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Analysis and New Lacanian School

The Lacanian Review

Hurly-Burly

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DELIGHTS OF THE EGO

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A PORTRAIT OF JOYCE AS A SAINT HOMME

Éric Laurent

In his lecture, "Joyce the Symptom", most likely written over Easter 1976, Lacan asks this question: "Joyce the symptom carries things so far through his artifice that one wonders whether he isn't a Saint, the saint homme."¹ We thus must hear the equivocation in the title of *Seminar XXIII, The Sinthome*, between *le symptôme*, the symptom, and *le saint homme*, the saintly man. It emphasises the saint but also the man in relation to his symptom. There is a homology there with the title of one of Freud's last works. *Der Mann Moses und die Monotheistische Religion* addresses the question of God for the last time on the basis of one man's destiny.² *Seminar XXIII* is about monotheism and the saintly man, but in a way that is quite different from Freud's approach.

Lacan used the word "Saint" in various ways. In *Seminar XVIII*, Lacan treats eastern and western forms of the saint as equivalent. Mencius corresponds to Gracián, where both are aspiring to the same sanctity/sainthood for man. "For Balthasar Gracián, [...] everything was about establishing what can be called man's holiness. His book, *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*, can be summarised in one word: be a saint. It is the only point in western civilisation where the word "saint" has the same meaning as in Chinese, "*tchen-tchen*"³ (or "*sheng*" in a different transcription, which brings out the homophony with "saint" more clearly). Lacan's remark is an almost literal copy of aphorism 300 of the *Oráculo Manual*: "In short, be a saint, for this says everything in one word."⁴ This is the perspective from which Lacan enquires into the situation of Joyce, who, through his art, explores the holiness of man.

Éric Laurent is an Analyst Member of the School (AMS), member of the ECF and NLS. He is former President of the WAP.

1. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom", in this issue, p. 15.
2. The work was published in Amsterdam in 1939.
3. Lacan, J., *Le Séminaire*, livre XVIII, *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* [On a Discourse That Is Not a Semblant], Seuil, Paris, 2006, p. 36.
4. Gracián, B., "Oracle manuel", *Traité politiques, esthétiques, éthiques*, édition de Benito Pelegrin, Seuil, Paris, 2005, p. 407.

Translation by A. R. Price

Is Joyce a Saint?

"Praise be to God for we owe it to Him, namely to the will that is supposed of Him (for in our heart of hearts we know he does not exist) Joyce is not a Saint. He rejoices too much in the S.K.beau for that, he takes pride in his art to his art's content."⁵ Joyce's pride lay in enjoying his wanting-to-say [*vouloir dire*], his will to create "the uncreated conscience of [his] race."⁶ Joyce's art is to succeed in saying, to the point of being able to say, everything: "saying everything, language included." Beckett famously formulated it thus: "here form is content, content is form [...] When the sense is sleep, the words go to sleep [...] When the sense is dancing, the words dance."⁷ The content is the form itself. Far from being opposites, they go hand in hand.

Owing to his relationship to his art, Joyce is not a saint – his pride is to re-joyce in his art. "He is proud of his art," says Lacan, "to his art's content [*Il a de son art art-gueil jusqu'à plus soif*]." This is the first reference to his relationship to substance abuse (alcohol), which, along with syphilis, will contribute greatly to the deterioration of Joyce's health.⁸ His brother Stanislas attributed the deterioration of his eyesight to his alcoholic comas.⁹ Beginning in Dublin at his mother's death, the massive bouts of drunkenness increased when he became a father, in Trieste, and would punctuate his life in Zurich and Paris until the perforation of his duodenal ulcer.¹⁰

Joyce never expected his art to make him rich. He always lived with a will to own nothing, supported by patronage, that of a woman in particular, Harriet Shaw Weaver, the heiress who wanted to be a feminist and a progressive. His pride [*art-gueil*] drove him to wish for his recognition only by the university, in which he had been unable to remain. This is how Lacan puts it: "Joyce, for his part, didn't want to have anything, save the escabeau [sublimation] of the magisterial fact of saying, and this is quite enough for him not to be a straightforward *saint homme*."¹¹ Joyce effectively wants something that comes back to him from a discourse other than his art. He is expecting recognition from the university discourse.

5. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom", *op. cit.*, p. 15.

6. Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Everyman's Library, New York, 1991, p. 318.

7. Beckett, S., "Dante... Bruno. Vico... Joyce", in Beckett S. & al., *Finnegans Wake: A symposium. Our Examination Round His Factification for Incarnation of Work in Progress*, Shakespeare & Co., Paris, 1929, New directions, New York, 1972, pp. 1-22. Available on the internet.

8. Cf. Birmingham, K., *The Most Dangerous Book. The Battle for James Joyce's Ulysses*, Penguin, London, 2015, pp. 290-291.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

11. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom", *op. cit.*, p. 15.

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12. Miller, J.-A., *Marginal Notes on the Establishment*, ed. J. C. Miller, London, 1977, p. 10.

13. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom", *op. cit.*, p. 15.



Éric Laurent, A Portrait of Joyce as a Saint Homme

What Is It to Be Simply a Sainly Man?

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If Joyce is not “simply a saintly man,” there is nevertheless no such thing as the “Saint-as-such” [*Saint-en-soi*]. In *Television*, Lacan juxtaposes historical figures of heterogenous discourses. He compares the analyst to the moralists of antiquity, describing them as two figures, heterogenous figures, of the saint. Whoever occupies the place of “the object *a* incarnate”¹² deserves to be declared a saint. It is not possible to define the saint-as-such, any more than the analyst-as-such. It’s a matter of incarnating the object *a* in a unique way. It is not a matter for the analyst of “being a semblant” of the object *a*, as is sometimes said: the object *a* is a semblant. On the contrary, it is a matter of incarnating it, presenting it with sufficient consistency. And there is nothing essential here, only a direction – there is a direction instead of an essence.

“Truth be told, there is no Saint-as-such, there is only this desire, to put the *finneshing* touches to what is known as the Way, the canonical Way. Whence one does ptom on occasion into the canonisation of the Church, which knows a bit about it, having reconicalised itself, but which goes barking up the wrong bloody tree in every other case. For there is no canonical way to saintliness, in spite of the eagerness for sainthood, no way that sorts out Saints, that would turn them into a sort. There is only scabeustration; but the castration of the escabeau is accomplished only through escapade. You only get a saint through not wanting to be, through the sanctity of forswearing it.”¹³

Thus for Lacan there is no essence of sainthood (no “saint-in-itself”), there are only singular existences; on the other hand, the bureaucracies of the Church have a desire to polish and repolish rules so that they will lead to that place, thereby freeze-framing an ideal of the way. As soon as there is a desire to make the way into a canon, there is a fall, “ptom”. This is the appeal to an institution, a bureaucracy, for it to become the place, the locus of canonical authorisation. Desire is captured by the institution which reconicalises [*reconiques*], a term that condenses “*requinquer*” [to refresh, perk up], “*redonner de l’éclat* [to shine, to burnish] and “*icône*” [icon]. The Church, like the bureaucracy, adopts charismatic icons, and inflates itself with life through making saints. It feeds on the flesh of saints. There is no royal road leading to the uniqueness of the object *a*’s incarnation. Psychoanalysts, artists and saints no more form a kind than women do.

6. Lacan, *Écrits*, New York, 1991, p. 318.
7. Lacan, *Écrits*, New York, 1991, p. 318.
8. Lacan, *Écrits*, New York, 1991, p. 318.
9. Lacan, *Écrits*, New York, 1991, p. 318.
10. Lacan, *Écrits*, New York, 1991, p. 318.

