

# Hurly-Burly

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to move elsewhere by limiting body, thought. Does it mean that philosophy, the prescribing shame that makes one deserving, while the other rejecting control of distinct and clear reasoning? Passions divulge but in how what the unity of the mind is all-encompassing actually in whatever in the body does not the plagiarist's desire however cannot be taken to convey a symbolic content advantages of stealing others' ideas is a way of looking at the divide between remainder that *cannot be present* to the values attributed to the Other. The of being a man operates as a way to body and soul, or does it work to sustain the subject of her commitment to wager about her Being.

Department of Tel Aviv University.  
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Editorial  
 Event: The WAP Congress  
 Event: The NLS Congress  
 Workshop  
**Studies**  
 Hypermodern Times

**Jacques Aubert**

## ***Passed Over Stories***

*The following text is a re-written version of a paper delivered under the title "Histoires d'opâques" at the Thirty-fourth Study Days of the École de la Cause freudienne, Les leçons du sinthome, 5-6 November, 2005.*

My paper takes off from the little text entitled "Ego nominor N... ego"<sup>1</sup> that perhaps you have looked through, one that already focuses on a short inaugural text by James Joyce, "A Portrait of the Artist", the first text he put forward for publication.<sup>2</sup>

### **Portrait**

What does a portrait tell us? First of all, quite simply, that there is something of the body; and at the same time that this is merely a condition. If it is destined to be ranked amongst works of art, then this body, says Hegel, envisaged as a head, or else full-length, has to "express the unity of the spiritual individuality and [...] above all make the spiritual unity appear."<sup>3</sup> A unity that is not a given, a spirit is still to be defined. One can grasp that this text sketches out a research project and a programme, the matrix of a work in so far as it secretly includes its author in the order of his body but not without relating to something of the order of Spirit: a matter of symbolic embodiment.

What is a written portrait? Here Joyce sets out not an autobiography disguised as a self-portrait homologous with the subject, but the exploration of what, of a subject, amounts to his constitutive "cache": the image not of a particular artist, but of that semblant that constitutes the artist as a function, and a player in a highly particular *savoir-faire* with language: that of writing, from its extreme point at which signification falters, namely, the letter. By the same stroke – and it is a decisive stroke, one that makes for a scansion and one that is paradoxically inaugural – he gives a first sample of this *savoir-faire* in his writing with his "Nego", the production of a name. Not just any name however: precisely the name of a function: of an authentic Name/Name-of-the-Father. Moreover, a name that he appropriates for himself. I remind you of this and underline it right now at the start because it will be orienting my remarks: this name is written in the midst of a language rabble where one can make out, just as they mix together, Jews and Gentiles alike.

### On a certainty, or: "It is not to be said..."

As an intransitive, "Nego" is a particular treatment of negativity, one that makes a hole. This is of such a nature as to invite us to unbind it into a neologism, i.e., literally, as the index of "a new discourse", being bifid, "N...ego". Indeed, with *ego*, he sets down the basis of an imaginary, but a new imaginary: why not the one that Jacques Lacan calls for, if, that is, the "N" thus isolated does indeed carry both a symbolic reference (the name carried by a word) and its residue, the real of the letter, any letter. As a result, one finds oneself in a "There is not...", a marker of an impossible, an impossible to make signify ("N...") because it harbours the pure act of naming, a nameless naming (heralding a discourse without speech?): a Name-of-the-Father one can go without on the condition one makes use of it... This is how two modes of writing<sup>4</sup> find themselves knotted together, the readable and the not-for-reading, which orient the reading of *Séminaire XXIII*.<sup>5</sup> In this "Nego" where, thanks to an implementation of the letter, a knot starts to sketch itself out, the "ne" (another un-reading...) would be both conjunctival and disjunctival.

*His Nego*. This act of naming, appropriating a name, is all the more remarkable given that as such it heralds, though distinguishes itself from (since on these pages it is only a question of "the artist"), the series of proper names that seem to designate Joyce himself: Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, Shem the Penman. The first of these he was to take up again in the ensuing months in *Stephen Hero*, and would only let go of with *Ulysses*, in which he gives the upper hand to that of Bloom. More exactly, Stephen Dedalus, i.e. Joyce in as much as he is caught up in "Catholic armature", to use Lacan's expression, draws out of it and makes way for the Blooms, Leopold and Molly, who are more or less

Jewish, and the present must come to make up the lack of master of those that are. We shall now try to account for the matrix, he wanted to say.

It is indispensable to this research:

The fear of the adolescent is not conceptual, but an aspect of the present, the present as an acquaintance for the moment through a to liberate their individuality. But for the rather the

### Features of contingency

It is very much traits of those of a face, of one started presenting as out, ascertained, and questioning, not only at time: far from being problematised, and Multiple presents with features crop up, and experience in some way constituting at least one of these features are "other" out, to be read before we

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Jewish, and the presentification of surplus-jouissance, flowers of jouissance that come to make up the edging, to dress down the act, as was suggested by "the master of those that know", Aristotle. This is the stride [*le pas*] with which we shall now try to accompany Joyce based on the working drawing, or if you prefer, the matrix, he wanted to offer his first readers.

It is indispensable to have in front of us the opening that proleptically frames this research:

The features of infancy are not commonly reproduced in the adolescent portrait for, so capricious are we, that we cannot or will not conceive the past in any other way than its iron, memorial aspect. Yet the past assuredly implies a fluid succession of presents, the development of an entity of which our actually present is *a phase* [My italics] only. Our world, again, recognises its acquaintance chiefly by the characters of beard and inches and is, for the most part, estranged from those of its members who seek through some art, by some process of the mind as yet untabulated, to liberate from the personalised lumps of matter that which is their individuating rhythm, the first of formal relation of their parts. But for such as these a portrait is not an identificative paper but rather the curve of an emotion.<sup>6</sup>

## Features of contingency

It is very much traits - "features" - that are involved, but not simply and crudely those of a face, of one of those characters the Renaissance prosopographies started presenting us at the dawn of modernity.<sup>7</sup> These features are not sought out, ascertained, and identified in an original whatever, but through a questioning, not only of space ("the characters of beard and inches") but also time: far from constituting a priori categories of experience, they are problematised, and this is how time sees the present being pluralised, *presents*. Multiple presents which, as we are going to see, are a host of points at which features crop up, are presentified, features of jouissance identifying the experience in some way, bestowing upon the subject an "in-lieu-of" identity, and constituting at least one of the first bearings of a discourse like no other. And these features are "characters", signs that are still to be circumscribed and laid out, to be read before writing about them.

