He regretted missing Synge's *Playboy* and the anti-*Playboy* riots, for which the *Countess Cathleen* row may stand in. *Stephen Hero* more explicitly makes its protagonist a test-case for artistic principles, the principle of art. Here Joyce's chief laboratory is the mainly Catholic milieu of the university that Yeats indicts in "On hearing that the Students of our New University have joined the Agitation against Immoral Literature" (1912). In *Stephen Hero* Stephen encounters a range of "patriotic and religious enthusiasts" (SH 164). These often represent the "Irish Ireland" ideology, which favoured the language movement and damned the literary movement as alien. A fellow-student says that "our peasant has nothing to gain from English literature" (58); a Gaelic teacher says that English "is the language of commerce and Irish the speech of the soul" (64); and the university's President attacks "writers who usurp the name of poet, who openly profess their atheistic doctrines and fill the minds of their readers with all the garbage of modern society" (96). He also tells Stephen that "the cult of beauty is difficult", and that Aestheticism "often begins well only to end in the vilest abominations" (101). Oscar Wilde, no doubt. Yet Stephen's "conversations with the patriots" (70) are conversations, not mutual polemics, and he is himself comically dubbed a "fiery-hearted revolutionary", a "heaven-ascending essayist" (84-5). These terms suggest the artist who transmutes politics and religion into something else. In any case, the *kunstlerroman* can have a mock-heroic dimension, which need not invalidate its premises. In *Portrait* Lynch deflates Stephen by asking: "What do you mean ... by prating about beauty and the imagination in this miserable Godforsaken

island?” (*P V* 1474).

Again, Stephen is not just the would-be poet as hero. He is also a literary critic and Pateresque aesthetic philosopher: an “essayist”. A critic, even a Wildean “critic as artist”, seems an unlikely hero for any novel. Yet, in both fictions, criticism is Stephen’s most prominent literary activity. Like Joyce’s critical essays, his critic-hero belongs to the Revival’s literary-critical dimension. Yeats especially had to counter the idea, which Boyd saw as resurgent in 1923, that nothing mattered but the Irish people’s opinion of any work. Joyce graphically illustrates the problem of criticism in the “malignant episode” (*P II* 794) where, to the cry “Catch hold of this heretic”, Stephen’s classmates beat him with a cane and cabbage-stump for preferring Byron to Tennyson (767). It’s one image of Irish “debate” that Stephen should be grotesquely martyred for the religion of art. Yet Stephen as scathing critic can himself appear the “tormentor” (796). Readers may sympathise with Davin when he induces the “cold violence” of Stephen’s comment about the “old sow”, after urging innocently: “a man’s country comes first. Ireland first, Stevie. You can be a poet or mystic after” (*V* 1052-5). Nonetheless this, like much else in *Portrait* and *Stephen Hero*, echoes resistance to Yeats’s contention that literature is “almost the most profound influence that ever comes into a nation” (Yeats 1986: 387-8).

In *The Strong Spirit* Gibson demonstrates the vast extent to which *Portrait* is conscious of Yeats and other Revival writers. But he sees this as primarily evincing Stephen’s/ Joyce’s struggle with the nets of “revivalist discourse” (Gibson: 149). Even such a struggle, based on Joyce’s youthful immersion in Yeats, would testify to literary rather than political power. And is “revivalist discourse” just “revivalist discourse”? That discourse (or, rather, variegated literary effects) would have been less powerful if not entangled in other meshes – like the lure of being “a poet or mystic” or both. The literary movement was not only about Ireland: hence its appeal to Joyce. But Gibson

stuffs all its sources, like all its effects, into ‘revivalism’; as when he says: “Revivalism at the end of chapter 4 [of *Portrait*] figures chiefly ... as [George] Moore’s aestheticism” (181). Again, an old charge against Yeats’s ‘Celticism’ is its “English connection”, to quote Gibson. But the 1890s were not only about England either. The ‘Celtic element’ contributed to trans-national revolt against exteriority. Joyce memorised Yeats’s heretical religion-of-art testaments, “The Tables of the Law” and “The Adoration of the Magi”. Similarly, his early career as a poet is indebted to the *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic elaborated in Yeats’s introduction to his anthology *A Book of Irish Verse* (1895, 1899). For Yeats, the new Irish poets are “distinguished ... by their deliberate art, and ... preoccupation with spiritual passions and memories” (Yeats 2002: xxvi). *Chamber Music* deploys Yeatsian tropes: twilight, faery, sighs, paleness, long hair, soul, “dewy dreams”, “dappled grass” (CP 23,32). Such debts, woven into *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait*, are not cancelled by (varying degrees of) irony or by later satire: “the twattering of bards in the twitterlitter between Druidia and the Deepsleep Sea” (FW 37.17). Joyce did a fair bit of poetic “twattering” himself. *Chamber Music* comes under the Symbolist rubric of soul-music, even if Joyce’s rhythms are less subtle and various than Yeats’s, and draw on traditions of art-song rather than folksong.

Walter Pater (1839-1894) lurks somewhere “in the twitterlitter”. In the late nineteenth century, Pater had a cultish impact on emergent writers: his stress on craft (“deliberate art”); his formulation of ‘aesthetic poetry’; his Anglicisation of ‘l’art pour l’art’. Pater’s *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) became ‘religion of art’ gospel, especially its account of the Mona Lisa and “Conclusion”, which ends: “Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake” (Pater: 190). Yeats gives Pater star-billing in the *Oxford Book of Modern*

Verse. Besides starting the anthology with a free-verse lineation of Pater's Mona Lisa prose, he proclaims that this art criticism "dominated a generation", and says of the 1890s: "Poetry was a tradition like religion ... and it seemed that [poets] could best restore it by writing lyrics technically perfect, their emotion pitched high, and as Pater offered instead of moral earnestness life lived as 'a pure gem-like flame' all accepted him for master" (Yeats 1936: viii-ix). Pater's signature ideal, "to burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain ... ecstasy", had widespread heretical appeal (Pater: 189). In Trieste Joyce transcribed passages from Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) and *Imaginary Portraits* (1887). His essays on James Clarence Mangan imitate Pater's elaborate style, adopt/ adapt Pater's ideas, and represent Mangan as a proto-aesthete who "refused to prostitute himself to the rabble or become a mouthpiece for politicians ... one of those strange aberrant spirits who believe that the artistic life should be nothing other than the continuous and true revelation of the spiritual life" (*OCPW* 134). Since Joyce's Mangan essays are sometimes held to counter Revival biases by setting up an ideal-type of the Irish Catholic writer, it's interesting that they should belong to Paterian common ground. Adrian Frazier virtually represents Pater as the driving ecumenical force behind the entire literary movement: "George Moore, Edward Martyn, W.B. Yeats, and James Joyce all found themselves ... in reading Pater" (Frazier 1997: 8). If Moore's *Confessions of a Young Man* influenced *Portrait*, it was partly because Moore mediated Pater. Stephen's aesthetic philosophising is ostensibly conducted in relation to Aquinas, Newman, and Catholic theology. But Pater-parody sits next to Newman-parody in "The Oxen of the Sun", and it is hard to draw sectarian lines where the religion of art is concerned. Different streams of "spilt religion" (T.E. Hulme's term) merge in "devotion to style". For MacNeice, Joyce's early prose "out-Pater[ed] Pater" (MacNeice: 176). Pater, a high Anglican before he lost his faith, like Newman before his conversion, was himself a

devotee of Aquinas. Moreover, the ethos of 'aesthetic' literature was metaphorically, if not literally, Catholic. It might have been made for Joyce, and Joyce made some of it.

Perhaps it would highlight Pater's impact on Joyce if this were more often configured with his impact on Yeats. Although his presence in Joyce's works is well-documented, Frank Moliterno noted in 1998 that "comparative scrutiny of Pater and Joyce [had] remained peripheral for decades" (Moliterno: 1). One reason may be that Joyce, who rarely names Pater, "repressed" his centrality to "the artist as a young man" (*P* III, 148). Besides Pater's stylistic influence, and the influence of his "devotion to style", *Marius* supplied a blueprint for the artist-hero and the Paterian 'moment' served as a model for the Joycean 'epiphany'. This is Alan D. Perlis's summary: "[Pater's] Aesthetic Hero ... who makes his art his life ... is distinguished by his finely tuned senses that let the world of impressions bathe him completely and even, in washing through his mind, consolidate with consciousness into an epiphanal moment which is no longer the object's alone, but the object and the self welded by a 'hard, gem-like flame'" (Perlis 1980: 274). Moliterno rebukes a critical tendency to think that Joyce and other writers quickly "outgrew" Pater (Moliterno: 145). After all, he was still on Yeats's mind in the mid-1930s – or significantly recalled to mind by new versions of exteriority and rhetoric. Admittedly, Joyce was then parodying Pater's famous sentence about Mona Lisa: "She is older than the rocks among which she sits" (Pater: 99). This becomes Anna Livia's "*I am Older northe Rogues among Whisht I Slips*" (*FW* 105.18). In "Lestrygonians" Joyce has AE (George Russell) quoting from the same passage: "What was he saying? The ends of the world ... Something occult: symbolism. Holding forth" (*U* 8.527-31). Yet parody does not "displace" its target. The Pater-inflected epiphany indeed belongs to "Symbolism" (hardly just a brief literary phase): "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the

mind itself ... the most delicate and evanescent of moments" (*SH* 216).

'Epiphany' also belongs to the interface between poetry and prose. It may define the 'prose-poem'. Since the *fin-de-siècle* was about quintessence, its quintessential genre was lyric, viewed by Pater as the most complete literary fusion of form and matter: Yeats's "lyrics technically perfect, their emotion pitched high". Joyce began as a lyric poet, and "the eloquent and arrogant peroration" of Stephen's essay on "Art and Life", replicated in Joyce's first essay on Mangan, affirms:

The poet is the intense centre of the life of his age to which he stands in a relation to which none can be more vital. He alone is capable of absorbing in himself the life that surrounds him and of flinging it abroad again amid planetary music. (*SH* 85; *OCPW* 60)

Besides "beauty", a keyword for Pater, is "ecstasy": a word that recurs in Stephen's reveries, and which suggests a quasi-sexual consummation between the artist and beauty. In Joyce's first stab at self-portraiture (his 1904 "A Portrait of the Artist"), he writes: "it was impossible that a temperament ever trembling towards its ecstasy should submit to acquiesce, that a soul should decree servitude for its portion over which the image of beauty had fallen as a mantle" (Anderson 1964: 260). In *Portrait* itself, Stephen transfers "beauty" to the artwork – ecstasy's fulfilment as "aesthetic stasis":

Beauty expressed by the artist cannot awaken in us an emotion which is kinetic or a sensation which is purely physical. It awakens, or ought to awaken ... an aesthetic stasis, an ideal pity or an ideal terror, a stasis called forth, prolonged and at last dissolved by what I call the rhythm of beauty ... Rhythm ... is the first formal aesthetic relation of part to part in any aesthetic whole or of an aesthetic whole to its part or parts or of any part to the aesthetic whole of which it is a part. (*P V* 1147-57).

At the epiphanic interface, Stephen's definition of form as "the rhythm of beauty" parallels what Yeats meant in 1900 by "The Symbolism of Poetry" where the entire poem is conceived as "a musical relation":

[W]hen sound, and colour, and form are in a musical relation, a beautiful relation, to one another, they become as it were, one sound, one colour, one form, and evoke an emotion that is made out of their distinct evocations and yet is one emotion. The same relation exists between all portions of every work of art ... (Yeats 2007: 116).

Like Stephen, Yeats abjures kinesis as an impurity: “The purpose of rhythm ... is to prolong the moment of contemplation”; poets should “cast out ... those energetic rhythms as of a man running” (117, 120).

To adapt another of Pater’s influential propositions, Joyce’s prose aspires to the condition of poetry: hence, perhaps, *Finnegans Wake*. His art, like Yeats’s, originated in an aspiration to create highly crafted, ultimately symbolic, “spiritual manifestations”. Shelley was another shared master.⁴ Yeats thought that Joyce had “certainly surpassed in intensity” – that 1890s noun – all other contemporary novelists (Yeats 1954: 651). To this day, Irish novelists often keep one eye on poetry. So how should we rate Stephen as poet? Or Stephen’s poem set amid Joyce’s prose in *Portrait*: a villanelle that combines qualities of Yeats and Ernest Dowson? Dowson helps Stephen to eroticise Yeats’s symbolic Rose. The poem is also “supersaturated”, as Stephen’s mind is said to be, by spilt religion (*P V* 2335). Like Yeats in the 1890s, Stephen replaces religious ritual with poetic incantation, the would-be rhythm of beauty: “Are you not weary of ardent ways,/ Lure of the fallen seraphim?/ Tell no more of enchanted days” (1749-

⁴ “In my history of literature I have given the highest palms to Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Shelley” (Joyce, *LII*, 90); “To detach himself from Mangan, to define not the sorrowful but the impersonal joy of art, [Joyce] needs to have recourse elsewhere: to Aristotle and Aquinas, to Coleridge and Shelley, to Flaubert and Mallarmé, to D’Annunzio and Ibsen.” Kevin Barry, “Introduction” (*OCPW* xxiii); “When in middle life I looked back I found that [Shelley] and not Blake, whom I had studied more and with more approval, had shaped my life”, W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Works*, Vol. V: Later Essays, ed. William H. O’Donnell (New York, Scribner, 1994), 121-2.

51). As he composes his villanelle, sexual and creative arousal begets a series of epiphanies, of which the poem is itself only one instance or from which it emerges. Or, behind the scenes, the prose may have emerged from the poetry: some prose epiphanies are as verbally extravagant and more rhythmically interesting: “The earth was like a swinging smoking swaying censer, a ball of incense, an ellipsoidal ball.” The passage continues ambiguously: “The rhythm died out at once ...” (1571-3). Stephen’s crystallising of his emotions swings from desirous fantasy to precise memory; from Paterian ecstasy to dark projections:

If he sent her the verses? They would be read out at breakfast amid the tapping of eggshells. Folly indeed! The brothers would laugh and try to wrest the page from each other with their strong hard fingers. (1717-21).

Another rhythm there. The whole sequence reflexively implicates Yeats, aesthetic and generic shifts, literary reception. The *Countess Cathleen* episode follows.

The jury appears to be out as to whether Joyce thinks the villanelle a good poem. Perhaps as elsewhere in *Portrait*, he is having his stylistic (or free-indirect-stylistic) cake and eating it: moving between the heroic and mock-heroic, the poetic and mock-poetic. Or perhaps he represents Pater’s “desire of beauty”, where the erotic and aesthetic meet, as a necessary phase for the “young” artist. Gibson questions “the seriousness with which some critics have treated [the villanelle]” which “surely represents a hiatus in or slackening of Stephen’s modernity, a kind of recidivism ... Here he is still remote from the adult Joyce: hence the resurgence of a Yeatsian vocabulary” (Gibson: 199). For Gibson, Stephen must always mature in a pre-determined “modern” direction, or advance the work of national liberation, rather than undergo stages of literary apprenticeship which (as for Yeats) count in themselves. This parallels the idea that writers quickly outgrew Pater or Aestheticism or Symbolism and hurried on to ‘modernism’, without the 1890s leaving a more indelible imprint.

Pound hoped to make Yeats an imagist poet, but admitted that he would always be “romanticist, symbolist” (Pound: 151). Perhaps Joyce, shadowing Stephen, partly remained these things too. Further, Pater does not really advocate “aesthetic stasis”, even if his prose-style inclines to that condition. Here Stephen, though not Joyce, misreads him. Pater’s influence (as on Virginia Woolf) included his relativistic stress on shifting perception, consciousness-streams. He conceives the “moment” in both art and life as belonging to the phenomenal flux: “impressions unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them ... that strange, perpetual, weaving and unweaving of ourselves” (Pater: 187-8). In “Scylla and Charybdis” Stephen says, apparently with Joyce’s sanction: “As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies ... so does the artist weave and unweave his image” (*U* 9. 376-8). *Portrait* weaves and unweaves the Aesthetic Hero. In “The Symbolism of Poetry” Yeats says that artists are “continually making and un-making mankind” (Yeats 2007: 116).

Now for some “what if” literary criticism. Had the Easter Rising not occurred, might we think rather differently about Yeats and Joyce around 1914: the year when *Portrait* began to be serialised, when Yeats published *Responsibilities*? Pound praised both works for their “hardness”. Taken together, they show how far the Irish literary ‘movement’ (Yeats’s term, less loaded than ‘revival’ is now) has come in poetry and prose. They also involve retrospects on that movement, including its relation to Parnellism and Paterism. This is epitomised by the links between some poems in *Responsibilities* and Stephen’s diary. Parnell is directly present in Yeats’s “To a Shade”; indirectly present in Stephen’s diary-entry on Gladstone and “A race of clodhoppers” (*P* V 2669-71). Joyce detested Gladstone for “effect[ing] the moral assassination of Parnell with the help of the Irish bishops” (*OCPW* 142). Poems and diary share three keywords: “away”, “conscience”, “father”.

As for Paterism: in “The Grey Rock” Yeats invokes dead ‘aesthetic’ poets from the Rhymers’ Club to counterpoint the poem’s fable of a goddess betrayed by a mortal. Art too can be betrayed: once again by courting popularity, by making the correct ideological moves to secure “a troop of friends”. Dowson and Lionel Johnson are praised for keeping “the Muses’ sterner laws” (Yeats 1985: 103). Yeats’s persona in *Responsibilities*, like Stephen’s in *Portrait*, is often the embattled artist-hero. “To a Shade” (109) tells Parnell’s ghost: “they are at their old tricks yet” – now with reference to art (Hugh Lane’s proposed gallery), as formerly to politics. In the last stanza Parnell assumes the mantle of artist-exile: an “unquiet wanderer” urged to leave Dublin: “Away, away! You are safer in the tomb”. “Away! Away!” with a not wholly different inflection, begins Stephen’s diary-entry for 16 April (*P V 2777*). In both “To a Shade” and the diary Dublin’s coast figures freedom: “that salt breath out of the sea/ When grey gulls flit about instead of men”; “the black arms of tall ships that stand against the moon, their tale of distant nations” (*P V 2779-80*).

Responsibilities is haunted by dead artists (including Synge) who represent values ignored by “the loud host”, vilified by the “old foul mouth” of the anti-Lane and formerly anti-Parnellite press (Yeats 1985: 105, 109). In Yeats’s epilogue-poem, Lady Gregory’s Coole, the locus of inner exile, figures sanctuary for art’s “priceless things”: “A sterner conscience and a friendlier home” (127). As in “The Grey Rock”, “stern” signifies inviolable literary and critical standards. In step with this sterner Aestheticism, Yeats’s poetry has, of course, moved on since 1900: *Responsibilities* reflexively marks how the battle with Irish audiences has changed his poetry. Thus “Paudeen” (108) revisits the clash between artist and bourgeoisie, with poetry now better fitted for that encounter. Initially, the poem’s own rhythm is infected by the Paudeen-voice (compare Stephen fearing his muse’s brothers): “Indignant at the fumbling wits, the obscure spite/ Of our old Paudeen in his shop ...”. But a “rhythm of beauty”, implicitly

toughened by culture-war, extricates itself to suggest the ideal reciprocity between art and audience: “a curlew cried and in the luminous wind/A curlew answered”. This is an epiphany about epiphanies (Yeats and Joyce share sea-birds as aesthetic icons). The poem finally symbolises itself as “a sweet crystalline cry”: a harder aesthetic object.

If *Responsibilities* dramatises an artistic mid-life crisis, *Portrait* dramatises an earlier rite of passage. Both works involve the “father” in this transition, in tensions between art and life. Yeats’s prologue-poem apologises to his “old fathers” because his only progeny is “a book” (101). *Portrait* ends with Stephen substituting Dedalus, his symbolic “old father” in art, for his actual father. Stephen’s rite of passage thus far is condensed into the diary. Here the potential artist-exile meets a range of people who reinforce or challenge his “revolt”: Davin, his father, John Alphonsus Mulrennan with his story of the old man who “had red eyes and short pipe” (*P V* 2748). The latter, whose speech evokes Synge, may combine patriarchal perils of the language movement and the literary movement. This is again a series of epiphanies: some based on everyday circumstance; others, “phases of the mind”, as when Stephen’s future or future art is symbolised as the sound of “hoofs that “shine ... as gems” – a Pater echo (*P V* 2734)? The epiphanies drafted earlier (interestingly, “gems” replaced “diamonds”), and closest to prose-poems, may be more ironically viewed than Stephen’s “new secondhand clothes” etc (*P V* 2785). Stephen himself criticises the horse-epiphany: “Vague words for a vague emotion” (2737-8). Yet, as dreams or prophecies of the artist’s life, the more visionary epiphanies seem partly ominous. Moreover, by sandwiching the visionary with the mundane, the new with the secondhand, and by making Stephen correct himself or backtrack, Joyce brings the multiple aspects of an emergent artistic personality closer together. He packs his pre-*Portrait* epiphanies (and poetry) into Stephen’s luggage. Various roads and rhythms are left open as work in

progress.

The diary's second-last sentence concentrates the mutual challenge of life and art: "experience"/ "smithy". Compare Yeats's "The smithies break the flood" in "Byzantium" (Yeats: 1985: 253). Stephen's "uncreated conscience", like Yeats's "sterner conscience", retains the 1890s idea that life should imitate art. And, like the invocations of "The Grey Rock", his prospectus for exile, which fuses "soul" with craft, is a religion-of-art prayer. So is his appeal to the "old artificer" – who may subsume the not-yet-so old artificer Yeats:

Michael Robartes remembers forgotten beauty and, when his arms wrap her round, he presses in his arms the loveliness which has long faded from the world. Not this. Not at all. I desire to press in my arms the loveliness which has not yet come into the world. (*P V* 2723-7)

Gibson comments: "Stephen finally 'overcomes' Yeats, the nineties, the backward look, and the tone and mood of the forlorn Anglo-Irish endgame" (Gibson: 199). Once again, no literary game is zero-sum. Nor is the impulse behind Yeats's poetry ever reducible to forlorn Anglo-Irishness. Nor does this (Oedipal) epiphany seem so clear cut. I would argue that the 1890s "desire of beauty" remains alive in Stephen – and Joyce: that in *Portrait*, as in *Responsibilities*, Pater and Parnell combine to new effect. We might read the foundational aesthetic intercourse between Yeats and Joyce (the ground of more than modern 'Irish' literature) in less proleptic terms, whether those of proto-modernism or post-1916 Irish nationalism or both. Stephen's reflection on "He Remembers Forgotten Beauty" might alternatively suggest that the "beauty" pursued by Yeats's early poetry has impelled Joyce to discover his own "rhythm of beauty".

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THE EPIPHANIC YEATS

Two poems written and published in the second half of 1912 confront the misunderstandings of the Irish when faced with books. The second-published was by Yeats. The first is James Joyce's celebrated broadside, "Gas from a Burner", begun in a railway station waiting-room in Flushing (Vlissingen) in the Netherlands on 14 September 1912. Joyce was travelling to Trieste from Dublin, which he had just left for what would be the last time. The poem satirises the Dublin printer who destroyed the printed sheets of *Dubliners* for fear that he might face prosecution for libel and obscenity. This is the long slow epiphany suffered by the printer after study of the proofs:

He sent me a book ten years ago
I read it a hundred times or so,
Backwards and forwards, down and up,
Through both the ends of a telescope.
I printed it all to the very last word
But by the mercy of the Lord
The darkness of my mind was rent
And I saw the writer's foul intent.
But I owe a duty to Ireland:
I held her honour in my hand,
This lovely land that always sent
Her writers and artists to banishment
And in a spirit of Irish fun
Betrayed her own leaders, one by one.
'Twas Irish humour, wet and dry,

Flung quicklime into Parnell's eye;
'Tis Irish brains that save from doom
The leaky barge of the Bishop of Rome [...] (Joyce 1991: 103).

The metre is heroic, the sentiment less so; the speaker's dim ten years reading a manuscript is matched by the author's recurrent theme, as evidenced in his Italian obituary of John O'Leary in 1907, "The Last Fenian": "in Ireland, just at the crucial moment, an informer appears" (*OCPW*, 139). The treachery of printers, the treachery of the lovely land which exiles its intellectuals, the humour which assaulted the type of the betrayed Irish hero for Joyce, Charles Stewart Parnell: all this is brought together with some satiric skill. Satire, though, is small recompense for the penniless writer waiting ten years (well, seven actually, the first version of the manuscript had been submitted in 1905) for the non-publication of *Dubliners*. Joyce's disappointment turns on both his printer and publisher as complicit in the great national betrayal. If the poem is primarily a record of a personal slight to its author, what has been slighted is the stories' realism, the scrupulous meanness of their writer's foul intent, the insulter of the honour of the lovely land of Ireland. Joyce gives full rein to his slightly spoilt sarcasm by the end of this extract: while insulting culture and religion can have unforeseen results, perhaps censorship by libel-wary printers is the least of them.

Irony is used as self-representation, where the author is misunderstood by a priggish and pious populism. In the same year, William Butler Yeats was in a similar mood, albeit in a position which was not as career-threateningly precarious. His poem "The Realists" was published along with three others in the December 1912 issue of Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* magazine, a journal founded that year and only on its third issue. In Yeats's poem someone else has had difficulty understanding, and in distinction from Joyce's satire, what follows is also rather difficult to decode.

The Realists

Hope that you may understand!
What can books of men that wive
In a dragon-guarded land,
Paintings of the dolphin-drawn
Sea-nymphs in their pearly wagons
Do, but awake a hope to live
That had gone
With the dragons? (Yeats 1957: 309)

This may be more squib than poem, but it was later collected in the 1914 *Responsibilities* and, along with the satiric turn already evident in the 1910 interim collection *The Green Helmet*, it is a poem turned on the philistines and the treacherous. The objects of the criticism in these poems is well-known: the loss of Revivalist idealism after the disgrace of the *Playboy* riots and the death of Synge; the small-town mercantile mentality of Catholic Dublin and their unwillingness to build a gallery for the gift of Hugh Lane's collection of modern art; the repression in 1913 of Larkin's strike and the great Lockout, by the Irish Church, Irish capital and Irish police; the apparently terminal decline of the national project in the failure to find a leader to replace Charles Stewart Parnell in the twenty years since his death.

Yeats was to recant on these views as a misapprehension, admitting that he was then unable to see that the "vivid faces" who are remembered in his "Easter, 1916" were continuing national revival by more stealthy means. Their eventually violent efforts would result in independence within ten years of these poems. Neither Joyce nor Yeats saw that coming—or certainly not in 1912—so in retrospect, the satire of these poems can seem as being out of time, given the great historical events that surrounded the unwitting writers, who were absorbed in personal and public disappointment. Yeats at this time was particularly estranged within Dublin literary and theatrical circles and turned to London and American literary friendships and collaborations. Joyce in Trieste would soon pay witness to other

momentous historical events until things got more dangerous after the outbreak of war: as a British citizen in the Austro-Hungarian empire, in 1915 he had to move to neutral Switzerland.

“The Realists” was published along with four other poems by Monroe in Chicago, under the encouragement of Yeats’s new friendship with Ezra Pound. I say encouragement: Pound claimed editorship of the poems. The two poets had met the previous year and they went on to set up a sort of literary partnership based in Stone Cottage in Sussex in 1913, beginning the challenge of developing a new type of poetry. In a dry-run for what he was to do with quite radical effect with T.S. Eliot’s *Waste Land* a decade later, Pound ‘revised’ Yeats’s poems, much to Yeats’s horror: “ruined by misprints”, he claimed in a letter to Lady Gregory when he saw the poems in *Poetry*, “Ezras fault[sic]” (Yeats 2002).¹ Pound, of course, would take the challenge in one direction, and Yeats could not quite follow him into what we would now call ‘modernism’. Yet at this stage of its development, emerging from symbolism into what Pound at first called ‘Imagism’, the new aesthetic is something faced directly in the title and rather more obliquely in the content of “The Realists”.

The poem does not look for the new in the future, but rather in the past. For one thing, “The Realists” has very little that looks like ‘realism’ about it, with its dragons and sea-nymphs. While dolphins may be natural creatures, here they provide symbolist scenery, drawing the sea-nymphs’ “pearly wagons”. We might seek modernism in the off-rhyme (wife / live) and the difficult syntax of the poem. The first line seems stranded, an apostrophe rhetorically closing down a conversation, presumably with ‘a realist’, “Hope that you may understand!”, that seems already to have finished before the poem has even started. In the grammar of the single sentence which constitutes the rest of the poem, its double-subject is attached to a delayed main

¹ See also Longenbach 1988:19.

verb. This means the reader has to straighten out the sense, which I read as: “What can books of men [...] and] ... Paintings of [...] sea-nymphs do [?]”. And that strange verb “to wive”, to take a wife, is given to the inanimate, “books” and not to “men”. But contortions of syntax and rhyme are not wholly convincing as evidence of modernity: the Victorian dramatic monologue had since the 1840s specialised in picking up conversations half way through, demanding the reader to fill in the space of the silent auditor. The interior-decoration of the dragons and dolphins and sea-nymphs may be a kitsch reprise of its first murmurings in the symbolist aesthetic of the mid nineteenth century Parisian and London *demi-monde*. “The Realists” exists only in the title, referring to those who have been answered by the first sentence. They remain the source of the poet’s scorn, as a rejected strand of nineteenth century art. Yeats offers a library, gallery and theatre of rogues, which includes the work of Zola and Manet and Ibsen, the realism manifest in Ireland by Yeats’s enemy George Moore, and what would soon become his struggle to understand James Joyce.

“The Realists”, like “Gas from a Burner”, is a poem about art and those who do not understand it. Straightening out the syntax, the “books of men” are more than a matter of understanding. Rather, they should “awake a hope to live”, even if that hope has gone with the dragons. The poem is, in the pedantic sense of the term, ‘Romantic’, that is, a poem looking back to a time before the novel, to the ‘Romances’ of Edmund Spenser and Arthurian literature, or further back to the Greek mythology of the Nereids. “The Realists” may at best be a throwback, to dolphin-riding and dragon-slaying, to a time before Cervantes revealed giants to be mere windmills. Yeats digs out his old pre-Raphaelite home-schooling by his father, and the later inspiration of his second father John O’Leary, setting the conditions within Ireland that necessitated the rediscovery of Irish symbols in Irish books that might stand up for themselves alongside powerful

British and European mythologies.

If, in a way, Yeats's assault on realism in art also appears to be an assault on the novel, or at least on narratives which insist on realism – unremarkable characters, plausibility of setting and motive, causality of event—it was published in the midst of a shift in his style and preoccupations which occurred around the momentous decade for Ireland and Europe from 1912 to 1922. Yeats's official view was that for a modern art, 'symbolism' was a mode to be preferred to its counter, 'realism'. This does not amount quite to 'abstraction' in Yeats's hands, as it might have been for Pound or for their European artist contemporaries. Like his younger contemporary Joyce, Yeats will only abstract so far, arguing for an art in which the image shines forth unencumbered by plot, and thus also unencumbered by mere explanation, holding forth its mystery before awed contemplation. Yet meaning will follow, and this is through something Joyce called in his version of the symbol, epiphany. It was to be formulated by the young Joyce around 1904 as the basis of an artistic creed held by an early version of his character Stephen Daedalus, in the unfinished novel *Stephen Hero*:

By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments (Qtd in Ellmann 1991: 157).

By 1904, Joyce had been writing a sequence of poems, later collected in *Chamber Music*, some of which are in a parodic relation with those of Yeats.² But he was also collecting another kind of writing, which he had showed to Yeats on their first meeting two years earlier, in October 1902 ("in the smoking room of a restaurant on Sackville Street" as Yeats tells us, in a fit of realist scene-setting). In

² See my "The Unconsovable Joyce: *Chamber Music*", in Connor 2012: 51-77.

Yeats's first account of this meeting, it is simply with an unnamed "young man" who "had written a book of prose essays or poems". The encounter did not go well, though the young man began by reading what we now know to have been his "Epiphanies" to the older poet:

[...] he read me a beautiful though immature and eccentric harmony of little prose descriptions and meditations. He had thrown over metrical form, he said, that he might get a form so fluent that it would respond to the motions of the spirit. I praised his work but he said, "I really don't care whether you like what I am doing or not. It won't make the least difference to me. Indeed I don't know why I am reading to you."³

The Dublin appetite for a good story aside, this meeting has much bearing on the development of Yeats's symbolism into his own version of the epiphany in the early years of the twentieth century as he approached middle age. So much attention has been given to the supposed spat between these two men, that the fairly precise terms of Yeats's praise, and the high level of understanding for what Joyce was trying to do, is often missed. For all that metrical form has been abandoned, the result, "a form so fluent that it would respond to the motions of the spirit" represents no challenge to the symbolist.

Yeats's version of symbolism was developed in his relation with English poet and critic Arthur Symons, who at Yeats's urging was to turn an 1893 essay called "The Decadent Movement in Literature" into the book we now know so well in accounts of modernist writing, the 1899 *Symbolist Movement in Literature*. It offered accounts of symbolic rather than literal constructions of meaning, something borne out in Yeats's symbolist masterpiece, the *Wind Among the Reeds* (1899). Symons's book was read by Pound, Eliot and Joyce,

³ W.B. Yeats, unpublished manuscript, first printed in Ellmann 1950: 624. I have corrected Ellmann's siting of this conversation in this and subsequent printings as O'Connell Street, which was the name given to Sackville Street in 1924.

and is dedicated to Yeats.⁴ Yeats's two essays on the subject, "Symbolism in Painting" and "The Symbolism of Poetry" were published on either side of Symons's book, in 1898 and 1900.

The "Poetry" essay promotes stasis and longing rather than inquiry or action as key to this new aesthetic. The "Painting" essay makes the distinction between plot and poetry, between realism and symbolism more clearly:

All art that is not mere story-telling, or mere portraiture, is symbolic, and has the purpose of those symbolic talismans which mediaeval magicians made with complex colours and forms, and bade their patients ponder over daily, and guard with holy secrecy; for it entangles, in complex colours and forms, a part of the Divine Essence. A person or a landscape that is a part of a story or a portrait, evokes but so much emotion as the story or the portrait can permit without loosening the bonds that make it a story or a portrait; but if you liberate a person or a landscape from the bonds of motives and their actions, causes and their effects, and from all bonds but the bonds of your love, it will change under your eyes, and become a symbol of an infinite emotion, a perfected emotion, a part of the Divine Essence; for we love nothing but the perfect, and our dreams make all things perfect, that we may love them (Yeats 1961: 149).

Yeatsian liberation from plot or portraiture seems easy, a perfect aesthetic contemplation which becomes a spiritual one. In one way we might think it as a matter of "a sudden spiritual manifestation", if not yet an epiphany in Joyce's terms, at least "a form so fluent that it would respond to the motions of the spirit". For readers of fiction, the epiphanic is usually read as some sort of unforeseen irruption of meaning into the real – or the unforeseen showing forth of actuality in the midst of narrative plausibility. Yeats's gradual accommodation with it was to be conceded by the time he wrote *Per Amica Silentia lunae*, in 1917: "We seek reality with the slow toil of our weakness and are smitten from the boundless and the unforeseen" (Yeats 1994:

⁴ See Matthew Creasy's 'Introduction' to Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, ed. Matthew Creasy. Manchester: Carcanet, 2014.

14). Yet before the maturing poet's admission of struggle with the contingent, in his account of symbolism as a liberation from motive and action and thus causality, Yeats seeks liberation into something beyond understanding, which he here calls "infinite Emotion". The symbol becomes "a part of the Divine Essence". The epiphany is restored to its original sense, the moment when the Magi viewed the infant Jesus.

But a showing forth of the Divine Essence in the symbol or epiphany is one thing. Yeats is very careful to say that it is only "a part of the Divine Essence", and while the eyes and human "love" may aid in perception, knowledge is another thing entirely. How do you know you have had an epiphany, and even presuming you did know, what category of knowledge is it: moral, scientific, spiritual? The epiphany is not unity of perception or even unity in perception. A phrase that Yeats worked and worried over throughout his mystical writings right up to the writing of *A Vision*, the "unity of being" to which all insight aspires, is another thing entirely. Epiphany is about knowledge, not being, and a knowledge inevitably coloured by a long philosophical history of perception and knowing in phenomenology and epistemology. In both the character's and reader's consciousness of epiphany in the realist novel, while it provides a means of talking about knowledge, intuition and concept remain at a distance; subject and object do not collapse one into the other in "unity of being". Or as Yeats would later put it in the uncrackable antinomial aphorism of Crazy Jane, "All things remain in God" (Yeats 1957: 512). That is, when granted an experience of God we might feel knowledge of the "things" that are in His gift; but also that God tends to hang on to those "things".

Yeats had been working through the problems with such knowing in prose fiction throughout his writing life. The linked stories, "The Tables of the Law", originally published by Symons in *The Savoy* magazine in 1896, and "The Adoration of the Magi" were collected

with a tale of Michael Robartes, as *Rosa Alchemica*, in 1897. “The Tables of the Law” was much loved by Joyce, who apparently learnt it off by heart (Ellmann 1950: 619). They are not “realist”, rather they are little Gothic horror stories, which ultimately play off apocalyptic import: knowledge granted becomes the terrifying being of eternal damnation. By the end of the “Adoration of the Magi”, Yeats provides a first run-through of the birth of the Antichrist, later to be summoned over twenty years later in poems like “The Second Coming” or “Leda and the Swan”. A dying prostitute is discovered by three latter-day Irish peasant Magi in a Parisian brothel as the bearer of the power of history. As one of the Magi says,

“When the Immortals would overthrow the things that are to-day and bring the things that were yesterday, they have no one to help them, but one whom the things that are to-day have cast out. Bow down and very low, for they have chosen this woman in whose heart all follies have gathered, and in whose body all desires have awaked; this woman who has been driven out of Time and has lain upon the bosom of Eternity” (Yeats 1992: 170).