12. Miller, J.-A., Marginal note in J. Lacan, *Television*, in *Television; A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment*, ed. J. Copjec, Norton, New York/London, 1990, p. 15.

13. Lacan, J., “Joyce the Symptom”, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

If there is no ideal pathway but only a desire, this desire digresses from *jouissance*. The analyst may well be a product of the analytic discourse, he derives no *jouissance* from it, contrary to the analysand, whose enjoyment is in speaking. The analyst has to work with it. Castration by discourse is to be compared with this paragraph from *Television* in which Lacan situates the disymmetry in the relationship between analyst and analysand in the analytic arrangement, on the basis of the *jouissance* in speaking: "That it produces an effect of *jouissance* – who doesn't "get" the meaning [*sens*] along with the pleasure [*joui*]? The saint alone stays mum; fat chance of getting anything out of him. That is really the most amazing thing in the whole business. Amazing for those who approach it without illusions: the saint is the refuse of *jouissance*."¹⁴ For the psychoanalyst, this is the path of object *a*, the path of the hole, and not that of identification with a name that qualifies. That is the way that Lacan, with Joyce, calls the way of "farcés".

The Saint and the Evidence of Laughter

Bloom's farces designate a particular form of irony tied to the way Bloom writes: "this Bloom from whose alienation stem his farces of Flower and Henry (Henry of the sly laugh, strictly for the ladies)."¹⁵ Bloom effectively uses a pseudonym, "Henry Flower,"¹⁶ to write to a woman whom we know only by name, Martha Clifford,¹⁷ and the contents of the letter that she addresses *poste restante* to Bloom in reply.

I select this passage that situates the fantasmatic dimension of their exchange, with its masochistic aspect:

I often think of the beautiful name you have. Dear Henry, when will we meet? I think of you so often you have no idea. I have never felt myself so much drawn to a man as you. I feel so bad about. Please write me a long letter and tell me more. Remember if you do not I will punish you. So now you know what I will do to you, you naughty boy, if you do not wrote.¹⁸

Joyce enslaves himself to a signifier, "Flower", which feminises him. "Flower" in *Ulysses* effectively refers to the feminine position that Molly articulates in her final monologue.

14. *Television*, 16.

15. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom", *op. cit.*, p. 15.

16. Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, Folio, London, 1998, p. 69.

17. Cf. Topia, A., "Notes. Les Lotophages", in Joyce, J., *Ulysse*, Folio Classique, Paris, 2013, p. 1329, note 7.

18. Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

Yes he said I was a flower
body yes that was
you today yes that was
what a woman is and
all the pleasure I could

There are other Henrys
of streets – and "Henry"
"Henry du coin, Henry"
homophony, by which
the laughter of the woman
over Bloom's compliment

"If in fact the said
proves full well that Bloom
We are here at the level
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19. Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

20. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom"

21. Joyce, J., *op. cit.*, p. 75.



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Dear Henry, when will we
I have never felt myself so
Please write me a long
I will punish you. So now
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Yes he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans
body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for
you today yes that was why I lied him because I saw he understood or felt
what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him and I gave him
all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes.¹⁹

There are other Henrys in *Ulysses* – the names of kings and the names
of streets – and “Henry Street” plays a special role, but in speaking of
“*Henry du coin, Henry pour les dames*” Lacan is stressing the translinguistic
homophony, by which “Henry” equates to “*On rit*,” “They’re laughing,”
the laughter of the women of his fantasy, such as Molly’s secret laughing
over Bloom’s compliments when they had been happy together.