It would not be excessive to see in these few lines the confirmation of a "scientific" aim on Joyce's part, or at least a claim to scientism: his brother Stanislaus reveals as much in his diary, on the precise date of 1904:

Whatever method there is in Jim's life is highly unscientific, yet in theory he approves only of the scientific method. [...] The word "scientific" is always a word of praise in his mouth.<sup>8</sup>

Scientism takes up a mathematical figure here: it will be a question of constructing a curve, "the curve of an emotion", out of the path of his drives. The wording is assuredly coherent with the development, which will follow, of a series of accounts, the enumeration of discrete points of experience furnishing elements of a construction, a plotted line for which one can see very well that it *cannot* go via these points, but *necessarily* to one side....: a constitutive failure, by its very nature. A real is at issue here, a real that is examined on the basis of a jouissance that crops up, definitively constituting the a priori category of its experience. There should be something of the body, and there is something of jouissance.

## Curve

What is notable is that this delineation has the semblance, so he says, of the construction of a curve: "A portrait is not an identificative paper but rather the curve of an emotion": the curve that the motions of the body can construct.

We know that in these early years Joyce was not simply fascinated by Ibsen, but he practically identified with him (as may be observed in his first essays, "Drama and Life" and "Ibsen's New Drama") and he envisaged writing a "Dublin Peer Gynt". This is why here one cannot avoid making a comparison with this figure of Bøyg, the Great Curve, who meets the hero in Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. How can one not heed the words of François Regnault, who tells us what can be grasped in the affair:

Bøyg's replies "myself" to the question "who are you?" are echoes of the motto Peer Gynt has just learnt: be yourself. In his "distribution", Ibsen does not call him "Bøyg" but "*a voice in the darkness*" [my italics: let's say: "in the *opaque*"], as though it were for Peer Gynt what Claudel's *Tête d'Or* names "the voice of my own speech". He only calls him Bøyg for the last line, as though with Peer Gynt down and out, Bøyg were becoming once more... himself.<sup>9</sup>

One can grasp what is at stake, and this would need to be picked apart more fully, in Joyce's first writings. At the same time, everything happens as if he had in his head what can, or must, for a rigorous mind like his, not so much sustain as offer all its chances to the idea of a line of beauty which, in Hogarth's wake, he gladly referred to. The curve distinguishes itself from this line in as much as it signals

its stakes, namely, the end of the supposed beauty discourse and its supposed beauty discourse, and circumscribe, in the end, a model of perfection. Don't be associated with the end of another logic, another end. In *Wake*, Brancusi was to refer to a spiral accompanied by

## Confessions

This 1904 beginning is the practices the poor fellow wrote the poems he was to know

He wrote a poem of contrivance in penitent and

Here we meet up with the public avowal of faith, the effects of this avowal, and crown (*Stephane*) promulgation, is here the portrait. At the same time, the prerequisite sacrament, a decisive issue for him

This "emotion" is a way to sublimate their energy understood in the perspective needed, at the heart of the strategic moment of

Sceptically, but satisfaction and beauty of moments – "It was meant to be corrupted; and they were good, they would have been nothing

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its stakes, namely, the enigma it aims to get round, the enigma of a real that the  
supposed beauty obscures, and which Joyce, a little further on, would ascertain  
and circumscribe. In this capacity, the curve is a first approach to the circle qua  
model of perfection. Don't these notions, this circle, on account of being able to  
be associated with the line that, in running through it, turns it into a hole, herald  
another logic, another discourse which, at exactly the same time as *Finnegans  
Wake*, Brancusi was to feature in his famous abstract portrait of a Joyce reduced  
to a spiral accompanied by an endless straight line?

## Confessions

This 1904 beginning is the moment of confessions in Joyce, one of those devout  
practices the poor fellow was wrestling with.<sup>10</sup> Precisely at that time, he presents  
the poems he was toiling with as follows:

He wrote a great deal of verse and, in default of any better  
contrivance, his verse allowed him to combine the offices of  
penitent and confessor.

Here we meet up with the double face of confession, the avowal, which may be  
the public avowal of faith as well as the avowal of transgression, and the possible  
effects of this avowal: penitence with or without repenting, the martyr's glory  
and crown (*Stephanos...*), and so forth. The avowal, the proclamation, the  
promulgation, is here the chief figure that orders the traits, the "features" of this  
portrait. At the same time, it obscures the fact that confession is the necessary  
prerequisite sacrament to Holy Communion, which as we shall see was  
a decisive issue for him.

This "emotion" is a way of designating his drives, and the curve is an attempt  
to sublimate their enigmatic path. Moreover, "confession" is also to be  
understood in the perspective of the holy man Augustine, who crops up just when  
needed, at the heart of an epiphanic evocation that was to be taken up at a  
strategic moment of "Portrait of the Artist":

Sceptically, cynically, mystically, he had sought for an absolute  
satisfaction and now little by little he began to be conscious of the  
beauty of mortal conditions. He remembered a sentence in Augustine  
– "It was manifested unto me that those things be good which yet are  
corrupted; which neither if they were supremely good, nor unless  
they were good could be corrupted: for had they been supremely good  
they would have been incorruptible but if they were not good there  
would be nothing in them which could be corrupted."<sup>11</sup>

The start of Augustine's argument would be taken up in *Ulysses*<sup>12</sup>, which as one can see merely opens out this first testimony.

