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The Discourse of Madness in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Samuel Beckett's Early English Prose

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Declaration:

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract:

My research investigates James Joyce's and Samuel Beckett's personal knowledge of "madness": in particular, I will look at how these experiences of madness (either one's own, or of another) are turned into literature, how they are represented in an aesthetic form in *Finnegans Wake* and in Beckett's early English prose. My choice of the generic term a "madness" reflects the necessity of considering mental illness as a multilayered and even uncanny set of different physical and mental conditions, and the discourses about them, which were at the centre of scientific and artistic debates during the early decades of the 20th century. As we will see, the textual representations of madness in both Joyce and (early) Beckett, are the result of the assimilation of various scientific theories and practices and reflect the cultural atmosphere of their times as well as literary traditions, both European and Irish. Moreover, all these elements were also combined with more personal, autobiographical ones. I will thus compare and contrast Joyce's and Beckett's texts providing a broader discursive context but also stressing those elements of originality that stem from biographical experience.

Contents

Introduction

My research examines discourses of madness in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Samuel Beckett's early English prose. I will look at how these texts reflect Joyce's and Beckett's engagement with discourses of madness which at once stems from the cultural atmosphere of their times as well as from more personal experiences. The analysis of these particular texts will allow me to compare work that was produced by both authors in the same period, namely 1928-1934, with an emphasis on how, in those years, the close collaboration with Joyce influenced Beckett's first literary attempts. Through a comparative analysis which combines textual genesis and biography, I will look at how these experiences of madness (either one's own, or of another) are turned into literature, how they are represented in an aesthetic form.

My choice of the generic term "madness" reflects the necessity of considering mental illness as a multilayered and even uncanny set of different physical and mental conditions, and the discourses about them, which were at the centre of scientific and artistic debates during the early decades of the 20th century. In the light of Foucault's genealogy of mental illness, and the ideas of the anti-psychiatric movement of the 1960s-1970s, Jane Ussher brilliantly summarises her choice of the term "madness" instead of "mental illness" in her exploration of women's madness as social construction:

> The term "mental illness" is problematic, as it suggests an internal pathology which can be incontrovertibly categorised and cured by biomedicine; a disease state that occurs within the individual and is separate from culture, values and politics. Notions of "mental illness" also serve to absolve the individual of all responsibility for their feelings or actions, implying passive sick role and reliance on a doctor for a biomedical cure. At the same time, as many of the anti-psychiatrists of the 1960s and 1970 have argued, physical illness can be located in "underlying pathologies in the individual organism", whereas "the mind is not an organ or part of the body [and] cannot be diseased in the same way as the body can". And while it has been claimed that diagnosis of all illness "is, like beauty in the eye of the beholder", social norms and subjective judgement are central to the diagnosis of disorders of the mind. The use of the term "madness" reminds us of this fact. (Ussher, 4)

A constant shift between "madness" strictly connected with culture and society versus "illness" as a pathology tangibly affecting the body (with the mind considered as being part of it) will emerge throughout the present analysis. However, I have opted for the choice of the term "madness" not as a way of differentiating it from physical illness: they do not have to be seen necessarily in opposition, with one excluding the other. In fact, the way in which I will employ the term "madness" is intended to include within its meaning "mental illness" in a more effective way than vice versa: mental illness suggests the idea of an illness of the mind as something isolated from the body, whereas madness can be far less specific and can also be seen as affecting the individual in its totality, both mind and body.

As we will see, the textual representations of madness in both Joyce and (early) Beckett are the result of the assimilation of various scientific theories and practices and reflect the cultural atmosphere of their times as well as literary traditions, both European and Irish. Moreover, all these elements were also combined with more personal, autobiographical ones. I will thus compare and contrast Joyce's and Beckett's texts, providing a broader discursive context but also stressing those elements of originality that stem from biographical experience. In doing so, this comparative analysis will focus on three macro-themes to which I will devote each chapter. The choice of these particular themes allows me to explore Joyce's and Beckett's engagement with three different and rather paradigmatic discourses of "madness", whose textual results reveal some sort of continuity (or discontinuity) between the two authors: in Chapter 1, I will look at how both Joyce and Beckett employ degeneration theory, one of the most representative European theorisations of madness at the turn of the twentieth century, for the construction of their fictional identities; in Chapter 2, I will explore how Joyce and Beckett engage with multiple historical associations between Jonathan Swift and madness, which will introduce the context of the Irish tradition; and finally in Chapter 3 the focus will be on "women's madness" through the example of Lucia Joyce, Joyce's allegedly schizophrenic daughter, whose story is at once a paradigmatic example of the tragic fate encountered by many women of her time, but also an exceptional case, as it leaves traces in the writing of both Joyce and Beckett.

Along with the thematic exploration of the discourse of madness in the early 20th c., a second main aim of the present research is to explore the evolution of Joyce's early

influence on Beckett. I will therefore focus on the period between 1928 and 1934, one of close proximity between Joyce and Beckett (but also of problematic distance), as well as the time in which Joyce's influence on Beckett was most direct, immediate, and tangible. It was roughly in this period, as is well-known, that Beckett had the opportunity to collaborate closely with him, at once witnessing and being part of Joyce's own compositional work, being almost mesmerised by Joyce's genius. This experience was crucial in Beckett's development: and if on the one hand, as Knowlson reports, before his encounter with Joyce, Beckett "did not intend to become a writer", nonetheless he soon "realised that [he] couldn't go down the same road" as his model (Knowlson, 111). This awareness partly derived from the unsuccessful attempts to see into print his first full-length novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, written between 1931 and 1932. Failing to publish the novel, Beckett turned much of its material into the short story collection *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934). My analysis of the transformations which this fictional material underwent reveals Beckett in the process of distancing himself from the "Joycean road" and the early emergence of certain original characteristics which will characterise Beckett's more mature works.

In order to fully illustrate this process of transformation, the analysis will not focus exclusively on the final texts; instead, I will explore the process of composition itself. In doing so, the combination of the analysis of the textual genesis with biography will be particularly beneficial. As noted by Finn Fordham in his exploration of the textual "doings" and "undoings" of modernist selves, the combination of genetic criticism and biography "offer[s] something distinct from both", as it allows us to look at the effect of the processes of composition themselves "on the life which then becomes key in providing an understanding of the work's content" (Fordham 2010, 26). On the one hand, I will illustrate Joyce's compositional process, stressing the almost symbiotic interdependence between life and writing during the seventeen years of gestation of *Work in Progress*; as for Beckett, I will stress those elements of similarity with Joyce in his compositional work, but I will also outline the evolution in the manipulation of the same material from earlier to later texts, in his attempt to overcome Joyce's influence. As it will emerge, a reading of a novel like *Dream*, in particular, at once influenced on different levels by Joyce's compositional method and full of more or less overt biographical references, will benefit from this methodological combination.

Despite the strong impact of Joyce's influence on Beckett's early writings, this influence seems to be often taken for granted. In particular, the impact of Beckett's having been a close witness of the composition of the *Work in Progress,* and the consequent impact on Beckett's first novel, with its later transformation into the short story collection, seems to be just as often overstated as it has been overlooked. Beckett himself has provided one of the most effective syntheses of his "anxiety of influence" when, in a letter to Charles Prentice, he describes "Sedendo et Quiescendo" as "stink[ing] of Joyce in spite the most earnest endeavours to endow it with my own odours" (Samuel Beckett to Charles Prentice, 15/8/1931, *LSB 1*, 81). Nonetheless, Beckett's often quoted definition of his early work has become a cliché. This is partly due to the fact that most of the systematic studies on Joyce and Beckett were published prior to, or almost simultaneous with, the publication of *Dream* in 1992. As a result, we only find generic references to Beckett's first novel: it is not even mentioned in Gluck's *Beckett and Joyce. Friendship and Fiction*, published in 1979, which remained the only extensive critical work on Joyce and Beckett for more than a decade. In the 1990s, almost contemporaneous to the publication of *Dream*, two edited collections appeared: *Re: Joyce and Beckett* (1992), edited by Phyllis Carey and Ed Jewinski, and *In Principle, Beckett is Joyce* (1993), by Friedhelm Rathjen. The latter in particular aims to show the extent to which "the presence of Joyce embraces the whole of Beckett's oeuvre": from "Beckett's first publication … his essay on *Finnegans Wake*, 'Dante…Bruno. Vico.. Joyce'" to "his reportedly last work, the poem "what is the word" of 1989" (Rathjen, viii). Beckett's early writings receive more attention than usual in both these instances. However, Beckett's relationship with Joyce seems to be exemplified almost exclusively by the essay "Dante… Bruno. Vico.. Joyce", read as an insightful juvenile exercise in literary criticism, reflecting Beckett's early literary tastes and revealing his "working out ideas that would come to fruition so perfectly in *Waiting for Godot*, and even more clearly in the later dramas" (Schreibman, 8). In *Re: Joyce and Beckett*, we also find critical explorations which aim to compare *More Pricks* with Joyce's *Dubliners* in the context of the Irish short story (i.e. John Fletcher and John P. Harrington) or the Dantean links between Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait* and Belacqua Shuah in *More Pricks* (Phyllis Carey). Both collections reflect the more general tendency to compare the two either as both young or mature authors, rather than analysing the work they were doing simultaneously.

Even after the publication of *Dream*, the novel remained one of Beckett's most overlooked works. Murphy's *Beckett's Dedalus: Dialogical Engagement with Joyce in Beckett's Fiction* (2009) represents one of the few significant exceptions, as it reads Beckett's early prose (up to *Watt*) as a response to Joyce and in particular, as the title suggests, to the aesthetic expressed in *Portrait of The Artist as a Young Man*. Murphy rightly stresses that in Beckett's early texts "[p]arody […] employs a much more complex set of strategic manoeuvres; its simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the primary 'source' material points towards innovative ways of dealing with the 'anxiety of influence'" (Murphy, 62). Murphy reads Beckett's earliest literary attempts in the light of Joyce's work, but nonetheless his approach seems rather reductive: Murphy only mentions very briefly "some important references" to Joyce's other works, arguing that "the most telling reference points in terms of the structuring of key ideas in Beckett's own fiction are to *Portrait*" (Murphy, 4-5), including *Dream*, whose "very complex structure" is seen exclusively as "[…] determined by an in-depth engagement with Stephen Dedalus's aesthetic as elaborated in *Portrait*" (62).

Apart from Murphy, however, critics have continued to take for granted Joyce's immediate impact on Beckett's earliest literary attempts, focusing instead on the traces of Joyce's influence on Beckett's later prose where this influence becomes less direct and more subtle. Possibly, there is a more or less conscious desire to remove Beckett from any sort of subaltern position, avoiding looking at the creative results accomplished during the period of Joycean apprenticeship as too imitative, and determined to consider the two men as equals, by stressing the opposite or complementary nature of their works. However, it is worth noticing that this almost Manichean distinction between Joyce's omnipotence and Beckett's impotence, Joyce's "apotheosis of the word" versus his own "literature of the unword" with which we tend to frame and compare Joyce's the works of Joyce and Beckett, was originally suggested by Beckett himself in his letter to Axel Kaun in 1937 (*Disjecta*, 170). Rathjen rightly stresses the fact that the first critic to compare Joyce and Beckett "seems to have been Beckett himself" (Rathjen, 99). His comparison nevertheless did not focus on similarities but on differences: in this way, "Beckett the shape-changer made up his own Joyce, a Beckettean Joyce by Joycean Beckett" (Rathjen, vii). This particular way of seeing Beckett as the shaper of Joycean criticism offers a fascinating ground of exploration and Rathjen's argument has been developed further by David Dettmar in

"The Joyce That Beckett Built" (1998), who argues that this paradigmatic difference was something which Beckett himself aimed to establish in order to downplay his own continuity with the Joycean project (Dettmar, 605). Such an understanding of the works of Joyce and Beckett in terms of this dichotomy has become indeed useful and effective in order to compare the two mature writers. But the fact that this distinction originates from Beckett himself suggests a desire to establish a continuity only in the form of a "coincidentia oppositorum".

Dirk Van Hulle's *Manuscripts Genetics; Joyce's Know-How, Beckett's Nohow* is one of the most remarkable and systematic comparative studies in which Joyce and Beckett are seen together. As can be guessed from the title, Van Hulle's analysis focuses on Joyce's and Beckett's poetics once they have become quite divergent, and on those Beckett works which can be read in many respects as the opposite of Joyce, showing how "Joyce used the textual history to write the history of the world, and how Beckett made a direct link between the development of the text and that of the individual" (Van Hulle 2008, 3). Van Hulle, in defining the compositional differences between the two authors, sees nonetheless a continuity between Joyce's "work in progress" and the development, on Beckett's part, of a "work in regress". As Van Hulle notes, in this way "Beckett did retain and develop an idea of work in motion and he even radicalized it: he applied it to his oeuvre in its entirety" (3). My analysis will further explore this kind of continuity and, following a similar genetic comparative approach, will look back at the very beginning of the process of development of Beckett's poetic. Further, I will scrutinize Beckett's first attempts to "remove" from his texts material which is Joycean on different levels. As we will see, I will indeed identify in Beckett's early texts the "link between the development of the text and that of the individual" (3), which at the beginning coincided with the development of his own original voice as a writer.

More generally, Van Hulle represents one of the few exceptions within the predominant tendency of seeing Beckett and Joyce strictly as single, self-contained authors. Surprisingly, in another relatively recent publication *Beckett, Joyce, and the Art of the Negative*, published in 2005, almost all the contributions focus either on one author or the other. The only exception is Van Hulle, who in his essay focuses on Beckett's and Joyce's "transtextual undoings", examining Joyce's reliance on notes from the German philosopher Fritz Mauthner, taken by Beckett in the late 1930s, following up Geert

Lernout's contribution in Rathjen's volume. In this essay, Van Hulle briefly mentions the analogies between Joyce's compositional work and the procedure adopted by Beckett for his first novel, namely the practice of compiling a source book, now known as the "Dream" notebook, in which he used to jot down annotations from his readings and which, exactly in the Joycean fashion, were ticked once incorporated into his work. However, Van Hulle only mentions Beckett's "Dream" notebook in order to differentiate between two systems of annotations employed by Beckett in the 1930s (Van Hulle 2005, 55), and focuses exclusively on the other one, less similar to Joyce's. On the other hand, in his contribution to *A Companion to Samuel Beckett* on the evolution of Beckett's short prose, Van Hulle resorts to an image reminiscent of the discourse of degeneration when he points out the continuity between the portraits of Joyce's alter-ego Shem and Beckett's alter-ego Belacqua, positioning "Sedendo and Quiescendo" "in the long tradition of writing as form of defecation" (Van Hulle 2013, 247).

Another significant contribution in the exploration of the late Joyce-early Beckett connection is offered by John Pilling's extensive critical and editorial work on Beckett's early texts. Pilling's annotations contained in his *Companion to Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *Samuel Beckett's More Pricks than Kicks: In a Strait of Two Mills*, are precious tools in the search for Joycean allusions more or less hidden within Beckett's early texts. Moreover, with his introduction to his transcription of Beckett's "Dream" notebook, Pilling provides a detailed account of Beckett's early engagement with Joyce's work, as well as how the more personal implications of their relationship affected the genesis of Beckett's first novel. Along with these detailed contributions, however, in *Beckett Before Godot*, Pilling also provides one of the most effective synthetical descriptions of the process of Beckett dealing with Joyce's influence:

> For Beckett, Joyce has to remain visible in his (Beckett's) handiwork for expulsion, or purging, to work. Joyce is unavoidably "the partially purgatorial agent" (Dis 33) who enables *Dream* and Beckett to go on. (Pilling 2004, 64)

With *Dream* as a whole proving unpublishable, Beckett had to further "purge" his text, gradually making Joyce's presence less manifest. Pilling's definition can be seen as the point of departure for my analysis: I will illustrate exactly this process of transition

from one text to the other, through examples of Beckett's different attempts to heal himself from the Joycean "intoxication with words" (Knowlson, 111). And it is exactly in the removal of allusion, seen as a Joycean characteristic, that certain features which will characterise Beckett's later works began to emerge in their embryonic state. Thus, from the compositional point of view in particular, we can already find the tendency which Van Hulle describes as "a two movement-process: the recollection of particulars and their consequent decomposition" (Van Hulle 2008, 122). In order to perceive this removal, however, Beckett's attempts to imitate Joyce's accretive method demand a closer look, which in turn reveals other layers of engagement with Joyce.

As recently noted by James McNaughton in his chapter devoted to "Echo's Bones" in *Samuel Beckett and the Politics of the Aftermath*, in Beckett early texts, "intertextuality is more than a mere technique to be overcome" but rather "a self-conscious aesthetic of redundancy that […] parodies [the] modernist obsession" (McNaughton, 55). The employment of certain particular literary sources, for instance, reveal not just a similarity in the compositional method. In fact, one element which will emerge through the comparison of Joyce's and Beckett's usage of other texts is their interest in the paradigms that other texts offer for expressing more personal concerns: either as an escape from or expression of emotions through processes of textual objectification or sublimation, which in Beckett's early prose is not only reminiscent of Joyce, but is often used to respond to Joyce. Therefore, particular attention to the "enveloping facts" (*FW* 109.14) will be combined with a biographical exploration of the more personal components of the texts. In what follows I will cross-reference different kinds of biographical materials, especially focusing on those which provide different perspectives on the same events, in order to see how they are transposed into art material. On the one hand, I will illustrate how Joyce attempted to give a textual shape to his own concerns about the reception of his works, about his severe eye problems, and later about his daughter Lucia's deteriorating mental health. I will devote particular attention to some "detrimental material", namely passages which have not found any space in the final version of the text, or, as with the analysis of chapter II.2 of *Finnegans Wake*, I will focus on the very early stages of composition of certain passages which are rather different from their final shape. This kind of material reveals clearly the cracks and gaps which Joyce was trying to fill, and how these aborted intentions nonetheless can be seen as integral part of the compositional process,

representing particular points of intersection between textual production and reformulation of fictional selves. As for Beckett, I will illustrate how he engages textually with Joyce not just though imitation but also as parody or tribute, in the attempt to deal with his own "anxiety of influence" but also, as we will see, on a more personal level, as in the case of Lucia.

The combination of genetic and biographical methods also requires some sort of chronological progression. Here I will combine two different kinds of progression which provide the skeleton of my thesis. The Joycean chronology will provide the axis of the thesis as whole. I will focus on certain key moments in the composition of the *Wake*, from the mid- 1920s to the mid-1930s. The first moment to be taken into account will be prior to Joyce's encounter with Beckett, from the development of the character of Shem, his alter-ego in *Finnegans Wake*, in the early 1920s, to the beginning of Joyce's collaboration with the magazine *transition*, 1926, and up until the publication of *Our Exagmination* in 1929. I will then return to a particular period in Joyce's life at the end of 1928, during which he experienced a serious creative block. Finally, I will focus on the period of Lucia's breakdown in 1932, looking at the textual changes coinciding with the first years (until 1935) of Lucia's never-ending medical history. I will try to follow a similar sort of progression even in Beckett's case. However, this progression will not be strictly biographical, and it will not be traced throughout the thesis as a whole but instead within each chapter. More specifically, I am interested in how a particular textual representation evolves from one text to the other, usually from *Dream* to *More Pricks*, but also from the poem "Sanies I" to *More Pricks*, as in Chapter 2. And I will see these changes as illustrations of different examples of Beckett's attempts to "purge" Joyce.

Along with a chronological progression, however, this thesis will be developed along the thematic thread of "madness". In particular I aim to explore how different meanings attributed to madness were employed by Joyce and Beckett in their different construction and reformulations of fictional identities, their own as well as others'. More specifically, in Chapter 1, I will look at how both Joyce and Beckett appropriate the discourse of degeneration in portraying their different alter-egos, Shem and Belacqua, as degenerate artists. I will first outline the evolution of the meaning attributed to the term "degeneration", from its emergence at the end of the nineteenth

century as organic explanation of mental decay, to a generic label for everything that could shake bourgeois sensitivity and needed to be isolated from society: the mad, the sick, but also the artist. Art according to degeneration theory was one of the main vehicles for the transmission of this "disease". I will thus establish a link between the turn of the century decadent art with which degeneration theory engages directly and the artistic atmosphere of Parisian avant-gardes in the 1920s with which both Beckett and Joyce came in contact through the magazine *transition*. I will then focus on Joyce's more personal engagement with degeneration, which partly finds its roots in his early literary tastes, as for instance his admiration for Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen's work, in particular, was considered by theorists of degeneration such as Max Nordau as at once cause and expression of disease. I will thus look at some *Wakean* allusions to Ibsen's play *The Master Builder* in connection with the character of the father, HCE, which can be read as a way of acknowledging Joyce's "degenerate" artistic descendance from Ibsen. However, the most significant development of the discourse of degeneration in the *Wake* is offered by the character of Shem, HCE's degenerate son and Joyce's own artistic alter-ego. I will look at the construction of the portrait of Shem in I.7, directly characterized by several physical and mental stigmata. In Shem's case the personal implications are particularly direct. The "Shem the Penman" chapter was composed around 1925, three years after the publication of *Ulysses*, the book which had brought to Joyce both scandal and celebrity. As shown by Marion Quirici, Joyce massively draws from negative critical reviews of *Ulysses* for the images and language of degeneration with which he gave shape to his character. I will argue that Joyce's tendency to incorporate criticism within his text was meant as a way to provoke his detractors, at once seeking for their attention and parodying them. But the text also serves as screen and protection, as exemplified by the image of Shem writing on his body with his own excrements: Joyce hides behind the mask of his fictional identity, which negative criticism itself had contributed to create.

In continuity with Joyce, the construction of an artistic identity through a degenerate mask characterizes Beckett's alter-ego Belacqua in *Dream* and *More Pricks*. Just as Shem, Belacqua possesses markedly degenerate traits, and I will read these characteristics as a means of engaging with Joyce. If Joyce deploys images and language of degeneration as a way to react to negative criticism, Beckett's engagement with the discourse of degeneration at the very beginning of his literary career is a way

to position himself within the Modernist universe, reflecting his difficulties in developing an original voice as well as in finding an audience. In doing so, as shown by his extensive annotations in the "Dream" notebook, Beckett's key source is Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, a popular turn of the century pseudo-scientific study which aimed to apply medical investigation to literature. Beckett drew from Nordau for most of the physical and mental stigmata which characterise Belacqua. I will argue that, given the particular source employed, Beckett was trying to trace a sort of "degenerate" literary lineage between Shem and Belacqua (but also between himself and Joyce), as a way to give literary shape and exorcise his "anxiety of influence", in a constant oscillation between parody and tribute.

I will first identify Belacqua's main degenerate traits: his more exterior symptoms, his characteristic "abulia", and his sexuality. I then focus on the analysis of the evolution of Belacqua's character from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *More Pricks than Kicks*, including the short story "Echo's Bones", meant as part of the collection but eventually unpublished until 2014. Outlining the evolution of Beckett's employment of Nordau and of the discourse of degeneration throughout these texts, it will be possible to notice the disappearance, the "removal" or "purging", of direct borrowings and the development of a more veiled system of allusions. Moreover, along with Beckett's attempt to deal with Joyce's influence, the first elements of originality can be also spotted. In particular, I will explore Beckett's serendipitous encounter, via Nordau, with a concept, "cœnæsthesis" or "bodily conscience". This concept can be seen as an anticipation of the characteristic feature of Beckett's later voices and bodies which are reduced to the bare minimum of their consciousness, a condition which nonetheless Belacqua strives to reach. Thus, if on the one hand, Beckett treats his character as an unoriginal and degenerate result of the modernist tradition which has reached with him the maximum level of degradation and deserves extinction, we can also see Belacqua as the degenerate progenitor of Beckett's later characters.

If in Chapter 1 a more European contemporary dimension is explored, Chapter 2 will focus on madness within the Anglo-Irish context, looking at the multiple associations between Jonathan Swift and madness. Through an exploration of Swift's works and biographies, I will first outline these multiple connections. As a result of his celebrity, along with many other different aspects of his public and private life, Swift's physical

and mental health has long attracted an almost obsessive curiosity. This curiosity characterized both the literary and scientific world as well as the popular imagination. I will first explore the different legends concerning Swift's madness, medical works focusing on Swift's condition and biographical works. All these sources provide more or less accurate or imaginative accounts of Swift's life and to different extents contributed to the process of his mythicalisation. Both Joyce and Beckett in different ways looked at Swift's life and work for inspiration. I will therefore analyse both Joyce's and Beckett's response to Swift.

In Joyce's case, although Swift is a pervasive presence within the texture of the *Wake* and I will necessarily refer to it in my analysis, my aim will be to illustrate Joyce's attempt to textualise his own personal experience with illness, through the analysis of a very particular piece of writing, namely the fragment "Twilight of Blindness Madness Descends on Swift". This fragment, composed in October 1928, never became part of *Finnegans Wake,* although it was published as a fragment in the magazine *Le Navire d'Argent.* Placed at the border between private and public writing, it reflects Joyce's concerns at the time of its composition. These concerns partly derived from the negative reception of his work. On the one hand, at the time of the composition of the fragment, Joyce benefited from the support of the *transition* circle, among whom he had found some of his greatest admirers. Nonetheless, the troubled gestation of *Work in Progress* was constantly accompanied by sceptical responses even from people close to Joyce such as Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Joyce's patron Harriet Shaw Weaver. If on the one hand these reactions fuelled Joyce's inspiration to some extent, as he turned them into material for his work (Lewis in particular), they also had a disastrous effect on Joyce's spirit. Joyce reached at this time almost paranoid states and the completion of his work seemed sometimes an heroical mission he had undertaken but which no one could understand. Moreover, all these concerns were aggravated by the worsening of his physical conditions, which at some points seems to have prevented progress with his work. Throughout the whole of 1928 Joyce had to undertake a series of eye surgeries which left him blind for weeks, causing him also extreme mental distress; in the same period Nora was also suspected of having cancer.

It was a terrible moment on all fronts and the Swift fragment was the first thing Joyce had managed to write after several months of creative block. Through the evocation of

Swift, it reflects an idea of madness as something implied by others as a consequence of fame, but also as a result of a physical exhaustion, establishing a close association between his own physical struggles and Swift's legendary madness. In particular, an association in terms of siblings will emerge, with which Joyce seems at once to acknowledge their points of resemblance (their lives, their suffering), but at the same time reflects the refusal of a complete identification. In this fragment Joyce is projecting himself, or rather his illness, upon an Irish writer with whom he had many points of contact but who is other than him, possibly in the attempt to sublimate his sufferings through writing, reshaping them through the image of Swift's legendary madness. I will argue that this fragment, even though it never found any space in the final text, is nonetheless still part of the compositional process in a wider sense: it coincides with what John Nash has described as "a point of maximum exhaustion, of the materials but also of the writer himself", which nonetheless represents "a restless point which ensured renewal" (Nash, 122).

Despite Beckett being very close to Joyce at the time of the composition of the fragment, and that his early interest in Swift might have been partly derived from Joyce, the allusions to Swift in Beckett's early works denote a certain level of autonomy from Joyce, as well as seeing the gradual emergence of some of the most original Beckettian features. I will therefore illustrate this process of transition, tracing the textual genesis of the short story "Fingal".

The origin of the short story stems from an autobiographical anecdote reported by Beckett in a letter to McGreevy as a sketch which seems to recall one of Joyce's early epiphanies, short fragments recording scenes of everyday life as moments of sudden insight, which he wrote between 1898 and 1904. Nonetheless, Beckett's anecdote undergoes different transformations: it first provides inspiration for the poem "Sanies I", and is then transposed and developed in "Fingal". Beckett's epistolary fragment thus gradually ferments through writing before assuming a more definite shape. Even this process of transformation in fact denotes a compositional affinity with Joyce: I will see it, on a smaller scale, as reminiscent of the Joycean "active elements" (JJ to Weaver, 9/10/1923, *JJL I*, 205), namely those sketches which Joyce employed as points of departure for the first drafts of *Work in Progress*. The analysis of this textual evolution of "Fingal", and of the Swiftian theme in particular, will also reveal a stratification of

meanings and allusions (especially to the Irish context) which is also very Joycean in principle, but resulting nonetheless in the expression of a more mature, original voice. "Fingal" is one of the last stories of *More Pricks* in order of composition. Written in 1933 when Beckett, being in Ireland, found himself already at a "safer distance" from Joyce, the short story reveals a considerable amount of independence from Joyce: by means of its allusiveness, and of the evocation of Swift in particular, the story offers a privileged view of Beckett's more confident way to deal with Joyce's presence and more generally with the Irish tradition. I will argue that "Fingal" represents an important moment of "transition": an active response, a much more personal creative reaction than the one achieved with the earlier writings. And I will show how the development of the Swiftian theme coincides with the emergence of some elements, namely the bike and the mental asylum, which will become central in Beckett's later work.

The final part of this exploration of the different meanings attributed to madness will be devoted to a particular case of "woman's madness". The tragic history of Lucia Joyce and the traces left in the writing of both Joyce and Beckett will be the focus of Chapter 3. I will look at how both Joyce and Beckett perceived the emergence of the first signs of Lucia's problems, and how these perceptions resonate in their works. Undoubtedly, Lucia was present in the *Wake* via Issy before her breakdown in 1932 and, as we will see, Beckett's different portraits of Lucia can be seen as different ways of engaging with Joyce's text, its form but also its content. However, given our focus, I will look at those textual changes in Joyce's work following Lucia's breakdown in 1932. Beckett's fictional representations of Lucia, on the other hand, reflect the experiences of his Parisian years (1928-1932). As it will emerge, Beckett seems to be one of the first persons close to Lucia to read some signs of disturbance, to experience them very closely and represent them in his work. Joyce, conversely, continued to refuse the idea of Lucia's madness and kept looking for alternatives until her final hospitalisation in 1936. I will therefore begin with the analysis of Beckett's texts and will conclude with Joyce.

Before delving into the textual analysis, each section will be introduced by a biographical overview, with particular attention to those elements which find a textual correspondence in both Joyce and Beckett. For Beckett, I will outline his relationship

with Lucia including the consequences for Beckett's relationship with Joyce, focusing in particular on the years between 1929 and 1932, from Beckett's first encounter with Lucia to her first serious breakdown. More than in any other example analysed here, we can observe Beckett's trying to adopt another main characteristic of Joyce's writing: the incorporation of personal material within the text. Interestingly, in Lucia's case Beckett manipulates in different ways the same biographical material giving her different names and different destinies.

The Syra-Cusa's portrait, in the attempt to imitate a Joycean compositional technique, is over-charged with erudite allusions from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Cooper's *Flagellation and the Flagellants*, Garnier's *Onanisme, seul et à deux* and Praz's *la Carne, la Morte e il Diavolo*, of which we find traces in the "Dream" notebook. I will look in detail at how Beckett employs each of these sources in order to turn into fictive form his own conflicting feelings towards Lucia. The Syra-Cusa, as we will see, is characterized by an attractive but dangerous body, often described in hysterical terms, and her beauty is perceived as a threat by Belacqua. She will emerge at once as an idealisation of a pathological condition but also in terms of an overt desire for punishing, controlling and getting rid of her body, often misogynistically perceived as "hysterical". Despite the dismissive treatment reserved to the Syra-Cusa in *Dream*, however, Beckett felt the urge to give a new fictional shape to Lucia through the character of Lucy in the short story "Walking Out". Here the same biographical material is treated rather differently: the attractive body of Lucy is amputated and made inoffensive, and her presence in Belacqua's life becomes, as it were, a more cherished one. Moreover, the short story is characterised by a much more sophisticated and dynamic system of allusions, which in this case seem to be mainly Joycean. In a constant oscillation between fiction and biography, as well as between parody and tribute, Beckett charges the text with subverted Ulyssean overtones, and of the "Nausicaa" episode in particular. Beckett's growing confidence in the manipulation of Joycean material is essential to his eventual fulfilment of that "pervasive need" experienced since *Dream* "to purge" the organism of the "real presences" still haunting it, as Pilling suggests. Indeed, not only Joyce's style but Lucia's presence was one of them. And if the portrait of the Syra-Cusa appears derivative from Wakean textuality, in *More Pricks* the text reflects again a more confident manipulation of the same material,

so that even the change in attitude towards representing Lucia is closely related to Beckett's overcoming his anxiety of influence.

1932 will be the point of departure for my analysis of Joyce. I will outline Lucia's complex medical history until her final hospitalisation in 1936, and I will then trace some parallels with the composition of chapter II.2 of the *Wake*. In particular I am interested in how the text reflects and responds to Lucia's "madness" through the development of Issy's voice within the chapter. Comparing the chronology of events with the genetic evolution of the "Nightlesson" in the same period, I will outline the close connection between the development of Lucia's illness and the development of the text by focusing on three key stages in the development of the chapter: the first draft of Issy's letter, the composition of "Storiella", and the creation of the footnotes. All these changes, despite the vagueness in the chronology, took place between 1933 and 1934. I will trace a compositional link between these textual elements, and I will read them as Joyce's textual responses to Lucia's worsening conditions. As I will show, their genetic progression reflects Joyce's gradually coming to terms with the supposed necessity of having Lucia isolated and under surveillance, putting a limit to her uncontainable nature; and his struggling with the necessity of distance between them and with the possibility of her permanent confinement in a mental institution. Unlike Beckett, Joyce aimed at filling through the text that distance between father and daughter which in real life was becoming a necessity.

Chapter I

Madness and the Construction of Fictional Selves: Degenerate Alter-Egos

Despite its scientific vagueness, degeneration theory offered one of the most culturally influential conceptions of mental illness which the 20th century inherited from the previous one. In this chapter I will look at the different ways in which the language and discourse of degeneration influenced the genesis of Joyce's final work *Finnegans Wake* and Beckett's early English prose (*Dream* and *More Pricks than Kicks*, including "Echo's Bones"). In so doing, I aim to describe how Beckett in his early works displays Joyce's influence, from the imitation of Joyce's compositional method to the shaping of his own portrait of the artist, as we will see, as a "young degenerate": a choice which seems to denote Beckett's perception and consequent ironic depiction of himself as a Post-Joyce "lower", "degenerate" writer. In this sense, as I will try to show, Belacqua can thus be seen as a direct descendant (in a sort of literary lineage) of Joyce's degenerate literary alter-ego Shem.

Before I proceed with the comparison of Joyce's and Beckett's different processes of appropriating the discourses of degeneration within their texts, it will be helpful to clarify what exactly terms as "degenerate" and "degeneration" at the time of his emergence and its evolution through the years, until the 1920s - early 1930s.

The Malady of Two Centuries. An Overview

Since its emergence in the second half of the nineteenth century, the term degeneration went through a process of rapid transformation. Central to the development of these theories since the 1850s were the studies of psychiatrists such as Bénédict Morel and Cesare Lombroso, who provided different variants of physical, organic explanations of immorality and decadence, stressing the importance of environmental factors on heredity. Morel was the first to argue that degeneration did involve an alteration of human material by means of a process of morbid inheritance which gradually leads to its sterility and final organic degradation. Morel's *Treatise on Degeneracy* was published in 1857, two years before Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, although it is rather drawn from the Lamarckian idea of inheritance of acquired characteristics.

According to Morel a degenerate is "a morbid deviation from the normal type of humanity", whose "hereditary influences will fatally weigh upon his posterity" (Morel in Pick, 40-41). By the late 1870s, Cesare Lombroso further developed Morel's theories for the definition of the "born criminal". Drawing from degeneration theory, Lombroso aimed to demonstrate a pathological condition in the criminal man by means of classification of the many different physical and mental stigmata which as Andrew Scull in *Madness and Civilization* explains were considered as "the price for sin – a price sometimes paid not by the original sinner for fornication, excessive drinking or other violations of conventional morality […], but by his or her children, grandchildren or greatgrandchildren" (Scull, 243). Lombroso was also the first alienist to apply with empiricist rigor degeneration theory to art: in 1891 with the *Man of Genius* Lombroso aimed to demonstrate that artistic genius was a form of hereditary insanity. In doing so, among the many different signs of degeneration, Lombroso enlisted the "inspiration of genius" and "originality" (Lombroso, 5), along with pallor, emaciation, cranium and brain anomalies, stammering, sterility, and many other degenerate more all less plausible traits which included left-handedness, vagabondage, fondness for special words, and even unlikeliness to parents.

As brilliantly shown by Daniel Pick in his *Faces of Degeneration – A European Disorder, c1848-1918*, the term was soon characterized by a plurality of connotations and different discourses developed in different nations and at different times, sometimes overlapping but more often remaining quite distinguishable. Far from gaining a stable and precise meaning, degeneration, Pick argues,

> slides over from a description of disease or degradation as such, to become a kind of self-reproducing pathological process – a causal agent in the blood, the body and the race – which engendered a cycle of historical and social decline perhaps finally beyond social determination. (Pick, 22)

Despite the impossibility of reducing degeneration to a specific mental or physical condition, it came to signify "the condition of conditions, the ultimate signifier of pathology" (Pick, 8), and gradually its language crossed the borders of specialist publications to deeply permeate popular culture. Fiction since its emergence in particular offered a fertile ground for this crossing over and propagation of degeneration imagery and ideas. If as explained by Foucault in *Madness and*

Civilization, since its emergence, the novel has constituted "[…] the milieu of perversion, par excellence, of all sensibility", as "it detaches the soul from all that is immediate and natural in feeling and leads it into an imaginary world of sentiments violent in proportions to their unreality and less controlled by the gentle laws of nature" (Foucault 1988, 219); even more deleterious seemed to become the effects of fiction when it displayed reality, with particular attention to the most sordid aspects of it. Fiction thus gradually became more and more engaged with science: either adopting or challenging the excessively optimistic nineteenth-century views of progressive writers. From the late nineteenth century literature began to show what science wanted to isolate as dangers for a healthy society. The first aimed to satisfy the most morbid curiosity, while the latter tried to exorcise fears and anxiety regarding race, sexuality and class. This phenomenon became particularly evident in France: from the so called *feuilletons*, such as *Les Mystères de Paris*, to the greatest exponents of French Realism and Naturalism. Émile Zola, possibly more than anyone else came to exemplify this tendency and in *The Experimental Novel* declared his intention to "all points to entrench myself behind Claude Bernard" (Zola, 1), a French physician who was a pioneer of experimental medicine. If, on the one hand, artists were fascinated by concepts such as "social disease" and environmental explanations for moral corruption, finding inspiration in scientific texts for the physical and mental physiognomy of their characters, another new phenomenon was also produced: the spectacularisation of madness and illness. The degenerate, the sick, the mad had to be isolated from society but, at the same time, had nonetheless to be exposed to its gaze. During Jean-Martin Charcot's *Leçons du Mardi* at the Sâlpètriere Hospital, for instance, all kinds of neurological disfunctions were put on display. Charcot's lessons soon turned into extremely popular and long-running events attracting a rich and heterogenous public eager to look at what Charcot himself defined as "the living pathological museum whose resources are almost inexaustible" (Charcot, 3). Many of these inexhaustible resources were even immortalised in a series of photographic collections, *Iconographies iconographiques de la Sâlpetrière* (published in 1876-77, 1878, and 1879-80).

Far from being an exclusively French phenomenon, there was engagement at different levels of degeneration theory with art throughout Europe: late Victorian British society was not immune to the darker cultural and social impact of the post-Darwinian

development of positivism with Herbert Spencer and his theory of the "survival of the fittest". As shown by William Greenslade in *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel: 1880-1940*, apart from the most paradigmatic *fin de siècle* Anglo-Irish authors such as Oscar Wilde and Bram Stoker and the Scottish Robert Louis Stevenson, even authors as different as Hardy, Gissing, Wells, Conrad, Foster and Woolf, all dealt in different ways and to different extent with this public discursive practice, writing "within, alongside or often, against the terms of discourse, consciously or unconsciously" (Greenslade, 4); interestingly Joyce is excluded from Greensdale's analysis, apart from a brief allusion to *Portrait*. More generally, as shown by Pick's attempt to frame degeneration as a "European" disease, every European country produced their "degenerate" artistic expressions: Ibsen, Hauptmann, Huysmans, Swinburne, d'Annunzio – to mention a few. Despite their differences and, in some cases, incompatibility, they all fell under the wide labels of fin-de-siècle or "decadent", especially for their detractors: as Max Nordau would say, "[t]he prevalent feeling is that of imminent perdition and extinction. Fin-de siècle is at once a confession and a complaint" (Nordau, 4).

Max Nordau's *Degeneration* offered a vitally important step in the evolution of the meaning of degeneration in relation to art. In this work, published in 1892, Nordau directly applies degeneration theory to art, which is seen as one of the primary vehicles for the transmission of the disease. In doing so he shaped a work of cultural criticism in the form of a medical treatise, offering detailed diagnosis, etiology, prognosis, and even therapeutics. In his attempt to apply scientific theories to art, in the shadow of Lombroso's *The Man of Genius*, Nordau aimed to demonstrate that many proto-modernist styles and innovations were either caused by physiological and neurological disorders, or by forms of mental illness:

> Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists. These, however, manifest the same mental characteristics and the same somatic features, as the members of the above-mentioned anthropological family, who satisfy their unhealthy impulses with the knife of the assassin or the bomb of the dynamiter, instead of with pen and pencil. Some among these degenerates in literature, music, and painting have in recent years come into extraordinary prominence, and are revered by numerous admirers as creators of a new art, and heralds of the coming century. (Nordau, 3)

The book offers a panoramic presentation that Nordau himself calls "a long and sorrowful wandering through the hospital" (3). This hospital is home for different kinds of degenerate artists as well as those who are subject to their influence: according to Nordau, "exclusively literary and aesthetic culture is, […] the worst preparation conceivable for a true knowledge of the pathological character of the works of degenerates" (3). So much is clear from a quick glimpse at the table of contents, in which we find an extensive list of categories of degenerates corresponding to specific artistic movements and fashions: among the Mystics we find the Pre-Raphaelites, Symbolism, Tolstoism and the Wagner cult; among the Ego-maniacs: Parnassians and Diabolists, Decadents and aesthetes, Ibsenism and Nietzsche; and finally the last section is devoted to Zola and his school under the label of Realism. Nordau's aim was to attack the avant-garde artistic work by way of proving that far from being modern and progressive, it was actually atavistic and regressive. In Nordau's words: "this book is an attempt at a really scientific criticism, which does not base its judgement upon the purely accidental capricious and variable emotions it awakens […] but upon the psycho-physiological elements from which it sprangs" (Nordau, x). But as it can be easily guessed, scientific rigour did not find much space in his work. Pick rightly suspects that real criminologists and psychiatrists, including Lombroso, to whom Nordau dedicates his work, would probably have rejected Nordau's "scientific philistinism and positivist 'mania'" (Pick, 26). George Bernard Shaw's description of Nordau's work in his *The Sanity of Art* (1895) perfectly renders the idea of the nature of *Degeneration*:

> Imagine the general staleness and occasional putrescence of this mess disguised by a dressing of the terminology invented by Krafft-Ebing, Lombroso and all the latest specialists in madness and crime, to describe the artistic faculties and propensities of the insane. Imagine all this done by a man who is a vigorous and capable journalist, shrewd enough to see that there is a good opening for a big reactionary book as a relief to the Wagner and Ibsen booms, bold enough to let himself go without respect to persons or reputations, lucky enough to be stronger, clearer-headed man than ninety-nine out of a hundred of his critics, besides having a keener interest in science: the born theorist, the reasoner, and busy-body; therefore able, without insight, or even any very remarkable intensive industry … to produce a book which has made a very considerable impression on the artistic ignorance of Europe and America. (Shaw, 70-71)

But through his attack on Nordau, Shaw also reveals how representative of its time *Degeneration* was, especially the way he attributes the reason for Nordau's success to the artistic ignorance and philistinism of his contemporaries, ready to label as "degenerate" everything that could shake their moralist sensitivity. Despite its evident scientific charlatanism, Nordau's attack on *fin-de-siècle* literature was nonetheless soon translated into Italian, French and English, becoming internationally influential. Published in Britain and America in 1895 it ran to seven editions in six months and, as shown by Hans-Peter Söder in "Disease and Health as Contexts of Modernity: Max Nordau as a Critic of Fin-de-Siècle Modernism", between 1890 and 1900 *Degeneration* became one of Europe's ten bestselling books; it also gave popularity to hitherto little known authors such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Verlaine as well as giving boost to the reception of Ibsen, or what was also defined as "Ibsen-mania" (Söder, 474). More generally, throughout the first decades of the twentieth century it provided a paradigm for the interpretation of art in terms of health and sickness, sanity and insanity, a conception which lasted for a few decades. At the beginning of the 1920s, in the essay collection *Degeneration in the Great French Masters*, Jean Carrère, for instance, explains that "the last century was the chief period of their [the bad masters] reign. In that epoch of general confusion and disturbance of the nations, all sorts of larvae emerged from the depths of human nature, and bad masters arose on everyside" (Carrère, xviii). Carrère defines Zola, Balzac, Flaubert and Rousseau as "bad master", by which he means "a source of degeneration", someone who

> gifted with the power to seduce men by the charm and wealth of his imagination, by his skill in weaving harmonious and captivating phrases, instead of urging himself toward heroism and drawing toward it the souls which influences, surrenders himself in his writings to all the weaknesses of passion and all the seductions of the life of ease, uses his talent for the exaltation of mean pleasures and gross desires, and on that account becomes, for those whom he has enchanted, a teacher of weakness, egoism, cowardice, and cupidity. (Carrère, xvii)

However, as shown by Ian Dowbiggin in *The Quest for Mental Health: A Tale of Science, Medicine, Scandal, Sorrow, and Mass Society*, at the beginning of the twentieth century "the alacrity with which degeneracy theory was received faded" (Dowbiggin, 60) among the scientific world, leaving space to the new approach represented by neurology. The dramatic consequences of the WWI, including the

vertiginous number of shell-shock victims, actually undermined the idea of intergenerational decline, to focus on specific traumas within the life of the individual. Also, the advent of psychoanalysis and the consequent exploration of the darkest and deepest aspect of the self, moved the focus from the outside to the inside, rejecting degeneration and hereditarian theories and substituting in their place principles of mental mechanisms that possessed universal validity. Nonetheless the cultural impact of degeneration lasted and dominated the early decades of the twentieth century. As Pick notes, with the end of World War I "in a different sense the history of degeneration was only just beginning" (Pick, 17), as Europe was facing a dark situation complicated by the consequences of the war, the global economic crisis and the rising of nationalisms and totalitarian regimes. Thus degeneration, by means of the power and popularity lying precisely in its vagueness, could be easily pressed into the service of very different social and political agendas. Paradigmatic in this sense is Hitler's campaign against Degenerate art which was pivotal for his ascent. This tendency, once again, was not an exclusive characteristic of Nazi-Germany. The discourse of degeneration theory became part of wide (and sometimes contradictory) ideological, socio-political and cultural debates on sexuality, respectability, race purity, and nationalism which left no corner of the Western world untouched.

