Yeats’s Expression of the World Soul in His Early Fictions

His fiction still presented characters within an identifiable social world, but he found his characters and their world increasingly elusive and enigmatic and his own grasp upon them, as he made clear in The Sacred Fount (1901), the questionable consequence of artistic will. In his early verse and drama, Yeats, who had been influenced as a young man by the Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite movements, evoked a legendary and supernatural Ireland in language that was often vague and grandiloquent. As an adherent of the cause of Irish nationalism, he had hoped to instill pride in the Irish past. Joyce, who spent his adult life on the continent of Europe, expressed in his fiction his sense of the limits and possibilities of the Ireland he had left behind.