One notices that one cannot be satisfied with any comparison with the *Confessions* that would be in some sort analogical. Joyce goes straight to the essential issue, even if, for Jacques Lacan's readers, he seems to be halting midway: a first knotting is being pointed at here, the same that is drawn up for us in *Seminar VII*, the knotting together of beauty, death, and corruption, against a backdrop of Law.<sup>13</sup>

### Jouissance, expense and crossing through common sense

I resume. In the way it unwinds, this "portrait" is a succession of traits, of "features", to take up his first words:

The features of infancy are not commonly reproduced in the adolescent portrait for, so capricious are we, that we cannot or will not conceive the past in any other way than its iron, memorial aspect.

This inaugural position is remarkably radical: it is an examination not of the subject-artist's memory (under the sign of identity, "*même-hoir*, heir to the meme") but reminiscence of his past, irrevocably without return, prior to any use of language ("infancy") before any appropriated speech: a subject isolated at the outset as being "not commonly reproduced". And these features constructing as best they can the curve of the artist-function are a host of features of semblance and dissemblance targeting the jouissance of writing, emerging in the formation "Nego".

But is it really a matter of isolating this "not commonly reproduced" of the outside, of setting it up? The next part shows that it is more a matter of that sort of isolation of the interior which is constituted by any crossing.

Thus he writes: "His training had early developed a very lively sense of spiritual obligations at the expense of what is called 'common sense'." Taking Joyce literally, once more, observe if you will that he brings up two new features: he calls "sense" into question, qua "common sense", and implies jouissance in the affair, tackled from the angle of "expense", since, after all, sense is also the sensual sense of the five senses, a very "lively" one, and thus we are in the order of the expense/sense rhyme. We shall not be surprised to see him, at the end of the text, comparing himself to a "spendthrift saint"; later on, he gives himself over to an "extravagance", an equivocal word designating both prodigality and eccentricity.

And one can see him opening a critique of the representatives, so to speak, of the Church, accusing them of putting themselves at the service of goods, of giving

in to "marketable goods", sacraments, is a fact taking up these pages "marketplace" value (sometimes in a field of use-value inasmuch and this is at the heart to be remaining in the

At the same time, shows him to be too much himself, to be at the cunningest angle of the value of the Latin text of his contemporary, pure, and never a *savoir-faire* (for not

### On the "cunning"

These points of view name "epiphany", the moment which is both and evanescent of the sense of mechanism. However, let's not be of the contingent: the necessary are set out being written".

It is notable how will also come to the subjective side, first in the vulgarity of "sense itself"<sup>16</sup>), then in the aesthetic apprehension from the same root of action of showing "the from *phemi*, "to say". Joyce is examining in what makes for a no cause for astonishment in the sense of "scen



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in to "marketable goodness"; it will be remembered that simony, payment for sacraments, is a recurrent theme in Joyce, especially at that time. Some time later, taking up these pages again in *Stephen Hero*, he would be asking himself about the "marketplace value of words". In other words, Joyce is starting to open up (sometimes in a hesitating fashion) the question of the writer's savoir-faire in terms of use-value in as much as it is distinct from exchange-value, in communication, and this is at the very moment he is replying to an offer of publication. He seems to be remaining in the position of saint, "décharitant" and "poubellishable".

At the same time, his practice, contemporary with this text, of epiphanies, shows him to be, from a certain angle, prisoner to repetition. And, he says as much himself, this angle aims to grasp the Beautiful: "holding mere beauty at the cunningest angle"; mere in the sense of "pure and simple" (where one finds the value of the Latin *merus*, unmixed), where one will be glad to hear the snickering of his contemporary and fellow countryman, Oscar Wilde: "the truth is rarely pure, and never simple".<sup>14</sup> And everything lies in the singular angle that defines a savoir-faire (for instance: the eighteen styles of *Ulysses*).

## On the "cunningest angle" phase

These points of jouissance that he would soon be trying to theorise under the name "epiphany", these multiple presents, are moments. Joyce says so: "the moment which I call epiphany"; and again "they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments."<sup>15</sup> One would like to understand the word in the sense of mechanics, evoking the relationship between intensity and distance. However, let's not deprive ourselves of its temporal connotation, the moments of the contingent: not the "that which" by which the possible, impossible, and necessary are set out, but the "when", to wit, "when the impossible stops not being written".

It is notable however that Joyce uses the word "phase" here, a signifier that will also come back to him to characterise the epiphany, more precisely its subjective side, first in *Stephen Hero* ("a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself"<sup>16</sup>), then in the definitive *Portrait*, where it designates the "phases of aesthetic apprehension" as well as terror and pity according to Aristotle.<sup>17</sup> *Phasis*, from the same root (*phaino*, to shine) as "epiphany", is first and foremost the action of showing, the manifestation. But Bailly reminds us that another *phasis*, from *phemi*, "to say", signifies "a word", "an act of saying". We may advance that Joyce is examining "phase" in its equivocation: a manifestation of the contingent in what makes for a semblant of speech in a "spiritual manifestation". There is no cause for astonishment at the use of the word "spiritual" here: it is spiritual in the sense of "spirit". This manifestation is that of a dead body.

This equivocation does not run counter to the value of "Phase" to designate Passover, far from it, for instance in the Vulgate, in Exodus 12:11: *est enim phase (id est transitus) Domini*. That is, in the King James translation, "it is the Lord's Passover".<sup>18</sup> For the time being, let's simply say that for the Christian readers of the Scriptures, the accent is laid, through this term, on a most singular "dead body": on the death and resurrection of Christ. We shall see later on how there might be a bit more to say about this. In any case, one can grasp against what backdrop these contingent features of jouissance that the epiphanies are stand out. And their very repetition, which is, all told, one of their characteristic features, brings out the death-drive that animates them. We know that this death-drive is to be found at work in the attempt to put these epiphanies into discourse that *Dubliners* constitutes, right up to the point that precisely with "The Dead" the act emerges; the act which, having affronted the impossible of the relation, offers, albeit for a while only, some horizon.