Throughout Europe, early twentieth century artists, on the other hand, were reverting to different approaches to the human mind and its pathologies which became more and more central in the development of the sometimes opposite aesthetic and expressions of Modernism. The clinical psychologist Louis A. Sass in *Madness and Modernism*, one century after Nordau, subverts the relationship between art and illness, using Modernist art in order to give a phenomenological insight on one of the most elusive illnesses of the twentieth century, schizophrenia: another label for madness which, similarly to degeneration, encompassed a great variety of symptoms usually defined in terms of defect, deficit and failure as a way to deal with their incomprehensibility and more generally otherness. Sass nonetheless seems to play, more or less consciously, with pathological metaphors reminiscent of the degeneration discourse (although strikingly the link between degeneration and schizophrenia, especially in connection to art, is never made explicit in the book) when he states that the 20th century aesthetic tendencies have moved from an epidemic to an endemic state" (Sass, 29), stressing the

fact that avant-gardism can be seen as a "chronic condition" of modern art in its moving away from tradition.

Paris, in particular, where Joyce and Beckett met in 1928, was now once again home for a new generation of Modernist "degenerates", who far from becoming extinct, were even more radically investigating the language of insanity, or at least the myth of insanity, into their aesthetic ideal. Among the several Parisian avant-garde magazines and publications which were proliferating in the late 1920s giving expression to these new artistic trends, both Joyce and Beckett collaborated simultaneously with the experimental journal *transition*, active from 1926-1938. On the one hand, Joyce, had found among the *transition* group his most enthusiastic supporters and since 1926 had been closely collaborating with them for the publication of the instalments of *Work in Progress*; thanks to his encounter with Joyce, Beckett, on the other hand, published on those same pages some of his first literary attempts, and more generally, being in the process of shaping his own aesthetic, found in the *transition* circle a quite stimulating artistic atmosphere.

transition represents a heterogenous and international group of intellectuals and artists who, to different extents, could be seen as direct descendants of the literary movements which Nordau attacked and who were in fact under the attack of their contemporaries: Wyndham Lewis in one of his attacks on *transition* in *The Enemy*, for instance, contends that Jolas' "New Romanticism" is nothing more than

> […] a return to the feverish "diabolism" that flourished in the middle of the last century in France, and which reached England in the "nineties," with Oscar Wilde and Beardsley as its principal exponents. Huysman's exploitation of the mediaeval nightmare and his Messe Noire interests; Nietzsche's turgid satanism and the diabolism of Baudelaire and Byron; the "Drunken Boat" of Rimbaud, and the rhetoric of Lautreamont, are its basis. (Lewis, 30)

transition took its name from the period of transition in which its contributors were living, characterized, as the editor of the magazine Eugene Jolas states, by "the crisis of man" (Jolas 2009, 115). In his autobiographical work, *Man from Babel,* on which he worked from the early 1940s until his death in 1952, Jolas looks back at the years of *transition* echoing Nordau's sense of the importance of environmental factors in

producing psychic disturbance: "[i]n those days of psychic tension in Europe, when the great economic tremblor was at its height and totalitarianism had begun to cast its sinister shadow across the political horizon, I found that my unconscious life somehow mirrored these phenomena of the sick world-soul" (Jolas 1998, 113).

Nonetheless, in Jolas' editorial project with *transition*, we can sense see how there was an evolution from the decadents in terms of the attitude to degeneration. For the first group seems to enjoy and indulge in the feeling of the imminent end, there is a hedonist acceptance. For Jolas however, this regression/disintegration implied a regeneration: "We believe that there is no hope for poetry unless there be a disintegration first. We need new words, new abstractions, new hieroglyphics, new symbols, new myths" (Jolas, *transition*, n. 3, 178), Eugene Jolas declares in 1927 in "Suggestions for a new Magic".

Jolas, in his many critical contributions to *transition*, in which he reflects on what he calls the "malady of language" ("Frontierless Decade", Jolas 2009*,* 119), seems to echo and develop degeneration ideas in more positive terms: in "The Revolution of Language and James Joyce", published in 1928, for instance, he states:

> When the beginning of the twentieth century is seen in perspective, it will be found that the disintegration of words and their subsequent reconstruction on other planes constitute some of the most important phenomena of our age. The traditional meaning of words is being subverted, and a panic seizes the upholders of the norm as they contemplate the process of destruction that opens up heretofore undreamed-of possibilities of expression. ("Revolution of Language and James Joyce", Jolas 2009, 377)

These possibilities, according to Jolas, could be conceived only by those with a "more sensitized nervous system" (Jolas 2009, 377). Note the complete inversion: these tendencies are not seen here as signs of illness but as the result of a special sensitivity which "seems to have struck only a small minority" (377). And Joyce's genius, for Jolas, did stand out: "in the new work of James Joyce […] that this revolutionary tendency is developed to its ultimate degree" (377).

Likewise, in the "Poetry is Vertical" manifesto, published in 1932, Jolas moves from the rejection of the "postulate that the creative personality is a mere factor in the pragmatic conception of progress, and that its function is the delineation of a vitalistic

world" ("Poetry is Vertical", Jolas 2009, 266); and continues with "immediacy of the ecstatic revelation, in the alogical movement of the psyche, in the organic rhythm of the vision that the creative act occurs" (266). This is exactly the kind of rhetoric that Nordau denounced when talking of "the aesthetic schools" seen as "the heralds of a new era":

> Their word is no ecstatic prophecy but the senseless stammering and babbling of deranged minds, and what the ignorant hold to be the outburst of gushing, youthful vigour and turbulent constructive impulses are really nothing but the convulsions and the spasms of exhaustion. (Nordau, 17)

"They do not direct us to the future, but point back to times past" (17), Nordau warns his reader; whereas "Poetry is Vertical" proceeds with the invocation of a "transcendental 'I'" which

> […] with its multiple stratification reaching back millions of years is related to the entire history of mankind, past and present is brought to surface with the hallucinatory irruption of images in the dream, the daydream, the mystic-gnostic trance, and even the psychiatric condition. (Jolas 2009, 267)

Jolas is, in this sense, rather close to the Surrealists in his giving over to the unconscious, the irrational, the collective depths as well as pathological conditions: the Surrealists appropriated these, in a nihilistic-looking drive towards the anti-progressive. But Jolas's approach also reflects his fascination for Jung's theories as expressed in "Poetry and Psychology" (translated by Jolas and published in *transition* n. 19/20, 1929) in which Jung outlines his psychoanalytic definition of poetry as a means of seizing on the so-called 'primordial image', the 'timeless' and 'universal' truths which constitute the collective unconscious.

Joyce was not sympathetic to either of these approaches. As Jolas was well aware, "there was nothing in common between his attitude and that of the surrealists and psychoanalysts. Nor did his experiments have anything to do with those of the German romantics who explored the mysticism of the individual world" (Jolas 1997, 385). Beckett, on the other hand was – to an extent – more sensitive to more extreme forms of avant-gardism than Joyce and, unlike Joyce's, his signature appeared under the Verticalist manifesto, but we will get back to this in the final section of the chapter. As

Jolas states in “The Revolution of the Language and James Joyce” (Jolas 2009, 379). “James Joyce has independently found his solution”, which nonetheless had a strong impact on the aesthetic proclaimed by *transition* in its several manifestos; and despite the variety of linguistic experimentations hosted in its pages, *transition* came soon to be known as, in Marcel Brion’s definition, “Maison Joyce” or even more sardonically as the “James Joyce Adulation and Interpretation Union” (Fitch, 11).

Scarlett Baron, in her paper “After the Little Review: Joyce in *transition*” recently presented at the *Joyce/Beckett Symposium* held at the University of Cambridge (May 2018), was apparently expressing a quite common feeling as she wondered about what exactly Joyce had in common with Jolas and the eccentric group of people gravitating around *transition*. A similar concern was raised as early as in 1956 by Magalaner and Kain wondering “[w]hy did [Joyce] not dissociate himself from the more blatant extravagances of this admittedly plucky magazine?” (Magalaner and Kain , 245), convinced as they are that both “Joyce and the *transition* group have suffered because of their alliance” (246). Baron addresses this question more positively, suggesting that an explanation could certainly lie in *transition* being an experimental environment in which Joyce could find transnationalism, elitism, (theoretical/ linguistic rather than political) anarchism, and dialogism, characteristics which were definitely well suited for Joyce. But as Dougald McMillan has shown in detail in *transition. The History of a Literary Era*, Jolas’ magazine represented for Joyce a prestigious enough publishing opportunity at a particular time in his career, after his new work had already been turned down by (and in some cases harshly criticised in) *The Transatlantic review*, *This Quarter*, *The Dial*, *The Enemy*, and *The Exile* (see McMillan, 180-181). Joyce found among the *transition* circle great friends and supporters who exalted what Joyce’s detractors used to attack (as Baron noted, they managed to turn negative criticism into evidences of philistinism). Their enthusiasm helped Joyce to positively face negative criticism which often used to describe his work (as well as his person) in degenerate terms. As we will see, this was one crucial aspect of Joyce’s own experience with degeneration ideas and imagery and their consequent reflection in his work. However, Joyce’s engagement with degeneration ideas is prior to the beginning of the composition of the *Wake* and to the experience with *transition*. In the following pages I will outline these different experiences and see how they converge in Joyce’s final work.

"At the vanessance of his lownest" (*FW* 177.16-17) – Joyce and Degeneration

Joyce's engagement with the discourse of degeneration and its consequent reflection in his work developed years before the beginning of the adventure with *transition*. Although there is no proof of Joyce having read Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, his artistic and aesthetic orientations in his youth can be quite revealing. At the turn of the century, a few years after the publication of *Degeneration,* the young Joyce was an enthusiastic admirer of artists such as Henrik Ibsen or Gerhart Hauptmann, who according to Nordau were pathologically infected and inclined to imitation. For Nordau, Ibsen was a "higher degenerate" whose "egoconsciousness is even more striking than his mysticism" (Nordau, 146). Furthermore, according to Nordau, Ibsen's egomania assumes the form of anarchism, as he "is in a state of constant revolt against all that exists" (145). However, he is "a theoretic criminal, his motor centres not being powerful enough to transmute his anarchically criminal ideas into deeds, and that finds satisfaction of his destructive impulses not in the insurrection, but in the activity of dramatic composition" (146).

In his article "On Ibsen's New Drama" published on the 1st of April 1900 in *The Fortnightly Review*, Joyce is writing in response to the young Irish Revivalist Arthur Cleary who, in line with Norday, in his article "The Theatre, Its Educational Value" had declared "the effect of Henrik Ibsen is evil" (Cleary, 123). In his response, after an accurate analysis of the play *When We Dead Awaken*, Joyce defends his master with words full of categorical admiration: "Henrik Ibsen is one of the world's great men before whom criticism can make but feeble show. Appreciation, hearkening is the only true criticism" (Joyce *CW*, 48). Even more than Ibsen's works, the young Joyce's admiration was for Ibsen's personality: what Nordau considered Ibsen's pathological inability to adapt to the world was seen by Joyce as characteristic of his being a true artist and innovator. Indeed, as shown by the following letter he sent to Ibsen, full of youthful enthusiasm, Ibsen's life had become a model to follow:

> what I could discern dimly of your life was my pride to see, how your battles inspired me - not the obvious material battles but those fought and won behind your forehead, how your wilful resolution to wrest the secret from life gave me heart and how in your absolute indifference to public canons of art, friends and shibboleths you walked in the

> light of your inward heroism. And this is what I write to you of now. (James Joyce to Henrik Ibsen, March 1901, *JJSL*, 7)

Joyce's admiration for Ibsen didn't fade through the years, shaping some of his life choices (i.e. exile, refusal of marriage) as well as Joyce's early aesthetic statements of his early articles such as "Drama and Life" and "The Day of Rabblement" which found their application in Joyce's choice to depict Dublin as centre of paralysis in Dubliners and was still influencing Joyce until his final work. As shown by Marvin Carlson in "Henrik Ibsen and *Finnegans Wake*", the most frequent allusions in the *Wake* are to Ibsen's play *The Master Builder*, a play with autobiographical overtones which can be read as a reflection on the role of the artist within society through its protagonist the architect Halvard Solness, who feels threatened by a younger, more idealistic and ambitious generation of architects and fears the diminishing of his own creativity. Meaningfully, Joyce associates HCE, the father, with *The Master Builder*, an association which as noted by Tindall becomes central in the climax of the construction of the cities in III.3: in his defence,

> HCE affirms his importance as creator: founder of a family and builder of cities -- the "Bygmester" of Chapter I (4-6) and the Jaun-Earwicker of Chapter XIV (446-48): 'I'm not half Norawain for nothing (452.36). Ibsen, architect of a doll's house, suitably attends the apology and boast of the Master Builder. (Tindall, 271)

From the very first pages HCE is introduced as the "Bygmester Finnegan, of the Stuttering Hand" (*FW* 4.18) and, among many other allusions throughout the text, he is also evoked by Shaun in I.7 as "that greatgrand landfather of our visionbuilders, Baabo, the bourgeoismeister" (*FW* 191.34-35). Here Shaun, reaching the climax of his invective against Shem, is warning his brother that the ruinous end of their father, his fall, was caused by his ambitions for reaching the edge, thinking "to touch both himmels at the punt of his risen stiffstaff", he "wishy-washy sank the waters of his thought" (*FW* 191.35-192.1). The image of "water in the brain" (Gould, 7) was used by Gerald Gould in his review to describe ALP. Namely this refers to the condition of hydrocephalous enlargement, water in the brain, and which as we will see better in the next chapter apparently was the cause of Swift's death revealed by the posthumous trepanning of his skull.

Mirroring Ibsen's character HCE is threatened with displacement by younger generations but, in accordance with degeneration theory, HCE also passes on the expiation of his sins to his descendants. Significantly in III.3 it is the father (via Yawn) who accuses his son Shem to be "Such ratshause bugsmess so I cannot barely conceive of! Lowest basemeant in hystry! Ibscenest Nansance!" *(FW* 535.17-19). Marvin Carlson argues that this passage might echo the list of invectives in *Ghosts*, reported by Shaw in his *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* ("Bestial, cynical, disgusting, poisonous, sickly, delirious, indecent, loathsome, fetid, literary carrion, crapoulous stuff, clinical confessions: all these epithets are used […] as descriptive of Ibsen's work"; Shaw, 2) as a way to establish a parallel with his own public reception which "had much in common with Ibsen's […] For Joyce this was but another proof that he had taken up Ibsen's mantle" (Carlson, 140). The "obscenest nonsense" definitely recalls the negative reception of Joyce's own work, and indeed it seems that by playing with images of descent and inheritance Joyce is trying to establish a literary lineage between Ibsen and himself by drawing on degeneration theory (a construction which as we will see later will characterise Beckett's early attempt to deal with Joyce influence). One particular degenerate trait which Nordau ascribed to Ibsen and that Shem has inherited from his father, and which Joyce himself shared with Ibsen, is "eggoarchicism" (*FW* 525.10): the condition of being "self exiled upon his ego" (*FW* 184.6-7). The Penman, introduced at the beginning of 1.7 as "Master Shemmy" (*FW* 169.20) is a "condemned fool, anarch, egoarch, heresiarch" (*FW* 188.15).

However, the "obscenity" of Joyce's writings largely lies in the way sexuality is presented. Richard Brown in *James Joyce and Sexuality* provides the most extensive overview of Joyce's engagement with scientific and other literature on sexuality pointing out Joyce's modernity of his responsiveness to sexual perversity in his writing. As rightly stressed by Brown, scientific investigation on sexual perversions (strictly connected with and often influenced by degeneration theory) were in fact the condition sine qua non for the emergence of a new idea of non-necessarily generative sexuality. As shown by Brown, Joyce drew on a huge variety of sources for his presentation of Bloomian sexuality (among them Freud, Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*, Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* or even Galopin's *Le Parfum de la femme*) thus weaving into the book "different, potentially conflicting kinds of discourses". In this way, Joyce's prose embodies a "new onanistic concept of sexuality" in the way in which it

requires “a degree of “perversity” in order to guarantee the “normality of his deviation from the narrow traditional ideal” (Brown, 88). The use of the word “onanistic” is not causal and in fact, does not refer exclusively to masturbation, rather to all those sexual practices which are not meant for reproduction, at once expressions of perversity and/or more or less creative and intentional contraceptive methods. This was the main focus of *Onanisme seul et a Deux* by Paul Garnier, defined by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* as one of the “unglorified scribes” of the “pornography of the morbid” (Foucault 1990, 54) characteristic of fin de siècle society. The book was part of Joyce’s library in 1920s, as noted in Ellmann’s *Consciousness of Joyce* (Ellmann 1977, 109), a source which, as we will see, is also chosen by Beckett as shown by the extensive annotations in the “Dream” notebook.

But as shown by Brown, Havelock Ellis, the well-known English sexologist who was also translator of Lombroso’s work into English, had possibly a much deeper impact on Joyce. In Joyce’s library in the 1920s was Ellis’ *The New Spirit*, an overview of the modern atmosphere devoting each chapter to its most representative writers (among them, Ibsen). As shown by Brown as well as by Ronan Crowley in “Looking at Animals without Seeing Them: Havelock Ellis in the “Circe” Episode of Ulysses”, Joyce was also familiar with Ellis’s *Studies on Sexuality*, a rich medical compendium in which along with homosexuality different kinds of onanistic practices were presented: vescical excitation, mixoscopy (Ellis’ term for voyeurism), zoophilia, pigmalionism, all of which were included in *Ulysses*. As noted by Brown, “Joyce and Ellis [are] close in spirit, […] both […] prepared to look at sexual anomaly not just as a matter for clinical examination but, to some extent, as an act of human creativity and imagination” (Brown, 85). Joyce’s affinity with Havelock Ellis does not seem to be limited to the sphere of sexuality, for we read in the introduction to *The New Spirit*, an invitation to “[s]et your shoulder joyously to the world’s wheel” which is very Viconian, or Wakean, in principle: “The old cycles are for ever renewed, and it is no paradox that he who would advance can never cling too close to the past. The thing that has been is the thing that will be again: if we realize that, we may avoid many of the disillusions, miseries, insanities that for ever accompany the throes of new birth” (Ellis, 33).

Reminiscent of Bloom in “Circe”, even HCE is soon presented in the *Wake* as lost “in a freakfog, of mixed sex cases among goats” (*FW* 48.02). More generally the reader of

the *Wake* constantly faces the impossibility to determine HCE's sexual crime(s), constantly discussed but whose nature is nonetheless ultimately mysterious. Meaningfully, Earwicker is frequently conflated with the most representative decadent artist (and celebrity) Oscar Wilde, suffering cruel accusations from the self-righteous. As pointed out by Sam Slote, Joyce's 1909 lecture "Oscar Wilde, il poeta di Salomé" anticipates the complexity of Wilde's appearances in *Finnegans Wake*:

> this is not the place to probe into the strange problem of the life of Oscar Wilde nor to determine to what extent heredity and the epileptic cast of his nervous system can exculpate him from that which he was accused. Whether innocent or guilty of the charges brought against him, he was undoubtedly a scapegoat. His greatest crime was to have caused to England a scandal; […] the truth is that Wilde, far from being a monster of perversion that inexplicably arose in the midst of modern civilization of England, is the logical or inevitable product of the Anglo-Saxon college and university system, a system of seclusion and secrecy. (Joyce *CW*, 150)

As a scapegoat for the British judicial system and as a dandy, Oscar Wilde would seem to provide an exemplary model for HCE. Although often referred to, similarly to Ibsen, as the archetype of the fallen father (Atherton, Walton), as pointed out by Slote, "[t]he putative presence of Wilde in the *Wake* registers the difficulty of enunciating a clear and determinate identity through a palimpsest of excessive accusation" (Slote, web). This is precisely what a signifier like degeneration also does: it is an ideological device that unifies a conflicting field of meaning. In the *Wake*, thus Wilde's excess of identification exemplifies the paradox of the impossibility to determine the real nature of HCE's crime which, like degeneration itself (its causes as well as its symptoms), is heavily overcharged by different, sometimes contradictory meanings. In its being "wildly overdetermined" (Slote, web), HCE's identity can thus virtually lie in anybody and any crime, as suggested by the variants of his name "Here Comes Everybody".

In fact, every other character in the *Wake* has some marks of degeneration, as Rabaté alludes to in his contribution on III.3 in *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*: "Incest, homosexuality, bisexuality, hysteria, narcissism – these are only some of the diseases ascribed to the Earwicker family via Shaun" (Rabaté *How Joyce Wrote FW*, 390); these in fact are not real diseases, but rather expressions of 'perverse' sexuality which would undermine the healthy progression of the species). Fordham, while pointing out the fact

that the discourse of mental illness in the *Wake* is generally limited to Issy, provides genetic evidences of the extent to which every character is characterized as mentally ill at some point, and that the book itself could be seen as a mental institution:

> at such periods in the narrative, the building in or beside which the *Wake* occurs, transforms itself from a Mullingar pub or Finn's hotel into a madhouse. In J's notebooks the square siglum the hieroglyph for the house/book/edifice, is at one point equated with exactly this: a "lunatic asylum" (VI.B.9 102 JJA vol 31, p 52). It is also a workhouse, a poorhouse (VI.B.8, JJA, vol 30, p 366) showing it as mostly at the more destitute end of the social scale. The madhouse - the "mobhouse" where Humphrey is gardening in I.2 (30.16); the "Ridley's" into which Paul Horan is thrown in I.3 (49.18); the "Maison Allfou" of I.8 (197.25) - is one incarnation of the site of action - and of the book itself. … For every chapter type one can find a type of debility, mental and physical, an illness and a symptom: Shem (depression/near suicide), Shaun (repression/mania), Kate (obsessional housewife), Sackerson (failure anxiety/ alchoholism), Anna (loneliness/ aphasia) and Humphrey (hubris/ stress/mid-life crisis). (Fordham 1995, 78-79)

The mental asylum was, of course, one of the main resources of eugenics and (forced or indirect) sterilisation, as through confinement 'degenerates' were prevented from generating more degenerate flesh and 'social hygiene' was thus guaranteed. Nonetheless, despite his "stuttering hand", the father "Haveth Childers Everywhere" and the humanity in ruin which populate the *Wake* is elevated to universal myth. Len Platt, in his *Joyce, Race and* Finnegans Wake, has extensively covered different aspects of racial discourse closely linked to degeneration such as eugenics, social Darwinism and scientific racism, which given the complexity of such a conceptual framework as degeneration cannot be fully explored in the present study. However, in his chapter devoted to social Darwinism and eugenics, Platt identifies the most frequently used signifier of eugenics in the *Wake* in his analysis of two families of "degenerates" from the New World, the US, the Jukes and the Kallikaks. These were invented names for families who were objects of two different studies: R. L. Dugdale's, *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity (*1877; revised in 1915), and Henry Herbert Goddard's *The Kallikak Family – A Study of the Heredity of Feeble Mindedness* (1912). Both accounts were classically eugenicist. They used a combination of statistics, Lamarckian biology and "careful observation" to prove how criminality, "harlotry" and "feeble-mindedness" were inherited characteristics. As Platt notes:

> at II.ii the whole family become Kallikaks and Jukes, with ALP visualised sewing up the torn clothing of 'big Kapitayn Killykook and the Jukes of Kelleiney' (295 fn 1). In some ways the Earwickers, like the Jukes and Kallikaks, are scapegoated (see 375. 3 – 4 – 'And kick kick killykick for the house that juke built'), but with the crucial difference that they are also centralised, not as the freaks and misfits of the modern world, but rather as the mock prototypes/ stereotypes. This is the real point about the association, that with it the condition of the Jukes and the Kallikaks becomes not 'their' condition, but ours. (Platt, 86)

Degenerates such as the Kallikaks and the Jukes are thus universalized (and it is likely that Joyce spotted in their names an echo of Catholics and Jews). This seems to exemplify the crucial role degeneration ideas play in the development of that "unfolded all marryvoising moodmoulded cyclewheeling history" in which the "individual person life unlivable" becomes "common to allflesh, human only, mortal" (*FW* 186.2-6) which is the *Wake* itself, and which provocatively Shem the Penman, the artist, inscribes on his own body using his excrement as ink in chapter I.7. This important image has clear degenerate connotations: it suggests an idea of writing as an obscene act as well as product of bodily waste rather than the expression of artistic genius; the idea of an art which becomes a vehicle of disease and which corrupts the body. In the following pages I will try to develop the discourse of degeneration in its relation to art, focusing on how Joyce plays with the idea of an art bearing signs of its author's degeneration by looking at the portrait of the author of the letter in the *Wake*, Shem.

"writing the mystery of himself in furniture" (*FW* 184.9-10): Shem the Penman

The connection between mental impairment and artistic genius seems to be of particular interest for Joyce. In the next chapter we will see how William R. Wilde's early medical efforts to determine the physical causes of Swift's madness is one of the main sources for biographical details on Swift's life and illnesses, which are frequently alluded to throughout the *Wake*. Moreover, for the analysis of the "Mamafesta" in I.5 Joyce finds inspiration in Jean Crépieux-Jamin's *Les Éléments de l'écriture des canailles*. If Nordau and Lombroso had focused on the final literary product and its role as vehicle of transmission of disease, Joyce's choice is instead a treatise of graphology, a medical text which analyses hand-writing as a signifier of disease. This is interesting considering Joyce's complex compositional process, punctuated by struggles due to

poor health, and often defined in terms of madness by Joyce himself (I will talk more about this in the next chapter). As for the writing within the *Wake*, Shem's letter, we are told, bears signs of "purely delinquescent recidivist, possibly ambidextrous, snubnosed probably and presenting a strangely profound rainbowl in his (or her) occiput" (*FW* 107.10-12). This could be a possible allusion to Joyce's previous alter-ego Bloom, in whom "[a]mbidexterity is also latent" (*U* 15.1780), hence the "recidivist". Shem, Joyce's degenerate alter-ego, is also however portrayed as a "disinterestingly low human type" (*FW* 179.13) who has "flickered up and flinnered down into a drug and drunkery addict, growing megalomane of a loose past" something which should explain "the litany of septuncial lettertrumpets honorific, highpitched, erudite, neoclassical, which he so loved patricianly to manuscribe after his name" (*FW* 179.20-21), the allusion here might be to Stephen.

In the *Wake*, Shem the Penman embodies the identity of the degenerate artist, bearing several physical stigmata such as his "many sclads and burns and blisters, impetiginous sore and pustules" (*FW* 189.32-33). But he is also described in explicitly *fin de siècle* degenerate terms: thus, he is expected to "turn out badly and do for himself one *dandy* time" (*FW* 272.12-14) and he is affected by "chicken's gape and *pas mal de siècle*" (*FW* 192.14). He is also an "esuan Menshavik" (*FW* 185.34), this being one of the latest implications of the cultural influence of degenerationist theories. As shown by Fordham Joyce added this allusion for *transition* 1927 (Fordham 2013, 58), while in 1926 Hitler in *Mein Kampf* had declared degenerate art a product of Judeo-bolshevism, the label of "art bolshevism" becoming more and more crucial in the Nazi anti-Semitic and anti-communist propaganda. Mensheviks, originally belonging to the Russian socialist movement just like the Bolsheviks, were a minority which didn't follow Lenin, thus suggesting the idea that Shem was not even a Bolshevik: he was a "sham" even in this sense. Shem's self also wanes "chagreenold and doriangreyer" (*FW* 186.8): these clear decadent/*fin de siècle* allusions to Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin* and Wilde's *Portrait of Dorian* Grey sound as an accusation of the moral depravity of Shem's decadent vision not even being original (see Fordham 2013, 56), but rather, we could add, inherited (the lack of originality as a sort of genetic burden, as we will see, will become one of Belacqua's main characteristics). Moreover, it is possible to notice a combination of Joyce's own physical symptoms with allusion to such an Irish decadent writer and celebrity as Wilde. In the next chapter I will devote my attention to the usage Joyce

makes of Swift's legendary madness in and out of the *Wake*, but at this stage it would be worth noticing that the "green old" and "grey", recall the three stages of blindness along with the ideas of ageing and physical decay. In this section, however, I will rather focus on how Shem has managed by means of his own "excrement" to have his self "squirt-screened from the crystalline world" (*FW* 186.7), as a consequence of celebrity which at once implies exposition and requires a screen.

Joyce develops his fictional alter-ego composed of decadent elements in a very particular moment: the Shem the Penman chapter was almost completed by 1925, three years after the publication of *Ulysses*, which brought to Joyce scandal and celebrity. I.7 mirrors exactly Joyce's own experiences at this particular stage of his literary career. Since the publication of *Ulysses*, Joyce's work and by extension his own personality had been described in degenerate terms. Virginia Woolf in her review in the *Times Literary Supplement* speaks of the "comparative poverty of the writer's mind" and in her diary she goes even further defining *Ulysses* as "[a]n illiterate, underbred book, it seems to me; the book of a self-taught working man, and we all know how distressing they are, how egotistic, insistent, raw, striking, and ultimately nauseating" (Woolf, 188-189). Even Carl Jung whose theories found a forum on the pages of *transition* in 1922 made Joyce an example of the schizophrenic mind. For Jung, Joyce's psychosis remained "latent", but he also spoke, more ambiguously, of "an insane person of an uncommon sort" whose apparent abnormality may conceal "superlative powers of mind" (Jung, 117).

Nash and Fordham have already illustrated how Joyce directly turned negative criticism into material for his work, in what they have respectively defined as "writing of reception" (Nash, 3) and as "writing of rejection": "a writing which rejects those who were attempting to reject it" (Fordham, 2010*,* 218). Ingeborg Landuyt, in her genetic analysis of I.7 in *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*, has shown how Joyce integrates within the chapter images of biblical unfavoured sons, monsters and criminals borrowed from medical texts with commentaries (often rather personal attacks) on *Ulysses* in the chapter (Landuyt *How Joyce Wrote FW*, 145-146). But it is Marion Quirici who in "Degeneration, Decadence, and Joyce's Modernist Disability Aesthetics" points out that Joyce's negative critical responses which serves as raw material for this chapter frequently apply invocations of disability and degeneration

imagery to accounts of Joyce's own degeneracy, or the degeneracy of his writing. Quirici rightly stresses the vernacular propagation of the vocabulary of degeneration covering all the possible nuances of stigmatization of illness and disability as a reflection of wide-spread internalised anxieties regarding race, sexuality, and class. Shem is thus portrayed as physically impaired and morally defective, with a "meticulosity bordering on the insane" (*FW* 173.34), a "noxious pervert's perfect lowness" (*FW* 174.35–6). He is described as a "semidemented zany" (*FW* 179.25) but also as a "blethering ape" (*FW* 192.4), an "unwashed savage" (*FW* 191.11) with "simian sentiments" (*FW* 192.22), "with a hollow voice drop of your horrible awful poverty of mind" (*FW* 192.10) who would "made a hottentot of dulpeners crawsick" (*FW* 192.33). As shown by Quirici, all these images are quoted almost verbatim from Joyce's critics.

Still, this depiction of Joyce's 'defiant" taking control over negative criticism in what Quirici sees as a "political protest" (Quirici, 105) explains only partially the process of creation of Shem. Joyce is not just making fun of the language of degeneration in his criticism but also embodying it in his own literary identity, which he wears as a mask but also identifies with. He enacts a mimicry. Since the early reception of *Ulysses*, Joyce had become aware of the fact that his fictional identity would be merged with the real one as a consequence of fame. As early as in June 1921, in a letter to Weaver he enlists different legends about himself:

> A nice collection could be made of legends about me. Here are some. Triestines […] circulated the rumour, now firmly believed, that I am a *cocaine addict*. The general rumour in Dublin was (till the prospectus of Ulysses stopped it) that I could write no more, had broken down and I was dying in New York. […] In America there have been two versions: one that *I was almost blind, emaciated and consumptive, the other that I am a mixture of Dalai La ma and sir Rabindranath Tagore*. *Mr Lewis told me he was told that I was a crazy fellow who always carried four watches […]. I suppose I now have the reputation of being an incurable dipsomaniac. One woman here originated the rumour that I am extremely lazy and will never do or finish anything*. (I calculate that I must have spent nearly 20,000 hours in writing Ulysses). A batch of people in Zurich persuaded themselves that *I was gradually going mad and actually endeavoured to induce me to enter a sanatorium* where a certain Doctor Jung (the Swiss Tweedledum who is not to be confused with the Viennese Tweedledee, Dr Freud) amuses himself at the expense (in

> every sense of the word) of ladies and gentlemen who are troubled with bees in their bonnets. (James Joyce to Weaver, 24/06/1921, *JJSL*, 283)

Addiction, disability, orientalism, madness, sloth – this rich collection of legends (my italics) will become part of *Finnegans Wake*, a few years later (1923-1924) attributed to Shem, and the Lewis anecdote will be of inspiration for the Four Watches of Shaun. Joyce proceeds by explaining to Weaver something which seems to work as an anticipatory explanation for the creation of Shem as described in I.7:

> I mention all these views not to speak about myself or my critics but to show you how conflicting they all are. The truth is probably that I am quite commonplace person undeserving of so much imaginative painting. There is a further opinion that I am a crafty simulating and dissimulating *Ulysses*-like type, a 'jejune jesuit' selfish and cynical. There is some truth in this, I suppose: but it is by no means all of me (nor was it of *Ulysses*) and it has been my habit to apply this alleged quality to safeguard my poor creations. (283)

This application of "alleged quality[ies]" has been described by Fordham in *I do, I undo, I redo* in terms of the self as product of textual constructions and deconstruction (Fordham 2010, 15). In the chapter devoted to Joyce and the genesis of "Circe", Fordham points out how roughly at the same time the letter quoted above was written, Joyce introduced into the episode the Messianic Scene, by which "he came to objectify his own sense of persecution and of coming of fame and power", drawing his own "self-mythicalization as a sacrificial victim" (Fordham 2010, 225). I argue that with the creation of Shem, Joyce develops this method even further as a response to an excess of accusations. In making Shem a degenerate, Joyce moves beyond the role of "sacrificial victim" and adopts instead "the position of the enemy": he "wears" his own criticism as a mask, at once appropriating it and pushing it to the extreme. With Shem, Joyce turns the degenerate condition into an artificial pose, as a way to provoke his detractors and seek for their attention, but also as a way to protect himself, hiding behind the mask.

Joyce's compositional process is the result of a complex relationship with his critics, with the discourse of degeneration, as well as more generally with his readership, and it reveals his constant attempt to shape his identity as an artist through his own work. As suggested by Nash "Joyce's reviews comprise a sort of narcissistic mirror that supports his self-obsessive writing, no matter how critical those reviews" (Nash, 208). Shem writing on his own skin, a rather exhibitionistic act, can be read as in relation to this. In

writing with his own excrement, he is covering his body, his own self, with something at once as intimate and as repulsive as his own faeces, moving the attention from the inside, the romanticized hidden self, to a contradictory, obscene, excessive, unstable yet highly visible and recognizable image, which although providing a cover or mask, being written on the body cannot be separated from his being. It thus can be seen as a rather extreme form of autobiography, not just writing about autobiographic experiences, but writing of and onto the body itself: a degenerate body which at once produces and bears signs of contradictory and excessive degenerate writing.

Moreover, Shem uses bodily waste products to write the self on the self's body; rather than using potentially productive products (sperm) to produce more flesh and matter. It is degenerate to fail to produce more flesh, as Shaun declares in his attack:

> you should (if you were as bould a stroke now as the curate that christened you, sonny douth-the candle!) repopulate the land of your birth and count up your progeny by the hungered head and the angered thousand but you thwarted the wious pish of your cogodparents, soph, among countless occasions of failing (*FW* 188.35-189.2)

And his sterile and degenerate writing becomes instead a vehicle of disease:

> adding to the malice of your transgression, yes, and changing its nature, […] alternating the morosity of my delectation […] with sensibility, sponsibility, possibility and prostability, your lubbock's other fear pleasures of a butler's life, even extruding your strabismal apologia, when legibly depressed, upon defenceless paper and thereby adding to the already unhappiness of this popeyed world, scribblative! (*FW* 189.2-3).

But if on the one hand he is accused of sterility, Shem as a degenerate must nonetheless be prevented from generating more degenerate flesh. This is possibly what Shaun hopes to achieve in condemning ultimately his brother Shem as "mad": sterilisation. Through Shaun's excess of criticism, thus Joyce, once again, shows its intrinsic contradiction so that he is constantly ridiculed even before Shem's short apologia which concludes the chapter (and in which the emptiness and hypocrisy of pseudo-medical labels seem to be also invoked: "black mass of jigs and jimjams, haunted by a convulsionary sense of not having been or being all that I might have been or you meant to becoming, bewailing like a man that innocence which I could not defend like a woman" (*FW* 193.30-33-194.2).

However, Joyce's attitude will not always be so "defiant" and, throughout the seventeen years of composition of *Work in Progress*, criticism often formulated in degenerate and pathological terms exerts a profoundly negative force on his creative mind. Even with beginning of the serial publication in *transition* at the beginning of 1927, and the consequent enthusiasm of a new group of estimators and supporters, negative criticism had a strong effect on Joyce and his work. Interestingly Richard Ellmann, in the chapter of his biography devoted to 1926-1929, stresses more the negative effect of criticism than the positive one of having become the *transition* bell-weather. According to Ellmann, these years were deeply affected by his poor health, by the crisis in Joyce's relationship with his patron Harriet Weaver, and by dejection due to the negative reception of his work which by the late 1920s was being attacked even by those people whose opinion Joyce valued most. This for example was Stanislaus' case, who by the end of 1926 accuses his brother of "softening of the brain" or Pound's, who defines Joyce's work in term of regress (Ellmann 1982, 585, n.28). Even Weaver in 1927 accuses Joyce of "wasting his genius", something which leads Joyce to a serious breakdown. Whether genuinely authentic or exaggerated in order to obtain Weaver's sympathy and dissimulate a lack of inspiration, it is a fact that this rather painful inactivity lasted for quite an extended period (and was more generally punctuated by crisis of different nature as we will see in the next chapters devoted to Swift and Lucia). As shown by David Hayman in *A First-draft Version of Finnegans Wake*, apart from revising Book I and III and part of II, Joyce does not write anything new between March 1928 and September 1930 (Hayman 1963, 7). But some of the additions made in this period are quite revealing, as for instance the psychoanalytic allusions in III.3, including the passage "Get yourself psychoanolised!/ – O, begor, I want no expert nursis symaphy from yours broons quadroons and I can psoakoonaloose myself any time I want […] without your interferences or any other pigeomstealer" (*JJA* 59, 30, BL MS 47484b-324, *FW* 522.30-36). It was also probably in this period that Joyce felt in need to go back to Shem's portrait, adding a fragment (which did not eventually find space in *Finnegans Wake)* to the marked pages of *transition* 7 which served as the starting point for the printers of 1.7 in the mid 1930s. This fragment would have found its space right after "a bladder tristened" (*FW* 169.19-20) at the end of the very first page of the chapter enlisting Shem's rather degenerate appearances, written in 1925. Dirk Van Hulle alludes to it in the *Pre-Book Publications of* FW, but it can also be

found in its full-length in the final pages of the *James Joyce Archive*, vol. 47, for which I provide here my transcription:

> To enjoy to the full best the absent vignette on the opset page (perhaps the madest ting that was ever here done) one has merely to moor I mind that the skull of Shemus, the ~~bard~~ simp, suffering is he skull of the [blank space], that the eye of S. the b. s. is the eye of Tiresias Furlong, that the nose of S. the b. s. is the nose of Artlove Coogan, that the arm of S. the b. s. is the arm of Emitharmon MacNeill. That the hair of S. the b. suffering is the hair of Peer Glynn, that the marrow is " " of Syams Coyne, that the goatee is Mercutio Wilkins, chin Gervatus (?) Beirme (?), that the shoulder of Shem, the serf, militant, is the shoulder of George Gordon Natans, that the ear of Shem, the serf, ~~suffering~~ militant, is the ear of Percy Origliari, that the tongue of Shem, the serf, ~~suffering~~ militant, is the tongue of Messirs Francini, that the foot of Shem, the serf, ~~suffering~~ militant, is the foot of Tomas Staggeright, that the hands of Shem , the serf, ~~suffering~~ militant, are the hands of Swaull and Burke, (Burke and Hare) that the stomach of Shem , the serf, ~~suffering~~ militant, is the stomach of Gustavus Adullfuss, hat the heart of Shem, the serf, ~~suffering~~ militant, is the heart of Captain Boycott Boycaught in Bonomia, that the liver of Shem, the scribe, triumphant is the liver of which Mr Jecus divides with Mr Hoyt. (*JJA* 47, 552-554; BL MS 47475, 278v; cf. *FW* 638)

Joyce further dissects his composite creature in different body parts "each part of his body corresponding to a a [sic] ward of Dublin", as Joyce notes at the side of the final page of the fragment (*JJA* 47, 47475-279, 554), combined with the names of different characters with strong fin de siècle connotations: Tyresia, the Homeric blind prophet, but also a central figure in the modernist attempt to explore sexuality, being as Eliot would say, an "Old man with wrinkled female breasts" but also a possible allusion to Apollinaire's surrealist play *The Breasts of Tyresia* – which as Cathryn Flynn has shown in "'Circe' and Surrealism: Joyce and the Avant-Garde" bears strong analogies with "Circe"; and Enitharmon, a major character in Blake's visionary mythology representing spiritual beauty and poetic inspiration. There are also allusions to Ibsen with "Peer Glynn", to the two romantic exiled revolutionaries Byron and Shelley with "George Gordon" and "Percy" (although this of course also recalls Pierce O'reille) and possibly Edmund Burke, whose *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* after a century had exerted a great influence on the development of the Pre-Raphaelites aesthetic and who was also of course Irish. There are also many other Irish national heroes mentioned, such as Art O'Leary and Captain

Boycott. The fragment culminates with the liver "which Dr Jecus divides with Mr Hoyt", a clear allusion to Stevenson's novel, one of the most representative of a certain late-Victorian fiction that was a direct expression of anxieties concerning degeneration.

The fragment looks to be a rewriting of the criticism of Joyce as a degenerate Irishman in which, bringing together decadence and degeneration along with Romanticism and Irishness, Joyce develops Shem's mimicry through the mask of a composite degenerate Romantic-nationalist hero. One of the most interesting aspects of this fragment is that it allows us to look at its gradual shaping: at some point Joyce decides to turn the "simp" (an allusion to Lewis' "Revolutionary Simpleton") into a bard, and instead of "suffering" he is now "militant", and gradually the "serf" becomes "the scribe, triumphant". As Van Hulle suggests, Shem is depicted "as the criticized and misunderstood bard who triumphantly managed to write himself out of this period of sufferings" (Van Hulle 2016, 79). The fragment, in line with Joyce's dissection of Shem into body parts which characterised the chapter, was nonetheless never included in the final text, possibly because it was not particularly good. But it might also be possible that Joyce found the passage too revealing of his true self, in a similar way to what seems to have happened with the fragment on Swift, which I will analyse in the next chapter. Written after the enthusiastic start with *transition* (as Van Hulle notes, it was appended to the marked pages of *transition* used as starting point for the printer of *Finnegans Wake* in the mid-1930s), this fragment seems to exemplify Joyce's not always defiant attitude towards his critics. It appears as a sudden need for self-explanation, which is then rejected soon afterwards, in a similar way to what had happened with the fragment of Swift composed in 1928 (possibly, because they did not represent an escape from personality but rather the opposite).

As we will see in the following chapters, the gestation of Joyce's final work was punctuated by different moments of crisis, but nonetheless, in those same years, Joyce found among the *transition* circle supporters who managed to accommodate every request – such as - minute revisions and double size printing. He also found most of those collaborators, or rather 'human prostheses', who became his eyes and hands. More concretely, he found the team who assisted him in the long process of composition of *Work in Progress* from 1927 to until the moment of its publication of *Finnegans Wake* in 1939. One particular positive effect which can be considered part of

the composition of *Work in Progress* in which again the language of degeneration is included in different ways, was the opportunity to respond to criticism through a criticism directed by Joyce himself. I refer of course to the essays collected in *Our Exagmination* in 1929, the first critical apparatus responding to a work which had not been fully published: "His producers are they not his consumers? Your exagmination round his factification for incamination of warping process. Declaim" (*FW* 497.1-3).

