

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In this Part of the book an attempt has been made to present the sort of literary materials out of which Joyce formed his conceptions of poetry, the poem, and the poet. In the first section are passages on esthetic theory which, combined, provide us with some insight into Joyce's intellectual milieu, the spectrum of critical opinion in the light of which he wrote: Scholasticism, Romanticism, Realism, Aestheticism, and Symbolism—a rich and complex blend of ideas and attitudes. As intellectual background they are relevant to *A Portrait*, but beyond this general relevance each has its share of specific connection with Joyce and this novel. We can be certain, or nearly so, that Joyce had read every one of these passages before he finished *A Portrait*. In almost every case our certainty is confirmed by verbal echoes. And going beyond verbal parallels we can see how a mind impregnated with these diverse esthetic philosophies might produce such a complex and variegated work as *A Portrait*. Joyce's elaborate presentation of Stephen's own esthetic may derive from Yeats's insistence that an artist must have a philosophy. Flaubert's emphasis on impersonality and his careful avoidance of the autobiographical, balanced against Wilde's assertion that "autobiography is irresistible," may help us understand how Joyce arrived at his concept of an impersonal autobiographical novel. And Flaubert's hostility to and contempt for the bourgeois, revealed in his remarks on Homais' speech in *Madame Bovary*, combined with Shelley's romantic view of the importance of the poet, may lie behind Joyce's peculiar concept of the Epiphany as a moment in which is revealed either the vulgarity of the non-artist or a memorable phase of the artist's mind. In combination, these passages on esthetics help account for Joyce's production of a scholastic, romantic, realistic, aesthetic, symbolist novel.

The materials in the second section are relevant to the "Villanelle of the Temptress" composed by Stephen in the last chapter of *A Portrait*. To be a literary artist, a poet, Stephen must demonstrate his mastery of both the theory and practice of poetry. As the materials in the first section of this Part relate to esthetic theory, so the materials in the second section relate to Stephen's esthetic practice in composing his poem. The materials in the third section relate to the

concept of the poet as manifested in Joyce's novel, both in the author's presentation of Stephen and in Stephen's view of his own role in life. In the name he gave his hero, Joyce related him to St. Stephen—prophet, saint, and martyr—and to Ovid's Daedalian trinity—fabulous artificer, overbold youth, and overclever victim. But Stephen's modern roots are in the view of the poet projected by the rhapsodic Italian novelist, D'Annunzio, and the view of the artist as individualist developed by Oscar Wilde. In D'Annunzio, Joyce found a voice which spoke so powerfully to one side of his nature that there is some question whether Joyce "used" D'Annunzio in *A Portrait*, or if at times we simply hear the Italian author speaking through the Irishman. Certainly in the first version of the novel (Part I, Section 3 above) D'Annunzio's is the dominant voice; but in the final version his tones are heard only in a few purple passages which have their proper place and function in the larger whole. His role has been subordinated—mainly through the importation into the narrative of those realistic and naturalistic elements which give Joyce's work a solidity and specificity that the ornate Italian never achieved.