This is not virgin birth, and to answer in one way the question which would later end ‘Leda and the Swan’, the woman did not put on his knowledge with his power. Yet the woman who has been “cast out” must nevertheless be worshipped.

The epiphany, the sudden spiritual manifestation, in these stories is one thing. Actual knowledge is another, because it is anti-human, exchanging human partiality for the oneness of the Divine, in whom all things remain: “after such knowledge”, as the speaker of T.S. Eliot’s “Gerontion” put it twenty or so years later, “what forgiveness?” (Eliot 1963: 40). In “The Tables of the Law”, the lapsed Catholic mystic Owen Aherne has been granted a view of a heretical text, a secret book from the twelfth century by Joachim of Flora, a copy of which survived the order of its destruction by Pope Alexander IV. Aherne is tracked down by the narrator of the story to an old house behind the Four Courts in Dublin (again, both narrative realism and

the symbol of the rationalist architecture of the public realm are held more closely together than we might think in this as in other Gothic fictions). The narrator gains an interview with the damned. After he gained the knowledge contained in the text, we can only describe the consequences as Faustian.

“Then all changed and I was full of misery; and in my misery it was revealed to me that man can only come to that Heart through the sense of separation from it which we call sin, and I understood that I could not sin, because I had discovered the law of my being, and could only express or fail to express my being, and I understood that God has made a simple and an arbitrary law that we may sin and repent!”

[...]

“No, no,” he said, “I am not among those for whom Christ died, and this is why I must be hidden. I have a leprosy that even eternity cannot cure. I have seen the whole, and how can I come again to believe that a part is the whole? I have lost my soul because I have looked out of the eyes of the angels” (Yeats 1992: 163-4).

To take the part for the whole might be one sort of mistake in the question of a possible unity of knowledge as thrown up by the epiphany. That is, mystical perception here is a form of synecdoche and its subsequent collapse. Despair has been the result of Aherne’s experience: once gained, knowledge of the whole has revealed the inadequacy of the partial human knowledge. In thinking about this as epiphany, one mistake might be to say that seeing is actual knowledge. The narrator (as with the Magi in the companion story) is a mere observer not a participant in the action or knowledge, one of those seeking “reality with the slow toil of our weakness”.

As Yeats shifted from symbolism to some sort of accommodation with realism, an epistemological passage by the way of the epiphany was needed, with “the boundless and the unforeseen”. This means watching the horror of knowledge put on without power which is the basis of Aherne’s suffering, the utter moral becalming of life without sin. For Yeats, in “The Adoration of the Magi” and throughout his writing on mysticism, the epiphany needed working out in the terms

of just what knowledge was imparted to him, and that was ultimately given to him by his wife's communicators through the automatic writing, as emerged in *A Vision* and in its explicatory sonnet "Leda and the Swan". I say explicatory advisedly, since that poem recreates the horror implicit in these earlier stories, sexual violence and the question of assent, the end of civilisations and dynasties as the result of a historical necessity initiated by the actions of the divine (Yeats 1957: 441). In "Leda", the initiator was the Greek God Zeus. In "The Tables of the Law", an earlier run-through of this material, the failed priest Aherne surrenders his humanity for knowledge, the sinfulness which is "the sense of separation" from the whole, where to sin is to be human. Despite his faith, Aherne is isolated from those who can receive Christian redemption, since he has been granted a forbidden vision of "the whole": "I have lost my soul because I looked out of the eyes of angels". It is a terror of eternal damnation as knowledge and power which is envisaged as strongly as another, more popular Gothic Irish text also published in 1897, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

*

Yeats went on to bring these in many ways conflicted ideas into a new aesthetic which was not that of his friend Pound or of his younger rival Joyce. As "The Tables of the Law" shows, the way of the mystic was not to be Yeats's, whatever the evidence of his great return to this material in both versions of *A Vision*. The Gothic fear of knowledge of the laws of being is a fear of unity or wholeness, a commitment to the partial over the generalised, the abstract or indeed the ideal. Yeats probably thought he was an idealist, and the philosophical writings bear this out. But in both art and mystical writing, he followed a programme which was more instinctive than theoretical, unable to repudiate the very thing with which he sought unity of being, the boundless and the unforeseen.

Whether Yeats was a realist is another issue. Elsewhere in his foundational account from 1950, Richard Ellmann considers the

relation between Yeats and Joyce (and indeed Pound) as one of intelligibility over dream, conscious over unconscious, not what we might think of as the main concerns of the symbolist or idealist: “His [Yeats’s] own way did not lie in the suspension of the active faculties; to the end he remained stubbornly loyal in his art to the conscious mind’s intelligible structure” (Ellmann 1950: 636). And that included a decision to get back to life. Certainly between Yeats and Joyce the matter of a return to life, of living, was a considerable pull, and for Yeats at least, the return of pressing contemporary politics was one way in which it forced its way into the writing. In an essay which takes for its title Ellmann’s phrase “The Conscious Mind’s Intelligible Structure”, the English poet Geoffrey Hill quotes clinchingly from *A Vision* to stress the success of “Easter 1916”: “A civilisation is a struggle to keep self-control” (Yeats 1962: 268). The poem, Hill says, “in its measure and syntax, stands as his exact imagining of that struggle and that civility” (Hill 1971: 23).

The Irish poet Derek Mahon, who might be a little more wary than Hill in allowing that extraordinarily high praise (“exact imagining”) to poet or poem, contends that such an example is not always a good one for Irish poets:

Other objections might be that there is too much “fury”; that his heroism is too relentless; that his standards of beauty and performance are too elevated to be humanly interesting. There is a singular character defect too: the will to “win”. He was too interested in winning; so it comes as no surprise that his brother Jack was the more winning personality and his father, in many ways, the wiser man (Mahon 2002).

If Mahon is not quite opposed to what Hill praises in Yeats, his exactitude, the “the will to ‘win’” seems to preclude the “humanly interesting”. In his great poem about those lost in history, “A Disused Shed in County Wexford”, Mahon relegates the epiphanic from the heroic to a creaking towards the chink of light by “magi, moonmen / Powdery prisoners of the old regime” (Mahon 1975, 38).

Nevertheless, for all of his preference for the unheroic in Joyce or Beckett, there is an exactitude in Mahon's seeking of anti-Yeatsian anonymity. That exactitude we usually associate with Joyce, the coolly withdrawn artist and his "spiritual-heroic refrigerating apparatus patented in all countries by Dante Alighieri". Stephen Dedalus will not allow that all things remain in God: "The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails" (*P* 213 and 181). Paring his fingernails or not, Stephen's creator Joyce could certainly bite the hands that fed him.

Joyce's earlier attacks on the turn-of-the-century Dublin literary scene, "Gas from a Burner", "The Holy Office" and the "Day of the Rabblement", not to mention the doctrine of realism expounded in "Drama and Life", only let Yeats off comparatively lightly compared to his contemporaries. Yet he was not spared. "The Holy Office" had caricatured Yeats thus:

Ruling one's life by common sense
How can one fail to be intense?
But I must not accounted be
One of that mumming company –
With him who hies him to appease
His giddy dames' frivolities
While they console him when he whinges
With gold-embroidered Celtic fringes (Joyce 1991: 97).

This starts with a great couplet (can common sense be intense?) before launching into a parody of "To Ireland in the Coming Times", a poem first published in 1892 which envisaged an Irish history extending with unbroken continuity back beyond colonisation and Christianity to the beginnings of time. The Celt predates the Bible in Yeats's version, but is mere mumming in Joyce's, crossing it with Yeats's public unrequited loves and his knack with Celtic decoration. One of Joyce's palpable hits here is rendering Ireland's timeless garment, the "red-rose-bordered hem / Of her, whose history began /

Before God made the angelic clan” (Yeats 1957: 137-8) as “Celtic fringes” rhymed against “whinges”.

In his 1916 *Reveries over Childhood and Youth*, Yeats relates that his father’s definition of a gentleman was “a man not wholly occupied in getting on” (Yeats 1956: 90), and John B Yeats may have had his own ambitious son in his sights. Joyce’s “Holy Office” is fairly merciless in its put-down of the revivalist scene, in its own ungentlemanly way: many of those satirised had helped its fiercely ambitious young writer to “get on” and were to continue to do so. But it is in Joyce’s more direct statements of an aesthetic position which appear to demure from revivalist orthodoxy that we can see the purposes that might redeem such seemingly ungrateful criticism. For Yeats in “The Realists” and for Joyce in his early writings, the word “Life” takes on a certain ethical as well as aesthetic import. If its imitation is at issue, so is its criticism for both of these post-Arnoldian aesthetes. If poetry is “a criticism of life”, of course, the criticism is of realism, one issue of the practicalities of the philistine.

Joyce’s “Drama and Life” essay and debating text must have been an extraordinary thing to have read or heard at the time, given its undergraduate author was not yet 18. Reading it, we can grasp just what the buzz might have been about this young man, a reputation not really borne out by what remains of his poetry and fiction at the time. It makes a strictly necessitarian statement of realism in drama, and then, moving on to “Life”, it posits the necessity of realism in its criticism.

Human society is the embodiment of changeless laws which the whimsicalities and circumstances of men and women involve and overwrap. The realm of literature is the realm of these accidental manners and humours—a spacious realm; and the true literary artist concerns himself mainly with them. Drama has to do with the underlying laws first, in all their nakedness and divine sincerity, And only secondarily with the motley agents who bear them out (*OCPW*: 23-4).

Nothing could be further from Yeats and the drama of the Irish revival, at that stage developing its own, rather more otherworldly, polemic. In one way, this might be seen as a statement of tragedy by Joyce, albeit one which has removed the hero. In another, it is precocious student in the grip of the new thing, in this case Ibsenism and an aesthetic of the real. Ibsen, unlike Aherne, cares little about damnation in his heroism: “the artist foregoes his very self and stands as mediator in awful truth before the veiled face of God” (*OCPW*: 26). Towards the end of the piece, Joyce contemplates the truly radical proposition that “real life” must find a place on the Irish stage:

Shall we put life—real life—on the stage? No, says the philistine chorus, for it will not draw. What a blend of thwarted sight and smug commercialism. Parnassus and the city Bank divide the souls of the pedlars. Life indeed nowadays is often a sad bore. [...] Life we must accept as we see it before our eyes, men and women as we meet them in the real world, not as we apprehend them in the world of faery (*OCPW*: 28).

The disappointed Yeats of 1910-1916 would agree with Joyce’s analysis of ten or so years previously. That little dig against the fairies that Joyce makes at the end there might also be against Wagner, who has appeared in this essay to demonstrate that “drama arises spontaneously out of life and is coeval with it” and is thus a justification for using myth. There is indeed also a “world of faery” in Ibsen, as in *Peer Gynt*. But if the young Joyce sought to detach himself from its Irish manifestation, there was still a need to accommodate the mythical and the other-life of faery within drama.

Up to this date, Yeatsian fairyland, like its Victorian predecessors was a happy alternative to this life: in “The Stolen Child”, the “world’s more full of weeping than you can understand” (Yeats 1957: 86-9). But as Yeats was to construct his own life story in his *Reveries over Childhood and Youth*, the other world was not a place so easily repudiated, even if it was one he suffered great trouble in gaining access to, for all of the enthusiasm of his stated beliefs. The young

Yeats was to seek the other world through the direct experience of spiritualism and the great philosophical–historical system of *A Vision* came to him from his medium-wife’s honeymoon automatic writing. At first the séance seemed to be an easy way to gain the knowledge. Yeats’s account of his first séance is one part horror and the other part comedy, and it begins with the phrase “spiritual manifestation”, albeit used in ways with which Joyce only blasphemes: “He [a friend of Yeats] and his friends had been sitting weekly about a table in the hope of spiritual manifestation and one had developed mediumship” (Yeats 1956: 103). The revelatory process is something which readers of narrative after Joyce have learnt to call epiphanic, even if it looks like actively setting out to achieve such a thing. At the centre of Yeats’s spiritualism there is always the possibility of the bogus, either as the fraud of the medium or the bad faith in the telling of the story. At the end of his comic description of his first, fairly catastrophic, séance, there is a typical question: is such an experience hallucinatory, internal, rooted in a fantasy of the self; or does it come from an external spiritual presence?

For years afterwards I would not go to a séance or turn a table and would often ask myself what was that violent impulse that had run through my nerves. Was it a part of myself—something always to be a danger perhaps; or had it come from without, as it seemed? (Yeats 1956: 105)

The closest we get to Joyce’s definition of the epiphany did not see print until the 1944 publication of *Stephen Hero*, and remained a private joke by the time of the publication of “The Dead” in *Dubliners* in 1914, set on the feast of the epiphany. But Roy Foster suggests that long after Joyce had shown Yeats the poems and prose fragments that he called “Epiphanies” in 1902, Yeats developed the fragmented style of his *Reveries* after reading the early extracts of *A Portrait*, which had been serially published in *The Egoist* from 1914 to 1915. Stephen’s “sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself” and

Yeats's "hope of spiritual manifestation" may or may not have been given to him in the séance, but something else had been discovered, a sceptical phase in a mind desiring to believe. Joycean "spiritual manifestation" is in "speech", "gesture", "or in a memorable phase of the mind itself": linguistic, bodily, mental. To this we might add Yeats's questioning that such experience originates within the faulty perceiving machine not just of mind but of the body, a "violent impulse that had run through my nerves". That Yeats and Joyce should use the same phrase is maybe not unusual, spiritual manifestations being rather more the subject of fashionable inquiry in art and science then than now. If Joyce is at best blaspheming with his reference to the spirit, we must remember that the word "soul" runs all the way through *A Portrait* and is not always used ironically. In many ways, stories like "The Dead" and "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" turn on their séance-like moments, and the ghostly lighting of the latter seems to will the presence of the absent hero Parnell into the room.

Yeats had originally planned to call his collection of autobiographical reveries *Memory Harbour* after his brother Jack's 1900 watercolour of Rosses point in Co Sligo, until he found that a recently-published book had the same title. The painting told him that an epiphany can come from a figure in an artwork as much as direct experience or memory itself.

When I look at my brother's picture, *Memory Harbour*—houses and anchored ship and distant light-house all set close together as in some old map—I recognize in the blue-coated man with the mass of white shirt the pilot I went fishing with, and I am full of disquiet and of excitement, and I am melancholy because I have not made more and better verses. I have walked on Sindbad's yellow shore and never shall another's hit my fancy⁵ (Yeats, 1956: 52).

Various objects in the distance seem both tilted towards the

⁵ The painting dates from 1900. A reproduction was used as the frontispiece for the first 1916 edition of *Reveries over Childhood and Youth*.

viewer and pushed hard up against a high horizon in the faux-naïve perspective of Jack's painting. Behind the blue-coated man, the figures and ships and famous metal man pointing to the correct channel through the harbour are all allowed to hover in an indiscernible space which seems to be a middle-ground competing to be given attention as foreground. These are shapes in the memory as much as the concrete relations of things in the sight of the land and seascape before the painter. The older brother's experience of a painting in which shared family memories are temporally as well as spatially flattened, is triggered by the sight of the blue-coated man who seems to stand half out of the picture. In Yeats's account of looking at the picture, for all that the blue-coated man was both in memory and in actuality the pilot through this harbour, the tilted spatial perception in the painting leads to an emotional effect of atemporal perception, allowing an epiphany, a phase of the mind where both the artistic achievement and the experience of life are revealed as disappointment. The structure of the painting, to adapt Ellmann and Hill, is intelligible, but it is a disconnected, skewed perspective: the visual syntax is off. Phantasy, as Yeats would put it, is denied by the lost experience of the yellow shores of youth.

*

Reveries Over Childhood and Youth steps on Joycean territory, where recurrent yellow sands remain linked with an experience of language or of art, an experience which for both writers is one shortcoming. In Joyce this is usually of failure or betrayal, among other things by the art object itself. So, are Yeats and Joyce epiphanists with a secretly shared project? Is Yeats doing the same thing that Joyce allows Stephen to nudge us into understanding in *Stephen Hero*? Yeats encouraged Pound to include a Joyce lyric in his *Des Imagistes* anthology, "I hear an army charging on the land" from *Chamber Music*, a poem which owes much to Yeats's "He Bids his Beloved be at Peace" ("I hear the Shadowy horses, their long manes a-

shake”) in *The Wind Among the Reeds*.⁶ That was a collection that Joyce always referred to with the highest praise (sometimes the only product of the Irish literary revival about which he could find good things to say). But in Yeats’s case, while it might be adequate at this stage to see him weighing up the attractions of imagism (as opposed to symbolism) and to see him think about the influence of the Japanese haiku as imperishable art object as opposed to the transient random data of the minute, he tested such ideas and for his purposes he found them wanting.

In an excellent recent statement of the ways in which argument has approached Joyce’s handling of this, Paul K. St Amour lays out what he calls “several articles of faith” of Joycean criticism:

[...] that the literary object’s historical and material particularities are utterly distinct from its symbolic function; that particular objects are among the “raw materials” of a work, at once preceding it and requiring transformation; and that the work’s coherence and universality depend on its subduing those objects, whether it be myth, satire, or objective spatial form (St Amour 2014: 204).

This is a progressive movement, and I would suggest that it is only in the latter article where we could say that Yeats might be in accordance with Joyce: that his interest in the epiphany was phenomenological rather than materialist, in the subduing of particularity through both perception and art. I don’t want to open up again here the matter of whether or not Yeats was actually an idealist – and that he really was a modernist. But statements akin to St Amour’s latter article of faith are common among those critics of the Irish literature of the mid-twentieth-century who regularly turned (as I am doing here) between Yeats and Joyce, seeking symbolist and mythic critical narratives to make sense of their predominantly historical and

⁶ See Jolanta Wawrzycka “‘Ghosting Hour’: Young Joyce Channeling Early Yeats” in this volume.

biographical approaches. Even when other post-McLuhan and post-Barthes theories of myth came along, pushing epiphany back into an everyday charged with mythologies – where the “symbol” became the “brand”, where the word “iconic” now appears in practically every English-language journalistic discussion of culture—the attractions of wedding such iconology to sweeping historicist description (primarily postcolonial, in criticism written in times of political violence) could not be resisted.

Yeats had stated the matter early, in the 1925 *Vision*, where he located Joyce squarely in the mainstream of his modernist contemporaries, with the then-living who were in Phase 23 of the cycles of the moon, those who possess a receptive or creative mind. I say the living: Rembrandt and Synge are the ghosts who provide examples in the main body of the text. This extract from the 1925 *Vision* was cut from the 1937 version, as Yeats’s argument with and adjustment towards his modernist contemporaries (and himself) developed through the 1920s and ’30s, as did his need to grapple with a modernism into which Joyce had finally unleashed his masterpiece, *Ulysses*:

It is with them [those artists in Phase 23] a matter of conscience to live in their own exact instant of time, and they defend their conscience like theologians. They are all absorbed in some technical research to the entire exclusion of the personal dream. It is as though the forms in the stone or in their reverie began to move with an energy which is not that of the human mind. [...] I find at this 23rd Phase which is it is said the first where there is hatred of the abstract, where the intellect turns upon itself, Mr Ezra Pound, Mr Eliot, Mr Joyce, Signor Pirandello, who either eliminate from metaphor the poet’s phantasy and substitute a strangeness discovered by historical or contemporary research or who break up the logical processes of thought by flooding them with associated ideas or words that seem to drift into the mind by chance; or who set side by side as in Henry IV, The Waste Land, Ulysses, the physical primary—a lunatic among his keepers, a man fishing behind a gas works, the vulgarity of a single Dublin day prolonged through 700 pages—and the spiritual primary, delirium, the Fisher King, Ulysses’ wandering. It is as though myth and fact, united until the exhaustion of the

Renaissance, have now fallen so far apart that man understands for the first time the rigidity of fact, and calls up, by that very recognition, myth—the Mask—which now but gropes its way out of the mind's dark but will shortly pursue and terrify (Yeats 2008: 174-5).

It is extraordinary that this critique of his modernist contemporaries was made so close to its highpoint. Yeats is objecting to one version of what St Amour sees as a progressive movement: from the datum of the experience to its transformation; from an aesthetic rising only out of “their own exact instant of time”; the sceptical critique of symbolism in the elimination “from metaphor [of] the poet’s phantasy”; the composition by accident and contingency, and flow: “flooding them with associated ideas or words that seem to drift on to the mind by chance.”

By the end of this extract (taken from the 3-page paragraph which was mostly cut in 1937), Yeats turns prophetic, as is fitting for his *Vision*, and tells that his own contemporaries’ embrace of the arbitrariness of the sign, where “myth and fact” have fallen apart, will be followed by the pursuit and terror of “myth” or “the Mask”. Many read this as the Mask which will manifest itself as a violent authoritarianism, as an anti-individualist second coming. In the 1920s there were numerous candidates auditioning for the role of the mask, offering to reunite myth and fact in Germany and Italy. Of course, there were other options further East and they were to emerge in Spain, but when Yeats goes on to talk of anarchy and violent revolution, it is vehemently anti-democratic and anti-communist: “the old intellectual hierarchy gone [men] will thwart and jostle one another”. For the reader of nineteenth-century philosophies of history from Thomas Carlyle to Karl Marx, this is recognisable as the struggle between anarchy and aristocracy, capital and proletariat, ideology and idealism; for the reader in early-twentieth-century political history this looks like fascism, grounded in George Yeats’s readings in Hegel and Yeats’s own interest in the cyclical, or Viconian, versions of history in

Italian philosophers Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile (politically-divided as those two eventually were; Joyce, too, shared an interest in Vico). Earlier, in 1925, Yeats may have embraced the terror of the totalitarian solution to the falling apart of myth and fact. His friendship with Pound is thought to have been paramount in this intellectual development, but his attempts to make sense of *Ulysses*—unsuccessful, he never finished it—played no small part in this flirtation with the violent right.

The Irish critic and politician Conor Cruise O'Brien initiated the critique of Yeats's fascism in his 1965 "Passion and Cunning" essay. The most convincing defence of Yeats was made by O'Brien's contemporaries Hill, Donald Davie and Denis Donoghue, who pointed to Yeats's struggle between his official statements and the actuality of what goes on in his poems and plays, which are evidence of much greater political and ideological sophistication than his official statements on politics and society. For Donoghue, for example, "we must give up ascribing to the poems, as works of art with their own inner logic, the convictions we ascribe to Yeats the man, the public figure, the pamphleteer" (Donoghue 1998: 373). Myth and fact are not so easily reunited in the unfolding of the poems, written as they are in process, in dialogue or even in continuing dialectical conflict with one another and within a working through of thoughts that are never quite worked out. They pursue, to use a favourite word of Yeats, an antinomial process, structured as opposites which never meet, a dialectic which may be figuratively "violent" but is not always determined by violence as theme. As with his reaction to his first spiritualist experience, despite a great wish to belief and continued opposition to all sceptical philosophies, Yeats always questions his own credulity. Many of his poems end with questions, not all rhetorical. "Sailing to Byzantium" gives way to "Byzantium". And in that poem the dolphins come back again from the poem of 18 years previously, "The Realists", out of "That dolphin-torn, that gong-

tormented sea.” (Yeats 1957: 498). In the great 1933 *Winding Stair* collection, this poem is followed by the date 1930 on the page, no matter how it has ended at the first millennium.

If this was at the beginnings of the falling apart of myth and fact – and the dolphins, smithies, gong in “Byzantium” are all difficult and possibly unlockable symbols—the spawning of image from image looks like a 1930s modernism reaping the failings of Venetian and Byzantine culture a thousand years later. This was two thousand years out from the first epiphany and Yeats himself can present his fear of the epiphany as fear of those who “eliminate from metaphor the poet’s phantasy [...] or who break up the logical processes of thought by flooding them with associated ideas or words that seem to drift into the mind by chance.” In his 1931 introduction to Joseph Hone and Mario Rossi’s Bishop Berkeley, he distinguishes Gentile’s “Pure Act of Italian philosophy” from that suggested as belonging to God in Berkeley. There, Berkeley’s personal God is “a pure and indivisible act, personal because at once will and understanding”. Only “in this act do all beings—from the hierarchy of heaven to man and woman and doubtless to all lives—share in the measure of their worth.” The Yeatsian epiphany may be in opposition to just this conception of all of the things that are in God, or, as here, “at once will and understanding”.

Only where the mind partakes of a pure activity can art or life attain swiftness, volume, unity; that contemplation lost we picture some slow-moving event, turn the mind’s eye from everything else that we may experience to the full our own passivity, our personal tragedy; [...] (Yeats 1994: 111).

This an answer to “a new naturalism that leaves man helpless before the contents of his own mind”, the naturalism of Joyce and Pound: “the man, his active faculties in suspense, one finger beating time to a bell sounding and echoing in the depths of his own mind” (Yeats 1994: 109). And this bore import for Davie in the reading and

the writing of poetry which does not follow naturalism and modernism into the mere compilation of data, a modernism which has dispensed with the verb: “There is a road plainly open from the intelligible structure of the conscious mind to the intelligible structure of the sentence” (Davie 1955: 125).

In one of the Responsibilities poems that had matched so closely Joyce’s critique, Yeats prospected the epiphany of the Christian millenium (and its recurrence) as disappointment and dissatisfaction in a single sentence.

The Magi

Now as at all times I can see in the mind’s eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depths of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary’s turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor (Yeats 1957: 318).

The old men in this poem look back to “The Adoration of the Magi” and forward to “Lapis Lazuli”, where “ancient faces like rain-beaten stones”, give way to transfiguration through the mournful music of tragedy: “Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay” (Yeats 1957: 567). (Mahon touches directly on this aspect of Yeats in “A Disused Shed”, though at the conclusion his “magi, moonmen’ mushrooms” are pleading from accident or atrocity –Treblinka, Pompeii—never refigured as tragic gaiety: “Let not our labours have been in vain”.) In “The Magi”, transfiguration is some way off, despite its immediate proximity to the first, or even second, coming of Christ in the moment of epiphany. The crucial word is the first “Now”, and its continuation in an eternal present: “Now as at all times”. A great poem of the same period, “The Cold Heaven” begins with the word “Suddenly”, as it opens out an epiphany of a winter night which gives way to a vision of the ghost of the dead departing the body, doomed to walk the roads

alone (Yeats 1957: 316). We remember Joyce's "sudden spiritual manifestation", since the Magi, like the poet, have been looking for something like an ushering of the epiphanic into the liturgical – "Now as at all times" / is now and ever shall be. Will such a liturgy deliver a creed, something known and knowable, in this experience? Yeats's spiritual disappointments remain like Joyce's, a consequence of epiphany which is a coming before, yet not into knowledge. The Magi are "the pale unsatisfied ones", and if for them, this "Now" contains a sight of a second coming, it is a repetition of an epiphany, a hope that "once more" they will be delivered from disappointment.

The poem's single sentence, like the difficult sentence that makes up most of "The Realists", offers a difficulty in syntax which is crucial to reading the intelligibility of its matter, a syntax revealing "uncontrollable mystery" in the final two lines. "Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied": the object of the sentence following the main verb "I see" is qualified by the clause beginning with the gerund "Being". In the delayed participle in the syntax, the "pale unsatisfied ones" remain unsatisfied by Calvary's turbulence. But in a pentameter line which is shored up between end-line commas, "Being" is allowed briefly to resonate as a noun: the ambiguity allows that it is being which is unsatisfied by Calvary's turbulence.

Yeats recurs to the point continuously, the aspiration and never the achievement of "unity of being" a quality of God and not nature. His working through into sense recurs throughout his work, as here, sixteen years later in 1930 in the Crazy Jane poems, where "All things remain in God", and as phrased a year later in the Berkeley essay, where despite the evidence of the act of God before their eyes, the reason why the Magi have remained unsatisfied across nearly thirty-five years of this material (from "The Adoration of the Magi" story, in 1897) is that as Yeats finally phrases the issue, they cannot share in the measure of their worth. There is further weird disturbing beauty in that stunning image of the silver helms of the holy men "hovering" here

(like the shapes recalled in Jack's *Memory Harbour*) or the punned stasis of ongoing time in "their eyes *still* fixed". "The Magi" offers the unsatisfied ontology of the intelligible syntax of epiphany, granted neither knowledge nor power by the revelation of Christ or anti-Christ, either at birth or in the sacrifice of crucifixion. This is an irresolution of history, eternity as repetition, a provisional state of being which is merely proximate to knowledge, a withdrawing of assent, eventually a willed suspension of belief no matter that the assertion of belief is everywhere at issue. These Magi remain both powerless and unknowing before the antinomies of soul and body, where both Calvary and the Virgin's birth struggle in the stable are revealed to be "The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor".

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“GHOSTING HOUR”: YOUNG JOYCE CHANNELING EARLY YEATS.¹

W. B. Yeats was generously complimentary when, in his 1902 letter to the twenty year old James Joyce, he praised Joyce’s writing as “remarkable” and his “technique in verse” as “very much better than the technique of any young Dublin man” Yeats might have met during his time (*L* II 13-14). In counseling Joyce about the qualities that “make a man succeed,” he spoke not so much in terms of talent but of character: “*faith* (of this you have probably enough), *patience*, *adaptability* (without this one learns nothing), and a gift for growing by experience and this is perhaps rarest of all” (*L* II 14, my emphasis).² Whether or not Joyce heeded the words of someone he considered old, these words might have resonated with Joyce deeper than he would care to admit, as could be glimpsed from the peculiar

¹ This paper combines presentations delivered at the James Joyce Birthday Conference, Università Roma Tre, February 2015 and at IASIL Conference, University of York, July 2015. Grant from Dean of College of Humanities/ Behavioral Sciences at Radford University made research/travel possible.

² Richard Ellmann (1966) suggests that Yeats’s use of the word “adaptability” in his letter to Joyce is a response to the charge leveled against Yeats in “The day of the Rabblement” where Joyce accuses Yeats of “adaptability,” a “treacherous instinct” (see note in *LII*, 14). However, earlier, in his 1950 *Kenyon Review* piece entitled “Yeats and Joyce,” Ellmann speculated that Joyce’s pamphlet “probably never reached Yeats’s eyes” (621).

triplet of his own terms forged a dozen years later: “silence, exile and cunning” (*P* 247). If this is a long-incubating measured retort to Yeats, Joyce had by then re-forged his youthful self in Stephen and left that self behind by cutting through the nets that he felt flung at him a decade earlier.

Many poems in *Chamber Music* bear an undeniable Yeatsian stamp that goes beyond mere influence. That Joyce, the “word-catcher” (Curran 35), was familiar with Yeats’s poetry needs no substantiation:³ echoes from *The Wind Among the Reeds* (“poetry of the highest order”, *CW* 71) and *The Rose* will reverberate throughout Joyce’s future works, further problematizing the complex relationship between the two artists that began just as young Joyce was shaping his artistic identity, posturing and chafing in efforts to distance himself from the Yeats/Revival crowd that dominated Dublin’s literary scene. Critics have centered on the Shakespearian, Romantic and Elizabethan influences in *Chamber Music*, as well as on Symbolist techniques that Joyce perfected thorough translating Verlaine or Rimbaud.⁴ But as I illustrate below, Joyce also grafts a number of Yeatsian poetic elements onto his own poems in the acts of “silent translexion,” or

³ Some of the more comprehensive presentations of the two poets’ relationship and their presence in the same literary scene include Richard Ellmann’s *Yeats: The Man And The Masks* (1948); his “Yeats and Joyce” in *Kenyon Review* (1950); *The Identity of Yeats* (1954), and his Yeats-Joyce entries in *James Joyce* (1982). These topics are revisited by R. F. Foster in volume one of his *W. B. Yeats* biography (1997), and fully explored by, among others, Vicki Mahaffey in *States of Desire: Wilde, Yeats, Joyce and the Irish Experiment* (1998).

⁴ See A. Walton Litz’s introduction to *Chamber Music* section of *Poems and Shorter Writings* (1991). Marie Dominique Garnier, in “Verse after Verlaine, Rime after Rimbaud” in Conner (2012) presents a virtuoso close reading of Verlaine/Rimbaud poetic technique as internalized by young Joyce. Also in Conner, Michael Patrick Gillespie offers an overview of *Chamber Music* reception in “Reading Joyce’s Poetry Against the Rest of the Canon,” and Adrian Paterson reads *Chamber Music* in the context of Elizabethan song.

deliberate but covert *intralingual* assimilation of lexis and imagery, a process akin to the *interlingual* practice that Serenella Zanotti defines as “silent translation, i.e., the unacknowledged incorporation of translated texts into one’s writing”.⁵ This essay presents close-readings of a few instances of lexical and phraseological overlaps in both poets with a twin objective: firstly, to demonstrate that, while Joyce’s early poetic expression derives from Yeats’s quite conspicuously, Joyce transcends the Yeats material by committing it to an entirely *new* poetic end (as befits the decidedly apostate ways of the young nonconformist we recognize in Joyce) and, secondly, to address some of the ramifications of “silent translexion” of Yeats for Joyce’s early artistic development.

It is worth recalling that young Joyce vacillated about the value of his poems. They incubated within him between 1901 and 1904; they were dismissed in 1906 as “young man’s book” even though they were not published as a volume until 1907; they were gifted to Nora in a parchment edition in 1909 and, in the same year, condemned to be burned (LII 270) in, perhaps, a gesture of protesting too much for he also wanted them set to music and, two years later, to know what Arthur Symons said about them in his review (LII 322). Writing about James Clarence Mangan in 1907, Joyce stated that poetry is “always a revolt against *artifice*, a revolt, in a certain sense, against *actuality*” (CW 185; my emphasis). These words are a thinly veiled pronouncement about the *actuality* of Dublin’s literary scene

⁵ Serenella Zanotti, “Silent Translation in Joyce”, presentation at the XXIV International James Joyce Symposium in Utrecht, 2014. Following up on Scarlett Baron’s analysis of Joyce’s use of “translation as quotation” (and of “instances from Joyce’s early works in which the author himself acts as the unauthorized translator of another writer’s words” 2012: 521), Zanotti offered a compelling textual evidence of this practice in Joyce’s works (e.g. Joyce’s use of Dante) and included examples of other Modernists, such as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, also engaging in “silent translation.”

dominated by what Joyce saw as the *artifice* of the Celtic Revival agenda that left no room for the kind of art he was beginning to create, a point well covered in Joycean criticism. Marie-Dominique Garnier sees the poems as “key-texts, as war zones [...] as experimental border-crossers, early games in stylistic and linguistic gate-crashing” (78), a view I wholeheartedly share. For A. Walton Litz, Poem XII is a crucial poem in *Chamber Music* because it “argue[s] against sentimentality and the ‘pathetic fallacy’ [...] through a deliberate clash of styles” and is an important “sign of [Joyce’s] growing command of language and his deep-felt need for a manner of writing that could combine irony with lyricism” (1991: 6-7). And while Yeats sensed the new energies in Joyce’s poems early on, over a decade later, in 1915, he once again lavished his generosity on Joyce by working to secure funds for him from the Royal Literary Fund (Ellmann 1983: 390), by praising him to Edmund Gosse as “a man of genius” and calling his *Chamber Music* “very beautiful and all of it very perfect technically” (LII 354). He reiterated this praise a few days later writing that Joyce was a poet with the “most beautiful gift” and the best “new talent in Ireland today” (LII 356).

Given the presence in Joyce’s poetry of imagery and numerous phrases that either echo or are identical with Yeats’s, one wonders whether Yeats deliberately overlooked the overlaps or whether, by praising Joyce, he indirectly praised himself. For instance, some lines in Joyce’s poem XXXI resonate with those in Yeats’s “Down By the Salley Gardens,”⁶ especially the *where* and *when* of the lovers’ walk:

Joyce: “O, it was out by Donnycarney (...) /My love and I did walk together”

Yeats: “Down by the salley gardens /my love and I did meet;

Joyce: “And sweet were the words she said to me”

⁶ A song that Joyce performed, as evidenced by a Horse Show Week concert programme reproduced in Jackson and McGinley, *Dubliners, An Annotated Edition*, 1993: 131.

Yeats: "She bid me take love easy"

Joyce: "But softer..."

Yeats: "But I..."

Joyce preserves Yeats's keen sense of poetic cadences of sound/rhythm/rhyme schemes (tone-deaf as Yeats otherwise was) as he *rewrites* both Yeats's story and the mournful tone of a lover's anguish over love lost. On the surface, Joyce evokes a happy ("O, happily!") summer outing that ends with a kiss,⁷ yet his eight lines, to Yeats's sixteen, connote woe, not through the descriptive mode we find in Yeats, but through the lexical values of word-sounds: "O" (repeated twice), "out," "flew," "love," "along," "wind," and "went." To Yeats's tone of regret and grief signaled in the word "but" ("But I, being young and foolish..."), Joyce offers a *cliffhanger* "but" – the soft "kiss" ("But softer... was the kiss she have to me"), an anticipatory elision of the story that unfolds throughout *Chamber Music*.⁸ The "kiss" in its final position contains the seed of the story's undoing, thematically as well as phonetically: Joyce needs only one double ss word in the final line to signal love's demise, where in Yeats, sibilant s's and double ss's quite prominently infect the salley gardens with *serpent*-ine signatures of doom. Incidentally, those eight lines make a haunting song that Joyce apparently liked and praised the composer, Adolph Mann: "I find it very happy in tone and the sliding

⁷ Years later Joyce will have Bloom reflect: "First kiss does the trick. The propitious moment" (*U* 13.886); both he and Molly will recall their kiss on Howth, one that is central to the narrative in *Ulysses*, in addition to being, arguably, the most famous kiss in literature.