And this criticism, in its "incamination of the warping process", interestingly, uses the language of degeneration in different ways: Robert McAlmon in his "Mr Joyce Directs an Irish Ballet" exalts Joyce's language, associating it to that of primitive tribes who "by drums, dances, and a variety of gestures get their emotions across without the necessary means of a common language" (*Our Exagmination*, 107); William Carlos Williams, in his "A Point for American Criticism" departing from Rebecca West's criticism, subverts her accusation of Joyce's being a fool, stating that "the true significance of the fool is to consolidate life, to insist on its lowness, to knit it up, to correct a certain fatuousness in the round table circle" as well as defining her negative criticism as "proper" in England "due to national exigencies like the dementia of Wyndham Lewis" (*Our Exagmination*, 182). Degenerate language is at once exalted by means of a subversion of the discourse of degeneration, but it is also used to attack critics, as in Lewis's case, just as in the way they had previously done with Joyce. This is a further proof of how the language of degeneration was rooted in the everyday vernacular and critical language despite (or/and by virtue of) its contradictory nature.

Even Beckett is not exempt from this: in "Dante…Bruno.Vico.. Joyce", more than any other contributor of *Our Exagmination*, Beckett focuses on how Joyce's work challenges the idea of linear progression, in his attempt to illustrate the continuity between Dante, Bruno, Vico, and Joyce (here again an idea of lineage and discontinuity, given the punctuation, seems to be suggested). Beckett describes Joyce's language in terms of verbal germination following corruption, "an endless verbal germination maturation, putrefaction, the cyclic dynamism of the intermediate" (*Our Exagmination*, 16), and he even defines Joyce as "biologist in word" (19). Note also his enthusiastic illustration of Joyce's "desophistication of language" in contrast with the excessive abstraction reached by the English language which has thus become, "bored *to extinction*" (20). Beckett makes further use of the language of degeneration when he

states that [t]he figurative character of the oldest poetry must be regarded, not as sophisticated confectionery, but as evidence of "a poverty-striken vocabulary and of a disability to achieve abstraction" (*Our Exagmination*, 10) and culminates his attack on Joyce's detractors by stating that if someone does not understand *Work in Progress* "it is because you are *too decadent* to receive it" (13). Beckett thus subverts the terms attributing decadence to those readers unable to appreciate Joyce's work, who are affected by a "intellectual salivation" in Pavlovian, behavioristic terms. One of these readers, directly attacked by Beckett is, once again, Rebecca West, who had recently accused Joyce of narcissism, but of course she was not an isolated case.

Our Exagmination, however, is one of the many examples in which Joyce's circle of friends helped in the wide compositional process of his work and I will return to this particular kind of collaboration in the next chapters, as I will trace the evolution of Joyce's relationship with his work as well as with his readers. Joyce's attitude might have appeared less defiant at some points later in the composition of *Work in Progress*, but interestingly Beckett, as his correspondence shows, will refer to Joyce as Shem the Penman throughout all his life. In the following pages I will look at how Beckett dealt with Joyce's literary influence in the construction of his alter-ego Belacqua, who, similarly to Shem, is portrayed as a complex, contradictory, defiant and obscene degenerate.

Beckett's Portrait of the Artist as a "Post-war degenerate"

Soon after his arrival in Paris at the end of 1928, Beckett found himself immersed in its experimental atmosphere. His friend Thomas McGreevy introduces Beckett to Joyce by the end of 1928 and in a few months, he started his collaborations with *transition* as well as other Parisian avant-garde magazine such as *This Quarter* and *Bifur*, on whose pages, different, sometimes even opposite, approaches to the human mind are privileged topics as well as sources of inspiration for writers and artists. Probably as a way of following Joyce's footsteps, Beckett tried to avoid becoming part of any such organised intellectual movement, yet he found himself involved with several of them on different occasions. In the same number of *transition* in which "Sedendo et Quiescendo" is published, for example, Beckett's signature appears also under the "Poetry is Vertical" manifesto quoted above, although arguably Beckett was not totally in accordance with it. Nancy Cunard's publishing house, the Hours Press, offered

Beckett many commissions for translation: he is also involved in the *Negro Anthology* in 1934, which as Cunard shows in her "The American Moron & the American of Sense – Letters on the Negro" was perceived as "a disgrace for the white race" (Cunard, 199), while Cunard herself was seen as an "insane and downright degenerate" and someone "who would impair the fundamental principles of the Caucasian race of peoples" (199).

Unlike Joyce, Beckett is not so categorical in his hostility towards Surrealists and he happens to collaborate with them for the translation into English of the "transpositions" of many of their works throughout the 1930s. Surrealists saw one of their precursors in Nerval, who according to Nordau provides the "perfect instance of that 'comprehension of the mysterious' which is one of the most common fancies of the insane" (Nordau, 171; see also *DN* [83]) and more than any other avant-garde movement they were radically integrating the insane, or at least the myth of insanity, into their aesthetic ideal.

Among Beckett's translations of texts by André Breton and Paul Éluard, particularly relevant to the discourse on degeneration and mental illness is his rendering into English of the whole section entitled "Surrealism and Madness" in the "Surrealist Number" of *This Quarter*, a special issue co-edited by Edward Titus and André Breton in September 1932 (vol. 5, n. 1). The section consists of extracts from *Nadja*, the poetic novella first published by Breton in 1928, and a section excerpted from *The Immaculate Conception*, a work co-authored by Breton and Éluard in 1930, which includes experiments in automatic writing and simulations of mental diseases. In "Surrealism and the Treatment of Mental Illness" (a text translated by Beckett himself into English) in response to those critics who accused surrealism of "autism", or rather what at the time was defined as "egocentrism", Breton considers

> in the treatment of mental illnesses, it is evident that the main development has been in the increasingly abusive condemnation of what […] has been called autism (egocentrism), a condemnation most convenient for the bourgeoisie, since it enables to regard as pathological everything in man which is not his pure and simple adaptation to the external conditions of life, since its purpose is to secretly exhaust all cases of disobedience, insubordination, or desertion, which have or have not so far appeared

> worthy of respect (poetry, art, passionate love, revolutionary action etc.). (Breton 2012, 88-89)

Breton, who after his medical studies had served in the French Army in the neuro-psychiatric branch during World War I, in what seems a direct subversion of Nordau's discourse, believed he could apply his medical observations to the creative processes, arguing that "the essays of simulation of maladies virtual in each one of us could replace most advantageously the ballad, the sonnet, the epic, the poem without head or tail, and other decrepit modes" ("Introduction to the Possessions", Breton 2012, 72).

It can be easily guessed that the translation of unmediated expressions of the unconscious was problematic for the surrealists. As explained by Edward Titus in the Introduction of the *This Quarter* special issue, they had always "consistently refused to explain themselves in any but their own publications" (Titus, 5) and this publication of the first English translation of Surrealist texts represented an exceptional event. In meeting Breton's and Éluard's approval, Beckett's "transpositions" managed to succeed, through the thoughtful art of translation, in rendering the same immediacy and automatism of the Surrealist writings in a different language: a literary exercise which, considering the evolution of Beckett's style, definitely exerted a certain influence on his artistic development. Therefore, although Beckett's instinct was not exactly Surrealist, as claimed Albright in *Beckett and Aesthetics* (11), nonetheless he is right to stress the importance of these translations along with the critical studies of Proust and Joyce. Surrealism constituted a milestone in the historical avant-garde, a powerful revolution which could not be ignored. Beckett, as explained by James Knowlson, "shared the thrilling atmosphere of experiment and innovation that surrounded Surrealism" (Knowlson, 113) and in fact, living in Paris in those years, it seems as it could not have been otherwise.

Of course, in the early 1930s, Beckett's Parisian experience was dominated by James Joyce's hulking presence: Beckett had the opportunity to intimately know Joyce's work as one of his closest collaborators, as a critic and as a translator. Beckett's description of his work in terms of the "stink of Joyce" quoted earlier shows, as suggested by Pilling, the extent to which "Beckett imagined his plight in physiological terms, as if he were 'soiled' and giving off 'odours'" (Pilling *DN*, xiii). Van Hulle, as briefly mentioned in the introduction, resorts to an image reminiscent of the discourse of

degeneration when he positions “Sedendo and Quiescendo” “in the long tradition of writing as form of defecation” (Van Hulle 2013, 247) as a way to point out the continuity with the portrait of Shem. He also underlines the similarities of Beckett’s notetaking for *Dream* with Joyce’s, including his use of the Joycean sigla in one of his annotations. Even John Pilling refers to Beckett’s early struggles with Joyce’s influence and, just as Beckett himself does, hints at Beckett’s physiological (and often pathological) conception of his work on different occasions. In *Beckett before Godot*, for instance, Pilling reads “Sedendo et Quiescendo” as a necessary attempt to excrete Joyce through, “an explosion of narrative colic designed to eliminate from the body of this book the waste matter Beckett had accumulated from his close association with Joyce” and sees Joyce himself as the “‘partially purgatorial agent’ who enables *Dream* and Beckett to go on” (Pilling 2004, 64).

Both Van Hulle and Pilling have hinted at the “stink of Joyce”, not just in *Dream*’s final text, but in its own compositional method. Beckett was fascinated by Joyce’s “esteriorisation of thought” which is rendered through a meticulous manipulation of language. At the earliest stage of his literary career, his compositional process was akin to Joyce’s, being what the surrealists would define “the odious crossing out of words increasingly afflict[ing] the written page, crossing out life itself with a stroke of rust”, Breton 2012, 93). The young Beckett borrowed from Joyce the encyclopaedic accumulation of sources which became, at least at the beginning, what Beckett in his correspondence defines as the “old demon of notesnatching” (*DN*, xiii), which of course is again another allusion to Shem, the “odious and still today insufficiently malestimated notesnatcher” (*FW* 125.22-3). Crucial for the composition of Beckett’s first novel is the so-called “Dream” notebook*,* which Beckett kept between 1931-1932: a source book in which the jotted down entries from his reading were turned into raw material for his novel. Pilling also points out that “Beckett began what would … become his first full-length fiction without having very much idea of what might emerge” (*DN*, vii), but he does not highlight the fact that even this aspect of Beckett’s relationship with his work could be dictated by his proximity to Joyce. At the time of his encounter with Beckett in 1928 Joyce was directing a sort of team-work of “human prostheses” for quite mechanical additions from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* which Van Hulle sees as “paradigmatic of Joyce’s extended mind at work” (Van Hulle 2012, 162). Beckett thus was one of the closest witnesses of the way in which Joyce used to

overcome compositional issues (both physical impediments and also lack of inspiration). Possibly Beckett derives from this experience his conception of Joyce's "heroic work, heroic being" (SB to Suheil Badi Bushrui, 29/9/1980, *LSB 4*, 533). Most certainly at the time of the composition of *Dream*, he believed that a similar mechanical additional method could work for him as well, given that the composition of *Dream* was constantly punctuated by Beckett's own health problems, psychological distress, and several "dead spots". Nonetheless, this method proved to be not very suitable for him. In the following pages, following the thematic thread of degeneration, I will outline the evolution of the way in which he uses this sources in *Dream* and *More Pricks*, in which explicit references disappear in order to return massively in 'Echo's Bones'. But first, what exactly were these "degenerate" sources? And what do they reveal about Beckett's intentions?

Pilling's invaluable work in his edition of the "Dream" notebook make the sources much easier to identify. In his attempt to shape his first literary alter-ego, it is not surprising that Beckett chooses very intimate forms of autobiography, such as the *Journal intime* by Jules Renard (from which he draws some annotations on Huysman) and St Augustine's *Confession*s, demonstrating an interest of self-writing and its relationship with sin. But given the focus of this chapter and of the thesis as a whole, particularly revealing are texts such as Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony*, or other peculiar texts such as Cooper's *Flagellation and the Flagellants; History of the Rod* and Garnier' *Onanisme Seul et à Deux* (followed by, in a sort of compensation, the Bible, Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*, and Inge's *Christian Mysticism*), together with what will be the main focus of the following analysis: Max Nordau's *Degeneration*. As all these sources suggests, Beckett was looking for texts which provided him with more or less overt decadent, degenerate images and vocabulary which are used to shape his text as well as Belacqua's identity.

Meaningfully, Beckett attributes to Belacqua markedly degenerate traits, thus patently establishing a link with Joyce's alter-ego Shem. But despite the several analogies between the two fictional characters, Joyce's and Beckett's position in the late 20s - early 30s was necessarily and obviously different. Although immersed in the same cultural atmosphere, Joyce and Beckett find themselves in two different moments of

their lives: on the one hand Joyce was the Modernist genius who with *Ulysses* had reached a peak of popularity and finds himself in the position to react to criticism through the pages of his new work, although it is not receiving the reception as positive as he was expecting. Beckett, on the other hand, apart from his small circle of friends was basically an unknown writer to be, who was trying his best in order to get published (as critic, translator and poet) and whose work had not been object of critical attention. Thus, as I will argue in the following pages, in attributing degenerate characteristics to Belacqua, Beckett was trying to shape his artistic identity, at once taking a stance, a position, ironically applying a sort of criticism to his aspirations, and dealing with Joyce's influence. At this very early stage, the choice of making Belacqua a "high degenerate" through Nordau's *Degeneration* is quite revealing of what Beckett meant to do with his character. As seen earlier in this chapter, in his aim to apply medical investigation to literature, even if sometimes celebrated, Nordau's *Degeneration* even in its own time was more often denounced as charlatanism. This seems to reinforce the idea that Beckett's choice had an ironic function. At once recognising his belonging to the avant-garde and ironically pointing out the limits this affiliation involves, Beckett used Nordau in order to position himself within the Modernist universe through an ironic engagement with its orthodoxies. Thus, as I will try to show, Nordau offers also an interesting key for the interpretation of *Dream* and *More Pricks than Kicks*, including "Echo's Bones". In this sense, it is possible to trace a continuity with Joyce, in Beckett's construction of identity by means of playing with masks – but, as we will see, there are also obvious differences.

Nordau is no exception from all the other sources which appear in the "Dream" notebook. Degeneration offers to Beckett a rich "butin verbal" (SB to McGreevy, 8/11/1931, *LSB 1*, 91) made of erudite vocabulary which, given the peculiar nature of the text, shifts between the medical/pathological and the literary spheres: for instance, "echolalia" (*DN* [629]), "logorrhoea" *(DN* [636]), "onomatomania" *(DN* [629]), "coprolalia (mucktalk)" *(DN* [671]), "anxiomania" (*DN* [659]), not to mention the long list of phobias (*DN* [662]). Siobhán Purcell, in her analysis of the impact of degeneration theory on *More Pricks*, rightly stresses that the "significance of the excerpts from Nordau foreground Beckett's concern with contingency of perceived degenerative conditions […] and the pathologizing capabilities of language and discourse" (Purcell, 31). Ulrika Maude in "Beckett, Body and Mind" also highlights the

importance of reading Nordau, as all the symptoms will be then "scattered throughout his writing" (Maude, 176). But the impact of Nordau is much more immediate. In fact, all the annotations in the "Dream" notebook were in fact meant to be source material for Beckett's first novel, interestingly excluded from Maude's list and only briefly mentioned by Purcell.

More immediately, Nordau provides Beckett with a paradigm, literary as well as physiological, to appropriate and push forward (like a sort of mask to wear, in a similar way to what Joyce had done with his criticism) and subsequently to subvert. As he writes in a letter to McGreevy in September 1931, he "has to buckle the wheel" of his writing or "run the risk of Nordau's tolerance" (SB to McGreevy, 12/9/1931, *LSB 1*, 87). *Degeneration* with its interpretation of art in evolutionist, or rather devolutionist terms, allows Beckett to affirm his status of degenerate heir of the avant-garde through his alter-ego: Belacqua's failures are thus determined by his cultural heritage as well as, more generally, environmental factors. In doing so, Beckett is acknowledging his literary tastes and belonging, but it seems he is also attempting to give literary shape to his struggles to find an original literary voice which needs an ironic detachment from "the original type", namely Joyce, in order to develop. Beckett might have had the *querelle* with West in mind to which he refers in *Our Exagmination*, but possibly as I will now try to show, the choice of Nordau also reveals Beckett's good knowledge of the Shem chapter in the *Wake*, and in making Belacqua a degenerate he is trying to establish a link between his and Joyce's alter ego.

Degeneration thus becomes a rich source of inspiration for the creation of Beckett's first literary alter ego, who is characterised by several degenerate physical and mental stigmata. As with most of the degenerate artists attacked by Nordau, Belacqua can easily be ranked among what Nordau defines as "High degenerates, bordermen, mattoids, and graphomaniacs" (Nordau, 18; *DN* [613] -- second entry from Nordau in the *DN*), or, in Beckett's words, an "horrible border creature" (*Dream,* 123) who is affected by "graphospasmus" (*Dream,* 66). His main degenerate trait is his characteristic "aboulia": in Nordau's words, "a disinclination to action of any kind, attaining possibly to abhorrence of activity and powerlessness to will" (Nordau, 20).

More generally, Belacqua is affected by different degenerate behavioural tendencies such as alcoholism, suicidal tendencies and moral irresponsibility, anxiety and fits of

depression, all characteristics which can be also ascribed to Shem. Belacqua also has "notorious physical peculiarities" (*Dream*, 133), which although not a direct borrowing from *Degeneration*, would be considered by Nordau and many of his contemporaries as unmistakable marks of sexual and moral depravity: "a saturnine complexion" (*Dream,* 124), "shingles and … weeping eczema" (73), "prostrated elephantiasis" (78), all of which repeat Shem's "many scalds and burns and blisters, impetiginous sores and pustules" (*FW* 189.32-33). Some of the marks of degeneration attributed to Belacqua even more clearly recall Joyce's literary alter-ego. Like Shem, the "megalomane with a loose past", Belacqua is a "megalomaniac" affected by "intestinal incohesion" (*Dream*, 66). Beckett more than once attempts to portray Belacqua by explicitly echoing Joyce's portrait of Shem, as when he explicitly challenges the reader to "spot the style":

> *As an herpetic taratantaratatula (have you spotted the style?)* hath he consumed away. He dared to go off the deep end with his shadowy love and he daily watered by daily littles the ground under his face and beerbibbing did not lay siege to his spirit and he was continent though not in the least sustenant and many of his months have since run out with him the pestilent person to take him from behind his crooked back and set him before his *ulcerous gob in the boiling over his neckings* and in chambering and wantonness and in bitter and blind bawling against the honey that honey bloody well you know the honey and in canvassing and getting and weltering in filth and scratching off the scabs of lust. (*Dream*, 72-73, my italics)

Note here in the composition of this "pestilent figure" the inclusion of Beckett's own symptoms (also reminiscent of Joyce) with the reference to the cyst in his neck for which he eventually undertook a surgery in December 1932. A few lines below at the same page we also find an allusion to "the bitch of a heart" to which he also refers in a letter to McGreevy dated 24 February 1931, as it was keeping him awake at night. (*LSB 1*, 69).

Later in *Dream*, Beckett also shows the intention of portraying Belacqua dissected into body parts (thus recalling medical textbooks which tended to classify patients according to their symptoms, presenting them as dissected into sick body parts), as Joyce happens to do several times in I.7, as for instance with "Shem's bodily getup" which

> it seems, included an adze of a skull, an eight of a larkseye, the whoel of a nose, one numb arm up a sleeve, fortytwo hairs off his uncrown, eighteen to his mock lip, a trio of

> barbels from his megameg chin (sowman's son), the irony shoulder higher than the right, all ears, an artificial tongue with a natural curl, not a foot to stand on, a handful of thumbs, blind stomach, a deaf heart, a loose liver, two fifths of two buttocks, one gleetsteen avoirdupoider for him, a man root of all evil, a salmonskelt's thinskin, eelsblood in his cold toed, a bladder tristened, (*FW* 169.11-24)

This portrait of Shem is characterised by lack of unity with each part diseased differently, forming a long dark diagnostic list. But Belacqua seems to be an even more "disinterestingly low human type" (*FW* 179.12-13) than Shem, so much so that his own author soon grows tired of him:

> In particular we had planned to speak of his belly, because it threatens to play so important part in what follows, his loins, his breast and his demeanour, and spell out his face feature by feature and make a long rapturous statement of his hands. But now we are tired of him. (*Dream*, 133)

Beckett's usage of the first-person plural here denotes a not yet singular authentic lyric voice: the 'we' of the not yet formed – still anxious with influence, as it were. Moreover, the paragraph closes with the epigrammatic statement "Cacoethes scribendi, the doom of the best of penmen" (*Dream*, 134): "cacoethes" can be translated as the uncontrollable urge to do something, an ill-disposition, a malignant disease. "Cack" also refers to excrement. Beckett is here at once defining the act of writing in terms of pathology (either as addiction or as inability to exert control on the body) and establishing a close connection (they share the doom) with "The Penman", Joyce.

Other borrowings from Nordau suggest Beckett's aims to frame his disease in the particular spatial and temporal context of the Parisian avant-gardes, with his allusion to "la folie obsidionale (siege madness of 1870)" (*DN* [624]), as Beckett notes in his *DN*. Siege madness is an early definition of the shell shock, which became very common after WWI and is known today as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. "Folie obsidionale", according to Nordau, originated in Paris during the twenty years of the Napoleonic war and had to be considered as the main reason why "the craziest fashion in art and literature would necessarily arise" (Nordau, 17) there. In *Degeneration*, we read:

> In Paris a veritable epidemic of mental diseases was observed, for which a special name was found - la folie obsidionale, 'siege-madness'. And even those who did not at once succumb to mental derangement, suffered lasting injury to their nervous system. This

> explains why hysteria and neurasthenia are much more frequent in France, and appear under a greater variety of forms, and […] they can be studied far more closely in this country than anywhere else. (Nordau, 42)

Beckett's allusions to the obsidional insanity in *Dream* are thus ironic allusions to Beckett's own experiences with the Parisian literary avant-gardes as the heirs of turn of the century decadents. At the beginning of the 1930s, as we have seen in the previous pages, Paris was still the home for a new generation of Modernist "degenerates", who far from becoming extinct, were even more radically integrating the insane, or at least the myth of insanity, into their aesthetic ideal. Breton, in particular, worked closely with soldiers affected by shell shock effect when he served in the First World War as a psychiatric worker. Beckett was definitely more sensitive than Joyce to the charm of Surrealism, in particular with regards to its engagement with mental illness – Beckett was in the process of shaping his own aesthetic and, in a way, at the time he was the ideal reader for *transition* (with Joyce as the main author, but all the possible approaches to the unconscious and the human mind dynamics in general are well-accepted). But in *Dream*, as the use of Nordau shows, he has an even stronger narcissistic urge, like Joyce, to shape his own identity rather than imitating pathological states in the surrealist fashion and, like Joyce, he uses the language of degeneration to do so.

In *Dream*, Belacqua alternates states of obsidional insanity with mystical/ecstatic ones, as shown by the allusion to Ruskin in the following passage:[1]

> Every night when he squeezes through the breach and is absorbed by the avenue, that is his impression. But now, before that happens, before he regains his boxful of *obsidional insanity*, he stands well out in the dark arena, his head cocked up uncomfortably at the star field, like Mr *Ruskin* in the Sistine, looking for Vega. (*Dream*, 16)

According to Nordau, Ruskin was one of "the most turbid and fallacious minds" (Nordau, 28) whose propositions "were decisive in determining the direction taken by

[1] Interestingly Belacqua becomes "siege crazy" even after the miserable attempt to explain to the Smeraldina his internal battle between flesh and mind concerning his intercourse with women, "He was no longer detached, nor ever almost at one with the girl, but an item in the Hof's invisible garrison, *going siege-crazy*." *Dream*, 26), but we will get back to Belacqua's contradictory relationship with women later.

the young Englishmen of 1843, who united artistic inclinations with the mysticism of the degenerate and hysterical" (Nordau, 29). However, none of these states seems to be really authentic in Belacqua. They seem rather poses that Beckett is deliberately making Belacqua try to clumsily adopt, and they seem to act as Beckett's own self-criticism for not having been able to find his own personal voice – thus running the risk of becoming, he suggests in *Dream*,

> [t]he gentleman scrivener who has not very near or dear or clear ideas on any subjects whatsoever and whose talent is not the dense talent of the proselytiser and proxenete but the rare article in the interests of whose convulsions clouds of words condense to no particular purpose. (*Dream*, 168)

This idea seems to be reinforced by the narrator warning Mr. Beckett of Belacqua being "a dud mystic" (*Dream*, 186), another possible link with Shem, him being a "sham" (inauthenticity or fakeness, would be such a bigger topic that it can only be briefly mentioned in this research). More generally, it could be an allusion to the particular experimental atmosphere that Beckett absorbed in Paris, which, according to Nordau, was the result of deranged people forcing insane ideas on their companions, namely "folie à deux", something similar to what Joyce in the *Wake* describes as "a friendship, fast and furious, which merely arose out of the noxious pervert's perfect lowness" (*FW* 174.35-36). As Nordau explains in *Degeneration*:

> Among pronounced lunatics is the *folie à deux,* in which a deranged person completely forces his insane ideas on a companion; among hysterics it assumes the form of close friendship, causing Charcot to repeat at every opportunity: 'Persons of highly-strung nerves attract each other'; and finally authors found schools. (Nordau, 30)

Beckett's annotation in the *DN* is rather eloquent with his personal addition in brackets: "Folie à deux *(exasperated into -isms)*" (*DN* [622]; my italics). Ironically, as shown by this passage of *Dream*, Belacqua's degenerate inclinations were thus not original traits but almost stereotypical characteristics, a "folie à deux" of a whole class of "gémisseur": "[a]ll this pallor and umbilicism à deux might be the very thing for a certain class of gémisseur, it might be the very thing for him, permanent and pertinent and all the rest of it for him" (*Dream*, 193). "Gémisseur", another borrowing from

Nordau, namely someone who exceeds in commiseration (see Nordau, 10, n.14)[2], is an art in which Belacqua (Shem-like and Joyce-like) seems to excel, as he happens to live in "the coastermonger times of a pale and ardent generation" (*Dream,* 66): a previous generation possibly embodied by Shem seen as "a nogger among the blankards of this dastard of a century" (*FW* 188.13-14), another passage in the *Wake* with strong degenerate implications. Beckett is thus enacting an ironic appropriation of Nordau's discourse. Being exposed to a particular kind of art makes him a degenerate (as it will become even clearer with the analysis of "Echo's Bones") and works as a justification for Beckett's inability to get rid of "the stink of Joyce". Indeed, as Quirici shows, different critics, almost thirty years after Nordau, were still decrying "not merely the degeneracy of *Ulysses*, but more so its power to influence other writers" who were thus "dangerously susceptible to contagion from Joyce, and likely to pass on the disease" (Quirici, 89).

Through these allusions to Nordau, Beckett is implicitly suggesting that his lack of originality has environmental as well as hereditary causes. This idea is reinforced by the fact that, as some entries in the "Dream" notebook suggest, Beckett was particularly intrigued by the *Degeneration* chapter devoted to egomania, which as we have seen is a characteristic which Nordau attributes to Ibsen, and Joyce attributed to both himself (in his youth) and to his characters. Interestingly the first entry in the "Dream" notebook related to the section dedicated to egomania is "*My* psychic and somatic stigmata" (*DN* [660], my italics). As seen earlier in this chapter, Nordau associates egomania with Ibsen, as an "egomaniac anarchist". Ibsen is also the author chosen as a model by Joyce since his youth. Beckett was definitely aware of Ibsen's influence on Joyce and I argue that he was quite intrigued by this idea of a sort of literary lineage involving Ibsen, Joyce and himself.

Nordau devoted an extensive part of this chapter to his pseudoscientific explanations for egomania. An egomaniac according to Nordau is an invalid who

> must of necessity immensely over-estimate his own importance and the significance of all his actions, for he is only engrossed with himself, and but little or not at all with

[2] Beckett annotates in the *DN* the title of Morel's treatise "Delire Panophobique des Aliénés Gemisseur" (*DN* [615]) widely quoted by Nordau.

> external things. He is therefore not in a position to comprehend his relation to other men and the universe, and to appreciate properly the part he has to play in the aggregate social institutions. (Nordau, 257)

And quoting Lombroso he points out "all delirious geniuses are very much captivated by, and preoccupied with, their own selves" (Nordau, 90). These degenerate characteristics of egomania seems of particular interest for Beckett as suggested by the following block of entries in the *DN*:

> fallacy of the individuum (*DN* [663])
>
> cœnæsthesis: general sensibility. Dimly perceived cellular organic Ego not involving cerebral consciousness (*DN* [664])
>
> prenatal cœnæsthesis
> {tumultuous
> {exasperated cœnæsthesis (somatic)}
> (*DN* [666])
>
> monopolising consciousness of degenerate subject
> {Distorting the *Not I*
> {Excluding
> (*DN* [667])

These notes refer to a quite long passage in *Degeneration* (90-94), in which Nordau explains the evolution of the consciousness of the ego, which originates from a more general sensibility of the body. This bodily conscience, or cœnæsthesis, characterises the organism in the primal stage of its evolution. According to Nordau, "[t]he formation of an "I", of an individuality clearly conscious of its separate existence, is the highest achievement of the living matter, so the highest development of the 'I' consists in embodying in itself the 'Not I', in comprehending the world, in conquering egoism, and in establishing close relations with the other beings, things and phenomena" (93), a stage named by the sociologists Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer as "altruism" (see Nordau, 93). Cœnæsthesis, on the other hand, refers to the general sensibility of the "unconscious organic I", a stage which in the natural evolution of the organism usually precedes the development of the ego (prenatal cœnæsthesis); however, the consciousness of the egomaniac is characterised by the persistence of this particular sensitivity. The egomaniac is therefore usually more focused on these kinds of interior,

organic perceptions rather than in the external world: “the degenerate man remains a child all his life. He scarcely appreciates or even perceives the external world and is only occupied with the organic processes of his own body. He is more than egoistical, he is an ego-maniac” (Nordau, 94).

Nordau thus introduces the specific concepts of “cœnæsthesis” and the “Not I” which will have long lasting effects on Beckett’s aesthetic development. As pointed out by Ackerley, cœnæsthesis would become a “key term in defining Beckett’s aesthetics of impotence and failure, and, with respect to his first ventures into the psychic territory, a demarcating landscape of consciousness that would henceforth be his own” (Ackerley 1996, 172). It is thus a serendipitous encounter with a term, a concept, “cœnæsthesis” which will become a characteristic mark of Beckett’s later voices, breaths, bodies reaching a next-to-immaterial state, as if their highest form is in their ability to reduce not to nothing, but to the bare minimum of consciousness, a reduction exemplified by the play *Not I* (1972) itself.

However, at the time of the composition of *Dream*, for the border creature Belacqua, “the tumultuous coenaesthesis (bravo!) of the degenerate subject” (*Dream*, 32) is still something he has to “flog on” in order to enwomb and expunge his consciousness, as shown by the following passage from *Dream* in which Belacqua’s failure to maintain what he considers a privileged condition, seems to be the embryonic condition sine qua non for the development of later Beckettian characters:

> Convinced like a fool that it must be possible to induce at pleasure a state so desirable and necessary to himself he exhausted his ingenuity experimenting. He left no stone unturned. He trained his little brain to hold his breath, he made covenants of all kinds with his senses, he forced the lids of the little brain down against flaring bric-à-brac, in every imaginable way he *flogged on his cœnæsthesis* to enwomb and expunge his consciousness. *He learned how with his knuckles to press torrents of violet from his eyeballs, he lay in his skin on his belly on the bed, his face crushed grossly into the pillow, pressing down towards the bearings of the earth with all the pitiful little weight of his inertia, for hours and hours, until he would begin and all things to descend, ponderously and softly to lapse downwards to darkness, he and the bed and the room and the world. All for nothing*. He was grotesque, wanting to ‘troglodyse’ himself, worse than grotesque. It was impossible to switch off the inward glare, wilfully suppress the

> bureaucratic mind. It was stupid to imagine that he could be organised as Limbo and wombtomb, worse than stupid. (*Dream*, 123; my italics)

The passage shows Belacqua's struggles to "troglodyse" himself ("Troglodyte" being another borrowing from Nordau, *DN* [657]). But no matter how hard he tries, as long as he is alive, he will always remain "for all his grand fidgeting and shuffling, bird or fish, flapping its wings under a press of water". Bird or fish, Belacqua is a "hybrid", and far from being a closed universe, he is often led by his bodily instincts to face the external world. In *Dream* his tormented relationship with women, in particular, becomes the exemplification of his inability to reconcile body and mind. Belacqua's contradictory relationship with women, which consequently leads him to masturbation and prostitutes, denotes a "degenerate sexuality", which Nordau defines as any kind of sexual practice or identity that did not subordinate itself to the imperative of reproduction. In this way, Beckett chooses for Belacqua the destiny of extinction.

Still, Belacqua's existence is not limited to *Dream* and in fact all the degenerate characteristics become more prominent in *More Pricks than Kicks*, even though direct references to Nordau are much less prominent than in *Dream.* There are a few significant exceptions: cœnæsthesis, of course being one of them, which appears in "Love and Lethe" and "Draff"; "onomania" – a craze for buying, collecting (*DN* [619]) in "What a Misfortune"; and the idea of a "marriage mitigated with a cicisbeo" (the first entry from Nordau in the *DN*), used in "Walking Out", a story dominated by the themes of non-reproductive sexual practices, sterility and impairment, with once again strong Joycean overtones which I will discuss more in depth in the chapter devoted to Lucia. Far from being safe from the danger of procreation, in *More Pricks,* Belacqua's sterile intercourses with other women are frequent and he even gets married twice. As we will see in Chapter 3, sexual intercourse with women which attains to normative standards (courtship and marriage) imply for Belacqua not just the final threat of procreation but, paradoxically, a threat to his own self-preservation. Nonetheless, as a degenerate, after all, Belacqua possesses a sort of "contempt for traditional views of custom and morality" which although constantly challenged still are acknowledged and not ignored.

In *More Pricks*, Belacqua is also given a meaningful surname, "Shuah". Shuah is the mother of Onan, a biblical figure who in order to avoid raising descendants for his late brother, engaged in *coitus interruptus*. The choice of a Jewish name could find an

explanation in the widespread identification of the degenerate artist with the Jew which was reaching its apotheosis in the 1930s. The biblical origin of the word onanism is annotated in the *DN* ("Er, Onan and Shelah, sons of Judah and Shuah", *DN* [425]) as being from Garnier's *Onanisme, seul et à deux, sous toutes ses formes et leurs consequences.* It is worth noting that 'Shem' is of course an old biblical character also. Moreover, it is very likely that Beckett read this book because of Joyce, and the choice of this source as well as the choice to give Belacqua a Jewish name which alludes to his onanistic inclinations, can be read as further ways of establishing a link with Joyce. Belacqua echoes Leopold Bloom, the modernist wandering Jew par excellence, who in *Ulysses* indulges in onanistic practices, degenerate by definition, causing the book being banned in America for ten years. As noted by Colin Gillis in his essay devoted to Stephen's "wretched habit" in *A Portrait*, Joyce's "treatment of masturbation in fiction was a task that Joyce took seriously, and he was willing to risk social ostracism and censorship to accomplish it" (Gillis, 612). A path definitely followed by Beckett in his early prose.

However, instead of the modern Ulysses, we can find in *More Pricks* the modern Fingal, another "sham", as pointed out by Mary Power, "a parody of the serious but bogus epic" (Power, 151), namely Macpherson's *Ossian Cycle*. Again, the *Wakean* overtones are present, Fingal being the Scottish variant of Finn MacCool, associated in the *Wake* with HCE. "Fingal" narrates one of Belacqua's numerous romantic fiascos and is dominated by a landscape in which picturesque and romantic elements are ignored for (or replaced by) the spectacle of the Portrane Mental Hospital. As we will see in more detail in the next chapter, here for the first time in Beckett's prose, a certain place is represented: the asylum. This will recur in Beckett's fiction (*Murphy*, *Watt*, *The Unnamable* as well as later texts). For the first time Beckett makes his character face the concrete possibility of definitively avoiding any kind of social ties rather than through his temporary ability to go "womb-tomb": "'No shaving or haggling or cold or hugger-mugger, no' – he cast for a term of ample annotations – 'no night-sweats'" (*MPTK*, 22), Belacqua fantasises. For the first time Belacqua thus finds the possibility of "the nature outside me compensating the nature inside me" (22) and sees the asylum as "a land of sanctuary" (25). This definition reflects the aestheticised idea of insanity embraced by many artists, including the surrealists and Beckett himself, at that time. At the beginning of the 20th century asylums were a fearful reality in Ireland. Ironically,

though, for Belacqua, without the asylum there would be "little left of Portrane but ruins" (23). Despite this irresistible attraction for the asylum, however, Belacqua does not become one of the inmates, not in "Fingal" nor in any other short story, meaningfully missing a meeting with his companion Winnie Coates and Dr Sholto at the entrance of the asylum. Belacqua only walks beside the border of the asylum, close enough to see its insiders and to wish he could be one of them. He thus appears as what Nordau defines as "the borderland dweller" (Nordau, 9) under which are classified the "high degenerates", "mattoids" and "graphomaniacs", as seen at the beginning of this section. Once again, unable to conform to social standards, he manages to find a momentary refuge in Taylor's pub. Here, he abandons himself to a "memorable" fit of laughter which could also be read as an allusion to Nordau, who considers this exasperated emotionalism another trait of degeneration:

> Another mental stigma of degenerates is their emotionalism. […] It is a phenomenon rarely absent in a degenerate. *He laughs until he shed tears, or weeps copiously without adequate occasion*; a commonplace line of poetry or of prose sends shudder down his back; he falls into raptures before indifferent pictures or statues; and music especially[3] […] arouses in him the most vehement emotions. (Nordau, 19; my italics)

For the first time, Beckett in *More Pricks*, and "Fingal" in particular, one of the latest stories of the collection to be written (early 1933), manages to show a reality surrounding Belacqua, in which humanity as well as the landscape are "in ruins". It is difficult to distinguish the outsiders of the asylum from insiders and, as noted by Purcell

> Beckett's depiction of a ruined Ireland traversed by a self-confessed degenerate, charges his developing aesthetic with a contemporary urgency that responds to anxiety about degeneracies. … The painful cases that populate the collection serve as a city-wide counter-narrative to the Irish Revivalist ideals of myth, physical culture and "full bodied Gaels" lamented in "Censorship in the Saorostat". (Purcell, 33)

In contrast, such a counter-narrative is characterised by a system of quite different Irish literary allusions, i.e. Joyce and Swift, which suggests a rather different idea of Ireland. Joyce, twenty years earlier, had already depicted Dublin as the centre of paralysis (of

[3] See *DN* [311] entry from the dictionary of proper names for Belacqua: "Sitting and meditating the soul grows wise… [he] built guitars and musical instruments he then carved and engraved with much care the heads and necks of these guitars, and sometimes played some of them".

which degeneration may represent the natural evolution) and Swift's name, in particular, was strongly associated with mental illness and mental asylums in Dublin (I will focus on this in the next chapter). Nonetheless, it does not look like Beckett is completely "advocate[ing] a radical aesthetic which, in keeping with Belacqua's degeneracy, celebrates the fact of his own incoherency" (Purcell, 33), as Purcell suggests. Beckett's earliest prose is still far from such a "celebration", or what Sean Kennedy in *The New Cambridge Companion to SB* describes as process of heroic appropriation of "the terms of the discourse of degeneration", subjecting them to an ironic reversal (or "transvaluation")" (Kennedy S., 196). And this is because, at this very early stage of Beckett's aesthetic development, his writing seems to be primarily an attempt to exorcise his own "anxiety of influence": Belacqua's degenerate traits are the result of a sort of genetic/environmental/literary burden with which Beckett is trying to deal. Belacqua is nothing more than a despairing sterile deviation of an original type and, as Nordau suggests, should be abandoned to his inevitable fate. Belacqua still does not embody that "wretchedness which must be defended to the very end" which will characterise Beckett's later works (Kennedy S., 197). Hence Beckett describes him in "Ding-Dong", as "an impossible person", confessing "I gave him up in the end because he was not *serious*" (*MPTK,* 32); and finally decides to inflict on Belacqua an accidental death in "Yellow", just because doctors forget to auscultate him.

Beckett's hostility towards Belacqua becomes even more manifest in "Echo's Bones". Given the way in which Belacqua dies in "Yellow", following his editor's request to add one more story to the collection, Beckett's resurrection of his character might appear a necessity. But Beckett could have inserted a story in the middle of the collection, whereas he decides to take the opportunity to make Belacqua expiate his sins and to cruelly make fun of him even more: as Nixon suggests in his introduction to the annotated edition of "Echo's Bones", Belacqua is "brought back to life in order to atone for his narcissism, his solipsism and for being an 'indolent bourgeois poltroon' in the previous stories" (*Echo's Bones*, xv). With this story in which he has "put all I knew and plenty that I was better still aware of" (SB to McGreevy, 6/12/1933, *LSB 1*, 171) Beckett returns to a rather Joycean language, making extensive use of "quoshed quotatoes" (*FW* 183.22) mainly recycled from the "Dream" notebook. As Nixon notes in the introduction, "there is hardly a sentence in Echo's Bones that is not borrowed from one source or another" (xvi) – sources which he helps us to identify with the

extensive glossary included in the volume. In this story which Charles Prentice, who had commissioned and then rejected it, defines as a "nightmare […] which would make people shudder and be puzzled and confused" (Charles Prentice to SB, 13/11/1933, quoted in *Echo's Bones*, xii), more explicitly than ever here Belacqua is presented as the parody of the "degenerate artist" and direct references to Nordau abound (along with those to Burton, Praz, Garnier and Cooper).

Nordau's presence can be sensed on the very first page of the story when the narrator states that the individual existence is for Belacqua an "injustice":

> No one was more willing than himself to admit that his *individual* existence had in some curious way been an injustice and that this *tedious process of extinction*, its protracted faults of old error, was the atonement imposed on every upstart into animal spirits each in the order of time. But this did not make things any more pleasant and easy to bear. (*Echo's Bones*, 3)

Nixon notes that the expression is taken from Friedrich Ueberweg's *History of Philosophy* (from which Beckett took notes in his "Philosophy Notebook" kept in the 1930s), "[d]efinite individual existence constitutes an injustice and must be atoned by extinction" (*Echo's Bones*, 55-56); but it might as well recall "the fallacy of the individuum" (*DN* [663]), as Beckett notes in the *DN* based on Nordau, which consists in "the illusion […] to consider himself as an "individuum", confronting the world as a separate world or macrocosm" (Nordau, 94). Moreover, the idea of a "tedious process of extinction" as a result of "old errors" recalls the scientific definition of degeneracy itself, the "atonement imposed on every upstart into animal spirits each in the order of time": "old errors" generate a morbid deviation which doesn't allow the natural progression of the healthy species but gradually lead to sterility and consequently extinction.

The dark afterlife in which Belacqua's atonement takes places is depicted in markedly decadent terms with venereal diseases, sterility and degeneracy dominating the whole story but we also find allusions to the artistic panorama contemporary to Beckett. In the first part of the story in which Belacqua meets the prostitute Miss Zaborovna Priviet, different rather disturbing apparitions punctuate their encounter; among them, "the nest of rank outsiders, mending in perfect amity a hard place in Eliot, relaxing from time to time to quire their manifesto: "Boycott Poulter's Measure!" (*Echo's Bones*, 11) which

Belacqua spots among the "dim rabble`" which "passed by and passes away" (12) and which seems to be a caricature of the *transition* circle (including surrealists) with their tendency to define their aesthetic through manifestos, one of which was signed by Beckett (see *Echo's Bones*, 67).

In the second part, Lord Gall of Wormwood, the "aspermatic colossus" (*Echo's Bones*, 23) forces Belacqua to procreate with his wife in order for him to assure a lineage and to save his estate, but ironically Belacqua and Lady Gall generate a daughter. It is during his absurd discussion with Lord Gall that Belacqua explicitly defines himself as a "postwar degenerate" totally lacking original ideas, "[w]e have faults, but ideas is not one of them (*Echo's Bones*, 26). Here Belacqua's (as well as Beckett's) gaze is still directed towards the past – the war, with its disastrous consequences, that Beckett has in mind is WWI, and as the passage suggests he still sees himself and, consequently Belacqua, as a "degenerate" product of the past rather than an artist able to express the ineffability of the present (as he will in fact become after WWII). Lord Gall also repeatedly counsels Belacqua to "cut out the style" (*Echo's Bones*, 28) with allusion to Belacqua's attempt to imitate Rimbaud, a precursor in many aspects of the decadents as well as the surrealists. But the allusion here is also autobiographic: more specifically, the poem evoked is "Le Bateau Ivre" ("Drunken boat"), a poem translated by Beckett himself in early 1932 (see Nixon in *Echo's Bones*, 89). The parody of the decadent poet is rendered through a further reference to Rimbaud in the third section of the "little triptych" (*Echo's Bones*, 4) when Belacqua is trying to achieve some sort of poetic vision but he miserably fails: "he closed his eyes, intending to have a vision, but felt so marooned he did so that he opened them again quick" (*Echo's Bones*, 36). Nixon in his annotations refers again to "The Drunken Boat" and what Beckett calls Rimbaud's "eye-suicide – pour des visions" (*Echo's Bones*, 99; see also SB to McGreevy 11/3/1931, *LSB 1*, 73); but the passage seems to be also reminiscent of Stephen in the opening of "Proteus" *Ulysses,* "walking into eternity along Sandymount strand" with his eyes shut ('Shut your eyes and see" (*U* 31.9), Stephen says to himself, before the ineluctable modality of the audible transforms reality into rhythm and Stephen steps into "[a] catalectic tetrameter of iambs marching" *U* 31.23-24).

