

## Genealogy of Joycean Melancholy: Before and After *Giacomo Joyce*

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In the first episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus says: "It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant" (*U*, 1.146). This cracked mirror of a servant of England can only show a distorted image of himself. Although this figuration may remind us of raging Caliban seeing his own face in a glass, it is not derived from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* but from "The Decay of Lying" of Oscar Wilde as Don Gifford points out.<sup>1)</sup> Let me remind you of the context of the phrases.

**Cyril:** ... I can quite understand your objection to art being treated as a mirror. You think it would reduce genius to the position of a cracked looking-glass. But you don't mean to say that you seriously believed that Life imitates Art, that Life in fact is the mirror, and Art the reality?

**Vivian:** ... the true disciples of the great artist are not his studio-imitators, but

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1) Don Gifford with Robert J. Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*, second edition, revised and enlarged by Don Gifford, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988, p. 16.

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those who become like his works of art, be they plastic as in Greek days, or pictorial as in modern times; in a word, Life is Art's best, Art's only pupil. / ... Schopenhauer has analysed the pessimism that characterises modern thought, but Hamlet invented it. The world has become sad because a puppet was once melancholy. The Nihilist, that strange martyr who has no faith, who goes to the stake without enthusiasm, and dies for what he does not believe in, is a purely literary product. ... Literature always anticipates life.<sup>2)</sup>

Vivian, speaking for Wilde himself, is objecting to the attitude of treating art as a "mirror up to nature" (*Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 2), because this attitude "would reduce genius to the position of a cracked looking-glass." Cyril the listener shows some understanding of this opinion. However, he is surprised by the radical opinion that Life imitates Art and that Life is the mirror: Life is Art's best and the product of Art, not vice versa. According to Vivian or Wilde, the "cracked looking-glass" is far different from Art. Thus calling Irish art "the cracked lookingglass" is virtually synonymous with calling it non-art. Of course, I'm not sure if Stephen would approve of the opinion of Oscar Wilde, but alluding to the phrase of Wilde, Stephen might have expressed certain bitterness towards the contemporary Irish art or, especially, the artists of the Irish Renaissance.

Now, I'd like to give close attention to the reference to *Hamlet*: here, the definition of art as a mirror, which was expressed by Hamlet or Shakespeare, was rejected by Vivian, and also, he points out that the pessimism was invented by Hamlet. Vivian says "The world has become sad because a puppet was once melancholy." The work of art called *Hamlet* cannot be a mirror up to nature, but the real human lives of the world become a mirror up to Hamlet. According to this logic, we can say that the melancholy is the mentality or sentiment fixed by Hamlet.

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2) Oscar Wild, "The Decay of Lying," in *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, with an introduction by Vyvyan Holland, London and Glasgow: Collins, 1966, pp. 982-83.

He bequeathed the sentimental legacy to posterity or later artists. Consequently, they could variously represent many types of melancholic characters. A mentality copied from art forms a life, which could be imitated by another artist. Although the work of art imitating a life may not be a superior art, the work representing a life imitating an art can produce an irony. Imitating a work of art, the lives of Madame Bovary or Julian Sorel could illustrate such an irony. And in the works of Joyce, we can see many characters that are imitating the mentality, that is to say, a melancholy.

Stephen Dedalus must have wanted to create a work of art different from the “cracked lookingglass” or cracked mirror up to nature. He may well also say that Hamlet invented the pessimism and the melancholy, not vice versa. Although Joyce might have had a certain ironical view on the aestheticism of fin de siècle or Oscar Wilde, some Joycean characters seem to indulge themselves in the *idée fixe* of melancholy: their lives were already anticipated by literary works. We can say that Joyce represents such lives by “a style of scrupulous meanness”<sup>3)</sup> If the pessimism, the melancholy and the nihilism were the *Zeitgeist* at the time, Joyce must have made use of such stereotypic representations for shaping some fictional characters.

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The word “melancholy” appears in three stories in *Dubliners*: in ‘Eveline,’ “she heard a melancholy air of Italy” (‘Eveline,’ 126):<sup>4)</sup> in ‘A Mother,’ “the melancholy of the wet street effaced all the trustfulness and enthusiasm from” Miss Beirne (‘A Mother,’ 196-97): and the most interesting examples appear in Little Chandler’s

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3) From a letter for Grant Richards, May 5, 1906, in *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Richard Ellmann, London: Faber and Faber, 1966, vol. 2, p. 134.

4) The numerals after title show the lines in Gabler edition of *Dubliners*.

monologue in 'A Little Cloud': he thought "Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament" ('A Little Cloud,' 114-15).

The first, he felt "a gentle melancholy," which may be a general sentiment everybody has felt:

He watched the scene and thought of life; and (as always happened when he thought of life) he became sad. A gentle melancholy took possession of him. He felt how useless it was to struggle against fortune, this being the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to him. ('A Little Cloud,' 29-33)

The first sentence has something derisive: whenever he thinks of "life," he becomes "sad." The repetition of "thought of life" makes the sentence sound stale, although the "gentle melancholy" would have a positive implication for Chandler. He thinks he learned the vanity of life in exchange for his youth: he got the melancholy with "the burden of wisdom." And because he is conscious of his own wisdom, he thinks of his own aptitude for poetry. In the following sentences, he thinks of the melancholy positively as his own temperament. He thinks it is something unique to him.