⁸ Although the poem's number is XXXI, it appears as number XXI in the first Gilvary sequence of 27 poems, and as number XXIII in the Yale sequence of 34. In the context of the whole volume then, the poem speaks to "love" that is becoming a memory. The sequencing of the poems is addressed in notes on *Chamber Music* in Joyce's *Poems and Shorter Writings* (1991: 248-252); see also Marc Conner's discussion in his opening chapter of *The Poetry of James Joyce Reconsidered* (2012), esp.11-13.

of the third line makes a very nice effect” (LII 287).

Another effect, that of a “melancholy chant” (MBK 134), pervades Joyce’s own musical setting to Yeats’s “Who Goes with Fergus?” that he sang to his dying brother, George. Something of that 1893 poem from *The Rose* resurfaces subtly in the phrasing and imagery of Joyce’s Poem VIII. Though vastly different in their format (four quatrains to two sestets) and tenor, both poems share rhetorical parallels in the opening lines: “Who will go...” and “Who goes...?” They also share the imagery of “woods,” “merry”-making/“dance,” “virgin/young and fair”/“maid,” Yeats’s russet and brazen coloration is sunny and golden in Joyce. There are evocations of “love” in both Yeats and Joyce, but the difference in terms of rhetoric couldn’t be greater: the imperative mode of Yeats’s call to end all brooding upon the bitter “mystery” of love is countered in Joyce by a series of somewhat conceited questions as to the “mystery” of “who goes” through the greenery. And while the closing lines in Yeats return us to Fergus, the ending in Joyce returns us to the virginal “who,” revealed to be the “true love” girl. Yeats’s mythic and Joyce’s no-nonsense earthly concepts of love are sharply juxtaposed here – a foreshadowing of one of my concluding thoughts.

The structure of poem VIII reveals that Joyce had learned a few other lessons from “Who Goes with Fergus:” worth noting is the presence of chiasmic formations in Yeats (“*And brood* on hopes and fear *no more/And no more* turn aside *and brood*”) and in Joyce (“*woodland/carry* so brave *attire*”/“*the woods* their rich *apparel wear*”). Repetition is also a salient feature in both poems – Yeats’s anaphoric “and”, Joyce’s anaphoric “who” – although Joyce augments his repetitions with amplifications: “green wood”/“*merry* green wood”; “the sunlight”/ “the *sweet* sunlight”; “the woodland”/“the *sunny* woodland”; and “O, it is for my true love”/“O, it is for my *own* true love.” Four spondees in Joyce (“green wood” and “true love,” both doubled) nod to Yeats’s four spondees: “deep woods”, “young

man,” “white breast” and “dim see”.⁹ Joyce’s second “true love, amplified by “own,” to read: “own true love,” prompted Marc Conner to observe that such a “sustained emphasis ... effects a ritardando” (153); I would add that “own true love” is a rather rare molossus whose three stressed syllables do, indeed, slow the rhythm of the phrase (there are nine additional such figures in *Chamber Music*¹⁰). A closer scrutiny of Yeats’s “heart’s core” reveals a molossus as well: “deep heart’s core;” it is preceded by another, “bee-loud glade,” both quite emphatically declaimed by Yeats in his BBC chant-like recordings of “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”.¹¹

⁹ As well as to the final spondee in the famous “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”: “heart’s core”; Joyce’s “light footfall” repeats a phrase from another Yeats’s poem, “The Cap and Bells” (1894), where a lover’s soul “had grown wise-tongued by thinking of a quiet and light footfall.”

¹⁰ Poem II: pale green glow; grave wide eyes; III: sweet harps play; VII: pale blue cup; X: wild bees hum; XVI: pale dew lies; XXVIII: long deep sleep; XXIX: wild winds blow; and XXXVI: long green hair. While there is no consensus among prosodists about the molossus in English (in classical Greek and Latin prosody, it refers to the length of the syllable rather than to the stress), the point is that this ritardando-producing triple-word figure, quite prominent in Yeats’s early volumes (see note 11), would not escape Joyce’s attention for its aesthetic value of effecting mood and affecting poetic time.

¹¹ In addition, molossus appears in the following poems in *The Rose*: “Fergus and the Druid”: thin grey hair, wind-blown reed; “The Rose of Battle”: sea’s sad lips, long grey ships, sweet far thing, and dim grey sea; and in “The Pity of Love”: cold wet winds. The foot is also present in four poems in *Crossways* (1889): in “The Song of the Happy Shepherd:” cold star-bane; in “The Sad Shepherd:” old cry still; in “The Cloak, the Boat, and the Shoes:” all men’s sight (twice), all men’s ears; in “The Madness of King Goll”: beech leaves old (repeated seven times in the refrain); in “The Falling of the Leaves”: sad souls now; in “Stolen Child”: dim grey sands; and in “The Ballad of the Foxhunter”: head falls low, old eyes cloud, long brown nose, old man’s eyes, and one blind hound. Finally, in *The Wind Among the Reeds*, so highly esteemed by Joyce, molossus appears in “The Host of the Air”: long dim hair (three times) and sweet thing said; in “The Song of the Old Mother”: young lie long; arguably in “He Bids His Lover Be at Peace”: Sleep,

The Rose also contains the poem “The Pity of Love” which, when read side by side with Joyce’s December 1902 Paris poem XXXV, reveals how much of that haunting poem Joyce had internalized. However, Joyce’s craft here differs from Yeats’s and, while it emulates Verlaine’s, as many critics have noted, the Yeatsian imprint is also quite manifest. Besides the presence of water imagery in both poems, we note that the beginning of second stanza in Joyce, “The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing,” is almost identical to Yeats’s “The cold wet winds ever blowing”. Joyce’s winds intensify the first stanza’s “moan”/“cry” that is “sad” as “the seabird”. “Sad” and “the seabird . . . going forth alone” in Joyce recall “pity” and “the clouds on their journey above” in Yeats. Yeats’s imagery of grey shadowy waters/winds that mark the anguish “hid in the heart of love,” also deeply informs Joyce’s. Both stanzas in Joyce are replete with evocations of *the noise* of winds and waters, also present in Yeats’s second stanza; they are synonymic permutations, or, again, amplifications, of Yeats’s “mouse-grey waters are flowing”. Joyce sets his “grey” (winds) in a meta-chiasmic correspondence with Yeats’s “grey” (waters), as he also echoes Yeats’s chiasmic rhyme of “love”/“above”/ “grove”/“love” by transforming it into an undulating, slightly protean progression of near-rhymes in “moan,” “alone,”

Hope, Dream; in “The Poet to his Beloved”: dove grey sands; in “He Gives his Beloved certain Rhymes”: pearl pale-hand; in “The Cap and Bells”: pale night gown; in “He Tells of a Valley Full of Lovers”: dream-dimmed eyes; in “He Tells of the Perfect Beauty”: dream-dimmed eyes (again) and God burn time; in “The Blesses”: God half blind, wise heart knows, and drops faint leaves; in “The Secret Rose”: great wind blows; and in “The Travail of Passion”: death-pale hope.

On a slightly different note, I am grateful to Matthew Campbell who directed me to the first chapter of his book, *Irish Poetry Under the Union, 1801-1924*, where he also mentions Yeats’s molossus at the end of “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” and posits that Yeats might have picked up this metric effect from the end line of Samuel Ferguson’s version of “Ceann Dubh Dilis”. See Campbell 2013: 11-12.

“monotone,” “go,” “below,” and “to and fro”.¹² Marie-Dominique Garnier, in her brilliant reading of this poem, discusses Verlaine’s original and Joyce’s “creative translation” (95) side by side with translations by Arthur Symons and Martin Sorrell. Both Symons and Joyce forgo Verlaine’s “monotone” in their English trans-semantifications. Thus “languueur monotone” becomes “slow sound languorous and long” in Symons); “[a voice that] lulleth me here with its strain” in Joyce; and “[sobs...lay waste my heart] with *monotones* of boredom” in Sorrell (Garnier 94-96, my emphasis). Sorrell’s phrasing foists itself into English in a somewhat off-note mode and its peculiarity lends insight into Symons’s and Joyce’s exclusion of “monotone” from their translations, though Joyce salvaged it exquisitely in XXXV (Wawrzycka, 128). He might have also bested Verlaine or any other poet for that matter in, what Garnier dubs “one of the volume’s cleverest though muted rhyming tricks [...] semantically very close to Verlaine’s autumnal monotone. ‘The noise of waters’ matches ‘cry to the waters’ to (silent) perfection, in what seems to be a case of poor, flat rhyming, except for the silent, graphic, muted presence of the genitive form, balanced in a fragile enjambment” (99). Matthew Campbell’s no less brilliant reading of poem XXXV proceeds from his rearrangement of the poem into six lines of an alexandrine to underscore Joyce’s remarkable inventiveness in handling the rhythm/ rhyme schemes (2012: 73-75). Set alongside of “The Pity of Love”, poem XXXV, in its thematic and prosodic – diasyllabic – articulation of waters/going/waters’/blowing/waters/flowing, expands on the diasyllabic rhyming in Yeats: telling/selling/blowing/flowing. Along with the near-rhymes of the “o”s,

¹² Through Stephen, we learn that the youthful Joyce “sought in his verses to fix the most elusive of his moods and he put his lines together not word by word but letter by letter [...] and even permuted and combined the five vowels to construct cries for primitive emotions” (*SH* 25, emphasis added).

Joyce's rhyming sequence renders the lover's near-identification with the sounds of the elements¹³ in a somewhat *metonymic kinship* with flowing waters and blowing winds (to Yeats's lover-as-*observer*, skirting the metaphor).

Those blowing winds, in poem XXIX, become "Desolate winds", a phrase also present in Yeats's 1896 poem, inventively titled "The Unappeasable Host" (*The Wind Among the Reeds*, 1899), where Yeats repeats it consecutively three times:

Yeats: "Desolate winds that cry... ;
Desolate winds that hover... ;
Desolate winds that beat the doors of Heaven, and beat..."
Joyce: "Desolate winds assail with cries/ The shadowy garden where love is"

The rhyme scheme, enclosed in Yeats, is "upbraided" in Joyce by the word "raimented" with the remaining monosyllabic rhymes forced to behave, framed into yet another chiasmus of the lover's rhetorical question, "My heart, why will you use me so?"/"My love, why will you use me so?" Yeats's "unappeasable host," the whirling wind – the *sidhe* foregrounded in the opening poem of *The Wind Among the Reeds* volume, "The Hosting of the Sidhe"¹⁴ – is a host as difficult to please as the heart of a lover in Joyce's question. "Unappeasable" may have found its echo in Joyce's "unconfortable," a nonce word¹⁵ with

¹³ Permutations of these sounds, detached from signifiers, will be mouthed by Stephen on the beach (*U* 2. 402-4). Like the passage from Stephen Hero in Note 10, the poem sheds light on Joyce's later work; as Garnier observes, "[o]n a thin edge between a 'moan' and a 'monotone'" and Wakean "soundsense and sensesound" *Chamber Music* is indeed, "a complex poetic object" (82).

¹⁴ Sidhe, explains Yeats, "is Gaelic for wind." See Appendix A, "Yeats's Notes in *The Collected Poems*, 1933" in Richard Finneran's edition of *The Poems of W. B. Yeats*, 1983: 590. See also Horace Reynolds's review of Joyce's *Collected Poems* in *The New York Times*, October 10, 1937.

¹⁵ Matthew Campbell explains that "the notion of a 'nonce word' - that is, a word coined for the occasion and not necessarily passing into general usage - was coined by James Murray for the *New English Dictionary*, first recorded use in OED, 1884." See Campbell 2012: 76 n2.

Miltonian echoes noted in Skeat (Campbell 2012: 53) that appears in poem XXI, initially the opening poem of *Chamber Music*. As these lexical formations suggest, both poets early on invest considerable creative poetic energies into teasing out unique dimensions latent in language; however, as exemplified by a number of additional nonce words shown by Campbell to be scattered throughout *Chamber Music* (“unzone” in XI; “Enisled” in XX; or “conjurable” in XXVI; 2012: 52; 76, n2), the young Joyce bends the rules of standard English to forge expressions that are *brand new*; they thus anticipate the “variously inflected, differently pronounced, otherwise spelled changeably meaning vocable scriptsigns” of *Finnegans Wake* (118.26-28).

The whirling of the unappeasable host resonates in Joyce’s “tail piece” poem XXXVI, “I hear an army”, where it morphs into the “whirling laughter” of the charioteers. Yeats, in writing to the secretary of the Royal Literary Fund on Joyce’s behalf in 1915, praised this particular poem as “a technical and emotional masterpiece” (*L* II 356), but it is difficult to imagine that Yeats had not recognized the poem’s remarkable likeness with his own 1896 poem from *The Wind Among the Reeds*, “He Bids his Beloved Be at Peace” whose vibrant onomatopoeic and visual imagery (also seen in “The Valley of the Black Pig”) is saliently present in Joyce:

Joyce: “I hear an army charging upon the land/ And the thunder of horses plunging, /foam about their knees”

Yeats: “I hear the Shadowy Horses, their long manes a-shake, /Their hoofs heavy with tumult”

Joyce: “They come shaking in triumph their long green hair”

Yeats: “And hiding their tossing manes and their tumultuous feet”

Joyce: “They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame, /Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil”

Yeats: “clinging, creeping /The Horses of Disaster plunge in the heavy clay”

Critics have pointed out the poems' similarities (e.g., Litz 7) and commentaries, particularly on Joyce's poem, abound,¹⁶ so I shall forgo adding more at this point. Instead, I would like to comment on Joyce's purloining Yeats in terms of his own larger poetic project. I started with a suggestion that Joyce, through "silent translexion", assimilated what he found best in Yeats but he also transformed it to achieve a very different effect. That is, in isolation, Joyce's "The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing" or "Desolate winds assail with cries" are open borrowings, quotations unencumbered by "perverted commas". In the context of the full poems, however, those borrowings can be seen as Joyce's tribute to Yeats whose influence on and formidable presence in Dublin's literary scene Joyce had to heed. But it is a tribute with a twist: in his poems, Joyce offers re-figurations of what he treasures in Yeats, making an aesthetic virtue of meta-repetitions. Without changing the linguistic habitat of Yeats's splendid turns of pen and masterfully forged phrases, Joyce re-fosters them in much more concrete terms, which in turn affects their resonance away from myth. Re-contextualized in Joyce's poems, those phrases are refined and liberated from their original gravitas as part of Celtic lore. Where Yeats's "desolate winds", full of pathos, are harnessed into the West, East, North and South cosmographic/ mythical system, in Joyce they describe the natural force that assails the garden – not "*of* love" but one "*where* love *is*", a declarative mode toppling a metaphorical one. Joyce's precisely chiseled presentation of Yeats's phrase yields an entirely different result, as we have also seen with both poets' use of blowing winds and flowing waters: on a large mythical scale in Yeats as against an earthly, true-to-life, almost banal scale in Joyce.

¹⁶ The poem, as all the critics who wrote about it dutifully mention, appeared in Ezra Pound's 1914 anthology, *Des Imagistes*; Pound's praised "for its 'objective' form" (Litz 1991: 7). For recent analyses, see Campbell 2012: 75-76 and Conner 164-65. For a succinct discussion of the indebtedness of *Chamber Music* to *The Wind Among the Reeds*, see Mahaffey 1998: 241-242 n88.

In a broader, thematic context, the multiplicity of lovers' lyrical voices in *The Wind among the Reeds* is distilled in *Chamber Music* into just one markedly unique lover's voice (Mahaffey 1990: 194). This refinement, coupled with precision and economy of expression, "the elimination of fat" (Kenner 1956: 33), the use of nonce words and experimental poetic forms, and with Joyce's re-envisioning of poetic expressions of "love" itself, marks an entrance into the English language of a new poetic mode, one that creates "life out of life" (*P* 172). It represents love as seduction (with "chilly aftermath", Mahaffey 1990: 196) and lovers as grounded in earthly realities, in contrast to those tethered into mythic realms envisioned in Yeats. Even Yeats's "pity beyond all telling" is retold by Joyce without Yeatsian pathos. Joyce will eventually define "pity" as "the feeling which arrests the mind in the presence of whatsoever is grave and constant in human suffering and unites it with the human sufferer" (*P* 204). But already in poem XXXV, he renders the lover's "pity" in terms of universalizing aesthetic stasis, the *quidditas* captured in an image of the winds that "cry to the waters' monotone." Ellmann reminds us that, while Joyce internalized aspects of Yeats's technique, he discarded his "dreamy content" and "deliberate Irishness, for at this period in his career he thought that poetry should be landless" (1950: 621), as Joyce's poems in *Chamber Music*, arguably are. Mahaffey points out that Joyce has also "reduced the scale of desire" between the lovers, "placing it more simply between the hidden womb and narrow tomb, between the alternate yearnings for light ("sunrise") and darkness, daydream and nightmare" (1998: 242). Years later, Joyce has Stephen Dedalus reflect on Yeats's Michael Robartes who presses his arms around the "loveliness which has long faded from the world" and rebuff it: "Not this. Not at all. I desire to press in my arms the loveliness which has not yet come into the world" (*P* 251). This rejection of Yeats's poetic platform is reaffirmed in the near-final "Away! Away!" (*P* 252): it echoes numerous "Away"s that, in Yeats's

early poems, always connote awayness from the sensible world and retreat into the fairyland. Considered in the context of the whole of Joyce's work, this Yeatsian phrase resonates in Stephen's (literary) and Joyce's (actual) exile from – translation out of – all that Yeats's literary Dublin represents. It also makes Joyce's 1907 speculation about Mangan – that it might have been, perhaps, his “profound sense of sorrow and bitterness that explains [...] the fury of translation in which he tried to hide himself” (*CW* 185) – so much more prescient/prophetic, for the young Joyce-the translator's story might be just that: sublimating his own profound sense of bitterness by delving into the fury of translation,¹⁷ of “silent translation” in Zanotti's interlingual sense, and of silent intralingual translexion of Yeats – to forge his own poetic voice and his artistic identity away and in exile, through the cunning use of the best that was available to him, all in silence, Yeats's *faith*, *patience* and *adaptability* be damned.

¹⁷ For the context of translation as a formative aspect of Joyce's artistic development see Wawrzycka, “Translation,” in McCourt 2009: 125-136.

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JOYCE, YEATS, AND THE SACK OF BALBRIGGAN

Working with the manuscripts and notes of James Joyce is often extremely time-consuming and tedious, but it is also often very rewarding. Textual and genetic scholars get to see aspects of the work that very few people ever get to see. Granted, many people are simply not interested, but if you love an author and her/his work, it makes sense to want more once you have read it all and eventually find yourself drawn to the prepublication material that is available. Jed Deppman gives, perhaps, the best sales pitch for Genetic Criticism I have encountered:

we love our texts so much that we want to know what they were like as children. So we read texts, but also avant-textes, and when we get to know those, it turns out that we want to read about their childhoods, too: the sources of the sources of the sources... and there is no natural endpoint [...] The result, of course, is that as we geneticists affirm and pursue this hermeneutical regress, we shake the text itself [...] And the final paradox is that, shaken or not, the "text" is still there, even if it has been expanded to include prepublication and source materials; it originally inspired and continues to justify our love of close reading (Deppmann 2006: npg).

Like looking at childhood photos of our favorite actors and recognizing that person we know and admire behind that young face, we look at the "childhood" stages of a text, and we can still see the familiar elements we have grown to appreciate. Even if we go back to the earliest notes, as Deppman says, the text is still there.

Much of genetic research, at least in my experience, involves

hours upon hours of staring at notes and drafts, deciphering nearly illegible script, looking for patterns or for something familiar, or even looking for something unfamiliar. It can be tedious work. Sometimes a pattern emerges, and I form a hypothesis and dig deeper to see if it leads to anything interesting. Sometimes it does not, and, after weeks of research, I must abandon it and move on to another idea. At other times, however, a single word can stand out. And sometimes that single word can reveal a story that takes you deep into the author's writing process, deep into the author's life at the moment of composition, deep into the history of the society in which he was living, and deep into connections with other authors. It is one such story I tell below.

I was looking into the late stages of the development of the "Cyclops" episode following some forgotten hypothesis that did not pan out, when I ran across something that caught my eye. On one of the page proofs for the episode, Joyce had written in a few grammatical and punctuation revisions, and he also wrote in a single word: "Balbriggan".¹ Balbriggan is a small town north of Dublin where I once stopped at a petrol station. What does this town have to do with the events of the episode?

In the "Cyclops" episode, a parodist intrudes into the narration several times to describe what is going on in Burke's pub in various, over-the-top styles. The third such intrusion describes the clothes worn by the Citizen and portrays him as an ancient Irish warrior king. This intrusion mocks the overly romantic language of Irish legends and the Revivalists. When it first appeared in *The Little Review* in 1919, the section in question originally read:

he wore trews of deerskin, roughly stitched with gut. His nether extremities were encased in high buskins dyed in lichen purple.²

¹ Joyce, James. Buffalo MS V.C.I—18a. See also *JJA* 25, p. 6.

² James Joyce. "Ulysses: Episode XII." *The Little Review* 6.7 (1919): 42. Print.

This passage is a description of a typical ancient hero from Irish myth wearing animal skins dyed with local plants; in this passage, his trousers and boots are being described. This all makes perfect sense.

But then Joyce, as he did frequently at this state, revised it. More than two years after it ran in *The Little Review* (specifically October, 1921—the importance of this date will be explained below), and as he was supposed to be making final punctuation and grammatical corrections, he added one word to this description:³

he wore trews of deerskin, roughly stitched with gut. His nether extremities were encased in high **Balbriggan** buskins dyed in lichen purple.⁴

Was Balbriggan famous for making buskins or leather boots? As it turns out, no, it was not. So does this revision make any sense? It really doesn't. So why does Joyce use the name of this small town north of Dublin as an adjective to describe these ancient heroic buskins? He had to have some reason for doing this, and I wanted to find out why.

Balbriggan was famous for being the home of Smyth's Stocking Mill, which produced hosiery and long-john-style undergarments beginning in 1780. Their products were of such high quality that the Queen of England purchased stockings from them. They became world famous and were often copied by lesser-quality manufacturers looking to capitalize on their reputation.⁵ The town itself became famous for the underwear produced at the mill, and the name Balbriggan became synonymous with its under garments and

³ Joyce's constant addition of new material at this late stage became a source of frustration and tension between him and his printer Maurice Darantier.

⁴ Buffalo V.C.I—18a. See also James Joyce. *JJA 25*: James Joyce: *Ulysses*, "Cyclops," "Nausicaa," & "Oxen of the Sun": *A Facsimile of Page Proofs for Episodes 12-14*. Ed. Michael Groden. Vol. 25. New York: Garland, 1978. Print. The James Joyce Archive: 6.

⁵ Parliament, Great Britain. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*. 14 June–6 July 1887. London: Cornelius Buck & Sons, 1887: 1731-1732.

stockings, but not buskins or boots of any sort. This made Joyce's choice of adjectives even more of a mystery.

It turns out that Joyce's revision has nothing to do with the buskins at all, but instead, it has a lot to do with the Irish Revolution and events that take place well after 16 June 1904, and it links Joyce and W.B. Yeats both artistically and politically. I uncovered this story, mostly backwards and in pieces, in various notes, fragments, and letters of both Joyce and Yeats, but when it all finally came together, the mystery of the buskins suddenly made sense. It all started with the Easter Rising.

We all know the tragic story of the Rising: on Easter Monday 1916, several nationalist revolutionary groups got together and staged a take-over of several locations around the city of Dublin and declared independence from England. The General Post Office was the most visible and notable location seized by the rebels, and it was the centre for much of the fighting and destruction that occurred. The English gunboats laid waste to most of the city between the River Liffey and the GPO, and the rebels were eventually forced to surrender. Public opinion among the Irish at this time was luke-warm at best. Many people thought the rebels were foolish and had caused a huge confusion and a lot of death and destruction for nothing. This opinion, however, shifted very quickly in favor of the rebels and in favor of the cause for Irish independence. After the Rising, it was generally expected that the rebels would serve time in jail and eventually be set free. Instead, they were quickly tried, sentenced, and sixteen of them were hastily executed and unceremoniously buried. This horrified nearly everyone, and the negative public reaction shifted the momentum of the nationalist movement toward eventual success.

Neither Joyce nor Yeats was in Ireland at the time of the Rising. Joyce was living in Zurich, but we know kept close tabs on the events from afar as he did with all of Irish politics and current events (Grodan 2010: 132). Yeats was in England having an absolutely

terrible time at a literary charity event when news of the Rising first made it to England. Over the next few days, as the news trickled in by way of much rumor and a few letters, Yeats was horrified to discover that the city of Dublin was seized by a group of republican rebels, and more horrified to learn that he personally knew several of the rebel leaders. Yeats had known Constance Markievicz since they were children. Padraig Pearse, who caused earlier tensions with Yeats and the Abbey Theatre, had since reconciled and was on good terms with both the poet and the company. Yeats knew Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett well, and also Maud Gonne's estranged husband, John MacBride, whom he disliked immensely for obvious reasons. Several employees of the Abbey Theatre and family members of the Cuala Press employees were also involved in the Rising.

While Joyce was keeping these events quietly in the back of his mind, Yeats quickly began drafting the poem that would eventually become the heartbreaking and beautiful "Easter, 1916". On 10 May 1916, while the executions of the rebel leaders were still being carried out, Yeats wrote to Lady Gregory: "The Dublin tragedy has been a great sorrow and anxiety ... I have little doubt there have been many miscarriages of justice ... I had no idea that any public event could so deeply move me—and I am very despondent about the future" (Yeats 1955: 612-3). In this same letter, Yeats tells Gregory that he had begun to gather ideas for a commemoration to the rebel leaders. "I am trying to write a poem on the men executed—'terrible beauty has been born again.'"

Just from this fragment he provided in the letter, we can see the familiar refrain that would make its way into the poem, and we can see that Yeats is struggling internally with both the terror and the national potential of the events. By September, he had finished the poem and had twenty-five copies printed, which he shared only with his close friends. He would keep the poem a poorly kept secret for four more years before he was ready to share this poem with the

world.

The year after completing the poem (1917), the poet AE (George Russell) asked Yeats for permission to print the Easter Rising poem in a nationalist pamphlet that he was arranging. Yeats, always mindful of his public image, declined; he was not yet ready (Foster 1997: 82). He justified his refusal to Lady Gregory in a letter from 31 May of that year: “I do not want to take a political part however slight in haste so he will perhaps have to do without my name,” and by “perhaps” he meant “definitely” as the pamphlet was produced without Yeats’s poem. This reluctance to take a public position on the rebellion and the rising tensions that followed demonstrates Yeats’s keen awareness of the precarious nature of the political climate. Although his nationalist politics had been on display via his plays and his leadership role at the Abbey Theatre, he was aware that, as an artist and not a politician, both his professional and personal livelihood could be jeopardized by sticking his neck out at the wrong time. His was not a decision about *which* political message to deliver, but rather, *when* it was safe to deliver it.

Over the next few years he would write several more poems about the Rising and those involved, including, “Sixteen Dead Men,” “The Rose Tree,” and “On a Political Prisoner,” but he did not publish these at that time, either. Yeats was in the process of compiling a collection of tremendously powerful and potentially influential political poems that he was not letting anyone see.

The War and the Black & Tans

The tensions between Ireland and England caused by the Easter Rising continued to escalate until it became an all-out war. The Irish War of Independence officially began with Sinn Féin’s official Declaration of Independence on 21 January 1919. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) quickly began to stage attacks and raids on British military and police outposts, and by April 1919, tensions were

rising quickly, and a full-scale British military invasion followed. There were tremendous losses of life and property on both sides of the conflict, and so England decided to bring in reinforcements in an effort to tip the scales in their favor.

Winston Churchill, who was then British Secretary of State for War, devised a plan to both employ British military veterans from World War I and to help the British police force maintain control in Ireland. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) was the primary police force in Ireland for the crown, and they were being overwhelmed by the guerrilla tactics of the IRA. In 1920 Churchill began implementation of his plan for an auxiliary force for the RIC that came to be known as the “Black and Tans” due to the colors of their mismatched uniforms. They eventually got matching uniforms, but by then the moniker had become established. Churchill’s plan was extremely successful as over 9,000 men answered his call to help secure British control over Ireland. This auxiliary force soon became infamous for their brutal treatment of Irish civilians in their attempts to root out IRA subversives, and for their unofficial “reprisals” against civilians for IRA attacks whether the attacks were confirmed or not—at times they were only suspected. These reprisals became increasingly brutal, and official calls by the British government to restrain the Black & Tans went unheeded and (most importantly) unenforced. Soon entire towns and villages were destroyed as retribution for IRA activities. On 20 September 1920, the town of Balbriggan received the full force of a Black & Tan reprisal attack.

The Balbriggan tragedy started with the shooting death of a drunk, off-duty British police officer. Accounts vary as to exactly what led to the death of this policeman, but common elements indicate that there was some sort of loud exchange between the officer and the patrons of a local pub, and he refused to leave the pub when asked by the local Republican volunteer officers. It was later confirmed that he was not in uniform, and he never identified himself as an off-duty RIC

officer; he was just a loud drunk who refused to leave. At some point during the altercation, he drew his weapon, was fired upon, and was killed by the Republican officers. Local British officials initially agreed that the off-duty policeman was the aggressor in the incident and no charges were filed. Local Black & Tan forces, however, did not accept this decision, and they planned a reprisal attack against the entire town as revenge for the killing. Later that same night, the Black & Tan forces invaded the town, murdering two suspected Sinn Féin members and setting fire to Smyth's Stocking Mill as well as to four pubs and forty-nine houses of private citizens (McKenna 2011: 102). For the next week frightened locals were forced to sleep out in the fields surrounding the town as Black & Tan forces continued to patrol the area and set fire to more private houses.

“The Sack of Balbriggan,” as it was soon called, made international headlines and cast a dark shadow over an increasingly unpopular British Imperial system. An American newsletter published on 2 October 1920, twelve days after the initial violence, noted that “houses were soaked in petrol and left to burn through the night,” and that the citizens were warned that if they tried to bury their dead at a public funeral the Black & Tans “would return to complete the destruction of the town, and increase the list of the dead.”⁶ The British government officially condemned the attack, but did little to stop further attacks which continued throughout the country until the truce was signed in July 1921. Michael Hopkinson, in his book on the War of Independence, notes that due to the unusual brutality of this particular incident, the name “Balbriggan” became synonymous with “reprisal” (Hopkinson 2002: 81).

⁶ National Bureau of Information. *News Letter of the Friends of Irish Freedom*. Washington, D.C: National Bureau of Information, 1920, 2.

Yeats's Reaction to The Sack of Balbriggan

At the time Balbriggan was sacked, it had been three years since Yeats told Lady Gregory that he did not want to make a political statement in haste. The atrocities committed there in late September 1920 seemed to finally push him over the edge, and he began to plan out his grand statement and his irreversible leap into Irish politics. He gathered four poems, including “The Rose Tree,” “On a Political Prisoner,” “A Meditation in Time of War,” and “The Second Coming,” and he sent them to *The Nation* magazine in London. He was already a well known and well respected poet by this time, and this was a clear attempt to gain the sympathy of his British readers. The first two poems, “The Rose Tree” and “On a Political Prisoner” are about the people involved in the Easter Rising, which was now four years in the past. The other two, “A Meditation in Time of War” and “The Second Coming” were originally First World War poems, but in light of recent events, the messages contained in both were suddenly relevant again, and when placed alongside the others, they amplified the sense of tragedy and apocalyptic doom that was hovering over Ireland at the time. *The Nation* first printed “The Second Coming” and “The Rose Tree,” in their 6 November 1920 issue. The following week they printed “On a Political Prisoner” and “A Meditation in Time of War.” In back-to-back issues they published a 1916 poem paired with a World War One poem that were both clear messages about the current events of 1920 Ireland.

Immediately after sending his poems to *The Nation*, he arranged for a bigger and bolder statement in the United States. He took six political poems—the four he sent to *The Nation* plus “Easter, 1916” and “Sixteen Dead Men”—and sent them along with four other new poems to *The Dial* for which Ezra Pound was the London Editor. The November 1920 issue of *The Dial* published all ten poems together projecting the strongest public declaration of support for Irish independence by Yeats, and the strongest singular political statement

he would ever make with his poetry. While *The Dial* was an American magazine, Yeats was aware that its readership and influence extended all across Europe as well, and he wanted this message to be heard. The ten poems printed are:

“Michael Robartes and the Dancer”

“Easter, 1916”

“Sixteen Dead Men”

“Under Saturn”

“The Rose Tree”

“On a Political Prisoner”

“Towards Break of Day”

“Demon and Beast”

“A Meditation in Time of War”

“The Second Coming”

These poems combine his strong political statements about the Easter Rising and WWI with his romantic and touching visions of the Irish landscape. The ten poems present a powerful political and emotional argument for Irish Independence.

Simultaneous to his submissions to *The Nation* and *The Dial*, Yeats also sent these poems and five others to his sister, Elizabeth at the Cuala Press in Dublin, but he asked her to hold off publication for several months in consideration of the literary magazines. Cuala Press published the entire collection three months later as *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. This made his political message a three-fold attack on British atrocities—in Ireland, in the US, and in England.

Yeats continued to write political poems after this, including one entitled “Reprisals” that calls on the ghost of Lady Gregory’s late son Robert to renounce his devotion to the British military in light of the Black & Tan attacks on civilians. Lady Gregory thought that it was a

bit insensitive and insincere, and asked that he not publish it. The poem remained unpublished until 1948, long after the deaths of both Gregory and Yeats. Another poem addressing these attacks is “Nineteen Hundred Nineteen” which Yeats called “a lamentation of lost peace and lost hope” (*Letters*: 668) and which recalls the murder of a woman named Ellen Quinn, the wife of farmer near the Gregory estate, who the Black & Tans shot and killed, along with her infant child, as the two stood watching a passing lorry while in the doorway of their own home.

Yeats today is known as much for his political poems as he is for his other poetry. Although he began to take a passionate interest in creating these poems in the aftermath of the Easter Rising, it seems that it was the atrocities of the Sack of Balbriggan at the end of September 1920 that finally persuaded him to speak out.

Joyce’s Reaction to The Sack of Balbriggan

During the First World War, while Joyce and his family were living in Switzerland, he remained fairly tight-lipped about politics. As a condition of his relocation, he had to sign an oath of neutrality, which he was happy to do if it meant keeping his family safe from the war raging across Europe at the time. This did not mean, however, that he did not keep close tabs on what was happening, especially in Ireland; he just kept quiet about it (Gorman 1948: 299-300). He was so successful at keeping his mouth shut, that many people who met him during this period thought that he was completely disinterested in politics.

Stuart Gilbert wrote that Joyce showed an “ironical indifference” to politics, and that “the author of *Ulysses*, in this as in other matters, shows no bias; he introduces political themes because they are inherent in the Dublin scene” (Gilbert 1955: 18-19). In other words, because Joyce never talked about politics openly while living in Switzerland, Gilbert believed that Joyce’s only reason to include

political issues in *Ulysses* was as a method of accurately expressing the views of people who live there and not due to any beliefs that Joyce held himself.

Frank Budgen who also met Joyce at this time famously wrote, “On one subject, he was more uncommunicative than any man I know: the subject of politics” (Budgen 1989: 191). Budgen later realized that Joyce was actually deeply invested in politics despite his temporary silence on the matter, and in 1939 (long after Joyce left Switzerland), Budgen wrote a correction to his earlier statements, saying: “I must confess that I was once guilty of helping to create the impression that Joyce was nonpolitical. He was certainly non-party, but no man can be nonpolitical who spends the greater part of his life in celebrating his native city” (Budgen: 339). Despite Budgen’s correction, the impression that Joyce was apolitical, remained part of Joycean scholarship for decades. Even Richard Ellmann, in his 1959 biography, included contradictory statements about Joyce’s politics. His depiction of the *young* Joyce was filled with information about his political interests, but during the time he was writing *Ulysses*, Ellmann states that Joyce was only “briefly exhilarated” by the thought of Irish independence (Ellmann 1982: 553). It was not until much more recently that scholars began to expose Joyce’s deep political concerns. The Critical Theory movement of the 80s and 90s helped to reveal that Joyce was, indeed, deeply concerned with politics, and that *Ulysses* was, in fact, packed with political content.

While Joyce was tight-lipped about politics, he read the newspapers and watched closely the events unfolding in Ireland. After the first serious Black & Tan reprisal attack on the town of Tuam in County Galway in July 1920, Joyce made a brief comment about the violence in a letter to his brother, Stanislaus: “We read about the troubles in Trieste. Those in Ireland are still worse” (*LIII*, 11). This comment seems tame, but neither Joyce nor Yeats could express themselves freely in their letters at this time as British censors were

inspecting all letters and packages and had been for several years. Just over one year later, Joyce wrote to his aunt Josephine expressing concern for the well-being of his father. “If he goes out with a man to protect him I think he is quite right, to judge by the papers I see, as everyone seems to carry his life in his hands in the dear old land of the shamrock” (*LI*, 174). Joyce made this statement in October 1921, during the truce, and as Ireland and England were drafting the treaty that would eventually secure Irish independence. This was also the time that he was working furiously to finish the final revisions and corrections for *Ulysses*.