Ironically, Belacqua has also just been depicted contemplating the landscape and struggling to define the whole scene:

> with the moon shining, the sea tossing in her sleep and sighing, and the mountains observing their Attic vigil in the background, he found it difficult to decide offhand whether the scene was of the kind that is called romantic or whether it should not with more justice be termed classical. A classic-romantic scene. (36)

And Belacqua himself becomes a "classic-romantic corpse" (36). The classical and romantic dichotomy, which in degenerative terms had been translated into healthy/sane and degenerate art, had dominated the artistic debated since the nineteenth century. Beckett's allusion here however seems to be multiple. He definitely has Mario Praz in mind. In the introduction to his accurate and fascinating overview of the different nuances which characterise decadent art (in which Nordau is also attacked for his "roughly positivistic approach"), Praz focuses on the distinction between classical and romantic and, in his attempt to define the romantic sensibility, stresses the limits of a neat contraposition of the term "classical" and "romantic". Praz is a very important source in the "Dream" notebook for the decadent images which compose the portraits of Belacqua's "middling women", as we will see in Chapter 3.

But this allusion to the classic-romantic might be even more specific, as suggested by the allusion to Goethe in the following passage. Belacqua is moaning about his existential ailments, acknowledging that "great art had proved a great boom while it lasted", but soon admitting that "he could not stand the pace" (*Echo's Bones*, 43), when he is brusquely interrupted by Doyle:

> You wear me to the pit with your… Shall I say with the eccentricities of your conversation, your buckled discourse? You must be rotten through and through to fly out your own system the way you do. Stick to the point, honour your father, your mother and Göthe. (44)

Goethe is obviously the greatest representative of the classic aesthetic which Nordau counterpoises to the decadent one, but which in those years Jolas wished to counterpoise to Joyce himself. 1932 had marked the hundredth anniversary of Goethe's death, but it was also the year of Joyce's fiftieth birthday and the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Ulysses*. Jolas wished to devote a special issue of *transition* to Joyce in contraposition to Goethe who, as Ellmann reports, would work "as a whipping boy" (Ellmann 1982, 642). At Joyce's request the issue was reduced to a special section of *transition* 21 entitled "Homage to James Joyce". Instead of a neat contraposition

between Joyce and "The Olympian", Goethe's figure is thus eventually ignored. Among the different contributions, however, Stuart Gilbert writes:

> The 'romantic' sees in *Work in Progress* a revolutionary art, an impassioned reversal of all the values and a challenge to the past; the classicist discerns, behind the spinning flux of words and symbols, the steel frame of unalterable law. Classic and modernist, each is justified. Pure mind and pure emotion – both are there. (Gilbert 1932, 247-248)

Beckett was probably aware of this, as this was the issue in which "Sedendo et Quiescendo" as well as "Poetry is Vertical" were published.[4] Along with this possible further allusion to Joyce, we also find in the "Echo's Bones" passage a much more overt allusion to Nordau and, more generally to degeneration theory, when Doyle implies that the eccentricities of Belacqua's conversation must be due to the process of decomposition of his body: "you must be rotten through and through". Interestingly Beckett chooses here the expression "buckled discourse" which is a clear echo of Beckett's own statement in the letter to McGreevy which we have met earlier, in which he mentions the risk of meeting "Nordau's tolerance" if one does not "buckle the wheel of one's poem" (SB to McGreevy, 12/9/1931, *LSB* 1, 87): Nordau indeed provides Beckett with a paradigm to subvert in order to make it his own. Nonetheless, this does not happen with Belacqua who, as degenerate, is destined to extinction and whose "demented conversation" (*Echo's Bones*, 45) must first necessarily be buried in order to generate something new.

[4] Moreover, as it emerges from Beckett's interview with Ellmann, Beckett and Joyce in those same year happened to have a discussion about Goethe: Beckett alludes to the fact that he and Jolas had once quarreled about Goethe with Joyce taking Beckett's side: "Beckett and Jolas quarreled about Goethe – Beckett quoted Was ich Weiss kenn jeder wissen/ Mein herz habe ich allein." Attacked Goethe. Joyce enforced Beckett's pt." (Ellmann notes interview with Beckett, TULSA) The reference is to *The Sorrows of the Young Werther*, a work which denotes a rather romantic sensitivity, thus making Goethe's work very difficult to classify either as exclusively classical or romantic; it is thus possible they were arguing about the classical/romantic distinction, although there are no further traces of this anecdote in Ellmann's biography or anywhere else.

Chapter II

Madness and the Irish Tradition: Jonathan Swift

In our exploration of the different meanings and imagery attributed to madness, the complex figure of Jonathan Swift should not be ignored. Swift's supposed madness has constantly met with popular as well as scientific curiosity in the Anglo-Irish world, long before the development of degeneration theory and consequent postulations about genius and madness in the nineteenth century. As I will show in this chapter, both Joyce and Beckett deal with this dominant figure in the Anglo-Irish tradition. And just as they have been frequently associated (more or less accurately) with each other, both in different ways have looked at Swift's life and work for inspiration. In Joyce's case, although the presence of Swift permeates the *Wake*, I will focus on the analysis of a strange piece of writing: Joyce's fragment on Swift which never found space in the *Wake*. It will serve as an illustration of a particularly critical moment in Joyce's life as well as for the composition of the *Wake*, namely from late 1928 up to the early 1930s (a period which Beckett witnessed quite closely). As for Beckett, the main focus of my analysis will be the short story "Fingal" in which Swift's presence is particularly prominent and which, being one of the latest stories to be written, testifies to a more mature engagement with Joyce's influence and a gradual developing of his own original voice. In this sense, although I will outline some analogies (both seem to be particularly interested in Swift's most human frailties and for both he is a presence in the Anglo-Irish tradition with whom they must necessary deal), I aim to stress both continuities and differences. But first I will outline the multiple historical associations between Swift and madness before I proceed with the illustration of how they fit in Beckett's and Joyce's work.

"To curse the Dean, or bless the Drapier" – Swift's madness between myth and reality

Even before his death, a strong ambivalence has always characterized Swift's fame and his reception**.** Augustan poet, witty and poisonous satirist, Dean of St Patrick's, political pamphleteer, English exile but also Irish patriot, polygamous lover, atheist priest,

eccentric misanthrope, these are just some of the identities simultaneously (and often contradictorily) adopted by and/or attributed to Swift. One of the most interesting and modern aspects of Swift's celebrity is how he actively contributed to the elevation of his multiple identities to a mythical status. Ann Cline Kelly in *Jonathan Swift and Popular Culture* extensively shows the ways in which Swift contributed to the process of his own mythicization through the construction of fictionalized multiple personae: particularly after 1730, with the publication of "Verses of the Death of Dr. Swift", "Swift devised dramatic self-representations that would imprint his life, character, and works on history in indelible ink" (Kelly, 78). Aside from the early tendency to devise masks worn according to the different purposes of his writings, at a later stage Swift begins to play with multiple references to himself, as the man, as the Drapier and as the Dean, thus suggesting an intention at once to hide his real self from the public and to unfold his contradictory "mediatic" identity. As Kelly notes, Swift was "presenting himself as an unresolvable conundrum rather than a definable individual" (78). Kelly proceeds, illustrating Swift's paradoxical strategy:

> On the one hand, Swift elicited the sounding of a gold trumpet, by emphasizing his identities as the brave Drapier, the conscientious Dean, the great author, and the noble benefactor of the city [of Dublin]. On the other hand, he escalated the scandals about himself to a new level, with shocks that would bring forth the blasts of the brass trumpet. (78)

Exemplary of the second tendency are Swift's mysterious and much discussed relationships with two women, Esther Johnson and Esther Vanhomrigh better known as Stella and Vanessa, which caused Swift's reputation to be marked by accusations of misogyny and/or depravity.

A veil of ambiguity seems to characterize every aspect of Swift's life and it is hard to determine his real intentions regarding the publications of his work, as well as the real nature of his relationship with the two women. On the one hand, the mysterious publishing history of the poem "Cadenus and Vanessa", which raised a big scandal and consequent speculations about Swift's sexual life involving a woman much younger than him, makes us wonder about what Swift's real intentions could possibly be. On the other, the fictionalization of Swift's correspondence with Esther Johnson into the so-called *Journal to Stella* after Swift's death is even more baffling: if the creation of the

personal language seems to prove the private nature of Swift's writing, as Moorhead in his editor's preface of the *Journal* notes, the interest does not reside in the romantic aspect, but should be read as "an informal and indiscreet chronicle of that time" (Moorhead in Swift [n.d.], xviii). This is quite interesting given that Swift himself in the *Journal* refers to some rumors about him being the author of Stella's letters, due to the similarity of their handwriting which he explains with the fact that he was Stella's writing master. In this sense, the *Journal to Stella* becomes an even more peculiar form of writing: if, on the one hand, it appears as an example of private writing made public without the author's consent, on the other, given the ambiguity generated by the idea of Swift writing to himself, we might wonder whether it was actually meant to be private at all. After all, the posthumous publication of his private writings is something Swift predicts in his "Verses on the Death of Dr Swift":

> Now Curl his Shop from Rubbish drains;
> Three genuine Tomes of Swift's Remains.
> And then to make them pass the glibber,
> Revis'd by Tibbalds, Moore, and Cibber.
> He'll treat me as he does my Betters.
> Publish my Will, my Life, my Letters.
> Revive the Libels born to dye;
> Which Pope must bear, as well as I.
> (Swift 1739, vv. 197-204)

Despite all the mysteries around his private and public life, it is a fact, as Kelly notes, that Swift's writings reflect his awareness that "he had created a larger-than-life print persona, whose sensational features would continue to inspire myth and counter myths" (Kelly, 102). Such a mythopoetic process further involved the fact that Swift's image was also shaped by the popular imagination. Despite his sexual scandals as well as his contradictory relationship with Ireland (as well as with the British settlers) Swift's popularity generated quite early an oral tradition around him that was sometimes completely independent from his biography. Jarrell has mapped this in "'Jack and the Dane': Swift Traditions in Ireland", showing along with the collections of anecdotes "Jack and the Dean", that the Irish Folklore Commission contains a rich collection of Swiftiana made from oral sources.

Among the aspects of Swift's life which seems to attract a major curiosity, giving birth to some of the most rooted legends about him, possibly even more than his mysterious relationships with Stella and Vanessa, is his physical and mental deterioration. Undoubtedly, Swift's health, physical but also mental, had never been particularly good. Since his youth he was affected by what has been known since 1881 as Ménière's disease, a disorder of the inner ear that causes a series of quite debilitating symptoms such as giddiness as well as fluctuating hearing loss with a progressive and ultimately permanent loss of hearing, ringing in the ear (tinnitus) and nausea. Swift himself has provided a sort of mythological explanation. In August 1727 he writes to Lady Henrietta Howard,

> About two hours before you were born, I got my giddiness by eating a hundred golden pippins at a time at Richmond, and, when you were five years and a quarter old, baiting 2 days, I got my deafness, and these two friends, one or other, have visited me, every year since: and being old acquaintances, have now thought fit to come together. (Jonathan Swift to Henrietta Howard, 19/8/1727, Swift 1801, v. 19, 56)

Despite the rather imaginative explanation, it can be easily guessed how frustrating all these symptoms were, and what a strong impact on the mood they could have especially if accompanied by more or less constant ailments such as shingles, gout, weakness, tremors, and in later years loss of memory and eye problems. Once again, the Verses reveal Swift's strong awareness that this could happen:

> See, how the Dean begins to break:
> Poor Gentleman, he droops apace,
> You plainly find it in his Face:
> That old Vertigo in his Head,
> Will never leave him, till he's dead:
> Besides, his Memory decays,
> He recollects not what he says;
> He cannot call his Friends to Mind;
> Forgets the Place where last he din'd:
> Plyes you with Stories o'er and o'er,
> He told them fifty Times before.
> (Swift 1739, vv. 80-90)

Rather than particular clairvoyant powers, this passage seems to testify Swift's long coexistence with his own symptoms and the awareness they would accompany him (constantly worsening) until his death. As Swift himself writes to Pope in 1736: "years and infirmities have quite broken me; I mean that odious continual disorder in my head. I neither read nor write, nor remember, nor converse: all I have left is to walk and ride; the first I can do tolerably; but the latter […] is seldom in my power; and having not an ounce of flesh about me, my skin comes off in ten miles riding, because my skin and bone cannot agree together" (Jonathan Swift to Alexander Pope, 2/12/1736, Swift 1801, v. 14, 177). In his final years in particular, Swift's physical (and consequently mental) conditions worsened until, in 1742, following a sudden decline in his health, he was declared "a person of unsound mind and memory, and not capable of taking care of his person or fortune" (Banks, 90) and a guardian was appointed. The most probable explanation for this is that senile dementia increased his helplessness until his death in 1745. Apparently Swift became affected by aphasia (a striking coincidence with Beckett's own attack of aphasia in his final days): Swift thus was disqualified from any conversation as well as from leaving any written trace in the last three years of his life.

Swift's gradual decline culminating in silence has contributed to the development of many legends on his madness. It is easy to imagine how in the popular imagination Swift's inability to talk to friends could be interpreted as an extreme evolution of his misanthropy. As Scott points out in his introduction to the *Journal to Stella*, "his manners, in his better days, were but slightly tinged with the peculiarities which afterwards marked them more unpleasantly" (Scott in Swift [n.d.], vii). Given the unpleasantness of Swift's behavior combined with his fame, Swift's genius descending into madness was an extremely fascinating topic. Whereas admirers romanticized the image of a great mind which loses his power because it could not bear reality, detractors undoubtedly seemed to gain a certain satisfaction in depicting him as he miserably lost his outrageous wit, his energy, and finally his reason: they considered madness as the right punishment for his sins. One of his earliest biographers, the Earl of Orrery, for instance, provides a vivid description of this process:

> His rage increased absolutely to a degree of madness; in this miserable state he seemed to be appointed as the first proper inhabitant of his hospital, especially as from an outrageous lunatic, he sank afterwards into a quiet speechless idiot, and dragged out the remainder of his life in that helpless state. (Earl of Orrery, 264)

To reinforce these rumors on his mental instability, Swift's choice of donating all his estate to establish a mental hospital was also interpreted in opposite ways: either as a proof of having envisaged his destiny "that he should die a maniac", and thus aiming to build an asylum as his final shelter; or as a further proof of his total lack of human sympathy and thus as a final provocative acts towards his city. As Elizabeth Malcom notes in her history of the St. Patrick Hospital, Swift's choice of erecting a mental asylum was seen as "some kind of sinister joke aimed against the Irish", reading the building of the asylum as a "devastating comment upon the mental capabilities of the Irish nation" (Malcom, 3). This intention seems to be expressed again in the *Verses*, in which the "[l]and of Slaves and Fens; /A servile Race in Folly nurs'd" (Swift 1739, vv. 73-74) is, needless to say, one of the objects of Swift's satirical burst:

> He gave what little wealth he had
> To build a house for fools and mad
> To show by one satiric touch,
> No nation needed it so much.
> (Swift 1739, vv. 479-482)

Along with his poor health, his eccentricities in his private life, the unsettling reasoning of provocative writings such as the *Modest Proposal*, or the *Tale of a Tub*, or *Gulliver's Travels* denote the visceral nature of his satire whose effects, according to Erin Mackie in "Swift and the Mimetic Sickness", "induce through mimicry states of being that are at once mentally dizzying and corporeally sickening" (Mackie, 361). We might add that Swift's writings denote a fascination with madness as a way to challenge logic and reason. As Malcom points out:

> Swift […] demolishes the simple dichotomy of reason versus madness and demonstrated graphically that reason itself, separated from emotions, can become a form of insanity. In an age that set so much store by the concept of reason, this was a highly subversive proposition. (Malcom, 13)

Indeed, what really discomforted his detractors was the ferocity of his satire, such as "His Vein, ironically grave" which "Expos'd the Fool, and lash'd the Knave" in order "To cure the Vices of Mankind" (Swift 1739, vv. 315-317). In this sense, as Malcom notes, "[s]een against the background of his writings" Swift's bequest of his estate to build the St. Patrick Hospital "was eminently logical: for most of his life he had

wrestled with the underlying madness that he saw all about him; his hospital was to continue the same struggle after his death" (Malcom, 16). Malcom's rather empathic explanation seems to confirm the socio-political awareness and acumen displayed by Swift. As Malcom notes, the enterprise was indeed an unprecedented one: "[a] number of hospitals had recently been established in Dublin […], but purpose-built asylums were unknown in Ireland" (Malcom, 30). Moreover, "Swift had specifically conceived his hospital in reaction against the abuses prevailing at Bedlam" (30), the only model available in England at the time, whose miseries Swift had witnessed during his visit in London in 1710 (after which he became one of its governors).

In many ways madness is thus associated with Swift, however this association constantly undergoes transformations through the centuries. As briefly mentioned earlier, Swift's first biographers seem to correspond to those "special friends" who, as Swift predicts in the *Verses*, "[w]ill try to find their private Ends" (Swift 1739, v. 75) making profit of the morbid curiosity around Swift's many mysteries, and, as Kelly notes arousing "the hope that sifting through the wreckage of his remains will reveal secrets about his private life hidden behind the public façade" (Kelly, 128). Even before his death, in 1741, Alexander Pope managed to publish against Swift's will a part of his correspondence in which Swift provides accurate reports of his physical conditions and which are considered the "first glimpses into his private thoughts" which "showed Swift not as dynamic force field, but as a pitiable, tormented old man" (Kelly, 103). Lord Orrery in *Remarks on the life of Dr. Swift* (1751) (quoted above) was the first among Swift's friends accused of exploiting Swift's memory, arranging a coherent narrative of Swift's maladies and speculating on their causes. He was soon followed by Delany, who seems keen to show off a strong intimacy with Swift throughout his biography published in 1754 and who was the first to provide details about the post mortem examination of Swift's brain ("remarkably loaded with water" Delany, 149) originating the enduring fascination with Swift's skull. Finally, there was Deane Swift, who seemed to make good use of his kinship (he was grandson of Swift's uncle), having access to much of Swift's correspondence which he included in his *Essay on the Life, Writings, and Character of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (1755). We can also mention

Samuel Johnson, Matthew Pilkington, and Thomas Sheridan[5], all of whom mixed myth and reality, thus contributing to the legend of the mad Swift.

If most of Swift's early biographers considered Swift responsible for his own faith, nineteenth-century biographers such as Thackeray and Masson became more and more obsessed with Swift's repudiation of God and tended to exaggerate his madness and present it as God's wrath. Thackeray, for instance, was convinced that Swift was possessed by the devil, and suggested that Swift had gone mad during the composition of Book IV of *Gulliver* and that the Yahoos could be interpreted as a signal of Swift's thoughts going drastically askew.

However, this interest in Swift's madness reflects a combination of the cult of personality with the growing scientific curiosity which was characteristic of those years. As noted by Kelly: "Swift's mysteries made readers want to look into his bedroom, sickroom – and finally the grave" (Kelly, 37). Thus, along with Swift's personality, his body became an object of curiosity. His skull, in particular—its shape, its content, its abnormality, became the object of attentive examination (again, this was anticipated by Swift "[f]or when we open'd him we found, /That all his vital Parts were sound", Swift 1739, vv. 175-176). As seen in the previous chapter, the nineteenth century witnessed a growing scientific interest in mental disorders, their classification and treatments, and discussion on degeneration, genius and madness. In the nineteenth century Swift's personality and his supposed madness thus became a much-debated topic even from the medical point of view. Thus in 1835 St Patrick's Cathedral required repair to prevent flooding from the River Poddle, and during this time the coffins of Swift and Esther Johnson (Stella) were opened. Their bones were exhibited as curiosities for ten days before reburial. Following this, Swift's skull became an object of a phrenological examination. However, if on the one hand, 'scientists' had turned their interest in Swift's case in the attempt to find a physical proof for his mental decay, on the other hand, morbid particulars generated even more legends about him.

[5] See Samuel Johnson "Swift" in *Lives of the Poets in Selected Poetry and Prose* (1781); Matthew Pilkington, Poems on Several Occasions… Revised by the Reverend Dr. Swift (1731); and Thomas Sheridan, *The Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's Dublin* (1784).

Ironically though, according to this phrenological analysis, Swift apparently was low in wit and high "amativeness" (or eroticism).

Several biographies reflect the spirit of the time. Sir William Wilde's *The Closing Years of Dean Swift's Life* is exemplary, published in 1849. Wilde based his analysis on Swift's writing more than one century before, in order to draw information on Swift's symptoms, and aimed to provide a detailed medical examination of Swift's case. He relies on the fact that "[t]he very extensive epistolary correspondence of this great man, and his familiar style of writing, as well as the publication of letters which were never intended for the public eye, have greatly assisted us in collecting materials for the history of his malady" (Wilde, 5-6). The limits of this approach are evident, Swift being aware of the fact that his private writings could be the object of public curiosity, and that his tone and content may vary according to the addressees[6]. Moreover, Wilde, trying to dismiss legends on Swift, unavoidably created new ones. However, Wilde's attempt to adopt an objective approach allowed him to throw some light on the mysteries of Swift's life and, even despite inaccuracies, he was the first to get closer to a proper medical diagnosis:

> The vein of peevishness and discontent, partly mental, and partly owing to physical causes, and the ordinary and gradual decay to which flesh is heir, - yet aggravated, no doubt, by the loss of those two most valuable senses by which man holds communication with external nature, - which we perceive in the latter years of Swift's correspondence, is not to be wondered at, although it has been endeavoured to be exaggerated into insanity by Orrery, Delany, Dr. Warton, and others. (Wilde, 35)

Interestingly, Wilde becomes one of the main sources on Swift's biographical details for Joyce. I will come back to this in the next section.

If nineteenth-century biographers didn't show particular sympathy for Swift's sufferings and tended to see his madness as the result of God's punishment for his sins, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Swift gradually became the embodiment of a modern antihero. Characteristic of the twentieth-century fascination for Swift is an interest in the most human (even private) aspects of his life. Two biographical works

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[6] It is worth noticing that an attempt at a posthumous analysis has also been attempted much more recently by Norman O. Brown in 1959, "The excremental Swift" aiming to analyse Swift's writing along Freudian lines (Malcom, 2).

published in the first decades of the twentieth century, in which Swift is presented as the prototype of the modern man who could not endure others, but who nonetheless chose to live heroically are particularly relevant. The first is *The Skull of Swift* by Shane Leslie (an important figure in the reception of James Joyce too), published by Chatto and Windus in 1928, in which Swift is depicted as a sort of Promethean figure who "brought the irony of the gods with him to earth and used it to the dread and diversion of his fellow-men" (Leslie, 4). The other biography is by Mario Rossi and Joseph Hone, published in 1934, *Swift or the Egotist,* in which we read: *"*This is Swift and ever shall be, rising alone in the midst of the wreckage he wrought about himself, severed from all solidarity with his fellow-men, good or evil; as the light falls. But he himself is deeper than good and evil" (Rossi and Hone, 43-44). Beckett collaborated with Rossi and Hone in the early 1930s, so it might be that Joyce was also aware of this book.

More generally, as stressed by Mahony, the twentieth century witnessed the international flowering of Swift studies independent from the Irish context (Mahony, 140-141). Even the Surrealists considered Swift as one of their precursors, enlisting his name in their manifesto in the 1920s; and in 1934 Breton declares him a "surrealist in malice" (Breton 1934, web). However, on the other hand, Swift's significance in Ireland, even as its political currency had begun to fade in the 1920s, with its effective service to nationalism completed, "began to acquire significance in the Irish literary culture" (Mahony, 141). In this sense exemplary is Yeats' case who dedicated to Swift what Mahony sees as "one of his less nationalist plays", *The Words upon the Window Pane* in which the theory of Swift's "dread of madness" (Yeats 1931, 17) passed on to his descendant becomes quite central, as we will see in the final section of this chapter devoted to Beckett.

Joyce and Beckett thus must not be considered isolated cases in their interest in Swift both at a national and international level (although as we will see each one will be more sensitive to certain Swiftian peculiarities). And despite Beckett's claim that "Joyce loathed Swift" (see Ellmann's notes of his interview with Samuel Beckett, 28 July 1953, TULSA collection) it seems quite likely that they discussed the man and his work in the first period of their acquaintance, considering Joyce's Swiftian additions to *Work in Progress* added at the time of his collaboration with Beckett (in 1929, he was among

those people who were helping Joyce with the revisions of the instalment for *transition* 15 that would contain part of what is now III.3).

As shown by Frederik Smith in *Beckett's Eighteenth Century*, it is at the beginning of the 1930s that Beckett undertook a close and extended reading of Swift (Smith, 10 and ff). This particular interaction will emerge more clearly in the next two sections, in which I will outline Joyce's and Beckett's particular responses to Swift and his multiple connections with madness.

"Perhaps it is insanity" - Joyce's Fragment on Swift

Despite the frequent associations that have been made by critics between Joyce and Swift[7], Joyce's response to Swift is not so obvious and to an extent, as it will emerge in this section, it undergoes an evolution which can be traced in his writings. In "Joyce and Swift – A Likely Pair", Joseph McMinn traces the progressive growth of Joyce's interest in Swift and his engagement with Swift in his work, from the early dismissive comments about Swift in his correspondence, to the crucial structural importance Swift gains in the *Wake*. Although, as Benstock rightly wonders, "[i]t is actually rather odd that Joyce came by his inheritance so late in his career, that the Swift who developed into a major contributor to *Finnegans Wake* [...] had remained relatively ignored for so long" (Benstock B., 21), McMinn finds a possible explanation in Joyce's youthful iconoclastic attitude, expressed in one of his letters to his brother Stanislaus: "I am very pleased with your admiration for Swift. I suppose I shall get interested in him some day. But I prefer people who are alive" (JJ to Stanislaus Joyce, 13/11/1906, *JJL II*, 193). As McMinn notes, Joyce's early comment on Swift denotes "the mind of an artist who

[7] See L.A.G Strong's *The Sacred River*, Wilson's *The Wound and the Bow*, Levin's *James Joyce*, Atherton's *The Books at the Wake,* and Jarrell's different essays on Joyce and Swift. As already noted by McMinn, in "A likely pair: Joyce and Swift", Mackie Jarrell in "Swiftiana in *Finnegans Wake*" makes a valuable distinction between different kinds of Swiftian influence upon Joyce, including, "that which can be identified as allusion or quotation, and the much looser sense of a Swiftian 'feel' about the style. Jarrell also questions the accuracy of Stuart Gilbert's remarks on this topic: Gilbert, friend and translator of Joyce, often invoked what he called 'the manner of Swift' in commenting upon Joyce's style and sources in *Ulysses*, for example, seeing Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* as the source for Joyce's Irish bull passage in 'Oxen of the Sun', or identifying Swift's scatological fictions as the inspiration for some of the more scabrous episodes in *Ulysses*. This metaphoric use of the term 'Swiftian', a generalised sign for madness and unnatural obsession, is rejected by Jarrell as inexact, unhelpful and negative in its effects. Another example which could be added is offered by Wells whose opinion Joyce so much respected but who nonetheless spoke of a "cloacal obsession" shared by Joyce and Swift only by virtue of their Irishness" (McMinn, 31).

refuses to rule out any literary influence on the anticipated road to artistic maturity. At this stage, it seems that Joyce's sense of contributing to 'modern' writing required a disavowal of traditional literary heroes, and a studied preference for contemporary ones" (McMinn, 29). An attitude very different from Beckett as we will see. In accordance with the general feelings towards Swift, Joyce's sentiments also appear rather mixed. Contrary to the spirit of his letter to Stanislaus, in 1913 Joyce included Swift as one of several writers in the illustrative material for two of three lectures on Irish literary history which he gave in the following year at the Università Popolare in Trieste, 'Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages', approving "his satire sharing first place with Rabelais in world literature" (Joyce *CW*, 123). Yet on the other hand, as mentioned above, Beckett in his interview with Ellman laconically states that "Joyce loathed Swift" and according to Padraic Colum, Joyce thought Swift responsible for making "a mess of two women's lives" (Colum P. and M., 148), namely the two Esthers, Stella and Vanessa.

This ambivalence seems to be in line with the general reception of Swift, as Joyce seems at once to acknowledge undoubtedly the value of the writer and of the public figure, but adopts a judgemental tone when it comes to Swift's most private sphere, as if Joyce himself were not immune from the pleasure of diminishing with gossip what was perceived as a larger-than-life presence in the Irish tradition. However, it is a fact that, unlike Beckett, who as we will see in the next section would turn his attention to Swift quite early in his literary career, Joyce's engagement with Swift's life and work becomes manifest only in *Ulysses*, with few but quite significant appearances, and then gains particular importance in the Wake, with Swift becoming a pervasive and multiple presence.

As shown by Mackie Jarrell, Joyce draws from Swift's *Polite Conversation* much material for "Circe", and her "comparison of the two shows that Joyce knew Swift extraordinarily well or, more probably, was writing with *Polite Conversation* open before him, since he uses at least twenty of Swift's proverbs" (Jarrell 1957, 546). Much more relevant to our discourse on madness, however, is the uncanny apparition of Swift's ghost in "Proteus". McMinn illustrates Joyce's choice after a decade to re-elaborate a passage from *Stephen Hero*, whose apparition of Joachim Abbas was a reflection of Stephen's obsession with Yeats' "The Tables of the Law" which he knows

by heart and in which he discovers Abbas. However, in "Proteus", Stephen seems to dismiss his former interest in Joachim, and instead of Yeats, Stephen's thoughts are now associated with Swift:

> Come out of them, Stephen. Beauty is not there. Nor in the stagnant bay of Marsh's library where you read the fading prophecies of Joachim Abbas. For whom? The hundred headed rabble of the cathedral close. A hater of his kind ran from them to the wood of madness, his mane foaming in the moon, his eyeballs stars. Houyhnhnm, horsenostrilled. The oval equine faces. Temple, Buck Mulligan, Foxy Campbell. Lantern jaws. Abbas father, furious dean, what offence laid fire to their brains? Paff! *Descende, calve, ut ne amplius decalveris*. A garland of grey hair on his comminated head see him clambering down to the footpace *(descend!),* clutching a monstrance, basiliskeyed. (*U* 33.105-116)

Swift is thus depicted as "descending" into a fierce and almost savage madness induced by hate for mankind (rather different from the depiction of a powerless dean in the *Wake* as "fast aslooped in the entrance to his poltronchair" *FW* 423.6). The passage reveals a first identification with Swift and to an extent anticipates some elements of the fragment "Twilight of Blindness Madness Descending on Swift" which I will analyse soon. This identification seems confirmed by an even more direct projection of Stephen into Swift a few lines below, as Stephen (who once had clerical aspirations) imagines his future self as Swift/the priest and concludes murmuring to himself, "[h]e would never be a saint", echoing Dryden's remark to Swift "Cousin, you will never be a poet". As McMinn suggests,

> Stephen chooses to imagine a notorious version of the Dean, a writer who, like his creation Gulliver, revolts against his own species and, Proteus-like, assumes the fantastical shape of his fictional beasts. Swift's legendary madness and misanthropy clearly commend themselves to the gloomy mood of the young teacher, surrounded by treacherous friends and uncomprehending pupils (McMinn, 30).

The association with Swift is thus an anticipation of a "great future", as McMinn sees it, which at once implies fame and celebrity, but also the darkest sides these medals involve. However, it is worth noticing that the identification of Stephen with Swift takes place in *Ulysses* and not in *Portrait* (Joyce was not ready to deal with him). As Stuart Gilbert notes, commenting on this Swiftian passage in *Ulysses*, "Stephen *once* aspired to write "deep" books, epiphanies, manifestations of himself" (Gilbert 1955,

123, my italics) and this seemed to be the Stephen of *Portrait.* But "now", in *Ulysses*, a certain distance has emerged with his alter-ego so that he can establish an association with Swift which seems to be tinged by ironic detachment towards his younger alter-ego – not too dissimilar to what Beckett does from the beginning with Belacqua, in this sense, who like Stephen is also an exiled, aspiring poet, with a conflicting relationship with Ireland and an inclination to witty superior detachment from the mass and great ambitions.

In the *Wake*, Swift's presence is much more pervasive. Often associated with Sterne (their names according to Joyce should be swapped), as shown by Atherton in *The Books at the Wake*, Swift in the *Wake* is nonetheless characterised by a "trinitarian nature", at once human and divine (Atherton, 115). Each male character seems to be associated with one aspect of Swift's identity: Shem as the Drapier, "O'Shem the Draper" (*FW* 421.25), author of "the Crazier Letters" (*FW* 104.14), Shaun as the dean, "Itch Dean!" (*FW* 485.3), part of a "ruridecanal caste" (*FW* 484.29-30), as well as the hypocritical "westminstrel Jaunathaun" (*FW* 452.9) lecturing the girls. The most human side of Swift is associated with HCE, as he stands in the *Wake* for the old man (with all his infirmities) with his child lovers, Stella and Vanessa, who usually appear together in the *Wake* as sisters and rivals in association with Issy and her sisters. Joyce's disapproval of Swift's behavior here should not sound too contradictory, as Swift perfectly serves the construction of the notorious reputation of HCE and the ultimately mysterious nature of his crime. Thus, references to Swift throughout the *Wake* do abound, and Mackie Jarrell's "Swiftiana in *Finnegans Wake*" along with the substantial integrations of Broes' "Swift the Man in *Finnegans Wake*" are useful tools in order to detect many of them.

In this section, however, although I will necessarily refer to Swift's presence in the *Wake*, my aim will be to illustrate Joyce's attempt to textualise his own personal experience with illness through the analysis of a very particular piece of writing, namely the fragment "Twilight of Blindness Madness Descends on Swift", written in October 1928, in a particularly critical moment in Joyce's life. As seen in the previous chapter, although just one year earlier Joyce had managed to find among the *transition* circle some of his greatest supporters, however, since 1926 writer's block had become quite regular. Book II was stalled and he had no new sketches. 1928 was characterised

until its end by growing concerns about his work, and despite the enthusiasm for the serial publication in *transition* and the strong support of Jolas and his circle, the reception of *Work in Progress* was constantly accompanied by sceptical responses, even from people close to Joyce such as Ezra Pound, his patron Harriet Shaw Weaver and even his brother Stanislaus. Furthermore, apart from a few exceptions, such as Wyndham Lewis' attack with his essay "The Revolutionary Simpleton", which appeared in *The Enemy* 1927 and fuelled Joyce's inspiration, negative criticism generally had a devastating effect on Joyce's spirit.

Moreover, since the very beginning of the composition of *Work in Progress* in the early 1920s, regular intrusive eye surgeries had severely limited Joyce's reading and writing processes, not to mention the terrible consequences on what Joyce calls his "nerves" repeatedly in his correspondence, possibly made even worse by the side effects of the medications he had to take (i.e. arsenic, phosphour, and laudanum). These personal experiences affected (and are reflected in) Joyce's final work: the seventeen years of gestation of *Finnegans Wake* were constantly punctuated by prolonged periods of inactivity due to the bad conditions of Joyce's eyes as well as to his "nervous breakdowns", accompanied by Joyce's claims of being unable to complete his work. Nonetheless, Joyce usually managed to overcome these critical moments by focusing on his work, at once cause of and remedy to his pains.

By the end of 1928 the situation was aggravated by the suspicion of Nora having cancer and a series of eye surgeries which left Joyce blind for weeks, causing him of course extreme mental distress, which led him to one of the most serious creative blocks during the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, which lasted until 1931. In the last months of 1928 Joyce was not even able to work at the revisions for the *transition* instalments (nothing was published between *transition* 13, July 1928, and 15, February 1929), as shown in the following letter to Valery Larbaud dictated on the 7th of October 1928, just two weeks before the composition of the Swift fragment. Joyce depicts his condition as particularly critical:

> Dear Larbaud,
>
> Suppose Miss Beach told you about my collapse. I cannot see a single word of print and of course dreadfully nervous on account of it. They are giving me injections of arsenic and phosphorous but even after three weeks of it I have about as much strength as a

> kitten and my vision remains stationary that is in the dusk with the light behind it. They examined 'all the internal organs of the beast' and his blood pressure and found everything normal except his nerves. Apparently I have completely overworked myself and if I don't get back sight to read it is all U.P. up. (JJ to Larbaud, 7/10/1928, *JJL III*, 182)

The letter reveals a sort of interdependence between Joyce's physical conditions and the development of his work: no matter how worn out by his writing Joyce admits to be, writing seems to have a crucial importance from a psychological point of view. Joyce has to gain sight and energy in order to progress with his work, and in doing so he seems to constantly test his own physical limits - a stoicism, and /or a will to arise/resurrect (to sight, in particular – which is of course a theme of the *Wake*). As argued by John Nash in his *James Joyce and the Act of Reception, Finnegans Wake* "implies a particular mode of exhaustion; not only of readers and of materials, but also the writer's personal exhaustion" which nonetheless is "the restless point which ensures renewal, of self, of writing" (Nash, 123). Indeed, as I will try to show, the fragment on Swift seems to perfectly exemplify this process.

The fragment is in Joyce's words "the only thing I have written in the last four months" (JJ to Weaver, 28/10/1928, *JJL I*, 273). It was enclosed in a letter to Weaver but interestingly it never became part of *Finnegans Wake,* although it was published as a fragment in *Le Navire d'Argent, a* review edited by Valery Larbaud, and Robert McAlmon in his contribution to *Our Exagmination*, "Mr Joyce directs an Irish words ballet", refers to it as if it were already part of *Work in Progress,* devoting to it a quite detailed analysis (*Our Exagmination*, 109-110). Placed at the border between public and private writing, this fragment represents a very peculiar example of Joyce's self-writing (at once Wakean and not). Written in a particular moment in the composition, it reflects his attempt to react to his own physical and psychological sufferings through writing and through the figure of Swift in particular, whose reputation, as seen in the previous section, has gained through the centuries an almost mythical connotation and whose physical sufferings as well as his supposed madness continued to attract a morbid curiosity even at the beginning of the twentieth century.

But let's now have a close look at the fragment, one of whose main characteristics is that of being accompanied by a glossary, which Joyce defines as "just forty seven times as long as the text" (*JJL I*, 273), provided by him with Stuart Gilbert's help:

> TWILIGHT OF BLINDNESS MADNESS DESCENDS ON SWIFT
>
> Unslow, malswift, pro mean, proh noblesse, Atrahora, Melancolores, nears; whose glaque eyes glitt bedimmd to imm! whose fingrings creep o'er skull: till qwench! asterr mist calls estarr and grauwl honath Jon raves homes glowcoma.
>
> Glossary:
> Burmese-
> Nyi-ako-mah-thi-ta-thi= twilight
> literally, (the time when) younger brother (meets) elder brother, does not recognise him but yet recognises him.
> Unslow = inevitably
> pro mean) = (h)ora pro me, nobis)
> pro noblesse) pro, proh, two Latin forms, usual and unusual, mean and noble
> Atrahora = (Latin) black hour, c.f. Horace - post equitem sedet atra cura, black care sits behind the horseman
> Melancolores = (Greek, Latin, Spanish ending) black, colour, sorrow
> glauque = (Greek, French) owl-sighted, green
> glitt = glimpses of reason or sight
> bedimm, etc = bedamned, etc
> fingrings = little circles made by fingers touching head, incipient dementia
> creep o'er skull = crepuscule
> qwench, etc = one star (Stella) in being quenched, name calls another (wench), (Vanessa)
> mist calls = call wrongly, call through the mist, call an opprobrious name (mist, German for dirt)
> asterr = (Greek) a star
> estarr = (German) Blindness. Green starr= glaucoma. Graue starr= cataract= grey. Schwarz starr (black)= dissolution of the retina.
> asterr) = Esther (Johnston), Hester (Vanhomrigh)
> estarr)
> grauw = (German, Irish) onomatopoetic? grey, love, cold
> raves = delirium, dream (French)
> homes = those of Stella and Vanessa

glowcoma = fireside and repose, glaucoma
(*JJL I*, 273)

The first entry of the glossary provides the Burmese translation of 'Twilight", Nyi-ako-mah-thi-ta-thi, and it is quite interesting that the translation is not part of the main text but it is used instead in the glossary to add meaning to a rather plain English word such as "twilight", which definitely does not involve any sibling relationship nor their process of recognition. McMinn reads this fragment as a proof of sympathy and a sort of fraternal respect for Swift as the ageing genius (McMinn, 32). Yet a sense of fraternal relations does not necessarily imply sympathy. More than fraternal sympathy and respect it seems to suggest an almost unavoidable identification as a consequence of Joyce's own physical decay. As seen earlier, Joyce's feelings towards Swift were rather ambivalent. Moreover, in the *Wake* Joyce's and Swift's different illnesses, blindness and deafness, are generally associated with the two brothers, the blind Shem who has "light ears yet he could but ill see" (*FW* 158.13) and Shaun, who, by contrast, had "sound eyes right but he could not all hear" (*FW* 158.12). The relationship between the two brothers in the *Wake* is far from sympathetic as shown for instance by this passage from I.7 in which Shaun, at the end of his invective against his brother in I.7, is mocking Shem for complaining about his pains: "(O Jonathan, your estomach!) The simian has no sentiment secretions but weep cataracts for all me, Pain the Shamman!" (*FW* 192.21-23); this is also an example of how Swift is evoked in the *Wake* by means of one of his numerous illnesses, in this case affecting the stomach.

This association with Swift in terms of siblings (with the relatively only partial recognition between two) seems to suggest an acknowledgement of their points of resemblance (their lives, their suffering) but at the same time a refusal of a complete identification. In this fragment Joyce is projecting himself, or rather his illness, upon an Irish writer with whom he had many points of contact but who is other than him, possibly in the attempt to sublimate, or even neutralise, his sufferings through writing, reshaping them through the image of Swift's legendary madness.

The fragment hints at some significant analogies between the two writers. According to the glossary, "Atrahora" refers to a famous passage from Horace's *Odes*, namely "post equitem sedet atra cura" (Horace 2002, 3, 1, 40): "black care sits behind the horseman". Here Joyce seems to allude to a painful discipline to which he has to adhere in order to

complete his work, which, in a constant oscillation between meanness or poverty and noblesse ("pro mean, proh noblesse"), would bring him fame but which also assured him material struggle. In his correspondence, Joyce often describes himself as being exhausted by several consecutive hours of overworking which nonetheless never seemed to be enough. Moreover, as described in this letter to Weaver, written a few weeks after the composition of the fragment, Joyce had to rely on others for dictation and proofreading:

> As regards myself I cannot yet read or write anything except books for infants but I am, with some difficulties, trying to follow a pilocarpin cure which is supposed to restore some kind of vision at some period in the future. Nevertheless I had them retype in legal size, twice or three times this, when it has been read to me by three or four people, I shall try to memorise as to pages etc (there are nearly hundred) and so hope to be able to find the places where I can insert from the twenty notebooks which have filled up since I wrote this section. The notebooks, written when I was suffering from my eyes or lately are quite legible to me as they are scribbled with thick black pencil, but the other ones, about thirteen, I am relying on my improved sight to help over. (JJ to Weaver, 2/12/1928; *JJL I*, 276)

As proven by this letter, Joyce's condition required help, human prostheses – this is a large theme in the *Wake*, given that Shem takes from his mother's dictation in one version of his own letter. The black care is thus for Joyce the daily physical and mental effort his writing process imposed on him in order to reach results which the mysterious Vladimir Dixon describes in his letter as "almost supper-humane" ("A Litter to Mr. James Joyce", *Our Exagmination*, 193). Joyce's writing, and his last work in particular, indeed evokes a rather romantic image of the writer as an almighty god/creator and often makes us readers wonder whether *Finnegans Wake* can possibly be the product of a single mind. With a glimpse into Joyce's compositional process, it becomes evident that Joyce's was a single mind which required multiple bodies in order to operate.[8]

In Swift's case, the continuous effort to improve his poor physical and mental health, as shown by his correspondence, is mainly focused on physical exercise and dietary restrictions. But, more generally, Swift's private writings reveal an identity he generally

[8] It is thus very interesting that Beckett, one of Joyce's closest collaborators, was the one who has contributed most to creation of the myth of Joyce's omnipotence while at the same time making the physical decay and bodily limitation crucial elements of his aesthetic.

tried to suppress in his public writings (i.e. the private language of the *Journal to Stella* as well as his accurate report of his physical conditions in his letters to Pope which, as mentioned earlier, were published against Swift's will). A clear split has thus emerged between the extremely fragile private man and Swift's multiple public identities – such as the brave Drapier and the conscientious Dean. Joyce was definitely aware of this since, as seen earlier, he clearly associates Shem with the Drapier, Shaun with the Dean, and HCE with the man, in what Atherton sees as a sort of hypostatic "paradigm of a god": different identities which Swift himself during his life and through his writings created as part of a process of self-mythicalisation.[9]

Speculation and gossip are unavoidable consequences of fame and in both Joyce's and Swift's case often had to do with their supposed madness. The fragment also seems to hint at what, by 1928, had become an almost paranoid obsession with the idea of being considered mad, suggested by "fingrings", as noted in the glossary "little circles made by fingers touching head, incipient dementia" - which can be read as a symptom of dementia but it is also a gesture usually made by the "sane" to indicate someone else's madness. These insinuations, as the fragment suggest, "creep over the skull" gripping Joyce's mind with obsessive thoughts. The fragment thus reflects Joyce's obsession, at once paranoid and narcissistic, with what people say about him, to which Joyce's attention has always been inclined even before the beginning of the composition of *Work in Progress*, as seen in the previous chapter. But he also seems to hint here at the morbid curiosity for Swift's body, more specifically for his skull, as in fact as we have seen phrenologists had been "creeping over" Swift's skull, trying to find signs of degeneration ante-literam which could explain his madness.