“If in fact the said ladies are the only ones to get a laugh out of it, this
proves full well that Bloom is a saint. *Que le saint en rie*, that says it all.”²⁰
We are here at the level of proof, of evidence. For Lacan, “the evidence-
based saint” is confirmed by the laughter that what is particular to a woman
is picked out by the farce around the letter. The farce is an enigma to be
deciphered and where it is only laughter that shows it has reached its desti-
nation. It is an enigma, not a message – the laughter assures us that it has
been received as such. The structure of the circulation of this farce, which
is no longer an undelivered letter, is distinct from that of a witticism. There
is a phallic level circulating between Bloom and the women, but what
makes them laugh, if we take Molly, is a level lying beyond the phallus
which is implied by the word “Flower”, a feminisation that causes even
greater laughter. It lies on the side of the object, not the phallus – as Lacan’s
qualification makes clear: “If in fact the said ladies are the only ones to get
a laugh out of it, this proves full well that Bloom is a saint.”

This idea of a beyond-the-phallus, or beyond phallic jouissance, defines
a new horizon for “saying everything” about jouissance: “*Que le saint en rie*,
that says it all.” Now, it is impossible to say everything about this beyond-
the-phallus. In place of the signification of “beyond”, which is impossible
to say fully, we have the laughter of the saint which “says it all”, which can
be linked to “ça”, “that”. The laughter of life comes as a counterpoint to
the threat of death, so present in *Ulysses* right from the episode of the funeral
in the sixth chapter, “Hades”. And in the episode of “Circe”, Stephen is
even more clear: “Death to the devil! Long live life!”²¹

19. Joyce, J., *Ulysses. op. cit.*, p. 734.

20. Lacan, J., “Joyce the Symptom”, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

21. Joyce, J., *op. cit.*, p. 913.

The Saint and His Relationship to the Master's Discourse

While Joyce expects something from the university discourse, he expects nothing from the master's discourse. Joyce demonstrates this clearly through the irony to which he subjects the character of Bloom. He makes him an advertising broker – a “*placier*” in the language of the day – an advertising man, constantly on the lookout, with his keen eye, for the definitive slogan, looking for opportunities to place his own formulas. He is fascinated by the creative force of the advertising for “Plumtree Paste” (pork paste sold in a beautiful tin with a picture of a plumtree), where the plumtree has nothing to do with pork. He has the desires of a publicity man.

What were habitually his final meditations?

Of some one sole unique advertisement to cause passers to stop in wonder, a poster novelty, with all extraneous accretions excluded, reduced to its simplest and most efficient terms of exceeding the span of casual vision and congruous with the velocity of modern life.²²

Joyce also makes fun of Stephen, who wants to work as a teacher and journalist, for both Stephen and Bloom pervert the cause of the waste object. Here's what Lacan says: “If he makes the Bloom of his fantasising so Henrisible [*Henrycane, en ricane*, mocks, laughs at], it's to demonstrate that by laying it on as thick as the adman, in the end what he's got, having obtained it thus, is not worth much.” This “not worth much” is clarified by a comment on utilitarianism in *Seminar VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*: “It is a fact of experience that what I want is the good of others in the image of my own. That doesn't cost so much. What I want is the good of others provided that it remain in the image of my own.”²³

Bloom knows that the only meaning language has is the *jouissance* it harbours, which is what his farces reveal, but the only use he puts it to is perverted in his advertising job, which consists in transforming the desires it expresses into commodifiable objects, which he extracts from their particular links with the body. In this sense, as Lacan says, he “cheapens” them. “By cheapening his body itself, he demonstrates that “LOM ain't without a body” doesn't mean a thing, if he doesn't tithe everyone else for it.

22. Joyce, J., *Ulysses, op. cit.*, p. 676.

23. Lacan, J., *Seminar Book VII, The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960*, ed. J.-A. Miller, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 187.

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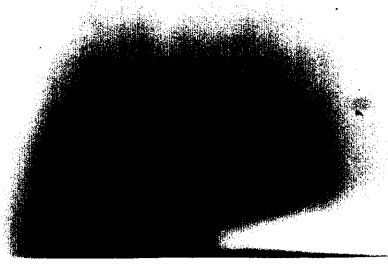
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Éric Laurent, A Portrait of Joyce as a Saint Homme

the Master's Discourse

university discourse, he expects demonstrates this clearly through Bloom. He makes him an image of the day – an advertising man's eye, for the definitive slogan, the formulas. He is fascinated by "Plumtree Paste" (pork paste sold in a tin, where the plumtree has the name of a publicity man.