This brings us at last back to Joyce’s odd reference to Balbriggan in the “Cyclops” Page Proof. Joyce completed the majority of his final revisions to “Cyclops” during this same month. This was also the one-year anniversary of the Sack of Balbriggan, about which several Irish newspapers made particular note. *The Freeman’s Journal*, *The Irish Independent*, *The Irish Examiner* and others all ran pieces about the tragedy and the memorial service held in Balbriggan on the anniversary.

It seems to be a bit more than coincidental that Joyce chose this place in the text, at this time during the revisions to include a reference to the Sack of Balbriggan, which (as Michael Hopkinson noted) had become synonymous with Black & Tan reprisals and emblematic of the struggle for Irish independence. There was no other clear reason for Joyce to include the word at all in this episode. It does not make any sense within the context of the narration. But Joyce was not quite finished with this anachronistic allusion to the Irish War of Independence. A few weeks later, after the Page Proof was reset, Joyce went back and added more to this passage... a lot more.

On the revised proof his addition of the adjective “Balbriggan” to describe the buskins has been successfully inserted.⁷ Joyce now turns

⁷ BuffaloV.C.I.—18b. See also James Joyce. *JJA* 25 p. 16.

his attention to the girdle strung with sea stones worn by the warrior king. Each stone contains an image of one of the many “heroes of antiquity,” and he lists them, including a few humorous examples. On this proof, however, Joyce makes two changes to the phrase, “heroes of antiquity.” First he makes them “Irish” heroes, by writing this revision in the right margin, and then on the other side of the page, include “heroines” as well. So immediately after referring to Balbriggan, Joyce inserts “Irish heroes and heroines,” but he still is not finished. He begins to crowd the page’s margins with the names of actual Irish heroes and several more names added just for fun. This new list of Irish heroes and heroines includes: Red Jim MacDermott, a famous fenian; Michael Dwyer, one of the leaders of the 1798 rebellion; Henry Joy McCracken, leader of the United Irishmen in Ulster in 1798; Theobald Wolfe Tone, the famous eighteenth century revolutionary and founder of the United Irishmen; and Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa, the famous Irish revolutionary, at whose funeral Padraig Pearse made one of his most famous and inflammatory revolutionary speeches. Among the names thrown in for fun, include (ironically) people who fought against the Irish, like Francy Higgins known as the “Sham Squire” and Captain Boycott, the notorious English land agent. There are also other names Joyce included among the list of Irish heroes and heroines like Charlemagne, the Last of the Mohicans, and Dante Alighieri. This list reaches ridiculous proportions, but we can see that once Joyce decided to make them Irish, he first made sure to include some actual Irish revolutionary figures.

This gives us a reference to the Sack of Balbriggan, the mention of *Irish* heroes and heroines, and many names of actual revolutionary figures all on the same page, none of which were there before the anniversary of the tragic events at Balbriggan. It seems clear that on this anniversary, and as Ireland was on the verge of independence after centuries of English rule, Joyce, having read about the anniversary

memorials, had these things on his mind and wanted to include references, however, subtle, in *Ulysses*. Joyce's typical pattern of revision often included words and phrases gathered in his notebooks, which he used as part of his creative process. After searching through the existing documents, however, I could not find the word "Balbriggan" in any of the existing notebooks, which suggests that this was likely a last-minute decision by Joyce as he was revising.

Braving Yeats's Curse

So that is the long story that brings together both Joyce and Yeats in their reactions to the brutal reprisals against the Irish people at the hands of the Black & Tans. Just one word Joyce scrawled at the bottom of a page (at the stage when he should have been done revising) sent me on this journey through the notes, letters, and histories of both authors. This is one of the great joys of working with the manuscripts of Joyce and Yeats. We not only get to look deeper into the works we know and love, but we get to learn the stories of how they got to us in the first place, and what the authors were doing and thinking at the time.

John Stallworthy, in his 1963 *Between the Lines: Yeats's Poetry in the Making*, writes about the genesis of several of Yeats's poems and begins the text with an epigram by Yeats:

Accursed who brings to light of day
The writings I have cast away!
But blessed he that stirs them not
And lets the kind worm take the lot!

He points out that Yeats's own preference was that we not look behind the curtain at the often ugly process of composition, and, in these earliest days of Genetic Criticism, Stallworthy felt that he had to justify his actions. He says that, "If... the motive is reverent curiosity, and the result an enlarged understanding of the man and his work, I submit that the end justifies a slight irregularity in the means"

(Stallworthy 1963: npg). In essence he is arguing that Yeats's own preferences regarding his rejected documents are not as important as the benefits that come from their study as long as that study is executed with respect for the work in question. Joyce, on the other hand, would probably not have cared at all that people were looking into his notes and drafts as long as they gave him some money for the privilege.

Genetic critics today have no such hang-ups about what the author may or may not have wanted, and the result is the potential for a far deeper exploration of the author, the work, and the world in which he lived. And sometimes this exploration can start with a researcher's confusion over one single word scrawled across the bottom of a revision document.

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“WHAT BOGEYMAN’S TRICK IS THIS?”: “CIRCE” AND
YEATS’S REVIVAL DRAMA

James Joyce’s ambivalent relationship with Ireland and Irish culture has received considerable critical attention. Most Joyce scholars tend to see his long, voluntary exile and commitment to what we now call aesthetic Modernism as in a dual opposition to his own concern with the world of his youth and his compulsive recreation of it in language¹. The notion of a creative tension between a

¹ Owing to Joyce’s self-representation as a modern cosmopolitan artist and an exile from his native country (a view also shared by his early critics and his first biographer Herbert Gorman), the polarization between the Irish cultural heritage on the one hand, and international Modernism on the other has frequently informed appraisals of his oeuvre. According to Bulson, “Joyce was born and raised in nineteenth-century Ireland, but he matured in twentieth-century Europe” (2006: 21). This notion is endorsed by Attridge and Ferrer, who state that “if Dublin was ‘homeysweet homely’, an unailing source of memories and materials for Joyce’s books, it was the ‘gratifying experiences’ of Paris that provided the environment and the audience which those books demanded” (1984: 1). Spinks shows an analogous dualist approach, by arguing that “two developments in particular furnish the immediate cultural backdrop to Joyce’s artistic career: the Irish literary and cultural revival of the 1880s and 1890s and the broader stylistic experimentation of European literary modernism” (2009: 14). Finally, we could also cite Stewart’s contention that Joyce “was the international modernist *par excellence* of his day, yet the question of where his modernism sprang from is difficult to answer. [...] Joyce turned away from nationalists and revivalists alike, and identified strenuously with a ‘movement already proceeding out in Europe’ which he identified as ‘the modern spirit’” (2006: 133).

metropolitan, cosmopolitan, Modernist Joyce and a native, “nationalist” Joyce has consistently been advanced to account for this apparent contradiction in his writings, thus highlighting an underlying dichotomy between Joycean Modernism and Irish cultural nationalism². In particular, considering Joyce’s notorious rejection of what he saw as the excesses of the Irish Literary Revival – especially its insularity and obsession with recovering Celtic folklore and peasant traditions – in favour of an urban culture which looked towards continental literary traditions, the question of Joyce and revivalism has generally been approached in terms of dichotomous oppositions, namely the Revival’s celebration of an aristocratic culture of heroism vs. Joyce’s mock-heroic celebration of the middle-class culture of Dublin streets, mysticism vs. realism, or the evocation of a timeless idyllic rurality vs. highly-detailed, contemporary urban fictions.

This view is partly substantiated by Joyce’s own critical and creative writings. In his broadside poem “The Holy Office” (1904), he notoriously attacked the Revival writers dismissing them as cowardly “mummers”, who have eluded the stern demands of their art by fearing the physical world and evading unpleasant Irish realities. However, the work which is most often cited in support of his harsh criticism of the Revival is the 1901 essay “The Day of the Rabblement”, written in a fit of indignation at the recent developments

² Here I am quoting freely from Nolan 1995: xi, one of various studies that have lately challenged the general understanding of Joyce as a continental artist who turned away from his native country, by providing a reappraisal of his relationship with Irish cultural nationalism and the Literary Revival. In a recent essay, for example, Joseph Valente has claimed that, taking account of both sides of the equation, he “proposes to show that the undeniable anti-nationalism of Joyce’s Irish years and the budding nationalism of his early period in Italy dialectically resolved themselves into an idiosyncratic cultural *transnationalism*, in which the localized attachments of and to the ethnos coincide, productively, with their cosmopolitan negation” (2004: 73). See also in this regard Duffy 1994, Tymoczko 1994, Platt 1998, Attridge and Howes 2000, Gillespie 2001.

in the policy of the Irish Literary Theatre, which he considered as “the property of the rabblement of the most belated race in Europe” (*CW*: 70). Joyce’s resentment was primarily provoked by what he saw as the Revival’s conservatism and what he saw as the Irish Literary Theatre’s tendency to lower its artistic standards in the interests of nationalism. Moreover, his objection to the Irish language as a basically dead language was already manifest, exactly as his attitude towards traditional Irish themes, since he regarded them as representatives of a static – that is nostalgic, if not morbidly anchored to a dead past – idea of history. Revival dramatists tended to see Irish history as a progressive decline from an early heroic period to a modern urban culture characterised by materialism and vulgarity, whereas Joyce found his own idea of literature in general, and drama in particular, most fully realised by contemporary European writers, and above all by Ibsen, as his essay “Ibsen’s New Drama” (1900) clearly demonstrates. Nevertheless, “The Day of the Rabblement” is also a paradoxical piece, as it reveals Joyce’s profound interest in the literary side of the Revival, and shows that he pursued the same aim as the leaders of the theatre movement, since “they wanted to raise the level of literature in Ireland and so did he” (Potts 2000: 54).

From his active intervention in the contemporary debate on Irish cultural nationalism, we could assume that Joyce was neither unpatriotic nor indifferent to the cultural heritage of his native country, and that he basically shared the ideals and aspirations of the Revival, first and foremost the attempt to revitalise and dignify an authentic Irish culture. However, what he did not share with his fellow countrymen were the means they chose to achieve their purpose – that is, the use of peasant folklore and the Irish language – which Joyce dismissed as backward and provincial, and which were two features that inevitably clashed with his Modernist and cosmopolitan aesthetic ideals. This is the reason why the question of Joyce and revivalism has generally been discussed in opposing terms. However, as some critics

have noted, his attitude towards the Revival was far more complex and his oeuvre, despite its resistance to revivalism and disdain for obtuse cultural nationalism, is substantially *within* revivalist traditions. O'Neill, for instance, remarks that "Joyce's initial contempt gave way to a profound understanding of the psychology of the Revival and of the uses of myth in the creation of identity" (1994: 379). This is also evident from the fact that, by the time he had lived on the continent for several years, Joyce explicitly manifested his burgeoning nationalist sympathies in a series of articles he wrote between 1907 and 1912 for the Triestine newspaper *Il Piccolo della Sera*, as well as in his "Ireland: Island of Saints and Sages" (1907), which he gave at the Università Popolare in Trieste. In his emphasis on Ireland's "glorious past", here Joyce seems to echo and support a major tenet of the Revival, which he describes as "the Irish nation's insistence on developing its own culture", and "the demand of a very old nation to renew under new forms the glories of a past civilization" (*CW*: 157).

Considering that drama was the medium through which the Revival expressed itself most forcefully and controversially, this essay aims to interpret Joyce's theatrical experiments in the "Circe" episode of *Ulysses* in the light of revivalist plays, particularly by William Butler Yeats, who believed that the theatre should ignore what he described as "the arbitrary surface peculiarities of life", to focus on the archetypes of the unconscious, where "no mind's contents [are] necessarily shut off from one another" (Platt 1998: 163). Yeats's words remind us of the psychodrama of "Circe" and its blurring of boundaries between the inner and the outer, in order to represent both an individual and a collective unconscious. Furthermore, an interesting link is also provided, for example, by the fact that the protagonist of Yeats's play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* appears in one of the many hallucinatory visions depicted in "Circe", precisely when the nationalistic theme is introduced by the presence of Edward VII and Stephen Dedalus is knocked down by the British soldier, Private Carr,

who accuses him of offending the king. Here Cathleen ni Houlihan materialises as “*Old Gummy Granny in sugarloaf hat [...] seated on a toadstool, the deathflower of the potato blight on her breast*” (U 15.4578-80), a caricature of the traditional image of Ireland as a poor old woman. Then, thrusting a dagger towards Stephen’s hand so that he may defend himself against the soldier, she says: “remove him, acushla. At 8.35 a.m. you will be in heaven and Ireland will be free” (U 15.4737-8), thus showing that, by the time he wrote *Ulysses*, Joyce could treat as bitter farce the ideas he had stated so seriously in his juvenile essays.

The notion of a polar opposition between Joyce and Yeats is rooted in the famous account of their first meeting³, where the two figures emerge as separated by age, religious background, but most of all by different aesthetic ideals: whereas Yeats was trying to reconstruct a mythic society and a nationalist cultural ideology out of the materials of popular folk art, Joyce – with a cosmopolitan early Modernism already in his mind – struggled to create a conscience of his own race by representing the very paralysis that the older poet evaded. However, this view fails to account for the fact that Joyce deeply admired Yeats’s symbolist verse in *The Wind among the Reeds*, and shared with him a conception of the artist as a divinely-inspired priest, not entirely in control of the mysterious creative powers he exercises. Moreover, he was influenced by his interest in magic, spiritualism and the occult, all of which would appear frequently throughout *Ulysses* and especially in “Circe”⁴, which has been characterised as “carnival, pageant, brothel-play and séance” (Parrinder 1984: 180). In spite of such a widespread commonplace,

³ For a detailed analysis of how this encounter has been reported, see Ronan Crowley’s “Things Actually Said: On Some Versions of Joyce’s and Yeats’s First Meeting” in this volume.

⁴ On the importance of the occult in *Ulysses* see Terrinoni 2007.

this essay aims to make a comparison between Joyce's dramatic experimentation in "Circe" and some of Yeats's plays by drawing on a number of recurring thematic elements and formal features. In particular – notwithstanding their undeniable differences, and the fact that "Circe" often manifests Joyce's dissent from the aesthetics of the theatre movement – what in Revival drama is an act of delving into a communal mythic past and Celtic folklore for nationalistic purposes (the self-fashioning of an Irish cultural identity) is paralleled in "Circe" by the enacting of mnemonic processes on different levels (personal, interpersonal, cultural, textual) aimed at the construction of both the individual identity of Stephen and Bloom through the expiation of their psychic problems or "sins of the past", and a collective one.

Virtually all commentators on *Ulysses* have acknowledged the dramatic, visionary and dreamlike quality of the Nighttown chapter, whose art is "magic" and whose technique is "hallucination". Suzette Henke, for instance, was among the first critics to observe that "in a Circean universe, the hallucinogenic reigns. [...] In 'Circe', dream is externalized and made public – though Joyce and the reader are the only spectators who have full access to all the theatrical scenes. The two protagonists enact fantasies and hallucinations that adhere to the deep structure of the unconscious" (Henke 1978: 181-183). The episode makes the previously latent manifest on many different levels: the landscape of "Circe" is a projection of both a private and a collective unconscious, the staging of the characters' repressed desires, fears and guilt, but also a release of linguistic and narrative energies from earlier chapters, as the repetition of plot elements and phrases, as well as the enacting of a personal, interpersonal and textual memory clearly show. Stephen and Bloom, for instance, are confronted with the apparitions of their mother and father respectively, for whose death they both feel deep remorse. Such "revenants" are, at the same time, the materialisation of the characters' repressed

memories and the repetition of textual fragments taken either from other sources (intertextual references) or from previous episodes (intratextual references), incorporated in both the stage directions and the characters' words:

STEPHEN: Ho!

(Stephen's mother, emaciated, rises stark through the floor in leper grey with a wreath of faded orange blossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with grave mould. Her hair is scant and lank. She fixes her bluecircled hollow eyesockets on Stephen and opens her toothless mouth uttering a silent word. A choir of virgins and confessors sing voicelessly.)

THE CHOIR:

Liliata rutilantium te confessorum ...

Iubilantium te virginum ...

[...]

THE MOTHER: *(With the subtle smile of death's madness)* I was once the beautiful May Goulding. I am dead.

STEPHEN: *(Horrorstruck)* Lemur, who are you? What bogeyman's trick is this?

BUCK MULLIGAN: *(Shakes his curling capbell)* The mockery of it! Kinch killed her dogsbody bitchbody. She kicked the bucket. *(Tears of molten butter fall from his eyes into the scone)* Our great sweet mother! *Epi oinopa ponton (U 15.4157-80).*

The apparition of May Dedalus in the guise of a ghost – haunting both the character's mind throughout the day and the text of the novel – echoes previous chapters, in particular “Telemachus”, where the narrative voice twice evokes Stephen's disturbing dream of his dead mother, described in similar terms. Moreover, Mulligan's denigratory words also occur in the first episode (and again in “Proteus”), together with the intertextual reference “our great sweet mother”, which ultimately refers to Swinburne's poem “The Triumph of Time” before it comes back in “Circe”. In an analogous way, the materialisation of

Rudolph Virag's ghost, equally grotesque, entails the repetition of leitmotifs traditionally associated with Bloom, such as the Jewish theme and the dream of the Orient, as well as the paternity theme (also with reference to the Old Testament). As Bloom is confronted with the sense of guilt provoked by the painful memory of his father's suicide, the Nighttown episode recalls previous occurrences of the same recollection, for example in "Lotus-Eaters" and "Hades":

([...] A stooped bearded figure appears garbed in the long caftan of an elder in Zion and a smokingcap with magenta tassels. Horned spectacles hang down at the wings of the nose. Yellow poison streaks are on the drawn face.)

[...]

RUDOLPH: What you making down this place? Have you no soul? (*With feeble vulture talons he feels the silent face of Bloom*) Are you not my son Leopold, the grandson of Leopold? Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the god of his fathers Abraham and Jacob?

BLOOM: (*With precaution*) I suppose so, father. Mosenthal. All that's left of him (*U 15.246-62*).

Moreover, the relationship of the chapter to the rest of the novel is one of phantasmagoria and carnival, as themes, characters, incidents and memories from preceding episodes reappear as strange and yet familiar, in that they come back in grossly exaggerated and distorted forms. As Parrinder puts it, "dramatic set-pieces follow one another like scenes in a pageant or floats in a carnival procession. Specifically appropriate to the carnival theme are the transvestite fantasies [...]. The episode is full of distorted bodies and physical grotesques" (1984: 177-178). In a crescendo of absurdity, for example, Bloom incessantly changes his attire, physical appearance and even his identity; new bizarre figures are introduced, such as the Siamese twins Philip Drunk and Philip Sober, who "*appear in the window embrasure. Both are masked with Matthew Arnold's face*" (*U 15.2513-14*), while others

materialise in the guise of a merging of separate characters that the reader has already encountered, further metamorphosed:

(His Eminence, Simon Stephen Cardinal Dedalus, Primate of all Ireland, appears in the doorway, dressed in red soutane, sandals and socks. Seven dwarf simian acolytes, also in red, cardinal sins, uphold his train, peeping under it. He wears a battered silk hat sideways on his head. His thumbs are stuck in his armpits and his palms outspread. Round his neck hangs a rosary of corks ending on his breast in a corkscrew cross. [...] Then, unable to repress his merriment, he rocks to and fro, arms akimbo, and sings with broad rollicking humour) (U 15.2654-70).

Though used for different purposes, hallucinations, dreams, masking and fantasy connect Joyce's use of extravaganza and carnivalesque imagery in the Nighttown chapter to revivalist plays such as, for instance, Yeats's *The Shadowy Waters* or *The Green Helmet*. At the same time, such elements show Joyce's engagement with a contemporary cosmopolitan culture dominated by psychoanalysis, Expressionism and (later) Surrealism, exactly as Yeats was deeply involved with cultural trends outside of Ireland, such as symbolism, spiritualism, the Japanese Noh and Surrealism itself. Not differently from "Circe", *The Shadowy Waters* – whose first published version appeared in 1900, although Yeats thought of the story as early as 1884 or 1885⁵ – has commonly been considered a piece closer to a

⁵ After an early conception and a long elaboration, the work appeared in the *North American Review* in May 1900, and in book form (Hodder and Stoughton) in December of the same year, accompanied by a prologue. The Irish National Theatre Society staged this version in January 1904, but then Yeats revised it for publication in the 1906 volume *Poems, 1899-1905*. In this phase the author admittedly reduced its overabundant symbolism and made the language used by the sailors closer to colloquial speech. This version was later performed at the Abbey Theatre (December 1906), but again rewritten – on the ground that the author did not consider it an entirely viable performance piece – resulting in the so-called acting version of 1907, which is the one traditionally included in editions of Yeats's *Collected Plays*. Critics generally regard the process of gradual transformation of the original work as a progressive imaginative loss and, on the whole, consider it more effective as a poem than as drama. On the evolution of the play even before its first publication see Clark 1964.

dramatic poem than a full-blown play. By the author's own admission, the plot had been so often rearranged and was so overgrown with symbolism that it gradually became obscure and vague, and some of its unusual effects were extremely difficult to achieve on stage. Furthermore, the play can be seen as a psychodrama in that it is one of the few, among Yeats's, which are not based on a particular story, but was conceived entirely by the poet expressing his personal motivations. As Yeats wrote in *Autobiographies*, the supernatural birds that appear in *The Shadowy Waters* and throughout his work had revealed themselves in his early childhood. The presence of supernatural creatures that circle round the masthead of Forgael's ship and the fact that in some unpublished versions many characters – the grey-robed "Seabar", of the race of the Fomorian gods of darkness – have eagle faces clearly show the importance of the visionary and magical element characterising his work. Moreover, *The Shadowy Waters*, with its dreamlike atmosphere, also contains, among other things, the story of souls rising from the dead to be transformed into man-headed birds, exactly as in "Circe" the spectres of dead characters such as May Dedalus, Rudolph Virag and Rudy Bloom appear under strange – in the case of Paddy Dignam even animal-like – metamorphoses:

FORGAEL

I have good pilots, Aibric. When men die
They are changed and as grey birds fly out to sea,
And I have heard them call from wind to wind
How all that die are borne about the world
In the cold streams, and wake to their desire,
It may be, before the winds of birth have waked;
Upon clear nights they leave the upper air
And fly among the foam (Yeats 1900: 21).

(The beagle lifts his snout, showing the grey scorbutic face of Paddy Dignam. He has gnawed all. He exhales a putrid carcased breath. He grows to human size and shape. His dachshund coat becomes a brown mortuary habit. His green eye flashes bloodshot. Half of one ear, all the nose and both thumbs are ghoul-eaten.)

PADDY DIGNAM: *(In a hollow voice)* It is true. It was my funeral. Doctor Finucane pronounced life extinct when I succumbed to the disease from natural causes.

(He lifts his mutilated ashen face moonwards and bays lugubriously.)

BLOOM: *(In triumph)* You hear?

PADDY DIGNAM: Bloom, I am Paddy Dignam's spirit. List, list, O list! (*U* 15.1204-19).

There seems to be a marked thematic similarity between, on the one hand, the late Dignam's emergence from the body of a beagle, or the grotesque materialisation of revenants from both the characters' and the book's past – J.J. Molloy, for example, reappears assuming “*the avine head, foxy moustache and proboscidal eloquence of Seymour Bushe*” (*U* 15.999-1001) – and, on the other hand, the apparition of spirits and bizarre creatures in some of Yeats's plays like the aforementioned *The Shadowy Waters*, or *The Green Helmet*. The latter contains talk of cat-headed people and a talking decapitated head, an image which finds an echo in “*Circe*”, though the language is markedly different:

CONALL

We told him [the Red Man] it over and over, and that ale had fuddled his wit,

But he stood and laughed at us there, as though his sides would split

Till I could stand it no longer, and whipped off his head at a blow,

Being mad that he did not answer, and more at his laughing so,

And there on the ground where it fell it went on laughing at me.

LAEGAIRE

Till he took it up in his hands.

CONALL

And splashed himself into the sea (Yeats 1910: 18-19).

(Virag unscrews his head in a trice and holds it under his arm)
VIRAG'S HEAD: Quack! (U 15.2638-37).

Therefore, Yeats's experimental theatrical works and Joyce's dramatic episode in *Ulysses* are highly symbolical and employ techniques of defamiliarisation. In particular, Ellmann mentions Yeats's belief that truth is apprehensible by symbols alone and never by direct statement, thus showing how knowledge and symbolism are associated in the poet's system (1979: 292). *The Shadowy Waters*, for instance, opens with Forgael locked "in some crazy dream" (Yeats 1954: 148) and shows queen Dectora experiencing a trancelike state "as if in sleep" (Yeats 1900: 40), or "caught in woven nets of enchantment" (43). Moreover, strange alienating figures also appear in other plays, such as the Red Man, a spirit, and the Black Men in *The Green Helmet*. Similarly, at the beginning of *On Baile's Strand* we witness "a Fool and Blind Man, both ragged and their features made grotesque and extravagant by masks" (Yeats 1954: 247), discussing the mythical Aoife's country, a land "full of wonders" and extraordinary transformations where "there are a great many Queens [...] who can change themselves into wolves and into swine and into white hares, and when they are in their own shapes they are stronger than almost any man; and there are young men there who have cat's eyes and if a bird chirrup or a mouse squeak they cannot keep them shut" (Yeats 1903: 43)⁶. Finally, the opening of "Circe" immediately projects the reader into a squalidly expressionistic, unfamiliar setting where an ice-cream trolley becomes a "gondola" floating under a lighthouse, a tottering figure bending over rubbish appears as a "gnome", and where the stage is populated by "a deafmute idiot [...]"

⁶ In the first 1903 edition, the Fool and the Blind Man had names (Barach and Fintain, respectively) which were removed in subsequent versions. By depriving them of their identities, Yeats made them into universal types rather than characters, which is another instance of defamiliarisation.

shaken in Saint Vitus' dance", a "*pigmy woman [who] swings on a rope*", among many other grotesque characters (U 15.25).

Together with ghost imagery, magical transformations and strange metamorphoses, such texts also feature tragicomic hero-cultism and apocalyptic visions. In "Circe", for instance, Bloom is at the same time debased and magnified; he is ridiculed as a "bigamist, bawd and cuckold and a public nuisance to the citizens of Dublin" (U 15.1158-60) and put on an imaginary trial for his difficult relationship with women, which is of course a projection of his fears and sense of guilt for his repressed desires. Later, he is satirically celebrated as a sovereign "*under an arch of triumph [...] in a crimson velvet mantle trimmed with ermine, bearing Saint Edward's staff, the orb and sceptre*" (U 15.1442-4), as "emperor president and king chairman [...] Leopold the First" (U 15.1471-2) and founder of "the golden city which is to be the new Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future" (U 15.1444-5). Soon afterwards, he is condemned as "a disgrace to christian men. A fiendish libertine" (U 15.1754), humiliated as "bisexually abnormal" (U 15.1775-6) and declared to be "a finished example of the new womanly man" (U 15.1798-9). Finally, he is publicly derided in the pillory, thrown "*soft pantomime stones*" until he is ignited and becomes "*mute, shrunken, carbonised*" (U 15.1956). In the Nighttown chapter, where urban culture mingles with working-class Dublin accents, these tragicomic elements are associated with popular entertainments such as farce, pantomime and music hall. To quote a few examples, in one of the many hallucinatory visions Bloom's dead mother appears "*in pantomime dame's stringed mobcap, widow Twankey's crinoline and bustle*" (U 15.283), whereas another stage direction introduces a grotesque procession of silent figures that are familiar – that is, encountered in previous episodes – and bizarre at the same time: "*mute inhuman faces throng forward, leering, vanishing, gibbering, Booloohoom. Poldy Kock, Bootlaces a penny, Cassidy's hag, blind stripling, Larry Rhinoceros, the girl, the*

woman, the whore, the other, the..." (U 15.3044-6).

Analogously, Yeats came to see the mask of comedy as essential to his survival in the often hostile environment of the Irish dramatic movement, showing an interplay of the comic and the serious in such works as *The Green Helmet*, characterised by medieval carnival and the grotesque, and *On Baile's Strand*, featuring a series of farcical elements. Cynthia Wheatley-Lovoy bases her study of the relationship between Joyce and Yeats on "their mutual use of the comic mode to reveal the nature of the heroic, especially in the climate of inversion, parody, and irony that seemed to characterize much of the Irish Revival" (1993: 20). Thus both writers show an intense fascination with comedy, farce and the grotesque, and with their relationship to a modern view of heroism, although the protagonists of their art embody radically different values and ideologies (Yeats's humanly-divine Cuchulain, representing the poet's aristocratic and heroic vision on the one hand, and Joyce's Bloom as *homme moyen sensuel*, epitomising middle-class urban culture, on the other). In his "Paris Notebook" (1903) Joyce describes comedy as "the perfect manner in art", because it "excites in us the feeling of joy" (*CW*: 144), and "Circe" shows the presence of comic, parodic and farcical traits together with what we can recognise as the typical elements of the grotesque according to Hegel, namely unnatural fusion, distortion and multiplication⁷. As for Yeats, although he began to explore the potential of comic technique as early as 1903, when he wrote his first Cuchulain play *On Baile's Strand*, we can consider *The Green Helmet* – performed at the Abbey Theatre in 1910 and published later that year – as his first full-scale venture into the modern-looking form he called "heroic farce". The latter (originally written in prose under the title *The Golden Helmet*) was meant to be an introduction to the

⁷ Cf. Hegel 1920. For a modern theory of the grotesque see Bakhtin 1968, Kayser 1981 and Harpham 1982.

former, and both show a merging of comic and serious elements where the comic techniques emphasise, and often undermine, the theme of heroism⁸. As a matter of fact, Katharine Worth has regarded its form as an attempt to draw the symbolism of the 1890s into “the modern theatre of surrealist farce” (1978: 153). The subtitle, “An Heroic Farce”, shows a departing from the high-heroic tone characterising the other plays in the cycle, and refers not to Cuchulain’s heroism, but to the pretence of heroism shown by other characters such as Conall and Laegaire. They see themselves as heroes who deserve the helmet of the title owing to their attempts to fight the cat-heads, but the helmet becomes the symbol of the trivialising of heroism, because it is considered as another prize to win through the use of force, and the bone of contention in petty squabbles.

Finally, in *On Baile’s Strand*, the inaugural play of the Abbey Theatre in 1904, Cuchulain’s tragedy (the killing of his own son and the fit of madness that follows) is framed by the comedy of a Fool and a Blind Man, who take advantage of the situation and its chaos to secure food. These characters are presented in a similar way to Conchubar and Cuchulain, and act as their low counterparts, at one point even mocking the central conflict of the play, that is Conchubar’s insistence that Cuchulain take an oath of loyalty. This doubling technique is a characteristic device of comedy, and shows that, in this play, tragedy is deflated by farce and contaminated with low-mimetic style:

BLIND MAN: He [Conchubar] will sit up in this chair, and he’ll say, “Take the oath, Cuchulain; I bid you take the oath. Do as I tell you. What are your

⁸ Arranged in narrative order, the Cuchulain cycle consists of *At the Hawk’s Well* (1917), *The Green Helmet* (1910), *On Baile’s Strand* (1903), *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919) and *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939). Much of the material is taken from Lady Gregory’s *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902), a popular and influential account of the life and adventures of the legendary hero, for which Yeats wrote an introduction.

wits compared with mine? And what are your riches compared with mine? [...] Take the oath, I tell you; take a strong oath”.

FOOL [*Crumpling himself up and whining*]: I will not – I’ll take no oath – I want my dinner (Yeats 1906: 77).

In conclusion, this essay intended to show that, in both his critical and creative writings, Joyce challenged the basic tenets of the Revival, and especially the tendency to assume that the cultural authenticity it sought resided in Celtic mythology, peasant folklore and Gaelic language. Nevertheless, through the same texts he also manifested a keen interest in the contemporary intellectual debate concerning the creation of a nationalist cultural ideology, and proved to share with Yeats and the main exponents of the Revival the strenuous effort to revitalise and dignify an authentic Irish culture. Going back to the dichotomies that are traditionally employed to discuss Joyce’s ambivalent relationship with his native country, or with the Irish Literary Revival, we can see that it is precisely the author’s vision in general, that all-embracing and multifaceted work which is *Ulysses*, and its most absurd chapter “Circe” in particular, that characteristically embody a perfect balance of antithetical traits. This has allowed us to draw a series of analogies between the dramatic episode of *Ulysses* and some revivalist plays by Yeats without overlooking their unquestionable diversity, and to reconsider the well-established idea of a polar opposition between Joyce and the Revival, or Joyce and Yeats, in seeking to explore the connections between these great figures of Irish and world literature.

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YEATS'S THEATRE, JOYCE'S DRAMA

As Norman Jeffares has it, “we think of Yeats primarily as a poet, yet throughout his life he devoted much of his energy to writing plays and for many years his time was taken up as Manager of the Abbey Theatre with ‘theatre business, management of men’” (Jeffares 1964:1). The second posthumous edition of his *Collected Plays* (1952), although it does not include all of his published plays, consists of seven hundred pages, and this already gives some indication of the scope of his dramatic work.

One does emerge from the reading of his plays, however, with an acute sense that a study of his dramatic works should involve the careful evaluation of an astonishing quantity of materials produced not only in the authorial practice of writing plays (as well as introductions, announcements, notes, production notes, annotations and mock annotations, elaboration of different versions in prose and in verse -see the Variorum editions – rewrites for publication in different collections usually accompanied by new introductions). There are also all the writings he penned in support of the Irish dramatic movement and, from 1904 on, of the Abbey Theatre including speeches, announcements, manifestoes, publicity – such as that for Maud Gonne’s *Association Irlandaise* in Paris – performance and tour organization, readings, book reviews, lectures, open letters to newspapers, debates, training of actors, musicians and dancers, selection of authors (an astonishing variety, in this case, such as, for

example, Calderon de la Barca's *Purgatorium Sancti Patrici*) and actors, (as with the Fay brothers company), designing and making props (such as the masks for *At the Hawk's Well*, as well as cloths to be unfolded), scenery design, audience training. All this activity also included his participation in the many "controversies", disputes and "stirring rows" in which the theatre was embroiled. This constant activity was instrumental in allowing Yeats to define the scope and the "method", as he had it, of the Irish Dramatic movement, as one engaged in a continuous reshuffling and remodelling of the texts by way of changes in the medium (whether poetry or prose), the performative codes (tragedy or comedy, ritual or farce), the different technical solutions (with stage directions almost becoming a sub-genre in their own right), with tightly knit and subtly incorporated notes and comments.¹

Yeats's profession of faith in the theatre (and in what it can know and achieve), as construction, form and text in performance, stemmed directly from the selection of the personages, the heroic power of their deeds and from the high and powerful lively quality of language that they spoke, characteristic of the Irish tradition, in which

people were in love with a story, and gave themselves up to imagination as if to a lover" (*Cuchulain*, Preface, ix).

Stressing the strong connections linking myth and ritual in the Irish tradition, Yeats stated that he, like any actual Irish story-teller (and, the "country-people of today"), "believed" in the actual "nearness" of Cuchulain (as a character "called up" from "the past"

¹ Along with the 1922 edition of Yeats's *Later Poems*, I have also drawn on the 1923 edition of *Plays and Controversies*, texts and annotations, and Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, 1902, (both the text and Lady Gregory's notes), as well as Yeats's Preface and final Note. These texts proved invaluable tools of research (also because they were planned and published in their original form by Yeats himself, and therefore retain their distinct period flavour).

and capable of “stirring the imagination”, *Cuchulain*, Preface, ix) and in the active “nearness” of imagination, constantly “running off to Tir-nan-oge, to the Land of Promise”, availing himself of the “lyrical temper” of the Irish people, “athirst for an emotion”, seeking “beauty” and “perfection” even if “only for a moment”, even if in the form of unnatural or unearthly beauty:

His [the Irish story-teller’s] imagination was always running off to Tir-nan-oge, to the Land of Promise, which is as near to the country-people of today, as it was to Cuchulain and his companions. His belief in its nearness, cherished in its turn the lyrical temper, which is always athirst for an emotion, a beauty which cannot be found in its perfection upon earth or only for a moment (*Cuchulain*, Preface: xii).

Myth must, however, be revisited and rebuilt in its entirety and complexity, starting from a survey and a close examination of its rewritings, translations and adaptations and then integrating it with the lore preserved by the present-day country people in order to show it in action and redefine, within it, the roles of men and women (especially the role of the woman, of “the great queen”, acting as a foil to the ‘new woman’), of heroes and heroines alike. All this, so as to root the absolute ‘belief’ in personages, in their heroic deeds and dramatic language:

His imagination, which had not been able to believe in Cuchulain’s greatness, until it had brought the Great Queen, the red eye-browed goddess to woo him upon the battlefield, could not be satisfied with a friendship less romantic and lyrical than that of Cuchulain and Ferdiad, who kissed one another after the day’s fighting, or with a love less romantic and lyrical than that of Baile and Ailinn, who died at the report of one another’s deaths, and married in Tir-nan-oge. His art, too is often at its greatest when it is most extravagant, for he only feels himself among solid things, among things with fixed laws and satisfying purposes, when he has reshaped the world according to his heart’s desire (*Cuchulain*, Preface: xiii).

Yeats’s Preface has seldom been considered in relation to the theatre, as a way of preparing for the animation and ‘presentation’ of

the Irish matter in theatrical form, but the powerful Yeatsian wording, focussing on the necessity to “believe” in Cuchulain’s presence and proximity, is there to express a prophecy about the Irish theatre and his own, fundamental contribution to it.