Joyce thus makes use of gossip about Swift's life but, at the same time he seems to note that fear of being talked about is paranoia – a sign and/or a cause of madness; and he then identifies himself with Swift as someone being judged. As seen in the previous chapter, Joyce, to a certain extent, seemed to enjoy such misinformation about him, as a proof of interest for his personality as well as for his work. He had also managed to react to negative criticism through its incorporation into its writing, defined by Nash as a "writing of reception" (Nash, 3) and by Fordham as a "writing of rejection" (Fordham

[9] Joyce seems to push the discourse of multiple personalities and Swift even further as the letter "self-penned to one another", as suggested by Atherton might also be an allusion to the rumour of Swift being the author of Stella's letters, see previous section. (Atherton, 116)

2010, 218). Finally, as seen earlier, he had shaped his alter ego Shem with strong, provocative, degenerate characteristics. However, Ellmann includes in his account of 1927-1929 a selection of excerpts from Joyce's correspondence which clearly show how 'madness' had become a word which Joyce himself used frequently in his correspondence in relation to his work. Ellmann's intention here seems to be to create his own mythical construction of Joyce as the misunderstood genius, but in fact he reveals Joyce's rather narcissistic contempt towards his critics, unable to understand something which will be only appreciated by future generations. Many of Joyce's remarks at this time reveal this tendency: as for instance the ones reported in Ellmann's biography, "[p]erhaps it is insanity. One will be able to judge in one century" and "[t]he one thing which permits to accomplish anything is Blake's idea: if the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise" (Ellmann, 590); or the one reported by McAlmon, according to whom Joyce once told him "Miss Weaver says she finds me a madman. Tell me frankly McAlmon. No man can say for himself" (McAlmon 1968, 251); and Jacques Mercanton's account "The one thing which permits me to accomplish anything is Blake's idea: If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise" (Mercanton quoted in Ellmann, 590); to which we could add Joyce's own remarks about himself and his work: for instance, when in the same letter to Weaver in which the fragment was enclosed, Joyce comments about "having some congenital imbecility in my character" (JJ to Weaver, 23/10/1928, *JJL I*, 273); or when he states that "[e]ither the end of Part I A [ALP] is something or I am an imbecile in my judgement of language" (JJ to Weaver 1/2/1927, *JJSL*, 318). Similarly to Joyce's personal association to Swift in the fragment, these excerpts from Joyce's correspondence at once reveal a rather paranoid tendency but they also allude to a fame which will last over the centuries: possibly Joyce was envisaging for himself a future in which his own supposed madness, like Swift would become a topic with strong appeal subject to different interpretations. As seen earlier, Swift's detractors and admirers had both contributed to feed this legend during his life as well as after his death. Joyce was almost certainly aware of the *The Skull of Swift*, by Leslie Stephen, who was also the author of two rather bitter reviews of *Ulysses* in *The Quarterly Review* and *Dublin Review* in which Joyce was first depicted as a catholic renegade and then as an outsider (see Nash, 107). Joyce took great interest in these two reviews and most probably the irony of seeing Swift depicted as a Titan by the same person who depicted him as an outcast did not escape him.

However, Joyce seemed quite familiar with various biographical works on Swift. Broes in "Swift the Man" has shown how Joyce makes extensive use of Swift's brief autobiographical fragment contained in his *Miscellaneous and Autobiographical Pieces, Fragments and Marginalia*, which he took up only to his thirtieth year for information on the first half of his life. He also might have found information in Leslie Stephen's *The Skull of Swift* and Swift's correspondence (especially the *Journal to Stella*) for Swift's early adulthood. However, as Broes notes, "[d]espite the many references in the *Wake* to Swift's early or middle years, Joyce devotes much more attention to the concluding portion of his life, focusing particularly on the declining Dean's many infirmities" (Broes, 124) and of these none is treated more extensively than Swift's deafness, which becomes a major theme in the *Wake*. In this sense, the most prominent source for Joyce becomes William Wilde's *Closing Years in the Life of Dean Swift* (1849). Joyce picked Wilde's work as the primary source for particulars about Swift's life and illness as well as the account of the post-mortem and the exhumation or the early medical analysis of Swift's ailment which he could not have found elsewhere. As shown by Jarrell in "Swiftiana in *Finnegans Wake*" these included "such minor items as the attempts of Swift's friends to persuade him "to go to Spa or Bath" ("spa mad but inn sane") and to be trepanned ("if old Deanns won't be threaspanning")" (Jarrell 1959, 276). Along with his son Oscar, even William Wilde is often referred to in the *Wake* in association with HCE because of the sexual scandal and consequent trial which followed Mary Josephine Traver's accusations of sexual assault (compare with Glasheen 1975*,* 307). Probably Joyce was curious to see what he could have possibly to say on such a controversial figure as Swift whose sexual scandals are also rather emblematic. However, among the numerous biographical works on Swift, Joyce found in the work of a medical author and surgeon such as Wilde several images to feed his text with, starting from the very origin of Swift's illness: the fits of giddiness and consequently deafness which, according to Swift's own account reported by Wilde began with his "eating hundred golden pippins at a time" (Wilde, 6). Or there is Swift's prediction of his own death: namely that he would die as an elm dying from the head (Wilde, 28), another major image associated to Swift in the *Wake*, for which Wilde provides extremely rational explanations but which nonetheless feed the mythological texture of the Wake, as for instance in the following passages: "That you could fell an elmstree" (*FW* 25.30); "The elm that whimpers at the top" (*FW* 64.4-5); Tame Schwipps [...]You know bigtree are all against gravestone [...] Garnd ond mand" (*FW*

146.11); “I feel as old as yonder elm” (*FW* 215.34). Even in III.3 after the accusation of “Ibsenest nansance”, HCE is associated at once with Oscar Wilde and Swift:

- Is that yu, *Whitehed*?
- Have you *headnoise* now?
- Give us your *mespilt reception*, will yous?
- Pass the fish for Christ’s sake!
- *Old Whitehowth* he is speaking again. *Ope Eustace tube*! Pity poor *whiteoath*!... *Tell the woyld I have lived true thousand hell*s. Pity, please, lady for poor *O.W. in this profundust snobbing I have caught.* (*FW* 535. 23-30; my italics)

As shown in “Swiftiana in Finnegans Wake” both Martha Whiteway, who cared for Swift in his last years, and Howth, the Danish name, meaning head, for Ben Edar, are played with in “Whitehed”, “Old White-howth”, and “whiteoath” (Jarrell 1959, 276). But in the very same lines, we also find allusion to “headnoise” – which definitely recalls one of the symptoms of the Ménière’s disease lamented by Swift, as well as the “mesplit reception” and the “true thousand hells” which, for different reasons, Wilde (both father and son) and Swift both experienced during their lives. Incidentally, regarding Howth – which according to the Wakean topography is the head of the sleeping giant – it is from Wilde that Joyce could have learned that Swift’s first severe fit of giddiness took place during a horse ride to Howth Castle, “which obliged him to lie down for two hours before he was able to proceed into town” (the anecdote seems to suggest a sort of fractal image of Finnegan, the sleeping giant, containing Swift himself).

Joyce found in Wilde’s the *Closing Years* even the cause of Swift’s death revealed by the posthumous trepanning of the skull, namely, “hydrocephalous enlargement” or more commonly, water in the head, which left Swift silent and sleepy for the last months of his life. In the *Wake,* HCE is affected by “howdrocephalous enlargement” (*FW* 310.6). Fordham argues that in the passage in II.3, in which HCE is turned into a radio, and in which the sense of paranoia becomes crucial, that “the psychic instability of Joyce’s condition has a correlative here in the physical diagnosis of HCE, with a ‘howdrocephalous enlargement’, water in the brain: Joyce’s brain dangerously enlarged, as it were, by the watery project of writing *Finnegans Wake*” (Fordham 1995, 194). As in the fragment, Swift’s and Joyce’s own physical and psychological

symptoms here blend into each other. Fordham refers to Joyce's own symptoms here, as he himself later in 1935 experienced auditory hallucinations. It is also worth noticing that in 1928 the *Observer* issued an unfavourable review by Gerald Gould of ALP stating that "It looks as if he had a spelling-bee in his bonnet, and had got confused by the buzz …. The only water it all suggests to me," he wrote, "is water on the brain" (Gould, 7). However, in a passage in which deafness, gossip and paranoid states are so crucial, Joyce had definitely a Swiftian parallel in mind, which seems to be confirmed also by the "Ligue of Yahooth" mentioned few lines below the passage.

As seen earlier, Wilde's main aim in his *Closing Years* is to prove that only by the very end of his life was Swift affected by senile decay and physical symptoms which were not to be confused with madness. Joyce seems to allude to this interpretation in the fragment with the reference to "incipient dementia", namely deterioration of the brain and body with which he glosses the word "fingrings" but also with the title itself, with its close juxtaposition of "blindness" and "madness". A physical reason for madness is also what Joyce will try to find for his daughter Lucia's illness, refusing psychoanalysis for many years and opting instead for more organic, physical treatments. Wilde's approach to illness was thus one to which Joyce was rather inclined and it is rather paradoxical that, as seen in the letter to Larbaud quoted at the beginning of the chapter, Borsch, Joyce's doctor, at the time of the composition of the fragment was trying to convince Joyce that there was nothing wrong with his vital organs and that the cause of his ailments was to be found in his "nerves".

According to Wilde, thus, Swift's madness was the result of his malfunctioning body. But, interestingly, there is no trace of Swift's characteristic physical symptoms in the fragment (deafness and giddiness, which are constantly alluded to in the *Wake*), which are replaced instead with Joyce's own, as shown by all multiple allusions to the three stages of blindness: "the damned trilogy of colours" (JJ to Weaver, 23/10/1928, *JJL I*, 273): green for glaucoma, grey for cataracts, and black for the dissolution of the retina. There is also his use of the German word for blindness, "estarr", which contains both Hester (Johnson and Vanhomrigh) and Star, Stella; "melancolores", at once the last stage of blindness but also sorrow; and "glowcoma", which in the glossary is associated with "fireside and repose", possibly the lack of consciousness (coma) being seen as the end of sorrows.

McAlmon (probably under Joyce's own guidance, intent as he was to build up his own mythical identity) in his "Mr Joyce directs an Irish words ballet" (1929) suggests that Joyce has managed here to depersonalise his emotions through language:

> In the above quoted passage the emotional impact of its meaning could be the painful record of a subconscious quivering with terrors as in a night crise, but by using the English language only as a basis, while weaving in classic mythology, German, Latin, and French, words or rhythms, he has managed to depersonalise his emotions and situations sufficiently to take the raw quivering of a suffering spirit out of the passage. (*Our Exagmination*,110)

It is fascinating that McAlmon perceives depersonalisation as an effect of weaving other languages in, as if the suffering spirit were thus extracted, and definitely Joyce might have guided McAlmon, and lured him away from the 'personal' reading. But I would argue instead that one of the most interesting aspects of this fragment is in fact how far it is from the doctrine of impersonality, letting the "suffering spirit" quiver, through language, in front of our eyes, thus reaching in fact a moment of intense personalization. It gets inside Swift's experience (personalising him) while at the same time patently inserting the author's self into Swift (projecting a personal expression of the author). By contrast in the *Wake* Swift the man is usually evoked by means of his own physical symptoms, deafness and vertigo in particular.

We might wonder whether the fragment was ever meant to become part of the *Wake*. Yet it is so Wakean in its style, while McAlmon speaks of it as if it is already part of *Work in Progress*, and Gilbert mentions that Joyce "was particularly pleased by it, and moved by it" (*JJL I*, 273). Possibly Joyce simply didn't find any sequence into which the fragment could easily slip; or it could be perhaps a parody of the Wakean style, and another possible aspect to consider is its massive self-pitying function – a bid for money and pity, or even just a way of malingering with Weaver, to whom the fragment is addressed. At the time of the composition of the fragment, Joyce was desperately trying to get Weaver engaged with his work. In order to overcome her skepticism, he had already asked her to "order a piece" in 1926 then to guess the title. Indeed, he had already sent her other fragments with glossaries, as Ellmann suggests, "to make her not only a reader but an accomplice in the perpetration of *Finnegans Wake*" (Ellmann, 581), possibly because he was afraid she wouldn't invest in him anymore (something which

was definitely another cause of mental distress for him). In this sense, Lidderdale's and Nicholson's account of the relationship between Joyce and Weaver at the beginning of 1928 in *Dear Miss Weaver* is rather amusing, as it seems to suggest that Weaver was inclined to give Joyce money as long as he did not try to involve her in his work:

> It seemed that Mr Joyce's state of mind could never be restored so long as she was in any way associated with his current work; and that the only hope of avoiding a break with the Joyce family … lay in establishing her right to keep her thoughts to herself. She decided she must persuade him to stop asking her opinion, and convince him at the same time that he could always depend, whatever he wrote, on her support and regard. (Lidderdale and Nicholson, 276)

Nonetheless, Joyce didn't give up, as proven by another letter to Weaver dictated on the 20th September 1928, few weeks before the composition of the fragment, in which again Joyce seems to play with the triangulation: physical illness, madness, and development of his work; and which can be read as a bid of sympathy for himself as well as for his work:

> The complete eclipse of my seeing faculties so kindly predicted by A.M.'s young friend from Oxford, the ghost of Banquet [sic], *I am warding off by dressing in the three colours of successive stages of cecity as the Germans divide them*; namely, green Starr; that is, green blindness, or glaucoma; grey Starr; that is, cataract, and black star, that is dissolution of the retina. This therefore forms a nocturnal tricolour connected by one common color; green, with Shaun's national flag of peas, rice, egg yolk. The grey of evening balancing the gold of morning and the black of something balancing the white of something else, the egg probably. […] It was rather amusing to dictate [the letter] because my mind has been a stupid blank for weeks and I have the vapors; or the languors or something of that kind. So I hope it will amuse you though I really am not in such a good humour as you might suppose from the few damp squibs of humour contained herein. (JJ to Weaver, 20/9/1928, *JJ LI*, 269; my italics)

Note here the reference to the three stages of blindness. But unlike the fragment, the trilogy of colours is here connected with clothes, as also seems to happen in III.2, in the passage which evokes the tenth station of the Via Crucis, in which Jesus is stripped of his garments: "Haul's Seton down, black, green and grey and hoist Mikealy's whey ad sawdust. What's overdressed if underclothed?" (the passage interestingly also contains

an allusion to Swift as the "undraped divine", *FW* 435.14-15). As noted by Lorrein Weir, this stresses the mythical transformation of his illness, with Joyce "vesting himself in ritual garments" (Weir, 182).

Whether the fragment was meant to be included in the *Wake* or not, it is nonetheless definitely part of its composition. As the very first stage of that process of renewal originating from maximum exhaustion, it appears to be Joyce's first attempt to reconnect with his work after a prolonged pause imposed by his poor health. It can be thus read as a sort of therapeutic exercise in order to test his poor eyesight and possibly sublimate his frustration through writing. And even its appearance in *Le Navire D'argent* shortly after its composition can have a therapeutic value in a wider sense, as it seems part of that sort of Joycean interaction between "the private writing space and the public space of writing", which as Van Hulle suggests in *James Joyce's Work in Progress: Pre-Book Publications of* Finnegans Wake *Fragments* "seemed to have had an inspiring effect in less creative periods" (Van Hulle 2016, 168). The partial publication of *Work in Progress* seems to have been an important part of the compositional method as the reactions from the external world, whether positive or negative, were constantly feeding the text. Moreover, shorter term contacts with publishers, from a more prosaic point of view, were an incentive to revise smaller parts of texts and to stay engaged with a project which Joyce sometimes felt he was not going to be able to complete because of his physical and mental distress.

In the early months of 1929 Joyce began to work again on III.3 for the instalment of *transition* 15. The composition of the chapter had been punctuated by Joyce's eye problems from the beginning in 1924-25[10]. Interestingly, as argued by Hayman in his introduction to the volumes of the *JJA* devoted to III.3 (*JJA, vol. 61*, vii), gradually in the chapter the old character HCE is given voice while the younger loses it (see the definition of 'twilight' according to the Burmese translation in the glossary appended to the fragment). Joyce revised the typescript in large format (or legal size) specially prepared for him as his diminishing vision was preventing him from working on the revisions for *transition* 15 – this was between December 1928 and January 1929, same

[10] Compare with Ellmann's chapter on 1924-1925 and *JJL I*, 225-27.

weeks as the composition of the fragment. It is worth noticing a couple of small additions to a passage already charged by Swiftian overtones:

> - I see a blackfrinch pliestrycook… who is carrying on his brainpan… a cathedral ~~a~~of lovejelly for his… Tiens, how he is like somebodies!
> - What sounds of tistress Isolde's my ear? […]
> 'O, set but swift still a vain essaying! I invert the initial of your tripartite and sign it sternely on your breast. What do you hear breastplate?
> I ahear of a hopper behidin the door slapping his feet *in a pool of bran* (*JJA vol. 61*, 47484a-180, *FW* 329)

In the passage, Yawn experiences a 'triptych vision' (*FW* 486.32) of HCE and ALP, Tristan and Isolde and Swift, Stella and Vanessa. At the beginning of the 'psychoanalytic session' (*FW* 486), Swift's presence can be already be sensed by means of the invocation to Sterne, as well as the allusions to Swift's water in the brain with "brain pan" and "pool of bran". The additions make Swift's presence more explicit and he is also "given back" his deafness, after the composition of the fragment.

In 1929 Joyce devoted his energy to III.3 and in particular to the development of the Haveth Childers Everywhere section, which became between February 1929 and June 1930 more than twice as long in the published version by Babou and Kahane and the Fountain Press (see Van Hulle 2016, 163). And although in his genetic analysis of III.3 Rabaté suggest that there was a much more divisive logic behind the choice of developing one section of the chapter independently, this experience can undoubtedly be read as further proof that the prospect of a publishing commission was a rather effective stimulus for Joyce. As shown by Van Hulle, the revision and publication process of *Haveth Childers Everywhere* is paradigmatic of Joyce's extended mind at work on the level of the text's production". The text is rather corrupt and has additions by the hands of five six different people: "These five or six collaborators played an important role in the construal of Joyce's Umwelt […] for they served as his eyes at that moment and thus to a large extent determined the world as perceived and experienced by the near-blind writer" (Van Hulle 2016*,* 162). It is at this stage that Joyce inaugurated his most mechanical mode of composition, which Beckett witnessed closely, becoming one of Joyce's human prostheses, collaborating in the search of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for possible entries on cities through which he transformed the

chapter, and which also served as a remedy for Joyce's lack of inspiration. As seen in the first chapter, this mechanical and accretive method of composition is reflected in Beckett's attempt to write a novel, whose composition involved the accurate compilation of a source-book whose entries are widely employed to enrich the text, as seen in the previous chapter. The inclusion of Swiftian material in Beckett's early writing did not follow this path, however, although it nonetheless required some time and different attempts in order to ferment properly. I will illustrate this process in the next section, looking at how the Swiftian overtones in Beckett's poem "Sanies I" and the short story "Fingal" also denote the evolution of Beckett's response to Joyce's influence.

"poem scum is fermenting" – Swiftian overtones in Beckett's early writings

As noted by Smith in *Beckett's Eighteenth Century*, Beckett "as a sensitive young protestant, good at languages and with a streak of independence" (Smith, 28) had more than one reason to be interested in Swift. As a student at Trinity College it was impossible for Beckett not to perceive Swift's shadow, and he would have most certainly have read as part of the honours course of studies Swift's works such as *The Battle of the Books* and *The Verses on the Death of Dean Swift* along with *The Drapier's Letters.* It is well known, however, that Beckett undertook a prolonged reading of Swift's work (*Journal to Stella*, *Gulliver's Travel*, *A Tale of the Tub*) in the early 1930s and as noted by Smith, "Beckett was seemingly fascinated by both the man and his writings" (Smith, 27). Smith points out how Swift seemed to embody for the young Beckett the paradox of the "Age of Reason" as in fact an age of the irrational and relates this to Beckett's interest in different aspects of insanity, tracing the early influence of Swift into Beckett's later works.

In the chapter "'Hiatus in MS': Swift and Beckett", Smith frames Beckett's interest in Swift as in line with the modernist affinity with the eighteenth-century sensitivity[11] and is prompted to trace a comparison between Beckett and one of his main major influences: Joyce. However, the brief comparison traced by Smith is somehow

[11] In the early 1930s Beckett was also in touch with one of the authors of *Swift, The Egoist*, Joseph Hone who, as referred in his letter to McGreevy, was "collaborating with one Rossi (the Berkeley better half) in a book on poor Swift. A boring moribund creature" (SB to McGreevy, 5/1/1933, *LSB 1*, 150).

unsatisfying: Smith seems too keen to assert Beckett's greater expertise than Joyce's on the Swift material. If on the one hand, it is undeniable that Beckett was much fresher than Joyce from the reading of Swift (whether from university or later after 1933) and that he possibly was a more as a kindred spirit with Swift than Joyce; Smith seems too categorical in the rejection of the idea that Beckett's interest in Swift could have been "kindled by Joyce".[12] And in fact, at the time Joyce and Beckett met, Joyce's mind had been quite occupied with Swift. Furthermore, Smith focuses in particular on the "demented logic" of *Murphy* and *Watt*, in which Joyce's shadow is much less noticeable and which undoubtedly reveal Beckett's close reading and deep assimilation of Swift's work. But in fact, a more in-depth analysis of *More Pricks*, and "Fingal" in particular, could add a different nuance to the Beckett-Joyce-Swift "triangle": as I will show in the following pages. Indeed, Swift's presence in "Fingal" reveals one of Beckett's first attempts to deal with the Irish tradition in a way indebted to Joyce but in more mature terms. It is a dialogue with Joyce in which differences between the two voices begin to emerge more clearly. I will thus focus exactly on that "Joycean mediation through the Swift" material invoked (and avoided) by Smith.

Chris Ackerley with "'The Last Ditch': Shades of Swift in Samuel Beckett's "Fingal" aims to compensate for Smith's overlooking of Swift's presence in "Fingal", showing how "Swift is […] emblematic of a number of themes of lasting concern to Beckett: the fragility of reason; the sense (and the dangers) of being trapped within the tower of the self; and the inability to empathize with the very real sufferings of others" (Ackerley 2008, 65). As seen in the first section of this chapter these themes emerged both from Swift's writings but also from the popular (in every sense) legend germinated throughout the centuries in Ireland, about his madness and the building of the asylum. As shown by Ackerley, he enriches the texture of his story by drawing on two traditions, the legend of Stella and the tower, and the history of Vanessa's tribulations to examine Belacqua's treatment of women and more generally his sexuality.

[12] Smith seems to force the meaning of some passages of the *Wake* in order to prove Joyce's indebtedness to Beckett for having taught him something about eighteenth century literature, as for instance in this case: "How used you learn me, brather soboostius, in my augustan days?" (*FW* 468.3-4). By Smith's own admission in footnote, the passage had been already composed long before Beckett and Joyce had met. On the other hand, different sources attest Joyce's familiarity with Swift, prior to his meeting with Beckett.

According to Ackerley, Beckett "makes use of parallels with Swift, from madness to misogyny, and the sense of his presence as a living force in the historical landscape of Fingal" (65). In doing so he shows how Beckett draws from different sources along with his own biographical anecdotes: allusions to Swift's own work, popular collections of legends on Swift such as "Jack and the Dane", and even Yeats' play *The Words upon the Window Pane*, written in 1931. Although Ackerley briefly alludes also to Yeats' play as a possible source for "Fingal", he tends to isolate the Swiftian theme, especially removing the Joycean lens. Ackerley acknowledges the fact that Belacqua Shuah is an unheroic antithesis of Joyce's Stephen Dedalus (Ackerley 2008, 63). But in fact much clearer allusions to Joycean characters can be spotted easily (and partly we have already done so in the previous chapter tracing the continuity with Shem) and their combination with the Swiftian material in "Fingal" is particularly interesting.

Beckett's use of Swift in this story is very Joycean in principle, reflecting different forms of stratification: from the genetic point of view, the anecdote from which the story originates is reminiscent of Joyce's "active elements" which needs to become "a little older" (JJ to Weaver, 9/10/1923, *JJL I*, 205) in order to expand and to take its final artistic shape; but there are also stratifications of meanings and allusions (especially to the Irish context), expressing a more mature, original Beckett's voice. The development of the Swiftian theme coincides with the emergence of some other elements, namely the bike and the asylum, which will become central in Beckett's later work. Smith says Swift's presence "becomes more profound when Beckett stops alluding to him" (Smith, 31). And this can be said about Joyce's presence as well, for if in "Fingal" the allusions to Swift are excessively apparent they have also become to a certain extent more intimately Joycean: the way Beckett employs Swift, his madness and his ambiguous relationship with women, along with the other Irish allusion seems to exemplify this process.

The anecdote about Swift which eventually find its place in "Fingal", is mentioned for the first time in a letter to McGreevy at the beginning of 1933 and can be seen as a sort of epiphany which Beckett tries to adapt to different shapes (poetry/fiction):

> I was down at Donabate on Boxing Day and walked all about the Portrane lunatic asylum in the rain. Outside the gate I was talking to a native of Lambay, and asked him about an old tower I saw in a field nearby. 'That's where Dane Swift came to his motte' he said.

> ‘What motte? I said. ‘Stella.’ What with that, and the legend about the negress that his valet picked up for him, and the Portrane lunatics and round tower built as relief work in the Famine, poem scum is fermenting, the first flicker in the wash-tub since the bitch & bones. (SB to McGreevy, 5/1/[1933], *LSB 1*, 150).[13]

The anecdote indeed looks like “a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself” (*Portrait*, 211); and, reading Beckett’s explanation right afterwards, it also reminiscent of Stanislaus Joyce’s definition for his brother epiphanies as “little errors and gestures - mere straws in the mind - by which people betrayed the very things they were most careful to conceal” (Joyce S., 124). Nonetheless, rather than being left untouched in all its self-revelatory power, as Beckett’s commentary also suggests, this sketch is waiting for the right formula in order to germinate (as announced in the letter to McGreevy, “the poem-scum is fermenting”), thus recalling, from a genetic perspective, Joyce’s “active elements”, namely those sketches from which *Work in Progress* originated. Incidentally the situation strikingly recalls Janauthan’s description of Dave/Shem in III.2: “[w]hy, bless me *swits*, here he its, darling Dave, like the catonine lives just in time as if he fell out of space, all *draped in mufti*, *coming home to mourn the mountains from his old continence … on quinquisecular cycles after his French evolution*” (*FW* 462.30-34, my italics). Although “Sanies I” does not seem to contain any Parisian reference, in “Fingal”, Belacqua is just back from Paris, reflecting Beckett’s own situation at the time of the composition of the story. Nonetheless, both the voice in the poem and Belacqua are depicted “mourning” the landscape of their homeland while they cross it on their bikes.

The poem “Sanies I” is the first attempt at giving literary shape to this autobiographical episode, and although, as shown in his correspondence Beckett was working on it at the beginning of 1933, it took its final shape in May. Beckett here plays with names, as even though Swift’s presence can silently be sensed in the landscape, he indirectly alludes instead to a Swift being a type of bicycle (possibly the same as the one found by

[13] It would be worth noticing that Portrane asylum is *not* the one established by Swift, which was ‘St Patrick’s Hospital for Imbeciles’, however, as it will become clearer soon, it dominates a landscape associated with Swift on multiple levels.

Belacqua): “flinging the proud Swift forward […]/I see main verb at last/ her whom alone in the accusative/ I have dismounted to love” (“Sanies I”).

Beckett ironically imagines himself on his bicycle going “from Portrane on the seashore”, “like a ritter with pommeled scrotum atra cura on/the step”: it is striking that the Horatian allusion is very similar to the one we have already met in Joyce’s fragment on Swift, ie to the “atra cura”, the “black care” which sits behind the horseman, the knight, (“ritter” in German), which Beckett ironically attributes to himself as he rides his bike across Fingal. This might incidentally suggest that Beckett was among those people to whom Joyce had shown the fragment (and its glossary) analysed by McAlmon in his contribution to *Our Exagmination* which was also published in *transition* 15 (certainly Swift was in Joyce’s mind in those months). Beckett, who met him roughly at the time of the composition of the fragment (1928), was also definitely aware of Joyce’s struggles in his compositional process at the time they met and afterwards, and possibly had the fragment in mind five years later when he was afflicted by his own physical pain. It might be just a coincidence that, as in Joyce’s case, Swift’s name occupies Beckett’s mind in a moment of physical distress. However, the genesis of the poem as attested by Beckett’s correspondence, seems to be closely linked to Beckett’s own psycho-physical conditions, and to an idea of a writing of the body/writing despite physical limitations, which recalls that of Joyce (despite the obvious age difference).

And it seems possible to argue that the poem also reveals Beckett’s early fascination with malfunctioning bodies – especially when in connection with the physical act of writing. “Sanies”, namely a purulent discharge, was written right after neck cyst surgery “in bed with pus pouring out into foments through the stitches” (Beckett to McGreevy, 13/5/1933, *LSB 1*, 157). Although the poem is about other kinds of physical efforts, in the same letter the poem is introduced with these words:

> It’s an ill cyst blows nobody any good. I find it more and more difficult to write and I think I write worse and worse in consequence. But I have still hopes of its coming in a gush like a bloody flux. Here’s a poem. (SB to McGreevy, 13/5/1933, *LSB 1*, 159)

Beckett here seems thus to be indulging in a rather decadent, degenerate idea of art (as seen in the previous chapter). And the poem itself is imbued with allusions to non-

normative sexuality. As shown by Conor Carville in "Smiling Tigers: Trauma, Sexuality, and Creaturely life in *Echo's Bones*", Beckett's early poems in *Echo's Bones* (and "Sanies I" in particular) reflect the radical changes in the legislations of and regulation of sexuality both in Ireland and in France and their consequent cultural and social impacts, which as seen in the previous chapter had much to do with degeneration theory, and for which Beckett displayed a particular sensitivity. Carville argues that Beckett's concerns were refracted through his reading in psychology, Otto Rank in particular (Carville, 158), but I would argue they were also filtered through his interest in Swift, developed by Beckett in those same years. As will become clearer from the analysis of "Fingal", Beckett associated Swift's name with non-normative relationships with women and even more importantly with destitution and with Irish mental institutions in particular.

"Fingal" is the final shape taken by the Swiftian "scum". As noted by Pilling in his notes on Swift and the evolution of *Dream* to *More Pricks*, the final short story form in particular "offered, in spite of the restrictions, something of the freedom which Swift had enjoyed in the looser genre of the essay: space for anecdotes, incidental obiter dicta, a certain playfulness and, in short, anything that promoted a largely devil-may-care attitude to mask things too painful to directly deal with, about which a writer might care very deeply in private" (Pilling 2011, 239). In the short story, the antiheroic connotation is even more accentuated by a combination of Swiftian and Joycean material. Instead of the heroic Finn McCool, who in the *Wake* is mirrored by the clumsy giant Tim Finnegan, in *More Pricks* we find Fingal, the Scottish version of Finn in McPherson's *Ossian Cycle*. As pointed out by Power, by "choosing McPherson's transplanted hero, [Beckett] adds another dimension to the mock-heroic" (Power, 151), adding at once a sense of alienation (he's the "white stranger" – strikingly resembling what Swift wrote about himself and Ireland in his correspondence with Alexander Pope: I call myself a stranger in a strange land" (Swift 1965, III, 341) but also playing again (once more) with his unoriginality: as seen in the previous chapter. Power was the first to point out the rich Anglo-Irish intertextuality of the short story. Showing how Beckett "fresh from helping Joyce with the text of *Finnegans Wake* and working on *Our Exagmination*" was "prompted to take up the challenge of the Finn material" along with other important Anglo-Irish sources such as Swift and Wilde (for a further allusion in the title of the short story could be to Oscar Wilde's second name, Fingal). Both

these charismatic figures in the Irish tradition, as we have seen, are quite revealing sources as their names can be linked to degeneration, moral and physical decay, and madness (an association made by Joyce in the *Wake* as well, as seen earlier). Moreover, as shown by Power, Dr Sholto, who represents the dark stranger, on a more specific level is identified with John Sholto Douglas, Oscar Wilde's enemy: "Douglas had periodic bouts of madness, and the shadow of insanity hung over several generations of the family. That Beckett's Sholto is a doctor in a mental hospital is a comic touch. The insane have come to direct the asylum" (Power, 155). The limit between sane and insane thus becomes particularly blurred.

Power acknowledges the influence of the apprenticeship with Joyce, as the "layers of association and overlapping time sequences suggest *Finnegans Wake*" (Power, 156). However, it should be noted, in 1933 Beckett, being in Ireland, found himself already at a "safer distance" from Joyce and their contacts were much less frequent. What Power does not stress is the fact that "Fingal", along with a continuity, reveals also a considerable amount of independence from Joyce. One of the most interesting aspects of "Fingal" is that, by means of its allusiveness, and the evocation of Swift in particular, it offers a privileged view of Beckett's more confident way of dealing with Joyce's presence. I would like to argue that "Fingal" represents a moment of "transition": not just imitation or passive absorption but an active response, a much more personal creative reaction than the one achieved in the early writings.

In the story particular power is given to the landscape in which Joycean overtones conflate with new elements and themes which can be read as an anticipation of Beckett's later prose. Power stresses the importance of the phenomenological experience of topography through the characters' perspective which plays such an important role in the short story. Belacqua and Winnie invert the sensual atmosphere evoked in *Ulysses* through the memories of the Blooms' first romantic intercourse at Howth head which in Molly's recollection blends with Gibraltar. Meaningfully, in "Fingal", while contemplating the landscape, both Belacqua and Winnie ignore the castle in the foreground. Belacqua in particular ignores Malahide Castle and is moved instead by a very different landmark, the asylum. As Power points out, "old times and the barony, chivalry, and romance have been displaced, in the mind of Winnie and Belacqua at least" (Power, 153). Belacqua, once again according to his anti-heroic

nature, first proves himself unable to defend Winnie from the potential attack of the old man, and then abandons her, running away with a stolen bike. In this sense, Belacqua might be seen indeed as one of those lazy boys/servants with whom, according to the popular legends, Swift was happy to interact. Beckett was likely to be familiar with them. Jarrell mentions one popular story placed near Portrane Castle Donabate, (Stella's residence) in which Swift is walking through the fields when he sees a boy lying lazily along a fence and stops to ask him the way to a certain place. "The boy stretches out his leg and points to the direction with the toe of his boot. The Dean smiles and says that he will give him a shilling if he can do anything lazier than that. The boy says, 'Put the shilling in my pocket,' and the Dean laughs with pleasure." (Jarrell 1964, 105). Most certainly Belacqua, with his aboulia and pedantic punctiliousness, on more than one occasion would have impressed Swift, possibly deserving a shilling too.

Landscape and names in "Fingal" are charged with a density and multiplicity which is to an extent typical of the *Wake*. But one of the most impressive landmarks according to Belacqua, which in fact will become very Beckettian and can also be associated with Swift's name, is the mental asylum. Beckett seems to play with the idea of historical depth and through the shadow of Swift here two different mental institutions in Dublin conflate: on the one hand, St. Patrick's Hospital, the first psychiatric institution in Dublin founded by Swift, on the other, the Donabate Portrane Asylum which dominates the story, built in 1895 and one of the last institutions to be built to respond to the growing number of patients. Swift's concluding lines in *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* "He gave the little wealth he had,/to build a House for Fools and Mad/ And shew'd by one satiric touch,/ No nation wanted it so much" (Swift 1739, vv. 85-86) sounds once more almost as a prophecy as indeed since the eighteenth century the lunatic asylum had become a fearful reality in Ireland, as legislation criminalised the insane and labeled the majority of pauper insane as dangerous. As shown in "The institutional response to mental disorder in Ireland: censuses of Irish asylums, psychiatric hospitals and units 1844–2014", the increase of institutionalization and the consequent need for new spaces for the containment and isolation of the insane was a "consequence of a backlog of persons presenting for admission because of delay following illness onset and a broadening perception of what constituted mental illness" (Walsh et al, 762). Portrane in particular was an auxiliary asylum built to respond to the increasing demands.

The mental asylum is indeed central in "Fingal". And to Beckett's use of Swift, which is not limited to "Fingal", but as Smith shows, reaches more mature results in *Murphy*, a novel mainly set within a mental institution and which according to Smith reflects Beckett's reading of A *Tale of a Tub*. As Smith notes, "[p]erversely […], both Swift and Beckett suggest that the residents of Bedlam and the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat are no crazier than those outside those wall" (Smith, 35). But this analogy clearly emerges in "Fingal" as well. Winnie and Belacqua agree that "the lunatics seemed very sane and well behaved" (*MPTK*, 23), and to a certain extent all the characters they meet during their walk across the country can be considered as escaped lunatics.

In "Fingal" for the first time Beckett introduces the mental asylum in his fiction, a place which will dominate his later works. As noted by Ellmann "both *Murphy* and *Watt* brought characters to insane asylums, as if only there did human gestures approximate to their environment" (Ellmann 1986, 82). Meaningfully, Belacqua is placed "at the border", but he can nonetheless be seen as first primordial stage in the process of alienation of Beckett's characters, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Belacqua is the first Beckettian character to display what O'Brien sees as a

> […] conflict of personality […] more often a consequence of the irrational, at times, irreconcilable constraints imposed upon the individual by the dictates of society which to some [like Belacqua] are incomprehensible, to many confusing, and to others so unacceptable that the emotional conflict consequent upon a profound attempt at rationalization, leads to what society deems to be aberrant behavior. (O'Brien, 225)

Belacqua's fit of laughter (which, as we as seen in the previous chapter, can be considered expression of degeneration and whose importance is stressed by the circularity of the story) exemplifies Belacqua's inability either to embrace the social standard or to be totally excluded from society: although he doesn't seem to require any institutionalization, nonetheless he meets social disapproval in Taylor's pub – "drinking and laughing in a way that Mr Taylor did not like" (*MPTK*, 27). This is precisely why Belacqua cannot be an escaped lunatic as suggested by Ackerley (see Ackerley 2008, 63): being Belacqua, a "horrible border figure", institutionalization is not a bliss Belacqua deserves yet and he is destined (*nomen omen*) to remain in the Limbo.

Smith rightly stresses the analogies of *A Tale of a Tub* with *Murphy*. Swift in the "Digression on Madness" offers the overview of different mentally impaired figures

who could not find their right place in society. His Modern Author inspection of the Bedlam reflects Swift's own experience and recalls Beckett's visiting (and taking extensive notes) at the Bethlem Royal Hospital in London thanks to his friend Geoffrey Thompson, which served as inspiration for *Murphy*[14]. Murphy's walk through the cells of the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat is definitely reminiscent of the Modern Author's visit to the Bedlam, in which he happened "to observe with utmost exactness [the patients'] several dispositions and behaviour, by which means, duly distinguishing and adapting their talents, they might produce admirable instruments for the several offices in the state […] civil and military" (*Tale of a Tub*, 85). But it is already possible to find this affinity between Beckett's and Swift's depiction of madness in "Fingal". Winnie and Belacqua contemplating the inside of the asylum face a reassuring scenario:

> Below the playground on their right some of the milder patients were kicking a football. Others were lounging about, alone and in knots, taking their ease in the sun. The head of one appeared over the wall, the hands on the wall, the cheek on the hands. Another, must have been a very tame one, came halfway up the slope, disappeared into a hollow, emerged after a moment and went back the way he had come. Another, his back turned to them, stood fumbling at the wall that divided the grounds of the asylum from the field where they were. One of the gangs was walking round and round the playground. Below on the other hand a long line of workmen's dwellings, in the garden children playing and crying. (*MPTK*, 22-23)

The description here is rather unmelodramatic, unsensational, suggesting a rather sympathetic documentary realism (Beckett is possibly trying here to un-sensationalise 'the mad'). On the other hand, Belacqua suggests: "Abstract the asylum and there was little left but ruins" (*MPTK*, 230). Here the apparent romantic overtones are charged with a rather Swiftian satirical touch. Beckett ironically plays with the historical depth of the landscape, anticipating his view as expressed in "First Love", more than ten years later: "what constitute the charm of our country, apart of course from its scant population, and this without the help of the meanest contraceptive, is that all is derelict, with the sole exception of history's ancient faeces" (*Short Prose*, 33-4).

[14] These annotations appear in the "Whoroscope Notebook" kept by Beckett in the 1930s, part of the University of Reading Special Collections (JEK A/5/78).

The allusion to the ruins might be Swiftian as well. As reported by Jarrell, one account of Swift's residence there locates "Dean Swift's Castle", described as "the summer residence of Swift and his wife Stella" in a field facing the back gates of the Mental Hospital. According to the tale, "[g]old was supposed to be buried here. Once men came and dug and removed a pot of gold. No matter what they did they could not fill up the hole made. It is still shown, though the castle is in ruins." (Jarrell 1964, 111). In Beckett's story, more than the different landmarks, it is the humanity which populates the landscape which is in ruins.

Winnie finds the landscape of "Fingal" so desolate and totally uninteresting that, as she ironically notes "I see nothing but three acres and cows. You can't have a Cincinnatus without a furrow" (*MPTK*, 19). Here the reference to the impossibility of generating a Cincinnatus might suggest a subtle multiple allusion both to Joyce and Yeats, and more generally to the Irish tradition. Cincinnatus was a legendary figure of Roman virtue who was prompted to take over leadership of the Roman Republic while working in his fields and, having achieved his victory, relinquished his power and returned to his farm. He is evoked in the *Wake* at the opening of I.2, associated with the Giant Finnegan, "Finnfinnotus" (*FW* 285.L7), who leaves space to his descendant HCE: "Cincinnatus the grand old gardener was saving daylight under his redwoodtree one sultry afternoon, Hag Chivichas Eve, in prefill paradise peace by following his plough for rootles in the rere garden of mobhouse" (*FW* 30.12-15). It is interesting that, just like the Cincinnatus in "Fingal", he his ploughing the rear garden of a mad-house, thus recalling the topography of Dean Swift's Castle according to the anecdote quoted above. Interestingly Broes in "Swift the Man" sees the following allusion to Cincinnatus in the *Wake* as reminiscent of Swift: "and turned his back like Cincinnatus; […] stutters fore he falls and goes mad entirely when he's waked" (*FW* 139.5) but the evidence there does not seem to be so explicit.

Winnie is ironically referring to the old farmer they have just met working in the fields, mock-heroically compared to Cincinnatus and depicted as mythical figure, he might also remind one of Swift's "Digression of madness" in which the inmates of the Bedlam are provocatively seen as potential "beaux, fiddlers, poets, and politicians" (Swift 1747, 86). The reference to the impossibility for the land to generate a Cincinnatus could be also read as an ironic indirect response to Yeats' play *The Words*

upon the Window Pane and its commentary published almost simultaneously with the play in *the Dublin Magazine* two years earlier in 1931. Here Yeats along with the exploration of the theme of Swift's madness, enacts the construction of a heroic Swift and a heroic Irish 18th century. Swift was "haunting" Yeats at the time of the composition of the play: he "seems to make me part of some national mythology […] another turn of the gyre and myth is wisdom, pride, discipline" (Yeats 1931, 7) as Yeats claims in the commentary. Moreover, one of the characters of the play, John Corbet, a Cambridge undergraduate, claims: "In Swift's day men of intellect reached the height of their power, the greatest position they had reached in society and the State, that everything great in Ireland, in our character, of what remains of our architecture come from that day", and further "his ideal order was the Roman Senate, his ideal men Brutus and Cato, such an order and such men seemed possible once more" (Yeats 1934, 601-602). Yeats in the commentary published in the *Dublin Magazine* describes Corbet's claim as "an overstatement of an enthusiastic Cambridge student, yet with some measure of truth" (Yeats 1931, 8). As he explains in the essay, Yeats believed that Swift with his *Drapier's Letters* had "created the political nationality of Ireland" (8).

As noted by the editors of the first volume of *SB Letters*, Yeats' commentary on his Swift play was published in the same issue of the *Dublin Magazine* in which the poem "Alba" was published and so Beckett was almost certainly aware of it. Beckett in "Fingal" seems to have Yeats in mind at different levels. Ellmann reports that Beckett "liked especially the play about Swift […] in which the voice of Swift utters the devastating final line, 'Perish the day on which I was born" (Ellmann 1986, 100), possibly, it could be added, because it is reminiscent of that Joycean/Viconian circularity – germination/putrefaction exalted in "Dante.. Bruno. Vico... Joyce[15]. Nonetheless, I would argue that Beckett's engagement with Yeats' play is once again mainly ironic; and once again landscape and the wrecked humanity which populate it play a crucial role. The evocation of Cincinnatus in this sense becomes exemplary.

