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**A Close Reading of Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling*
Women in Contrast to James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young
*Man***

Bachelor Thesis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma "Důkladná Četba Díla Samuela Becketta *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* v Porovnání s Dílem Jamese Joyce *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*" vypracoval samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedl jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci, dne

Podpis:

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Methodology	5
3. Samuel Beckett, James Joyce: A Brief Biography	6
4. <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i>	9
4.1 Plot Overview	10
5. Dream of Fair to Middling Women	11
5.1 Plot Overview	12
6. Analysis of the Central Theme.....	12
6.1 ‘The Conflict of the Spirit and the Body’	13
6.1.1 <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i>	15
6.1.2 <i>Dream of Fair to Middling Women</i>	17
7. Comparison	23
8. The Protagonists.....	26
9. Structure	29
10. Conclusion	31
11. Závěr	32
12. Annotation.....	33
13. Anotace	34
Works Cited	35

1. Introduction

This thesis attempts at an analysis of Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*¹ (1992) in comparison to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*² (1914), in regard of the literary influence that I believe Joyce's work represents for *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. Nowadays, both Samuel Beckett and James Joyce are known to have achieved a cult status in literature, and are considered by many as two of the greatest authors in the 20th century literature. In 1928 in Paris, Beckett would help Joyce write *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and become a student of his. It is, therefore, surprising, to say the least, that a relationship between *Dream* and *A Portrait* has not yet been touched on, let alone thoroughly explored.

In this essay, I will attempt to analyse *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in regards to their central theme, the way in which their respective protagonists act, and the structure according to which the two novels are written. This essay is divided into three consecutive sections, each of which corresponds respectively to the subject ascribed to it: the first section could be said to function in order to introduce this work and the two authors; the second section, then introduces the works under analysis, whereas the third section deals with the analysis of the works presented and concludes the thesis.

The purpose of this thesis is, then, to provide an insight into the connection between Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the similarities in the approach that the respective authors took in writing the works analysed. In order to do so, I utilize the primary texts of *Dream* and *A Portrait*, as well as a wide range of secondary literature.

¹ Samuel Beckett. *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1993.

² James Joyce. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2011.

2. Methodology

I chose *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* as the focus of my thesis because of how I believe it relates to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. I believe the books to be similar not only in terms of structure, but also in terms of style and genre: both *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are coming-of-age novels.

Both Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are works of semi-autobiographical fiction. I was able to confirm the presence of autobiographical elements in Beckett's work via the research that I undertook, which meant linking parts of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* to their factual counterparts, as documented by James Knowlson—who is widely considered to be a central authority on Beckett—in *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*.³ Since *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* serves more as a sort of intertextual and inspirational backdrop to the narrative presented in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*—the main focus, once again, is on Beckett—I approach the autobiographical elements in *A Portrait of the Artist* more as being complementary of Beckett's life and work, rather than providing a complete account of Joyce's life.

However, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is, also, a semi-autobiographical, not an autobiographical novel, as it is often falsely stated: an introduction to *A Portrait* deems Stephen Dedalus to be a 'Joyce under a pseudonym,' and 'the story, to all intents and purposes, autobiographical.'⁴ Stanislaus Joyce, in his book *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years*,⁵ called the character of Stephen Dedalus, who serves as the protagonist of *A Portrait of the Artist*, 'an imaginary, not a real, self-portrait.'⁶

As *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* is one of Beckett's more obscure works, there has not yet been much written about it, aside, perhaps, from how it correlates with Beckett's life. I, therefore, am confident in stating that this particular correlation between Joyce and Beckett, and the intertextual influence between *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is relatively

³ James Knowlson. *Damned to Fame: the Life of Samuel Beckett*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁴ *A Portrait*, p. VII.

⁵ Stanislaus Joyce. *My Brother's Keeper*. The Viking Press, Inc, 1958

⁶ *My Brother's Keeper*, p. 48.

underexplored in criticism, therefore this thesis will hopefully provide further insights to the ways these two works can be read when observed side-by-side.

The approach I chose was to analyse the two works side-by-side, in terms of themes, characters, and structure. To do this, I, at first, present details from Beckett's and Joyce's lives, as I believe these are crucial in understanding the differences in the authors' approaches. Afterwards, a brief description of each work follows, to ease the reader into their subsequent analysis.

In *Damned to Fame*, Beckett is said to have 'regarded [Joyce's] influence as primarily a moral one.'⁷ In this essay, I shall propose that apart from the much emphasised and discussed moral influence, there literary influence was equally important and significant. The thesis will attempt to highlight on certain aspects of that kind of influence. I propose that Joyce's influence on Beckett, at least in his early years, was, primarily, a literary one: *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, which Knowlson describes as being 'very Joycean in its ambition,' should then serve as a clear evidence of this.

It is also stated in *Damned to Fame* that '[Beckett] is consciously trying to rid himself of Joyce's influence'⁸ in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. To analyse the development of Beckett's own style as being derivative of Joyce, I shall look at the influence of James Joyce's *A Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man* on Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, and at how the two differ in the execution of the similar methods undertaken in terms of composition.

3. Samuel Beckett, James Joyce: A Brief Biography

Both Beckett and Joyce were exiles. Despite the fact that they were both self-imposed, the details behind each of their exiles differ: Samuel Beckett came from 'a comfortably off, middle-class Dublin family,'⁹ and, once older, was expected to either take over the family trade, or to become a lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin. Beckett, graduating from Trinity with a Degree in Modern Languages, only left for Paris, at first, to teach English at the École Normale Supérieure. His exile did not begin as one.

From an early age, James Joyce studied to become a priest. He attended the Clongowes Wood College, until being transferred to the Belvedere College, after

⁷ *Damned to Fame*, 2422-2423.

⁸ *Damned to Fame*, 3299.

⁹ *Damned to Fame*, 618.

Joyce's father, John Joyce, was met with monetary difficulties. Each Clongowes and Belvedere were chief Jesuit establishments in Dublin. Later, Joyce went on to attend 'the Royal University of Ireland, at University College, [which was] an affiliated Jesuit institution.'¹⁰ He graduated with a degree in English, French and Italian, and decided to leave for Paris soon after, to attend Medical School. Joyce turned his back on the Church, 'hating it most fervently,'¹¹ and in doing so, he also turned his back on Ireland.

Since 5, Beckett attended the Elsner Academy, ran by 'Misses Ida and Pauline Elsner.'¹² Beckett was taught music and took piano lessons from Miss Pauline, while Miss Ida, Beckett's individual teacher, was 'registered [...] as a teacher of languages and Beckett began to learn [...] French from her at a very early age.'¹³

Beckett left the Misses Elsner Academy in 1915 to attend Dublin's Earlsfort House. At Earlsfort, Beckett further honed his proficiency in French. From Earlsfort, Beckett transferred to the Portora Royal School, from which he would later transfer to Trinity, to study Modern Languages. The stay at Dublin's most prestigious University brought about Beckett's encounter with Bianca Esposito, a lecturer of Italian, who invoke in Beckett an appreciation for Dante and the *Divine Comedy* (1320).

At Belvedere, Joyce studied English and French, along with Latin and Italian, and 'applied himself happily to his studies.'¹⁴ He was an exemplary pupil until the age of 14, when an encounter with a certain "lady of the night" 'helped to fix his image of the sexual act as shameful.'¹⁵ The encounter marked a shift in Joyce's relationship with the Church.