Yeats did not, in fact, inherit Irish folklore and myth passively but was actively refashioning them while at the same time, constructing his own personal myth, aiming at the elaboration of his experience into “a deliberate and complete idea”, as he puts it in *A Vision* (1925). He was convinced that recognizing the myth which man embodies, describing the image man tries to copy trying to reunite with his anti-self, in an obsessive dialogic and dialectic relation, would enable him to understand his own deeds and thoughts.

The ascetic “meditation on the mask” (Yeats 1953: 922), a mask that has been deliberately and artificially wrought or carved, (a must for poets, heroes and saints), is the way by which men attain knowledge and greatness and it is up to a high tragic theatre to prepare the setting for their practices of artistic self-begetting and re-fashioning. Yeats, who has generally been identified, because of his “administrative” wisdom, with Conchubar, on the contrary, more often adopted the frame of Cuchulain (actually “working himself into Cuchulain”), and saw this figure as the ideal benchmark because of Cuchulain’s endurance, “strength” and the strenuous fighting qualities, all of which he elaborated in plays and poems (eight in all). Yeats’s victories of the mind and his intellectual achievements, suggest that he has much in common with Cuchulain.

For Yeats, it is up to the theatre, elaborating its own language, to work on the structure of myth in order “To have the story right” so as to avoid the effect pointed to in *Deirdre* (1906) by The First Musician: “so mixed up with fable [...] that all seems fabulous” (Yeats 1964: 49). Theatre is called on to sort out the fabulous elements and let the pure imaginative core emerge by negotiating its inner hierarchical order and the roles of characters, the symbolic value of their actions

(through the material stage, through the articulation of the action in scenes), which allows structures, interpretative patterns and frameworks to come into focus, in a fertile alternation of de-mythologising and re-mythologising activities.

At an early stage Yeats scrupulously engaged in a survey of the entire domain of European literatures to see how they were constituted in terms of different genres and forms and ways of knowing. Rather than writing a book on the “Declaration of Principles” as George Russell had planned to do, together with Lionel Johnson, Standish O’Grady, Douglas Hyde, and John Eglinton, Yeats decided to publish an essay on “The Literary Movement in Ireland” (in the *North American Review*, 1889), in which, having announced that the entire nation should be set at work to revive the Irish tradition, he went on to formulate one of his most telling prophecies about the vocation and burden of Ireland: “Much may depend in the future in Ireland now developing writers who know how to formulate in clear expressions the vague feelings now abroad” (Yeats 1970: 23). In this essay he meant, at the same time to plan a full exploitation of the ancient Irish tradition, assuming the responsibility of elaborating the “clear expression” as the proper mould (systematisation, order, “clarity”, purity and simplicity being the appropriate implements) and to get rid of the vaporous “vague feelings” of *fin-de-siècle* decadent literature and even of the Celtic Twilight movement itself (which he would later define as “a handful of dreams”).

Over the years, his central nucleus of thought on folklore and poetry, was elaborated both in his prose writings (letters, book reviews, but more poignantly, in his rewriting and commenting on his own poetry and plays in notes and prefaces), as well as in his own poetry, ultimately pointing to a “lyrical theatre”, as a supreme artistic expression. Some early elements would turn up again and again, although in readapted forms: having moved from Shelley’s platonic “unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the

creator” (Yeats 1975: 61), to Swedenborg and to Blake, Yeats aimed at pointing to and singling out archetypal emotions, immortal moods, “old revelations”, as he told the Dublin Hermetic Society in 1894 when reviewing a book by A.E., in which poets were shown not to be concerned with social or real life problems, nor engaged in politics, as they were “removed from ordinary life” (as Pater famously had it). Accusations of expressing “vague feelings” were clearly aimed at the decadents who were charged with divorcing literature and philosophy, poetry and craftsmanship.

This stance proved fundamental when applied to the theatre. It revealed that the reason for avoiding the presentation of modern bourgeois life “for the middle classes of the great cities” (Yeats 1923: 32), was that it was not capable of conveying the “national spirit” nor of expanding or strengthening the social role of the theatre that went with it:

The life of the drawing-room, the life represented in most plays of the ordinary theatre of today [...] differs very little all over the world and has [...] little to do with the national spirit (Yeats 1923: 189-90).

The idea of a discipline of the imagination to be reached through craftsmanship and technical proficiency, “perfecting earthly powers and perception” (Yeats 1970: 68), to achieve clarity and style in language (in a way not dissimilar to William Morris), at the same time stemmed from and had a bearing on Yeats’s actual theatre practice.

Being a nationalist was for Yeats necessarily related to the theatre, writing “passionately” was to write “dramatically”: it meant taking into account the fact that his thoughts would take “fire in such a way that [he] could give them dramatic expression”, in order to be able to write “movingly” and to “touch the heart” of people:

I am a nationalist, and certain of my friends have made Irish politics the business of their lives [...] and an accident made these thoughts take fire in such a way that that I could give them dramatic expression. I had a very vivid dream one night, and I made Cathleen Ni Houlihan out of my dream

But if some external necessity had forced me to write nothing but drama with an obvious patriotic intention, instead of letting my work shape itself under the casual impulses of dreams and daily thoughts, I would have lost[...] the power to write movingly upon any theme. I could have aroused opinions, but I could not have touched the heart” (Yeats 1923: 56-7).

At an earlier stage folklore was intended by Yeats in a more general way. In his essay “The Message of the Folklorists “ (1893) his interest was such as to make him – given his desire to connect folklore with poetry and poetry with music and potentially with all forms of literature – go so far as to state that many classical authors were nothing but “folklorists with musical tongues”: “Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare and even Dante, Goethe and Keats, were little more than folklorists with musical tongues”(Yeats 1970: 69). He developed these ideas in his essay on “Irish National Literature” (1895).

Yeats’s ambition to create a great distinctive poetic literature from Ireland’s pagan and Christian traditions meant experimenting with different genres and materials in his own work (*The Island of Statues* (1885)) wavered between dramatic form and poetry, bearing all the stylistic marks of the nineties). The art of telling stories in his prose work on *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) merged with the romantic *fin-de-siècle* poetry of the long poem *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889). In these experiments, Yeats discovered, along the way, the work of generations and arrived at a complex blend, through the heaping up of ancient lore in translations and adaptations. At the same time he sought to understand the limitations of tales and fables that he read and revisited in order to get to the imaginative core of the tradition and to weigh its potential as a way to restore greatness, strength, powerfulness and simplicity to language by imposing a style on it (as style was even inscribed in the morphological traits of the country, in the form of the scenery of the “ragged hills”).

The famous Preface to Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, 1902, published the same year as the Irish Theatre Society was founded, is central to an understanding of the critical discourse on which the theatre was being founded, Irish Theatre should have its roots in "ritual" (and avoid risky modernizing impulses), and it should be capable, as Yeats would say in a 1899 *Beltaine* article, of coming "to its greatness again ..." recalling "words to their ancient sovereignty", and rendering them capable of "touching the heart" (Yeats 2003:150). The man of theatre, "calling up the past and stirring the imagination", must make a profession of faith, "believe" in 'personages' and in situations, not just enumerating or juxtaposing them or vaguely describing them, but showing them, summoning them up with their names (names of places, too, as "making the nearness of the Land of Promise" come true) as actual presences and words in action, "athirst for an emotion" (*Cuchulain*, Preface: ix and xiii). In the total recreation of this markedly three-dimensional physical world, in which personages move among "solid things", exhibiting their props (as we see in the "sword" first "put [...] into St Michael's hand by a wood-carver who was perhaps unaware that the "thought was perhaps put into his mind by St. Michael himself" (*Cuchulain*, Preface: xi) even "Cherubins and Seraphims" could be shown "with their precise duties and privileges" (*Cuchulain*, Preface: x).

Apart from arranging the genealogies of heroes and heroines, "arranging ... Kings and Queens, the shadows of forgotten mythologies, in long lines that ascended to Adam and his Garden" (*Cuchulain*, Preface: xi) and caring "about the shape of the poem and the story" (Preface: x) as the poet does, the playwright "creates" and re-shapes, "for learned and unlearned alike, a communion of heroes, a cloud of stalwart witnesses" (authors-actors-spectators), all "sharing" (a highly connoted term in Yeats) in an

art which is often at his best when it is most extravagant, for he [the poet] only feels himself among solid things with fixed laws and satisfying

purposes, when he has reshaped the world according to his heart's desire" (*Cuchulain*, Preface: xiii).

The "solid things", the "fixed laws", the "satisfying purposes", are precisely inherent in the work of "reshaping of the world", that is theatre itself, according to one's desires and passions, through the negotiation of its real and symbolic, public and private spaces.

Yeats's Preface most appropriately concentrates on the language adopted in works of folklore (often reconstructed out of different manuscripts, written in different languages and given in different versions, moreover, not often written "with a fine understanding of English, but rather with "clumsiness" of style). The Preface points to the radical importance of rendering the dramatic style through the imposition on language of cadences and rhythms, changes of tones, musical effects in speech, in a situation in which, as Yeats has it, "changes of rhythm are changes of sense" (Preface: vii), form and style "constraining" authors ², as the author engages in writing from the author's point of view rather than from the traditional view of the personages themselves:

This play is founded on the old story of Seanchan the poet, and King Guaire of Gort, but I have seen the story from the poet's point of view, and not, like the old story-tellers, from the king's (Yeats 1923: 40).

Yeats also experimented by choosing to impose a particular style on texts that had already been through a series of translations and retranslations to and from the Irish. But what did "style" mean for Yeats? What he had in mind was, I think, what he himself said in his last broadcast entitled "I became an Author" given in 1938, a few months before his death, that is, that the main concern of an author was "to give the natural words in the natural order", to achieve

² "If Father Dineen or Dr. Hyde were asked why they write their plays, they would say they write them to help their propaganda; and yet, when they begin to write the form constrains them, and they become artists"(Yeats 1923: 41).

severity, simplicity and naturalness, which are the most laborious and difficult qualities to attain:

When I wrote a poem half a dozen lines sometimes took as many days because I was determined to give the natural words in the natural order, my imagination still full of poetic diction. It was that old difficulty of my school work over again, except that I had now plenty of time (Yeats 1975: 509).

In the theatre this could be achieved by strictly adhering to the natures of the personages, “a thought which was perhaps put into his [the craftsman’s] mind by St Michael himself” (*Cuchulain*, Preface: xi). This signals the necessity of rendering speech in all its “lively” quality, inviting the audience to “share” in the playwright’s creative experience, showing the process by which simple tales can become great immortal works even without their being expressed with “perfect dramatic logic or in perfectly ordered words”³. This is by no means easy, especially for authors who “write in English”, as writing in English has given the Irish “strange eyes”:

We who write in English have a more difficult work, for English has been the language in which the Irish cause has been debated; and we have to struggle with traditional phrases and traditional points of view[...]. But fewer know that we must encourage every writer to see life afresh, even though he sees it with strange eyes (Yeats 1923: 42-43)

The writing processes of the first three plays, *The Countess Cathleen* (1892), *The Shadowy Waters* (1904), and *On Baile’s Strand* (1906), were all developed alongside Yeats’s other theatrical work and bear connection to the comments, controversies, rewritings, and notes that show Yeats as both author and theatre manager, developing, elaborating his critical stance both through his writing and his management duties. *The Countess Cathleen* (first published in *Samhain* 1902 and first performed at the St. Teresa’s Total Abstinence

³ Note by Yeats on the Conversation between Cuchulain and Emer, in Lady Gregory, *Cuchulain*: 351-353.

Association Hall, Dublin, in April 1902, and at the Abbey Theatre for the first time in December 1911 with Maud Gonne in the title role), has a full retrospective presentation in the note to the 1923 edition of *Plays and Controversies*. In this presentation, Yeats shows himself as the populariser of a legend that had fallen into neglect and that had to be translated from the French, retold by Mr Larminie. It was the story of “a woman who goes to hell to save her husband and stays another ten years having been granted permission to carry away as many souls as could cling to her skirt” (Yeats 1923: 285), somehow featuring the equally heroic action of an author who has to undergo a whole series of difficulties (literally “going to hell”), in order to build up a community willing to share the theatrical experience.

Yeats had carried on with the activity of gathering folklore materials throughout 1897 while staying at Coole Park. He then worked on these materials with Lady Gregory as can be seen from six long essays written from 1898 to 1902, and also in the preface to the 1902 edition of *The Celtic Twilight* in which Yeats refers to a very ambitious folklore project: “a big book about the commonwealth of fairy”. He adds: “I shall try to make it systematic and learned enough to buy pardon for this handful of dreams” (Yeats 1970: 54-5). The only book to come out of this collaboration was *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland, Collected and Arranged by Lady Gregory, with Two Essays and Notes by W.B. Yeats* (1920).

Yeats’s dissatisfaction with the materials and with the project of systematizing and presenting them in a scholarly fashion (already expressed in relation to O’Grady’s works) can be detected in a 1915 letter to John Quinn:

I had also nearly finished my notes for Lady Gregory’s book, and that has laid the ghost for me. I am free at last from the obsession from the supernatural, having got my thoughts in order and ranged on paper” (Yeats 1970 [vol 2]: 55).

Yeats had by then already some knowledge of Japanese theatre

(“In modern art, whether in Japan or Europe, ‘vitality’... sings, laughs, chatters ...”; Yeats 1970: 384), and would soon be introduced to *Noh* theatre by Ezra Pound who was editing the works of Fenollosa. Thus Yeats’s set of references grew larger through the discovery of new forms with the *Noh* theatre and its symbols and techniques becoming the starting point of his later plays.

Yeats had, in the name of the power of “creation” and of the creation of the new on stage, already adopted a principle of selection of texts and “personages” that had the potential quality of a synthetic “high art” and “style” (not being as “profuse in speech” as *The Shadowy Waters* (Yeats 1922: 35), a method of simplification and a free combination of folkloric motifs, even of accepting as “unintentional changes” and felicitous findings what might be “stirred” and activated from the deeps of the Irish tradition and more generally from the “vast” domain of the Arts and of Literature such as the *Mabinogion*) and “come to him” (his own wording), in the shape of visions and apparitions (even allowing in that for false identifications, misquotations, misinterpretations or sheer misunderstandings). Yeats was coming close to Joyce’s principle of “volitional errors” or “felicitous mistakes”, according to which, as for Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses*, errors are “portals of discovery”. This is particularly true, as Hiro Ishibashi said, of the writing conditions in which Yeats created his plays inspired by the *Noh* theatre:

Yeats did what he did in this genre as early as 1915 [...] when there were less than twenty pieces available in English translation out of about 240 extant *Noh* plays [...], after seeing only some fragmentary amateur performances of *Noh*, never having seen a complete stage production, and never even having visited Japan. The discovery of a new form was the starting point of all his later plays. A creation, we thus see, can be born out of a misunderstanding. And a creative work is free to turn misunderstanding into creation if only his works have in themselves the power to exist as high art (Ishibashi 1975: 151).

At the same time defining what was the country’s cultural scope

and the limits of his attempts to “reform” the Irish theatre, Yeats said, as if deciphering a moment of epiphanic revelation, that Ireland’s culture was strictly connected to the most elementary and magical theatrical acts:

I need a theatre: I believe myself to be a dramatist; I desire to show events and not merely to tell of them; [...] and I seem to myself most alive at the moment when a room full of people share the one lofty emotion; my blunder had been that I did not discover in my youth that my theatre must be the ancient theatre that can be made by unrolling a carpet or marking out a place with a stick, or setting a screen against the wall” (Yeats 2001:10).

In a 1902 essay (Yeats 1923: 18-33) published in *Samhain* (the same year as the Preface to Lady Gregory’s *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, which he refers to in the essay itself), Yeats had reported on the three-year experiment of the Irish Literary Theatre. He discussed both the controversial version of *Diarmuid and Grania* which had been viewed negatively by critics, and Douglas Hyde’s play, *Casadh an t-Sugain*, the first play performed in Irish in a theatre; he also announced that the Irish Literary Theatre had given birth to a company of Irish actors. Yeats drew attention to similar free and new structures in M. Antoine’s *Theatre Libre*, that had staged both A.E.’s *Deirdre* and his own *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Yeats believed the new Irish theatre, whether in modern Irish or in the utopic “idiom of the English-speaking country-people”, was bound to “discover a new region for the mind to wander in” and would have to face (and to solve) problems of cultural training and of method (involving authors, actors and public alike):

It is necessary to put so much in order to clear away so much, to explain as much, that somebody may be moved by a thought or an image that is inexplicable as a wild creature (Yeats 1923: 29).

Rooted in the simple actions of tracing the magic boundary of the stage, “unrolling a carpet, or marking out a place with a stick, or setting a screen against the walls” or otherwise “the unfolding and folding of a cloth [...]” as in *At the Hawks Well*, the Irish theatre could

finally be ready for the apparition of “extravagant” and “inexplicable wild creatures”. This could also mean acknowledging that the problems of obscurity in Irish literature had probably more to do with “a roundabout way of speaking” and acting than with the weight of “mythological allusions” themselves (*Cuchulain*, Preface: x).

The philosophical meditation on the mask, connected, as we said, to the knowledge of the *Noh* theatre, was also a way of showing the subtle interaction of the work with the Irish tradition and mythological allusions and the solution to some of the technical presentation problems. If we look at the list of Persons in *At the Hawk's Well*, the most important play inspired by the *Noh* theatre, we find three musicians (their faces made up to resemble masks): the Guardian of the Well (with face made up to resemble a mask), an Old Man (wearing a mask), a Young Man (wearing a mask). In the song of the musicians calling “to the mind's eye”, we can identify the key to the difference in presentation of masked characters and characters with made up faces resembling masks. We must not look at appearances but only at the differences in degree between material and immaterial things, between the qualities and roles of the characters (the major ones only, wearing masks, the musicians, chorus-like, only having faces “painted as masks”). But Yeats had also achieved the integration of the *Noh* theatre tradition of masks with the thoroughly Irish tradition of painted faces, for example in *Deirdre*, where we encounter women, red with raddle, to “make them brave and confident”, or the dark-faced Messenger or the Executioner. And the masks, designed by Edmund Dulac, together with two lanterns, could be re-used for other plays!

In the *Death of Cuchulain* (1939) Yeats recapitulates the whole Cuchulain story while also adding characters from other works, i.e. the Blind man from *On Baile's Strand*, Aoife, the mother of Cuchulain's son, met by Cuchulain in *At the Hawk's Well*, with the addition of the Morrigan, the goddess of war. Yeats also adds himself:

in a sort of tragic joy he spits at the modern world, while the street singer reunites and incorporates the re-mythologized heroes of Easter 1916.

The importance of a system of “order” as a way of articulating the “form”, reflected in Yeats’s graphic and visual patterns, has been emphasized by Giorgio Melchiori, in his *The Whole Mystery of Art* (1960), in his bringing attention to the idea that in art, in popular art, “mastery” and craftsmanship, cannot be divorced from “mystery”, from “ancient technicalities and mysteries” (Yeats 2007: 10). It can be seen in ancient manuscripts as well as in modern publications that stress the importance of visual presentation and lettering (Cuala, Dolmen Press). This originates from William Morris’s Arts and Crafts movement and shows that publishing was not a peripheral industry in Ireland, but was, on the contrary, capable of shaping the reading habits of the Irish, which were, in turn, part of a legacy communally elaborated and “handed down from generation to generation” (*Cuchulain*, Preface: x).

Writing “slowly”, writing and rewriting, presenting his texts for performance in always different form, Yeats came to consider that the theatre was the form of art, the kind of literature best suited to conveying imaginative richness, creative energy and the physicality of the word in the Celtic tradition. Yeats found ways to allow his theatre to evolve, grow, transcend itself and, even, to be re-mythologized by reconstructing a modern Irish Olympus (as in the song sung by the street-singer character in *The Death of Cuchulain*:

I meet them face to face
Conall, Cuchulain, Usna’s boys
All that most ancient race...
Are these things that men adore and loath
Their sole reality?
What stood in the Post Office
With Pearse and Connolly?
What comes out of the mountain

Where men first shed their blood?
Who thought Cuchulain till it seemed
He stood where they have stood?...
A statue's there to mark the place
By Oliver Sheppard done (Jeffares 1964: 241-2).

In a note to *The Dreaming of the Bones* (1918), Yeats revealed that, since he did not know of the Robartes papers before writing it, he could not have relied on any source or “warrant” for it. At the same time he stressed that he felt he was in no need of any specific “warrant”, as the actual warrant was represented by the “folklore of all countries” itself:

I have done something for which I had no warrant in these papers or from that source, but warrant there certainly is in the folklore of all countries (Yeats 1923: 456).

The folklore of all countries is thus the warrant or the “granary” (as he said of the *Eddas*), the repository of all motifs and themes to be reworked in a new system of symbols and myths. The “warrant” is represented by Yeats’s theatrical method itself: present in the very act of setting up the stage for representation (or self-representation), getting ready for “adventures in the deeps of the mind”, in which the “folklore of all countries” could be re-echoed and rebound on the artist so that he could “found”⁴, following his free imagination, characters and situations (therefore making of them a matter of “belief”). His method was thus his actual gift and legacy to his own country .

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Joyce started drafting *Exiles* in 1914 (or possibly even earlier, in 1913) and he finished it in 1915 in Zurich. He submitted it to many publishers and periodicals, as well as to theatres, in Zurich and Berne.

⁴ This is a key term in Yeats’s note to *The Secret Rose* which also contains several precious remarks about his way of dealing with folklore.

He also sent it to Dublin's Abbey Theatre, at "the request of Mr. Yeats". It was rejected everywhere even by Yeats who, while feeling that it was "sincere and interesting", objected that "it was far from the folk drama" they performed at the Abbey (*L I*: 104). Feeling desperate, Joyce also considered addressing himself, as he wrote to Ezra Pound⁵, "to a good dramatic agent in America". (*Letters I*: 101)". The play was finally published in England by Grant Richards and in America by B.W. Huebsch in 1918, but in the meantime the manuscript (just like the proof-sheets of *A Portrait of the Artist*) had been sold as a collectible item, to John Quinn, in 1917. This may also be the proof that Joyce considered his play as an experiment not to be repeated and therefore as a unique collectible item.

In *Exiles* there is no profession of faith in the folk theatre, nor any firm 'belief' in its personages: the notes (and fragments) that interact with the text (a distinctive feature of the play and a recurrent trait of avant-garde literature), subtly undermine and secretly dismantle the theatrical quality of the text itself, in which a discussion on modern ethics is carried on in a sort of sustained and tense philosophical "duel" (to borrow a term from André Gide) between the author, the characters and the public, ultimately resorting to a form that is "not necessarily drama as such", but rather a loose series of "impressionistic literary sketches" (*Exiles*, 165-166).

As a study of exile (and of "exiles", featuring the different forms of exile, passive and active, embodied in each character), the study also applies to the character of the artist himself as featured in Richard Rowan, totally deprived of any "warrant" or tradition on which to found himself and his (new) art, dispossessed of his desire and of his

⁵ In Ezra Pound's view *Exiles* was a "side-step", if compared to his "profoundest work". It was a "necessary katharsis, clearance of mind from continental contemporary thought-Ulysses obscure, even obscene, as life itself is obscene in places, but an impassioned meditation on life" (Pound, 1960: 415-416).

own artistic means, suffering, “wearied” (“weariness”, “tiredness” for Richard, and “fatigue” for Bertha are highly connoted motifs in the play), and faced, now that exile has ended and he is back to his native town, with the decision to enter a new cycle in life and in art. Doubt (extended to his own literary means) appears to be the only extant theoretical and philosophical implement available to him.

The meditation on exile and on estrangement is apparently elaborated outside of any mythical frame, with the risk that the play may appear as the typical conventional modern play addressed to bourgeois audiences, featuring, in the triangular logic of “husband, wife and lover”, the situation, in the “squalor” of modern city life, that Yeats hated so much.

In spite of some rather “bathetic” features (Bertha - Doubt of me?/ Richard – Yes.), the play is not about subjective experiences nor about sentimental issues (based on “social or moral conventions”, adultery, fidelity, physical or spiritual betrayal, jealousy, lying), rather, in a modern ethical key, it is about problems of integrity and identity, of possession and dispossession, of estrangement and exclusion, that seem to resist direct representation on stage. The philosophical matter of exile results in a risky bordering on the “region of the difficult, the void and the impossible”, having to do with the difficulty of conveying to the public “passion in itself”, passion in action (and, in order to do so, resorting even to quotations from philosophers such as Spinoza and his “scholastic definition of jealousy, as *passio irascibilis*”).

All characters are under close scrutiny :

Robert wishes Richard to use against him the weapons which social conventions and morals put in the hands of the husband. Richard refuses. Bertha wishes Richard to use these weapons also in her defence. Richard refuses also and for the same reason. His defence of her soul and body is an invisible and imponderable sword. As a contribution to the study of jealousy Shakespeare’s Othello is incomplete...It and Spinoza’s analysis are made from the sensationalist stand point – Spinoza speaks of *pudendis* and

excrementis alterius jungere imaginem rei amatae. Bertha has considered the passion in itself.- apart from hatred or baffled lust, the scholastic definition of jealousy as a *passio irascibilis* comes nearer – its object being a difficult good. In this play, Richard’s jealousy is carried one step nearer to its own heart. Separated from hatred and having its baffled lust converted into an erotic stimulus and moreover holding in its own power the hindrance, the difficulty which has excited it, it must reveal itself as the very immolation of the pleasure of possession on the altar of love. He is jealous, wills and knows his own dishonour and the dishonour of her, to be united with every phase of whose being is love’s end, as to achieve that union in the region of the difficult, the void and the impossible is its necessary tendency (*Exiles*: 163-64).

The characters (Richard Rowan, writer, Bertha “his bride in exile”; Robert Hand, a journalist; Beatrice Justice, his cousin, music teacher) are cast in a “fourfold pattern” as Jean-Michel Rabaté has it: “The constellation of characters is no less rigorous in *Exiles*, and Joyce had probably learnt from Italo Svevo’s *Senilità*⁶ the art of playing on the classical fourfold pattern which opposes two men (the extroverted lover and the introverted artist) and two women (the fragile spiritual “sister” and the sensual object of admiration and love)” (Rabaté 1989: 26). In the suggestion that the representation could be reached through separate sketches there is much more than superficial “impressionism”, but rather a pointing to what is unstageable, that is to say, “thoughts” and “feelings” that cannot be conveyed in action, and also gaps, intermittences, silences, differences and distances. The “novelistic” constantly infiltrates the drama, integrating but also subtly undermining it. The purpose is not that of “presenting”, of clarifying but of letting “notes” and the rhythms of the thoughts of characters resound, rendering thoughts and feelings in

⁶ Italo Svevo’s very perceptive report on the London première of *Exiles* mentioned the comments of some English “louts”: “They want to force on us Italian ways. Of Italians that, as is well known, are jealous even when they do not love” (Svevo 1986: 131-133).

their complex reality, in blurring and blending more than clarifying, precisely entering the “region of the difficult, the void and the impossible” by further divaricating the “telling” and the “showing” in action.

In this play consisting of “three cat and mouse acts” or of “rough and tumble” rounds as in boxing, in a continuous reversal of roles, the characters’ moves and desires are interdependent:

“Robert wishes Richard [...] Richard refuses [...] Bertha wishes Richard [...] Richard refuses” (Rabaté 1989: 26), all hinged on a choice between the “pleasure of possession” and the “altar of love”, the characters never completely yielding to the other.

Joyce carefully directs himself (and his public), through the maze of ambiguous indirectness and vicariousness, through the interplay of idealised dreams (especially “dreams of love”) and sensual or realistically rendered truths, the only certainty being that of suffering (almost Christ-like in Richard Rowan), of the excruciating “restless living wounding doubt” (about the possibility of betrayal, as in the Gospels or, in the more prosaic modern version of the cuckold, as in Paul de Kock, *Le Cocu, Exiles*: 175). All this has to be conveyed to the public, “sifted” and presented in action in the natural and independent expression of its characters: “The dialogue notes [...] must be sifted in the sieve of the action [...] letting the characters express themselves. It is not necessary to bind them to the expressions in the notes” (*Exiles*: 174), albeit keeping their shadowy and ambiguous characteristics. A whole series of warnings and advice for handling this matter is given by Joyce:

It will be difficult to recommend Beatrice to the interest of the audience, every man of which is Robert and would like to be Richard – in any case Bertha’s. The note of compassion can be struck when she takes the spectacles from her pocket in order to read. Critics may say what they like, all these persons – even Bertha - are suffering during the action (*Exiles*: 164).

Perhaps it would be well to make the separate sketch of the doings of each of the four chief persons during the night, including those actions that are not revealed to the public in the dialogue, namely, Beatrice and Richard (*Exiles*: 175).

During the second act, as Beatrice is not on the stage, her figure must appear before the audience through the thoughts of or speech of the others. This is by no means easy (*Exiles*: 174).

The self-inflicted wound of doubt “cherished” and cultivated by Richard is the key-note to this play, as Joyce explains, confirming that the modes of indirection and vicariousness in presentation (inspired by the “Celtic philosophers [...] inclined towards incertitude and scepticism – Hume, Berkeley, Balfour, Bergson”, *Exiles*: 174), are the most appropriate and useful:

The doubt which clouds the end of the play must be conveyed to the audience not only through Richard’s questions to both but also from the dialogue between Robert and Bertha (*Exiles*: 174).

The self-inflicted wound can also be seen as the manifesto for the new art, depending on the experience of exile, on both artistic and philosophical grounds. The play ends on this note:

RICHARD [...] I have a deep, deep wound of doubt in my soul.

BERTHA [Motionless] Doubt of me?

RICHARD Yes.

BERTHA I am yours. [In a whisper] If I died this moment, I am yours.

RICHARD [Still gazing at her and speaking as if to an absent person] I have wounded my soul for you- a deep wound of doubt which can never be healed [...] It is not in the darkness of belief that I desire you but in restless living wounding doubt. To hold you by no bonds, even of love, to be united with you in body and soul in utter nakedness – for this I longed. And now I am tired for a while, Bertha. My wound tires me. [He stretches himself out wearily along the lounge. BERTHA holds his hand, still speaking very softly]

BERTHA Forget me, Dick. Forget me and love me again as you did the first time. I want my lover. To meet him, to go to him, to give myself to him. You, Dick. O, my strange wild lover, come back to me again! [She closes her eyes] (*Exiles*: 162).

In the last speech, Bertha wavers between direct address (“Forget me, Dick”: a “forget” that is ambiguously almost a “forgive”), to the impersonal (“To meet him...”), almost in reverie and resisting any pathetic mode, almost duplicating Richard’s mode as described a little earlier: “speaking as if to an absent person”, staging the impossibility of drama itself, through the introduction of the symbol and mystery of the wild and strange Celtic heroine⁷, whose qualities are difficult to identify (as her beauty is both “visible and invisible”, sensuous and spiritual, a presence and an apparition), a female warrior whose desires or wills cannot be mastered by anybody:

It is an irony of the play that while Robert not Richard is the apostle of beauty, beauty in its visible and invisible being is present under Richard’s roof (*Exiles*: 165).

The Celtic heroine is shown at the very centre of the ancestral struggle between love and possession, between love and death (d’Annunzio, Nietzsche, Wagner, Ibsen, Freud, Schopenhauer, all contributing to it). Although some parallels with characters from Yeats’s plays may be indicated as sources (Countess Cathleen, Deirdre, Emer and Fand, for example), it is rather to an avatar, to a carefully wrought ‘mould’, shaped by centuries that I see *Exiles* connected. The mould is that of King Candaule story, that seems to be directly evoked by the language of the play and of the Notes. The original story had been told by Herodotus (*Clio*), Plato (*Republic*), it was repeatedly taken up, more as a case study, than as an entertaining piece, by Théophile Gautier (1844), by Friedrich Hebbel (a “prose tragedy”, *Gyges und sein Ring*, 1856) and, more recently by André Gide in a text for the theatre (1901, published in 1904, centered on

⁷ “Europe is weary even of the Scandinavian women (Hedda Gabler, Rebecca Rosmer, Asta Allmers) whom the poetic genius of Ibsen created when the Slav heroines of Dostoievsky and Turgenev were growing stale. On what woman will the light of the poet’s mind now shine? Perhaps at last on the Celt” (*Exiles*: 174).

Gyges' ring) which he defined as a "drawing, rather than a painting", for which he had tried to retain "its integrity, severity, logic, with no attempts to conceal its faults with excessive lyricism" (Gide quoted in Sheridan 1999: 171). This quotation could hark back to a passage in Joyce's *Notes*, where the use of "a little unloving language" is explained:

Richard must not appear as a champion of woman's rights. His language at times must be nearer to that of Schopenhauer against women [...] He is in fact fighting for his own hand, for his own emotional dignity and liberation [...] He does not use the language of adoration and his character must seem a little unloving" (*Exiles*: 169-170).

Gide's play, no less than Joyce's, is a study case, a 'pièce à thèse', aware of the dramatic possibilities of the original story (but also aware that there is no original story) and combines the changes present in the different versions as a challenge that was likely, in this activity of constant remaking, to build up other originals and, together with them, a new, many-faced and unheard of text, for which no label is available, as well as a new public for it.

The story deals with Candaule, king of Lydia, who had a friend named Gyges, whom he wished to convince of his wife's beauty, arranging to have Gyges to look upon her when she was naked. The queen, nameless in Herodotus, but called Nyssia in Gide, having become aware of this dishonour done to her, compels Gyges to kill either himself or the King. Gyges kills his friend Candaules, marries the Queen and becomes king of Lydia.

There are many coincidences with Joyce's text: the King's dominance over Gyges, which results in the killing of the King himself (his own decision proving to be a self-destructive one, a voluntary exile, a self-inflicted wound), is transformed into the possibility to "destroy at a blow Richard's confidence in himself" (*Exiles*:168) . The invitation to look upon the Queen unveiled is transformed into an open invitation for Robert to lie with her, so as to

make it possible that the two friends, Richard and Robert will be united through Bertha's flesh, thereby revealing a latent homosexual drive in them (the same Freud had discussed, in relation to marriage with beautiful women).

The bodily possession of Bertha by Robert repeated often, would certainly bring into almost carnal contact the two men. Do they desire this? To be united, that is carnally through the person and the body of Bertha as they cannot, without dissatisfaction and degradation- to be united carnally man to man as man to woman? (*Exiles*: 172).

The conclusion, if less cruel, is potentially no less tragic (or ironic), as the redefinition of what exile is comes full circle:

Exiles – also because at the end either Robert or Richard must go into exile. Perhaps the new Ireland cannot contain both. Robert will go. But her thoughts will they follow him into exile as those of her sister-in-love Isolde follow Tristan? (*Exiles*: 172).

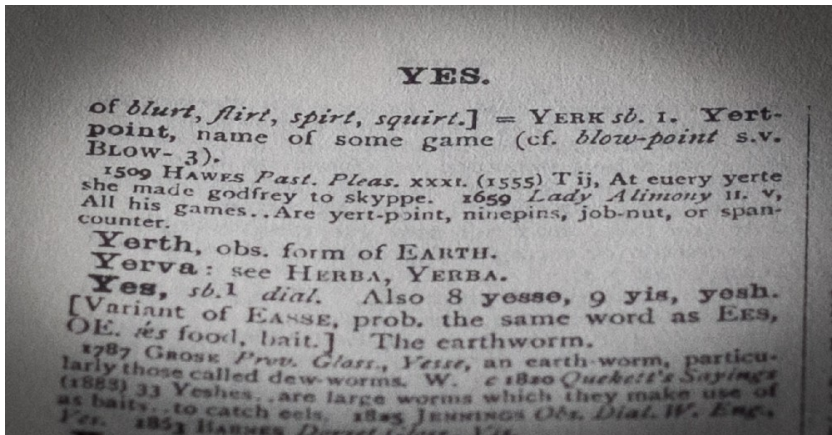
Exile is an on-going, ever renewed, ever changing process that, “founding” creation itself, redefines love, friendship, integrity and identity, freedom and dignity and can only be represented with “severity”, “in utter nakedness” as the “living wound of doubt”.

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“YES I SAID YES”: EROS, SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND
CONSENT IN JOYCE AND YEATS



When does yes mean yes? And what does that yes affirm? In this article, I want to juxtapose a character frequently read as a figure of affirmative female desire, Molly Bloom from Joyce’s *Ulysses*, alongside a more troubling example of a woman who literally cannot say no, in the complex and distressing erotic rape poem, *Leda and the Swan*. In this examination I am as concerned with reception and pedagogy as with authorial intention—that is, with how we teach these topics and how our conversations around them circulate. Through an exploration of what Joyce called “the female word yes”

and the imagination of woman as “der Fleisch der stets bejaht” (*SL* 285), the flesh that affirms, I want to highlight the complications of imagining women as a perpetual yes and the gendered expectations around the performance of the yes which make it a word, to borrow Anne Carson’s phrase, “with ropes all over it” (Carson 1995: 32), an expression of finitude and limitation as well as of idealized ecstasy and infinity.

Certainly, in what Vincent Cheng calls “the Joycean unconscious: a culturally constructed consciousness of Joyce and his texts in the psyche of our mass culture” (Cheng 1996:182) the end of Molly’s monologue serves as an univocal erotic affirmation, a synecdoche for her character and for the book’s representation of female sexuality as a whole. Cheng mentions the 1986 classic Hollywood comedy *Back to School*, when the actress Sally Kellerman as the college literature professor Dr. Diane Turner begins her *Introduction to Literature* class by reading the “flower of the mountain” section of Molly’s speech in *Ulysses* with passion and élan, while fondling and tossing her crimped platinum hair. As she reads, Rodney Dangerfield enters into a pastoral reverie, imagining himself on the hillside, kissing her bosom as sheep crowd into the background. In Kellerman’s performance, the eros of the passage is contagious even as its kitschy sentimentality is visible: reading it aloud performs its affirmation, awakens its erotic potential, and provokes a response as Rodney Dangerfield screams “yes, yes, yes” from the back of the classroom, carried away by the professor’s delivery and obvious beauty. “Thanks for the vote of confidence,” Kellerman says in her famously smoky voice, “I think Joyce is pretty hot stuff too.” Charmed (rather than terrified) by his enthusiasm, the response of Dangerfield’s reciprocal flesh marks the beginning of their relationship.