There were so many different moods and impressions that he wished to express in verse. He felt them within him. He tried to weigh his soul to see if it was a poet's soul. Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament, he thought, but it was a melancholy tempered by recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy. If he could give expression to it in a book of poems perhaps men would listen. ('A Little Cloud,' 112-18)

Probably, the "faith" is not only the faith in God but also the faith in human nature. Losing such a faith would bring about the "resignation," and the "simple

joy” would be brought about by the faithfulness of the others. However, these sentiments he got in exchange for his youth cannot be unique to him. He hopes to be recognized as “one of the Celtic school by reason of the melancholy tone,” but, if Wilde was right, such melancholy had become a warmed-over sentiment after *Hamlet*.

He would never be popular: he saw that. He could not sway the crowd, but he might appeal to a little circle of kindred minds. The English critics, perhaps, would recognize him as one of the Celtic school by reason of the melancholy tone of his poems; besides that, he would put in allusions. He began to invent sentences and phrases from the notice which his book would get. *Mr Chandler has the gift of easy and graceful verse. ... A wistful sadness pervades these poems. ... The Celtic note.* ('A Little Cloud,' 118-26)

Coming home after the talk with Ignatius Gallaher, Chandler tries to read a poem by Byron. It is a poem about a man standing in front of the tomb of a girl who is dead.

He paused. He felt the rhythm of the verse about him in the room. How melancholy it was! Could he, too, write like that, express the melancholy of his soul in verse? There were so many things he wanted to describe: his sensation of a few hours before on Grattan Bridge, for example. If he could get back again into that mood. ... ('A Little Cloud,' 449-54)

But his baby's crying bothers him and the mood has passed. His wish to write a melancholy poem has remained unfulfilled. Joyce himself might have experienced such a frustration. (Joyce's son Georgio was born in 27 July 1905 and Joyce started to write "A Little Cloud" in February 1906, when the baby would "awake suddenly and begin to cry" ('A Little Cloud,' 455) and sometimes "sob convulsively" (472).)

However, even if he could “get back again into that mood” and write a poetry, there is no assurance that the melancholy in his verse would “appeal to a little circle of kindred minds.”

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As for his presupposition, we could ask why he thinks the melancholy tone would remind the readers of the Celtic note at all? Don Gifford indicates the importance of the work of Matthew Arnold, *Study of Celtic Literature*. On “the Celtic school,” Gifford says that it is a label

“under which English critics, taking their lead from Matthew Arnold’s *Study of Celtic Literature* (London, 1867), had grouped late nineteenth-century Irish poets, particularly those who indulged a vague and dreamy melancholy and who were interested in a revival of the Irish cultural past, its language, folklore, and mythology.”<sup>5)</sup>

At the beginning of the chapter 6, where the word of melancholy frequently appears, Arnold indicates three features of English poetry: (1) a turn for style, (2) a turn for melancholy, (3) a turn for natural magic. He says all of these are from Celtic source.<sup>6)</sup> He always compares characteristics which he thinks as Celtic with characteristics which he thinks as German. We cannot help but feeling a kind of stereotype in his description. For instance, “realism” is a German characteristic and

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5) Don Gifford, *Joyce Annotated: Notes for Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, second edition, revised and enlarged, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1982, p. 69.

6) Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature and On Translating Homer in The Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol.5, New York: AMS Press, 1970, p. 112.

“style” is “the most striking quality” of Celtic poetry.<sup>7)</sup> He talks about “the poetical Celtic nature.” According to him, “its chord of penetrating passion and melancholy,” or “its Titanism as we see in Byron,” is Celtic “vehement reaction against the despotism of fact.”<sup>8)</sup> He says:

All Europe felt the power of that melancholy; but what I wish to point out is, that no nation of Europe so caught in its poetry the passionate penetrating accent of the Celtic genius, its strain of Titanism, as the English.<sup>9)</sup>

The real purpose of this work of Arnold is, indeed, to emphasize the Celtic nature which has already permeated the English literature. Although it is not sure if Little Chandler knows it, it is Byron whom Arnold highlights as a representative poet showing a Celtic nature distinctively. Saying “the Celtic melancholy is struggling, fierce, passionate,”<sup>10)</sup> Arnold quotes two passages of Byron’s poetry as an example of “the Titanism of the Celt.” We should think, however, such Arnoldian Celticism, in due course, would be stretched to mean the modern Irishness, be used as an Irish identity, and be favoured by the writers of Celtic Renaissance. Or we may call it a concentration of meaning of Celt if the Celtic nature would be considered uniquely Irish. It could be Joyce’s critical insinuation based on the original text of Matthew Arnold that Little Chandler is reading a poetry of George Gordon Byron.

The phrase of “Celtic note” Chandler conjures up is found in the same chapter of Arnold’s work. Here Arnold is arguing on “the power of natural magic” quoting from Keats’s poetry. According to him, there are 4 ways to deal with nature: (1) the

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7) *Ibid.*, p. 119.

8) *Ibid.*, p. 126.

9) *Ibid.*, p. 127.

10) *Ibid.*, p. 128.

conventional way, (2) the faithful way, (3) the Greek way, and (4) the magical way.<sup>11)</sup> The first one, the conventional way, is not the way of art, so we can dismiss that. In “the faithful way,” observation is all that you can do. In “the Greek way,” “lightness and brightness are added” to the observation. And in “the magical way,” charm and magic are added.<sup>12)</sup>

Although this seems rather emotional definition, he says Goethe does not give “the power of natural magic,” and that Shakespeare and Keats do.