After leaving Belvedere in 1898, James Joyce continued his education at the University College, Dublin. Father Charles Ghezzi, a Jesuit and a teacher of Italian at the College, 'gave Joyce a good grounding in Dante.'¹⁶ Along with Dante, the University College period introduced Joyce to Giordano Bruno, and meant for Joyce the end of his allegiance to the Church: 'he would retain faith, but with different objects.'¹⁷ Joyce thought it better to shift his focus to art. In 1900, Joyce published *Ibsen's New Drama*, a critical essay.

¹⁰ *My Brother's Keeper*, p. 93.

¹¹ James Joyce, and Richard Ellmann. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Faber and Faber, 1975.

¹² *Damned to Fame*, 705.

¹³ *Damned to Fame*, 2530-32.

¹⁴ *James Joyce*, p. 46.

¹⁵ *James Joyce*, p. 48.

¹⁶ *James Joyce*, p. 59

¹⁷ *James Joyce*, p. 65.

In 1902, James Joyce left for Paris to study at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Paris. He could not finish his studies due to an inefficiency in French and returned to Dublin the same year. Joyce would then travel to Paris once more, in 1903, only to return again, to see May Joyce die. He began drinking heavily. In 1904, Joyce began work on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It would take a decade to complete. On June 10th, 1904, Joyce met Nora Barnacle. They decided to elope.

Joyce's exile had begun. Joyce and Nora arrived in Zurich in 1904, and left for Trieste soon after. In Trieste, Joyce began to teach English. Joyce's teaching continued in Pola and in Trieste again, after all aliens have been expelled from Pola, in 1905, by the Austrian authorities. Joyce wrote of his situation in Pola:

I have come to accept my present situation as a voluntary exile—is it not so? This seems to me important both because I am likely to generate out of it a sufficiently personal future [...] and also because it supplies me with the note on which I propose to bring my novel to a close.¹⁸

In Trieste, Joyce would work on *A Portrait of the Artist*. It was completed and, finally, published, along with *Dubliners*, via the influence of Ezra Pound, in 1914. Once the First World War broke out, Joyce moved to Zurich in 1915. In 1920, the family relocated to Paris. In Paris, Joyce published *Ulysses* in 1922.

In 1926, Samuel Beckett left for Florence, to prepare for his final examinations in Italian and French. During the stay, Beckett formed a friendly relationship with Bianca's siblings, Mario Esposito and Vera Dockrell, née Esposito. Vera 'recounted to Beckett a story about James Joyce,¹⁹ in which the author is discovered, by Vera and Vera's mother, laying drunken in a passageway in Dublin, after being thrown out of a theatre rehearsal; the incident occurred on June 20th, 1904.

Beckett graduated from Trinity in 1927. He began teaching French and English at Campbell College, Belfast. He left Campbell in 1928, returning home to Cooldrinagh at Foxrock, County Dublin, to stay with his family. There, Beckett reunited with his cousin, Peggy Sinclair, on a visit from Kessel, Germany. Much to the family's dismay, Beckett fell in love with Peggy. He later adapted the relationship in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. It became the basis for the novel's second chapter.

¹⁸ *James Joyce*, p. 194.

¹⁹ *Damned to Fame*, 1721.

Beckett arrived at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris on November the 1st, 1928. He was greeted by Thomas MacGreevy, a friend of Beckett's, associated, also, with the École. In 1927 in Florence, Mario Esposito introduced Beckett to Joyce's work. In 1928 in Paris, Thomas MacGreevy introduced Beckett to Joyce. Of their first meeting, Knowlson wrote:

Beckett wanted to meet Joyce, mainly because of his intense admiration for *Dubliners*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses* and some of his poems [...] There was a lot in the background and personality of the older Irish writer to attract Beckett. They both had degrees in French and Italian, although from different universities in Dublin. Joyce's exceptional linguistic abilities and the wide range of his reading in Italian, German, French and English impressed the linguist and scholar in Beckett, whose earlier studies allowed him to share with Joyce his passionate love of Dante [...] They shared too a fervent anticlericalism and a scepticism in all matters to do with religion, although their mutual preoccupation with religious imagery still ran very deep [...] ²⁰

The relationship of Joyce and Beckett was that of mentor and mentee: Beckett would write for Joyce, conduct research, and Joyce would have Beckett spend lengthy periods of time over. Joyce's daughter, Lucia Joyce, took to Beckett with a blind devotion. Beckett was still involved with Peggy Sinclair. Once the matter had been resolved—Beckett's interest was purely in James Joyce—the relationship of Joyce and Beckett had deteriorated. In 1932, Joyce and Beckett would reconcile.

4. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Semi-autobiographical in nature, James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* details the life of Stephen Dedalus, an Irish youth, on his journey to adulthood. '[It] begins with the [...] innocence of a story told to a child, and ends with a tone that is hesitant, suspicious, fragmented and estranged,' as Colm Tóibín has pointed out.²¹

²⁰ *Damned to Fame*, 2263-2264.

²¹ Colm Tóibín. 'Colm Tóibín: James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*, 100 Years On.' *The Guardian* (2016). Guardian News and Media. Dec. 29, 2016.

Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist* is a depiction of an Irish Catholic, struggling to retain his faith in the Church.

It took Joyce a decade to write *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The work on the manuscript began in 1904, in Dublin, and, at first, the work carried the name *Stephen Hero*. Joyce began work on *Stephen Hero* as a reaction to the death of his mother, May Joyce, after realizing that 'he could become an artist by writing about the process of becoming an artist.'²² Having written close to a thousand pages, Joyce abandoned the manuscript of *Stephen Hero*, deciding to revise the text completely; in Trieste, Joyce began to work on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Joyce had made 'the significance of trivial things'²³ the main subject of *A Portrait*. This allowed Joyce to look at life and dissect from it what no author before had been able to dissect: 'the necessity of representing the self in its childish beginnings as well as in its completion.'²⁴

4.1 Plot Overview

Stephen Dedalus is born into a wealthy, Dublin family.

'Chapter One' of *A Portrait*, Stephen's father, Simon Dedalus, tells Stephen an old-fashioned story. Stephen is intrigued. A little later, while still a child, Stephen proclaims he wants to marry a Protestant. His family is outraged.

Simon Dedalus enrolls Stephen at the Clongowes Wood College, a Jesuit boarding school. An incident occurs early on, when Stephen's glasses are broken; Stephen, unable to see properly, does not write the work he is assigned. Due to not doing so, Stephen is 'pandied' by one of the authorities at Clongowes.

In 'Chapter Two', Simon Dedalus transfers Stephen to the Belvedere College, also run by the Jesuits, due to financial difficulties. A brilliant and devoted pupil, Stephen suffers a crisis of faith after he commits 'a sin of flesh' with, to euphemize, 'a lady of the night'. He is overcome with guilt, and fears for his soul.

In 'Chapter Three' of *A Portrait*, Stephen's fear is deepened by attending the sermons of Father Arnall, which depict Hell explicitly. In light of these sermons,

²² James Joyce, p. 144.

²³ James Joyce, p. 164.

²⁴ James Joyce, p. 208.

Stephen turns to God for forgiveness. He is unable, however, to resist the ‘vigour of life within him.’²⁵

‘Chapter Four’, the director at Belvedere presents Stephen with the option to either assume, or to dismiss priesthood. Leaving the director’s office, Stephen decides to dismiss the director’s proposal. Stephen has an epiphany, while walking along the shore: Stephen decides for the latter, in order to become an artist.