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language has is the jouissance it but the only use he puts it to is to transform the desires into extracts from their participation says, he "cheapens" them. "LOM ain't without it for everyone else for it.

"This is the way trodden by the mendicant brethren: they fall back on public charity which has to pay their subsistence." The market is not the path for saints; the path is a kind of tithe imposed on others. Lacan gives a form to what he has formulated in *Television* as "the way out of capitalist discourse."²⁴

"Imposing a tithe" is what the analyst does, in his own way. He makes himself the waste object of desire and makes the other pay a tithe for it. "So as to embody what the structure entails, namely allowing the subject, the subject of the unconscious, to take him as the cause of the subject's own desire."²⁵ Joyce, Gracián, Lacan: "The more saints, the more laughter."²⁶ The more ways out there are, the more one laughs. One comes back to the way of farces. This way of "making oneself the object" is different from the master's discourse which, in a very articulate and subtle manner, attempts to persuade one that all bodies are equal and, therefore, that they can all be connected up to objects of the market, to surplus value. Democratic individualism of the market, or, from another perspective, the brotherhood of charity are equivalent. It is a matter of ignoring the singularity of jouissance by reducing the problem to the satisfaction of needs and distributive justice.

Joyce's Experience and Lacan's Hypothesis

It is not till the end of *Seminar XXIII* that Lacan gives full weight to what might have remained just a schoolyard incident and conceptualises the "metaphorisation" of Joyce's body. He contrasts the ordinary experience of the body with Joyce's. In the ordinary case "there is something of the psyche that is affected, that reacts, that is not detached, in contrast to what Joyce testifies to after having received the strikes of the cane from his four or five classmates."²⁷

However, Joyce has no truck with the hare-brained esoteric ideas in vogue at the time about the migration of souls from one body to another, as a function of the attainment of karma. He stresses that Joyce – aware, moreover, like other intellectuals of his day, of the theosophical hypotheses of Madame Blavatsky and the transmigration of souls – doesn't yield to Platonism of the body nor to the Aristotelian version of the soul as the form of the body.

24. Lacan, J., *Television*, op. cit., p. 16.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

27. Lacan, J., *Seminar Book XXIII, The Sinthome*, ed. J.-A. Miller, Polity, Cambridge, 2016.

This implies nothing but the buffoonish theory that doesn't want to put the reality of the body in the idea that forms it. An Aristotelian antiphon, as we know. What experience, it's a killer imagining it, could have set an obstacle for him here, for him to Platonise, that is to say, to defy death like the world at large by upholding that the idea shall suffice this body by reproducing it.²⁸

Lacan wonders what experience prevented Joyce from "defying death like the world at large", not believing in the immortality of the soul or in the idea of his body. At this point in his reasoning, Lacan does not give the answer. The fact that he adds, "it's a killer imagining [this experience]" shows how much attention he brings to this question, but also points out that this experience explains deadly aspects of the slack relationship Joyce has to his own body. The early and pathological euphoria that punctuate his destiny imply a prior traumatic encounter. The episode from Joyce's childhood that Lacan gives special weight to is a sort of "aftershock", as they say about earthquakes, of a primordial relationship to the body, as experienced by Joyce.²⁹

The Saintly Man and the Push to the Woman

Joyce, as a man, on the side of LOM, has a body. He is all the more sensitive to the feminine side which can be declined in terms of symptoms, of being-symptom: "Joyce takes himself for a woman on occasion only to reach fulfilment as a symptom. A well oriented idea albeit bungled when it falls to the ending. Might I say that he is symptomatology."³⁰

Saying that "Joyce takes himself for a woman on occasion" can be understood in several ways. There are the repeated transformations of men into women in *Ulysses*. There is a whole transgender dimension in the novel. The fantasies in the "Circe" episode refer to it frequently. Bloom is described as the feminine man, or as he who is expecting a baby.³¹

There is also the transformation into a man of the pimp in Circe's house, Bella, who suddenly becomes Bello and gives Bloom the most humiliating orders, feminising him in an original masochistic position, which ends with what one facetious critic calls the first "transgender fisting"³² in the history of the novel.

28. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom", *op. cit.*, p. 16.

29. Cf. *supra*, pp. 123 & 140-141.

30. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom", *op. cit.*, p. 18.

31. Joyce, J., *Ulysses*, *op. cit.*, p. 466.

32. Thirlwell, A., "It's Still a Scandal", *The New York Review of Books*, 23 April 2015, available on the Internet.

And there is also the novel Molly, the "yes" that abolishes finity. As Joyce wrote to Frank: "The first sentence contains the episode, which begins and ends."

Lacan indicates that this "well oriented idea", it "falls to the end" in his discourse on his symptomatology, in the discourse he has described from the unconscious of Joyce's text itself that becomes the defining moment of the body of each person.

The Saint Reunites with the World

At the beginning of his work, God's in creation. He has the "personality" of the artist. His position is compatible with the marked by a cry or a cadence or a mood and refines itself out of existence. The mystery of esthetic, like the artist, like the God of creation, above his handiwork, invests his fingernails.³⁴

He thus reformulates the whom he is inspired. First, the appearance of the poet as speaker mobilised by the shock of the to the former lyric impulse. sentence.³⁵

33. Rabaté, J.-M., "Notices. Pénétration de l'erreur over the gender of 'Faust' in Goethe's *Faust*: 'Ich bin der Herr' and the envelope say, 'I am the flesh that is'."

34. Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, e-books/A-Portrait-of-the-Artist-as-a-Young-Man, Grasset, 2015, p. 10.

35. Mallarmé S., *Crisis in Poetry*, p. 10.



... want to put the
... antiphon, as we
... have set an obstacle
... death like the world
... reproducing it.²⁸

... from "defying death
... of the soul or in
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... [this experience]"
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... He is all the more
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... transformations of men
... tension in the novel.
... frequently. Bloom is
... a baby.³¹
... in Circe's house,
... the most humiliating
... which ends with
... "sting"³² in the history

And there is also the novel's final word, the speech spoken by Penelope Molly, the "yes" that abolishes time in the novel, transporting it into eternity. As Joyce wrote to Frank Budgen, "Penelope is the *key* to the book. The first sentence contains 2,500 words. There are eight sentences in this episode, which begins and ends with the female word, 'yes'.³³

Lacan indicates that if Joyce's transformation into a woman was a "well-oriented idea", it "falls to the ending". It remains "symptomatology", a discourse on his symptom, logos about his symptom. In his "symptomatology", in the discourse he fashions, it becomes clear that Joyce is *unsubscribed from the unconscious*, that is, that *he doesn't address a given body*. It is Joyce's text itself that becomes the enigma to decipher, and it becomes the defining moment of the book, without it being articulated to the symptom of each person.

The Saint Reunites with God: the Epiphany

At the beginning of his work, Joyce defines his position as analogous to God's in creation. He has to be everywhere and nowhere. He has to make the "personality" of the artist disappear in the very text he produces. This position is compatible with his wish for realism. The author's place is marked by a cry or a cadence: "The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak [...] The mystery of esthetic, like that of material creation, is accomplished. The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails."³⁴

He thus reformulates the position of both Mallarmé and Flaubert, by whom he is inspired. First Mallarmé: "The pure work implies the disappearance of the poet as speaker, yielding his initiative to words, which are mobilised by the shock of their difference; [...] restoring perceptible breath to the former lyric impulse, or the enthusiastic personal directing of the sentence."³⁵

33. Rabaté, J.-M., "Notices. Pénélope", *Ulysse, op. cit.*, p. 1290, note 1 : "Joyce commits a grammatical error over the gender of 'Fleisch', which is neuter, because he inverts the sentence by Mephisto in Goethe's *Faust* : 'Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint (I am the spirit that always denies).' He has Penelope say, 'I am the flesh that always says yes.'"

34. Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Planet ebooks, <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/A-Portrait-of-the-Artist-as-a-Young-Man.pdf>, p. 267. Cited in Eco, U., *Ecrits sur la pensée au Moyen Age*, Grasset, 2016, p. 962.

35. Mallarmé S., *Crisis in Poetry. Œuvres complètes*, Gallimard, 1945, p. 366, cited in Eco, *ibid.*, p. 962.

Then Flaubert: "*Madame Bovary* has nothing true in it. It is a totally invented story; into it I put none of my own feelings and nothing from my own life. The illusion (if there is one) comes, on the contrary, from the impersonality of the work. It is one of my principles that a writer must not be his own theme. The artist in his work must be like God in Creation—invisible and all-powerful: he must be everywhere felt, but never seen."³⁶

The "sainthood of man" that Joyce aims for can therefore adopt this divine position in creation. We see it in a crucial way in the question of the epiphany, in which the impersonal and the real of the reality at the very heart of the work knot together in a "perfect mechanism whose function it exhausts in itself."³⁷ The manuscript of the *Epiphanies* is held at the Lockwood Memorial Library at SUNY Buffalo. The texts are a good indication of the attitude of the young Joyce: one of the most delightful is without doubt the dialogue between Joyce and Mr Skeffington following the death of Joyce's younger brother.

Skeffington: I was sorry to hear of the death of your brother . . . sorry we didn't know in time . . . to have been at the funeral. . . .

Joyce: Oh, he was very young . . . a boy. . . .

Skeffington: Still. . . . It hurts. . . .³⁸

You can see the importance of the punctuation, which is crucial for indicating the place of the cry and the rhythm by which the creator is introduced into the creation. In the epiphany of Vilanelle, on which Lacan comments, this is even more marked.

The epiphanies are effectively defined by Joyce in *Stephen Hero* as the direct manifestation of a presence of the spirit: "By an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself."³⁹

The canonical example of an epiphany, given by Jacques Aubert, is essentially made of a dotted line on which a single word, "chapel", floats.⁴⁰

36. Flaubert, G., Lettre à Mlle Leroyer de Chantepie, 18 mars 1857 in *Preface à la vie d'écrivain*, Seuil, Paris, 1963, p. 188, cited by Eco, *ibid.*, p. 963.

37. Eco, U., *op. cit.*, p. 964.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 978.

39. Aubert, J., "Exposé au Séminaire de Jacques Lacan. Prononcé le 20 janvier 1976", *Le Séminaire*, livre XXIII, *Le Sinthome*, *op. cit.*, p. 180. [Jacques Aubert here refers to Joyce], *Stephen Hero*, *Ceuvres*, t. I, Paris Gallimard, coll. Bibl. de La Pléiade, 1982, p. 512.]

40. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 181.

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The Young Lady —

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The Post-Joyce

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41. Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*

42. Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

43. *Ibid.*, p.257 (penult)



Éric Laurent, A Portrait of Joyce as a Saint Homme

nothing true in it. It is a totally
own feelings and nothing from
comes, on the contrary, from
of my principles that a writer
his work must be like God in
must be everywhere felt, but

The Young Lady — (drawing discreetly) . . . O, yes . . . I was . . . at the . . .
cha . . . pel . . .

The Young Gentleman — (inaudibly) . . . I . . . (again inaudibly) . . . I . . .

The Young Lady — (softly) . . . O . . . but you're . ve . . . ry . . . wick . . . ed . . .