Shakespeare, in handling nature, touches this Celtic note so exquisitely, that perhaps one is inclined to be always looking for the Celtic note in him, and not to recognise his Greek note when it comes. ... we are at the very point of transition from the Greek note to the Celtic; there is the Greek clearness and brightness, with the Celtic aerialness and magic coming in.<sup>13)</sup>

As you can see, at least in this context, Arnold originally found “the Celtic note” in Keats and Shakespeare. To put it another way, before Oscar Wilde attributes the melancholy to the mentality of Hamlet, Arnold attributed “the Celtic note” to the works of Shakespeare.

Conjuring up the name of Algy, Mulligan tries to tempt Stephen into taking a trip with him to Athens, encourages him to learn ancient Greek (*U*, 1.77-81) and proposes to work together in order to “helenize” Ireland (*U*, 1.157-58). Bearing in mind the fact that in *Ulysses* Arnoldian Celticism and Hellenism are both rejected by

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11) Ibid., p. 136.

12) On “magic,” he says: “Magic is just the word for it, — the magic of nature; not merely the beauty of nature, — that the Greeks and Latins had; not merely an honest smack of the soil, a faithful realism, — that the Germans had; but the intimate life of Nature, her weird power and her fairy charm.” *ibid.*, pp. 131-32.

13) *Ibid.*, pp. 138-39.



Stephen, Little Chandler's presupposition on his melancholy is nothing but an irony. As Bryan Cheyette says, "By superimposing an Oxonian locale onto an Irish colonial setting Joyce is radically challenging Arnoldian liberal Celticism and the Victorian promise of modernity."<sup>14</sup>

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Although the melancholy is not an exclusive possession of Celtic school, many Joycean characters are hold to this sentiment. Now I'd like to quote some literary comments on this sentiment: since Robert Burton's voluminous anatomy, this sentiment has yielded many valuable discourses on literary characters, which will, I believe, illuminate the intrinsic nature of this mentally illness better than some technically medical explanation.

Masashi Miura, a Japanese literary critic, arguing about a Japanese writer, Junnosuke Yoshiyuki, says like this:

The eyes of melancholiac, which are inept at direct contact with the social reality, look at everything from a considerable distance as if they were looking through a telescope upside down. These are the eyes which look at everything as a past thing, looking at the present as the past. A sense of nihilism seems not to be a cause but an effect or a result of these eyes or gaze. ... Even the future would be felt as if it were the past.<sup>15</sup>

Miura quotes from Bin Kimura's *Time and Self*

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14) Bryan Cheyette, *Construction of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 208.

15) Masashi Miura, *Vein of Melancholy*, Tokyo: Koudan-sha Bunko, 2003 [Fukutake Shoten, 1984], pp. 8-9: a tentative translation from Japanese by S. Kikkawa.

A man of melancholy ... experiences all the historic development of the past, the present and the future as an *irrevocable* determination.<sup>16)</sup>

And I believe one of the most understandable descriptions of melancholy is, as Miura also quotes, in Kierkegaard's *Repetition*, which says like this:

People are always shouting that a melancholiac should fall in love, and then his melancholy would all vanish. If he actually is melancholy, how would it be possible for his soul not to become melancholically absorbed in what has come to be most important of all to him?

He was deeply and fervently in love, that was clear, and yet a few days later he was able to recollect his love. He was essentially through with the entire relationship. ... He longs for the girl, he has to do violence to himself to keep from hanging around her all day long, and yet in the very first moment he became an old man in regard to the entire relationship. Underneath it all, there must be a misunderstanding.<sup>17)</sup>

To look at the present as if it were the past: if this is a symptom of melancholy, Mr James Duffy, a main character in 'A Painful Case,' seems the typical case of this malady. As you know, he has "an odd autobiographical habit ... to compose ... a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense" ('A Painful Case,' 42-45). The narrator says that a medieval doctor would have called him saturnine (32-33). On this term, Terence

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16) Bin Kimura, *Time and Self*, Tokyo: Chu-Kou Shinsho, 1982, pp. 113-14: a tentative translation from Japanese by S. Kikkawa.

17) Soren Kierkegaard's, *Fear and Trembling / Repetition*, edited and translated with introduction and notes by Haward V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 136.

Brown notes like this:

The Saturnine man, born under the influence of the watery planet Saturn, is afflicted by an excess of bile and is a gloomy heavy-spirited sort of fellow whose constitutional melancholia can only be lifted by music.<sup>18)</sup>

The fact that he meets with Mrs Sinico in a concert hall and that he lends music suggests how she is ideal company for him. Eventually, to break off their relationship is to extinguish the possibility to cure his melancholy. In four years, he thinks like this:

Now that she was gone he understood how lonely her life must have been, sitting night after night alone in that room. His life would be lonely too until he, too, died, ceased to exist, became a memory — if anyone remembered him. (310-14)

He has not changed at all for four years: a change or a growth cannot be the theme of this story. The symptom of seeing the present as the past is incurable. To make matters worse, he thinks of someone who may remember him after his death: the future is also the past for him. This is a progress of the disease. Soon he feels he is outcast from life's feast (335). There is left nothing for him without

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18) James Joyce, *Dubliners*, with an introduction and notes by Terence Brown, London: Penguin Books, 1992, pp. 282-83. Although Robert Burton's exhaustive catalogue of symptoms and cures would arouse another interest, he also says that music is "a roaring-meg against melancholy, to rear and revive the languishing soul; 'affecting not only the ears, but the very arteries, the vital and animal spirits, it erects the mind, and makes it nimble' (Lemnius, *Instit* cap.44)." (Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, volume 2 in 3 volumes, London: J.M.Dent; New York: E.P.Dutton, 1932, p. 115.)

indulging in self-pity. His misery is brought about by his strong self-consciousness.