In ‘Chapter Five’ of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus is preparing to leave for the university.

5. Dream of Fair to Middling Women

William Hutchings’ classification of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* was that of ‘the alpha and the omega of Samuel Beckett’s fiction,’ as it was ‘the first of his novels to have been written and the last to have been published.’²⁶ Beckett ‘wrote [*Dream*] in the summer of 1932 [...] finishing it before the end of summer.’²⁷ He attempted to publish *Dream* desperately, and failed. Afterwards, Beckett did not want ‘to see *Dream* in print [...] until “some little time after [his] death.”’²⁸ It was.

For Beckett, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* was to serve as an experiment. In writing *Dream*, Beckett revolted against the tradition of ‘coherence, artifice, [and] unity,’ which he regarded ‘as belonging to the “chloroformed world” of Balzac’s novels.’²⁹ As a result of this revolt, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* is convoluted, often, to the point of incoherence. ‘That the style is under the influence of Joyce is almost beyond question,’³⁰ John King points out. Beckett’s own opinion of *Dream* was, that ‘it stinks of Joyce in spite of most earnest endeavours to endow it with [Beckett’s] own odours.’ In the later chapters of this essay, I will attempt to point out the similarities between *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *A Portrait of the Artist*, as well as the way in which Beckett tries to ascribe his work with original ideas.

²⁵ *My Brother’s Keeper*, p. 130.

²⁶ William Hutchings. ‘Dream of Fair to Middling Women by Samuel Beckett, Eoin O’Brien and Edith Fournier.’ *World Literature Today*, Vol. 68, No. 1, (Winter, 1994), pp. 125–126.

²⁷ *Dream*, p. VI.

²⁸ *Dream*, p. X.

²⁹ *Damned to Fame*, 3285-3286.

³⁰ John King. ‘Reading for the Plotless: The Difficult Characters of Samuel Beckett’s “A Dream of Fair to Middling Women.”’ *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Modernist Afterimages (Autumn, 2005), pp. 133-152.

5.1 Plot Overview

Dream follows the life of Belacqua Shuah. Belacqua's chief occupation in *Dream* is to court The Smeraldina–Rima and The Alba, while trying to evade the advances of The Syra–Cusa. Being a re–telling of Beckett's life from 1928 to 1930, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* chronicles Beckett's affair with Peggy Sinclair, the affair with Ethna MacCarthy, as well as the fiasco with Lucia Joyce.

The first chapter of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, 'One', opens with Belacqua, 'an overfed child,'³¹ chasing after a van that is being pulled by a horse.

The second chapter of *Dream*, 'Two', depicts Belacqua, sitting on a pier in Dublin. Belacqua and the Smeraldina–Rima, the current object of Belacqua's affection, have just bid farewell to one–another, for the Smeraldina is en route to Austria. Belacqua leaves Ireland for Vienna, to visit the Smeraldina–Rima. They stay near Vienna for a short period. Then, Belacqua is raped by the Smeraldina and leaves for Paris.

In Paris, Belacqua lives amongst the high–society and spends money lavishly. Also in Paris, Belacqua is approached by the Syra–Cusa, whose advances Belacqua shuns.

While in Paris, Belacqua receives a letter from the Smeraldina–Rima, and decides to leave for Hesse, to stay at the Smeraldina's family home. He arrives in Hesse suffering from diarrhoea, and is unable to be physical with the Smeraldina. Her English is imperfect, and Belacqua sees this as an obstacle: he mocks the Smeraldina's speech, and their relationship deteriorates.

'Und' marks Belacqua's return to Dublin, and serves as an introduction to the Alba. In 'Three', the fourth chapter of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, Belacqua returns to his family's home. During his time at home, Belacqua courts the Alba, albeit unsuccessfully.

6. Analysis of the Central Theme

I find there to be a certain difficulty in attempting a definite reading of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as well as in producing an in–depth analysis of any of Joyce's books. This difficulty, I believe, is due to the complex nature of Joyce's writing. As agreed upon by many, Joyce's work is meant to be read as a whole. William York

³¹ *Dream*, p. 1.

Tindall addresses this phenomenon in his 1959 book, *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce*, by stating:

Joyce wrote one great work in several books, each of which is connected with the others [...] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* makes *The Dead* seem preliminary sketch [...] *Ulysses* [...] makes *A Portrait [of the Artist]* seem preliminary sketch.³²

Since neither *Dubliners* (1914), *Ulysses* (1922), nor *Finnegans Wake* are the primary focus of this essay, I will not try and make claims as for this essay to be in any way a holistic interpretation of Joyce's body of work. Should an occasional reference to Joyce's later work occur, it does so only in order to better flash-out the major themes of *A Portrait of the Artist*, which I then compare to those in *Dream*.

In the case of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, the issue with interpretation is, also, due to the novel's complexity. Were I to focus exclusively on the way *Dream* is written, I would have to dwell deeply into Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, and doing so would go beyond the scope of this essay. In the following chapter, I shall try and approach *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as the basis of my reading of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, and to point out the connection I was able to spot between the two novels.

6.1 'The Conflict of the Spirit and the Body'

Published in 2014, Ondřej Vlašín's essay, *Autobiographical Aspects in Samuel Beckett's Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, claims, that 'the central theme of *Dream*' is 'the conflict of [the] spirit and [the] body.'³³ This is true: *Dream*'s preoccupation is with Belacqua's struggle with 'the basic elements of human existence,'³⁴ which, in this case, are love and sex. As such, Beckett's *Dream* is very similar to Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where 'the conflict of spirit and the body' drives Stephen to abandon his faith, for his dwelling in impure thoughts stains the his attempted godliness.

³² William York Tindall. *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce*. The Noonday Press, Inc., 1959, p. 50.

³³ Ondřej Vlašín. *Autobiographical Aspects in Samuel Beckett's Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. Masarykova univerzita, Filozofická fakulta. Brno, 2015. p. 50.

³⁴ *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett, Cambridge Companions to Literature*. Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition. p. 149.

In English literature, ‘the conflict of the spirit and the body’ gained prominence in the late 13th century, ‘as a dramatic simplification of the moral struggle in the Middle Ages.’³⁵ It began its life as ‘a fundamental part of Christian beliefs,’ and has since become a commonplace metaphor, which ‘dramatizes with a peculiarly direct and satisfying psychological realism man's feelings about moral choice.’³⁶

As a metaphor, ‘the conflict of the spirit and the body’ is a concept the usage of which can already be seen in the Bible. Medieval thinkers, such as Dante Alighieri or St. Augustine, used the Bible and other religious texts often as a source of inspiration. John Allen Canuteson specifies this in his 1975 essay, *The Conflict Between the Body And the Soul As a Metaphor of the Moral Struggle In the Middle Ages: With Special Reference to Middle English Literature*:

The passages [...] to which preachers and writers returned again and again in the Middle Ages to abbreviate, clarify, and dramatize the moral struggle were [...] Galatians 5, 16-17:

I say then, walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would.

In the Middle Ages, the metaphorical ‘conflict of the spirit and the body’ has often been interpreted as the conflict between the ‘holy’ and the ‘unholy’. The ‘spirit’, then, is mostly seen as the Godly component of the conflict, while ‘the body’ is seen as human, due to ‘the biblical use of flesh, which frequently represented man apart from God.’³⁷

I believe it is important to emphasize that this essay does not in any way discuss the prominence of the Bible or religion in the works of Samuel Beckett and James Joyce. Although the analysis of Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* does include references to religion, these are only present because the analysis of the theme

³⁵ John Allen Canuteson. *The Conflict Between the Body and the Soul as a Metaphor of the Moral Struggle in the Middle Ages, with Special Reference to Middle English Literature*. University of Florida, 1975. p. 5.