Hence a question arises: can this act be summed up as what goes to make up *comme-union*? And as the mirage born of *hainamoration*?

### On the edges of epiphany and what goes to make up *comme-union*

The saint, not commonly reproduced, is however only conceivable given an *Ecclesia*, given what goes to make up communion, *comme-union*. In reality, it is on this side that the keenness of the writing is to be found. We have seen that "the names of the mother" (*Alma Mater*, Holy Mother) waymark this first "Portrait of the Artist".<sup>19</sup>

The marketplace of the Good, marketable Goodness, is thus open, the marketplace of sacraments and the words (the Word?) that carry them, and singularly the sacrament that lies at the centre of the Catholic system, the Eucharist: there is a whole development to be followed up here, based on these first writings, and notably the first short-story from *Dubliners*.

The affair takes decisive shape when this first little "portrait" in a new turn digs into the question of communion a little more deeply. Addressing himself amongst others, to a woman: "... in all the ardent adventure of lust didst thou not even then communicate." The examination of the jouissance of The Woman "even then" a prostitute, is set down in the equivocation of "communicate", which also refers to both the passive "receiving holy communion" and the active "offering holy communion". A few lines later he is specifying this: "Thou wert sacramental imprinting thine indelible mark, of every visible grace."

When, after the refusal to publish that Joyce suffered for his little text, he dutifully sets about developing it in the manuscript that has *Stephen Hero* as a title, "what makes for *comme-union*" assumes all its weight in the issue. And this occurs over two distinct pages.

First of all, the epiphany is situated with his mother. The refusal to perform the central rite of the family home.

The general matter is an attempt at this new act as the mother that prevents must when coward eyes would soul intense women emanate purely iniquity full measure symptomatic the explanation

This enigmatic jouissance of The direct and sensual devotions:

There are hunting and women

On these pages, a Fa in relation to women

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mes all its weight in the issue. And the

First of all, the page on which Stephen Dedalus reveals that his discourse on epiphany is situated in the continuation, and in the same line, as a discussion with his mother. The conflict had its origin (I am abridging and simplifying) in his refusal to perform his Easter Duty, a public sign of Holy Communion in the central rite of the Catholic Church, the Eucharist. His confessor, consulted by his mother, concludes in the exodus of the mother and the other children from the family home. Here is what comes next:

The general attitude of women towards religion puzzled and often maddened Stephen. His nature was incapable of achieving such an attitude of insincerity or stupidity. By brooding constantly upon this he ended by anathemising [*sic*] Emma [the girl of his thoughts] as the most deceptive and cowardly of marsupials. He discovered that it was a menial fear and no spirit of chastity which had prevented her from granting his request. Her eyes, he thought, must look strange when upraised to some holy image and her lips when poised for the reception of the host. He cursed her burgher cowardice and her beauty and he said to himself that though her eyes might cajole that half-witted God of the Roman Catholics they would not cajole him. In every stray image of the streets he saw her soul manifest itself and every such manifestation renewed the intensity of his disapproval. It did not strike him that the attitude of women towards holy things really implied a more genuine emancipation than his own and he condemned them out of a purely suppositious [*sic*] conscience. He exaggerated their iniquities and evil influence and returned them their antipathy in full measure. He toyed also with a theory of dualism which would symbolise the twin eternities of spirit [spirit again...] and nature in the twin eternities of male and female and even thought of explaining the audacities of his verse as symbolised allusions.<sup>20</sup>

This enigmatic knotting he imagines he can formalise thus questions the jouissance of The Woman. This had appeared, from another angle, in a more direct and sensual way, a few pages before, with regard to the Maundy Thursday devotions:

There are too many mammas and daughters going chapel-hunting. The chapel smells too much of flowers and hot candles and women. Besides girls praying put me off my stroke.<sup>21</sup>

On these pages, a Father is thus implied in a position both symbolic and perverse in relation to women, and there is no shortage in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young*

*Man* (not to mention the first short story from *Dubliners*) of passages and notations in support of this feature. And this knotting is to be found at the heart of his writing qua poetic, as well as the theorisation of his experience in the epiphany.

But it is however just as important to stress, following Joyce himself, a return of the subject upon himself, a questioning of his own jouissance, which leads him to conclude in the superiority of the enigmatic feminine position regarding what he designates as a "conscience": in fact, everything happens as if he were noticing that the "emancipation" at issue is women's liberation from phallic jouissance. Hence it ensues that it remains for the man, in order to reach this haunting and enigmatic Other jouissance, to identify with The Woman in what makes her All, thanks to that production of child which, as Lacan observes, is equivalent for the woman to what perversion is for the man: this "life-drive" takes on the figure of One Jouissance. As we know, this will lead him to curious admissions.

### The Woman brought forth

If the Tenebrae and the Mass of the Presanctified fascinated him, as we have seen, it is because they have the advantage of leaving the priest somewhat out of the picture (just as Stephen Dedalus, having envisaged the role of "priest of eternal imagination", went on to want to limit himself to the role of dean), i.e., out of the act, and caught in repetition. For him, the fact that there was something of the symbolic already there was just right, it was very comfortable. And he would admit that "the rite is the poet's rest". There remained the other jouissance, knotted to the The Woman in *comme*-union, an epiphanic as well as Eucharistic devoration: epiphanic in that it conjoins common and sense. The Other jouissance adding onto the so-called aesthetic jouissance like youth to its flower: these two jouissances are but one, repetition is jouissance.<sup>22</sup>

The artist Stephen Dedalus had well ascertained his jealousy of The Woman's jouissance. How could he then get out of it without in any way turning himself into woman, producing this jouissance that produces in turn The Woman, like a closed circle?

Here is an exchange from *Exiles* between Richard and his friend Robert on the subject of Bertha, Richard's wife:

Robert [to Richard]: [...] You are so young and yet you seem to be her father and mine. [...]