On the other hand, we have many chances to see a man who deplors someone's loss in Joycean works. For example, in *Ulysses* the man in the brown macintosh is the man who loves a lady who is dead (*U*, 12.1497). Every reader may well suspect that he was Mr Duffy. If he haunted the tomb of Mrs Sinico, his melancholy must have progressed after the end of the short story. And on the matter of a visit to the grave of a woman, the following phrase in *Giacomo Joyce* was aroused by Joyce's visit to the grave of a Jewish woman who committed suicide:

The tomb of her people and hers: black stone, silence without hope: and all is ready. Do not die! (*Giacomo Joyce*, p. 6)

Concerning this passage, Ellmann says:

In his daily activities a daydream of her[= Amalia Popper] persecuted his mind. One day he went with a man named Meissel — 'Pimply Meissel,' he calls him — to the Jewish cemetery, to visit the grave of Meissel's wife who died by suicide.\* The experience reminded him of his beloved's mortality ... [\*Flippo Meissel's wife Ada committed suicide on October 20, 1911. In *Ulysses* Bloom contemplates a visit to the grave of his father, also a suicide, in Ennis.]<sup>19)</sup>

This type of association should be called "a deviation of time," or a life with "reminiscence of the present."<sup>20)</sup> He may be called a worrier, but as Kierkegaard says, a melancholiac would become melancholically absorbed in what has come to

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19) Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, New and Revised Edition, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 345.

20) Miura, op. cit., p. 68.

be most important of all to him. If the man who is falling in love is melancholy, he cannot help but imagining the absolute end of his love. The experience of a visit to the grave in 1911 may have aroused not only the phrase of *Giacomo Joyce* but also the action of the man in the macintosh in *Ulysses*.

In a sense, the case of Gabriel Conroy is more painful than the that of Mr Duffy. An immediate reason Gabriel was seized with the idea of death is the fact that he was told about Michael Furey by his wife. However, it is not because Michael was dead but because Gabriel and Gretta or any other people have to die that he cannot help but thinking of the dead. Nobody will deny that they would soon attend the funeral of aunt Julia, but he appreciates the impartiality of death. From the point of view in the future, every life is the past going ahead to death. Gabriel knows that his life with Gretta would soon become the past, just like her love affair with Michael was the past. For a melancholiac even the present is the object of recollection. Perhaps he would envy Michael just because Michael was already dead, because Gabriel should live a life going to death for some time. His “generous tears” for all the living and the dead is not the sublimation of his desire or jealousy but the symptom of melancholy, which is telling him of the irrevocability of the future of all the living. He is strongly conscious of the fate of every human being who should give burial to his own self-consciousness.

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*Giacomo Joyce* was written when Joyce was completing *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and was beginning *Ulysses*. So this pivots between the two books. Ellmann says:

Though it reflects long brooding, and refers to events that occurred between 1911 and 1914, Joyce appears to have written it down only in July or August

1918.<sup>21)</sup>

A love poem which is never recited, it is Joyce's attempt at the sentimental education of a dark lady, his farewell to a phase of his life, and at the same time his discovery of a new form of imaginative expression. (*Giacomo Joyce*, p. xi)

It cannot be a love letter. As for the woman who was observed like this, such a poem or a record doesn't seem to convince her of his love. As Mark Osteen says, a love letter ideally "unites giver and recipient in a verbal embrace: the lover's identity is transmitted in written form, then returned and reincorporated by the reader, who then sends back her own image, reborn, but without commodifying it."<sup>22)</sup> However, here can be found no intention to communicate with her by his poem. If she read it, she would be embarrassed by the expression as if it were a photograph taken secretly.

In general, this sketch seems distinctive among his works, setting aside the fact that this was posthumously published. Joyce was usually reluctant to represent the author himself directly: if we can take Stephen Dedalus' statement as a manifestation of Joyce's aesthetic conception on literature, he would like to remain "within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent" (*P*, v.1467-69).<sup>23)</sup> However, in *Giacomo Joyce*, we can see an explicit sensuality of the narrator, or the author. As Ellmann puts it, "Joyce allows

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21) Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 342.

22) Mark Osteen, 'Women and Gift Exchange in *Ulysses*' in *Gender in Joyce*, ed. Jolanta W. Wawrzycka and Marlena G. Corcoran, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997, p. 39.

23) The Roman numeral and the Arabic numerals show respectively the chapter and the lines in Gabler edition of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

no doubt that the hero is to be identified with himself, for he calls Giacomo 'Jamesy' and 'Jim,' and once appeals to his wife as 'Nora' (*Giacomo Joyce*, p. xii). And besides, the motif which can provide an unification for this fragmental exposure of his inner life is only the yearning for the "dark lady." If the dramatic form is the highest form of art as Stephen says, *Giacomo Joyce* seems antithetical to the aesthetic conception. Taking into consideration the fact that he completed *Giacomo Joyce* just before he gets to his only dramatic work, *Exiles*,<sup>24)</sup> they display an interesting polarity like inimical twin brothers. The former abruptly begins with the murmuring question of the narrator:

Who? A pale face surrounded by heavy odorous furs. Her movements are shy and nervous. She uses quizzing-glasses. *Yes*: a brief syllable. A brief laugh. A brief beat of the eyelids. (*Giacomo Joyce*, p. 1)

It is the beginning of his interest: who, or what kind of girl, is she? "A pale face" and "heavy odorous furs" may have no positive nuance: it might be literally pungent. Frances L. Restuccia recognises an association with the works of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, "Venus in Furs." As he says, you may see here "the masochism of Joyce's sexual desires,"<sup>25)</sup> and the first name of the writer, Leopold, may have