³⁶ Robert W. Ackerman. ‘The Debate of the Body and the Soul and Parochial Christianity.’ *Speculum*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Oct., 1962), pp. 541-565.

³⁷ *The Conflict Between the Body And the Soul*, p. 4.

requires it, and are backgrounded. I do not wish to elaborate on the religious aspects of the two works, or on the prominence of religion in them. However, as the principal theme of the two novels does often appear in medieval texts, I believe it to be important to state this fact before moving further.

In the following chapters, I shall focus on how the ‘the conflict of the spirit and body’ serves as a clear-cut connection between Beckett’s *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

6.1.1 *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

It may seem out of place, at first, to consider the central theme of *A Portrait of the Artist* to be the clash of ‘mind and soul,’ as it is more often thought of as a critique of Catholicism; I myself found this addressed better in *Ulysses*, as Stephen does not condemn the Church in *A Portrait of the Artist*, and nor does Joyce. Stephen’s struggle in *Portrait* is internal and, as such, results in Stephen abandoning the Church without much ado, or a public condemnation of it.

H. G. Wells, for one, considered Joyce’s *Portrait* to be ‘the story of an education.’³⁸ This, however, is not true. While *Portrait* does, at times, comment on the Jesuit school system—the instance in which Stephen’s glasses are broken is an obvious stab at the rigidity at Clongowes—Stephen’s education in *A Portrait of the Artist* is mainly used in order to communicate Stephen’s intellectual growth, and is mostly backgrounded.

In *Portrait*, the ‘conflict of spirit and body’ arises from Stephen’s ‘sin of the flesh’, which functions as the beginning of Stephen’s ultimate loss of faith: after Stephen’s visits to the brothel, Stephen gradually begins to question his life as a Jesuit; once the ‘sin’ is committed, Stephen makes a habit out of visiting the Dublin brothels:

He would pass by them calmly waiting for a sudden movement of his own will, or a sudden call to his sin-loving soul from their soft perfumed flesh [...] It was his own soul going forth to experience, unfolding itself sin by sin [...] and no part of body or soul had been maimed but a dark peace had been established between them.³⁹

³⁸ H.G. Wells. *Review: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce*. *The New Republic*, 1917.

³⁹ *A Portrait*, pp. 103 – 104.

In the case of Stephen Dedalus, ‘the conflict of the spirit and body’ is the conflict of Stephen’s religious vocation, and the sexual desires that beset Stephen. The religious vocation of Stephen’s represents ‘the spirit’, while the sexual desires represent ‘the body’. Having visited the brothel, Stephen realizes his bodily desires. Soon after, Stephen’s mind is tormented by visions of Hell. These visions, a direct result of the sermons on Hell, held by Father Arnall, are meant to terrify the pupils at Belvedere, and force them to abstain from the life of sin. After hearing Father Arnall’s sermon, Stephen imagines his soul, burning in Hell, in vivid detail. He suffers from nightmares.

In realizing ‘the body’s’ desire, Stephen has betrayed ‘the spirit’—the God. In this sense, Father Arnall’s sermons serve as the catalyst for Stephen, enabling his growth. Fearful for his soul, Stephen tries to repent for the ‘sin’ he had committed by becoming a better Christian:

His daily life was laid out in devotional areas. By means of ejaculations and prayers he stored up ungrudgingly for the souls in purgatory centuries of days and quarantines and years; yet the spiritual triumph with ease so many fabulous canonical penances did not wholly reward his zeal of prayer [...] The rosaries, too, which he said constantly – for he carried his beads loose in his trousers’ pockets so that he might tell them as he walked the streets [...] He had no temptations to sin mortally. It surprised him however to find that at the end of his course of intense piety [...] he was [...] at the mercy of childish and unworthy imperfections.⁴⁰

It is of crucial importance to point out both Stephen’s attempt to repent for the sin he committed and Stephen’s dissatisfaction with the attempt’s result. While able to adhere to the teaching of the Church via a conscious decision—i.e. via ‘the spirit’, the God-fearing element of Stephen’s character, devoted to the teaching of the Church—Stephen’s basic, subconscious instincts prevail, and his nature—i.e. ‘the body’, which led Stephen ‘astray’ in the first place, and to revolt against the Church—does not change, despite Stephen’s desperate attempt to suppress the ‘human’ within him. It is due to this that, despite his efforts, he is often irritated by the simplest, most common things:

⁴⁰ *A Portrait*, pp. 151 – 155.

His prayers and fasts availed him little for the suppression of anger at hearing his mother sneeze or at being disturbed in his devotions.⁴¹

This also shows that Stephen's participation in the Jesuit order and tradition is coming to an end. While Stephen is not yet *actively* searching for a life beyond Belvedere, he is doubtful, and over-compensates accordingly. The episode of Stephen's delusional devotion to the Church is brought to a close once Stephen admits to the scope of his doubt, asking himself a question that functions as the culmination of his religious crisis:

To merge his life in the common tide of other lives was harder for him than any fasting or prayer and it was his constant failure to do this to his own satisfaction which caused in his soul at last a sensation of spiritual dryness together with a growth of doubts and scruples [...] I have amended my life, have I not?⁴²

By stating the uncertainty about his actions so far, Stephen admits defeat. However, the internal struggle that Stephen undergoes in *A Portrait of the Artist* is only resolved after he speaks with the director at Belvedere, who offers him the position of a priest.

Stephen, realizing that he no longer feels the same devotion to the Church as he once did, is compelled to decline the offer. As he ponders the idea of priesthood, Stephen is repelled by the stagnation of the religious life, in direct correlation to his failed attempt of amending his life.

6.1.2 *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*

Peter Fifield's instalment in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, the later work of Samuel Beckett is described as follows:

⁴¹ *A Portrait*, p. 155.

⁴² *A Portrait*, pp. 156–158.

How It Is might be understood to examine the nature of cruelty and suffering [...] *Happy Days* poses the question of the tone and value of humour [...] *Waiting for Godot* is a play about waiting, *Endgame* about ending.⁴³

Abiding by this analogy, it would be easy to dismiss *Dream* as being about dreams. While the previous chapter makes the claim of *Dream* being concerned with ‘the basic elements of human existence,’ it does not account for the way by which this is achieved. To put it bluntly: *Dream* is not about dreaming, although it does take place primarily in Belacqua’s mind. *Dream* is a very detailed, realistic portrayal of Belacqua’s life, and despite the fact that it is often incoherent—as it is mostly written using the stream of consciousness—it does not aim to transfigure Belacqua’s life, only to portray it in its own way.