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And Joyce comments on this overheard conversation: this triviality made
him think of collecting many such moments together in a book of epiphanies.⁴¹

Lacan reads Joyce's epiphanies as connecting the subject of the uncon-
scious with the real, which reduces the signification of the external world to
a triviality that is drained of meaning, to the point of silence, of rupture.
In *Dedalus* the epiphany becomes an operation of art that founds a way to
create an experience of life via the very punctuation that is introduced. It
is this position that Joyce generalises, establishing himself as a "a priest of
eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the
radiant body of everliving life."⁴² By introducing writing as the edge of the
hole of the person's disappearance. In this creation, the epiphany meets the
declaration that concludes the portrait where Joyce wishes to encounter life
without the support of established discourses founded on the family,
country or Church. A bit of the real outside signification. "O Life! I go to
encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in
the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."⁴³

our brother . . . sorry we
eral . . .

on, which is crucial for indi-
which the creator is intro-
Vanelle, on which Lacan

Joyce in *Stephen Hero* as the
By an epiphany he meant
the vulgarity of speech or of
itself."

en by Jacques Aubert, is essen-
word, "chapel", floats.⁴⁰

The Post-Joycean Psychoanalyst

Lacan encourages psychoanalysts to locate themselves in a post-Joycean
perspective by situating interpretation as a form of punctuation, an
epiphany or a hole in the creation that the text of analytic experience
constitutes. Punctuation works by creating a hole in meaning. As punctu-
ation, it is guided by the sole reason of *jouissance* and not by established
discourses that guarantee a signification. This is a way to define a register
of interpretation that lies beyond the use of the Name of the Father which,
conversely, guarantees interpretation through meaning. The analyst thus
operates on

an opaque *jouissance* from excluding meaning. They have long doubted as
much. Being post-Joycean is so much knowing. There can be no awakening
unless this *jouissance*, to wit a devalued *jouissance* given that analysis turns

³⁷ in *Préface à la vie d'écrivain*, Seuil,

le 29 janvier 1976", *Le Séminaire*,
Joyce J., *Stephen Hero*, *Ceuvres*,

41. Joyce, J., *Stephen Hero*, Grafton, London, 1977, p. 188.

42. Joyce, J., *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Paladin, London, 1980, p.225.

43. *Ibid.*, p.257 (penultimate line of the novel).

Re-Joycing the Ego

to meaning to resolve it, has no other chance of getting there but to get its dupe... its due pater, as I have indicated.⁴⁴

In *Seminar XXIII, The Sinthome*, Lacan says it very clearly: "In this way a successful psychoanalysis shows that one can also do without the Name of the Father."⁴⁵

Joyce knew how to do without the Name of the Father by using it as a model for his art.⁴⁶ This weird montage of "de facto foreclosure" and the use the son makes of it⁴⁷ to arrive at a particular way of dealing with the opaque jouissance in his work remains the suprising final point in Lacan. "What is extraordinary is that Joyce succeeded, not without Freud (though his having read him wasn't sufficient) but without turning to the experience of analysis (which might have lured him with some dull finnish)."⁴⁸ A new horizon of the work. It makes it possible to go beyond the banal ends that a two-dimensional [*aplati*] analytic experience can lead to. A new requirement for post-Joycean psychoanalysis: aim for an analysis that is not two-dimensional.

Translated by Russell Grigg

44. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom" *op. cit.*, p. 18.

45. Lacan, J., *Seminar XXIII, op. cit.*, p. 136.

46. Cf. Ellmann, R., *Joyce*, t. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 36: "After his [father's] death in 1931, James said to Louis Gillet: 'He never talked to me about my books, but he could not disown me. The humour in *Ulysses* is his [...] The book is his spitting image.'"

47. I refer to the subheading J.-A. Miller chose for Chapter IV of *Seminar XXIII*: "Joyce deep-rooted in the father he disowns" *Seminar XXIII, op. cit.*

48. Lacan, J., "Joyce the Symptom" *op. cit.*, p. 18.

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