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24) *Exiles* was first published in 1918, but on 10 July 1917, he wrote to John Quinn that he "began to draft it in August 1914" (*Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Stuart Gilbert, London: Faber and Faber, 1957, vol. 1, pp. 104-05). On 17 July 1915 he wrote to his agent, James B. Pinker, and William Butler Yeats that he was arranging to have *Exiles* typed (*Letters*, II, p. 353; I, p. 83). After the long struggle to have *Exiles* performed, John Quinn purchased the manuscript in the spring of 1917. For the details, see 'Preface' in *James Joyce Archive: Exiles: A Facsimile of Notes, Manuscripts and Galley Proofs*, prefaced & arranged by A. Walton Litz, New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1978, pp. xxiii-xxvi.

something to do with creation of the main character of *Ulysses*.

Though the first word we can hear from her, Yes, reminds us of the last word of *Ulysses*, its “brief” sound might have provoked his irritation. However, we can see that a curiosity for a girl with glasses (*U*, 13.777) would be something the narrator shared with Leopold Bloom. From the simple interest to the minor disappointment with her brief or terse reply, there may have been already hinted the beginning of a love, or the beginning of a disappointed love. Or, we may suspect that Joyce records an encounter with an absolute alterity. Emmanuel Levinas wrote that “The question *who?* envisages a face.”

In fact the “who is it?” is not a question and is not satisfied by a knowing. He to whom the question is put *has already presented himself*, without being a content. He has presented himself as a face. The face is not a modality of quiddity, an answer to a question, but the correlative of what is prior to every question. What is prior to every question is not in its turn a question nor a knowledge possessed a priori, but is Desire. The *who* correlative of Desire, the *who* to whom the question is put, is, in metaphysics, a “notion” as fundamental and as universal as quiddity and being and the existent and the categories. ... We ask “Who is Mr. X?” and we answer: “He is the President of the State Council,” or “He is Mr. So-and-so.” The answer presents itself as a quiddity; it refers to a system of relations. To the question *who?* answers the non-qualifiable presence of an existent who *present himself* without reference to anything, and yet distinguishes himself from every other existent.<sup>26)</sup>

25) Frances L. Restuccia, *Joyce and the Law of the Father* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 131. On Sacher-Masoch, Cheyette points to *Tales of the Ghetto*, which Joyce owned, as a possible source for *Giacomo Joyce*. See Cheyette, op.cit., pp. 225-26.

26) Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969, p. 177.



Unknowability or alterity of the woman will probably bring forth an opportunity of recognizing the power of the unknown, as Vicki Mahaffey suggests. However, let me leave aside this question for the present.<sup>27)</sup>

Although he soliloquises that “There is one below would speak with your ladyship” (p. 1), he cannot unburden himself to her. We can suspect that he knows the *jouissance* of reverie: if the love was required, the *jouissance* should come to an end. However, when he says “This heart is sore and sad. Crossed in love?” (p. 5), this lament or moan also shows his melancholic anticipation of the end of love.

Richard Ellmann compares *Giacomo Joyce* with the second poem in *Pomes Penyeach*, entitled ‘Watching the Needleboats at San Sabba,’ which was written in Trieste in 1912, and says “This is the melancholy of the lover who anticipates his own failure.”<sup>28)</sup>

*Watching the Needleboats at San Sabba*

I heard their young hearts crying  
 Loveward above the glancing oar  
 And heard the prairie grasses sighing:  
*No more, return no more!*

O hearts, O sighing grasses,  
 Vainly your loveblown bannerets mourn!  
 No more will the wild wind that passes  
 Return, no more return. (*Pomes Penyeach*, p. 14)

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27) Mahaffey, *States of Desire: Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, and the Irish Experiment* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 145.

28) Ellmann, op. cit., p. 347.

The refrain of “no more return” distinctively marks the end of youth, which reminds me of the last page of *Giacomo Joyce*.

Youth has an end: the end is here. It will never be. You know that well. What then? Write it, damn you, write it! What else are you good for? (*Giacomo Joyce*, p. 16)

With the anticipation of the end of youth, he becomes conscious of his own fate. In order to overcome his grief, he desperately tries to find his reason for existence. His answer is that there is nothing left for him except *writing*. But such writing is to translate the present into the past, to fix something happened in sentences which inherently consist of past tense. The man who has nothing without writing is the very picture of a melancholic who looks everything as a past thing.

In ‘Mourning and Melancholia,’ Sigmund Freud says there is much affinity between melancholia and mourning. He applies to the analysis of melancholia what he has learnt about mourning or grief:

In one class of cases it is evident that melancholia too may be the reaction to the loss of a loved object; where this is not the exciting cause one can perceive that there is a loss of a more ideal kind. The object has not perhaps actually died, but has become lost as an object of love (*e.g.* the case of a deserted bride). In yet other cases one feels justified in concluding that a loss of the kind has been experienced, but one cannot see clearly what has been lost, and may the more readily suppose that the patient too cannot consciously perceive what it is he has lost. This, indeed, might be so even when the patient was aware of the loss giving rise to the melancholia, that is, when he knows whom he has lost but not *what* it is he has lost in them. This would suggest that melancholia is in some way related to an unconscious loss of a love-object, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing

unconscious about the loss.<sup>29)</sup>

If the man in the macintosh is in mourning for a dead woman, he may know what he has lost. On the other hand, the narrator of *Giacomo Joyce* “knows whom he has lost but not what it is he has lost” in her. In reality he has lost nothing but his hope for the consummation of love. This loss is of an ideal kind. Probably, the end of youth is what the patient would have been reluctant to be conscious of. And it is only when he could become conscious of the loss of his youth, which gave rise to the melancholia, that he could become a writer and write about the lady. The loss may be redeemed by “the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to him” as Little Chandler says, but such redemption or “wisdom” could be given only when he could actually write on it. *Giacomo Joyce* may be a record of the remedial process of his melancholy which the ages had bequeathed to him.