In *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ‘the conflict of the spirit and body’ arises, at first, from the ‘rape’ of Belacqua by the Smeraldina–Rima. Belacqua’s reaction to the ‘rape’ is one of disappointment, and forces Belacqua to look at the Smeraldina in a different light: while, originally, Belacqua thought highly of the Smeraldina, he never wished for the relationship to be anything but platonic, for Belacqua is repelled by the Smeraldina’s physicality:

Because her body was all wrong, the peacock's claws. Yes, even at that early stage, definitely all wrong. Poppata, big breech, Botticelli thighs, knockknees, ankles all fat nodules, wobbly, mammore, slobbery-blubberty, bubbububbub, a real button-bursting Weib, ripe.⁴⁴

Belacqua’s inner conflict begins once he is forced out of the realm of ‘the spirit’—which, in this case, is Belacqua’s idealistic notion of love—into the realm of ‘the body’—which is mirrored in Belacqua’s sexuality, that he is constantly trying to suppress in order to leave his idealistic notion of love unspoiled. While he is fond of her emotionally, the sexual experience with the Smeraldina–Rima, who is incomparably more lascivious than Belacqua, irritates Belacqua to the point at which he begins to shun the bodily aspect of the relationship completely:

⁴³ *Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, p. 149.

⁴⁴ *Dream*, p. 15.

So that one day he forgot his manners and exhorted her: “For the love of God will you not take a loiny cavalier servente and make me hornmad ante rem and get some ease of the old pruritus and leave me in peace to my own penny death and my own penny rapture.”⁴⁵

As Belacqua distances himself more from the physical aspect of the relationship with the Smeraldina, i.e. ‘the body’, he begins to put more emphasis on the emotional aspects of it, i.e. ‘the spirit’:

Next the stuprum and illicit defloration, the raptus, frankly, violentiæ, and the ignoble scuffling that we want the stomach to go back on; he, still scullion to hope, putting his best... er... foot forward, because he loved her, or thought so, and thought too that in that case the right thing to do and his bounden duty as a penny boyo and expedient and experienced and so on was to step through the ropes of the alcove with the powerful diva and there acquit himself to the best of his ability.⁴⁶

In Paris, Belacqua is approached by the Syra–Cusa, to whom Belacqua is attracted physically:

The Syra-Cusa: her body more perfect than dream creek, amaranth lagoon. She flowed along in a nervous swagger, swinging in a thin arm amply.⁴⁷

This deepens Belacqua’s inner struggle. While he is attracted to the Syra–Cusa physically, the romantic devotion of Belacqua’s holds, still, with the Smeraldina–Rima. Finding himself, once again, in the conflict of ‘the spirit and body’, Belacqua compares the Smeraldina–Rima to the Syra–Cusa. Each, the Smeraldina–Rima and the Syra–Cusa, represent a side of Belacqua’s struggle: the Syra–Cusa represents ‘the body’, while the Smeraldina–Rima represents ‘the spirit’. Belacqua is left to decide what it is that he wants.

⁴⁵ *Dream*, p. 19.

⁴⁶ *Dream*, p. 114

⁴⁷ *Dream*, p. 33.

The evidence of Belacqua's emotional growth can be seen in his meditations on beauty, in which he decides that:

[...] the essence of beauty is predicateless, transcending categories [...] that beauty, in the final analysis, is not subject to categories, is beyond categories.⁴⁸

While the preoccupation with beauty mirrors Belacqua's spiritual growth, he does not cease to be plagued by his own, carnal desires. In other words, 'the spirit', which Belacqua is trying his best to uphold above anything else, is constantly being dragged down by 'the body', as seen in his physical attraction to the Syra-Cusa.

In a review of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* for the *Harvard Review*, Paul Hannigan notes that, in *Dream*, 'it is uncertain what Belacqua wants. In a sense, he wants sex, but he is troubled by a morbidly Irish sexual diffidence as well as crushing acedia.'⁴⁹ While Belacqua does want sex, this 'want' is not as simple as it may seem. The way in which Belacqua wants sex is so that he can be denied it, as it is the case with the Alba. With the Smeraldina-Rima, Belacqua's main goal was purely platonic affection, which is irreparably stained by the notion of the Smeraldina-Rima's lascivious nature. In this, 'the conflict between the spirit and the body' is, once again, clearly visible: the conflict, which began with the Smeraldina-Rima spoiling Belacqua's idealistic notion of love—a representation of 'the spirit', which, in turn, Belacqua tries to amend over the course of *Dream*—re-emerges with the introduction of the Syra-Cusa, with whom Belacqua's belief in the independence of 'the spirit' from 'the body' is challenged.

The reason why Belacqua does not allow the advances of the Syra-Cusa is due to the emotional bond with the Smeraldina-Rima, and an equal-in-value lack of attachment to the Syra-Cusa. The Syra-Cusa is clearly attracted to Belacqua, which repels him, as Belacqua is only able to see the Syra-Cusa as a temptress. This, also, is clearly deducible from Belacqua's dismissal of the Syra-Cusa:

⁴⁸ *Dream*, p. 34.

⁴⁹ Paul Hannigan. 'Dream of Fair to Middling Women by Samuel Beckett.' *Harvard Review*, No. 5, 1993, p. 216.

Now we seem to have got the substance of the Syra-Cusa. She was a cursed nuisance. Be off, puttantina, and joy be with you and a bottle of moss.⁵⁰

At this point in *Dream*, Belacqua's 'conflict of the spirit and body' is at its most prominent: although he wishes for no sexual contact with the Smeraldina-Rima, for he finds her physically repulsive, Belacqua does feel strongly about her. It is due to these feelings toward the Smeraldina-Rima that Belacqua dismisses the Syra-Cusa and the brothels, and since he is still tempted by the carnal desires, Belacqua resorts to masturbation. This is epitomized in Belacqua's statement on love, which says: 'Love condones...narcissism. Love demands narcissism.'⁵¹

The catalyst to Belacqua's growth in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* arrives, once Belacqua receives the Smeraldina-Rima's letters. It is from this point on, also, that the relationship of Belacqua and the Smeraldina-Rima begins to deteriorate. Belacqua is appalled by the grammatical errors in the letter, and the all-in-all 'amusing' nature of the Smeraldina-Rima's writing and, later, her speech, which Belacqua openly mocks:

"How comes it [...] you speak [English] so badly?"

[. . .]

"Egal" she said, loud and rude, "egal."

"So *badly*" he insisted "so *badly*."⁵²

At first, Belacqua attempts to further pursue the relationship with the Smeraldina-Rima. He travels to Hesse, where the Smeraldina-Rima resides.

Belacqua's 'conflict of the spirit and the body' is resolved once he realizes the futility of his relationship with the Smeraldina-Rima. The Smeraldina-Rima, frustrated as her carnal desires have not been satisfied for a while, tries to persuade Belacqua into having an intercourse with her, while Belacqua is hopelessly trying to get across his notion of love. Belacqua believes that love and sex 'are simply incompatible:'

⁵⁰ *Dream*, p. 51.

⁵¹ *Dream*, p. 38.

⁵² *Dream*, p. 84.

‘I admit Beatrice’ he said kindly ‘and the brothel, Beatrice after the brothel or the brothel after Beatrice, but not Beatrice in the brothel, or rather, not Beatrice and me in bed in the brothel.’⁵³

It is only after the Smeraldina–Rima leaves Belacqua that Belacqua’s internal conflict ends. The Smeraldina–Rima, who constantly approaches Belacqua with the need for physical passion, namely as he is trying to confess his true feelings for her, finally dismisses Belacqua’s feelings by leaving him, after he makes it explicit he wishes not to copulate. As such, Belacqua’s idea of love and sex, and the belief that the two are simply not compatible, is more literal than it may appear at the first glance. Not only does Belacqua believe that love and sex are not compatible. To Belacqua, the two are mutually exclusive.