More recently, this same passage was cited in the *New York Times* in an unusual context: an editorial by Gloria Steinem and Michael Kimmel on the passage of Senate Bill 967 in California, the so-called

“yes means yes” law which creates a new standard of affirmative consent for sexual acts on campus and demands explicit permission rather than the absence of rejection. Steinem and Kimmel argue that this new standard is more just, but then continue, on Joyce’s authority, to argue that it is also sexier, writing:

Actually, “yes” is perhaps the most erotic word in the English language. One of literature’s most enduring works, James Joyce’s “Ulysses,” concludes with Molly Bloom’s affirmative declaration of desire (considered so erotic, in fact, that it was banned for more than a decade after publication): “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.” “Yes means yes” is clearly saner — and sexier. And that’s true for both Leopold and Molly Bloom, as well as the rest of us (Steinem and Kimmel 2014).

Of course, Molly’s yes did not get *Ulysses* banned—that began with scenes of public exhibitionism, masturbation and orgasm in “Nausicaa”. But it is understandable for Steinem and Kimmel to invoke Joyce as part of a campaign to make consent sexy, and as a strategic way to pre-empt accusations of puritanism or of wanting to criminalize sexuality and desire. Steinem and Kimmel’s editorial expresses a wish—that all sex be desired, consensual, reciprocal—and a fantasy—that a yes cannot itself be ambiguous.

While most of the comments on the article were dedicated to the impact of the law on civil liberties, sexual behaviour and freedom, and rape culture on campus, a few readers picked up on the Joyce reference. A commentator called c-bone cryptically wrote, “Maybe this is the kind of world Kimmel and Steinem want to live in. Maybe they prefer to seduce with their words, as Joyce might.” And “Frequent Traveler” from Montana, who identified herself “as a scholar and teacher of literature, also a lesbian” wrote,

I have forwarded this article to friends with the title, “How to misread Joyce.” Molly Bloom’s monologue is an internal soliloquy. Whether or not

she verbally said “Yes” to Leopold and when, or if she said it with her eyes or through physical gestures, or whether all of this is a mixture of notoriously misleading memory and fantasy remains unclear.

This is a fair correction, although an unfair misreading of the oped quickly follows it:

Apply the law Steinem and Kimmel are celebrating, and most literature about love and desire, from Sappho through Austen, Dickinson, Woolf and Bishop, will disappear. This will probably be a good thing, from the law-makers’ point-of-view, because literature is about the silences and changing feelings that are inseparable from desire.

Steinem and Kimmel are certainly not arguing for the obliteration of literature, or the disappearance of ambiguity and silence in the literary language of desire—only for the necessity of a shifting language on consent, and in the particular context of the campus, which has seen an epidemic of abuse. But it is worth returning to the ambiguity in Molly’s own yes as a corrective to this blithe and idealistic reading of erotic and uninhibited affirmation

The “flower of the mountain” speech is among the most frequently discussed sections of all of Joyce’s work, from Tindall’s reading of Molly as “earth-goddess” and “agent of reconciliation” whose “yes is an affirmation of life” (Tindall 1959: 232) to Kenner’s vicious and moralizing “‘Yes’ of consent that kills the soul” (Kenner 1956: 262) to Derrida’s complex and mobile reading of the “self-affirmation” of the yes. Recently, in *Joyce’s Nietzschean Ethics* Sam Slote asks, “amidst all these possibilities what is she affirming?” (Slote 2013: 119). His answer repeats Tindall through a Nietzschean filter as he writes that Molly affirms everything. “Molly’s ‘yes’ is so promiscuous precisely because her perspective is multifarious: a mono-polylogue or a mollypolylogue, an ongoing, shifting, Protean, existential experiment in affirmation” (120). Molly’s “‘great Yes to life’ is an affirmation of the good and the bad, the emissions and omissions that have filled her life and days” (126). Her yes “is linked

to her carnality” (121). For Slotte, Molly is a girl who just can’t say no. She “affirms, even with her negations” (119).

But what about the times she rejects with her affirmations? Slotte’s interpretation of “yes” as carnal and promiscuous scants the ways in which Molly’s yes is also cerebral and discriminating. Like Tindall, Slotte is dazzled by the yes. Joyce provides plenty of ballast for this reading: certainly, by describing the chapter as turning “like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt” (*SL* 285) he has more than justified Tindall’s earth-goddess reading. But Joyce deflates every time he inflates: this grandiose immanence is balanced by the continuation of his analysis of the episode and character in the same letter as “perfectly sane full amoral fertilisable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent *Weib*” (*SL* 285). I am looking for the untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited and prudent yes, and not only the orgasmic gasp of the end of the chapter—not a yes that says yes to everything, but a yes that can say all kinds of different things.

Derrida’s complex and mobile reading of the “self-affirmation” of the yes comes closer to the slippery use of the word in the “Penelope” chapter. Derrida notes:

the ambiguity of the double yes: one of them comes down to the Christian assumption of one’s burden, the “Ja, Ja” of the donkey overburdened, as the Christ was with memory and responsibility; the other yes is a yes that is light, airy, dancing, solar, also a yes of reaffirmation, promise, and oath, a yes to the eternal return. The difference between the two yesses, or rather between the two repetitions of the yes, remains unstable, subtle, and sublime. One repetition haunts the other (Derrida 1985: 64-65).

This interpretation escapes the monologism of the single yes, replacing it with a binary—the yes of submission and the yes of affirmation. As Derrida develops his reading further, he returns the yes to the question of subjectivity:

Now there is no signature without yes. If a signature does not amount to manipulating or mentioning a name, it supposes the irreversible commitment of the one who confirms, by saying or doing yes, the contract of a mark left behind (71).

Yes is the word that cosigns the self, endorses and witnesses each proclamation. Derrida calls this an “almost preverbal vocalization,” “the perfume of a discourse” (73), wafting around and underneath each statement the self makes to the self.

Before returning to the closing lines of *Ulysses*, I want to shift the discussion away from the crescendo of yeses at the end of the chapter to the iterations throughout, which often get a mention but are rarely given much attention. Derrida dismissively and pre-emptively imagines an “Elijah Professor, Chairman or Chairperson” who might purchase an “nth generation computer” to generate “a great typology of all the yeses” (79) in *Ulysses*. After a Kafkaesque parable on the impossibility of the task of this diligent chair, Derrida claims that only a not yet invented, an unheard of computer, “could answer that music in *Ulysses*” (79). I propose no such typology, but I do want to show how yes is a much weaker and more complex word in the context of the chapter as a whole. Instead of focusing on the yes through the fish-eye lens of the letter to Budgen, which encourages a reading of the word as fat and globular and strengthens the earth-mother reading of Molly as infinite affirmation, I propose a deep-focus reading in which every yes is visible, though faintly so. I take my cue from Joyce’s statement to Louis Gillet, in which he says, “in order to convey the mumbling of a woman falling asleep I wanted to finish with the faintest word that I could possibly discover. I found the word yes, which is barely pronounced” (Gillet 1958: 111). Like the “wavespeech” in Proteus, “seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss, oos” (*U* 3.357), yes is whisper and breath, sibilance and pulmonary egress. In a chapter that mostly dispenses with commas and periods as punctuation, yes often *is* the punctuation, a faint word made emphatic and visible by repetition and

emphasis at the end of the chapter.

Yes and no are both difficult words to characterize as parts of speech—sometimes classified as interjections, sometimes misclassified as adverbs, even though they modify no verb. Derrida calls the yes “transcendental adverbiality” (72) meaning that the verb the “yes” modifies and doubles is “being”, since in his formulation yes becomes “the performative par excellence” (74) the word that speaks the self to the self. In “Penelope”, yes often seems to work as a conjunction, connecting different parts of the monologue, sometimes by extension and sometimes by acting as a hinge that changes the focus. Yes also acts as emphasis, intensification or mnemonic confirmation, usually of the previous phrase:

Id have to dring it into him for a month yes (*U 18. 872*)

he said you have no proof it was her proof O yes (*U 18. 65-6*)

he says your soul you have no soul inside only grey matter because he doesnt know what it is to have one yes (*U 18. 141-2*)

Poldy has more spunk in him yes (*U 18.168*)

but I dont know what kind of drawers he likes none at all I think didnt he say yes (*U 18. 439-40*)

like that bath of the nymph with my hair down yes (*U 18.562-3*)

when was that 93 the canal was frozen yes (*U 18. 555*)

if I could only remember one half of the things and write a book out of it the works of Master Poldy yes (*U 18. 579-80*)

she kissed me six or seven times didnt I cry yes I believe I did or near it (*U 18. 672-3*)

then the day before he left May yes it was May (*U 18.781*)

I was afraid it might break and get lost up in me somewhere yes (*U 18. 803-4*)

bought I think Ill get a bit of fish tomorrow or today is it Friday yes I will (*U 18. 907*)

O Jesus wait yes that thing has come on me yes now (*U* 18. 1104-5)

This is Molly talking to herself, confirming her opinions, locating her memories. Yes, my memory is accurate; yes, my opinion is correct. At times the yes is defiant and emphatic—“Ill change that lace on my black dress to show off my bubs and Ill yes by God” (*U* 18. 900-1) — and at times it is revelatory “wait by God yes wait yes hold on he was on the cards this morning” (*U* 18. 1313-4). But the emphatic yes doesn’t necessarily signal a promise—it is unlikely that Molly will go through with her imagined seduction of Bloom.

The word “yes” does not automatically attach to affirmation. The first yes of the chapter prefaces a near negation—“Yes because he never” (*U* 18. 01). Chameleon-like, “yes” often takes on the coloration of the rest of the sentence. While sometimes the word is a shout, it is more often a whisper—barely pronounced, as Joyce wrote, or to recall Derrida, the perfume of a discourse. Frequently, there is an element of smugness about the use of the word “yes”—yes, I am correct, yes, it is how I say it is, it is how I remember. In the “Penelope” tapestry, yes is a double-stitch—the word frequently serves to double and close off the statement that precedes it.

“Yes” also appears in recollected dialogue. Yes sheds light on the role of yes and no in the vocabulary of desire, since this yes is often produced under the weight of compulsion and expectation. Take, for example, the voyeuristic queries of the priest, follow-up to Bloom’s daydream of the erotic confessional: “but whereabouts on your person my child on the leg behind high up was it yes rather high up was it where you sit down yes” (*U* 18.108-9). The best example of this is when Bloom draws Molly into his own fantasy of cuckoldry:

would you do this that and the other with the coalman yes with a bishop yes I would because I told him about some Dean or Bishop was sitting beside me in the jews Temples gardens when I was knitting that woollen thing a stranger to Dublin what place was it and so on about the monuments and he tired me out with statues encouraging him making him worse than he is who

is in your mind now tell me who are you thinking of who is it tell me his name who tell me who the German Emperor is it yes (*U*18. 89-96).

This is less the eroticization of consent than the pornification of consent—when a yes is anticipated, expected, demanded, not much remains of choice and desire. There is dreariness to the repeated yes here, and Molly is a ventriloquist’s puppet, murmuring the responses that Bloom has scripted. Her yes is a concession to male fantasy. Later on, the yes is a response to repeated “pestering”, “then he pestered me to say yes till I took off my glove slowly watching him” (*U* 18.302-3). If a yes is produced in response to the expectation of female concession, then no is similarly a function of gendered expectation. When Bloom writes Molly a dirty letter and asks her “if I knew what it meant” Molly thinks “of course I had to say no for form’s sake don’t understand you I said” (*U* 18. 318-24). This is not to reject Molly as a desiring subject but it is to say that her ability to say both yes and no are shaped and stifled by gendered expectation. “I wanted to shout all sorts of things” she thinks, remembering Boylan, “who knows the way he’d take it...some of them want you to be so nice about it” (*U* 18. 588-91). Remembering Mulvey, she thinks “yes because theres a wonderful feeling there all the time so tender how did we finish it off yes O yes I pulled him off into my handkerchief pretending not to be excited” (*U* 18. 809-10). In other words, Molly is sometimes a woman who can’t say yes, at least, not too loudly.

What does this reading of the mobile, memory-laden, ambivalent yes of the rest of the chapter do for our understanding of the ending? Certainly as the yeses ramp up towards the end of the novel, there is a heavy-breathing, erotic quality to their repetition and rapidity. This is one of the most sentimental sections of the book, and it returns the story to romance, despite the tensions and betrayals of the day, despite the anxiety and obscenity of Molly’s earlier mix of suspicion and defiance. Indeed, this is Joyce’s last, best conjurer’s trick for *Ulysses*; he enlists us as believers in the romance of Bloom and Molly though

he has shown us the un-magical scene of marriage behind the curtain. Nonetheless, the yes at the end of the chapter is still multiple; it layers her past and present, reminding us that her yes to Bloom was also a melancholic goodbye to Gibraltar, girlhood, other loves, youth. Every yes forecloses other possibilities, and the illusion of choice—“then he asked me would I yes”—conceals the paucity of other possibilities —“might as well him as another” (*U* 18. 1604-5). If our hearts soar at the ending of the novel, the phrase “might as well him as another” drops like a stone into that sudden swell.

All this is to say that imagining Molly as the woman who only says yes, or to put it otherwise, as a girl who can’t say no, or figuring yes as the female word, or women as the eternal yes, is not just too romantic a reading of the novel, it is a dangerous one, and one that we need to be careful not to replicate in our writing and teaching. In order to illustrate this, I want to turn to the imagination of consent in a poem whose female character says neither yes nor no, Yeats’s “Leda and the Swan” first published in 1923, a year after *Ulysses*. As Elizabeth Cullingford has pointed out, the unsettling beauty of the poem needs to be put in the context of the role Leda has played in the pornographic imagination of figuring “male force” met with “female consent” (Cullingford 1994: 177). If Yeats’s representation of sex in an Ireland rife with censorship is subversive, the representation of rape is anything but radical.

can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies? (Yeats 2008: 220)

As Cullingford writes, Yeats allows for “the possibility of consent *in medias res*” (177) from the loosening thighs to the stillness implied in feeling the beating heart. The rhetorical questions of the poem open up troubling possibilities of both reciprocity and compensation in

rape. While the power—and even the erotic power—of the poem is undeniable, the poem also disseminates a fantasy of consent, which excludes not just a female reader but even a female amanuensis. As Yeats wrote, “there is no typist here I would ask to copy it - one a few days ago wept because put to type a speech in favour of divorce I was to deliver in the Senate” (Cullingford 1994: 151).

Critics have frequently ignored the powerful brutality of “Leda and the Swan” or have attempted to salvage its savagery, muting it into allegory, focusing on aesthetic tension and ambiguity in isolation from the charged subject matter, or mirroring the unproblematic eroticization of rape. Helen Vendler writes that the poem reflects “Leda’s own thoughts, of which the first justifies her physical submission and the second justifies her acquiescence in pleasure” (Vendler 2007: 175). Vendler repeatedly emphasizes that Leda is “seduced” by “her own free will,” “excused from resistance” (175). “One cannot separate the shudder of orgasm from the engendering in the womb” (176), Vendler claims, reading pleasure back from the consequence of pregnancy. There is much to question in this interpretation, which folds the deliberate erotic violence of Yeats’s poem into a fantasy of rape as reciprocity. The Roman relief of “Leda and the Swan” in the British Museum, identified by Charles Madge (Madge 1962: 532) as the likely visual reference for this ekphrastic poem, does not emphasize reciprocity or even pleasure but instead focuses on power—the oversized swan looms above Leda, his weight bowing her down, his claws gripping her thighs and his beak pinning her neck. This uneven force is missing from Vendler’s interpretation.

Yeats claimed to have begun “Leda and the Swan” as political allegory, but that Leda-like, he was overcome, “As I wrote a bird and a lady took such possession of the scene that all politics went out of it” (Jeffares 1968: 241). Yeats’s canny elision of the poet and subject and his insistence on the exorcism of politics in the poem does not entirely dispel the troubling residue of sexual politics. Even if we read the

poem as spiritual allegory, as what Helen Sword calls “a fable of divine inspiration” (Sword 1995: 198) we cannot ignore that “the Leda myth offers a model of poetic creativity that is, particularly for male writers, as problematic as it is compelling” (198).

It is too easy and too familiar to contrast Yeats’s myth making with Joyce’s anti-allegorical representations of women. Nonetheless, the “intensified sense of nationhood” which Emer Nolan calls “the precondition and consequence of Yeats’s art” sometimes went along with a conservative Golden-Age return to the days when men were heroes and women were milkmaids. The gendered nationalism of the Irish Revival on the one hand incorporated women in the revolutionary corps and promised political enfranchisement, and on the other, subsumed the claims of suffrage, paralyzed the women’s movement by submerging feminism into nationalism, elevated the figure of the mother while conscripting actual mothers into providing sons for an endless war, and revived an imagined golden past which involved not progress for women but regress into mythic and domestic archetypes.

As Foster and McCoolle demonstrate, women played key roles in the cultural revival and in the political fight for the new Ireland. But too often, as Foster points out, their “roles were kept ancillary” (Foster 2015: 229) and they were frequently “treated as helpmeets” (229) rather than as fellow travelers. The very radicalism that attracted women to the independence movement could prove their undoing, particularly in relation to sexual freedom, and freedom from sexual oppression. Perhaps the best-known example of this is that of the original Ledeian body, Maud Gonne, whose accusations of marital abuse were suppressed by Irish nationalists. Here Yeats leapt to her defence, “bitter at the refusal of nationalist politicians to support Gonne” (Foster 1998: 331), writing to Lady Gregory that “the trouble with these men is that in their eyes a woman has no rights” (cited in Foster 332). Yeats even hoped that Gonne’s disillusionment might turn

her away from nationalism back to “some little radical movement for personal freedom” (333)—that is, suffrage. But Gonne saw little room for freedom. In her April 1905 letter, Gonne rejected the possibility that her case will help “other women in Ireland in similar circumstances” (*Letters* 1994: 203), writing to Yeats, “I have never dared to tell the unhappy women to do as I am doing, for too often the drunken brute was the breadwinner & in each case the women had big families and no means of supporting them” (204).

If “Leda and the Swan” abstractly raises problems of free will, consent, and violence, in Gonne’s letter those dilemmas take on flesh and urgency. Here the distance between Gonne as muse and Gonne as activist seems particularly fraught. “Leda and the Swan” gives us two versions of the rape: the “glory” of spirit and annunciation and the “brute blood” of mastery and assault, the heavy plosive alliteration that ends the poem on a note of force. We might mark that “brute” is an odd word to use for a swan, although it is a word often used in the period for male sexual transgression. Could this poem of sexual assault, through the phrase “brute blood,” carry the distant echo of the “drunken brute,” or of the “drunken, vainglorious lout” (Yeats 1998: 194) whom Yeats believed had abused Gonne and assaulted her daughter in the sexual and national scandal of 1905? In “Leda and the Swan” Yeats obliquely elevates the very sacrifice he once rejected as part of the necessary and stunning spectacle of “terrible beauty” (Yeats 1998: 195).

By the end of the poem, the rape of Leda becomes back-story to the myth that occupied Yeats more centrally—the fall of Troy. Yeats frequently imagined Maud Gonne as Helen, compelled by her very nature, “being what she is,” (Yeats 1998: 94) to drive men to their deaths and countries to their ruin. Here, his distance from Joyce is again apparent. Through Mr. Deasy, Joyce mocks the scapegoating of women as the singular cause of sin and war, “A woman brought sin into the world. For a woman who was no better than she should be,

Helen, the runaway wife of Menelaus, ten years the Greeks made war on Troy” (*U* 3. 390-3). Farther away from nationalist claims on bodies, less nostalgic and allegorical, more pragmatic and material, Joyce rejects revival fantasy from his very first chapter. In Molly, he gives us a character whose loquaciousness strongly contrasts with Leda or Helen’s silence. Molly’s yes has agency, including the agency to say no.

Having exiled colonial politics, it may seem perverse and anachronistic to return sexual politics to these fictional and aesthetic fantasies of female consent and desire. And yet, it is urgent, not just because we teach these works on campuses (the week I taught Molly’s monologue in *Ulysses*, students held a workshop on consent) but also because women are too often turned to allegory, whether it is the spinning earth ball mother or the ravaged Leda, and that too is in the service of an obscured politics. Joyce’s ambiguous yes returns us not only to the problem of desire but also to our own interpretations, so that we need to keep asking the same questions all over again, not of the authors but of our own assumptions and pedagogic and hermeneutic practices. “What a woman!” Rodney Dangerfield says after Professor Diane finishes reading the end of *Ulysses*. “Dad, she is a *teacher*,” his son says, embarrassed. “I like teachers,” Rodney Dangerfield says. “Get something wrong, they make you do it all over again.”

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AN IRISH LITERARY BAYREUTH. YEATS, JOYCE AND THE
REVIVALIST WAGNER

This is my second opportunity to “compare the musico-literary culture of Joyce and that of Yeats”. As I wrote in an essay which radically elaborates a lecture I gave at the 2010 edition of the *Trieste Joyce School*, this means,

more precisely, [...] to identify and outline the contrasting elements of their respective musico-literary contributions that, to a very significant extent for both, were the origin of their creative activity, of their conception of literature and of their public interpretation of the role that, in different ways, they attributed to their experience as writers (Reggiani 2011: 92-93).

This new contribution will try to move beyond what William F. Blissett wrote in 1961 (!) – but which, unfortunately, still holds true today: “some account of the relation of Wagner to the Irish literary revival is in order. I believe that the influence is considerable, though much mediated and combined with other currents of thought. If W. B. Yeats had not happened to be tone-deaf! ...” (Blissett 1961: 60). In order to do so, firstly, I will sketch a brief overview of the critically neglected interaction between the apparently local phenomenon of the Irish Cultural Revival, “created in a metropolitan context for a metropolitan audience” (O’Toole 1985: 111), and “European” Wagnerism, that “sort of mass phenomenon in the cultivated bourgeoisie” which nourished “the supranational illusion (beyond the ‘mediocrity of fatherlands’) of an accomplishment of humanity

according to art, in the communal space of a festival (a ‘jubilee’ where the differences between peoples are erased” (Lacoue-Labarthe 1994: xix and 65). Finally, against such a musico(-)literary background of the Revivalist Wagner, I will provide an essential and paradigmatic comparison between the different steps Yeats and Joyce were taking on their Wagnerian trajectory in the transitional years between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Several decades before the Irish Cultural Revival, Wagner’s shadow had loomed to a varying extent over some representatives of the different Irish nationalist aspirations that had emerged during the first half or by the middle of the nineteenth century, despite Young Ireland’s alleged “popularist cultural pluralism” (Vance 1990:167). Scholars have detected emblematic and paradigmatic Wagnerian statements or overtones in Thomas Davis, James Fintan Lalor and Standish James O’Grady. Firstly, the “German-influenced conception of nationality” of Young Ireland’s chief founder Thomas Davis, “celebrating the uniqueness and superiority of an Irish culture purged of foreign contamination, [...] did [...] echo Wagnerian styles of thought”, and, as a consequence of such politico-cultural echoing,

as with other mid-century European Nationalists (Wagner himself among them), there was with Irish nationalists a simultaneous desire for the glorification of one’s own nation, its culture and achievements, and a definition of that nation in ways which effectively excluded incompatible groups (English 2006: 157).

Secondly, looking back retrospectively from 1919 at James Fintan Lalor’s “dominant mind inspiring his age”, Lillian Fogarty wrote that

as Wagner, in certain lyrical moments, thunders aloud his theme with the full voice of his orchestra, so Lalor repeats his supreme subject with a clamorous insistence, employing all the hundred instruments of prose music. This is the witchery of art, the great soul-throb giving life, and strength, and power to the artist for all time (Fogarty 1919: xlvii and xxxvii).

Finally, according to William Irwin Thompson, even Standish James O'Grady's "approach" to his "reconstruction" of the Irish mythic cycle stands out as "distinctly 'Wagnerian'" (1967: 22-23).

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, Wagner's legacy in Ireland was lovingly cultivated by hosts of Wagnerians, often admiring and adhering to Wagner's theories of musical and dramatic composition in a reasonable and balanced way, and Wagnerites, not infrequently exposed to what George Bernard Shaw calls Wagneritis, "a disease not uncommon among persons who have discovered the merits of Wagner's music by reading about it, and among those disciples who know no other music than his" (Shaw 1890: 55)¹. Both abounded within the ranks of the Irish and Anglo-Irish intellectuals who, in different ways and with different convictions, contributed to conceive of and erect the "motley building, part being exceedingly old, part middle-aged, and part new" (Pennant 1782: 293), of the Irish Cultural Revival - its presumed "cultural purism, or narrowness" (Vance 1990:169) and "willful myopia and exclusiveness" (Vance 1990: 173) notwithstanding. Thanks to their mediatory role in the cultural relationships between Teuton and Celt, Wagner confirmed his

extraordinary integrative force: he expressed nationalist yearnings felt by many, his use of legends not only impressed the Protestant Anglo-Irish cultural and literary establishment and devout Catholic intellectuals alike, but also the extreme fringes of Irish nationalism. They all found their Wagner (Fischer 2007: 302).

A few unequivocally exemplary instances of how some Irish Revivalists (*lato sensu*) "found their Wagner" and experienced their Wagnerian affiliation and familiarity will suffice to illustrate the point here. John Todhunter, a "chronicler of that tradition", proved that "a literary affinity with Wagner can survive a musical antipathy" (Blissett

¹ On Shaw's catalogue of Wagnerites and Wagnerians in *The Perfect Wagnerite* cf. Sutton 2002: 2.

1961: 62) when he competently regretted that “harmony, once the handmaid of melody, has become the tyrant of her gentler sister” and that “the younger generation begin [...] perhaps even to sigh for a Wagner opera without the vocal parts” (Todhunter 1920: 170 and 171). Writing in the inaugural number of one of England’s most important journals dealing with the development of musical composition and style during the first half of the twentieth century, George Moore confessed that “the word Bayreuth comes upon me now like the scent of lavender from an old chest” (Moore 1919: 7). Thomas William Hazen Rolleston was a “strong Wagnerite” as well (Blissett: 61, note 26), who “produced translations of *Lohengrin* (1911) and *Tannhäuser* (1912) and a free paraphrase of *Parsifal* (1913) for editions sumptuously decorated by Willy Pogany”; however, “when he came to collect them, he found that the title he wished to use - *Sacred and Profane Love* - had already been appropriated by [the English writer] Arnold Bennett, for a Wagnerian novel!” (Blissett: 62-63). Despite Max Nordau’s abuse of Wagnerism “as a neo-Catholic cult of diseased sensibilities” (Hanson 1997: 116), Edward Martyn found a distinctly Catholic Wagner: according to George Moore, he “saw himself as Parsifal” (Humphreys 2007: 57) and wrote that

Parsifal is the work of modern times which gives the grandest expression to this peculiar [liturgical] aestheticism. Indeed in its unspeakably beautiful music Wagner has written liturgical pieces which may be entitled to take their places beside Capella of the golden age (Martyn 1913: 535).

Finally, even Patrick Pearse, the flamboyant spokesman of “an exclusively Celtic literary culture in which Latin and Ireland’s European heritage had no part” (Vance 1990:169) found his Wagner: his sister Mary Brigid Pearse recalled that he was “a devotee of opera”, “especially loved Wagner’s art – *Gesamtkunstwerk*” (Pearse 1934: 91) and was also “affected [...] by the epic music dramas of Richard Wagner” (English 2006: 269).

William Butler Yeats is commonly considered the ultimate inspirer and leader of the Irish Literary and Cultural Revival: at its “center, radius, and circumference [...] moves [his] restless, protean figure of poet, playwright, fictionist, field-collector, anthologist, theorist of folklore, and student of matters spiritual” (Foster 1987: 206). However, when compared with the aforementioned “Wagnerized” Young Irishmen and Revivalists, how much of Yeats’s inspiring capability and leadership can be thought of as having a Wagnerian origin? Unlike Joyce, whose Wagnerian propensity has been widely discussed by a host of numerous scholars from various disciplines, Yeats’s position among Anglophone and Irish Wagnerians and Wagnerites has been only inadequately and inaccurately touched on by literary scholars, who have overlooked either his Wagnerian matrices in the nineteenth century or their developments in the twentieth, or, more frequently, both.

Fortunately, there are at least a few interdisciplinary exceptions that have sketchily and fleetingly tackled these controversial and somewhat ignored issues and that deserve to be mentioned here. The Yeatsian performing-arts expert James W. Flannery established himself as a pioneer when he wrote the only (eight-page) book section specifically and meritoriously entitled “Yeats and Wagner”. In it he suggests that even though Yeats and Wagner shared the awareness “that the dissociation between public and private sensibility was the basic problem besetting modern man” (Flannery 1976:102) and the self-identification with “the poet-priest of a cultural form of nationalism that transcended political, social, and religious divisions” (105), “closer analysis of the practical application of their dramaturgical and theatrical theories shows that in many respects Yeats and Wagner were poles apart” (108). Their common “failures in [forging ideologies, cosmogonies, popular religions (as) qualified myths having special relations to a people or society or culture]” were emphasized by the philosopher Paul Weiss, who added that their

failures “were not as great [as Blake’s] but were nevertheless quite complete” (Weiss 1958: 237). The musico-cultural historian Joseph Horowitz stressed how

[in] the British context, with its legacy of stable governance and enlightened rationality [...], industrialization produced a potent Wagnerian backlash, rejecting materialism and scientism, striving toward a transformative spiritualism. [...] Wagner was also hailed as a prophet of the occult. Wagnerian theosophists included not only Kandinsky and Scriabin in Russia, but William Ashton Ellis, today remembered for his translation of Wagner’s prose, and William Butler Yeats, for whom Wagner contributed to “the new sacred book that all the arts were seeking to create” (Horowitz 1998: 278-279).

Last but not least, the musicologist Harry White wrote perceptively that “a comparison between Yeats and Wagner [...] might afford to Irish cultural history a more resolutely European context than it often receives” (White 2008: 82), and the Spanish scholar John Lyon, whose contribution merits particular acknowledgement for its musicoliterary pertinence and, therefore, will be quoted more extensively, stated that

the basic premise of Wagner’s aesthetic theory – and later Yeats’s – was that drama should communicate subrationally and speak directly to what is most generic and instinctive in our make-up. Both Wagner and Yeats were insistent that contemporary language had become impoverished as a result of separation between our rational and sensorial responses. To transform this currency debased by naturalism and the theatre of ideas into one that spoke to the emotions, both Wagner and Yeats devised forms of heightened ‘tone speech’ which was designed to distance language as practical communication and by-pass the intellect, while retaining the free and spontaneous rhythms of living speech [...]. Wagner’s widely publicized investigations into the union of words and tone had an important effect on dramatists who were sympathetic to his ideals, even though they may have disliked his rhetoric. The dramatic language of [...] Yeats, in the use of repeated motifs and rhythmic development, owes something to this influence (Lyon 1983: 21).

To weigh up whether, how and how much of Yeats’s inspiring

capability and leadership in the context of the Irish Literary and Cultural Revival around the 1890s can be thought of as having Wagnerian origins, it is useful to briefly examine the text of an essay entitled “John Eglinton and Spiritual Art” (1898) in which Yeats invokes “Wagner as the model for cultural revival” (McAteer 2010: 60) and emerges as “an important [transmitter] of Wagner’s creative use of national myths and his ideas of *Gesamtkunstwerk*” (Fischer 2007: 295). After its appearance in a “debate [published] in the *Daily Express* about the literary ideals of 1899” (Fischer: 295), this essay was included in the eight-hand² miscellanea *Literary Ideals in Ireland* (1899), “an outcome of the Dowden controversy” (Longley 2014: 17) and “one of the most important Irish books of the 1890s” (Johnson 1997: 243).

The issue at stake in Yeats’s essay and the reason for his literary and politico-cultural “controversy” with John Eglinton (William Kirkpatrick Magee, 1868-1961) is the role of “Spiritual Art” in the context of a “possible chapter of Irish literary history” (Eglinton et al 1899: 5). In Yeatsian terms, “Spiritual Art” must not be “divorced from the past” (Williams 2002: 165) and is “supposed to spiritualize the nation, to assist only indirectly in the political and economic battles that, for Yeats, were merely symptoms of the spiritual ‘great battle’” (Harkness 1984: 102). Included within this spiritual and national frame, poetry itself is universalistically and naturalistically metaphorized as “a spiritual force [...] as immaterial and as imperceptible as the falling of dew or as the first greyness of dawn” (Yeats 1898: 421). Perhaps predictably, these similes show high theosophical density and mix theosophical sources - heterogeneous for coeval esotericists - in the typically Yeatsian way (Reggiani 2010: *passim*). In fact, not only is such poetry a “force”, swedenborgianly

² This miscellaneous book contains essays by John Eglinton (3), William Butler Yeats (3), Æ (George William Russell) (2), and William Larminie (1).

“immaterial and [...] imperceptible” (Fernald 1854: 32), but the first simile of “the falling of dew” recurs, e.g., in *The Last Supper*, one of the *Legendary Moralities* (1896: 119) published in 1896 by Fiona Macleod (William Sharp), who knew about “Wagnerian joys” (Sharp 1910: 197) and was “a great sympathiser” of “the Theosophical Movement” (Mead 1905: 465); moreover, the second simile of “the first greyness of the dawn” is a literal quotation from *The Hidden Shining*, a commentary written by Yeats’s friend Charles Johnston to his own translation of *Mundaka Upanishad* and published in 1895 (Johnston 1895: 133).

In Yeats’s view, from this “new movement of ideas which is observable in contemporary Ireland” and which is embodied in “men who are amongst the foremost of the modern school of Irish writers” (Eglinton et al 1899: 5), there may emerge a wider and deeper “conception of [national] poetry” that Yeats characterizes firstly, as “a revelation of hidden life”, worthy because of the “volume and intensity of its passion for beauty, and [...] the perfection of its workmanship”; secondly, as “founded upon transcendental science”, i.e. the “integrative investigation of mesmerism, hypnotism, clairvoyance, and mediumship” (Sommer 2013: 21), “a knowledge of which has been transmitted and accumulated in secret” (Waite 1891: v); thirdly, as nationally and socially aware of the fact that, in “a country of unsettled opinion”, crowds “in every Royal Academy” sympathise more “with anecdotes or pretty faces or babies than with good painting” and forget “good art [...] when vulgarity invents some new thing, for the only permanent influence of any art is a gradual and imperceptible flowing down, as if through orders and hierarchies”; fourthly and finally, as inspired by a potentially intermedial textualization strategy that considers “painting, poetry, and music” as “the only means of conversing with eternity left to man on earth” (Yeats 1898: *passim*).

Strategically, all of these characteristics had already been

anticipated in the first two paragraphs of Yeats's essay by some homogeneous and pertinent references to Richard Wagner, whose "musical dramas" can be compared to

the Greek tragedies, not merely because of the mythological substance of The Ring and of Parsifal, but because of the influence both words and music are beginning to have upon the intellect of Germany and of Europe, which begins to see the soul of Germany in them (Yeats 1898: 419).

Thus, in 1898, thanks to the theoretical and operative support of the German "musikalische Demagoge" (etymologically *stricto sensu*) who "war zugleich ein Esoteriker" (Dahlhaus 1971: 11), Yeats memorably articulates his "conception of the folk as a spiritual aristocracy" according to

a tradition that is founded upon the notion, not only of the permanent, but also of the esoteric; not only of the esoteric, but of an esoteric that is native to the Irish and for which some matching esotericism is necessary for the middle and aristocratic classes (Deane 1998: 116).

Timothy Martin's *opus magnum* and an interdisciplinary host of numerous scholars have shown - not without some flagrant musico(-)literary ambiguities and contradictions - that Joyce found a different Wagner from that of Yeats and the other Irish Revivalists mentioned above, also because of his proven (although still musicologically unfathomed) competence as "both a musician and a literary artist" (Martin 1984:66). Such differentiation is even textually paralleled by the fact that, in his coeval *Drama and Life* (1900), Joyce metaphorizes his counter-Revivalist and anti-Revivalist Wagner in a way that seems incompatible with Yeats's Wagnerian semantics exemplified above:

If you ask me what occasions drama or what is the necessity for it at all, I answer Necessity. [...] Apart from his world-old desire to get beyond the flaming ramparts, man has a further longing to become a maker and a moulder. That is the necessity of all art. Drama is again the least dependent of all arts on its material. [...] Whether] there be marble or paints, there is always the artstuff for drama. I believe further that drama arises

spontaneously out of life and is coeval with it. [...] The author of Parsifal has recognized this and hence his work is solid as rock (*OCPW* 26; italics mine).

Joyce's Wagner was different from that of the Irish Revivalists in much the same way as his "radical principle of *artistic economy*" was *radically* different from their (in Joyce's eyes) flaunted "protest against the sterility and falsehood of the modern stage" and "war against *commercialism* and vulgarity": as he wrote in the inaugural paragraph of *The Day of the Rabblement* (1901), emphasizing an econo-literary hue which matches his very conception of an "artistic economy" as expressed in his appropriation of Giordano Bruno, "No man, said the Nolan, can be a lover of the true or the good unless he abhors the multitude; and the artist, though he may *employ the crowd*, is very careful to isolate himself" (*OCPW* 50; italics mine).