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In *Giacomo Joyce*, the narrator's yearning evokes a daydream, which in turn amplifies itself to the extent that the boundary between the real and the dream becomes uncertain.

She raises her arms in an effort to hook at the nape of her neck a gown of black veiling. She cannot: no, she cannot. She moves backwards towards me mutely. I raise my arms to help her: her arms fall. I hold the websoft edges of her gown and drawing them out to hook them I see through the opening of

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29) Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia' in *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology*, ed. Philip Rieff, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991, p. 166.

the black veil her lithe body sheathed in an orange shift. It slips its ribbons of moorings at her shoulders and falls slowly: a lithe smooth naked body shimmering with silvery scales. It slips slowly over the slender buttocks of smooth polished silver and over their furrow, a tarnished silver shadow ... Fingers, cold and calm and moving ... A touch, a touch. (*Giacomo Joyce*, p. 7)

On these last four words, "A touch, a touch," Ellmann (*Giacomo Joyce*, p. xxxiii) calls our attention to Molly's words, "Give us a touch, Poldy" in *Ulysses* (6.80-81). But we should rather remember the words of Stephen Dedalus in his reverie: "Touch me. Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. I am lonely here. O, touch me soon, now. What is that word known to all men? I am quiet here alone. Sad too. Touch, touch me." (3.434-36)

Now, Richard Ellmann's analysis of a passage from *Giacomo Joyce* seems very full of meaning in relation to this topic. The passage from *Giacomo Joyce* is:

Her eyes have drunk my thoughts: and into the moist warm yielding welcoming darkness of her womanhood my soul, itself dissolving, has streamed and poured and flooded a liquid and abundant seed ... Take her now who will! ... (p. 14)

Ellmann comments:

The same imaginary possession occurs in *A Portrait*:

"Her nakedness yielded to him, radiant, warm, odorous and lavishlimbed, enfolded him like a shining cloud, enfolded him like water with a liquid life: and like a cloud of vapour or like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech, symbols of the element of mystery, flowed forth over his brain." (*P*, v.1743-48)

Compare the dialogue in the last act of *Exiles*:

“ROBERT [catching her hands]: Bertha! What happened last night? What is the truth that I am to tell? [He gazes earnestly into her eyes.] Were you mine in that sacred night of love? Or have I dreamed it?

BERTHA [smiles faintly]: Remember your dream of me. You dreamed that I was yours last night.

ROBERT: And that is the truth — a dream? That is what I am to tell?

BERTHA: Yes.

ROBERT [kisses both her hands]: Bertha! [In a softer voice.] In all my life only that dream is real. I forget the rest.” (*Exiles*, p. 152)

In *A Portrait*, Stephen is making a villanelle here. He dreams of being folded in the arms of a naked woman. A sensual feeling gives birth to a poem. The sexual fertility is juxtaposed with the creation of work of art. We can say that *Giacomo Joyce* was also produced by such a fertile imagination. However, one wonders why Ellmann compares the passage with the dialogue in *Exiles*.

This is very important dialogue between Bertha and Robert. We can understand here what really happened between them. But why should we compare this with the passage of *Giacomo Joyce*? In the latter case, a sexual intercourse cannot be the fact but the imagination, or a reverie, of the narrator.

We cannot doubt that there has been a physical relation between Bertha and Robert the night before. But Bertha insists that he should call it a dream and Robert accepts this suggestion. He says that only that dream would be real. On the other hand, in *A Portrait*, the events that really happened were what Ellmann calls the “imaginary possession.” This should be called a dream.

Can we say that Bertha has the magical power to make the real into a dream at least for Robert? If he can believe it, the relation may become an imaginary possession at least for him. However, in the level of reality of this drama, we can never believe it as a dream. I suspect the comparison Ellmann suggests is to make

what Bertha calls a dream equivalent to the imaginary possession that occurred in *A Portrait and Giacomo Joyce*. Indeed, this equivalency can be possible only outside of the dramatic reality of *Exiles*.

As you know, Joyce suffered from the fear that he had been cuckolded in August 1909. Vincent Cosgrave engaged in falsehood: he told Joyce that at the time Joyce used to meet Nora, she went with him too. Taking him seriously, Joyce must have lived in agony during a fortnight until he discovered that it was malicious report.<sup>30)</sup> These agony and jealousy he experienced must have helped him to develop the imagination of feeling himself as a cuckold. In a sense, this was a precious experience for him in giving birth to Richard Rowan and Leopold Bloom. In *Exiles*, Bertha called the fact a dream, and Robert called the dream real. Ellmann juxtaposes their realistic love affair in the imagination of James Joyce writing *Exiles*, with the dream or imagination of Stephen Dedalus making a villanelle in *A Portrait*, and with the imagination of Joyce writing *Giacomo Joyce*. Giordano Bruno stated in his *Of the Infinite Universe and Innumerable Worlds* that “The actual and the possible are not different in eternity.” As James S. Atherton writes, it is from this that Joyce derives his assumption that the events and characters described in history, literature and myth have equal validity.<sup>31)</sup> Comparing the dialogue in *Exiles* with the other examples of imaginary possessions, Richard Ellmann may also have suggested the Joycean method of artistic creation largely based on his assumption about the equality and exchangeability between “the actual” and “the possible.”