It is important to note, however, that, in the case of Belacqua and the Smeraldina–Rima, the dismissal is not one sided. The dismissal of the Smeraldina–Rima’s of Belacqua’s ‘spirit’ is met with the dismissal of the Smeraldina–Rima’s ‘body’ by Belacqua. Having had abandoned Belacqua, the love Belacqua felt for the Smeraldina–Rima deteriorated, reviving, in turn, Belacqua’s suppressed libido. After the Smeraldina–Rima leaves, Belacqua spends the night with a prostitute.

After the relationship with the Smeraldina–Rima ends, Belacqua moves to a new relationship, this time concerning the Alba. The Alba is the only of the three women to whom Belacqua is both physically and emotionally attracted. At this point, ‘the conflict of the spirit and the body’ is at a state of rebirth, as both ‘the spirit’ and ‘the body’ are at the state of an equilibrium. However, the Alba does not share Belacqua’s feelings and rejects him:

He has not lain with her. Nor she with him. None of that kind of thing here, if you don't mind.

At being told off, the conflict of Belacqua’s ends for the last time.

⁵³ *Dream*, p. 102.

7. Comparison

James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to the Middling Women* share the conflict, the central theme: 'the conflict of the spirit and body'. In each of the works, the way in which the conflict is realized—i.e., the journey which Stephen Dedalus and Belacqua take to resolve their internal struggle—and the conflict's resolution is achieved in a similar manner, and is, therefore, one of the most important connections between *A Portrait* and *Dream*. In this chapter, I shall attempt to compare the approaches of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* to the conflict of the spirit and the body, respectively.

In both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, the conflict of the spirit and the body begins with a sexual intercourse. The very first difference—and, the main between *A Portrait* and *Dream* in terms of the theme—is the nature of the intercourse. With *A Portrait*, the intercourse is intended. It is a conscious choice made by Stephen Dedalus to walk into the brothel and 'sin mortally.'⁵⁴ At first, Stephen does not feel guilty about committing the 'sin of flesh', rather, he is taken in by it:

She passed her tinkling hand through his hair, calling him a little rascal.

—Give me a kiss, she said.

His lips would not bend to kiss her. He wanted to be held firmly in her arms, to be caressed slowly [...] With a sudden movement she bowed his head and joined her lips to his and he read the meaning of her movements in her eyes.

He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips.

In *Dream*, Belacqua's conflict between the spirit and the body begins unintentionally. Belacqua's visit to the Smeraldina-Rima in Vienna is, at first, non-sexual. It is not until Belacqua is 'raped' by the Smeraldina-Rima that the conflict truly begins, until 'the bodily' aspect of Belacqua's character is introduced. Belacqua's attitude towards the

⁵⁴ *A Portrait*, p. 155.

‘rape’ shows both the involuntary nature of the whole affair, as well as Belacqua’s original intention to keep the relationship with the Smeraldina–Rima platonic:

But in the morning, not too bright or early, she would skip in in a most rudimentary woollen gymnasium sheath, the plump bright bare fleshstilts warmed up ad rudorem, and make tea to be drunk with a lemon. For weeks, until what we are about to relate to you came to pass, that was the best hour of the day [...]

Until she raped him.

Then everything went kaputt.

The implacable, the insatiate, warmed up this time by her morning jerks to a sexy sudorem, she violated him after tea. When it was his express intention, made clear in a hundred and one subtle and delicate ways, to keep the whole thing pewer and above-bawd.

When juxtaposed and compared side-by-side, the similarity in Beckett and Joyce’s approach to the theme is more than obvious. Nonetheless, so are the differences. The main difference in the onset of the conflict is in the involuntariness of Belacqua’s sexual experience.

As both the books unfold the identical theme in what is an almost identical manner, I find it safe to assume that this approach was chosen by Beckett directly as a response to Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist*. It serves, also, as the moment in which Beckett inserts one of his own, signature themes, that is the involuntary nature of the human life, along with the inability to do as one wishes to. Following on the statement from *Damned to Fame*, it is clear that this moment in the *Dream* is also the moment in which Beckett is trying to ‘rid himself of Joyce’s influence,’⁵⁵ by adding a twist on the Joyce story which, although rather simple—by changing a voluntary sexual act into an involuntary one—allows Beckett to stray away from Joyce and endows the story with a slight, Beckettian irony.

Another similarity between the two books arises in the time following the two incidents, in which the protagonists—Beckett’s Belacqua and Joyce’s Stephen—attempt to amend their lives. Both Belacqua and Stephen spend a short period after the

⁵⁵ *Damned to Fame*, 3299.

intercourse reflecting on its moral value. While Belacqua is appalled by the sexual experience from the very first moment, Stephen's guilt over his committing the 'sin of the flesh' does not show only after the sermon of Father Arnall. As such, 'the conflict of the spirit and the body' begins as one where 'the spirit' has been stained by the 'lusts of the flesh' for Belacqua, and after the sermon of Father Arnall, Stephen's conflict reaches the same prospect.

As for the conflict itself, the one that Belacqua struggles with in *Dream* is the conflict in which the activity of 'the body'—that is, to restate the fact, the 'hideous' sexual act with the Smeraldina–Rima—stains 'the spirit'—that is, Belacqua's innocent ideal of true love. In *A Portrait*, the conflict holds between Stephen's want to 'sin mortally', a representation of 'the body', and his devotion to God, i.e., 'the spirit'. In this, Stephen's inner conflict is carried out in the more traditional sense, as it is an exact rendition of the theme as worded in *Galatians 5, 16-17*.

To achieve their ideal of 'spirituality', both Stephen and Belacqua attempt to amend the 'bodily' aspect in their lives. While Stephen abstains from visiting the brothels and follows a religious routine every day, Belacqua, too, abstains from brothels, as well as from having an intercourse with the Syra–Cusa, and resolves to masturbation. However, in ascribing the category of 'the spirit' to his love for the Smeraldina–Rima, Belacqua's inability to appropriate his life in order to pursue the relationship with the Smeraldina—Rima comes out as more of a failure than Stephen's inability to become God-like which, in itself, should be impossible.

There is also a certain correlation between Belacqua's masturbation and Stephen's piety. Via masturbation, Belacqua 'avoids the brothel and attempts to have the Smeraldina-Rima according to his God.'⁵⁶ This, again, is in direct correlation to Joyce's treatment of Stephen's over-emphasised piety, through which Stephen attempts 'to have himself' according to his God, so to speak.

While Stephen only attempts to amend his life after attending the sermon of Father Arnall, Belacqua's situation in *Dream* is slightly different. Belacqua begins to meditate on the nature of beauty and sexuality soon right after he is 'raped' by the Smeraldina–Rima. However, a change in Belacqua's approach comes about in a similar way as it does with Stephen: Belacqua receives a letter from the Smeraldina–Rima. The letter is yet another aspect of Beckett's *Dream* that is derivative of Joyce.

⁵⁶ Paul Stewart. "Sterile Reproduction: Beckett's Death of the Species and Fictional Regeneration" *Continuum Literary Studies: Beckett and Death*. Continuum International Publishing, 2009, p. 180.

Both the sermon of Father Arnall in *A Portrait of the Artist* and the Smeraldina–Rima’s letter in *Dream* relate directly to the protagonists’ sins. The sermon that Father Arnall delivers discusses lust, while the Smeraldina–Rima’s letter is lustful in nature. Both the sermon and the letter serve as catalysts for the novels’ protagonists. From the point of story–telling, they both serve the same purpose: both the sermon of Father Arnall and the letter of the Smeraldina–Rima prompt Stephen and Belacqua to move forward.