Richard: When I met her first she was eighteen and since that time I have watched. I have felt her soul unfolding. Sometimes I turn to look at her in our room. I mean when I am writing. She is lying on

the bed reading a novel of her father's. [...] if I had been Robert, I could have Richard. [...] high out of the world with what I feel that I am or in other words forth. [...] bourne her

Here one can better see an incredible fantasy. Even in *Exiles*, this exercise is revealing.<sup>23</sup> It will be the entire horizon of *Exiles* (story).

### Reading at the head

There is an illustration of a whole life through a great fascination for the Tenebrae he followed religiously at heart. This is the other Stephen says to one of his

Don't you think person. [...] connection with book at the lesson he is strange?

The Reader is the Reader dark which is, amongst (celebration) and repetition Presanctified demonstration without speech or words

(from *Dubliners*) of passages and knotting is to be found at the heart of his theorisation of his experience in the mess, following Joyce himself, a return of his own jouissance, which leads to a pragmatic feminine position regarding sex: everything happens as if he were a woman's liberation from phallic desire for the man, in order to reach this point to identify with The Woman in what Lacan calls the "life-drive" which, as Lacan observes, is the drive for the man: this "life-drive" takes him to his death, this will lead him to curious

sanctified fascinated him, as we have seen of leaving the priest somewhat out of his envisaged the role of "priest of the church" (himself to the role of dean), i.e., out of the fact that there was something about it, it was very comfortable. And he was "at rest". There remained the other side of the coin, an epiphanic as well as a moment of conjoinment, common and sense. The aesthetic jouissance like youth to its end, repetition is jouissance.<sup>22</sup>

maintained his jealousy of The Woman's thought in any way turning himself into a woman in turn The Woman, like a closed

When Richard and his friend Robert on

long and yet you seem to be

eighteen and since that time of longing. Sometimes I turn to you when I am writing. She is lying on

the bed reading some book I have given her – Wagner's Letters or a novel of Jacobsen. She is struggling with sleep. You say I am like her father. Do you know what I feel when I look at her? [...] I feel as if I had carried her within my own body, in my womb.

Robert: Can a man feel like that?

Richard: Her books, her music, the fire of thought stolen from on high out of whose flames all ease and culture have come, the grace with which she tends the body we desire – whose work is that? I feel that it is mine. It is my work and the work of others like me now or in other times. It is we who have conceived her and brought her forth. Our minds flowing together are the womb in which we have borne her.

Here one can better understand that Lacan should have pointed out this incredible fantasy. Even though Joyce definitively erased the admission thereof in *Exiles*, this exercise on the representation of the impossible relation is no less revealing.<sup>23</sup> It will be noted that this practically heralds, in its last paragraph, the entire horizon of *Finnegans Wake*, but for the comic aspect (but that's another story).

### Reading at the heart of the opaque and the death-drive

There is an illustration of this opacity of the One jouissance. We know that his whole life through, right up to the nineteen-thirties, Joyce would maintain a fascination for the Tenebrae and the Good Friday Mass of the Presanctified, which he followed religiously year in year out, text in hand, even though he knew it by heart. This is the other page from *Stephen Hero* I was announcing, on which Stephen says to one of his friends:

Don't you think that the Reader who begins the mass is a strange person. No one knows where he comes from: he has no connection with the mass. He comes out by himself and opens a book at the right hand side of the altar and when he has read the lesson he closes the book and goes away as he came. Isn't he strange?

The Reader is the Reader of the Tenebrae, an impossible reader of the dark.<sup>24</sup> A dark which is, amongst other things, an aporia of the rite: at once game (celebration) and repetition, under the sign of death. The Mass of the Presanctified demonstrates this. It seems to have the characters of a discourse without speech or words<sup>25</sup>: the officiant does not consecrate the substances but

uses those consecrated the day before. There is pure repetition, without act, from which emerges the death-drive coming to the place of the sacrifice, as is accentuated by the hymn chanted at the opening of the Office, the *Vexilla Regis*: "There is no hymn", says Joyce, "that can be put beside that mournful and majestic processional song."

It is again the song that Joyce highlights with regard to the Reader's intervention:

You know how his lesson begins? *Dixit enim Dominus* [corr: *Haec dicit Dominus*]: *in tribulatione sua consurgens ad me. Venite et revertamur ad Dominum.*

He chanted the opening of the lesson in *mezza voce* and his voice went flowing down the staircase and round the circular hall, each tone coming back upon the ear enriched and softened.

– He pleads, said Stephen. He is what that chalk-faced chap was for me, *advocatus diaboli*. Jesus has no friend on Good Friday. Do you know what kind of a figure rises before me on Good Friday? [...] An ugly little man who has taken into his body the sins of the world. Something between Socrates and a Gnostic Christ – A Christ of the Dark Ages. That's what his mission of redemption has got for him: a crooked ugly body for which neither God nor man have pity. Jesus is on strange terms with that father of his. His father seems to me something of a snob. Do you notice that he never notices his son publicly but once – when Jesus is in full dress on the top of Thabor.<sup>26</sup>

Is one to be surprised at this surging forth of the voice and the chant in the opacity of the liturgy? At this response they give to the body's decline? And especially, at this voice being, inextricably knotted, that of the failing voice and the voice of The Woman? On this last point, we may recall a few notations amid the disorder: in *The Dead*, the aunts mentioning the young children replacing the women in the liturgical chants; at the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* the *Mulier cantat* that interrupts the dialogue between the two friends; and then a certain Molly Bloom, singer of her state. As for the father's voice, when one exceeds the biographical details, things are more complex.

### The response from the poetic, the other face of the holy man

In the "big" *Portrait*, Stephen Dedalus is not very clear on the question of the Eucharist: "I neither believe in it nor disbelieve in it".<sup>27</sup> Moreover, he has a curious conception of it: "Phrases came to him asking to have themselves explained. He

said to himself: I must write about translating the phrase *Stephen Hero*, where he will extricate himself from this approach somewhat better than that he become a protestant, forsake an absurdity, write an illogical and incoherent new discourse, a new dogma of the two communions. He was the father of Leopold Bloom, quick, precisely in an effort to leave the house of his father."