[15] Here in "Fingal", Belacqua is associated with Swift as "the Little fat Presto" and in "Yellow": he dies echoing Swift's last words: "I am what I am" – "upon the housekeeper's removing a knife from him as he was going to catch at it, he shrugged his shoulders. and, rocking himself, he said, 'I am what I am, I am what I am,' which, as noted by Jarrell"", appears also in the Wake: "I yam as I yam" (*FW* 604.23) (Jarrell 1959, 290).

The complex system of allusion to Anglo-Irish sources employed by Beckett within a story dominated by a desolate Irish landscape, suggests an aesthetic statement in opposition with Yeats' attempt at forging an Anglo-Irish identity. Instead we find a myth of insanity, degeneration, illness meaningfully becoming the norm in Beckett's aesthetic. "Fingal", more than any other earlier text can be read as Beckett's personal alternative to the late Yeats'Anglo-Irish ideals. Beckett's engagement with Irish cultural (and political) heritage has something which recalls Joyce's own youthful reaction to the Irish Catholic national cultural atmosphere, but if Stephen's response was "Silence, exile and cunning" (*Portait*, 281), Belacqua's motto becomes is "doubt, despair and scrounging" (a further evidence of the degenerative connection between Joyce's and Beckett's alter-egos, see previous chapter). Along with Joyce's presence, Swift's association with madness and with mental institutions becomes crucial in the story and his presence is like a mythical veil on this Irish landscape as well as its humanity. And if on the one hand direct allusions to what can be considered Beckett's Anglo-Irish Protestant national heritage will gradually disappear from his later work, some elements which in "Fingal" are present in an embryonic state, will become characteristic of Beckett's more mature aesthetic.

Beckett, in particular, makes the architecture central in the short story. The towers of the asylum are not the only ones which dominate the landscape. Another landmark is even more directly connected with Swift and one of his women, Stella, Portrane Castle Donabate, (Stella's residence). Local legend proclaimed that Swift "incarcerated" his "wife" Stella there and used to visit her on occasion. It is from this detail on Swift's and Stella's relationship that the original "scum" has been generated and it is with "Fingal" that it has finally fermented. It is worth noticing that it is exactly through the evocation of Swift's unfortunate women, Stella and Vanessa, that the association between Belacqua and Swift becomes explicit: the "little fat Presto […], fresh and fasting, walking like camomile" (*MPTK*, 26). The allusion here is to "Presto" (Italian translation of "swift") a nickname Swift uses for himself in the *Journal to Stella*.[16] Ackerley and Smith of course attribute this description to Belacqua but it is not clear

[16] This is actually a nickname that was introduced by a later editor (Deane Swift) to replace Swift's nickname for himself of 'pdfr' in the little language. Presto was a nickname from a different context – Swift used with one of his friends in London, as he mentions in an anecdote in the Journal. For this editorial history and the regularization of the little language, see Abigail Williams' Introduction to the *Journal to Stella* (CUP, 2013), especially pages xxxviii – xxxix.

why, as in fact Belacqua is not present when the old man is narrating the anecdote on Swift to Winnie. Swift's presence is evoked – by Winnie? By the narrator? By Beckett? — generating an almost Wakean confusion between the different characters, Swift thus becoming Belacqua's archetype concerning his relationship with women. This is particularly interesting, as Beckett already uses Belacqua (in *Dream* as well as in *More Pricks*) in order to exorcise his own troublesome relationship with women in the early 1930s, thus establishing a more personal link between Swift and himself.

Ackerley also suggests that, in this sense, Yeats' play, although never explicitly mentioned "acts as a medium through which the tragedy of the two women is channelled" (Ackerley 2008, 65). Undoubtedly Yeats' commentary offered Beckett a series of anecdotes on Swift's sexuality. Apart from the one mentioned by Beckett both in his letter to McGreevy and in the short story, of "Swift sending his servant out to fetch a woman, and dismissing that servant when he woke to find a black woman at his side" (Yeats 1931, 17), Yeats also mentions the theory which becomes central in his play: "the dread of madness" (17) passed onto his descendants. The medium Mrs Henderson in the play reveals through the voice of Vanessa: "If you had children, Jonathan, my blood would make them healthy" but Swift's voice reveals: "What do I care it be healthy? What do I care if it could make mine healthy? Am I to add another to the healthy rascaldom and knavery of the world?" (Yeats 1934, 610). Once again, the legends of Swift's life anticipate concerns which will become crucial in the following centuries, with the consequent flourishing of degeneration theory, and Beckett was definitely sensitive to this topic, as was Yeats.

Swift's supposed misogyny and forced celibacy have much in common with Belacqua's peculiar sexuality, as anticipated in the previous chapter and as we will see more in detail in the next one. Beckett has in mind a destiny of extinction for Belacqua. And the story once again is, after all, about one of Belacqua's romantic fiascoes. We might wonder along with Paul Stewart whether there is any sexual implication in Belacqua's attraction to the bike (whereas Jake Kennedy reads it as "a kind of object counter-part to Belacqua's own melancholy subjectivity"; Kennedy J., web). As Stewart points out,

> Belacqua's interest in the bicycle is described in relation to his desire: he could, on no account, 'resist' a bicycle. In this way, too, the bicycle is the clear, if wry substitution of or for Winnie and, indeed, the scene mimics the encounter just previously in which the

> lovers had been lying on the grass. This observation is not pursued by Kennedy, but, if one were to do so, an interesting paradigm emerges: Bel (quite literally) flees from a "proper" sexuality - he flees from Winnie - in favour of a solitary, bike-led sexuality. The question remains: why? (Stewart, 260)

It is rather curious that "Fingal" is once again ignored in Hugh Kenner's "Cartesian Centaur", which does not contemplate any well-functioning bike "found" in the field, but only broken, missing, imagined ones which, according to Kenner "complement" Beckett's characters. However a possible answer to Stewart's question can be found in the fact that even in this instance Beckett composes a "Cartesian Centaur" (along with the voice of "Sanies I", Belacqua is in fact the first): the bike assures Belacqua his equilibrium, since, as revealed later in "Ding Dong", unlike his successor, Belacqua believes movement can save him "from the furies'. Meaningfully, this equilibrium cannot be reached by Belacqua in his intercourses with women (and Winnie is no exception) because, as Jeri Kroll suggests, they remind him "that he is, in fact, a creature composed of two seemingly contradictory elements: body and mind" (Kroll, 11). This might also account for Beckett's interest in Swift incarcerating his "motte" in the tower, as his own ex-lover, Joyce's daughter Lucia, had been committed to an asylum the year before. But this will be one of the main focuses of the next chapter.

Chapter III

Madness and Women: Lucia Joyce

The final chapter of our exploration of the different meanings attributed to madness will focus on the long existing equation between madness and women. Hysteria, the "women's illness" par excellence, was like degeneration one of those paradigmatic diseases of the nineteenth/twentieth century. Similarly, at the turn of the 20th century, schizophrenia was another "remarkable example of the cultural conflation of femininity and insanity" (Showalter, 203). As explained by Showalter in *The Female Malady*:

> During the post-war period, the female malady, no longer linked to hysteria, assumed a new critical form: schizophrenia. And whereas psychoanalysis rarely treated schizophrenia, confining itself to the neuroses, traditional medical psychiatry here came into its own. […] Still the most baffling, controversial, and malignant of the psychoses, schizophrenia has, since Bleuler's time, been extended to cover a vast assortment of odd behaviours, cultural maladjustments, and political deviations, from shabbily dressed bag ladies to Soviet dissident writers. (203-204)

I will look at the cruel fate many women encountered by focusing on one woman in particular, Lucia Joyce, at once an exemplary but also an exceptional case, as her story leaves traces in the writing of both our subjects, Joyce and Beckett. Generally, biographers and critics refer to Lucia's problems in terms of schizophrenia. This term was coined by Eugen Bleuler and understands the "split mind" as split between thoughts and emotions (and not as a so-called "split personality"). Joyce called it "one of the most elusive diseases known to men and unknown to medicine" (JJ to Weaver, 9/6/1936, *JJL III*, 386). Lucia's problems were even more baffling, and schizophrenia was only one of the different diagnoses offered for her: she was also considered hebephrenic and neurotic, and the vain attempts to cure her were equally varied: *cure libre*, psychoanalysis, hypnosis, glandular treatments, institutionalization, and even graphology. In this chapter, I am interested in the particular uncanniness of Lucia's "madness" how both Joyce and Beckett perceived it, and how their perceptions resonate in their works. Unlike the previous chapters, I will begin with Beckett.

Undoubtedly, Lucia was present in the *Wake* via Issy before her breakdown in 1932. However, given the theme of this research, I am more interested in those textual changes in Joyce's work dated following it. Beckett's representations of Lucia, on the other hand, reflect the experiences of his Parisian years (1928-1932). As it will emerge, Beckett seems to be one of the first persons close to Lucia to read some signs of disturbance and to experience them very closely and represent them in his work. Joyce conversely, continued to refuse the idea of Lucia's madness and kept looking for alternatives until her final hospitalisation in 1936. That Joyce's as well as Lucia's struggles are reflected in the texture of the *Wake* has been argued before, but not alongside the close analysis of Beckett's "textualisations" of Lucia. This contextualisation sharpens certain features of Beckett's and Joyce's compositional transformations of life into art. I will therefore compare these different textual representations, which offer different perspectives on the same events but, which nonetheless, as we will see, reveal some important analogies.

Before delving into the analysis of Beckett's and Joyce's texts, each section will be introduced by a biographical overview, with particular attention to those elements which have an impact on the texts, including their genesis. Cross-referencing different biographical sources, I will first trace a brief overview of the evolution of Beckett's relationship with both Lucia and Joyce; I will then show how Beckett deployed this biographical material in his early prose in the character of the Syra-Cusa in *Dream* and Lucy in the short story "Walking Out". Turning to Joyce, I will first outline Lucia's medical history between 1932 and 1936, with particular attention to Joyce's reaction to these events and then explore the way in which Lucia's situation contributed to the development of Issy's role in II.2 and her consequent "confinement" within the footnotes. In particular I will focus on three important changes in the evolution of II.2 establishing a connection between them via Lucia: the early draft of Issy's letter, "Storiella as She is Syung", and the creation of the footnotes. My aim is to show how both Beckett and Joyce, respectively, responded to Lucia's first manifestations of instability through their texts, and how these texts reflect different stages of their coming to terms with the complexity of Lucia's situation.

In the cases of both Joyce and Beckett Lucia's "madness" emerges as strictly connected with a body, either over-functioning or malfunctioning, which needs

containment and isolation. However, there will emerge a paradigmatic difference between Beckett's consistently rather biological view and Joyce's (frequent but in the long run temporary) wishful thinking that love could cure Lucia and that she was not mad but inspired, a clairvoyant, somehow artistically gifted, or a victim of modernity itself. Joyce eventually came to terms with Lucia's problem, and accepted the idea of her being institutionalised. But Beckett apparently had got there first, as it were, although egoism and sense of guilt play also a part in his early fictionalisations of Lucia. Their different narratives, in this sense, make use of the figure of the mad person and the web of those around them in rather different ways, with Beckett's approach relying on an underlying dispassionate, empirical, medicalized stance and Joyce being much more erratic and suspicious of diagnosis.

"A paragraph ought to fix her"? Beckett's fictional portraits of Lucia Joyce

Biographical Overview – Beckett and Lucia

The beginning of this story is quite well-known: the young Samuel Beckett was introduced to James Joyce by his friend Thomas McGreevy in 1928 and then managed to gradually become close to him as collaborator, translator, critic and friend. Lucia and Beckett met in November 1928 and became to a certain extent intimate: of seeing him almost daily, as Beckett was going to Joyce's apartment to work with him, but also meeting him alone on different occasions. In the meantime, Lucia's promising but short dancing career culminated in what would be her final performance, a competition at the Bal Bullier that both her father and Samuel Beckett attended in 1929. Shortly after this, Lucia decided to give up dancing. In a letter to Weaver in 1929, Joyce wrote:

> Lucia seems to have come to the conclusion that she has not the physique for a strenuous dancing career the result of which has been a month of tears as she thinks that she has thrown away 3 or 4 years hard work and is sacrificing a talent. (JJ to Weaver, 19/10/29, *JJL I*, 285)

Carol Shloss devotes great attention to Lucia's dancing career in her biography (as well as the possible allusions to it in the *Wake*) and I refer to it for a detailed account. Undoubtedly dancing was a very important element in Lucia's life, and her decision to abandon it correspondingly upsetting. Seven months after her decision, Beckett tried to extricate himself from any involvement with her, in May 1930. Most of the

biographical accounts tend to see Lucia misreading Beckett's feelings towards her, although he had been giving her no sort of encouragement. As we will see soon, however, their relationship does not seem to have been so univocal. Maddox provides the most accurate account of this episode: while her parents were in Switzerland for Joyce's own medical consultations over his eyes, Lucia invited Beckett to lunch. Contrary to her romantic expectations, Beckett "insultingly, brought a male friend along for protection. Lucia, although well dressed, behaved very strangely. She hardly ate, then suddenly and wordlessly got up from the table and moved out of the door before the end of the meal" (Maddox, 253-254). As we will see in the analysis of *Dream*, there seems to be an explicit reference to this event in the text, and yet the meeting is not even mentioned in Shloss' biography. Soon afterward, Beckett made clear that he came to the apartment only to see her father and that he was not romantically interested in Lucia. When her parents returned from Zurich, they found Lucia was distraught. After this episode, Joyce, apparently at Nora's request, made it clear that Beckett was not welcome anymore to his house. As Maddox reports, Nora "rounded upon Joyce and told him that his daughter's affections had been trifled with [and] Joyce […] accepted his role as the outraged father (Maddox, 254). Nonetheless, this did not mean that contact between Beckett and Lucia ended completely. Indeed, Beckett kept updating his friend McGreevy on Lucia's erratic behaviour, as proven by the following passages from Beckett's correspondence with McGreevy in the period between May 1930 and the beginning of 1932 (when Joyce and Beckett's friendship resumed):

> A letter from Lucia… calm. (SB to McGreevy, 18-25/7/1930, *LSB 1*, 32)
>
> I heard from Lucia. I never think of her now. (SB to McGreevy 5/8/1930, *LSB 1*, 36)
>
> I had a very calm letter from Lucia, advising me to accept the world and go to party. (SB to McGreevy, 25/1/1931, *LSB 1*, 61)

But even more interesting is a passage in a letter dated 7th July 1930, in which Beckett refers to the fact that Lucia is unhappy and writes:

> A letter from Lucia too. I don't know what to do. She is unhappy she says. […] *But it is impossible there is no solution. What a terrible instinct prompts them to have the genius of beauty at the right - or the wrong - moment!* (SB to McGreevy 7/7/1930*, LSB 1*, 27; my italics).

Beckett's comment seems to suggest a physical beauty which he finds hard to resist; but this beauty has also a "genius" suggesting a creative power or quality. Beckett is possibly seeing her beauty as something akin to a work of art (and possibly, in her being Joyce's daughter, another product of his genius).

According to Knowlson, the reconciliation between Joyce and Beckett happened when Joyce came to realise how serious his daughter's condition was, with his and Beckett's mutual concern for Lucia making them even closer (Knowlson, 111). It is not clear when this actually happened given that, as we will see, Joyce had a singular reaction to Lucia's problems – being long isolated in his belief that she was not mad. It is a fact however that the consequences of Beckett's break-up with Lucia on his relationship with Joyce lasted for quite a few months. As suggested by Megan M. Quigley in "Justice for the "Illstarred Punster": Samuel Beckett and Alfred Péron's Revisions of "Anna Lyvia Pluratself"", Beckett's break-up with Lucia might be one of the reasons why, for instance, Joyce did not allow Beckett's and Alfred Peron's French translation of ALP to be published, on which Beckett had been working during the summer of 1931 (Quigley, 478). Particularly unpleasant for Beckett was the night of celebration at *La Maison des Livres* during Easter vacation in 1931 ("Shem was there and Colum and all the galère" – SB to McGreevy, 7/9/[1933], TDC, MS 10402/54, quoted in *LSB 1*, 190): as Knowlson reports, Beckett felt his and Peron's work on the ALP translation had been underestimated but nonetheless, felt "obliged to hide his true feelings" (Knowlson, 130). However, this night marked Beckett's return to the Joyce's circle.

From the point of view of Beckett's artistic development, it was in this period of distance from Joyce, during the summer of 1931, that he began to work on an early draft of his first novel *Dream.* John Pilling points out that just a few weeks later,

> the unusually close juxtaposition of having seen Lucia, whom he could not love, and then Peggy, whom he had ceased to love, within a few days of one another cannot have helped the state of mind, although he may already have realised [...] that this furnished him with a possible armature for the fictional creation. (*DN*, ix)

As Knowlson reports, later in that same week of July 1931, Beckett had "a rather miserable dinner with the three of them [the Joyces]. […] He thought that James and Nora were in good enough form […] But Lucia, he thought, looked dreadful. "Foutue" - knackered, fucked - was the word he used to describe her" (Knowlson, 134). Apart

from Beckett's comment on Lucia's state, it was right after this encounter that Beckett announces in a letter to McGreevy dated 15 August 1931 that he had written an early draft of "Walking Out": "I have just finished what I might describe as a whore's get version of Walking Out, the story I spoke to you of in London" (SB to McGreevy, 15/8/31, *LSB 1*, 82).

Lucia's condition grew worse in the following months: her first serious breakdown happened in February 1932 after the celebrations of Joyce's 50th birthday party along with the anniversary of *Ulysses*: she threw a chair at her mother when she discovered that Beckett had been invited. Following this episode, Giorgio and Nora in particular advocated her hospitalization. This was the beginning of a sorrowful path of more or less traumatic and invasive medical intervention, as we will see in the following section on Joyce.

Beckett, apparently, as suggested by a letter from Kay Boyle to Richard Ellmann following Lucia's death in 1983, seemed to have had a deeper understanding than Joyce of Lucia's painful situation from the very beginning:

> One day, when we chance to meet again, I want to tell you of my first meeting with Samuel Beckett. It was in the sad time of Lucia's first crisis, the beginning of it all, and Sam and I talked together at a crowded party. We both remember every word of that talk of over fifty years ago, [...] during which he convinced me that there is such a thing as madness, and that love or understanding or any emotional response to that condition is not the cure. (Kay Boyle to RE, 29/1/1983, RE Papers quoted in Shloss, 195)

Although Beckett's comment here is the result of a retrospective look at events which took place fifty years earlier, in saying "there is such a thing as madness", Beckett accepts the notion of madness as a concept capable of rational, positivistic identification and description, and also places himself in opposition to Joyce's initial wishful thinking that love would cure Lucia. However, as it was Beckett's love that Lucia apparently was seeking, in Beckett's statement we can also read a way of putting a barrier between himself and Lucia's illness, thus refusing any kind of responsibility. This also suggests that Beckett's conviction of the existence of madness as an empirical, observable condition, and thus one susceptible to treatment through medical technique, is to some degree a means of controlling an unwanted and invasive feminine desire.

Much closer to the early manifestations of Lucia's problem than Boyle's letter to Ellmann is the composition of Beckett's poem "Ootfish", written in 1938 ten years after Beckett's first encounter with Lucia, and almost two years after her final hospitalisation. Fordham reads in this poem "a hostility […] which has as its target all the fruitless and utilitarian attempts to diagnose the conditions of either Lucia or *Finnegans Wake*" (Fordham 1995, 65). Although we cannot be absolutely sure that Beckett has Lucia in mind, the possible allusions are quite striking:

> you won't cure it you - you won't endure it
> it is you it equals you any fool has to pity you
> so parcel up the whole issue and send it along
> the whole misery diagnosed undiagnosed misdiagnosed
> get your friends to do the same we'll make use of it
> we'll make sense of it we'll put it in the pot with the rest
> it all boils down to the blood of the lamb. (*Poems*, 31)

The idea that "there is such thing as madness" seems to be already here, along with its incurability (especially by means of love) but the tone seems much more despairing than in the earlier quote. This "diagnosed undiagnosed misdiagnosed" misery is also seen by Beckett as the sacrifice of the lamb, an image which Joyce also uses in the *Wake* in connection with Lucia as we will see later. Medical practice is seen throughout the poem as cynical, exploitative and ultimately pointless. The poem might have also some more practical implications: "ooftish" is archaic slang for money, which was not a secondary concern for Joyce (especially regarding the expensive fees of Lucia's frequent hospitalisations), and they also find space in the *Wake*. Beckett might have been aware of both Joyce's concerns and their reflection in the *Wake*, as he was helping Joyce with the final revisions at that time. The last line suggests a fatalist acceptance of the suffering and sacrifice of the innocent at the mercy of mercenary experts.

"Ooftish" was composed after the initial cooling down of Beckett's relationship with the Joyce's, and as Lucia's mental health rapidly deteriorated, Beckett became closely involved again not just in the most joyful moments in Joyce's life but even in the most painful ones. Thus, for example Beckett suggested Joyce consult his friend Geoffrey Thompson who had just become senior high physician at the Bethlem Hospital in London (Knowlson, 267); he also visited Lucia at Ivry in 1939, and kept writing to her

throughout her life after she was moved permanently at St. Andrews Hospital in Northampton in March 1951. Unlike Giorgio and Nora, Beckett remained a stable and cherishing presence until the very end of Lucia's life, as shown by the following passages from Lucia's correspondence with Jane Lidderdale in the late 1960s:

> Mr Beckett sends me the London News every week I think it is very nice of him. (Lucia Joyce to Lidderdale, 22/2/1967)
>
> I had a card from Mr Beckett he is going to Italy and Berlin he told me that my brother and his wife are going to Dublin this month for the Joyce week I have not heard from him. (Lucia Joyce to Lidderdale, 8/6/1967)
>
> […] I hope to get 10 pounds from Mr Beckett He allways [sic] sends me some money for Christmas. (Lucia Joyce to Lidderdale, 20/12/1968) [1]

One possible question then would be how far Lucia was a point of reference for the representations of demanding, "unstable" women in Beckett's subsequent fiction and drama: Celia in *Murphy*, or Lulu, renamed Anna, in "First Love" (Lucia's second name was Anna), Winnie to a smaller extent, *Not I*, to a greater extent, and *Rockaby*, even more, to mention a few examples. But here she would only be a distant point of reference and the danger of indulging in speculation would be rather high. On the other hand, the allusions to Lucia in Beckett's early fiction are much more definite. As will emerge from my textual analysis, biographical correspondences in Beckett's early prose are striking and, as I will now show in the next section, characters inspired by Lucia in Beckett's work attract Belacqua for the same reasons that in actuality Lucia was considered first eccentric and then "mad".

Despite being often reduced and dismissed as an unrequited love, Lucia and Beckett's relationship had much deeper implications: the composition of *Dream* and "Walking Out" coincide with the personal struggles Beckett was experiencing with the Joyces, right after his temporary exclusion from the family circle and before Lucia's condition had been recognised by everyone as critical. I will now illustrate Samuel Beckett's early attempts to deal with (and overcome) Joyce's influence through the example of two fictional portraits inspired by Lucia Joyce: the Syra-Cusa, one of the middling

[1] All these extracts are part of Lucia Joyce's correspondence with Jane Lidderdale in the Lidderdale Papers, Joyce Collection, National Archives (Joyce/1/E/1-7)

women tormenting Belacqua in *Dream* and Lucy in "Walking out", one of the short stories in *More Pricks than Kicks*.

From the Syra-Cusa to Lucy

As with the evolution of Beckett's use of Nordau in *Dream* and *More Pricks* outlined in Chapter 1, the examples I will use in this chapter reflect Beckett's imitation of Joyce's late style and compositional technique, and consequently the struggles to liberate himself from that influence. But they also bear another important feature borrowed from Joyce: the incorporation of personal material. And given that this personal material is drawn from Beckett's own experience with Lucia, Joyce's daughter, even the material itself is in fact "Joycean".

The choice of the name, the Syra-Cusa, is indeed very Joycean already. It derives from St. Lucia of Syracuse, whose name means light and who is the patron saint of the blind, this being the reason why Joyce chose this name for Lucia (who was born one day before St. Lucia, on 13th of December). Fordham has extensively shown how the *Wake* is full of allusions to her name, analysing how Joyce "distorts it and plays with its sonic permutations and combines the subsequent meanings" (Fordham 1995, 94). As noted by Pilling in his annotations to the *"Dream" Notebook*:

> [St. Lucia] had very beautiful eyes, such that a nobleman wanted to marry her. She therefore tore them out and gave them to him, saying, "now let me live unto God". She is represented in art carrying a palm branch and a dish with two eyes on it. (*DN*, 110-111)

In *Dream* the narrator suggests that she "might have sent (Belacqua) at least one of her eyes in a dish" (*Dream*, 179). But in the intimacy of the *Dream Notebook*, the implications are much darker, with Beckett seeing in Lucia no intention to be released from her "troth":

> Lucia
> But she didn't try to be released from her troth – she did not send me her eyes on a dish (*DN* [774])

Beckett thus seems to imply she was willing to offer her body to him rather than to God. As we will see in the following section, Joyce may well have had Lucia's

unfortunate relationships with men in mind when he refers in the *Wake* to the opposition between a "tough troth" (*FW* 279.F35) and a "fortuitous fiction" (*FW* 279.F36) in Issy's Letter part of II.2, a passage which of course combines "troth" and "frictions", commitment and antagonism, but also "truth" and "fiction", which in both Joyce's as well as Beckett's writings merge, especially when dealing with Lucia's presence.

The following passage from *Dream,* which offers a detailed description of the Syra-Cusa, seems to contain also most of what Knowlson sees as the "clues" hinting at Lucia as a source of inspiration (Knowlson, 148). Along with the biographical analogies, what is particularly striking is the massive usage of literary sources taken from the *Dream Notebook*. Most of these we have already met within Chapter 1: Robert Burton *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Pierre Garnier's *Onanisme seul et à deux*, Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony*, and William Cooper's *Flagellation and the Flagellants*. I have highlighted them in different colours in order to show the rich mosaic composed by Beckett and I will go on to look in more detail at each of them:

> Her grace was supplejack, it was cuttystool and cavaletto, he trembled on a springboard, jutting out, doomed, high over dream-water. Would she sink or swim in Diana's well? That depends what we mean by a maiden. (*Dream*, 34)

> The Great Devil had her, she stood in dire need of a heavyweight afternoon-man. What we mean is she was never even last, let alone satiate; very uterine; Lucrezia, Clytemnestra, Semiramide, a saturation of inappeasable countesses. An endless treacle moon at the Porte de la Villette with a chesty Valmont in crimson sweater, tweed casquette and bicycle clips - her tastes lay in that direction. Her eyes were wanton, they rolled and stravagued, they were laskivious and lickerish, the brokers of her zeal, basilisk eyes, the fowlers and Hooks of Amourrr, burning glasses. Strong piercing black eyes. Otherwise we think the face ought to have been in togs. But from throat to toe she was lethal, pyrogenous, Scylla and the Sphynx. The firm pap she had, the little mamelons, gave her an excellent grace. And the hips, the bony basin, coming after the Smeraldina-Rima's Primavera buttocks scream for a fusillade of spanners, facades, chiappate and verberations, the hips were a song and a very powerful battery. Eyes — less good, to be frank, than we make out, our pen carried too, to catch woodcocks. And hollow. Nothing behind it. She shone like a jewel in her conditions, like the cinnamon tree and the rich-furred cony and Æsop's jay and Pliny's kantharis. Another of the many that glare. She was always on the job, the job of being jewelly. "She lives" said Belacqua, altogether extenuated, one day behind her back to Lucien, "between the comb and a glass".

> The best of the joke was she thought she had a lech on Belacqua, she gave him to understand as much. She was as impotently besotted on Belacqua babylan, fiasco incarnate, Limbese, as the moon on Endymion. When it was patent, and increasingly so, that he was more Octave of Malvern than Valmont and more of a Limbo barnacle than either, mollecone, as they say on the banks of the Mugnone, honing after the dark. (*Dream*, 50)

Like the rest of *Dream*, the Syra-Cusa's portrait is characterised by a rather clumsy attempt to achieve a style through imitating Joyce's compositional technique. But the sources employed for Lucia are particularly interesting and I will look now at each one, beginning with Burton, **highlighted in blue**.

Burton is the most prominent source in this passage. As shown by Chris Ackerley in his comparison of women portraits in Beckett's *Dream* and the early poetry, most of the images and words used to describe the Syra-Cusa are taken from *Anatomy of Melancholy*, in particular Part III, which is dedicated to melancholy caused by love and jealousy. Here is the list of entries quoted almost verbatim in our passage:

> An afternoon man (Burton I, 75; *DN* [744])
>
> A fine round soft pap gives an excellent grace (Burton, III, 80; *DN* [838])
>
> Most forcible battery (Burton III, 126; *DN* [863])
>
> Loves fowlers (eyes) - the hooks of love basilisk eyes, burning glasses (Burton, III, 82-83,84; *DN* [840])
>
> The Virgin Mary had yellow hair of a wheat colour & a most pleasing piercing black eye (Burton, III, 86; *DN* [842])
>
> Her rolling eyes were the brokers and harbingers of her suit (Burton, III, 89; *DN* [847])
>
> A case of the cinnamon tree and the rich furry cony (Burton, III, 95; *DN* [855])
>
> Shine in jewels in her conditions (Burton, III, 98; *DN* [857])
>
> Spending her time between a comb and glass (Burton, III, 99; *DN* [858])
>
> Strangle me in her garters (Burton, III; 169; *DN* [876])
>
> She's as impotently besotted on him as the moon on Endymion (Burton, III, 42; *DN* [830])

In the Syra-Cusa's case, most of these, for example "spending her time between the comb and the glass"[2] (Burton, III, 99; *DN* [858]), are taken from subsections 2 and 3 of Burton's text, dedicated to Beauty as a cause of love and to the Artificial Allurements which, according to Burton, include "provocation of gestures, clothes, jewels, pigments, [and] exornations" (Burton, III, 3). Beckett's choice seems to denote an utterly conventional male suspicion of the female "masquerade" which we will also encounter in Joyce. Interestingly, the choice of this particular quotation from Burton, "shine in jewels and stink in conditions" (*DN* [857]), which in *Dream* becomes "[s]he shone like a jewel in her conditions" and "[s]he was always on the job, the job of being jewelly represents a quite striking coincidence: as noted by Shloss, in picking that particular line, Beckett adopts almost the same words Stuart Gilbert used in his *Paris Journal* (Shloss, 191): as it emerges from his diaries, Gilbert did not have a very positive opinion of Lucia, and the words he uses to describe her in his journal are memorable:

> [...] professing the feminist desire to 'work' and having the feminine aversion for any work that is not directly exhibitionist or concerned with embellishing her body – 'work' as she sees it, meaning a well warmed and elegant office where *she, the Worker, shines like a jewel before the admiring gaze of employer.* (24/5/1932, Gilbert 1993, 48; my italics)

As Shloss notes, "where Gilbert generalised, seeing exhibitionism as a typically "feminine trait" […] Lucia posing for the "gaze" of men magnified and focused the behaviours of a lifetime spent as an artist's child" (Shloss, 189). This was an aspect of Lucia which definitely both allured and scared the young Beckett ("the genius of beauty at the right or wrong moment"), with the notion of feminine beauty as aesthetic ideal contending with the notion of artificial, empty masquerade.

Burton supplies different images for the physical description of the Syra-Cusa's attractive body, as the "firm pap she had [that] gave her an excellent grace" and, in particular, for her beautiful and dangerous eyes, often seen as privileged signs of interiority: "loves fowlers (eyes) - the hooks of love basilisk eyes, burning glasses", "The Virgin Mary had yellow hair of a wheat colour & a most pleasing piercing black eye", or "her rolling eyes were the brokers and harbingers of her suit", which recalls the

[2] See also Belacqua's own description in *Echo's bones* spending his life "between the bottle and the mirror" (25).

standard description of insanity, along with the fact that they were "less good, to be frank, than we make out", possibly an allusion to Lucia's squint. Burton provides a rich series of erudite images which help Beckett to define the conflicted nature of his relationship with Lucia which, for instance, is equated to the impossible one between Endymion and the Moon. But Beckett also describes the Syra-Cusa as "st[anding] in dire need of a heavyweight afternoon-man", namely a lover. Shloss reads this need for a lover as a substitute for the father (Shloss, 194), but in fact there seems to be no evidence of this in the text. As will become clearer later in this analysis, Belacqua rather needs a substitute for himself, as he is trying to avoid any physical intercourse with the "insatiable" Syra-Cusa.

As already noted by Ackerley, these allusions to Burton are combined, with "flecks of text from other particular texts" (Ackerley 2002, 63) which seems to mark the difference between the Syra-Cusa, characterised by a rather Medusean, deceptive, decadent beauty, and the other women, such as the Smeraldina inspired by his cousin Peggie Sinclair (whose portrait is more tender and affectionate with several references to Dante's *Purgatorio* employed to describe her) and the Alba (based on Edna McCarthy, another friend who is represented as the idealised lady). I will now analyse each source in detail.

The portrait of the Syra-Cusa expresses a beauty which reflects *fin de siècle*, decadent standards, whose appreciation, according to Nordau in *Degeneration,* as seen earlier*,* was a symptom of mental decay as well as a characteristic of the Modernist aesthetic. As seen in Chapter 1, the borderline character of Belacqua can definitely be seen as a parodic version of the degenerate artist according to Nordau's conception; but to a certain extent, even the Syra-cusa is depicted as a modernist, degenerate artwork, possessing to an extent "the (degenerate) genius of beauty". Possibly Beckett is suggesting the idea of Lucia as a daughter of modernism (or at least of what was for Beckett the greatest modernist writer) for she is also associated with artefacts such as Brancusi's *Bird in Space* at one point in the text, a "Brancusi bird" (Brancusi at that time had just created the illustration cover for *Tales Told of Shem and Shaun. Three Fragments from Work in Progress* published in February 1932).

Another exceptional source for images of threatening decadent beauty is Mario Praz's *Romantic Agony* (*La carne, la morte e il diavolo)*, **highlighted in red**, an extensive and

insightful study on the decadent aesthetic, which inspired Beckett in his description of the Syra-Cusa's "lethal beauty" (*DN* [277], *Dream*, 50), providing him with a rich list of dangerous *femmes fatales:*Lucrezia Borgia, the niece of Pope Alexander VI and an infamous poisoner; Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon and lover of Aegisthus, with whom she murdered her husband in his bath on his return from Troy; Semiramide, the Assyrian princess who slaughtered her lovers after they had spent the night with her; Scylla the beautiful nymph turned into monster who murdered her father: the Sphinx, famous for its riddles, linked by Praz here to Oscar Wilde's poem *The Sphinx*, "[y]ou wake in me each bestial sense,/ you make me what I would not be": and finally there is also the allusion to "a chesty Valmont", the seducer in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by Choderlos de Laclos (*DN* [277]; [312]; [329]). The effect is to emphasize the Syrah-Cusa's mutable, mercurial fluidity of self, a series of masks.

The passage also contains some borrowings from another peculiar text, Cooper's *Flagellation and the Flagellants; History of the Rod*, **highlighted in Green.** As the title suggests this is a history of flagellation through the ages, from which Beckett borrows different modes of chastisement "on the breech" *(Dream*, 50) for the Syra-Cusa who, as we are told, possesses "hips [which] were a song and a very powerful battery". Below is the full list of entries from Cooper:

> Fessades, chiappate -- rods, slaps (Cooper, 25; *DN* [353])
>
> A claque on the seat of honour (Cooper, 25; *DN* [354])
>
> A verberation on the breech (Cooper, 26; *DN* [355])
>
> Supplejack (rattan) (Cooper, 352; *DN* [378])
>
> Cutty stool - Scottish stool repentance (Cooper, 177; *DN* [389])
>
> Cavaletto (marble flogging block) (Cooper, 202; *DN* [401])

Beckett's description of "her buttocks scream[ing] for a fusillade of spanners, facades, chiappate and verberations", suggests the idea of punishment as both cure and titillation, but also ideas of discipline and control. Moreover, Beckett plays with the ambiguity and the passage seems to suggest the wish of punishing Syra-Cusa for her physical attractiveness as well as describing her own effect on Belacqua, who requires punishment or even "flagellation" for being too sensitive to her beauty.

The last source for the portrait of the Syracuse is also revealing; Pierre Garnier's *Onanisme, seul et à deux*, **highlighted in pink**. As seen in Chapter 1, it is very likely that Beckett read this book because of Joyce. Beckett could rely on Garnier's text for further erudite appropriations to define the Syra-Cusa's perverse sensuality. From Garnier he borrowed for instance her "little mamelons" to which according to Garnier "a manual prelude" should be applied "*so that she might be pricked & titillated, until she fell in with his male desires*" (Garnier, 44; *DN* [446]; my italics). However, the next borrowing seems to suggest a different sexual dynamic:

> a uterine temperament: lassata sed satiata (from Juvenal's Satire VI, "then exhausted by men but unsatisfied she went away") (Garnier, 70; *DN* [455])

In the description of The Syra-Cusa as "very uterine" (thus recalling the etymology of hysteria itself, which derives from the Greek word "hustéra", which means "womb"), we can read an example of Beckett's early misogynism, of which he has often been accused; but it possibly reveals even some hostility towards Joyce himself, and consequently reflected on the people around him: Lucia, after all, was the reason for the cooling down of Joyce's relationship with Beckett. However, Beckett was not isolated in his view of Lucia 'unsatisfied' and sexually voracious. Most of the biographical accounts refer to Lucia in similar terms (Maddox for instance speaks of Lucia's "uncontrollable interest in young men" with "sexual liberation all around them" – Maddox, 251): Ellmann, Maddox and Shloss all report a conversation between Lucia and William Bird during which Lucia confessed "Mr Bird, the trouble with me is that I'm sex-starved" (Ellmann, 649). Speaking of sexual starvation, the next entry from Garnier is not included in *Dream*:

> He would not perform upon her the duty of an husbands [sic] brother (Garnier, 17; *DN* [423])

However, as seen earlier, we nonetheless find references to "the afternoon man", or substitute for Belacqua, who is not particularly inclined to perform with the Syra-Cusa any marital duties. This attitude anticipates Belacqua's and Lucy's marital *menage* in "Walking Out" as we will see soon. It is also worth noting that if on the one hand, celibacy can be read as a peculiar expression of Belacqua's "degenerate" sexuality, as seen in Chapter 1, sexual abstinence was also a direct consequence of confinement:

abstinence as a way of curing the hysterical body was something which Lucia, in real life, experienced personally and Beckett might be alluding to this.

The Syra-Cusa makes her appearance in *Dream* with "her body more perfect than dream creek", which can be read as a possible allusion to the *Wake*; she also, ALP-like, "flow[s] along in a *nervous swagger*, swinging a thin arm amply" and with her head "null" (*Dream*, 33). Moreover, she is said to be "prone, when brought to dine out, to puke, but into her serviette, with decorum, because, supposedly, the *craving of her viscera* was not for food and drink" (33). The passage seems to reflect a quite harsh vision, combining directness with innuendo, gossip with impersonal diagnosis (which nonetheless seems to find a biographical correspondence in Dominique Maroger's recollection in *James Joyce*: "[Lucia] faisait la grève de la faim, que Miss Weaver ne vainquit que par des ruses sans cesse réinventées. Lucia se détruisait, comme elle continue à le faire aujourd'hui"; Maroger, 82): "viscera" being latin for "womb" Beckett is, once again, attributing to the Syra-Cusa hysterical tendencies. It also seems to have a strong biographical correspondence since, as seen in the biographical overview, before Beckett explained to Lucia that he was not interested in her, they had met in an Italian restaurant where Beckett had taken the precaution of bringing a friend along; as a consequence, Lucia was upset and left early without having said a word or eaten a mouthful. Beckett is possibly trying to "pathologise" what could be considered a normal reaction. The passage, nonetheless, seems also to suggest some sort of idealisation of a pathological condition which, to a certain extent, recalls Joyce's own reaction to Lucia's problems: after all, "[t]o take her arm, to flow together, out of step, […] was a *foundering* in music, the slow ineffable flight of a *dream-dive*, a launching and terrible *foundering in a rich rape of water*" (*Dream*, 33-34, note here the further allusion to the *Wake*, my italics). Beckett seems to see Lucia, her beauty as well as her eccentricities, as a product of Joyce's degenerate (as seen in Chapter 1) genius. It is strange that Shloss in her analysis of *Dream* does not spot signs of instability in Beckett's description of Lucia as the Syra-cusa. As in fact, Beckett can be here considered an early 'reader' of Lucia (as was Joyce – and so many Joyceans subsequently). It is true though, as proved by the allusions enlisted above, the Syra-Cusa's beauty is perceived as a threat by Belacqua, possibly reflecting Beckett's own conflicting feelings towards Lucia (the genius of beauty at the right - or the wrong - moment, again). The portrait of Syra-Cusa reveals Belacqua's own attitude towards

self-flagellation as he actually finds it hard to resist her. Interestingly, in *Dream* the only anecdote chosen in order to give the "substance of the Syra-Cusa" is the following one which denotes a strong tension between the body and text:

> One calamitous night Belacqua on fire, it is only fair to say with Ruffino, *was affected by her person with such force that he pressed upon her*, as a gift and a *mark of esteem* (mark of esteem!) *a beautiful book, one that he loved […] He pressed this treasure upon her*. *Lit with drink he forced her to take it*. She did not want it, she said she did not. It was no good to her, she would never read it, thank you very much all the same. Now if he happened to have such a thing as a *Sadie Blackens* […] But he pestered and plagued her till she gave in to get rid of him and took it. Then she left it in a bar and he dragged her back form the Batignolles to near the Gobelins to retrieve it. (*Dream*, 51)

My emphases stress the extremely physical and sensual way in which the episode is narrated. But paradoxically, it is a book, a text, that Belacqua uses to defend himself against and, at the same time, seduce this already textually-composed character: Belacqua is "affected by her person with such a force" that he uses the copy of Dante as a way to physically divide their bodies, but the way he "presses" it upon her is charged with sexual tension. And although she eventually leaves the book at the bar forcing them to go back to retrieve it, this seems not to be the real reason why she should be considered a nuisance, but more the fact that Belacqua finds it hard to keep their relationship at a purely intellectual level. The passage has once again strong biographical overtones, as Beckett actually gave as a present his copy of Dante to Lucia; this is confirmed by both Ellmann and Shloss, as well as from Lucia's own autobiographical recollections commissioned by Weaver in the late 1950s, "He […] gave me a copy of Dante La Divina Commedia as a present." (*Autobiography of Lucia Joyce*[3])

In *Dream* Belacqua's tormented relationship with women, in particular, becomes the exemplification of his own inability to reconcile body and mind. On the one hand, Belacqua tends to consider women as a projection of his own psyche, but in fact they constantly remind him of his body, and in doing so become an element of disturbance

[3] Handwritten notebook written by Lucia, commissioned by Harriet Weaver part of the Joyce Collection, Harry Ransom Centre. I am grateful to Elsa Baroghel for providing me with a copy.

in his attempts to exist within "the umbra" or the "tunnel" (*Dream*, 45) of his mind. As stated by Kroll in "Belacqua as Artist and Lover":

> Belacqua is […] more interested in immersion in his own consciousness, his Limbo (his identity as the Florentine Belacqua), where inactivity and impotence are specifically sought after as a release from the emotional tangles of the external world. The hero's difficulties are, therefore, largely fabricated, and the fiascoes in which he becomes involved are due to his inability either to maintain his impotence or to achieve a mature sexuality. (Kroll, 11)

Possibly in actuality, Beckett considered Lucia's mind as "the tortured and blocked replica of genius" (Ellmann, 649) in Ellmann's words or, as Chris Ackerley suggests, that he "became attuned to her erratic nature" and would watch "fascinated by aspects of her father's mind running rampant in the daughter" (Ackerley 2002, 62). However, in *Dream*, Belacqua's attention seems to be focused on The Syra-Cusa's attractive but dangerous body, which is "hollow" with "[n]othing behind it". Her head becomes simply "null". This characteristic might have a positive connotation for a character like Belacqua, if it were not for the fact that his nullification seems to exacerbate The Syra-Cusa's physicality. In defining her mind "null" Beckett is nonetheless suggesting an intellectual affinity between her mind and Belacqua's (an affinity which Smeraldina, for instance, totally lacks), as suggested by the "mark of esteem" he wants to express with the gift of the copy of Dante.

Beckett might have not been completely aware of the extent of Lucia's problem at the time of the composition of *Dream*, however the worsening of her condition might be seen as the reason why Beckett, after having dismissed her in *Dream,* decided to go back to her in *More Pricks* and make her body "unthreatening" so that if Beckett could not be in real life a suitable companion for her ("love is not the cure") at least his fictional alter ego Belacqua could, (the same character who in "Fingal", as seen earlier, considers the asylum a place of sanctuary). I agree with Ackerley when he says that the Syra-Cusa's "portrait lacks any sub-text of remorse" and that it looks like "an exorcism, a goodbye to all that" (Ackerley 2002, 66); I also share his bafflement about the consequences if *Dream* had actually been published: "and one can only wonder what might have happened, had the novel been published, to Beckett's rapprochement with

Joyce" (66).[4] In Dream the Syra-Cusa is relegated to a "postil" (*Dream*, 50), strikingly, long before the character of Issy being relegated within the footnotes in the *Wake*:

> Why we want to drag in the Syra-Cusa at this juncture it passes our persimmon to say. She belongs to another story, a short one, a far far better one. She might even go into a postil. (*Dream*, 49)

And Beckett intimates her to "be off" in a rather harsh misogynistic way: "Be off, puttanina, and joy be with you and a bottle of moss" (*Dream*, 51). However, it is quite striking that Beckett subsequently feels the need to give a new literary shape to Lucia as Lucy in "Walking Out". As noted by Pilling, in the passage above Beckett is possibly alluding to this: the "better story" being not *Finnegans Wake*, as Shloss reads it, but, instead, we would argue, Beckett's own story "Walking Out" (Pilling 2011, 185).