While Yeats gradually but inexorably distanced himself from strict Wagnerism after the last version of *The Speckled Bird* (1902) and reduced the number of his explicit Wagnerian references (which is not the same as saying that he cancelled Richard Wagner from his personal cultural encyclopedia), Joyce's subsequent Wagnerian career may be seen as following "the 'Parisian curve': favorable before the war, disrespectful after" (MacNicholas 1975: 29). To put it briefly, in 1912, he still defined Richard Wagner as "a great modern artist" in his "Universal Literary Influence of the Renaissance" (*OCPW* 189), while, in the following decades, "the evidence provided by the mature writings suggests that Joyce would always associate Wagner with the idea of progress" (Martin 1991:26). According to Timothy Martin

as the maturing Joyce came more and more into 'his own', as his tastes in art became less and less 'Wagnerian', his own work became, in several important respects, more and more so. [...] In fact, much of what we regard as Joyce's originality may to a considerable extent consist in his application of the idea of being 'Wagnerian' – of being, that is, the 'total artist' that Wagner epitomized – to the forms and methods of fiction in the twentieth century (Martin 1991: xiii).

In the preceding pages, I have tried to show how many Irish intellectuals entertained the idea of variously merging their national and nationalist aspirations with the European aura of their Wagnerian cultural and musico(-)literary experience and competence, thus contradicting both the usual charges of “popularist cultural pluralism” levelled against the “Wagnerized” Young Irelanders (*lato sensu*) and the frequent accusations of both “cultural purism, or narrowness” and “wilful myopia and exclusiveness” made against the Wagnerized Revivalists in the transitional years between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Beyond the Irish Sea, an English Bayreuth was invoked by Wagnerians and Wagnerites like George Bernard Shaw (Banfield 1988: 104) and the music critic for the *Saturday Review* John F. Runciman, who had written that “when I say we want an English Bayreuth, I mean entirely an institution and example which may do for England what Bayreuth is doing for Germany” (Runciman 1898: 93). In Ireland, some of the Wagnerized Revivalists even conceived of the feasibility of an Irish (literary) Bayreuth and tested it both in their “mire and blood” and in their daily life and work. Among them were Annie Horniman, “who hoped to create [it] at the Abbey” (Jordan 2000: 64); Yeats himself, who once had a vision of the Abbey “as a kind of Irish Bayreuth, with himself as the Irish Wagner, fusing ancient myths into a total theatre” (O’Toole 2015); and even Oliver St John Gogarty, who, after juvenile Wagnerian jokes and young-adult hopes of turning his Renvyle house into an Irish Bayreuth, in his mature age sarcastically and disappointedly confessed “in a letter to an American friend: ‘What a farce that legend of Coole as an Irish Bayreuth was’” (Foster 2003: 441). Despite Gogarty, though, within the walls of this Wagnerian “legend” (which should be more accurately fathomed and interpreted), as William S. Blissett wrote in 1961, “we may imagine how pervasive if not how explicit would be the Wagnerism of the conversations of Lady Gregory and Yeats at Coole” (63). And, not surprisingly, “the

concept of a national dramatic enterprise” was generated and cultivated there, “reawakening the soul of a nation to its foundational myth, [which] had more in common with Wagner’s Bayreuth than is often recognized” (Dawson 2008: 16).

Whatever their personal idiosyncrasies and resistances, these Irish Wagnerians and Wagnerites on the threshold between two centuries had good national and nationalist reasons to conceive of such a motley chronotope as an Irish Bayreuth, with its Wagnerianly “transnational, universal significance” (Young 2014: 24). Thus, they musico(-)literarily and culturally materialized their own transnational version of Wagnerism, inspired by “the transcendence of national boundaries, the rearrangement of ‘national’ identities, the revaluation of aesthetic objects, and the renegotiation of cultural concepts in a hyper-commercial age” (Bhattacharya 2006: 2).

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ONE OF MANY PLOTS: JOYCE IN SOME DUBLIN LIBRARIES

In his well-intentioned and genteel invitation to *Finnegans Wake*, Philip Kitcher wisely argues that Joyce did not want “to reveal his wisdom to the persevering faithful”; rather, he wished his work to be as obscure as possible, because he hoped to write a book that inspired idiosyncratic, creative readings from a large group of readers/writers, each of whom would find within it sufficient resources to reward sustained imaginative efforts (Kitcher 2007: 48).

This explains why, as most scholars would nowadays agree, plot is not too important in the *Wake*; or at least it is not as important as the big questions the book poses. To be sure, these are questions that would hardly find any rewarding answer in the mere excavation of the sometimes silly stories told and retold in Joyce’s book of the dark. They are the same questions other people would try to find an answer to by resorting to the foundational texts of the great world religions: who we are, what we do, why we live and die, and many other similar trifles.

And yet, one cannot avoid the hard fact that the plots are there in the book; ‘gaseously’ if you like, but they do exist. Just as the stories that Joyce wove into his works exist. Some of them have been traced by scholars, some are still waiting to be retrieved in some still-to-be-fully-deciphered manuscript; and some, which probably were never

written down anywhere by Joyce, are still blowing in the wind.

Joyce never was what we now consider a creative writer. He did not invent much in terms of narrative. He, as we know only too well, incorporated into his works, from *Dubliners* down to the *Wake*, a vast amount of trivial, but epiphanic stories that he happened to hear of or to read about. But, before I continue, let me to beg the patient reader for some suspension of disbelief, here, for what will follow is just a ‘story’: a story that puts together a number of threads and clues which I recently found here and there, during a period of research in the Dublin libraries. These clues can be connected or not. They can easily be discarded as unimportant, or they can be taken to be revelatory. We can use them, for instance – and this is what I will humbly try to do – in order to reconstruct, and partly reimagine, a narrative that might perhaps be of some use to scholars interested not only in Joyce’s Dublin years, but also in the ‘ideational’ genesis of the *Wake*.

One of the assumptions of this story is that some of the intuitions and ideas that helped Joyce come up with the basic narrative of the *Wake* might have come to his mind well before he put aside *Ulysses* in 1922, in order to embark on his most ambitious journey. But to go back to any possible birth of the book in Joyce’s mind, we first need to set out on a journey backwards, and start from the work itself in its final draft.

All begins with a cryptic reference to be found on page 253 of *Finnegans Wake*:

But, vrayedevraye Blankdeblank, god of all machineries and **tomestone** of **Barnstaple**, by **mortisection** or **vivisuture**, **splitten up** or **recompounded**, an Isaac **jacquemin** maumormo milesian, how accountibus for him, moreblue? (*FW* 253.34) [emphasis mine]

The annotations to the text inform us that “tomestone” stands for tombstone, that “Barnstaple” stands for a town in Devon, that “mortisection” comes from the Latin *mortisectio* meaning “I cut up something dead”, and that “vivisuture” is a reference to vivisection, or

rather, to its opposite. It goes without saying that the two concepts of mortisection and vivisuture are colloquially reinforced in the text by “splitten up” and “recompunded”. Finally, we are duly informed that “jacquemin” has to be read in connection with the preceding noun “Isaac”, to stand for the forgotten playwright Isaac Jackman, who wrote a play entitled *The Milesian*, a comic opera. Jackman was a Dublin attorney, and editor of the *Morning Post* (see O’Donoghue 1912, and Greene 2011). The Milesians are of course the Irish.

I will try to argue that the passage also alludes to something else, or rather, to someone else. The expression “the toместone of Barnstaple” could in fact be a reference to another Irish writer, slightly more famous than Jackman; an author whose name Joyce misspells in other places in the *Wake*, and whose presence would also shed light on the ideas of “mortisection” and “vivisuture” – but also, as we will see, on the name “jacquemin”. I’m talking of Bram Stoker (Barnstaple?), the author of *Dracula*, but also, while he lived in Dublin, a theatre correspondent, and later, after he moved to London, the manager of the great Victorian actor Henry Irving. We are told here and there in Stoker’s *Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, that the actor often went to Devon to recover after a tour, which might, or might not, explain the conflation of Bram’s name with the town of Barnstaple (see Stoker 1906-7). Needless to say, the ghost of Henry Irving also features in “Circe” (*U* 15.1847), but what doesn’t? In the fifteenth episode of *Ulysses* the dead awaken, and the undead do so too.

Looking then again at the passage in this light, “mortisection” easily becomes an allusion to the only way, according to Stoker’s famous book, to kill vampires, and to do so for good, that is, to split them up. But what about “vivisuture”? This might require some further speculation.

Since his early works, Joyce always showed an obsession with brothers (and sisters), and it can be argued that among other things, the *Wake* is also a tale of two brothers. Shem and Shaun are in a way

opposites that perhaps aspire to be re-united; or maybe they are united, as the upper and the lower parts of the same body. *Ulysses* is also a novel of brothers, with the two Parnells – the omnipresent Charles Stewart and his brother John Howard (*U* 10.1045-53). This is an old story with Joyce, if not the story of his life, as shown by his complex relationship with Stannie – two more brothers in conflict seeking reconciliation, perhaps.

But, going back to the above passage from the *Wake*, if “mortisection” really is an oblique reference to Bram Stoker, one wonders whether its opposite, “vivisuture” – meaning roughly “to stitch up someone or something that is still alive” – might perhaps be a reference to a brother of Bram Stoker? Who cares about Stoker’s brothers, one might ask? But couldn’t the same be said of Parnell’s brother? Who cares about him?

Actually, in *Ulysses*, we do encounter a mention of Stoker’s older brother, Sir William Thornley Stoker. In one of Mrs Bellingham’s bursts of invective directed at Bloom, she drops a very important hint:

- He closed my carriage door outside sir Thornley Stoker’s one sleety day during the cold snap of February ninetythree” (*U* 15.1029-30).

Why should this passage be important? What happened on February 1893? And what does Thornley Stoker have to do with that month and year? It is from these crucial questions that a part of my story will evolve.

Thornley (see J. O’C. 2012 and Stiles 2013) was one of Oliver St. John Gogarty’s professors of medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons. After Joyce left Ireland, the two became so intimate that Gogarty at some stage even moved house in order to live closer to his mentor, at Ely place. This is where Thornley himself lived with his ‘mad’ wife, but it is also where George Moore had a place. When Thornley died, in 1913, Gogarty was one of the few who were admitted to his private funeral service, and with him was George

Russell (see Thornley Stoker's uncatalogued papers, Trinity College Manuscript Collection). It is perhaps of some notice that all three, Russell, Moore, and Mulligan-Gogarty, are characters that appear in *Ulysses*, in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode. But what did Thornley Stoker do, and what does he have to do with Joyce?

Thornley was probably the most famous surgeon in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century. And, in February 1893, the date mentioned in "Circe", more precisely on the 2nd of February 1893, the day Joyce became eleven – and one should be reminded that in *Ulysses* the ghost of Bloom's son, Rudy, appears in "Circe" as "a fairy boy of eleven" (*U* 15.1623) having died *eleven* days after being born – Thornley Stoker became President of the Dublin Branch of the British Medical Society, at a meeting held in the College of Physics, Kildare Street, as both the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Irish Times* report in full-page articles.

Stoker had had a long and distinguished career as a surgeon in Ireland, working mainly in Swift's hospital, but also as "Inspector for Ireland under the Anatomy and Vivisection Act". With regard to *Ulysses*, this is incredibly relevant, in that the symbol of the episode in which Thornley Stoker features is "zoology", according to the Linati schema. And, it might also help to explain why the said Mrs Bellingham addresses poor Mr Bloom in this way: "The cat-o'-nine-tails. Geld him. Vivisect him" (*U* 15.3463).

But what does this have to do with the *Wake*? I would argue that in the light of the Stoker-related passages in *Ulysses*, "vivisuture" can be seen as a reference to vivisection inspector Thornley Stoker, just as "mortisection" can be taken to be a reference to Bram Stoker/Barnstaple.

However, we are still lacking an explanation of why Joyce would have made such a subtle reference to Thornley Stoker in *Finnegans Wake*. In order to figure this out, I suggest that we go back in time and abandon the realm of fiction in order to plunge into factual reality. Precisely, we need to look at what happened in Joyce's biography in

the spring of 1902, when he, together with Gogarty, decided to enroll at the Medical School of University College. This was not where Thornley Stoker worked, of course, as he had been President of the Royal College of Surgeons, a Protestant institution, and never taught at University College. But, it is noteworthy that Gogarty himself would soon leave the “Catholic” Medical School to join the more prestigious Protestant one, and eventually become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons himself.

However, in 1902, when both Joyce and Gogarty enrolled at the Medical school of the Catholic University, as we are told by different sources and can infer from *Stephen Hero* (SH 177), James took a very serious interest in Franciscan writers. In fact, in the summer of 1902, a few months after pre-registering as a medical student, Joyce went for four consecutive days to the Franciscan library of a Dublin church that would prove very important in the *Wake*, the church of Adam and Eve:

WIAM GRIFF

27	R. Twigg F.S.D.	Monkstown
March 22	David Conroy M.H.S.A. A. Piddell	H.D. Bright
June 9	J. F. Delaney	6 Garra
June 28 th	Br. Ignatius	De la Sa
July 26	San Patrick Nolan	St. Abney
" "	R. J. Nolan	19 Hugh
" 28	Rev. J. C. O'Neill	Both
July 29	Fast Joyce	
" "	(Rev) A. J. O'Meara O.P.	St. Milla
July 30	Fast Joyce	
July 31	Fast Joyce	
Aug 1	Fast Joyce	
Aug 9 1912	Thomas Lohan Coach	
20 "	J. Donnelly	St. M.
Aug 22, 1902	P. Canon Mannion O.P.	
Aug 26 1902	Fr. Laurence Costello O.S.M.	Box
	Fr. Bernard Kneafsey O.F.M.	
	Whelan	Green
Sept 3 1902	Robert Swaby	231
	Charles O'Leary	23
Sept 3 1902	Brother Paul Hill	S
	Rev. J. J. Moran A	

(see the library register of Saint Adam and Eve, courtesy of Brother MacMahon).

It is interesting to note that the library is, and was located, on the second floor of a building facing the river Liffey, from which, at certain hours, it is easy to admire the peculiarity of this tidal river, that is, the fact that it may run backwards. A river going backwards looked at from the library of Adam and Eve explains well why this church in the *Wake* will become “Eve and Adam’s” (*FW* 3.1):

Anna Livia is tidal. Twice a day, following the ebbing ocean tide, she slips downstream through Dublin city and to the mouth of Dublin Bay, where she runs into the Irish Sea. Then, with the turn of the tide, she is borne upstream by the incoming flow, through Dublin Bay and Dublin city back to the weir at Island Bridge. Then the tide turns again, and the Liffey begins to move once more toward the sea (Epstein 2009: 12-3).

It has so far proved impossible to know which books Joyce read at Adam and Eve’s, as there are no records or order slips. Catalogues have not survived, and books were shipped elsewhere on many occasions during the twentieth century. What we might assume, however, is that, at a time when he was a medical student, Joyce went there looking for books connected with the Franciscans, as this was the library of a Franciscan church.

History repeats itself, and in fact, a few months after his initial visits, Joyce was still in search of books with Franciscan links and he visited Marsh’s library in October 1902:

1902

Oct 17 *By Bill's letter* Belfast
Sir Thomas Drew Esq.

18th A. Badham

" M. Beatty

20th Daniel Powell C.E. Leath St

22nd Dorothy Gordon Dublin

22nd Winifred Birch Berkeinsted

22nd R. Phelps Monkstown

22nd Joseph 75 Peter's Terrace, Cabra

23rd M. Conley Stur & Elly Place

J. E. Henry. Ch. Pbn. Northwood Row

23 Joseph 95 Peter's Terrace, Cabra

28 Henry 7 Rathmin's Rd

29th M. J. J. J. Jerusalem.

31 R. M. C. Dublin

" Mark Monkstown

W. A. Hinch

Nov 3rd ~~Ambrose Bell~~

4th Thomas George

6th John J. O'Farrelly. Ballybough R.

7 Annie Jones Peter's Monkstown O'Brien

(courtesy of Jason McElligott, Keeper of Marsh's library)

He may well have gone there following a tip from Yeats (*JJII* 100-4) and the two writers may have talked about the Yeats's esoteric short stories, "The Tables of the Law" and "The Adoration of the Magi" which Joyce claimed to know by heart. These stories, among other things, mention a book of prophecies by Joacquim of Flora, the Italian hermit much loved by many of those semi-heretic Franciscans of whom Joyce was so fond at the time. On the occasion of their meeting, Yeats might have told Joyce that Marsh's library stocked books of prophecies by Joacquim Abbas, because after a few days Joyce actually paid two consecutive visits to this beautiful library, visits that ended up in *Ulysses*, of course:

Come out of them, Stephen. Beauty is not there. Nor in the stagnant bay of Marsh's library where you read the fading prophecies of Joachim Abbas (*U* 3.107-8).

Why was Joyce interested in those prophecies? Firstly because they fitted well with the prophecies of St Malachy that would prove to be so important in the *Wake* more than two decades later (especially those about the fall of Rome). For some time, their attribution remained uncertain. The main candidates were Joacquim or Malachy himself. Secondly, and this might again have been a tip given to Joyce by Yeats, Joacquim of Flora had designed a system of cyclical history divided into three ages, very similar structurally to the system devised by Vico, which would become a cornerstone of the structure of the *Wake* more than twenty years later. This would point, I would suggest, to the fact that behind the ever-present shadow of Vico, there lurks the presence of Joacquim, to whom Joyce might owe more than one might have suspected.

What if the "joacquemin" reference in the quotation from the *Wake* which inaugurated this paper, is among other things also a reference to Joacquim Abbas? I have reasons to believe that this might be the case, due to a very subtle and curious connection made in the same passage between Joachim Abbas and Thornley Stoker.

Again, in order to explain this incredible story, a look at biographical facts might be helpful. On arriving at the Marsh's library, on October 23, Joyce was not only going to encounter the pseudo-prophecies of Joaquim, and become acquainted with his tripartite vision of history; he was also going to sit, probably at the same table given the size of the reading room, with Thornley Stoker himself (see the picture of the library register reproduced above). This strange encounter might have very likely triggered in his mind the net of connections present in that *Wake* passage, which link Joachim, Bram Stoker and his more 'glamorous' brother, Thornley.

The importance of this fortuitous meeting is even more easily grasped if we think that it took place between a young medical student and possibly the most important surgeon in Ireland – who also happened to be the brother of the creator of the most powerful vampire in the history of literature (more powerful, to be sure, than the vampire figures that suspiciously crowd the pages of *Ulysses*).

It is impossible to know whether or not they talked on that occasion, but the *Ulysses* reference to Thornley Stoker would lead us to believe that, if not then, maybe later in life, and perhaps especially after Stoker became Gogarty's mentor, Joyce must have paid some attention to Thornley's biography.

For a young medical student, to meet the leading Irish surgeon face to face must have been quite an event; and, if we are to believe Yeats, who recorded how, on meeting Joyce – a young man totally unknown to him till then – a few days before the visit to Marsh's library, he was literally forced to talk with him for a good while about many different questions (*JIII* 100-4), we can imagine that Joyce might also have behaved similarly with Stoker. The fact that he must have had more than an ordinary curiosity about the man might be proved by the interest he took in his life and writings afterwards, as the pointed mention of him in *Ulysses* seems to demonstrate – a mention which is all the more important if we remember the

connection with Joyce's eleventh birthday.

If this is the case, that is, if Joyce really carried out some research on Thornley Stoker at some stage of his life, it is not too unlikely, given Joyce's past as a medical student – that he might have read of an article by this great surgeon that appeared in the *Annals of Surgery* in 1888, about a very interesting medical case that he solved, which occurred in Dublin on a strangely retrospective Bloomsday, 16 June 1887.

The case involved “a laborer, named Patrick Rourke, aet. 50, of robust habit and sanguine temperament”, received into the Richmond Hospital where Stoker worked. He arrived there

after a binge-drinking episode in which he had apparently fallen off a cart and suffered a head injury. The man's condition deteriorated until, after seven days, he was “in a state of profound coma” (*Annals of Surgery* vol. 7, 401-9, p. 401).

If this is not enough to stir our Joycean curiosity, what happened later is probably even more revealing of a possible connection between this poor Tim Finnegan-like labourer and one of the crucial intuitions behind the birth of the *Wake*. Stoker, in fact, wisely decided to operate on the wretched man, and “after the clot was removed and the wound **sutured** [emphasis mine], the patient at once showed “signs of returning brain power”. It was then that the labourer, who had literally been sleeping the sleep of the dead, awoke; and, guess what? He asked for a drink (of water, alas)! Soon after, he is reported to have given vent to some rather bad language (Stiles 2013: 205-6).

One wonders whether this extraordinary event that occurred to Stoker on a strangely anticipated Bloomsday, might have contributed, in Joyce's imagination, to suggest new meanings to the story of poor Mr Tim Finnegan who, before properly waking up from his own sleep of the dead, “one morning was feeling rather full”, and he “fell from the ladder and broke his skull”.

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FORGETTING AS AN ACTIVE PROCESS

Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis (a Latin adage)

To remember everything is a form of madness.
(Brian Friel 1983: 67)

The future's uncertain, the past
changing with every look back,
the present incomprehensible.

Shaken, you ask questions like:
"How was it for you?"

"What did you think of that?"

Your ex, somewhat bemused answers:

"What do you mean? It never happened.

And if it did, it wasn't like that."

(Frank Sewell 2003: 25)

The use of the word 'identity' in the past two centuries has had great currency not only in Ireland, but wherever the cultural heritage of formerly colonized countries and endangered lesser spoken languages has caused great discomfort and frustration and, as a result, a strong wish to assert the right of those countries and languages to protect themselves from further decay or even extinction. Yet, if the need, and right, of peoples and individuals to look for and define their identity cannot be dismissed as pointless and futile, it is as important to prevent this right from becoming the barbed wire between freedom

and a concentration camp. The danger, in fact, of a too frequent use of the word ‘identity’, and the related reference to myth – especially, in Ireland, the worn-out characters and stories of old Celtic myths – is that they may result in a covert form of ideology.

The Irish Revival in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had important political, social, linguistic and literary functions, but later, especially after the formation of the Irish Free State, it became for many politicians and second rate artists a comfortable catchword, good for almost any situation. The result, at best, was an overproduction of “good bad poems”¹.

In Brendan Behan’s *The Hostage*, one of the characters of the play makes the following statement, which effectively expresses the author’s awareness of how some of the great ideals he himself had cherished all his life had become mere clichés in everyday common speech in the early sixties: “This is nineteen-sixty, and the days of the heroes are over this forty years past. [...] The I.R.A. and the War of Independence are as dead as the Charleston” (Behan 1978: 131). If the memory of the past is often used by political power for its own purposes, which are more functional to its preservation than to the interests of society, it is the artist’s task to challenge and try to get beyond get such commonplaces and cultural stereotypes through a methodical revision of language and of different forms of literary communication. Literature at its best, in fact, feels the change before it actually takes place. The artist acts – so to say – as the litmus paper, through which the real needs and values of society are identified and revealed.

Following Maurice Halbwachs’s theory of the *cadres sociaux* (social frameworks), it is not the past that directs the choices of the

¹ “A good bad poem is a graceful monument to the obvious. It records in memorable form – for verse is a mnemonic device, among other things – some emotion which very nearly every human being can share” (Orwell 1970: 25).

present; rather, it is the needs of the present which have a conditioning influence on the representation of the past. As social frameworks change over time, likewise there must be a change in narrative codes and literary conventions. Plainly, a fact is never just itself: rather it is the result of what happens or is produced by external causes and the interpretation that an individual, a social group, or a whole population will give of it. The interpretation of a fact, on the other hand, depends as much on its articulation in words as on its psychological or social impact. The way a fact is told or described changes the nature of the fact itself. That is why literature has such a great responsibility in the process of the formation of a world view. It responds to the requirements brought about by cultural and social changes. Stephen Dedalus shows that knows this very well when he replies to Mr. Deasy with his well known statement: “History [...] is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake” (*U* 2. 377). He is not speaking against history as such, but about the use people like Mr. Deasy can make and have made of it, adapting facts to suit their own needs, which can be personal, ideological, political, instrumental, in fact making it into its opposite, myth.² It is through literature that such changes are articulated, arranged, and transmitted. If such a revolution does not take place, you are at a standstill: it is like trying to find one’s way about by consulting an old map.

In Ireland that task was taken on by Yeats and Joyce, although with very different approaches. Stephen Dedalus considers history, the social construction of memory, a nightmare; Yeats’s emphasis on Irish myths, still a form of memory, seems to serve more as a depository of metaphors for his own poetry than as a political or even a literary manifesto, despite his call in “Under Ben Bulbin” on Irish writers to

² Hugh’s words in Brian Friel’s *Translations* (Act II) could not be more explicit: “a civilization can be imprisoned in a linguistic contour which no longer matches the landscape of ... fact” (Friel 1983: 43).

sing “the indomitable Irishry” (Yeats 1965: 400).

Joyce was not at ease when in Dublin; but he felt a Dubliner when abroad, and it was not nostalgia! Far from the rhetoric of identity, well expressed in a short story like “Ivy Day in the Committee Room” (Joyce 1977: 129-148), what is left are the real values which make up a sense of identity: the feeling of being part of the continuity of one’s own culture, that feeling which makes you say: “I know this place, and this place knows me: this landscape, these people, the sound of the language”. Leopold Bloom, “the wandering Jew”, knows this all too well even before he is asked:

- But do you know what a nation means?’ says John Wyse.
- Yes, says Bloom.
- What is it? says John Wyse.
- A nation? Says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place” (U 12.1419-23).

Unhappy with codes that he felt were inadequate for the requirements of a fast-changing world, Joyce called into question and made a parody of social customs which were no longer understood by the very people who were performing them. He equally exposed the limits of the blind patriotism that made people cling to myths which had long lost their original value, including certain historical episodes which had been so radically manipulated as to have little or nothing to do with real events of the past. His impatience with all the commonplaces he could hear around him, read in newspapers and listen in the speeches of politicians is expressed throughout his work with words which alternate between expressing indignation and humour, and sometimes betray a certain bitterness. A few examples will to illustrate this. In “The Dead” we encounter the petulance of Miss Ivors, for whom the mere fact of writing a literary column in *The Daily Express* is reason enough for her to accuse Gabriel of being a West Briton. For her anything less than constant fidelity to Irish causes, in work and leisure is to be criticised. Thus her promotion of a

cycling tour of Ireland and her contempt on hearing Gabriel's plans to holiday on the continent:

- And why do you go to France and Belgium, said Miss Ivors, instead of visiting your own land?
- Well, said Gabriel, it's partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change.
- And haven't you your own language to keep in touch with – Irish? Asked Miss Ivors.
- Well, said Gabriel, if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language" (*D*, 205).

The narrowness of her views is counterbalanced by Gabriel's own, all-to-evident limits: his pathetic pride in his Christmas speech which is full of commonplaces far removed from the complexity of human feelings, which later are dramatically revealed to him by his wife's tears for young Michael Furey, who died of love for her. One way of interpreting the "snow falling faintly through the universe" (*D*, 242) passage, may be to read it as the objective correlative of that forgetfulness, which by covering all previous superfluous elements of his social and psychological identity, points towards its readjustment to cope with the times, which require a different language, and a different outlook. And since Gabriel Conroy is clearly a member of Ireland's minor intellectual world, his metamorphosis must become a prerequisite for those, like him, who have a great responsibility in the shaping of the nation.

Even more explicit is Stephen's reaction to Davin's invitation to him to join the Gaelic League class, which he had left after the very first lesson. Davin is so put out by Stephen's negative response that he asks him if he is Irish at all. Davin misses the point that for Stephen, learning Irish has little to do with his profound and evolving attachment to his own culture, which points to the essentials and away from any Romantic superstructure: "When the soul of a man is born in this country" – he retorts to Davin's idealization of all things Irish – "there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of

nationality, language, religion. *I shall try to fly by those nets. [...] Do you know what Ireland is? Asked Stephen with cold violence. Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow*” (*P*, 220).

Although we have to be careful in identifying Joyce with Stephen in any straightforward way, it is true that Joyce had at best a problematic relationship with the Irish language (although this changed somewhat by the time he came to write *Finnegans Wake*). He also rejected one of the fundamental principles of early Irish irredentism – and of what John Montague defines as “the neo-Gaelic lobby” (Montague 1973: 21) – which claimed a direct line of descent of the Irish from the old Celts. The “Cyclops” episode is probably the site of Joyce’s funniest and most vehement rejection of such principles and of so many of the pious commonplaces upon which Irish identity was being built during the Revival. Leopold Bloom is the principle victim of the blind Irish chauvinism so vociferously voiced by the Citizen and his friends in Barney Kiernan’s pub in Little Britain Street in Dublin. However appalled he may be, Bloom is not intimidated by the hate-filled remarks against everything not Irish. The English are dismissed for having “[n]o music and no art and no literature worthy of the name. Any civilization they have they stole from us. Tonguetied sons of bastards’ ghosts” (*U* 12. 1200-1) while everything Irish (for example Gaelic sports) should be praised and supported “for the development of the race” (*U* 12. 901). And, of course, the Citizen and his followers never miss any opportunity to mention the heroes of myth or history-become-myth to substantiate their points; so an eloquent appeal is made “for the resuscitation of the ancient Gaelic sports and pastimes, practised morning and evening by Finn MacCool, as calculated to revive the best traditions of manly strength and power handed down to us from ancient ages” (*U* 12. 909-12 *emphasis added*). The strangers, including all those who don’t have an Irish sounding surname, well! “we let them come in. We brought them. The adulteress and her paramount brought the Saxon robbers here” (*U*

12.1156-8). The Irish emigrants become the mythical “lost tribes” (*U* 12. 1241), and the three crowns on a blue field of the future flag of a free Ireland recall “the three sons of Milesius” (*U* 12.1310).

This radical attack on some of the icons of the Revival required an equally radical change in the literary and linguistic techniques and codes at Joyce’s disposal, a change which became more and more comprehensive through *Ulysses* up to *Finnegans Wake*. In fact, whereas in *Ulysses* Joyce develops a narrative technique others had used before him,³ in *Finnegans Wake* his radical treatment of morphology, syntax, word order and word formation looks forward to the language mixing and multicultural hybridization of our own times over half a century in advance.

Behind and beyond the Babel of sounds and linguistic convulsions of contemporary society lies a world view, which belongs more to the individual’s outlook than to any supra-individual reference models. In “Easter 1916”, Yeats is faced with a tragic revelation: McBride and the others who died during the Rising are not Cuchulain, they do not belong to myth (or maybe they are establishing a different sort of myth). McBride is just a person you meet in the street “at close of day”, someone you pass “with a nod of the head”. So he wonders: “Has anything changed here?” And he must admit that “all [has] changed, changed utterly” (Yeats 1965: 202). Yeats is one of the few who realized quite early in the formation of the new Irish State that you can’t survive by just clinging to old myths. As a consequence, his relationship with the old tales, which he had considered as the backbone of the Irish identity that would emerge from the fight for

³ Although the interior monologue is largely associated with Joyce’s *Ulysses*, “he never claimed any originality in the use of it. In the course of a conversation in his flat in the Universitätsstrasse Joyce said to me: ‘I try to give the unspoken, unacted thoughts of people in the way they occur. But I’m not the first one to do it. I took it from Dujardin. You don’t know Dujardin? You should’” (Budgen, 1972: 94).

independence, was confined within the limits of pure imagination and became something to exploit in order to further his creativity. Myths, legends, and even history were turned into characters, landscapes and settings for his peregrinations in “the deeps of the mind” (Yeats 1961: 224).

In *The Dreaming of the Bones* (1919), one of his plays for dancers, written about the same time as “Easter 1916”, two mythic figures, Dermot and Dervorgilla appear to a young man, who is fleeing from Dublin after the defeat of the Rising; according to the legend, it was they who sold Ireland to the Normans. The two ghosts ask the young man to forgive their sin, but at first he doesn’t understand what they mean: “What crime can stay so in the memory?”, he wonders. But when he realises who they really are, he rejects their plea: “O, never, never / Shall Diarmuid and Dervorgilla be forgiven” (Yeats 1982: 442). After seven hundred years the young Irish rebel is unable to forgive. In fact, this means he does not want to forget the crime, which implies that there will be no change in his outlook on the present state and the future destiny of his country. When you forgive, you don’t cancel a crime, you put it aside, as it were, and do not allow it to interfere with your present life. Seen in this perspective, forgetting becomes an active process.

Not all Irish poets after Yeats and Joyce have accepted the challenge. Many minor poets, or rather would be poets, who fill the pages of the many small anthologies and literary reviews in both the North and the South of Ireland, have kept using the same subjects with slight stylistic variations, clinging to what Robert Welch has described as “the incommunicable grief that consciousness of victimage brings” (Welch 2014: 82). The best writers, however, have been able to feel and respond to the innovations brought about by the social hybridization of the final decades of last century, with the ensuing introduction of linguistic levels and registers never heard before or previously ignored as not belonging in the field of poetry. They have

faced – each of them – the challenge of their time from a distinct, an individual point of view, of course, following each his/her inclination and personal story; yet, the overall impression is one of strict coherence and adequacy to the requirements of a reading public less and less interested in excavating a collective, unforgiven past, and more in the complexities of a puzzling and confused present, against which poetry – rather than providing sheer pleasure and/or consolation – may act like a sort of Ariadne’s thread, capable of giving some sense to a forest of apparently senseless signs and symbols. Seamus Heaney, Thomas Kinsella, John Montague, Desmond O’Grady, and Ciaran Carson – among others – have all tried to “purify the dialect of the tribe” (Eliot 1971: 141) some of them by translating or ‘re-mediating’ old texts belonging to different cultures (*Beowulf*, Dante, the Greeks, early Arabic poetry, even Japanese poetry in what Irene De Angelis calls “The Japanese effect” (De Angelis 2012); or, like Montague and Kinsella, by giving new life to old works of the Celtic tradition, like *The Táin* and ancient medieval lyrics. Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, instead, has chosen to write her poems only in Irish, taking up legends and characters of Irish and Christian myth only to make them metaphors of contemporary women’s problems and to look into women’s psychology more closely.⁴ The same can be said of Montague’s *The Rough Field*: based on historical facts of Irish history, particularly the history of Ulster, it is not, in my opinion, a poem of and on Irish identity, or at least only partially so. Rather, it is the poet’s purgatorial search for his identity as an individual against a common cultural background, which is changing so rapidly that “with all [his] circling” he feels it will be impossible for him, as for any individual, “to return / to what is already going // going // GONE” (Montague 1984: 83). The

⁴ Two clear examples of her reinterpretation of both pagan and Christian myths are, respectively, “Cailleach” (Hag) (Ní Dhomhnaill 1990: 134) and “Scéala” (Annunciations) (Ní Dhomhnaill 1991: 44).

same can be said of another, more recent long poem of his, “Border Sick Call” (Montague 1998: 345-357), a purgatorial pilgrimage through a snow covered land near the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic. Based on Dante’s *Commedia* it is more concerned with the poet’s progress towards self-consciousness than a cry against the partition.

Myth, history do not disappear, they are not ignored, but are left in the background, and when they are allowed to surface, it is through the filter of individual consciousness, be it that of the poet or of the reader: “I am my hero, – writes Seamus Cashman – and observe in me / universes of infinity” (Cashman 1997: 50); and Ciaran Carson declares: “I am not that interested in ideologies, I am interested in words, their sounds, and how words connect with experience”.⁵

In a short essay – “The Young Irish Writer and *The Bell*” – written in 1951, Montague expressed his dissatisfaction with the Irish contemporary literary scene with these words: “The tradition of the Revival exhausted, we find ourselves cut off from contemporary European literature, with little or no audience in England, since our national preoccupations have left us miles behind in the race” (Montague 1973: 170). It was the world, in his opinion, that had to become the Irish poet’s province. I would say Montague’s preoccupations as to the poor quality of contemporary Irish poetry are no longer valid. Much good and original poetry has been produced since then. Luckily, transitional forms emerge in transitional times: nobody can say with a high degree of certitude which will survive and which will not, since – as George Orwell argued in one of his perceptive literary essays – “Ultimately there is no test to literary merit except survival” (Orwell 1969: 105). One can only take note of

⁵ Ciaran Carson in an interview granted to *The Guardian* in 2009: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jan/17/poetry-ciaran-carson-belfast-ireland>

how the act of writing is changing and the representatives of the new generation of Irish writers, moving on from the middle generation of poets like Kinsella and Montague, Longley and Mahon, are re-imagining and re-shaping their world and language.