"N...ego" is the first step of the letter – this suspension of the suspense that the writer has to this free hand the state of

It is here that we find Aquinas. In the "big" *Portrait*, a bemused friend, Stephen

Perhaps Aquinas, the poet himself, the words *Ecce*, the hymn, is no hymn, processions

Thus, Saint Thomas under a mode of intelligibility, his remark allow us to go further. Not only the *Vexilla Regis gloriosi/Corporis mysterium* of the glorious body.

This invocation to the body of the body, its failing and its Here is a later verse

*Tantum ergo*, documentum, *Sensuum* etc.

is pure repetition, without act, from  
to the place of the sacrifice, as is  
opening of the Office, the *Vexilla Regis*.  
can be put beside that mournful and

thoughts with regard to the Reader's

*Et enim Dominus* [corr: *Haec*  
*insurgit ad me. Venite et*

hearth in *mezza voce* and his  
around the circular hall,  
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his friend on Good Friday. Do  
before me on Good Friday?  
into his body the sins of the  
and a Gnostic Christ – A  
mission of redemption has  
which neither God nor man  
with that father of his. His  
speech. Do you notice that he  
– when Jesus is in full dress

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the failing voice and the voice of The  
a few notations amid the disorder: n  
children replacing the women in the  
*the Artist as a Young Man* the *Mulier*  
the two friends; and then a certain  
father's voice, when one exceeds the  
plex.

## the other face of the holy man

not very clear on the question of the  
even in it".<sup>27</sup> Moreover, he has a curious  
ing to have themselves explained. He

said to himself: I must wait for the Eucharist to come to me: and then he set  
about translating the phrase into common sense."<sup>28</sup> This is his position in  
*Stephen Hero*, where he waters down and distorts his experience, to try to  
extricate himself from the Catholic doctrine of Communion. He clarifies his  
approach somewhat in the "big" *Portrait* when, in reply to a friend who suggests  
that he become a protestant, he says: "What kind of liberation would that be to  
forsake an absurdity which is logical and coherent and to embrace one which is  
illogical and incoherent?" Heresy is only a way out if it contributes to building a  
new discourse, a neologism, here again in the limbo constituted by the *lalangue*  
of the two communions. We shall not forget his remark when we learn that Virag,  
the father of Leopold Bloom, having converted to Protestantism, is cut to the  
quick, precisely in an exchange of voices, by the drama of Mosenthal's hero "who  
left the house of his fathers", apparently to his loss.<sup>29</sup>

"N...ego" is the first approach to a new signifier, poetic on account of isolating  
the letter – this suspense [...] that I have tried to make heard, and which is also  
the suspense that the whole of the "zero-epiphany"<sup>30</sup> is shot through with – giving  
to this free hand the status of an act at the heart of language.

It is here that we unexpectedly meet again the other holy man, Thomas  
Aquinas. In the "big" *Portrait*, after exposing his theory of Thomist aesthetics to  
a bemused friend, Stephen Dedalus concludes:

Perhaps Aquinas would understand me better than you. He was a  
poet himself. He wrote a hymn for Maundy Thursday. It begins with  
the words *Pange lingua gloriosi*. They say it is the highest glory of  
the hymnal. It is an intricate and soothing hymn. I like it: but there  
is no hymn that can be put beside that mournful and majestic  
processional song, the *Vexilla Regis* of Venatius Fortunatus.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Saint Thomas understands because he is a poet, poetry furnishes a special  
mode of intelligibility. Now, the hymns that Joyce mentions next in support of his  
remark allow us to go further, for they knot together rite, dogma and *lalangue*.  
Not only the *Vexilla Regis* I have just cited, but also the *Pange lingua*  
*gloriosi/Corporis mysterium* of Maundy Thursday: "Sing, o tongue, the mystery  
of the glorious body."

This invocation to the tongue and to song with the aim of treating the mystery  
of the body, its failing and its glory, needs no commentary.

Here is a later verse:

*Tantum ergo Sacramentum/Veneremur cernui;/Et antiquum*  
*documentum/Novo cedat ritui:/ Præstet fides supplementum/*  
*Sensuum defectui.*

In English translation:

Therefore, we venerate such a Sacrament prostrate;/ and the ancient teaching gives way to a new rite: Faith assures the completion at the failing of the senses.

Therefore there is a contrast between the new Christian rite, the Eucharist, which is received as an act, and the reading of ancient scripture which is ever to be begun over: the combat of the rite, of repetition, with everything it entails, against the reading of the opaque, which for Joyce remains a combat that is forever uncertain, before the failing of the senses which makes for enigmatic marks.

The crux of the affair is that the reading of the opaque insists, in as much as it is linked to jouissance. Isn't this what he wants to get rid of and pass over to his ideal reader?

## Passover

The Epiphany, with its phases, revolves around Passover. The Christian Passover, Easter, gives pride of place to the double question of the Redeemer being identified with the Son, and the question of his (sacrificed) body. In its ritual, it is the hymns, and notably those of Saint Thomas, that put into voice, which also means putting into question, if indeed the voice can be heard as a dehiscence in relation to speech, confession as an act of faith, *auto da fé*... This is a point on which the decisive point of departure in relation to Judaism is produced, one that is revealing in that the voice, its faltering as well as its intensity, stresses the question of Incarnation (and, historically, the impact of Neo-Platonism on the development of Christian dogma).

The weight of the equivocation of the signifier that translates *Pessah* in the Authorised Version needs to be indicated here: *Passover*, which turns out to be not a little ambiguous. It designates above all the event by which the Jews were spared massacre, "passed over", thanks to the lamb's blood marking out their houses, the lamb they had to hurriedly consume, in view of which they were then able to cross the Red Sea in safety, "passing over to the other side", which gives another sense of "passing over", that of "dying", "passing away" (see *transitus* "passage"): it is, if I may, the Red Sea Passover, a way of saying that it is not enough to go green, that the Other can go red, which produces something of the real... And the word ultimately designates the conversion to another communion.