On the other hand, Vicki Mahaffey thinks that Joyce’s self-examination, or the reflection, on his writing *Giacomo Joyce* gave birth to *Ulysses*: she says that Joyce

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30) Ellmann, op.cit., pp. 279-84.

31) James S. Atherton, *The Books at the Wake: A Study of Literary Allusions in James Joyce’s Finnegans Wake*, Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959, p. 36.

“seems to have realized his own unintentional arrogance.”<sup>32)</sup> “The problem with *Giacomo Joyce* is that between its covers the artist’s control is too absolute; his character is utterly at the mercy of Joyce’s representations of her.”<sup>33)</sup> The writer has a kind of privilege of representation. And he exercised the privilege on representing a Jewish woman. She convicts Joyce as a sexist and an anti-Semite.

For example, she remarks on the power relationship between the author and his subject:

Regarded sympathetically, the piece seems to represent Joyce’s desire to reverse the power flow in an unequal relationship by asserting his prerogative as a writer. ... But art, as Joyce would later see more sharply, is too often a simple strategy for reversing the flow of power, allowing the victim and aggressor to change places, and this is precisely what happens in *Giacomo Joyce*. The story of Giacomo Joyce presents Joyce as Popper’s suffering victim, but its *mode of presentation* makes her utterly subject to his representation of her. In short, *Giacomo Joyce* has sexist and anti-Semitic overtones that are essential to an understanding of the operations of prejudice and the power of art; in it, Joyce found himself to be inconsequential and undesirable in the eyes of an attractive Jewish woman and responded by instinctively and shamefully defending himself by appealing to the traditional privilege of a man, a Gentile and a writer to help him contain her power.<sup>34)</sup>

After this representation, however, “Joyce is careful to show that different laws apply to women and to Jew than to young men, and in “Cyclops” and “Penelope,” he provokes the reader ... to question any assumption of sexual or racial

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32) Mahaffey, op.cit., p. 144.

33) Ibid., pp. 150-51.

34) Ibid., p. 151.

superiority”.<sup>35)</sup> Moreover, according to Mahaffey, “Joyce designed *Finnegans Wake* so that it would be impossible for a reader to take sides for or against a character or a position with any assurance”.<sup>36)</sup>

A conclusion of Mahaffey’s treatise is that Joyce’s discoveries about *Giacomo Joyce* led to the obscurities of *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>37)</sup> But you may remember that, even in *Giacomo Joyce*, the author also represents himself in this work; Joyce is also included as a subject of representation. Mahaffey compares *Giacomo Joyce* with the works of a German graphic artist, Paul Wunderlich, and says on his work entitled *Giacomo Joyce X*:

[B]y putting himself inside the frame he gorges the privilege of the artist to make himself invisible, and this is his most important response to art’s commodification of human life — he gives up his exemption from representation; like Joyce before him, he subjects himself as well as others to the workings of his pencil, thereby complicating the relation between subject and object in his work.<sup>38)</sup>

Mahaffey may have suggested that this complicated method was produced by Joyce’s daring realization as a writer. And I’d like to add further: conversely, to pull a character out of the frame makes a kind of metafiction possible. I think Joyce tried to do so in a scene of *Exiles*.

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35) Ibid., p. 178.

36) Ibid., p. 178.

37) Ibid., p. 178.

38) Ibid., p. 166.



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In *A Portrait*, Stephen Dedalus hears some friends of his call his name in a playful manner “Stephanos Dedalos”(P, iv.764), and this outer voice prompts him to discover his own vocation as an artist like “the great artificer whose name he bore”(iv.811-12). And also in *Exiles*, Richard Rowan knows the truth by a cue of the crying of a fisherwoman:

THE FISHERWOMAN: Fresh Dublin bay herrings! Fresh Dublin bay herrings!  
Dublin bay herrings!

ROBERT [Quietly]: I will tell you the truth, Richard. Are you listening?

RICHARD [Raises his face and leans back to listen]: Yes.

[ROBERT sits on the chair beside him. THE FISHERWOMAN is heard calling out farther away.]

THE FISHERWOMAN: Fresh herrings! Dublin bay herrings!

ROBERT: I failed, Richard. That is the truth. Do you believe me?

RICHARD: I am listening. (*Exiles*, pp. 153-54)

Richard is listening to not only the voice of Robert but the voice of the fisherwoman, especially her crying of the word “herrings.” There is no doubt that Joyce is playing with words of “red herring” here. A crucial moment of recognition for Joycean character sometimes comes along with an outer voice, which appears at first glance incongruous with the context. Indeed, such an outer voice designates a moment of spiritual revelation or, in Joycean term, a moment of epiphany.

Joyce sometimes uses metafictional outer voices, which the characters in the narrative world can not hear. For example, in ‘Aeolus’ episode of *Ulysses*, the characters can not see or hear the captions, which explicitly show the fact that the text including the captions was composed by someone who had already read the narrative before. This is a method to impress the reader with its artificiality or

narrative textuality. David Hayman found out in it a presence called “the arranger” more than 30 years ago,<sup>39)</sup> but such a metafictional voice can be found even in ‘Penelope’ episode: as Don Gifford writes, the phrase of “O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh” (*U*, 18.1128-29) might be a call for help of her maker James Joyce.<sup>40)</sup> She might be able to transcend the border of the narrative world. Again, in *Exiles*, we can hear a strange discourse from Bertha:

ROBERT: Little Bertha! One embrace? [He puts his arm around her.] Look into my eyes again.