It is interesting how in this case Beckett manipulates the same biographical material. Unlike the Alba and Smeraldina, the other women in *Dream*, we don't find traces of Syra-Cusa in *More Pricks*. Lucy and the Syra-Cusa have in common the attractiveness of their bodies, but on these bodies a different destiny is inflicted. At the very beginning of "Walking Out", Belacqua is described as obsessed with the idea of finding for Lucy, his companion, a *cicisbeo* (a sort of authorised lover, a variation of the "afternoon man" already encountered in *Dream*) "so that they can establish their married life on this solid basis of a cuckoldry" (*MPTK*, 96). Belacqua's worries however come to an end when Lucy becomes the victim of an accident which makes her "crippled for life", preventing her from having sexual intercourse. Her accident opens the possibility of a happy marriage and Syra-Cusa's "basilisk eyes" become "better worlds than this" as they "never allude to the old days when she had hopes of a place in the sun." (*MPTK*, 105)

In "Walking Out" the literary allusions of *Dream* have almost disappeared (there are very few examples, leaving space for a far more sophisticated system of allusions which seem to be mainly Joycean, similar to the process described for Swift in

[4] Perhaps Beckett thought himself as good as Joyce in producing a text able to conceal the real identities of his characters. Or possibly he thought Joyce was not particularly good at spotting Lucia's presence in other's people texts, given the famous remark on "Walking Out": "One of the characters is named Lucia but it is quite different. She is crippled or something" (*JJL III*, 313).

"Fingal"). Among the exceptions is the word "cicisbeo"; interestingly, this is another borrowing from Max Nordau, as shown by the following entry in the *"Dream" Notebook*:

> the idea of a marital life "mitigated by a cicisbeo" (*DN* [765])

The sexless marriage in "Walking Out" definitely recalls that of Leopold and Molly Bloom, but of course everything is subverted: if in *Ulysses* it is a consequence of a painful experience after a marriage that is the basis of the development of the narration, in Beckett's case it becomes the culmination, being the premise for the only eventually happy marriage; moreover, what can in *Ulysses* be seen as a sort of mutual agreement (betrayal is something the Blooms have in common and tacitly accept); in "Walking Out", ironically, Belacqua tries unsuccessfully to impose betrayal on his partner in order to preserve his chastity, an outcome which is, nonetheless, only accidentally (and tragically) achieved.

Also, Lucy's misinterpretation of Belacqua's "sursum corda" (*MPTK*, 21) as his inclination to voyeuristic practices, as well as her "seeing" nothing at different times in the story, seem to add to the story's subversion of "Nausicaa", this confirmed by the absence of the "cuckoo" which is invoked three different times in the story, so recalling the final page of "Nausicaa":

> Only the cuckoo was wanting. (*MPTK*, 95)
>
> The cuckoo however was still in abeyance. (*MPTK*, 100)
>
> It was at this moment that he heard with a pang, rattling away in the distance, crex-crex, crex-crex, crex-crex,the first corncrake of the season. With a pang, because he had not yet heard the cuckoo. (*MPTK*, 103)[5]

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[5] Compare with: A bat flew. Here. There. Here. Far in the grey a bell chimed. Mr Bloom with open mouth his left boot sanded sideways, leaned, breathed. Just for a few.
Cuckoo
Cuckoo
Cuckoo
The clock on the mantelpiece in the priest's house cooed where Canon O'Hanlon and Father Conroy and the reverend John Hughes S. J. were taking tea and soda bread and butter and fried mutton chops with catsup and talking about
Cuckoo
Cuckoo

A further analogy is established by the physical impairment that Gerty McDowell and Lucy have in common: the discovery of which is a source of guilt for the Bloom, who is relieved by the fact that he didn't notice it before their "remote sexual intercourse", while for Belacqua it becomes a relief as it liberates him from the obligation of sexual intercourse.

Although these different portraits of Lucia have in common Beckett's misogynistic attitude towards women in his early years, of which the Syra-Cusa's portrait seems to offer a perfect example, the destiny inflicted on Lucy is at once cruel but much less dismissive: her presence in Belacqua's mind is not limited to the borders of the short story, as she is remembered later in another short story, "What a Misfortune": here, interestingly, Beckett eventually found space for a quotation from Burton jotted down in "Dream" notebook but which was not included in *Dream*: "Mens mia [sic] lucescit, Lucia luce tua" ("My mind shines, Lucia, for your light", *DN* [868], *MPTK*, 131) with which he plays with Lucy/Lucia's name and its meaning "light" ("luce" in Italian), in a very Joycean fashion. Although Belacqua moves on with his existence, "his dear departed Lucy" (*MPTK*, 131), once lost, remains a cherished shadow, just as happened to Beckett with Lucia.

Like "Fingal", "Walking Out" is a further example of how *More Pricks*, with its more sophisticated and dynamic system of allusions in a constant oscillation between parody and tribute, can indeed be seen as the very first stage of that process of purification, which Beckett needed to undertake in order to find his own literary voice, as noted by Pilling (Pilling 2004, 64). In the case of Lucia's different textual representations, this need of "purging" becomes even more significant: as I have shown, Beckett is at once "purging" Lucia, as a way of punishing her in some sort of revenge, but also "purging"

Cuckoo
Because it was a little canarybird bird that came out of its little house to tell the time that Gerty MacDowell noticed the time she was there because she was as quick as anything about a thing like that, was Gerty MacDowell and she noticed at once that foreign gentleman that was sitting on the rocks looking was
Cuckoo
Cuckoo
Cuckoo
(*U* 313.1986-1306)
Compare also with the *Wake*: "What clashes here of wills gen wonts, oystrygods gaggin fishygods! Brekkek Kékkek Kékkek Kékkek! Kóax Kóax Kóax! Ualu Ualu Uslu! Quaouauh!" (*FW* 2.1-3)

himself of Lucia's dangerous attractiveness, and possibly, of his sense of guilt after the worsening of her conditions. Beckett's attempt to reach a detached linguistic expression is reminiscent of Joyce: in *Dream*, in particular, Belacqua tries to control the voracious desire of the woman through a derivative Waken textuality, but in *More Pricks* Beckett turns instead to a more confident manipulation of his material. Beckett's change in attitude towards representing Lucia, therefore, is closely related to his overcoming Joyce's influence. However, if both Beckett's texts reveal his struggles to establish a physical distance between himself and Lucia, as we will now see, in Joyce's case the text become a vehicle to overcome the growing distance between father and daughter.

"For tough troth is stronger than fortuitous friction" (*FW* 279.F34) – Issy's Footnotes and Lucia's Confinement

Lucia's condition is a controversial but crucial point in Joyce's life and work. Many critics have extensively referred to her presence in the *Wake*. Finn Fordham, Carol Shloss, Jean Michel-Rabaté, and more recently Genevieve Sartor, in particular, have analysed the different ways in which Lucia's illness affected the composition of the Wake and how her destiny conditioned some of Joyce's textual choices. Shloss' work *Lucia Joyce – To Dance in the Wake* is the most extensive biographical account available, and includes a brief genetic overview showing within the text some of the allusions to Lucia's painting, her dancing, and the issue of her courtship. Much more accurate in providing detailed genetic evidences, Fordham with his doctoral thesis as well as in the article "Lighting becomes Electra", published in 2012, has shown the evolution of Lucia's role in the composition of the *Wake*, with her first breakdown as the watershed. Lucia's presence in the *Wake* can be sensed first as child/teenager and then following her growth, we find more or less overt allusions to her career as a dancer (and the consequence of its end), broken engagements, and the attempt to find her an artistic occupation with the "illuminated" letters which were going to embellish her father's work. Fordham, in particular, has shown how the evolution of the text reflects the evolution of Lucia's condition – the desperate search for a cure, Joyce's belief in Lucia's clairvoyance, but also, as with Beckett (even though their perspectives are necessarily different) his coming to terms with his sense of guilt and failure. More recently Sartor has focused on the genetic comparison between the later stages of revision of II.2 and the ALP's final monologue, showing their thematic connections

through the analysis of Lucia's presence. Still her presence in the *Wake* is not limited to these elements, whose interplay reveal the complexity of the connections between Joyce's daughter and his text.

In this section, I will add a further tile in this critical mosaic. In particular I am interested in how the text reflects and responds to Lucia's "madness", which despite the different diagnoses seems to have been perceived (by Joyce, by Beckett, and the people around them) as the result of both a "malfunctioning" mind and also a "malfunctioning body: either too weak or sexually insatiable (as seen with Beckett), a body which needs to be controlled, contained and possibly institutionalised. If Beckett's texts stage a struggle between discipline and desire, by trying to establish a physical distance between his characters within the texts, Joyce's text after Lucia's breakdown reflects his struggles with the idea of being separated from his daughter as well as his refusal of Lucia's confinement, which characterised his choices for Lucia's treatments from the emergence of her problems in 1932 until 1936. The text thus reflects Joyce's attempts to process the idea of the distance between father and daughter, objectifying it within the text as a way to exorcise his fears. For both Joyce and Beckett nonetheless, we can also sense in their texts their coming to terms with their sense of guilt as well as the wish for self-absolution. I will now compare the chronology of events between 1932 and 1936 (Lucia's first breakdown and her final institutionalisation) with the genetic evolution of the "Nightlesson" in the same period, focusing in particular on some key changes which the text underwent between 1933 and 1934: I will explore the way in which the evolution of Lucia's condition contributed to the development of Issy's role in II.2, from the composition of Issy's letter to her consequent "confinement" within the footnotes. I will read these elements as Joyce's textual responses to the situation, which reflect his coming to terms with the supposed necessity of having her isolated and under surveillance, of putting a limit to her uncontainable nature; and his struggling with the necessity of distance between them and with the possibility of her permanent confinement in a mental institution.

Biographical Overview – Lucia's Medical History 1932-1936

The whole story has already been told. Shloss' biography is the most extensive biographical account available, but Fordham is very insightful in his dissertation, including a concise biographical account with unpublished material and an accurate

comparison with the genetic evolution of the texts. However, I will briefly outline those biographical elements which will support my analysis of the text along with brief reference to Joyce's compositional achievements, which I will then analyse later in this section.

After her first "episode" in February 1932, Lucia began a long series of medical consultations and confinements in institutions. As showed by Carol Shloss in her biography, *To Dance in the Wake*, after her first residence in a *maison de sainté* in 1932, Lucia, and hence the whole Joyce family, met more than 24 different doctors, though psychoanalysts for a while were avoided. As a result, Lucia was exposed to the most cutting-edge institutions of that time. Thus for example in early 1932, during her first internment in the *maison de sainté* at l'Haye-Les-Roses, where some specialists found her quite sane but nervously excited and suffering from abulia (it is a striking coincidence that this was also the main characteristic of Belacqua, as seen in Chapter 1), while Doctor Henri Codet, founder of the Société Psychoanalytique in Paris, diagnosed Lucia's illness as "hebephrenic psychosis with serious prognosis". At that time, Joyce began to classify Lucia's behaviour, "to notice whether her thoughts seem disjointed and whether she fell into apathy" (JJ to Weaver, 6/8/1932, *JJL III*, 254). It was also at this time that Joyce wanted Lucia involved in an artistic occupation, commissioning in October 1932 the "lettrines", illuminated capital letters drawn by Lucia for each of the poems of *Pomes Penyeach*. As it emerges from both Shloss and Fordham's accounts, Joyce was gradually accepting the idea that Lucia should be kept under the surveillance of nurses; but he kept arguing with the family doctor, Fontaine, against solitary confinement, being convinced that Lucia would get irrecoverably worse following therapeutic isolation (Shloss, 232). From the genetic point of view, throughout 1932, with some intervals, Joyce was working at II.1 and II.2 at once, although the whole structure was not clear yet (he only had the so called "Triangle" section for II.2 so far). He was concluding the twilight games and sent "The Rainbow Girls" passage to Weaver in August 1932 when at Feldkirch with Lucia and the Jolases, where he managed to write after months.

In 1933, Lucia spent a few months in Switzerland with her parents. During this period, she was taken to the expensive clinic Les Rives de Prangins near Geneva for a few days in July and she was then admitted to the Burghözli Poliklinik, Zurich University

Hospital, after few weeks. The Burghözli was an institution which was considered at the cutting edge of research on schizophrenia where, following to Bleuler's theories, treatment consisted of a combination of organicist and psychotherapeutic approaches. In fact, as Shloss suggests, here was a sinister reality similar the Salpetriere in Paris, "a lunatic asylum, a house of lunacy, a place of madness, screaming and despair" (Shloss, 259). Joyce's family met the director, Dr Hans Wolfang Maier. As pointed out by Shloss, Maier was a pivotal figure in Lucia's life, for it was through him that she was handed into care of other doctors who had been trained by Bleuler (such as Oscar Forel, as well as other doctors who later visited Lucia: Raymond Mallet, Otto Naegeli, Jung and Brunner), hence she was seen in the light of Bleuler's research on dementia praecox. Maier found Lucia markedly neurotic but not "lunatic". Still, according to the general confusion concerning such mysterious diseases, Oscar Forel, another pupil of Bleuler and son of the eminent Auguste Forel, had a different diagnosis to offer. Forel had admitted Lucia at the Prangins clinic in Geneva in July 1933, as she was almost catatonic. Here she was diagnosed as schizophrenic but with "pithiatic elements" which means she could be cured by suggestion[6] (which nonetheless would have been extremely expensive, see Elmann, 665). But eventually he said he had no diagnosis to offer. Lucia was then taken to Burghozli hospital in Zurich where she was particularly miserable and frightened; she refused to stay and within a week her parents took her away from the clinic. She then returned to Prangins at the beginning of 1934 and remained there for eight months. Joyce was particularly upset as he felt isolated in his refusal to hospitalise Lucia. On the other hand, Leon in his correspondence with Weaver expresses more than once his preoccupation with the continued resistance Joyce was putting up against advice to put Lucia in a mental asylum: "he has still to fight against pressure brought to bear on him from all sides with regard to placing his daughter under a certain restraint in a sanatorium which he absolutely refuses to do. […] He tells me that she is encouraged by certain people to go and pass the winter alone in Zurich – this he regards as lunacy but every time I meet him some new origin of her condition has been discovered but the only thing which does not vary is the fact that he is the culprit" (Paul Leon to Weaver, 23/9/1933, *JJL III*, 287).

[6] The term "pithiatrism" was introduced by Joseph Babinski as a supplement for hysteria. It was based upon the theory positing that some hysterical indicators are generated by suggestion and can thus be removed by suggestion and would thus differentiate hysterical disorders from those on which persuasion has no impact.

It is difficult to guess exactly what happened in 1933 because Harriet Shaw Weaver burnt several of the relevant letters in the 1950s. However, the worsening of Lucia's conditions resulted in Joyce's breakdown, which consisted of insomnia and hallucinations. His doctors would not allow him to work, and he went on a cure of phosphor which caused the worsening of his paranoid states as well as severe hallucinations which he thought he deserved. Fordham in his thesis provides an interesting reading of II.3 (whose composition intersects with II.3 in the mid 1930s), showing how the text reflects the exasperation of Joyce's paranoia and self-accusation. The preoccupations for the reception of his work were almost obfuscated by concerns for his daughter as well as paranoid states originated by the fear of what other people around him were thinking.

From a genetic point of view this was a particularly crucial moment, as a small but very significant achievement was reached: at the end of 1933, Issy's voice and role within the chapter become more definite. The first step in this direction is the composition of what is generally defined as Issy's "Letter", at p. 279 in the final text. The first draft was composed by the end of 1933 and it was then left aside. However, as I will argue later, it helped Joyce in the shaping of Issy's role within the chapter, providing the link between II.1 and "The Triangle" fragment that Joyce already had written in 1926. Despite the vagueness of the chronology available, it is a fact that from the following year, 1934, II.2 underwent very important changes: Joyce composed "Storiella" and gave the textbook format to the chapter, introducing the footnotes (in which Issy's letter will eventually find its space). Issy thus becomes central to the development of the chapter, and despite all his personal struggles, Joyce managed to fill the gap between II.1 and "The Triangle".

At the beginning of the new year 1934, Lucia had first run away from home and been taken back by the police and had then cut the telephone wires, furious about the attention her father was receiving for his birthday, as well as the decision to allow *Ulysses* to be published in America. Lucia was sent again to the expensive clinic Les Prangins at Nyon and Joyce promised to Giorgio that she would remain until Giorgio returned to Europe. Lucia was to stay there for eight months. At this time, apparently, she was also treated for syphilis[7]. Despite the lack of any diagnosis, this can be

[7] Compare with Fordham 1995, Shloss, but also Ferris, *James Joyce and the Burden of Disease.*

considered a point of no return. As Fordham notes, "[t]he reports from Prangins near Geneva were indeed very disturbing. After an initial settling period in March Lucia was hallucinating and dissociating. She managed to escape, hid in a peasant hut and asked to stay there so she could cross the border the next day. But she was soon brought back" (Fordham 1995, 39). On the other hand, Joyce himself seemed not to be managing this prolonged distance from Lucia well. In September 1934, when Lucia tried both to escape and commit suicide, nonetheless Joyce believed that it was her status of continuous surveillance that was harming her:

> Her stay at Nyon, according to Joyce, had not been a success, and she was "on the verge of collapse" (2.9.34: to Giedion-Welcker). Joyce found that Lucia had tried to escape from the hospital by swimming across Lake Geneva. The hospital had thought she was trying to commit suicide since the lake was too wide to swim across. When she was picked up by a rowing boat she made them promise that they would not put her back under surveillance. But when Joyce visited he found she was under restraint, her windows were barred, and she was continually "surveillée". Joyce wanted to take her away from this hospital: "I feel that if she stays here she will simply fade out". (Fordham 1995, 42-43)

No wonder Joyce was unhappy with it, as this expensive clinic sounds here as bad as the Burghozli (and yet this account conflicts with other descriptions of Prangins[8]): it could be argued that Joyce was blaming a certain kind of disciplinary modernity for Lucia's condition. The imagery employed in this letter is also very interesting: if she is continually watched she will fade, as if the gaze will erase her. In his desperate attempt to avoid putting Lucia in a mental institution (which would have also implied a definitive diagnosis as psychotic for Lucia, something which Joyce really wanted to avoid), in 1934 Joyce even looked for some answers from parapsychological disciplines such as graphology: he tried to obtain a report on Lucia's handwriting from Dr Max Pulver. But even in this case his attempt was not successful, as Pulver refused to give any opinion[9]. It was also at the end of 1934 that Lucia met Carl Gustav Jung, and it is well-known that this encounter was a total failure, confirming Joyce's hostility towards the Swiss doctor and his discipline. As mentioned in Chapter 1, however, Jung was not

[8] Lisa Appignanesi in *Mad, Bad and Sad* provides an accurate account of the life of the the patients at Prangins, focussing in particular on Zelda Fitzgerald who spent a period there few months before Lucia's arrival (compare Appignanesi, 229 and ff.).
[9] Compare JJ to Carola Giedion-Welcker 22/7/1934 *JJL III*, 310.

indifferent to Joyce: years earlier, he had already made Joyce an example of the schizophrenic mind. For Jung, Joyce's psychosis remained "latent", but he also spoke, more ambiguously, of "an insane person of an uncommon sort" whose apparent abnormality may conceal "superlative powers of mind" (Jung, 134). Even though this article was greatly improved for its second publication in 1932, Joyce's reaction to it wasn't positive and possibly his refusal to have anything to do with psychoanalysis until late 1934 for Lucia, was probably reflected by the hostility generated by this episode.

Despite his inability to offer any effective solution for Lucia's problems, Jung was nonetheless the first who pointed out Lucia's influence on Joyce:

> If you know anything of my Anima theory, Joyce and his daughter are a classic example of it. She was definitely his "femme inspiratrice", which explains his obstinate reluctance to have her certified. His own Anima, i.e., unconscious psyche, was so solidly identified with her, that to have her certified would have been as much as an admission that he himself had a latent psychosis. It is therefore understandable that he could not give in (Jung to Patricia Hutchins, quoted in Ellmann, 679-80)

After four months of meetings, Jung concluded that Lucia was simply untreatable while Lucia, just as Joyce did, complained about the fact that Jung didn't take into account the physical nature of her problems ("my trouble is somewhere in the body" -- Cary F. Baynes, "Notes on Lucia Joyce in Zurich, 1934", 12/11/1934, RE Papers, quoted in Shloss, 275). More than Jung himself, in November 1934 Lucia spent a considerable amount of time with Carol Baynes, a nurse who Jung engaged as companion for Lucia, who kept a diary which is one of the rare cases in which Lucia's speech is reported. In Fordham's thesis, extensive excerpts and reconstructions, relating to Lucia's time with Jung at Kusnacht, come from the Baynes notes on Lucia, made over two weeks of companionship and nursing. I will refer later to some of their intimate conversations on Lucia's physical and mental conditions as reported in Baynes' diary.

Interestingly, the analysis with Jung was combined with the consultation of Dr Otto Naegeli, a specialist who claimed he could help distinguish symptoms that had an organic origin from psychogenic ones. He continued to treat her until March 1935, months after she had stopped having psychoanalytic sessions with Jung (Shloss, 275). As Joyce writes to Weaver,

> Naegelli is the best blood specialist in all Europe, they say. Perhaps he can cure her physically. She is not at all anaemic. […] [T]he poor child is not a raving lunatic, just a poor girl who tried to do too much, to understand too much. Her dependence on me is now absolute and all the affection she repressed for years pours itself out on both of us. (JJ to Weaver, 22/9/1934, *JJL I*, 346)

Apart from Joyce's mistrust towards psychoanalysis, these were also the years in which Lucia was afraid she could have contracted syphilis, and in which glandular treatments were in vogue as effective cure for mental disorders. But it is nonetheless striking that Joyce could think that a "poor child" who tried to do and understand too much, would need now a physical treatment - and in fact from 1935 on Lucia underwent different glands treatments, baths in salt water and even a bovine serum (see Fordham 1995, 58-60. Joyce even considered insulin, following Nijinski's case (this was an extremely intrusive treatment administered in order to induce deep comas). Any attempt to cure seemed more plausible than imposing a distance between himself and his daughter. By the end of 1934, Joyce wrote to Weaver after one day he had spent with her:

> I don't think you can have any idea of what my position is. I am trying to work. A few days ago, Lucia painted her face black with ink. Later she sent scores of telegrams to various people we knew. My wife and I found her in full evening dress. I am urged to go but it is very risky. The idea is to efface myself. I did before for 7 months. Result, almost irreparable. Lucia has no trust in anyone except me and she thinks nobody else understands a word of what she says. But she also profits by my indulgent character. (JJ to Weaver, 17/12/1934, *JJL I*, 353)

Despite being accused of being the "culprit", he nonetheless found hard to accept the idea of "effacing" himself. As Fordham has extensively shown, despite the continuous disturbing episodes, including episodes of Lucia's incendiarism, it is at this time that Joyce became more and more convinced of Lucia's clairvoyant powers. As with the recourse to graphology this drift to pseudo-science is at odds with the simultaneous organic, physical treatments. As Fordham has shown, it is reflected within many references to Lucia in the text. One of the examples enlisted by Fordham concerns a drawing as small as a stamp made by Lucia (which also appears at the end of II. 2) which appears to predict Alexander Ponisovsky (with whom Lucia had been engaged for a short time) breaking his leg – this in particular provides evidence of how Lucia was present in the text at this time (45). On the other hand, Weaver and Leon were

convinced it would be good for Joyce to be far away from Lucia in order to complete his work. – "In their actual situation both problems are tearing his heart and he may be at the moment abandoning his work in order to hurt himself" (Leon to Weaver, 19/7/35 NLI: 2, quoted in Fordham 1995, 171-172).

However, it was in January 1935, after the footnotes were being drafted, that Joyce allowed Lucia to travel to London and from there go and stay in Ireland which, as Fordham notes,

> [t]his was a new toleration of distance - previously Joyce had felt compelled to keep Lucia at home or be near whichever hospital she was consigned to. The exception in 1934, was forced on him by his closest companions, to whom he promised that he wouldn't visit her). Letting her go first to England and then to Ireland were extraordinary steps, given his usual attitude to both. It recognised that a distance between them might be crucial to her cure, which was now to be a *cure libre*. The "Co-education of Animus and Anima" had proved not to be "Wholly Desirable" (307.04). (Fordham 1995, 176)

A few months after her return to France she could not be contained without full-time surveillance, and she was transferred to Le Vésinet just to the west of Paris. Here she was confined for the last time, in 1936. As shown by Fordham, subsequent to the publication of II.2, as *Storiella as She is Syung* in 1937, there were fewer claims to Lucia's clairvoyance or to her status as a "magical being" stated by Joyce (or, at least, have been found). Moreover, following Lucia's final institutionalization, Joyce, after years of blocks in his writings managed to see into print *Finnegans Wake* in two years. I will now illustrate more in detail this close connection between the development of Lucia's illness and the development of the text.

Issy/Lucia

Despite the parallel evolution of Lucia's condition and the genesis of the text, from the critical point of view, Lucia's figure is quite divisive and if on the one hand we can discern a gradual flourishing of interest in Lucia (which also moves beyond the boundaries of literary criticism), there is also a trend of criticism which tends to diminish or completely overlook her impact on the development of the text. In his genetic analysis of the chapter in *How Joyce wrote Finnegans Wake* Crispi complains that

> In the twenty or so pages Ellmann devoted to the period from July 1933 to July 1935 Joyce's biographer focused almost exclusively on Lucia's condition and her treatments rather than on Joyce's continuing literary work. Nonetheless, it was precisely during this same difficult period that he accomplished the transformation of the layout of this chapter, giving it the appearance that characterises II.2 in *FW.* (Crispi *How Joyce Wrote FW*, 234-235)

It is true as Crispi notes that Joyce's new fragment in 1935, after two and a half years of silence it had been in *transition* 22, in February 1933) was a remarkable event in the development of *Work in Progress*, and it is not the first time that Ellmann overlooks the activity of *transition*. Crispi also rightly stresses that "the relevance of marginal comments to the central text in II.2 became more pronounced as the personalities of the speakers in the margins (and footnotes) became more distinct" (Crispi, 236); however, what Crispi does not seem to take into account is that the development of Issy's personality (which becomes more and more central in the evolution of the chapter) seems to be in fact related to Lucia's illness.

David Hayman in his work on the "genesis" of *Finnegans Wake*, in *The Wake in Transit*, surprisingly finds early signs of Lucia's illness (unequivocally defined in terms of "schizophrenia") in 1923: "the curious shape taken by Issy's personality can be traced in astonishingly large measure to Lucia Joyce's incipient schizophrenia, symptoms of which were certainly visible by 1923" (Hayman 1990, 148). Defining Lucia's problems invariably as "schizophrenia" seems to simplify the impact of her problems (in all their uncanniness) on the text. In fact, Hayman misrepresents the impact Lucia had on the work and on the character of Issy in particular, attributing to Lucia signs of instability long before they actually became manifest. Moreover, Issy's is characterised by being split into mirror-images, sisters or multiple personalities (as in fact every character in the Wake is) and not by the dissociation between thoughts and emotions, and thoughts and reality, that are the symptoms generally ascribed to schizophrenia. Even Milesi makes casual use of the term "schizophrenic", linking Lucia's condition to the text:

> The female mood becomes subjunctive again and the oscillatory perspective of II.2 is indissociable from its regressive, bipolar elaboration. It is most revealing that this "schizophrenic" process uncovering blanks and nodal scars in the text should coincide with acute stages in Lucia's troubles within the family, at a time when composition was turning into a game of double or quits. In no other chapter is the ambivalent relationship

> of the young girl, real or fictitious, with mother, father, and parental law better dealt with and her idiolect so sibylline, as if part of Joyce's project for II.2 had developed into acting out a strategy of psychoanalytic cure through reticular female discourses enounced within the framework of the father-writer's laws of language and desire (we remember Lucia's pictorial Lettrine or small gramma for "Storiella"15 and her part in the revision process of the Lessons [see, for example, MS 47478-206, *JJA* 53:287]). (Milesi, 583)

Milesi rightly stresses the ambivalence in the relationship between the young girl and her family, as well as the blurred distinction between reality and fiction. However, he does not go further than hinting at the idea that the text reveals some sort of strategy of psychoanalytic cure, which seems rather reductive. It is in 1934, roughly at the same time of the composition of "Storiella", that psychoanalysis, for a long time avoided by and disregarded by Joyce, was employed, but only to show its limits, with Jung unable to provide any solution for Lucia. It is more likely that with "Storiella" Joyce was critiquing psychoanalysis, pointing at its deficiencies (as will emerge from the analysis of the text soon). Lucia's problem was "bigger", possibly belonging to the realm of psychosis, perhaps responsive to psychiatric intervention in the body, and, according to the people close to Joyce (Giorgio and Nora but also Leon and Weaver), requiring "containment". The talking cure and *cure libre* tried intermittently between 1933 and 1935 were failing, and a prolonged stay in a mental institution, Prangins, was becoming the only possible option for Lucia. In 1934 she had to remain there for eight months.

Jean-Michel Rabaté is the first to clearly divide the genesis of the Wake in a "before" and "after" Lucia's break: "[b]etween 1923, when Joyce starts systematically parodying his former works in Notebook VI.A (Scribbledehobble), and 1933, when he has remoulded the 'Lesson' chapter, a certain break has taken place, a break linked to growing personal problems and also to the logic of the Wake's word machine" (Rabaté 1991, 101); seeing in particular the genesis of II.2 as symptomatic of this crisis, Rabaté affirms that Joyce "wrote his last book, and especially this chapter [II.2] as if a future existed for him, for his daughter, and for anyone in Europe, repressing [Joyce's] well-founded doubts as to what that future would bring" (101).

According to Rabaté, Joyce was "indicating a progressive and positive pedagogy he would have liked to use with Lucia in order to save her from schizophrenia" (Rabaté 1991, 105). In the text, just as in real life, according to Rabaté, Joyce "leaves Issy the

responsibility of her incoherence, he does not frame it in a pattern of predetermined interpretations. He adopts the same attitude to her as that he had facing Lucia's madness: he had to admit that she had a discourse of her own and thought that if one could listen to it in the end, it would eventually make sense" (105). Rabaté thus, despite his use of the term "schizophrenia", does not rely on any precise definition of the term, but focuses instead on the effects Lucia's condition produced on the text. This approach is also adopted by Fordham, who most extensively has shown the structural changes the *Wake* underwent, and the evolution of the place Lucia came to occupy in it. As Fordham suggests: "Though Lucia's condition extended the cracks in *Finnegans Wake*, […] the contemplation of her condition had provided material to fill those cracks, similarly to Joyce's experience with his own illnesses" (Fordham 1995, 210), which persevered and worsened after Lucia's breakdown. I share with Rabaté and Fordham the intention not to define or diagnose Lucia's problems, but to focus instead on the effect they produce on the text. Both Rabaté and Fordham refer in particular to the ways in which Joyce projects his hopes for the future, 'writ[ing] as if the future exists", highlighting Joyce's wishful thinking that Lucia could be cured or that she was not ill at all. These elements undoubtedly permeate the *Wake* and II.2 in particular. However, they are combined with Joyce's fears that a future might not exist at all for Lucia. Rather than future positive projections, I will analyse the negative implications of the present and the more recent past in the text, showing how Joyce between 1933 and 1934 attempted to give shape to his personal struggles within the texture of the *Wake*. This attempt to objectify his anxieties through writing recalls the "escape" from emotions which Joyce attempted with the Swift fragment, aiming to reach a form of control in the text rather than (or even along with) a liberating cure. And if, as Fordham has shown, the theme of "isolation" is definitely developed in the final chapter of the *Wake*, reflecting Joyce's "acceptance of her condition, as ill and /or isolated" as "Joyce isolates Lucia's illness from the book" (Fordham 1995, 233), I will argue that we can already find traces of Joyce processing, through the textual evolution of II.2, the idea of isolation for Lucia (via Issy) before it became a permanent reality.

After 1932, when Lucia following her first serious breakdown was consigned to a *Maison de Sainté*, the situation for Joyce became more and more critical, both physically and psychologically. Growing concern and paranoid states induced by his work were accompanied by a preoccupation with his daughter's condition, of course,

but also by paranoia about possible accusations of him being responsible for Lucia's problems, and by a sense of isolation in his refusal of the idea of Lucia being "mad" and requiring "confinement". On the other hand, Joyce, at a creative level, in what seems at first to be a quite unproductive moment, actually achieved some crucial accomplishments. He re-emerged after a prolonged period of intermittent writing which, as seen in the previous chapter had lasted since 1928, during which Joyce's spirit oscillated between the enthusiasm and support of *transition* which allowed him to complete and see in prints Book I and III and the frustration caused by his frequent and long-lasting creative blocks. By the early 1930s, after the revisions of book I and III however the block went on for several months (Fordham 1995, 119), and it was the composition of II which troubled him most, in particular the movement between II.1 and II.2. Fordham has shown that until then, it was Issy's role which was uncertain, but the uncertainty of Lucia's fate helped to dissolve the textual one.

Therefore, before delving into the analysis of II.2, I will first briefly look at II.1 in order to establish a compositional link between the two chapters, or rather to point out the missing link that Joyce himself was trying to establish at the beginning of the 1930s. According to Hayman, "[…] chapter 2.1 was drafted and revised with little apparent difficulty […] that was in 1930" (Hayman 1990, 14). In fact, difficulties were not so little, and as Joyce writes in the letter to Weaver to which the first surviving draft of the first section of II.1 was attached, it "came out like drops of blood" (JJ to Weaver, 22/11/1930, *JJL I*, 295). As demonstrated by Fordham, Joyce began his work on II.1 with serious concerns about his daughter, as in fact even before her breakdown in 1932, some events had tragically begun to mark her future. Even Slote in his genetic analysis of II.1 in *How JJ Wrote FW* has highlighted the hiatus in the composition of II.1 – Joyce began sketching the first section in the autumn of 1930, then put it aside at the beginning of 1931 until mid 1932, hence after Lucia's first serious breakdown, and kept working on it with some intervals until 1933 (see Slote *How Joyce Wrote FW*, 183 and ff.).

From a biographical point of view, Lucia's troubles had begun before her first sojourn in a *Maison de Sante*. As summarized by Fordham, "[d]uring the year after the summer of 1929 - when, with a "month of tears", she'd stopped dancing - Lucia had wanted and had had an operation on her squint, she'd fallen in love with and been jilted by Beckett, she'd taken up painting and had lost her virginity to the writer Hubbell" (Fordham 1995,

121). And as Fordham notes, II.1 bears clear allusion to the biographical events of those years. Among the many examples, for instance, there is the following passage:

> Aminxt that nombre of evelings, but how pierceful in their sojestiveness were those first girly stirs, with zitterings of flight released and twinglings of twitchbells in rondel after, *with waverings that made shimmershake* rather naightily all the duskcended airs and shylit beaconings from shehind hims back. *Sammy, call on.* Mirrylamb she was shuffering all the diseasinesses of the unherd of. (*FW* 222.32-223.11)

My italics show here the biographical allusion to Lucia's last performance, for which Lucia had created the celebrated fish-like costume shown on the cover of Shloss's biography. Beckett attended the performance, and Joyce seems to allude to his presence with "Sammy" – the break-up between Joyce and Lucia had taken place soon after this performance. There are further references to the costume in one of Issy footnotes: "Tho' I have one just like that to home, deadleaf brown with quicksilver appliques, would wholly applissiate a nice shiny sleekysilk out of that slippering snake charmeuse." (*FW* 271.F7-9)

In the passage above we can also find in "Mirrylamb" a clear allusion to Mary Lamb, 19th century essayist Charles Lamb's sister, who suffered from mental disease. As Fordham notes, her story echoes that of Lucia: Mary had two brothers (like Issy) – John and Charles. They disagreed (like Shem and Shaun) about how she should be handled. On the one hand, Charles wanted his sister to stay with him and to be kept away from institutuions; on the other, John that she should be locked up. These opposite positions neatly echo both Joyce on the one hand and Nora, Giorgio, several doctors and acquaintances against him on the other, a conflict which is also repeated in II.2 with the boys at war (Fordham 1995, 131). However the associations with Mary Lamb do not end here: as in fact the reason why she had to be kept in an asylum was that she had stabbed her mother during her breakdown; Lucia did not try to stab Nora, but her aggressiveness towards her mother was of major concern within the family (her first hospitalisation followed her throwing a chair at Nora), as Fordham has noted in "Lightning Becomes Electra", "the shadow of female violence, a daughter's violence to the mother, comes to haunt a text – and an oeuvre – from which it had hitherto been absent" (Fordham 2012, 337). Moreover, Mary's brother Charles wanted her involved in the *Tales from Shakespeare*, an artistic occupation which would have advanced her;

and as we know, similarly to Charles Lamb, Joyce was trying to keep Lucia busy with an artistic occupation, namely her drawing of the "Lettrines". Nonetheless, as the text suggests, Joyce saw her as a sacrificial lamb "shuffering all the diseasinesses of the unherd of", which as Fordham notes, suggests a sense of inferiority, "being unheard of" in comparison with her father and people around her (Fordham 1995, 131), and thus becoming just one among the "herd" despite her expectations.

Joyce managed to compose the Rainbow Girls in Feldkirch (autumn 1932) being close to Lucia who was there with him and managing to write for the first time after months. He kept revising II.1 until 1933 – it was then published in *transition* 22 in February 1933 and as *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies* in June 1934. Joyce seems to have combined the final revision of this chapter with the development of the passages in II.2 in which Issy becomes central. Danis Rose has pointed out the compositional analogies between the end of II.1 and the opening of II.2: "in much the same bitty way as he had finished II.1, he began by drafting separate small fragments of the text which he hoped would subsequently fit together" (Rose, 117). I believe one of these sketches was the letter, as I will now show. As seen in the biographical overview, between 1933 and 1934, Joyce was struggling to find the best solution for Lucia, and despite the opinions of the people around him, he kept trying to avoid having Lucia constantly "surveillée" as well as kept at distance from him. But he was also gradually coming to terms with the idea of a possible institutionalization for Lucia. In 1933-1934 he moved to Zurich so that he could be closer to Lucia who was moving around different institutions in the area. After different attempts, rejected by both Joyce and Lucia, they both finally agreed that Lucia should be left alone at Prangins. Joyce did not see her for eight months. The close proximity of the early draft of Issy's Letter and "Storiella" with the division of the text into sections and Issy's consequent confinement within the footnotes reflect Joyce's contrasting feelings in dealing with the search for a cure and a rejection of the idea of physical confinement. His textual choices reflect Joyce's response, his attempt at sublimation or objectification of Lucia's situation, and his coming to terms with the possibility of permanent institutionalization. I will now illustrate these textual choices starting from the analysis of the early drafts of Issy's letter (before it became a footnote), showing how, despite its late transformation and inclusion in the final text, it helped Joyce in defining Issy's role in II.2 leading to the composition of "Storiella" and consequently to the creation of the footnotes.

Issy's Letter

The turning point in the development of Issy's voice is the composition of the first draft of Issy's Letter, which Joyce wrote while in Zurich during the summer of 1933 and which bears evident biographical correspondences. Without mentioning the impact Lucia might have had, Crispi's chronology is nonetheless revealing, "Only from the summer of 1932 onward […] did the theme of Issy's sexuality and its relationship to the process and intent of writing come to dominate the new section of the night studies. This particular fixation, so pronounced in the published texts, only now [1933 ca.] came to occupy a central place in II.2" (Crispi *How Joyce Wrote FW*, 233). This is confirmed by Hayman who in 'Scribbledehobbles and how they grew' has shown that Joyce drew on his notes on "adolescence and learning experience" taken six years earlier in the Scribbledehobble notebook from different sources to compose an "abortive passage" possibly meant to become the opening of II.2, which only germinated in the following months when: "Joyce saw fit after six-revise-and-complete drafts to chop it into kindling, preserving intact only the first page or so, discarding a large segment and using most of the remainder in Issy's footnotes" (Hayman 1966, 107). This concentration on young women's sexuality probably happened with the first draft of Issy's letter. According to Rose the first draft of the letter was composed during the summer 1933 (Rose, 119), whereas the *JJDA* dates it 1933 (probably September), while for the *JJA* it is 1934 (*JJA* p. 225). I argue it was composed by the end of the summer 1933, during the weeks the Joyces spent together at Evian Les Bains in July. The letter was thus not created as a footnote but composed as a fragment and then left aside by September 1933. Nonetheless, as I will now show, it played an important role in the development of the text even before the right place for it could be found, similarly to the Scribbledehobble "abortive passage". It was drafted in ink in what Hayman defines "as a series of ten discrete sentences" which nonetheless have a coherence even in the original order – in this transcription I include the number Joyce gave to the sentences to indicate their order:

> **9** the good father with the twinkle in his eye will always have cakes in his pocket to bethroat us with for our allmicheal good
> **1** come coal of my slate, to the beat of my blush
>
> **2** with all this gelded youth about I just feel like putting an end to myself
>
> (the thrills of ills)

8 Wasn't it of (?) divining that dog of a day as I sat on the Drewitt's altar, as cooled as a culcumber with you offering me up insulse (?) illsents and the horners stagstruck on the leasward
5 I intend to take silk to grigg well my junior when I'm nineteenth
6 (Nature tells everybody about it)
3 You sh'n'dn't write you can't if you w'n' dn't pass for undevelopmented
4 If it's me chews to swallow all you saidn't you can eat my words for it, as sure as there is a key in my kiss. Quick erit faciofacey when we will conjugate tomorrow at amare hour
7 left: As she Viking well knows then them heartwise a most adventuresting trot is her
7 top: I learned all the runes of the gamest game ever from my old norse Asa (allusion to the affair with the nurse)
10 for troth being stronger than fortuitous friction, it's the surplice money – my, my young friend and sweet creature buy the bed with the clothes (flash if you stand for it, blast~~, (by Bethlem)~~ blush (~~by Vainas Esthete~~) if you're touched)

(a) [bottom] borrow the clothes. both as slick as cipollo, as sane as susina
(b) [next page] till uspebaughery changes him and she sells her auctor by minchton
(c) From this posth ? as you haste to pass ~~with~~[on] you little I~~ wept~~ weeping my last well (*JJA* 52*,* 227-232, BL MS 47478-302-306, cfr. *FW* 279.F1)

Joyce then wrote large numbers on each sentence giving them a new order (similar to the final text) and the word "letter" was added at the top of each page, so that the second missing draft would have looked as follows:

THE LETTER

1 Come, cool of my slate, to the beat of my blush. **2** With all this gelded youth about the thrills and ills of blank I just feel like putting an end to myself **3** You sh'u'dn't write you ca'n't if you w'u'dn't pass for underdevelopmented. **4** If it's me chews to swallow all you saidn't you can eat my words for it, as sure as there's a key in my kiss. Quick erit faciofacey when we'll conjugate tomorrow at amare hour. **5** I intend to take silk to grigg all my juniors when I'm nineteen **6** (Nature tells everybody about it). **7** I learned all the runes of the gamest game ever from my old norse Asa. **7** A most adventuresting trot is her and she vicking well knowed them heartwise, **8** Wasn't it ~~too~~just divining that dog of a day as I sat on the Drewitt's altar, as cooled as a culcumber, with you offering me up ~~insilse~~ illscents & the horners stagstuck on the leasward. **9** The good father with the twinkle in his eye will always have cakes in his pocket to bethroat us with for our allmichael good **10** for troth being stronger than fortuitous friction, (blast, ~~by Bethlem~~

> ~~God~~, if you stand for it, blush, ~~by Vainas Esthete,~~ if you're touched) it's the surplice money my, my young friend & sweet creature, buys the bed & borrows the clothes.

As it emerges from this transcription the sentences which I have indicated as (a), (b), (c) were not included in the next drafts; they are also missing from the transcription of the first draft manuscript in the *JJDA*, whereas Rabaté in his transcription includes (a) and (b) but not (c). Rabaté suggests that "at one point he had prepared a series of footnotes ready to be added at the bottom of some pages" (Rabaté 1991, 105); and Milesi sees "[t]he conception of what is now 279.Fl, conversely assembled from a disunited collection of ten unordered notes at 6.*0 stage, seems to have matured when Joyce was turning Â§4 into Â§5 and scattered footnotes, perhaps as a makeshift for the aborted female discourse, to be put at a strategically more relevant place in the slowly emerging new drift of the Lesson" (Milesi, 581). However, being the first draft written by spring 1933, its composition is much prior to the splitting of the text into sections and the creation of the footnotes. Given the coherence which characterises these sentences, even in their initial random order, they already seem to constitute the skeleton for a letter, or rather a "billet doux" in which an encounter is fixed, "Quick erit faciofacey", a "quick face to face", "when we'll conjugate tomorrow at amare hour"[10], and is closed by a farewell, as suggested by one of the sentences left out in the next draft: "From this posth ? as you haste to pass ~~with~~ on you little I ~~wept~~ weeping my last well". This looks like the closing of a letter in which the voices of father and daughter merge, but also, sadly, as a last will. Interestingly, this is the sentence which has disappeared in Rabaté's transcription (Rabaté 1991, 106-107). The passage was marked as "The Letter" in both the surviving typescripts from 1934 and then probably Joyce left it aside for a while. If the footnotes were not already in Joyce's mind, as this draft shows, Issy's voice was emerging.