One of the emerging groups which has given quite good, if uneven, results is that of some young writers who have been experimenting with the so called ‘performance poetry’, that is poetry “in which the poet comes face to face with his audience” (Lordan 2012) – in boxing rings, in pubs, at street occupations, cafes, farms, festivals, etc. – and reacts to their response. One poet/performer I have had the chance to meet is Dave Lordan. Some of his poems are hard to understand if you just read them, but when it is the poet himself who performs (not just reads) them, it is another matter. It is like a piece of prepared piano music by John Cage: when you ask the performer to play it again after removing all the objects previously placed on the strings of the instrument, what you get is mostly a very simple melody, or at least something which sounds familiar even to an unsophisticated audience, which proves that it is the code that makes the difference! What you find in Lordan’s poems, behind his original use of language, is a personal refusal of violence of all kinds, including that which is forced upon individuals by such institutional powers as “the headless politicians” (Lordan 2010: 18), the Roman Catholic Church,⁶ the police. His short story, “C-Section”, is a cry against hypocrisy and commonplaces, among which – disturbingly – is the rhetoric attached to such dramatic events as the Maze hunger strikes of the Nineteen Eighties, which too many – political groups, local counsellors, the press, individuals – try to exploit for their own

⁶ One of his best poems, “Spite Specific”, in *Invitation to a Sacrifice*, is a vehement protest against those religious institutions in Ireland that specialized in the infamous management of the workhouses for orphaned children. The language itself disarticulates as the poet’s indignation rises to an intolerable peak.

often less than worthy reasons:

Martyrs are the mannequins of history, plucked by vanquished and victors alike from the struggles of the past in order to make use of the perfectly malleable figures they make. They are put on show along the high streets of present ideology to the passing crowds, who stare at their own favoured martyr display through the unbreakable glass of bygone times, becoming riveted. We envy and worship our own selected martyrs for their incorruptibility, their pseudo-immortality. Yet they are always being dressed up by someone else backstage, someone still very much corruptibly alive [...] to keep us staring in the wrong direction, to hold us enchanted (Lordan 2010: 99).

What finally emerges from an accurate perusal of his 2010 collection of poems is not just the shallow experimenter of new word combinations or unusual sounds, but the gentle personality of a man who loves simple and helpless creatures and a world naturally beautiful, mysterious and happy before being spoiled by stupidity, abuse and violence. His language, at times obscure and even bizarre, is exactly what is required to avoid any temptation to indulge in rhetorical tirades or slip into elegy. Indignation without tears.

Above and beyond all this, his love of language itself is genuine and comes from his experimentation with what he and a group of performer-poets call “the spoken word lyric”. In his “Self Portrait in the Eye of a Horse”, Lordan declares he “would do anything for the music. Drop an E for example. ‘Pràncestors’ (for ‘Pre-àncestors’)” or cherish “a clauseless tongue, a language of pure conjunction: Whether for either how? But, and maybe, if once since while” (Lordan 2010: 103-104). Isn’t this pure Joyce, this zest for the pure sound of language, as in the “Sirens” episode in *Ulysses* or in *Finnegans Wake*? And there are deliberate mis-readings and counter-readings of “Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen” and “Easter 1916” in one of his best poems: “Invisible Horses” (Lordan 2010: 49).

This sort of approach can be very dangerous, of course: your live audience is not exactly like your prospective reader. These young

poets are aware of the psychological pressure of such closeness; nonetheless, they believe that “the spoken word lyric is the only variant of the lyric form which shows itself capable of attempting to keep pace with all of these complex, parallel and unpredictable changes” (Lordan, 2012), a statement to which I cannot fully subscribe, as each poem, whether it is ‘paged’ or not, preserves at least a memory of the original primary orality; besides, each paged poem is – if not in all – in most cases meant for performance.

To conclude: culture change has produced and is still producing in Ireland, as in other countries, new behavioural and linguistic codes through which a new dynamic vision of identity can be expressed – less committed to the founding myths of the country or to worn-out icons of Ireland’s history and more centred on the needs of the individual. Paradoxically, by accepting the possibility of forgetting, by admitting that oblivion is still part of our memory, both personal and collective, many contemporary Irish poets have acquired a fresh outlook on the fast changing colours of our times, the ability to see things from a different perspective, often in the same poem. “Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis”, says a Latin adage; so do languages and identities. If it is foolish to maintain that Italians are descended from the ancient Romans, it is as futile to keep to myths and legends to justify or support the idea of an identity which is wrongly supposed to be the same no matter what happens around us. Identities, like everything else, are always on the move, always changing, like the waters: this is what keeps them alive. Irish poetry today is alive and vital because the Irish have taken up the challenge to share the transnational flow of culture brought about by large scale migration, the new media and worldwide economy. The risk of getting lost in a forest of contradictory stimuli or falling into clichés is there, of course, but culture in its wider sense of the symbolic, linguistic and meaningful aspects a collectivity of people living in the same place – or also, as Bloom put it in “Cyclops” also living in different places”

(U 12. 1428) – have shared for a long time, and the literary tradition they have produced which is strong enough to act as a filter, able to give each new literary product its peculiarly “Irish” flavour.

“Things thought too long can be no longer thought” (Yeats 1965: 337). Some eighty years ago, Yeats had foreseen it all: if you stick to the same old symbols and images, to the memory of wrongs past and opportunities lost, you are at a standstill. If “Hector is dead”, so is the elegiac contemplation of things past, which no longer respond to the needs of both poets and readers. Yeats’s apocalyptic vision of the end of a cycle and the contemporary beginning of a new one, seems to express and justify what the new poets, from the North and the Republic alike, are trying to do: “There is a light in Troy” and “We that look on [may] laugh in tragic joy”.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Joyce/Shakespeare
(Syracus: Syracuse University Press)

“Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/Her infinite variety.” These words are spoken about Cleopatra, but, with a necessary change of gender, they could equally apply to their author, William Shakespeare. Perhaps the single most striking thing about Shakespeare is the sheer variety, the multifariousness, of his work; this is partly what gives rise to the theories of multiple authorship, or of a far more knowledgeable author, that Stephen has such fun with in the “Scylla and Charybdis” episode of *Ulysses*.

It is this variety, I think, that makes the juxtaposition of Shakespeare and Joyce such a rewarding and fascinating exercise: just as inexhaustible as Cleopatra. There are so many different angles on the topic, so many points of contact between the two writers, both intertextual and theoretical, that it is particularly appropriate that a book of essays by divers hands should be published to explore this link. This is the first collection of essays on this topic (there have been individual monographs on aspects of it) and one of the pleasures of reading through it is the switch of perspective involved in moving from one essay to another, the sudden change to one’s understanding that examination of another Shakespeare play or indeed another text by Joyce may bring.

Naturally, and inevitably, one play, and one particular episode of *Ulysses*, dominates the collection: five of the 10 essays concern *Hamlet* in one way or another and four of these also have to do with “Scylla and Charybdis”. But it is very interesting, and refreshing, to read about other plays and their connections to Joyce’s work. Among these is the play which actually has the most obvious link to *Ulysses*, namely the problematic and little performed *Troilus and Cressida*, set during the Trojan War and including of course the character Ulysses. Valérie Bénéjam provides a fascinating comparison of the role of the abusive, foul-mouthed Thersites in that play and the narrator of the Cyclops episode. She uses this juxtaposition to argue very convincingly that the narrator, and Thersites, are there to undermine the legendary, mythic material that surrounds them; they provide a necessary critique of the conversion of history into myth.

Dieter Fuchs also refers to *Troilus and Cressida* in his essay, which again deals with the character of Ulysses. Fuchs amusingly points out that the reference to this Ulysses in “Scylla and Charybdis” is erroneous, since it is not he who quotes Aristotle, as alleged in *Scylla*, but Hector. Fuchs sees this as an intertextual absence, where Ulysses both is and is not there, part of a Joycean strategy of “teasing of the reader” (25) which is deployed throughout the work. Fuchs also further explores his complex intertextual linking of Lady Penelope Rich in Sir Philip Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* sonnet sequence, via the Dark Lady of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* (Lady Rich is a frequently proposed candidate) to Stephen’s allusions to this particular Penelope (and hence to the obvious other) in “Scylla and Charybdis”.

Another play which is rarely invoked in connection with Joyce is *The Tempest*, though Stephen does refer to it at times during his theory of Shakespeare. And an even rarer juxtaposition is that of Joyce’s only surviving play, *Exiles*, with any piece by Shakespeare. Giuseppina Restivo demonstrates very persuasively the surprising relevance of *The Tempest* to *Exiles*; she is aided by an intertextual allusion, very

rare in Joyce's play, but this is secondary to her depiction of Richard as a failed Prospero, whose efforts at magical manipulation carry with them a very considerable human cost. She is also interesting in her linking of Prospero's island with Ireland, via the presence of "Patsy Caliban, our American cousin", as Stephen puts it.

Othello is the play discussed by Laura Pelaschiar, and here we get very close to the essence of Shakespeare's importance for *Ulysses*: next to *Hamlet*, I would say that *Othello* is the most relevant play for Joyce's work. One thing Pelaschiar does very well here is to offer a post-colonialist reading of Othello's character to which she does not really subscribe. She does it much better than many a paid-up post-colonialist. But the real aim of her essay is to displace the masculine values that she believes Iago and Othello share, and which prove to be Othello's undoing, on to what she sees as the very different principles that Leopold Bloom, among many other things, incorporates. This is a very honest, very thoughtful essay that will certainly reward rereading.

Turning, then, inevitably, to *Hamlet*: John McCourt reminds us of the 10 or 12 lectures on this play, now unfortunately lost, that Joyce delivered in Trieste. Given the audience, it is likely that a lot of time was spent on exegesis of words and passages, but it is also very possible that the famous "theory" was given an airing in some shape or form. McCourt also provides very helpful information on the screen versions of the play, already quite numerous by 1915. He points out the cinematic techniques of the "Circe" episode, where the faces of Stephen and Bloom merge in the mirror into that of Shakespeare, "rigid in facial paralysis", and wearing the cuckold's horns that also belong to Bloom – yet one more thread in the extraordinary knot that ties up together Bloom and Shakespeare, Stephen and Shakespeare's dead son Hamnet, Molly and Anne Hathaway, Boylan and Anne's assumed lovers, and also, on the level of the play *Hamlet*, Bloom and the ghost of Hamlet's father, Stephen and Prince Hamlet, Molly and

Queen Gertrude, and Boylan and Claudius. (Not to mention the *Odyssey* figures lurking behind these correspondences.)

It is also good to see the intertextual range being expanded beyond just Shakespeare and Joyce. Vike Martina Plock explores the interesting triangle of Joyce, Shakespeare and Goethe, developing the initial allusion in the library episode to *Wilhelm Meister* into a very full account of the ways that Goethe's version of Shakespeare interacts with Joyce's. Plock also convincingly suggests that Joyce and Goethe shared an "aesthetic and intellectual internationalism" that distinguished them from contemporaries in both Germany and Ireland and made them fit soul-mates (105).

Richard Brown's essay is highly original in its description of Joyce's Futuristic condensation of all of Shakespeare's works – and life – into a "single act" in the library episode. He links this "single act" to a fundamental aspect of modernity, namely the experience of the eternal in the everyday, in a very stimulating reading that opens up all kinds of avenues for exploration. For instance, Brown argues that Shakespeare as playwright was himself a kind of proto-Futurist, the generic mixing of his plays, their refusal to follow the rules of any one category (think of the porter in *Macbeth*) heralding the kind of liberation from formalistic constraints that the Futurists cherished.

And in "Loving the Alien: Egoism, Empathy, Alterity and Shakespeare Bloom in Stephen's Aesthetics", Sam Slote argues that Bloom, who, as noted above, is both Shakespeare and King Hamlet as well as being Ulysses, corrects and completes Stephen's aesthetics by opening them up to the experience of otherness, of difference, a world away from Stephen's essential solipsism. Slote's essay is unfortunately damaged by a misquotation – "an androgynous alien, being a wife unto himself" (138) should be "an androgynous angel" (*UG* 175), and this affects even his title. Nevertheless, the basic argument, a humane and generous one, remains valid: Joyce himself indicated that Stephen's perspectives needed completion by Bloom's

very different worldview, and that is essentially what Slote is arguing here.

Two essays consider *Finnegans Wake*: one, by Vincent Cheng, author of a seminal book on Shakespeare and the *Wake*, restates his position that the book is a sort of stage on which all the world's dramas can be played out, a taking literally of Shakespeare's "all the world's a stage", so that the Globe theatre really is the globe.

Paul Fagan's very substantial essay, finally, offers an interesting critique of Cheng's position, and indeed of much earlier *Wake* criticism. He argues, for instance, that the frequency of allusions to a particular work or author do not necessarily imply direct reference to those works. Shakespeare's works, for instance, form a kind of cultural storehouse for all of us – famously, we are often quoting him without knowing we are doing so. Thus, it is not surprising that the *Wake*, which is a kind of massive memory system anyway, should be bursting with distorted Shakespeare misquotations, which do not necessarily function on the thematic level also. Particularly impressive is his analysis of "camelot prince of dinmurk", though I am a little surprised he does not refer to the obvious presence of King Arthur's Camelot in that phrase.

All in all, this is a very engaging, refreshing collection, mercifully free of jargon and affectation, and without any particular critical axe to grind. It marks a definite advance in our overall understanding of this crucial literary conjuncture, widening and deepening our sense of the vital necessity, for Joyce, of taking on board and indeed incorporating into his own work that of his great predecessor. Moreover, and not least, the book was a pleasure to read, something one cannot say of all critical works on Joyce, where the words "hard" and "slog" too often come to mind. It commits itself to, and succeeds in, providing multiple perspectives on the infinite variety of a literary relationship that is truly inexhaustible.

Terence Killeen

John Millington Synge. 2012
Riders to the Sea – La cavalcata al mare
(Translation by James Joyce and Nicolò Vidacovich. Introduction and
notes by Dario Calimani)
(Treviso: Compiano Editore)

Dario Calimani's introduction to his new edition of James Joyce and Nicolò Vidacovich's translation of John Millington Synge's *Riders to the Sea* offers a rich discussion of Joyce's complex and often contradictory relationship with his fellow Irish writer while at the same time focusing on the main features of Synge's poetics.

Calimani points out how *Riders to the Sea* acts as a link between three major figures of early twentieth-century Anglo-Irish literature, i.e. W.B. Yeats, Joyce and Synge himself (37). The Yeats-Synge connection occupies the first section of the introductory essay (*Synge e Yeats/Synge and Yeats*): Calimani discusses Yeats's enthusiastic reception of Synge's work and his willingness to make the younger writer an essential contributor to the Irish Literary Theatre. Thus, the author quotes extensively from Yeats's *Autobiographies* and his Nobel acceptance speech, reporting the poet's first encounter with Synge and his claim to have discovered Synge's talent for the first time and to have contributed to his growth as an author by exhorting him to visit the Aran Islands in order to have a closer view of real Irish life. Synge's experience among the islanders and the turmoil created by the staging of *The Playboy of the Western World* are described in Yeats's Nobel speech and testify both to the poet's recognition of the role played by the younger writer in promoting Irish art all over the world

and to his artistic genius. However, as Calimani observes, the fact that *Riders to the Sea* is disregarded on this occasion and is only briefly mentioned in a later essay devoted to Synge's work gives ample testimony to Yeats's dislike of the play and to his instinctive dismissal of Synge's personal use of realism. This dismissal does not touch other features of Synge's play: Calimani thus assumes that, while expounding on his theory of the theatre, Yeats unconsciously subsumed the function of Synge's *Riders to the Sea* as well as its role as a "universal drama" (52).

The second section of the introduction (*Il dramma/The play*) is devoted to the critical appreciation of the play. Calimani points out the composite nature of *Riders to the Sea* as a tragedy, an "elegy for a disappearing world", and an ever-repeating play, "like an infinite ritual action" (53). At the same time, he emphasizes the existential quality of the play: death is all-pervading and accepted as "the necessary end of those who have had the fortune to have been born" (*ibid.*). Thus, the laws governing human existence remain obscure, defeat is inescapable, and no comfort is granted to Synge's characters. The playwright's real modernism, Calimani states, does not only reside in his refusal of language "as an official, soul-destroying instrument of English tradition and culture" (55), but also in his ability to conceive the fragmentation of human existence. In this sense, and because of Synge's proximity to the "the great current of European theatre" (56), the author asserts that *Riders to the Sea* paved the way to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and that the playwright himself finds his place in a genealogy of Irish writers which ranges from Wilde to Shaw, Joyce, and, of course, Beckett.

In the third section (*Joyce e Synge/Joyce and Synge*), Calimani illustrates Joyce's controversial relationship with *Riders to the Sea*, following the well-known path already traced by Richard Ellmann though not taking on board more recent work published both in Italy and internationally by Eric Bulson (to whom he nonetheless briefly

refers in the following sections), John McCourt, and others, who have focused on Joyce's Trieste years and on his translation of Synge's plays. Thus, the author delineates Joyce's initial dismissal of the play as a tragic poem more than a tragedy and his gradual reconsideration of the work, culminating in the resolution to translate it into Italian with the assistance of Nicolò Vidacovich in 1908. While briefly illustrating the different stages which would have led to the publication of *La cavalcata al mare* in 1929, Calimani describes some common traits in the two Irish writers' ideological and aesthetical beliefs, thus reinforcing his initial assumption about the unifying function of *Riders to the Sea*.

The fourth and fifth parts of the introduction (*La lingua della vita e la lingua dell'arte/The language of life and the language of art* and *La traduzione di Joyce e Vidacovich/The translation of Joyce and Vidacovich*) specifically deal with Synge's text and its Italian translation. Calimani focuses on the "impossibility" of translating Synge's language insofar as it shows the various diachronic stratifications the Irish language was subjected to, with an interesting mixture of Gaelic idiomatic and syntactic elements and standard English that the author briefly illustrates. As far as the Italian translation is concerned, Calimani sticks to the accepted view that while it is easy to assess that the idea of the project came from Joyce, it is far more complicated to demonstrate who is actually responsible for the title and to establish to what extent Joyce and Vidacovich contributed individually to the translation. Nonetheless, the author claims, if the translation has preserved much of the charm of "a living, primitive language of the people" (63) conveyed by the source text, it is because of Joyce's familiarity with the Anglo-Irish dialect; and it is also because of this adherence to the rhythm of the original that *La cavalcata al mare* succeeds in transposing the spirit of the Aran Islands' socio-cultural context better than other existing Italian translations of *Riders to the Sea*, (Calimani refers to his own "*Riders*

to the Sea”: *I problemi di una traduzione letteraria* (1982) for a comparative analysis of these translations).

Along with the introductory essay, the book’s paratextual apparatus is completed by detailed notes to the text, through which Calimani comments on significant passages of the play, highlights some of the features of Synge’s language by pointing to the linguistic choices of the translators, and explains some specific references to the Irish socio-cultural context that may escape non-experts.

Calimani’s edition thus contributes to the critical debate about Joyce’s translation practices that has long engaged – and still engages – scholars in the Italian Academy and that lists names like Carla Vaglio, Carla De Petris, and Joan FitzGerald, among others. The editor’s choice to provide both an Italian and an English version of his paratext points to the attempt to also make the book accessible to non-English speaking readers in Italy.

Emanuela Zirzotti

Ennio Ravasio. 2014

*Il Padre di Bloom e il Figlio di Dedalus La funzione del pensiero
tomista, aristotelico e presocratico nell'Ulisse di Joyce*

(Lecce: You can print, Tricase)

Ennio Ravasio, besides being a music teacher and a songwriter, is also an enthusiastic independent Joyce scholar who has recently set out the results of his research in an interesting book whose title can be translated into English as “Bloom’s Father and Dedalus’ Son: the Function of Thomistic, Aristotelian and Pre-Socratic Philosophy in Joyce’s *Ulysses*” (Ravasio is currently working on an English edition). The essay aims to show that Thomas Aquinas’s treatises on the Trinity and the Creation were instrumental for James Joyce in defining the mechanism that allows Stephen Dedalus to turn himself into the Creator of *Ulysses*, and into the First Person of a trinity completed by Bloom and Molly.

The reader should not be scared by Ravasio’s daring topic, because the book - thanks to the author’s assured familiarity with these, not easy, matters - reveals itself to be a useful instrument for a wider comprehension of some though episodes of *Ulysses*, such as “Proteus”, “Scylla and Charybdis”, “Sirens”, “Cyclops” and “Oxen of the Sun”.

Ravasio shows a vast knowledge not only of theological and philosophical matters, but also of Joyce’s works, as well as a great familiarity with the huge body of secondary Joyce literature. He outlines from the first chapter how Joyce lifts the Artist to the level of God the Father and Creator, who reveals his divine essence not only

by Creation, but by generating his Son. A Son – writes Ravasio – that is announced in the fifth chapter of *A Portrait*, where we see Stephen Dedalus writing the Villanelle of the Temptress, and where the text, specifying that “the word was made flesh”, quotes the prayer of the Angelus, associated with the striking of a bell, repeated three times. A sound charged with meaning, that it will be accordingly evoked in *Ulysses*.

From the analogy between the artist and the priest celebrating the Eucharist (where body and soul, matter and spirit become one), Ravasio starts drawing Dedalus’ esthetic theory. He stresses that in the narrative, the Shakespearean references, together with frequent allusions to Arius and Sabellius’ Trinitarian heresies, cryptically reveal the contradictions within the Dedalus character, who “acts and is acted on” in the “livre de lui même.”

Ravasio contends that the instant Dedalus creates *Ulysses*’s “primal matter” (*U* 3.401-04) by blazing “cataractic planets”, he also generates Bloom, who has already been in his mind since the night before, as the novel’s “trinity” finds its potential origin in a dream shared by Dedalus, Bloom and by Molly. For Ravasio, God manifests his intrinsic unity through phenomena of shared mind, allowing Dedalus and Bloom to take possession of thoughts, emotions and even biographical details that “belong” to the other.

Ravasio reminds the reader that in *Ulysses*, a superior entity sees, registers and connects all. It has been named in several ways - from “the arranger” to “the mind of the text” – and, among its prerogatives, it takes the liberty of creating a discrepancy between the first and the second part of the novel, whose seemingly capricious stylistic lack of homogeneity contrasts with the so-called initial style, prevailing until the tenth episode. Thus, in his book, Ravasio attempts to make a contribution to the discussion concerning the reasons for this stylistic break, highlighting a fundamental structural element of *Ulysses*: the section from the eleventh to the fourteenth episode, so peculiar in

terms of form, and which – he speculates – is based on the manipulation of a specific primal matter, that is the doctrine of four pre-Socratic philosophers, one for each episode.

The question of the interaction of matter and form, starting point of Dedalus' esthetic theory, once again proves for Ravasio to be the core of the novel's structure. A net of pre-Socratic correspondences establishes the styles, voices, characters, situations and settings of a crucial section of *Ulysses*. For example, Ravasio contends that Anaximenes's doctrine presides over the building of "Sirens", where vibrations, sounds and music spread in the air - which, according to the philosopher, is the arché, the first principle of all things: everything takes its origin from air and returns to air, even Bloom's cider. Or to give another example, Ravasio stresses that the recognition of the pre-Socratic correspondences intensifies the meaning of "Oxen of the Sun" as Parmenides, with his investigation into being and not-being and the relative denial of the concept of becoming, is the hub of the episode in which two beings, English literature and Mina Purefoy's son, are born and develop in a continuous process of becoming.

Although the thesis of Dedalus Artificer/Arranger is not completely original, in trying to bring it to its extreme implications, Ravasio's essay not only compels the reader to interpret Ulysses through a philosophical lens, but also reminds us that James Joyce's masterpiece belongs to a noble and lively tradition of "metafictional" narrative.

Elisabetta D'Erme

Joyce, James. 2013.
Epiphanies/Epifanie (ed. Carlo Avolio).
(Firenze: Clinamen)

As all Joycean scholars know very well, “Epiphanies” was the name given by James Joyce himself to “little character-revealing dialogues and various impressions” he started jotting down in 1900 (according to his brother Stanislaus). The debate on whether the epiphanies we now find collected in volumes that are to be studied as “shorter works” in their own right, or as pre-compositional materials to form “genetic dossiers” of later works – i.e. as raw material for later writings – is still far from finding a definitive answer. And perhaps no answer at all is to be sought for or expected. What is more important is the fact that these works can be used as maps to explore the concept of “epiphany” within Joyce’s aesthetic theory.

The Italian critical landscape has been recently enriched by a volume that tries to tackle the aesthetic question anew, and from a different perspective. It is edited by a young Italian scholar, Carlo Avolio, whose introduction is, in fact, largely dedicated to an exploration of the process through which the author developed his aesthetic theory. Thus, Joyce’s epiphanies are turned into *living* matter, instead of being relegated into the repository of “raw material” to be re-used or dismissed by the author according to circumstances.

Following Avolio’s line of reasoning, we understand the chronological evolution of Joyce’s aesthetic theory more clearly than ever: any metaphysical connotation implied in the original Greek meaning of epiphany is immediately dismissed by Joyce, who chooses

to stick to the sensible world, and turns to the task of isolating (and at the same time enhancing) single moments of focalization on individual objects of reality. However, once the epiphanies are abandoned as “autonomous forms of literary expression”, and widely integrated into larger narrative co-texts, they fall short of their original strength as “minimal narratives” – as Gerard Genette would call them – or “minimal drama”. Nonetheless, they continue to live and generate new meanings. From the epiphanies through *Stephen Hero* through *A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man* to *Ulysses*, Avolio invites his reader to follow the coherent aesthetic thread that links the juvenile sketches to the more engaging literary works that would follow.

A comparison with Giorgio Melchiori’s pioneering edition, dating back to 1982 and published under the title *Epifanie*, seems unavoidable. In his “Introduction” Melchiori claims that the epiphanies are “autonomous expressions of James Joyce’s creative genius” (“espressioni autonome del genio creativo di James Joyce”)⁷, thus offering a full endorsement of the need for an independent study of Joyce’s juvenile sketches in the wake of those critics that consider the epiphanies as “shorter works” left unpublished by the author.

Two major philological questions are opened by the comparison between Melchiori’s and Avolio’s editions: the first is to do with the ordering of the epiphanies, and the second concerns their translation.

As to the first issue, Avolio declares that he followed the ordering found in the *James Joyce Archive*, giving priority to the manuscripts numbered by Joyce himself, and then following them with those copied from Joyce’s manuscripts by his brother Stanislaus in his booklet.

Melchiori, by contrast, had grouped the forty epiphanies into two sets: first come the dramatic epiphanies (numbers 1 to 16), then the

⁷ James Joyce, *Epifanie (1900-1904). Rubrica (1909-1912)*, a cura di Giorgio Melchiori. Milano: Mondadori, 1982, 9.

narrative ones (numbers 17 to 40). To justify the re-ordering adopted in his edition, he claimed that Joyce must have been particularly interested in the dramatic form, when he started writing. The most striking aspect of Melchiori's decision is the use of such linguistic forms as "si è ritenuto" ("it has been considered"), "è presumibile" ("it is presumable"), "quasi in ogni caso" ("almost in each case"), and "dovrebbe rispecchiare" ("it should mirror"), all of which tend to cast the light of doubt on the legitimacy of the very act of re-ordering, although based on the authoritative conclusions of Hans Walter Gabler, the editor of the *Archive* volume containing a facsimile of the Epiphanies, notes, manuscripts and typescripts.

The second issue should be treated with particular care, since it involves the translators' personal frameworks, with regard to preliminary decision-making as to the prospective readers (whether a translation is to be felt as "target-oriented", that is, as a "service to the (allophone) reader" or not, for example), and their individual aesthetic response to the source text translated. One challenging example is given by the very first epiphany, which combines a dramatic exchange between two *dramatis personae* with a sort of nursery rhyme. In this case both translators are alert and responsive to the special combination, although with different solutions: they not only preserve the final rhyming effect (see Melchiori's "occhio/ginocchio"; Avolio's "domandare/cavare"), but prepare it carefully – though with differing strategies – at the opening of the dramatic exchange (see Melchiori's "chiedere scusa in ginocchio"; Avolio's "le aquile verranno e i suoi occhi caveranno", which introduces an additional rhyming effect well before it is needed).

More generally, Avolio's rendering sounds literal in most passages – the original flavour of dryness and mystery of all the epiphanies is normally preserved – but it takes liberties whenever the epiphany has to do with the incoherent, fragmented prose language of the dreamworld: this is the case with epiphanies number 10, 20, 30,

and 37, where the translations often display register variations (see, for example, “down” rendered with “dabbasso”, and “rises up” with “si solleva”, in epiphany number 10). Although we must keep in mind that information about Joyce’s dreamworld comes through the mediation of Stanislaus’ memory of his brother’s creative workshop, nonetheless the dream-like language allows for a free treatment of single words, word-order, and syntax, as in the case of epiphany 24, where a gerund is replaced by a present tense (“shaking the wings” becoming “agitano le ali”).

A concluding remark, which is intended to be a praiseworthy tribute to Carlo Avolio’s accuracy in tackling such a challenging task as editing the *Epifanie*, must be devoted to his meticulous use of detailed notes at the bottom of each epiphany: the complete range of manuscript and printed sources is given, but also whatever information may help readers to detect situations and characters from the real world, as well as Joyce’s recycling of words, syntagms or images in later works.

Romana Zacchi

Anne Fogarty and Fran O'Rourke (eds)
Voices on Joyce
(Dublin: University College Dublin Press)

If – as Joyce portended – Dublin could be recreated utterly and exclusively from the pages of *Ulysses* alone, *Voices on Joyce* tells us why. One gleans from the book jacket alone that this is no easy feat of scholarship – a shadowy juxtaposition of two Joyce images adorns it. In the foreground is a profile of Joyce looking into the distance while a man (also Joyce) with his eyes lowered and forehead creased lurks in the background; Zürich, photographed along with him, looks on through reddish emboss and blur. One approaches this volume as if through these coalescent images of Joyce – at once silhouetted and translucent; at once troubled by that which lies ahead and that which remains shrouded in the present moment. The plurality of voices surrounding the enigma that is Joyce and his oeuvre are meticulously assembled here. As if set for a judicial hearing, the articles which grace this collection conduct themselves as jurors whose voices are not just brought into chorus to be heard, but also to individually resonate in the halls of history known as Joyce scholarship.

Owing to its humble congeries of essays, edited by the eminent Anne Fogarty and by Fran O'Rourke (both of University College Dublin), the volume embarks on a historical journey through the Dublin of *Ulysses* and of 1904. Plentifully bestrewn throughout are Elizabeth “Lee” Miller’s 1946 photographs of Dublin taken for *Vogue*. These photos conserve much of Joyce’s Dublin and are not just images, but compositions that bear intense historical significance;

memories which are “at once redolent, elusive and distant” (Fogarty 8). One notes, for instance, that the chapter by playwright Frank McGuinness begins with a picture of the interior of Barney Kiernan’s pub. Overhead, hangs a sign which reads “Guinness is Good for You” under which patrons toast and converse to their pints of, what seems clearly to be, Guinness. As a result, the images align themselves to the topic of each chapter, each one chosen to tell a story or provoke a Joycean Dublin memory.

We hear the hubbub of the Jewish quarter as Cormac Ó Gráda maps the relations between real Jews in 1904 Dublin and fictional Jews mentioned in *Ulysses*. He takes special care to establish historical connections between Leopold Bloom’s Jewish context in *Ulysses* and 1904 Dublin’s recorded Jewish inhabitants. His research aims to capture the “vibrancy of the Jewish community at the time” (16). Even though he claims that the genealogical trace turned out, at best, to be a bunch of “wild goose chases,” Ó Gráda’s case is convincing: Bloom is invariably disqualified from most of Dublin/Irish Jewry (16). He stands out like a sore thumb. Despite the numerous reasons for his social abjection that researchers have hitherto illustrated, Ó Gráda emphasizes the impossibility of Bloom’s Jewishness: his “pleasant old times” (*U* 4.210) in Jewish homes would mean that he would not have understood any language other than Yiddish.

What better way to celebrate Bloom’s insignificance than celebrate Bloomsyear? Real dates of events in 1904 Dublin, notes historian Michael Laffan, are lost to the reader of *Ulysses*. Socially, the standard of living was bleak at this time and a large majority of women were employed as maidservants (26). At centre stage, he asserts, is land ownership and Irish nationalism. He emphasizes the circumstances that made 1904, claiming that by the time *Ulysses* was published in February 1922, “Bloomsday and Bloomsyear, the Dublin and the Ireland of 1904, belonged to a vanished world” (35). In a

manner akin to lyrical existentialism, *Ulysses* steers clear of the political occurrences that beset Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, ironically, the undercurrents of nationalism and unionism are nowhere more apparent than in “Cyclops,” where the Citizen and his cronies deride Bloom for his ethnicity. Bloom, as Joyce already noted, may be compared to the Irish national heroes Robert Emmet, Wolfe Tone and Charles Stewart Parnell, who are no more Irish than he is.

Adding to Joyce’s metronomic flitter between history and fiction is Anne Fogarty’s incisive look at “collective and individual acts of memory” with regards to Joyce’s writings on Parnell (38). The memory of the dead lingers on “in the symbol of the unrealized statue that seems a stony blank rather than a fixed and readily decipherable site of memory” in “Hades” (38). Joyce, as Fogarty affirms, identified himself with Parnell as an “outcast” in order to satirize Ireland’s political and social mores (38). A mythic rather than an historic Parnell plagues much Irish history, and for Joyce, his various identifications of this figure in his fictions are one such form of deification. For Joyce, Parnell was not just the “destructiveness of the past, the lack of the present and the revolutionary regenerative energies of Joyce’s art” but “a form of memory with a future” (49).

Unlike Clive Hart and Ian Gunn’s topographical guide to the *Ulysses* of Dublin, Joseph Brady’s offering focuses on the class differences prevalent in 1904 Dublin, and in this light gives not only a tangible account of shops and services but also of demography. To know the profiles of people who shopped at the resplendent boutiques and ran the economy of Dublin is to acknowledge the ever-widening socioeconomic disparity. Brady also finds that certain connecting streets like South Great George’s street were populated with stores that rarely advertised their products and instead listed their royal patrons (83). According to an advertising guide, “Grafton Street was the most prestigious shopping area at the start of the twentieth

century” (80) and it continues to retain its old architectural glamour today (95). Traversing 1904 Dublin, one unravels its dark secrets whilst well-dressed bourgeoisie trot by in taxis.

In perhaps the most provocative read in this collection, Justice of the Supreme Court of Ireland Adrian Hardiman supplies hard facts on crimes alongside legal terminology that no well-meaning sleuth can resist. Hardiman’s article, short of being a Whodunit itself, presents a Sherlockian account of unnatural deaths in *Ulysses*. The cases Joyce fictionalized are modeled closely on reported ones, most of them without conclusive resolutions and grey areas. A “trial by law” is “a formal attempt to establish the truth of past events” and this, Hardiman says, coincides with the “unreliability of the daughters of memory” which Stephen ponders in “Nestor” (53). Hardiman references a useful court and police statement made on the 1899 Childs murder case, adding a renewed air of speculation not even the papers of the day could have sustained. Legal history chances upon fiction, and readers are reminded that “cases are not, of course, won on fine speeches alone” (61). Despite Joyce’s contempt for co-counsel T.M. Healy KC, MP, in the acquittal of Samuel Childs, he credited barrister Bushe on the “advocate’s verve, eloquence and presentation in resolving the clash of rival narratives” (61). Such hawkish attention to detail and the revered skill of rhetoric are also noticeable in Stephen Dedalus in “Scylla and Charybdis.” The author ends with the caveat that his legal treatments are “a caution against over-interpreting evidence in such a way as to reach rash or false conclusions” (63). This extends to us readers who have to reach back into history and transact varying narratives before drawing conclusions.

Other important and equally illuminating essays by individuals of diverse backgrounds abound: Journalist Terence Killeen reviews photographer Lee Miller’s journey to Dublin and her relationship to Man Ray as well as to modernism and *Ulysses*; Richard Kearney answers the difficult “what is God?” question Deasy poses in “Nestor”

by extricating the epiphanies of Aquinas and Duns Scotus and juggling the composite of *whatness* and *thisness* that is the alloy of Joyce's epiphany (*U* 2.383); Joseph Long's argument that "Joyce's choice of exile" was "a way of choosing himself" extends to his choice of models in Dante, Virgil, and Homer (202); Donal McCartney and James Pribek scrutinize Joyce's University College Dublin and schooling albeit with different trajectories. Despite Joyce's poor performance at university, McCartney adroitly maintains that "the Jesuits and their college had indulged what Fr Browne understood to be his 'weird' sort of talent" and aided his growth (75). Also deserving of special mention are Fran O'Rourke's exceptional discussion of Joyce and Aristotle, Fritz Senn's witty exposition of etymological relatives in Ovid and Joyce, and Conal Hooper's spirited explication on sport in *Ulysses*.

As a whole, while the essays investigate Dublin through Joyce's oeuvre, they benefit from an absence of pressure to stick to any one strict theoretical hypothesis. The collection makes for easy reading, jolting the reader at necessary points with references to Joyce's texts that most may have already encountered. Divided into four disparate sections, one pays sole attention to historical narratives and another to Dublin; the other two are intertextual ventures and contemporary Joyce. These sections also map different spots of time through which Joyce has grown up as a literary figure. All in all, the themes are well-paced, celebrating the diversity of Joyce's readers and the universality of Joyce's works. History features here as an important tool for reading Joyce as it colours in the circumstances that gave rise to his works. Dates and places either displace characters or root them at a point in time. They also investigate the author's imagination, and how external events influenced his characters and critics. Just like every nightmare that should be contended with head-on, the historians and philosophers of *Voices on Joyce* are just those heroes. As theoretical readers project inwards, self-reflexively following Joyce's characters

and texts, historians start by extending outwards. They read the pavements and the streets; smell the river and the air, on this nightmarish day of Dublin past.

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Text should be justified to the left.

Length of articles: a maximum of 5.000 words, text and notes (including spaces).

Quotations:

Short quotations, in the body of the text.

Long quotations should be presented like a normal paragraph, but preceded and followed by a line jump.

Any elisions or cuts made within the quotations should be indicated by [...].

Referencing:

Most referencing should be done with the body of the text with the author date page system: (Costello 2004: 43).

Where necessary use footnotes rather than endnotes. Footnotes should be numbered consecutively. A note number should be placed before any punctuation or quotation mark.

A list of *Works cited* should be placed in Times New Roman (12) at the end of the text

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