The final conversation between Belacqua and the Smeraldina–Rima can be regarded to accomplish the same function in terms of story–telling as the final conversation between Stephen and the director. It is at these sequences that the protagonists of *A Portrait* and *Dream* realize the futility of their struggle, and decide to put an end to it. In each of these sequences, their respective protagonist realizes that the goal towards which they were working—to amend ‘the body’ in a way in which ‘the spirit’ can triumph—is met with complete dismissal, which forces them to experience an epiphany.

8. The Protagonists

Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist of James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is often regarded to be Joyce’s alter–ego. Although Dedalus is modelled closely on Joyce, there are certain differences between the character of Stephen Dedalus and that of James Joyce. The Jesuit institutions attended by Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait of the Artist*—Clongowes and Belvedere—are the same institutions that Joyce himself attended in real life. As Joyce was enrolled into Clongowes by his father, John Joyce, who in *A Portrait* appears as Simon Dedalus.

However, Joyce was not nearly as brilliant and devoted of a student as what he makes Stephen to be in *A Portrait of the Artist*. The incident in which Stephen’s glasses are broken and where Stephen is punished, for example could lead one to believe that it was the only time that Stephen is punished during his stay at Clongowes. In Richard Ellmann’s *James Joyce*, it is stated that ‘on March 14, 1889, just after Joyce’s seventh birthday, he was given four pandies on his open palm for the unusual offense of Vulgar language.’⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *James Joyce*, p. 30.

In creating Belacqua, Beckett worked, also, with his own life and formed the character in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* around his life between 1928 and 1930. The story proper begins in Dublin, where Belacqua bids the Smeraldina–Rima farewell. This incident truly happened, as in 1928, Beckett saw Peggy Sinclair off when she was leaving Ireland for Kessel, which in *Dream* is featured as Hesse. In fact, there are many instances in which Beckett builds the autobiographical reality into the fictional one, with Belacqua’s dismissal of the Syra–Cusa being one of them.

Beckett was very fond of Lucia Joyce—on whom the Syra–Cusa is modelled—until the end of his life. The relationship that Lucia had envisioned with Beckett was cut short not due to Lucia being a nuisance, but to protect her. As Lucia’s mental condition was worsening, Beckett reduced the frequency with which he used to visit her father, James Joyce, so that he would not disturb Lucia further.

The main similarity between Belacqua Shuah and Stephen Dedalus as such comes from the character’s names, as they both share an origin in classical texts. Joyce picked the name for Stephen from the myth of Daedalus, the great inventor in the Greek mythology. Beckett borrowed the name for Belacqua from Dante’s *Purgatory* (1320), where Belacqua is a figure waiting in Ante–Purgatory, for an admission into the Purgatory Proper. He must spend a life–time waiting for being slothful in life.

Each Joyce and Beckett introduce the character traits of Daedalus and Belacqua into their respective works. In *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, Belacqua’s quest for love is constantly being held back by his inability to act. In the beginning of the second chapter of *Dream*, ‘Two’, Belacqua, sitting on the pier, is described with ‘his hands in a jelly in his lap, his head drooped over his hands, pumping up the little blirt.’⁵⁸ Belacqua in *Dream* is sitting in foetal position, in the same way as the Belacqua in Dante’s Purgatory:

And one of the, who seemed to me fatigued,
Was sitting down, and both his knees embraced,
Holding his face low down between them bowed.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Dream*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Dante Alighieri, et al. *Dante's Divine Comedy: Hell, Purgatory, Paradise*. Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2013, p. 23.

Joyce's Stephen is also acknowledged in regard to the Greek myth. At the moment in which Stephen decides not to take up priesthood and realizes that his true calling is not to become a messenger of God, it is to become an artist:

The phrase and the day and the scene harmonized in a chord. Words. He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue [...] His soul had arisen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her grave-clothes. Yes! Yes! Yes! He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impeccable, imperishable.⁶⁰

With both Stephen and Belacqua, their experiencing epiphany is connected to the characters after whom they are named: Stephen's epiphany is, as presented above, the realization that he can re-invent himself. In Greek mythology, Daedalus was the greatest inventor in Greece. He was the man who built the Labyrinth, in which the Minotaur was kept, as well as the man who built for himself and his son, Icarus, a set of wings made off of wax, in order to escape a tower in Crete, in which the two were being kept. In realizing the strength of the words, Stephen acquires the tool necessary for him to escape the prison of the Jesuits, in other words, Stephen 'becomes an artist because art opens to him 'the fair courts of life' which priest and king were trying to keep locked.'⁶¹

For Belacqua, the epiphany arrives once he is told off by the Alba, and urged to move on. In this sense, the relation to the Belacqua in Dante's *Purgatory* is as clear as clear as it can get. In *Purgatory*, the original Belacqua must wait at the slopes of Mount Purgatory, unable to move forward, for either the entirety of his lifetime, or until someone frees him from the ordeal. Only then can he leave the shores of Ante-Purgatory and begin to climb up Mount Purgatory, towards the Garden of Eden. Beckett's Belacqua is 'freed' from the 'purgatory' of his inner struggle as soon as the Alba expresses her disinterest in him.

⁶⁰ *A Portrait*, p. 171–175.

⁶¹ *James Joyce*, p. 148.

9. Structure

In *Damned to Fame*, Knowlson describes ‘the overall structure’ of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* as being derivative of ‘Belacqua’s experiences with three young women: the Smeraldina-Rima, the Syra-Cusa and the Alba.’⁶² With *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, one could say that the overall structure of the work derives from Stephen’s life as he moves through the three stages of education presented in the novel, attending Clongowes, Belvedere, and, in the end, the university.

However, while there are certain similarities between the ways in which the two books are structured, this is also the category in which they differ the most. *A Portrait of the Artist* features five chapters, each of which communicates a different period of Stephen’s life. *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* ascribes its corresponding five chapters each to a different woman. The opening chapter of *Dream*—‘One’—is the only chapter in the book completely devoted to Belacqua, and it portrays Belacqua as a child. It is also the most Joycean of the chapters. In the first chapter, Belacqua is shown running after a horse, and in seeing it defecating, Belacqua’s sexuality awakens:

Behold Belacqua an overfed child pedalling, faster and faster, his mouth ajar and his nostrils dilated, down a frieze of hawthorn after Findlater's van, faster and faster till he cruise alongside of the hoss, the black fat wet rump of the hoss [...] Stiffly, like a perturbation of feathers, the tail arches for a gush of mard. Ah...!

In his autobiography of James Joyce, Richard Ellmann provides a chapter that substantially discusses the structure of *A Portrait*:

In the first chapter the foetal soul is for a few pages only slightly individualized, the organism responds only to the most primitive sensory impressions, then the heart forms and musters its affections, the being struggles towards some unspecified, uncomprehended culmination, it is

⁶² *Damned to Fame*, 3302-3303.

flooded in ways it cannot understand or control, it gropes wordlessly toward sexual differentiation.⁶³

In this description of the opening chapter of *A Portrait*, one can clearly identify the similarity between the intended function of Beckett's writing in *Dream* and Joyce's writing in *A Portrait*. Both the authors structure their opening chapters as means of introducing not only the characters of Stephen and Belacqua, but as an easy introduction into the rest of the two works as they stand in writing. *Dream* opens in a highly experimental manner, which is proper—perhaps even crucial—for a work written almost entirely in stream of consciousness. With *A Portrait*, the matter is bound to get a little more complicated:

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.