Now, Bloom's father cropping up, Rudolph formerly Virag, in the writing of *Ulysses* is tightly linked to the Passover, knotted for him, via an examination of Scripture and its reading, with paternity, the name and the passing over from one "communion" to another (truth be told, the fact that it is the Book of

Haggadah that is involved in the slicks of jouissance instead of the

AND IT WAS THE...  
He stayed in the...  
Reads it backwa...  
practice that, m...  
reading backwa...  
Dear, O dear, A...  
the land of Egyp...  
Israel Adona E...  
brothers, Jacob...  
and the stick an...  
death kills the...  
Sounds a bit s...  
but it's every...  
How quickly he...  
see with his finger

Later on we find presented in the...  
a more radical unraveling of the...  
threads of a failed knot: on the...  
signifiers of the act, which leads...  
the change of surname...  
bookmarked by the reading...  
sexual jouissance, "the name

What other object...  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> drawer?

An indistinct...  
Leopold executed...  
[respectively]...  
Hungary. An ancient...  
convex spectacles...  
in the ritual prayer...  
Queen's Hotel, Eng...  
addressed: To M<sup>r</sup>. D

At the level of the narrative...  
harbouring an unbearable secret...  
like all Jews, he has been...  
therefore he can and must pay



Haggadah that is involved instead of the Torah, the account that produces little lacks of jouissance instead of the Law, would merit fuller examination):

#### AND IT WAS THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER.

He stayed in his walk to watch a typesetter neatly distributing type. Reads it backwards first. Quickly he does it. Must require some practice that; mangiD. KcirtaP. Poor papa with his hagadah book, reading backwards with his finger to me. Next year in Jerusalem. Dear, O dear! All that long business about that brought us out of the land of Egypt and into the house of bondage *Alleluia*. *Shema Israel Adonai Elohenu*. No, that's the other. Then the twelve brothers, Jacob's sons. And then the lamb and the cat and the dog and the stick and the water and the butcher and then the angel of death kills the butcher and he kills the ox and the dog kills the cat. Sounds a bit silly till you come to look into it well. Justice it means but it's everybody eating everyone else. That's what life is after all. How quickly he does that job. Practice makes perfect. Seems to see with his fingers.<sup>32</sup>

Later on we find presented, in the unravelling of an inventory, the suggestion of a more radical unravelling, of what perhaps constituted for a suicidal subject the threads of a failed knot: on one hand the private deed of Deed poll (bearing the signifiers of the act, which is equally a "feat", and castration, "polling") publishing the change of surname, and on the other hand, the Book of Haggadah bookmarked by the reading tool of "hornrimmed [...] spectacles", rimmed with sexual jouissance, "the horn".

What other objects relative to Rudolph Bloom (born Virag) were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> drawer?

An indistinct daguerreotype of Rudolph Virag and his father Leopold executed in the year 1852 in the portrait atelier of their (respectively) 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin, Stefan Virag of Szesfehevar, Hungary. An ancient hagadah book in which a pair of hornrimmed convex spectacles inserted marked the passage of thanksgiving in the ritual prayers for Pessach (Passover): a photocard of the Queen's Hotel, Ennis, proprietor Rudolph Bloom: an envelope addressed: *To My Dear Son Leopold*.<sup>33</sup>

At the level of the narrative, Leopold Bloom is perceived by the Gentiles as harbouring an unbearable surplus-jouissance, which he saves up [*qu'il épargne*]: like all Jews, he has been spared, therefore he *is* spared [*il est épargné*], therefore he can and must pay, either way and in any possible way. And it is in his

body, with his body, in and with a small-scale incarnation, which goes along with the weak jouissance of his persecutors, that he must pay.<sup>34</sup> This is not foreign to the fact that his relation to life and death is not the same as the Christians', and this is made tangible in "Hades" regarding his father's suicide, a dead father, of a different stuff from the dead Son, on account of not being sure whether he was one in the right way.

### From the unnameable to the Name: crossing the fictions

"The principle of truly saying is negation", Jacques Lacan tells us. Nego, "There is not..." is a first self-same step [*pas*] of a search for the Name through the act that brings out its particular design, bit by bit: coming through anxiety, which the epiphany vouches for, i.e., "that which of the real is connoted within the symbolic", by a writing that meets up with the symbolically real.

In this first, short, "Portrait of the Artist", which is therefore neither identity paper nor face in the mirror, Joyce is already inscribing himself into the register of a savoir-faire with the letter. His treatment of jouissance makes him go back from the logic, which clasps him, of Eucharistic rite to the logic of reading the *documentum*, opening through the fictions onto a praxis of the letter. Thus he prepares us to better grasp the path, the passage that will lead him, though the names "Stephen Dedalus", then the "Blooms" to the very Name, Shem, hence the "Penman" of *Finnegans Wake*, which is his name without him... Being it, often indiscernible on account of his passer, "Shaun the Post". A formula starts to be developed here, appropriate to the jouissance of non-relation, a solution in language, of the Other in the One.

I have tried to introduce you to this Joyce first hand, "hand" to be understood calligraphically, of course. The singularity of this young Joyce is, behind his writing, the singularity of his "inspired hand". And this hand also recalls another young person interested in the destiny of everyman, for the time being examining herself, whose insistence Jacques-Alain Miller has reminded us of. For want of a last word, I shall apply this youngster's words to James Joyce. They run:

*Cette main, sur mes traits qu'elle rêve effleurer,  
Distraitement docile à quelque fin profonde,  
Attend de ma faiblesse une larme qui fonde,  
Et que, de mes destins lentement divisé,  
Le plus pur, en silence, éclaire un cœur brisé...*

This hand of mine, dreaming it strokes my features,  
Absently submissive to some deep-hidden end,

Waits the stroke  
And, perhaps,  
For the end.