BERTHA [looks.]: I can see the little gold spots. So many you have. (*Exiles*, p. 45)

I cannot understand what these “little gold spots” are, if they are not the downlights on the ceiling of the stage. If she is referring to the lights, she is the only person who could make a metafictional discourse in this play. Joyce rewrote this line of Bertha’s at the stage of fair copy. Such rewritings are very rare at this stage of composition.<sup>41)</sup>

Richard would refuse any solution for his doubt. His self-consciousness seems to have dominated the dramatic world as if it were written by himself. However, at the end of this play, he seems to be paralysed by his own undecidability. Probably his inertia cannot be cured. Just as a melancholiac feels as if he had no future, he

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39) David Hayman, *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning*, Prentice-Hall, 1970; a new edition, revised and expanded, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982. Especially on arranger, see “Ten Years After Thoughts” of new edition, pp. 122-25.

40) Don Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, p. 626.

41) You can make sure of the rewriting in the manuscript “Yale — I, 32,” *James Joyce Archive: Exiles: A Facsimile of Notes, Manuscripts and Galley Proofs*, p. 123.

says his “deep wound of doubt ... can never be healed.” (*Exiles*, p. 162)

Miura calls a common symptom of melancholiac “a deviation of time,” which means to “live reminiscing about the present.” He also points out that this is a malady of our times, because people should live their present lives, being conscious of the nuclear weapon, which is the symbol of annihilation of the world. Because we should live with the idea of “annihilation of the world,” everyone has to suffer the melancholy:

Every realm of modern expressions is darkly permeated with the sense of vanity, in which people feel as if everything came to an end before anything happens.<sup>42)</sup>

Probably Joyce knew this malady as a characteristic of the modern age even before the nuclear threat emerged when he wrote about “Time’s livid final flame” and “ruin of all space” in ‘Circe’ episode of *Ulysses* (*U*, 15.4244-45): Stephen Dedalus is also the typical melancholiac in the world of *Ulysses*. (He has been in a long mourning for his mother. As Freud wrote, there is a certain likeness of symptom between mourning and melancholy.)

That is because Joyce needs the women who can speak the last word, a coda, which he would use again and again in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. They may get beyond the boundary of the world of modern fiction, and beyond even the control of the melancholic author.

Just as Joyce made use of the Buffalo Notebooks for writing *Finnegans Wake*, he went through and quoted from *Giacomo Joyce* many times for writing *Portrait*, *Exiles* and *Ulysses*. As you can see from the annotations Richard Ellmann made, many entries were transcribed into the latter works. However, this is also a record

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42) Miura, op.cit., p. 68.

of his love and sensuality including a melancholic farewell to his own youth, if not a love letter.

The melancholy snuggling against the disappointed love is inevitably evoking the ethical question. In *Ethical Joyce*, Marian Eide says:

This awkward epistle, *Giacomo Joyce*, is a portrait of the lover who in rejection falls back on the tawdry mechanisms of bigotry: “defending himself against the pain of rejection,” Mahaffey argues in *States of Desire*, Joyce adopted “conventionally sexist and anti-Semitic attitudes.” But it is also a portrait of recognition, of seeing the ugly potentials of hatred within oneself and accepting responsibility, of realizing that the thing that makes one discontented or unhappy is not the inadequacy of the other but the failure of the self and further that there are reaches of unknowability within the self that these disappointments reveal.<sup>43)</sup>

*Giacomo Joyce* is full of the admiration of the otherness or femininity, which definitely refuses the possibility of textual reification by a male writer. Perhaps, “the failure of the self” gives rise to melancholia. But if his disappointments reveal his own unknowability within the self, this must have been a pivotal experience for the author, who, in time, plunges into the experiment of *écriture féminine*.

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**ABSTRACT**

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Genealogy of Joycean Melancholy:  
Before and After *Giacomo Joyce*

Shin Kikkawa

Aside from the recent development in the psychiatry, melancholy has been a discursive theme in many works of art. "Mourning and Melancholy" of Sigmund Freud is still helpful for thinking about the literary characters suffering from the disappointed love or loss of someone: it is goes without saying that Stephen Dedalus cannot recover from his mourning over his mother.

Melancholy can be analysed as a fundamental disposition in Joycean characters, and especially *Giacomo Joyce* would supply the clue to understand the pivot of self-consciousness of Joyce as an artist.

Masashi Miura, a Japanese literary critic, says that the eyes of melancholiac, which are inept with direct contact with the social reality, look at everything in a considerable distance as if they were looking through a telescope upside down. These are the eyes which look at everything as a past thing, looking the present as the past. And also, Bin Kimura, a Japanese psychiatrist, says that a man of melancholy experiences all the historic development of the past, the present and the future as an *irrevocable* determination. This type of melancholy can mostly be reified in Joycean texts, especially in *Giacomo Joyce*.

Joyce sometimes introduces “outer voices”: the voice of a fisherwoman in *Exiles* or a crying of “Stephanos Dedalos” in *A Portrait*, which can provide the characters a kind of recognition: or “captions” in 7th episode in *Ulysses*, which the characters in the narrative world can not hear. The latter can remind us of the real world where the author is representing the subject, whose unknowability or alterity was repressed in the world of fiction. By introducing such voices, Joyce makes it possible that the alterity of the represented subject (especially a woman) can manifest itself beyond the domination and control of the melancholic author.