He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt.⁶⁴

In opening *A Portrait* to a scene told largely in stream of consciousness, Joyce begins to adapt the reader to the structure in which the book is to follow: each of the episodes is presented as written in a different style, and the language in which these episodes are told gets progressively more sophisticated. The 'sexual differentiation' that Ellmann hints upon is embodied by Stephen's realization of his own gender: '*he* was baby tuckoo [italics mine].'

Another main structure point shared by the two novels are the events which come to serve as catalysts for Belacqua and Stephen: the sermon, and the letter. Both the sermon of Father Arnall and the letter of the Smeraldina–Rima appear in roughly the same moment in the novels. These sequences function as the central points in the bodies

⁶³ James Joyce, p. 297.

⁶⁴ *A Portrait*, 1.

of the two novels, and embody a thematically crucial moment in the evolution of Belacqua and Stephen.

10. Conclusion

Whether or not *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* was, on its own, a work of literature was never the question. Rather, the question posed at the beginning of this essay expressed an interest in how exactly does Beckett's unique work relate to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in terms of literary influence. As the similarities between the two books become obvious after the very first reading, it was rather interesting to me to find out that there has not yet been a proper, academic paper written analysing the two works in juxtaposition to one another, at least not one that I could find.

In analysing the two works, I, at first, resolved to a short overview of the biographic materials available to me, concerning Samuel Beckett and James Joyce. I did so for I believe such an approach to provide an inside look into the world behind the novels, as well as due to the fact that the works that this essay attempts to analyse are semi-autobiographical. As such, I found the biographical materials to be an irreplaceable source of information in understanding the creation of Belacqua and Stephen Dedalus.

Afterwards, I briefly introduced the works under analysis. This introduction serves a double purpose, as it introduces the reader to the works discussed which may prove alien to a first-time reader, while functioning also as a summary of the material. The summary, then, can be referred back to during the analysis, making the text easier to understand.

The analysis of *Dream* and *A Portrait* introduces the concept of 'the conflict of the spirit and the body', where the two works are juxtaposed and discussed thoroughly. It is by means of this analysis that I was able to establish the existing similarity between *Dream* and *A Portrait* from the thematic standpoint. The two works share the central theme and even approach it similarly. Additionally, both *Dream* and *A Portrait* conclude the conflict, as predicated of the theme, with their respective protagonists having an epiphany. Likewise, I was able to arrive at this conclusion via the substantial analysis.

In terms of their protagonists, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *A Portrait of the Artist* behave in a similar fashion in featuring a character the name of whose had been borrowed from the classical texts. However, Belacqua Shuah and Stephen Dedalus do not only serve as extensions of the classical characters the names of whose they bear; Belacqua and Stephen prove to be as much of extensions of their authors as they do of their namesakes.

Unfortunately, in terms of structure, the books are not too similar. While they both follow a five–chapter structure, they utilize this division rather differently, and aside from the nature of the opening chapter, the sermon of Father Arnall, and the fact that, in both books, each chapter corresponds to a different sequence of the protagonists' lives, *Dream* and *A Portrait* remain structurally dissimilar.

I believe that in writing this essay, I was able to support the statement made at the beginning, i.e., that the literary influence of James Joyce on Samuel Beckett was equally important and significant as the moral one.

11.Závěr

O tom, zda je *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* literárním dílem, nebylo nikdy pochyb. Otázka položená na začátku této práce spíše vyjadřovala zájem o to, jak přesně je z hlediska literárního vlivu Beckettovo jedinečné dílo spojeno s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* od Jamese Joyce. Zaujalo mě, že přestože je podobnost mezi těmito dvěma knihami zjevná již po prvním přečtení, nepodařilo se mi nalézt žádnou akademickou práci, která by se zabývala jejich srovnáním.

Při rozboru těchto dvou prací jsem se rozhodl sepsat nejprve krátký přehled životopisných údajů, které mám k dispozici ohledně Samuela Becketta a Jamese Joyce. Učinil jsem tak, protože věřím, že takový přístup poskytuje náhled do světa za romány a zároveň proto, že jsou obě díla, která se tato práce pokouší analyzovat, semiautobiografická. Na základě toho považuji životopisné údaje za nenahraditelný zdroj informací pro pochopení stvoření Belacqua a Stephena Dedaluse.

Následně jsem krátce představil rozebíraná díla. Tento úvod slouží dvojímu účelu, neboť uvádí čtenáře do probíraných knih, které se mohou při prvním čtení ukázat jako těžko uchopitelné, a zároveň funguje také jako shrnutí materiálů. K shrnutí se poté lze během analýzy zpětně odkazovat, což usnadňuje pochopení textu.

Rozbor děl *Dream* a *A Portrait* představuje koncept "konflikt ducha a těla", na jehož základě jsou tyto dvě práce postaveny vedle sebe a důkladně rozebrány. Díky této analýze jsem byl schopen prokázat podobnosti z tematického hlediska mezi *Dream* a *A Portrait*. Obě díla sdílí hlavní námět, a dokonce k němu i stejně přistupují. Navíc je v *Dream* i v *A Portrait* konflikt vyřešen, jak je naznačeno už v námětu, tím, že oba protagonisté zažijí epifanii. K tomuto závěru jsem došel i při důkladném rozboru.

Co se týká protagonistů, jak v *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, tak v *A Portrait of the Artist* vystupují postavy, jejichž jména byla inspirována klasickými texty. Nicméně Belacqua Shuah a Stephen Dedalus neslouží pouze jako odrazy postav z klasické literatury, jejichž jména nesou, ale ukázali se být do stejné míry i odrazy svých autorů.

Z hlediska struktury si knihy bohužel příliš podobné nejsou. Přestože se obě skládají z pěti kapitol, využívají tohoto dělení rozdílně. Kromě povahy první kapitoly, kázání otce Arnalla, a skutečnosti, že se v obou knihách každá kapitola odehrává v jiném životním období protagonisty, zůstávají *Dream* a *A Portrait* strukturálně odlišné.

Věřím, že napsáním této práce jsem podpořil prohlášení učiněné na jejím začátku, tedy že literární vliv Jamese Joyce na Samuela Becketta byl stejně důležitý a významný jako ten morální.

12.Annotation

This essay is concerned with pointing out similarities in the selected works of Samuel Beckett and James Joyce, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Furthermore, this work attempts to analyse the extent to which the similarities between the two novels in terms the central theme—that is, 'the conflict of the spirit and the body'—their protagonists and structure are clearly identifiable.

In the analysis of the novels' protagonists, biographical materials were used to make the distinction between the characters and their authors clear and definite. The chapter concerned with the structure of the two novels seeks to point out the main structural points that appear in both novels.

Key words: Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, a conflict of the spirit and the body

13. Anotace

Tato esej poukazuje na podobnosti ve vybraných dílech Samuela Becketta a Jamese Joyce, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* a *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Dále se tato práce také pokouší analyzovat, v jakém rozsahu jsou jasně identifikovatelné jednotlivé podobnosti mezi ústředním tématem těchto dvou románů — a sice, "konfliktem ducha a těla" — jejich protagonisty a strukturou.

Za účelem jasného a definitivního rozlišení mezi jednotlivými postavami a jejich autory byly v rámci analýzy protagonistů použity biografické materiály. Strukturou zabývající se kapitola je určena k poukázání na hlavní body, které se z hlediska struktury nacházejí u obou románů.

Klíčová slova: Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, konflikt ducha a těla

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