Can we, ought we to  
deep-hidden end  
examines, à la fois

- 1 Aubert, J., "Ego nomen",
- 2 Joyce, J., "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man", ed. by C. G. Anderson, Oxford Press, 1975. We are thinking of Hegelians.
- 4 Miller, J.-A., "De la main", August 2005, pp. 47-50.
- 5 Lacan, J., "Le semantisme",
- 6 Joyce, J., "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man",
- 7 We are thinking of Aristotle.
- 8 Joyce, S., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, Press, 1962, pp. 53-54.
- 9 Ibsen, H., *Peer Gynt*, ed. by S. de Nussli, L'opaque in French.
- 10 On these debates with Father, and on the subject of Annie Tardits in the book.
- 11 Joyce, J., "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man",
- 12 Joyce, J., *Ulysses*,
- 13 Cf. Lacan, J., *The Seminar*, Norton & Co., 1991.
- 14 Wilde, O., *The Importance of Being Earnest*,
- 15 Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*,
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 211.
- 17 Joyce, J., "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man",
- 18 [TN, Here and hereafter] The phonic similarity with
- 19 Cf. "Ego nomen",
- 20 Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*,
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- 22 See the fifth paragraph "Jouissance", trans. by

scale incarnation, which goes along with  
that he must pay.<sup>34</sup> This is not foreign to  
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## Name: crossing the fictions

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... first hand, "hand" to be understood  
arity of this young Joyce is, behind his  
hand". And this hand also recalls another  
everyman, for the time being examining  
... Miller has reminded us of. For want of  
... words to James Joyce. They run:

... effleurer,  
... profonde,  
... du monde,  
... sé,  
... brisé...

... my features,  
... hidden end,

Waits for a tear to melt out of my weakness  
And, gradually dividing from my other destinies,  
For the purest to enlighten a broken heart in silence...

Can we, ought we, submissively to give ourselves over to the distraction of this  
deep-hidden end, this jouissance that exercises such attraction, and which it  
examines, *à la vie, à la mort*?

## Translated from the French by Adrian Price

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- 1 Aubert, J., "Ego nominor N... ego" in *La lettre mensuelle*, No. 240, July/August 2005, pp. 52-6.
- 2 Joyce, J., "A Portrait of the Artist" in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Text, Criticism and Notes*, ed. by C. G. Anderson, New York, Viking Critical Library, 1968.
- 3 Hegel, G. W. F., "Painting" in *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, transl. by T. M. Knox, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975. We know that the young Joyce was for some time in thrall to Hegel and certain Neo-Hegelians.
- 4 Miller, J.-A., "Deux modes de l'écriture, deux jouissances", in *La Lettre mensuelle*, No. 240, July-August 2005, pp. 4-7.
- 5 Lacan, J., *Le séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, Paris, Seuil, 2005.
- 6 Joyce, J., "A Portrait of the Artist", *op. cit.*, p. 257.
- 7 We are thinking of Antoine Du Verdier's famous collection.
- 8 Joyce, S., *The Complete Dublin Diary of Stanislaus Joyce*, edited by G. H. Healey, Cornell University Press, 1962, pp. 53-4.
- 9 Ibsen, H., *Peer Gynt, texte intégral de la pièce, documents et commentaires autour du spectacle*, edited by S. de Nussac & F. Regnault, Éditions Beba, 1981, p. 24 [TN, concerning the author's aside: *l'opaque* in French means both "the opaque" and "the dark".]
- 10 On these debates which bear among other questions on heresy, the Trinity, the Name-of-the-Father, and on all the questions besides that orient the young Joyce, see the pivotal analyses by Annie Tardits in "L'appensée, le renard et l'hérésie" in *Joyce avec Lacan*, Paris, Navarin, 1987.
- 11 Joyce, J., "A Portrait of the Artist", *op. cit.*, p. 317.
- 12 Joyce, J., *Ulysses: The 1922 Text*, Oxford World Classics.
- 13 Cf. Lacan, J., *The Seminar, Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, transl. by D. Porter, New York, Norton & Co., 1992.
- 14 Wilde, O., *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act I.
- 15 Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*, *op. cit.*, p. 211 & 213.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 211.
- 17 Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *op. cit.*, p. 205, 211 & 212.
- 18 [TN, Here and hereafter, it should be noted that the French for both Passover and Easter is *Pâques*. The phonic similarity with *opaque* is exploited by the author.]
- 19 Cf. "Ego nominor N...ego", *op. cit.*
- 20 Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- 22 See the fifth paradigm of jouissance brought out by Jacques-Alain Miller in "Paradigms of Jouissance", transl. by J. Jauregui, in *Lacanian Ink*, Issue 17, Autumn 2000, pp. 8-47.

- 23 Maria Jolas reports that a graphologist who was consulted apparently diagnosed that Joyce's writing denoted, "a jealousy of the woman's belly."
- 24 [TN, *un impossible lecteur de l'opaque*, see the translator's note appended to endnote 9 & the other that comprises endnote 18.]
- 25 See the *Missal quotidien et vespéral* by Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B., "Mass of the Presanctified": "On Good Friday, the Church does not celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the mass. It contents itself [...] with consuming the Holy substances already consumed the day before. Hence the name [...]"
- 26 Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-7.
- 27 Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist...*, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
- 28 Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*, *op. cit.*, p. 345.
- 29 Cf. Lacan, J., *Le séminaire, Livre XXIII, Le sinthome*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-6.
- 30 Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
- 31 Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist...*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
- 32 Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 675.
- 34 One might care to reread chapter XII of *Ulysses*.

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## Reading Joyce

As Jacques-Alain Miller states in his encounter with the author, he pursued "the most radical psychoanalysis, conducted by himself, became clear to him". Le Sinthome of his teaching on the subject of his presence, but his true encounter with him to speak at an international level whose traces remain in the text. He proceeded through a reading of the text. In fact, Lacan asked himself the question: "Is he or that he is?" and he is reduced to [this] feeling of the text where all the difference lies. What is not the true."<sup>5</sup> One should not forget that Lacan takes from Freud the Freudian unconscious, which is presented at the study of the subject in its relation to truth. Taking up on it out "a perspective on the subject of formation of the unconscious" he teaches him about writing.