Shloss notes,

[10] The conjugation suggested with "together tolosher to master tomiss" appears in 47478-307, revealing Joyce's fear of losing and missing Lucia, and possibly making her the addressee of his message, "tolosher", "to lose her" "to Luce" – Lucia; it also suggests Joyce's own role as "master", which Joyce possibly felt he was losing too. This might be also suggested by one of the sentences cut after the first draft: "she sells her auctor by minchton"; however the first meaning seems to be that of a reunion at a given time which is "bitter", amara but also made for love "amare" to love and a first attempt at declination: "tomorrow at amare".

> One interesting aspect of this footnote […] is the modulation of the voice narrating the letter. It moves from the daughter's lament […] to the voice of the father in address to the girl […], and it does so without any grammatical markers even in the final version of the footnote. […] The daughter has eaten the words of the narrator or the father has eaten the daughter's words. (Shloss, 433).

Shloss sees it as "an amazing symbiosis at work", "a powerful mutual influence". But in fact Joyce is here attributing to the father an extremely manipulative power over the young daughter, "the good father… will always have cake in his pocket", denoting at once Joyce's own desire for self-absolution; on the other hand, "troth being stronger than fortuitous friction" also reveals the desire to get to truth/marriage rather than fiction/casual sex. And this becomes particularly clear in embryonic stage of the letter in the first draft.

Undoubtedly the voice of the daughter becomes distinct first with her laments then with her provocative sexuality. Rabaté is right to see it as the "nth variation of the theme of feminine destructiveness and wilful perversity" (Rabaté 1991, 108), and as he notes, this first draft of the letter also "shows more readily what the final text may obscure: the sense of despair, the temptation to commit suicide" which "is only balanced by a cult of an amoral Nature which states a "law of the junger" (268.F3) close to savagery [while] the obsessive recourse to sexuality is hauntingly founded on a sense of absence and castration on the male side": the gilded youth becomes "gelded", castrated; the thrills generate "ills", and "[t]he suicidal impulse seems to derive from the impossibility of obtaining any sexual satisfaction with young men" (108), a reading which is reminiscent of Beckett's fictional portraits. However, there seems to be more than this. One of the sentences left out from the final text in fact reveals a fatherly reproach, but also an implicit empathy with the young girl who does not conform to a normative sexuality and is therefore punished and marked as insane: "Blast, by Bethlem God if you stand for it, blush, by Vainas Esthete, if you're touched": "blast" bears a sense of destruction, annihilation following someone "standing for", "tolerating" something, perhaps a sexual advance; whereas a sense of feminine shame, vanity and aesthetics is suggested by the blushing "Vainas Aesthete"; the term "touched" is particularly interesting as it might be read as mad (reinforced by the exclamation which was soon deleted "by Bethlem god" suggesting the Bedlam Hospital, epitomising the most frightful mental institution), but also "touched up" sexually, and also asked for

money. Joyce here seems to incorporate the opinion of those around him who pressed him for Lucia to be institutionalised, and implicitly attributes their demands to their conformity to conventional norms of femininity. We can also spot a conflation of sexual desire, traumatic memory and madness strictly associated along with the father's attempt to minimise his responsibilities by locating the blame in the problem in amongst the words of Issy, according to whom the father "bethroat[s]" ("betrothes" but also "betrays") for the "allmichael good" (Almighty God). Of course, in this opposition we also find the implicit admission of the prevalence of truth (along with its being "stranger") over fiction: some biographical implications can be spotted even in this passage, as for instance the references to "Surplice money". As shown in the *JJDA*, it derives from the following entry in one of Joyce's notebooks, VI.B.3.1439, linked to a passage from *Le roman de Tristan et Iseult:*

> Priest buys Is / clothes
>
> Ogrin … had travelled on his crutch to Saint Michael's Mount, and there he bought vair, squirrel fur, and ermine, silken stuffs of purple and scarlet, a shift whiter than lilies, and a palfrey caparisoned with gold, which ambled gently. Folk laughed to see him spend the coins he had laid up for so many years on these strange and sumptuous purchases; but the old man loaded the horse with the rich stuffs and returned to Iseult. "Queen, your garments are in rags; accept these gifts, that you may be more beautiful, the day you go to the Ford Perilous …" Source: Joseph Bédier, *Le roman de Tristan et Iseut* (1900) XI 'Le Gué Aventureux', 124 [The Ford Perilous, 122]. (*JJDA,* N03 (VI.B.3), 143d)

The figure of Ogrin might indeed recall Joyce himself spending money for "sumptuous purchases". Moreover, as Fordham reports, in 1932 Joyce had "diagnosed [Lucia's] problem as an inferiority complex, and that a furcoat would sort her out, better than any psychoanalyst" (Fordham 1995, 30). The word "surplice" derives from "surpelliceum", literally "fur garnement". The passage seems to suggest an attention to clothing which is not new in the *Wake*, and we are reminded of the "tip" given to the reader in the "Mamafesta" "that the facts of feminine clothiering are there all the time or that the *feminine fiction, stranger than facts*, [note here the echo of "troth being stronger than fortuitous friction] is there also at the same time, only a little to the rere?" (*FW* 109.30-34). Clothes can be seen here as a form of re-embodiment, of the character's self-construction, at once drawing attention to and away from the body. This idea of curing through clothes the actuality of Lucia's condition against the grain of psychoanalysis,

whose focus is on interiority, and "covering" Lucia's body (in a way which is not too dissimilar to Shem's body covered up with excrements in I.7, as seen in Chapter 1), according to Joyce, was a more effective solution (in this very different from Beckett in whose texts this kind of self-construction is considered as threatening). However, "surplice" also suggests the liturgical vestment itself, and recalls the idea of religious ritual, possibly the sacrifice with Issy "on the drewitt's altar, as cooled as a culcumber", once again as sacrificial lamb who is offered "up illscents", or even more probably a rite of sexual initiation bearing a sense of "illness" and having proved almost fatal.

To this fragment Joyce kept adding (at the first stage many additions were probably under dictation as the typescript shows). It is with the second typescript 6.3 - dated 1934 - that the word "Letter" is crossed through at the top of the page and the word "Footnote" added (although, at the beginning it was not meant to occupy the space of the main text but was distributed on different pages of the typescript). This coincided with the period of Lucia's sojourn at Prangins, at the beginning of 1934, when Joyce accepted a period of six months separation. But "Storiella" at this point had already been drafted.

Although the chronology is very confused, it seems likely that the composition of the letter is prior to the composition of "Storiella". Possibly Joyce, in 1933, was thinking of the letter as a continuation of II.1 (in which Issy's role is central) and only at the time of the composition of Storiella it became part of II.2. As Hayman notes, "set off from the text as a footnote the letter became a foil for the long Shem parenthesis in "The Muddest Thick", adding an element of balance to complete the structure of the chapter" (Hayman 1966, 116). And this balance was provided by Issy, via Lucia (through the affinity Issy-Shem/ Lucia- Joyce). This interpretation would add a particularly sinister overtone to the slamming door at the end of II.1, "Lukkedoerendunandurraskewdy*looshoofer*moyportertooryzooysphalnbortansporthaok ansakroidverjkapakkapuk. (*FW* 257.27-28), followed by the curtains dropping down "by deep request", preceded by Issy left "most unhappy" and "all weeping bin" (*FW* 257.1-2).

This final passage of II.1 according to Slote "only went through one, possibly two drafts before the chapter was prepared for *transition* [in 1933]. This comparative paucity of draft levels suggests that this was the last section to be drafted before the

chapter was integrated" (Slote *How Joyce Wrote FW*, 187). And as Slote stresses "this section deals with the end of the children's games and the resumption of adult order, expanded into an invocation of divine intervention" (187). The lines preceding the final invocation are rather catastrophic, alluding to a miserable descent from the top to the bottom (italian idiom: "dalle stelle alle stalle", from stars, firmament, to dump, lit. pigsty): "the unhappitents of the earth have terrumbled from fimament unto fundament and from tweedledeedumms down to twiddledeedees" (*FW* 258.22-24). Here the allusion is to Freud and Jung: as early as in June 1921 Joyce was writing, expressing all his scepticism towards them and their discipline: "[a] batch of people in Zurich persuaded themselves that I was gradually going mad and actually endeavoured to induce me to enter a sanatorium where a certain Doctor Jung (the Swiss Tweedledum who is not to be confused with the Viennese Tweedledee, Dr. Freud) amuses himself at the expense (in every sense of the word) of ladies and gentlemen who are troubled with bees in their bonnets" (JJ to Weaver, 24/6/1921, *JJL I*, 166). In the concluding prayer, we also read "Thou hast closed the portals of the habitations of thy children and thou hast set thy guards thereby, even Garda Didymus and Garda Domas" (*FW* 258.30-31), which with their allusion to the new Irish Free State police force (and possibly implicitly to the history of women's incarceration in Ireland) seems to have biographical implications, as Lucia at this time was constantly surveillée by "guardians", her nurses).

One of the first parts to be composed in order to fill the gap between the closing of II.1 and the "Scribbledhobble" fragment is the actual opening of the chapter, written in early 1933. Here the door shutting is followed by emphasis on the ambiguity of setting with the question "UNDE ET UBI" (*FW* 260.R1) at the margin, repeated in the main text as 'whence and where'. "SIC" (*FW* 260.R2), Shaun's second comment, can be read as referring to a mistake in the text but also "sick"; moreover, "from tomtittot (game) to teetootomtotalitarian" (*FW* 260.2) within the central text sounds like a call to political order, to authoritative totalitarianism, following the children games, but also Freud's "Totem and Taboo". All of this suggests a continuation of the theme of disciplinary institutionalisation. Issy's first footnote, attached to the opening of the chapter, was present in the typescript composed in late 1934 and sent to Weaver in March 1935, therefore it was added right after Lucia had been released after eight months from Prangins. The footnote is attached to the cry of the guard at the door of the pub: "Am

shot says the bigguard". Issy responds "Rawmeash" – ie nonsense or incoherent speech "with her girlic tongue". As for the "quoshe" (*FW* 260.Fl), Milesi suggests this should be read as "quoth she" which "not only marks her desire for union with the verb (quoth | she — quoshe) but also shows the irruption of a purely female voice of discourse in a new assertive third-person singular form". However, "quo" might also stand for "where", thus becoming "where she", echoing the uncertainty of setting of the main text and margins. But followed by Issy's comment "I'd do nine months for his beaver beard", being a reference to pregnancy but also "getting sentenced for nine months", thus generating an ambivalence between hospital and prison which can be read once again in terms of a "sacrificed feminine body". The theme of prison is soon echoed also by Shem on the left side margins: "Non quod sed quiat: non quod sed quia" (*FW* 263.L3), which can be literally translated as "not because but therefore", and yet "quod" also means "prison", and "quiat" recalls "quiet" and thus we can read the sentence as "not prison but quiet" or "in prison because quiet": Lucia was brought to Prangins in a catatonic state.

As noted by Fordham,

> The necessary difficulty of the quest for diagnosis, of securing the "postconditional future" is shown at the opening of the "Nightlessons" as one of the more painful, "agonising" routes on the way to the pub, "diagonising Lavatery Square". Illness is something that brings the future into doubt, that disrupts the forms, rhythms and habits of the everyday: it is perhaps one of the paradigms that establishes the space of the future. Thus it is with an anxious sense that we construct hypotheses of recovery or decline - to fill that space. Illness brings on the fear of the sense of an ending. (Fordham 1995, 162)

Fordham reads Joyce's textual choices as reflecting Joyce's own prognoses, "his hopes and predictions of her recovery were not being proved right, so he endowed her with the power which was failing in himself", namely Lucia's supposed clairvoyance. But there are also allusions to the threatening present and most recent past which Joyce was trying to process through his text, with the prognoses made by others that were shaping father's and daughter's destinies (as well as the one of the text). During 1934 Lucia in a few months moved between several different institutions with Joyce upset about the separation. And although we know that the children at the beginning of II.2 find themselves at the door of the pub, in one of her first interventions, Issy mentions the

"Mater Mary Mercerycordial": this name recalls the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat hospital in Beckett's *Murphy* and seems to stand for a religious hospital, notorious later in Ireland for abuse. As pointed out by Benstock "the reference seems misplaced, but it also opens up a new question for investigation: of what importance is the hospital in the narrative?" (Benstock S. 1983, 212) Benstock does not mention Lucia (and in fact in another essay, she expresses her conviction that "Joyce's inability to accept his own daughter's mental illness might obviate such an easy correlation" between Lucia's problems and a pathological interpretation of Issy) (Benstock S. 1982, 170). Benstock instead gives the allusion to the hospital a double implication: it might be needed by the "bigguard" shot at the beginning of the chapter, but it might also show that the nubile daughter, object of the father's "lusty affections" is simply aware of the "the price she would pay [….] for his attentions", namely pregnancy. The refusal to look for any biographical correspondences in Benstock's analysis however, is particularly striking as she relies on Joyce's use of Morton Prince's work on his patient Miss Beauchamp, affected by dissociation of personality. In order to demonstrate that Joyce did not model Issy on Prince's patient, Benstock stresses the fact that unlike Miss Beauchamp with her irreverent double Sally, "Issy is not Joyce's patient, nor is her portrait limited to a textbook definition of personality deviance. Within the family structure, she remains in her role as daughter, her 'dadad's lottiest daughterpearl' (170): and this seems to reflect the way in which Joyce saw Lucia at the time. As Fordham reminds us, "Issy's footnotes have a coherence of their own: a consistently subversive scorn of a centre which is trying to say 'Stay with the father'" (Fordham 1995, 171). This was Joyce's opinion of Lucia too, as it emerges from the report redacted by Joyce and Leon and submitted to the Burghozli in 1934: "elle est en opposition violente avec les docteurs, apparemment plutôt avec les hommes. […] Tendence à accapparer le père" (Jame Joyce and Paul Leon, "Anamnese de Lucia Joyce", 1934, Zurich James Joyce Foundation), the choice of the word "accapparer", monopolise, is quite striking. However, it is exactly this strong dependence on the father along with their (both father and daughter) aversion to doctors which represented one of the main obstacles encountered by doctors, Jung in particular, in the attempt to cure Lucia. And the text reflects Joyce's scornful attitude (which also conceals some self-accusation) towards them: "The beggar the maid the bigger the mauler. *The greater the patrarc the griefer the pinch. And that's what your doctor knows*." (*FW* 269.22-24; my italics), a passage in which, again, the biographical overtones are quite obvious.

Michael J. Powers sees chapter II.2 as "the order of social institutions" in which children are placed "often against their will" (Powers, 103). The following passage which "Easy […] [a]pproach[es] to lead" (*FW* 262.1-2) in particular seems to mark the entrance to the pub/school but it might well be the asylum or more generally any institution which at once controls and confines, assures order:

> When shoo, his flutterby,
> Was netted and named.
> Erdnacrusha, requiestress, wake em!
> And let luck's puresplutterall lucy at
> ease!
> To house as wise fool ages builded.
> Sow byg eat. (*FW* 262.13-19)

Issy is portrayed here as a butterfly caught in a net in order to be named and classified in the name of science, suggesting a strong opposition between modernity versus the beauty and spontaneity of nature. In the passage the necessity of putting "lucy at ease" is also advanced along with an attack on what Joyce read as the "bigotry" of the people around him who were judging and influencing his choices, and also playing with a line from *Portrait* which has become almost idiomatic now, the "old sow that eats her farrow" (*Portrait*, 231), to describe Ireland as a motherland destroying its writers and artists. But apparently bigotry was all around Joyce and Lucia as well, and people were now judging and influencing his choices regarding Lucia: Gilbert, for instance had quite strong opinions on Lucia, as this note in his journal shows: "Lucia, inspected by Dr Fontaine, was ordered 12 days' rest in bed instead of the smacking she rightly deserves" – 6/5/1932, Gilbert 1993, 46); years later, as Lucia's conditions were worsening, Joyce bitterly attacked Weaver in a letter for not being sympathetic enough to Lucia: "Possibly Lucia, not having been brought up a slave and having neither Bolshevick nor Hitlerite tendencies, made a very bad impression on you and she certainly does not flatter" (JJ to Weaver 7/4/1935, *JJL I*, 361). As this passage shows, confinement, rather than an effective solution for the "mad", was for Joyce rather something which pleased (and reassured) the "bigots".

As I have shown, the early draft of Issy's letter provided the link between II.1 and II.2, despite its being kept "hors d'oeuvre" for a while. However, between the final stages of

II.1 and the composition of the opening paragraphs of II.2, another key fragment was composed, by which Issy's role in the chapter becomes central, namely "Storiella as She is Syung". I will turn now to its analysis.

"Storiella as She is Syung"

The close proximity between the composition of the early draft of Issy's Letter and "Storiella" is reflected in the continuity between them: as we move from a practical example of Issy's inadequate grammar and the consequent warning "You sh'u'dn't write you ca'n't if you w'u'dn't pass for underdevelopmented", to, as Milesi suggests, Issy consequently being taught

> how to knit genders, cases, moods, and tenses together. The twins seem to be racking their brains and fighting about "a rhythmatick" (268.08), "whereas she [. . .] jemenfichue will sit and knit on solfa sofa" (268.09-14), perusing these authoritative text- books which will try to remedy a bad command of linguistic laws, pointed out by the involuntarily outrageous English As She Is Spoke" from which "Storiella" takes its name. (Milesi, 572)

What Milesi defines as "the 'retrograde' conception of female grammar and sexuality in "Storiella" (Milesi, 581) is rendered necessary by Issy's seduction letter, so that "mag this sybilette be our shibboleth that *we may syllable her well*" (*FW* 267.21-22). Thus, the missing link between II.1 and the "Geometry Lesson" fragment is established via "Storiella" with the "Grammar Lesson". In "Storiella" Joyce includes some advice to young girls about meeting men, which as Fordham suggests seems thematically carried over from the previous chapter and, I would add, over the composition of the Letter which seems to have served as a bridge despite the uncertainty of its destination. Issy's "education" (or rather "correction", or "re-education"), makes this transition possible and Issy's centrality is confirmed by the invitation to "lead" (from the latin "educere", "to lead out") the passage at the very beginning of the chapter: "Easy, calm your haste! Approach to lead our passage!" (*FW* 262.1-2), a passage also composed in 1934, once the nucleus of "Storiella" had been drafted.

"Storiella" has been widely analysed genetically, apart from Crispi, the early genesis of the chapter has been analysed by Fordham and later stages by Sartor, as well as by Milesi. Its early stages of composition coincide with Lucia's consultations with Jung in

1934. This is particularly evident with the Jungian implications of "Storiella", already present in the full title of the passage, "Storiella as she is Syung". Milesi reads "Storiella" as

> a short story or fable of a young girl who sings/makes herself vocal while lying on her "solfa sofa" (268.14) until the lie she has knit (Dano-Norwegian sy in "syung," echoed in 268.13) is pierced by a Jung capable of interpreting and recognizing "The law of the jungerl" (268.F3, combining "Jung," "young girl," and "jungle"). (Milesi, 571)

As Jung was far from providing any solution, or interpreting any code, I am more inclined to read the allusion to Jung, as part of Joyce's process of assimilation of contemporary events through writing, with the ambiguity of the text finding its correspondence in the uncertainty and uncanniness of Lucia's situation; as Fordham notes,

> We might read the title and the story as *she issy-Jung* or as *she is Jung's*. The new title, with its old passive turned possessive, points to the issue of voicing the girl, of making her spoken rather than speak, making her written rather than write. Does she sing her story, is it sung for her, or does it emerge somewhere between the two - as she is taught how to sing it? The difficulty about her voice is a difficulty of Joyce's own: only by writing of her could he write, and only by writing through her could he write of her. (Fordham 1995, 155)

However, apart from Jung, "Lucia's breakdown is at the very centre of the chapter's format, its difficulties, its construction, and many of its thematic preoccupations" (Fordham 1995, 148). Along with the scornful response to Jung, there is something more sinister and unsettling: Joyce seems to deal with his own fears of being kept at a distance from Lucia, and of her being confined away from the world, just as Issy is confined out of the main text. The fable opens with Shaun's meaningful gloss on the right side which seems to elevate both father and daughter to archetypical figures, "PREAUSTERIC MAN AND HIS PURSUIT OF PAN-HYSTERIC WOMAN" (*FW* 266.R1): "preausteric" being a combination of "prehistoric" and "Auster", which McHugh and *Fweet* read as the German for "oyster". In fact, in Roman mythology "Auster" is the personification of a southern wind who brought heavy cloud cover and fog or humidity; given that one of Issy's shapes assumed in the Wake is that of "Nuvoletta" in I.6, and by the end of II.1 she becomes "[t]hat little cloud, a nibullissa,

still hangs isky" (*FW* 256.32) weeping, Joyce seems here to establish a causal connection between the "preausteric" father and the "nubied" (*FW* 157.14) daughter. Besides, the word "preausteric" might also recall prosthetic (Lucia being one of Joyce's prostheses, even for the composition of this chapter, as the presence of her handwriting shows: Hayman finds traces of Lucia's handwriting in the revisions of II.2). On the other hand, the "pan-hysteric" nature of the woman suggests some sort of "all-inclusive" feminine illness whose nature and cure are nonetheless difficult to determine. I it also contains the reference to pan-hysterectomy, complete sterility: again, the text reflects the oscillation of body and mind problems which affected Lucia suggesting that, in not having heirs she will have no continuity in history. And in fact, they are both modes of being outside of history and normative meaning (as pan-hysteric she needs correction and confinement) and they seem to be seen as equivalent, equal here or possibly linked by a causal connection again: pan-hysteric because pan-hysterectomy or vice versa.

As noted by Fordham, "Storiella" opens with the invocation of "O June of eves of the jenniest" (FW 266.27), Genevieve – Lucia was staying in Zurich in 1934 (Burgohzli and Nyon) and the expression of hope (Greek "elpis", "Elpis, thou fountain of greeces"): "lead us seek, lote us see, light us find, let uss missonot Maidadadate Mimosa Multimimetica, the maymeaminning of maimoomeining!" (*FW* 267.1-3). But we also soon find an evident allusion to more dramaticbiographical implications: the catatonic state in which Lucia arrived at Prangins, is alluded to with "catalaunic" at the opening of "Storiella", and other unconscious/semiconscious states such as "stupor out of stopor" (*FW* 261.15) at the beginning of the chapter (attached to "Storiella" in *transition* 23 in 1935) and "ondrawer of our unconsionable flickerflapper fore our unterdrugged" (*FW* 266.31-267.1). Fordham gives to the latter passage a psychoanalytical reading, underplaying the disciplinary and physical implications:

> Her significance in relation to Joyce is described in a psychoanalytic way: "ondrawer of our unconscionable, flickerflapper fore our unterdrugged", the unconscious that contains the suppressed (Freud's *unterdrückt*), contains what is not conscionable: what she perhaps brings out and what she fires up. Here too is Lucia's treatment since she was 'drugged'. (Fordham 1995, 155)

In fact “flickerflapper” (the combination of the Swedish word “flicka”, girl and flapper: the modish girl of 1920s) might lead us to read the girl as being unconscious and under drugged as a result of hospitalization, possibly alongside “doloriferous which more and over leafeth earlier than every growth an, elfshot, headawag, with frayed nerves wondering till they feel sore like any woman that has been born at all events” (*FW* 274.15-19).

Fordham also reads the reference to Alice’s broken glass as an allusion to the fact that, as proven by bills in June 1934 from Prangins, and in November from Kusnacht, Lucia twice broke the glass of her windows, possibly in the attempt to escape – “Alis, alas, she broke the glass!” (*FW* 270.20-21). In the text, the breaking of Alice’s mirror implies that “Wonderlawn’s lost us for ever” and comes with the invitation to give a “Liddell lokker through the leafery, ours is mistery of pain” (*FW* 270.19-22): the book pages, as leaves, hide their “mystery of pain”, “locking” its meaning, just as Lucia is locked away from the world and from the father, and constantly looked at or surveilled.

These few examples show the massive amount of references to illness, physical treatments, and symptoms which characterise “Storiella”. Along with his response to Jung, Joyce is recreating within the text a bigger, more confused picture which mirrors the obscurity of Lucia’s condition and the desperate attempts made in order to cure her. Joyce might at this point have not been certain about Lucia’s future, but he was nonetheless aware of the particular role Issy was assuming, confining her within the footnotes as at once a subversive body who needs to be “stemmed” and controlled but also a voice which struggles to be heard. I will now show how Issy’s confinement within the footnotes reveals Joyce’s attempt to objectify Lucia’s sufferings, along with the sublimation of his own.

Footnotes

This important evolution of the text is dated 1934, the same year in which Lucia first spent eight months at Prangins, after which both father and daughter were distraught. By the end of the year, Joyce was with Lucia in Zurich, where both psychoanalysis and gland treatment were attempted. Although Issy’s voice at the margin was not the first to be developed, her particular position within the footnotes, visually isolated and

confined at the bottom of the page, can read as a form of textual confinement which parallels Lucia's own condition. Sheldon Brivic, in *Joyce the Creator*, suggests that since Joyce divided II.2 into columns just when Jung was visiting Lucia at the Burghozli in Zurich in 1934, it is likely that Joyce's discussion with Jung touched on the concept of multiple personality. However, the idea of multiple personality is not completely relevant regarding Lucia (and again it reflects a misinterpretation of the term "schizophrenia"), and in fact Joyce's interest in the theme of split/double personalities was a much earlier moving force in the *Wake*, in which every character has multiple voices/selves. Fordham points to strong archival evidence which shows that the footnotes were formulated in Zurich (*JJA* 52, BL: 47478-161; 53), the crossroads of psychiatry, where the clinical methods at Burgholzi were meeting the analytic methods of Jung. During the writing of the chapter, Joyce moved Lucia from Geneva to Zurich and finally switched - after nearly three years of resistance - from psychiatry to psychoanalysis. Significantly, the first footnotes are attached to "Storiella" and with them, Joyce seems to be responding to Lucia[11]. As Fordham notes,

> Many of the early footnotes were taken - in no especial order - from the notes on 156: there are drawings (the hand, and the crossed cutlery) which stay in the left margin and indicate their affinity with Shem. But other footnotes are not taken from this material, for example, "law of the jungerl" (47478-168v), "making it up as we goes along" (169v), "a question of pull" (168v), "understudy my understandings" (171v), "wipe your glosses with what you know" (474748-175v) and "As you say yourself" (172v). They are not cryptically referential but, if anything, explanatory and written in an uncommonly lucid language. They are not mediated by other note-taking but written as direct responses: they seem to be glosses to the central text as it is encountered during a re-reading which becomes its re-writing. (Fordham 1995, 150)

Fordham suggests that the footnotes came in a moment in which Joyce's faith in a possible cure was fading, and he was gradually accepting the idea of Lucia's institutionalization and her being kept away from him, just as Issy is kept away from the main text. Indeed, the footnotes can be read as a form of textual confinement. And

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[11] Evidences for this can be found in the *JJA* 52: 47478-166v p.59 and 47478-168v,163: "Porphyrious Albion, redcoatliar, we were always wholly rose marines on our side every time" being the first trace of footnotes which will become *FW* 264.F3 attached to Storiella in the fair copy in ink in which sections 1 to 3 were integrated, (always in 1934) – see *JJA* 47478 166v, 69 and "A question of pull" (47478 168v, 64) first numbered footnote in the same draft.

just as for Lucia in real life, one of the main reasons for this confinement, is a verbal and bodily language which required containment. Footnotes, as Shari Benstock reminds us, are "a breakdown of the carefully controlled voice" (Benstock S. 1983, 204) and in the case of Issy, as Fordham notes, "they are characterised by an obscene provocative power which might recall Lucia's explicit language with Carol Baynes" (Fordham 1995, p. 171). Many references within the text seem to confirm the sexual neediness which characterise Beckett's portrait of the Syra-Cusa, and in fact reproduce from a different angle those elements which we have already met in Beckett's fiction: yet while Beckett tends to see his character (especially in *Dream*) as pure body/instinct with no interiority, Joyce's gaze seems to see Issy as a body needing to be educated and/or contained through empathic endearment (which, of course, is totally lacking both in *Dream* and "Walking out"). Apart from the general tone of the letter analysed above, this is also reflected in "Storiella", as for instance in the following passage,

> Have your little sintalks in the dunk of subjunctions, dual in duel and prude with pruriel, but even the aoriest chaparound whatever plaudered perfect anent prettydotes and haec genua omnia may perhaps chance to be about to be in the case to be becoming a pale peterwright in spite of all your tense accusatives whilstly you're wallfloored like your gerandiums for the better half of a yearn or sob. (*FW* 269.02-11)

Here we find advice on how to deal with "the aoriest chaparound", a chaperon "who *might* belong to the past", so that he then becomes "pale peterwright", a pale preterite – relegated within the past; or as Milesi puts it "[t]he present of enunciation necessarily mediates between past (aorist and preterite) and future "peter- wright" Peter Right and makes its presence felt" (Milesi, 575). However, we can also spot here the anxiety that she might be a "wallflower", i.e. too shy to meet a partner, "unheard", or unable to use language in regulated way, being "undevelopmented". The father's concerns are mirrored by the desperate tone of Issy's footnotes attached to the passage: "[w]ith her poodle feinting to be let off and feeling dead in herself. Is love worse living?" (*FW* 269.F1) or "[i]f she can't follow suit Renée goes to the pack" (*FW* 269.F2).

In this sense, Powers is right to stress that Issy's image is not just split between virgin and whore, but also occupies a "position on the boundary between childhood and adulthood" (Powers, 114), with past and future reflected into an unsettling present (and, given Lucia's situation, more and more uncertain). It is not surprising that, more than

her brothers, this oscillation affects Issy, as she often plays with the sexual innuendos of the central texts but also her "girlish tongue" not completely in control of what she is saying. This seems to be the case of the following footnote, third in the passage of "Storiella" analysed above, in which the terms "menstruation" and male "urination" conflate:

> Improper friction is male dictions and mens uration makes me mad (*FW* 269.F3)

It is likely that Joyce reflects Lucia's problems at different levels here. Along with a further reference to "frictions" (as seen earlier through the opposition between "troth" and "friction" in the letter), the footnote seems to reproduce in the text the same disoriented sexuality, as emerges in a specific episode reported in Baynes' diary, summarised in Fordham's thesis: Lucia told Baynes that "she'd had an unfortunate experience when she was a child, that it wasn't very pleasant to speak about: Then she said "do you know what a "sondange" [sic] was ... Then she said do you know "urine stérile"?". Baynes "did not press her for anything more precise but inferred from this reluctance to speak of this that her mother has given her no orientation, or the wrong one, to her body"[12]. The same lack of orientation and consequent confusion seem to characterise this footnote in which "mens uration" mixes menstruation, measuring, and men's urination. The passage also laments a "male dictions": at once "male"/"bad" diction, which recalls the idea of Issy's education which is "all for the man" and her inadequate language, but also the "malediction of men", meant as partners, which was making Lucia "mad"; but we can also read measurements as indicating homo mensura, rationalism and the science which was failing to understand and cure Lucia. The effects of this "malediction" seem to involve a sense of emptiness, hollowness (a term also used by Beckett in his portrait of the Syra-cusa) and consequent annihilation of the body which is deprived of the soul. We find, in this sense, a striking analogy with Lucia's words written to a friend of hers in Paris in 1932 from Feldkirch (the letter survives because Joyce saw a copy and sent it on to Weaver), "C'est faux il n'y a que

[12] This excerpt comes from the Baynes' notes on Lucia, made over two weeks of companionship and nursing in November 1934, quoted in Fordham 1995, 39 (Tulsa: 78, Lucia Joyce; Roelli documents).

mon corps que tu vois mon âme m'a quittée il y a longtemps"[13], echoed in the following footnotes:

> They just spirits a body away (*FW* 289.F2)
> Neither a soul to be saved nor a body to be kicked (*FW* 298.F2)

Footnotes are arbitrarily placed sometimes, as a plea for attention, and reflect a subordinate state against which Issy's tries to rebel. A sense of "inferiority" is already given by derivative nature of the footnotes themselves, being placed "below' and depending on the main text. This might be a further textualization via Issy of Lucia's possible inferiority complex. As told in II.1, Issy "was shuffering all the diseasinesses of the unherd of" for which Fordham finds biographical correlation in the fact that

> Being *unheard* of, not being as well-known as her peers, has been considered as one cause of Lucia's instability, to have friends like Kay Boyle and Stella Steyn whose work was being published, must have made her frustrated and we know that her unsatisfied will to create was enormously and worryingly clear to Joyce. Though not famous, she was not one of the crowd - she was *unherd* - but then maybe this made her something of a black sheep. The uneasiness of anonymity amongst fame would bring forth an inferiority complex from the unconscious - that psychic instrument which if violent and *unheard* can act as the source of mental disease, of "diseasinesses". Joyce's use of the language of psychoanalysis is not a parody of its jargon. This we might trace to having to come to terms with Lucia's condition. (Fordham 1995, 131)

As seen earlier Joyce himself, diagnosed her problem as an inferiority complex, and was convinced that a fur coat would sort her out, better than any psychoanalyst, offering a surface cure, a cover but also a screen from the world. But of course, the sense of inferiority was also towards her father himself, artistic inferiority but also on a more personal level (see for instance her relationship with Beckett). In II.2 *FW* 267.F5, after all, Issy herself confesses that she allows herself to be ruled by the fathering law. Interestingly, in II.2 the "inferiority complex" becomes an "infermierity complex" (*FW* 291.F8): an inferiority complex which becomes totally invalidating and which involves "infirmity" and the continuous control of nurses (in English "infirmary" e.g. clinic; but

[13] This undated letter was typed out by Joyce and enclosed with the letter to Weaver, 6/8/32, *JJL III*, 254).

also Italian for "infermiere" – might this be also an allusion to Lucia's affair with the nurse?).

Issy's problems with language and the attempts to instruct her in proper speech reflect a tutelage which is patriarchal and controlling, an imposition on the subaltern. And this might be read as a further nuance of meaning attributed to the psychoanalytic jargon: the failure of the talking cure on Lucia, imply the ineffectiveness of her education and her consequent inability to speak along with the doctors' inability to hear her and consequently cure her. Similarly, Issy, despite her outspokenness, struggles to speak and to be heard. Milesi in his analysis of the grammar of sexuality in II.2, reads Issy's wish to make herself vocal as "spelt out and denied in the string of 'silents selfloud' (1. 17; German Selbstlaut: vowel), the independent woman in her being made silent as the semivowels betray her still semivocal nature" (Milesi, 570). However, as seen in the passage of "Storiella" quoted above, she is also turned into "the woman standing as a wallflower, more precisely a geranium ("wallfloored like your gerandiums"), like the gerund whose possibility in the sentence ("whilstly being wallfloored") is denied access by enunciative strategies": as Milesi explains, "[t]he gerundium, from gerendum, itself a gerund form, half verb half noun, denoting uncompleted actions and only having oblique cases in Latin, becomes like the jilted flower the emblem of women's repression translated into language and is foresken for more than six months in a year or so for another "better half who has aroused desire of any kind ('yearn or sob')" (Milesi, 575). But in "the better half of a yearn or sob" we can read an allusion to the time spent in Prangins by Lucia in 1934, as a forsaken, jilted flower.

As suggested by both Rabaté and Fordham however, despite the derivative nature of the footnotes, in II.2 the female voice tries to emerge, managing to disrupt the main text: what happens with Issy's letter at this point is very interesting as in fact the central text leaves space to her voice, mirroring the structure of the letter in the following page. For the first time with the footnote at page 279, Issy's letter, the central text arrests with "a halt for hersake!" (*FW* 279.10) (which also recalls Joyce's pause in the writing to concentrate on Lucia). Milesi seems to reduce the importance of the Letter – both its genesis and function within the text. It is reductive to see Issy's "Letter" as "explicitly staged as an ephemeral interlude" (Milesi, 582); rather, I tend to agree with Hayman when he states that "[Issy's] footnotes contribute throughout to impose her personality

upon the male world of the studies, to introduce, that is, the irrational as a force in that world" (Hayman 1966, 116). However, the disruptive power of the footnotes is not just limited to the discourse of sexuality. As noted by Fordham, The footnotes "are constantly upstaging the central text, by being relatively one temporal step ahead, and by making jibes which seem to be based on private knowledge and a private language which the central text neither understands, nor plays any role in forming" (Fordham 1995, 172). It is in one of the footnotes that Issy reveals the Wakean sigla, or "Doodles family", which Joyce used in the composition of his draft, revealing a deeper knowledge of the text (and of its genesis, see Hayman introduction to *JJA* 52).

Moreover, Issy's voice is not limited to II.2 and in fact re-emerges quite distinctly at the end of the ALP's letter in Book IV, "[a]nd she is coming. Swimming in my hindmoist. […] Saltarella come to her own. I pity your oldself I was used to. Now a younger's there" (*FW* 627.3-6), dominating the closing pages of the book. Sartor in "What Genetics Can Do: Linking II.2 and IV of *Finnegans Wake*" reinforces this idea of continuity between the two chapters, showing how the later revisions of II.2 (after the publication of *Storiella* in 1937) were combined with the composition of the monologue. And although, as the analysis of this section shows, I disagree with Sartor's post-dating the composition of the Issy's letter to a much later stage, possibly 1937 (see Sartor, 78), II.2 and the end of IV are undoubtedly compositionally connected, with Lucia Joyce and the character of Issy forming a strong "narrative tie" (Sartor, 69)[14].

But this would lead us too far into the history of the composition of the *Wake*, which I cannot cover here. I refer for this to Fordham who has shown how in IV we can trace a similar progression in Joyce's acceptance of Lucia's condition, as ill and /or isolated, through objectification and consequent isolation of Lucia's illness from the book: as Fordham puts it, "Joyce prepares himself for the impending departure of himself and

[14] One of the many examples, not provided by Sartor but which nonetheless reinforces her argument, is for instance the recurrence of the theme of the "inferiority complex", see *FW* 291.F09 and 607.26, "incontigruity coumplegs of heoponhurrish marrage from whose I must sublumbunate", mixing continuity with incongruity and, similarly to II.2, referring to a "he-upon-her" "hurrish" marriage, which has also now become a "mirage" - compare "impending marriages" in Issy's Letter.

his work from each other, as well as from Lucia/Issy" who will remain "Loonely in me loneliness" (Fordham 1995, 233).

The transformations undergone in II.2 in the mid-30s on the other hand, bear signs of the uncertainty of Lucia's condition, with the impossibility to find either a diagnosis or a cure for her illness, along with a continuous search for anything which could avoid Lucia's institutionalisation accompanied by Joyce's fears on the disastrous effect of distance between both father and daughter. With the creation of the footnotes in particular, as Fordham observes,

> The central text attempts to reduce this distance but fails at various levels. The footnotes, distanced spatially, temporally and semantically, assert a confidence in that distance. The footnotes and the chapter as a whole perform that act which the central text was trying to perform - they code and enact the tolerance of an inevitable distance between Joyce and Lucia, a tolerance which reduces the distance, as the anxiety to reduce it aggravated it. As the claims to her clairvoyancy seemed to have inspired so much of this chapter, their writing out seems to have fictionalised, compromised and objectified them as wishful thinking. (Fordham 1995, 175)

However, as I have shown, this "tolerance of an inevitable distance" enacted by the text was not so immediate, but rather the result of a "textual negotiation" which is reflected in the complex genetic history of the chapter, of which I have outlined only the first (but nonetheless crucial) stages. The early drafts of portions of II.2 analysed above, reveal along with Joyce's wishful thinking, an objectification of Lucia's physical suffering as well as Joyce's own frustration, sense of guilt, and uncertainty about Lucia's future which coexist with Joyce's belief in her clairvoyance.

Joyce, unlike Beckett, aimed at filling through the text that distance between father and daughter which in real life was becoming a necessity. And as this analysis of the particular textual evolutions of II.2 has shown, the transition from the early draft of Issy's Letter, "Storiella" and the introduction of the footnotes between 1933 and 1934 reflect Joyce's struggling to accept the consequences of Lucia's condition: namely a distance between them which the text had not filled yet as well as his coming to terms with his own responsibilities. In both Joyce and Beckett, we can spot a need for self-absolution. Moreover, it is possible to sense a common misogynistic tendency of attributing a pathological value to the voracious sexuality of the young woman as a way

of representing Lucia's unfulfilled wishes, as well as the concentration on the external embellishments such as clothes and jewels, which Beckett sees as symptom of narcissism, whereas Joyce as a sign of recovery. However, if Beckett through what we could see as a form of mythicalised confession, enacts through the text a punishment or "correction" of the woman; Joyce on the other hand, seems to project his scornful scepticism and resentment towards "THE MIND FACTORY" with all "ITS GIVE AND TAKE" (*FW* 282.R1) because of their inability to understand her; and in seeing Lucia as a sacrificed lamb (or in the name of science but even more to Joyce's own work), rather than curing her, Joyce aimed to re-enact though the text her sacrifice in the attempt to elevate her tragic history to myth.

Conclusion

Through our exploration of different forms of madness, an instability in the use of this term and its cognates has constantly emerged. Each conception we have explored has turned out to be either more or less "empty" or in fact stand for something other than what has been more recently termed "mental illness" as such. This is particularly evident with degeneration and the all-inclusive nature of its definition, which reflects an attempt to exorcise social fears and anxieties; a similar problem was faced in the comparison of the multiple diagnoses and legendary explanations attributed to Swift's madness, as well as the different diagnoses and treatments which characterise the troubled medical history of Lucia Joyce.

Moreover, all the three main thematic threads reveal a strong correlation within madness and the body, either its inside or outside: degeneration theory finds its origin in an organic explanation of madness as a result of a malfunctioning body; the growth of the legends on Swift had much to do in fact with his physical ailments; and finally in Lucia's case her body was at the centre of medical attention, possibly even more than her mind.Strong physical or "bodily" connotations characterise the ways in which both Joyce and Beckett develop the discourse of madness within their texts. As seen in Chapter 1, the body becomes associated with the "madness" of writing, in both Joyce's and Beckett's texts, through the language and imagery of degeneration. In the *Wake*, Joyce employs the powerful image of Shem writing on his body with his own excrement in his own portrait of the artist: in doing so the obscenity, immorality and madness of Joyce's writings are represented as coming from the inside and then being indissolubly attached to the exterior of his body, corrupting it. It becomes a writing of and onto the body itself, a degenerate body which at once produces and bears signs of contradictory and excessive degenerate writing. On the other hand, in continuity with Joyce but also as an anticipation of the later development of his aesthetic, the mind and body connection is also very strong in Beckett's texts. Through his borrowings from Nordau, Beckett attributes to Belacqua physical stigmata which can be read as incontrovertible symptoms of his degeneracy; by virtue of his egomania, Belacqua's attention is by definition focused on the interior movements and conscience of his body

(coenaesthesis) and his bodily needs are often seen as a barrier to his existence within his mind (with women in particular). Moreover, in line with degeneration theory, that Belacqua's "conversations" are also the result of a malfunctioning body is clearly stated more than once in "Echo's Bones".

The ambivalence between mind and body in Swift's case, as seen in Chapter 2, is also undoubtedly very strong. Joyce seemed particularly intrigued by it and found a very personal (almost private) application. The interplay between body and mind is stressed in the very title of the fragment I have analysed, by the "blindness madness" direct association: madness and blindness seem to coincide, the one generating the other, both descending at once on the individual, either Joyce or Swift. The fragment suggests the double implication of madness as the result of physical exhaustion: at once, the madness generated from the inability to write or the madness of writing constantly challenging the limits of the body. As we have seen, no matter how worn out by his writing Joyce actually was, he had to gain sight and energy in order to progress with his work, and in doing so he seemed to constantly test his own physical limits. Roy Gottfried in *Joyce's Iritis and the Irritated Text* has already pointed out the way in which Joyce's increasing physical difficulties, namely with his eyesight, affected the composition, as well as the text itself, of *Ulysses.* The use of the magnifying glass, for instance, would make "small parts of the large work leap out from the page, increasing their size and the difficulty of going over them" (Gottfried, 11). As suggested by Gottfried the rise of the complexity of Joyce's work is proportional to his diminishing vision: Joyce by the end of the composition of *Ulysses* had perfected the method which will then further develop with *Finnegans Wake* (whose composition began with annotations to his previous work). This is a creative process which seems to add meaning to Beckett's definition of the "savage economy of hieroglyphics" in "Dante…Bruno.Vico.. Joyce": "[h]ere words are not the polite contortion of 20th century printer ink. They are alive. They elbow their way on to the page, and glow and blaze and fade and disappear" (*Our Exagmination*, 15-16). As Beckett was one of Joyce's closest collaborators, who assisted him regularly in his compositional process, his words might have much more physical implications, as they recall the effect of passing a magnifying glass over a line. The association with Swift in the fragment, on the other hand, reflects Joyce's own frustrations and the desire of surrendering to and finding refuge in a quite Beckettian "glowcoma".

Even for Beckett, the "Swiftian poem" reveals its bodily implication in its very title. As in the case of Joyce's fragment, an organic image is employed on order to describe the writing: "sanies", poems meant as "purulent discharges" (thus reflecting Beckett's own physical problems at the time of their composition). The name of Swift has also for Beckett another important physical implication, made explicit with "Fingal": destitution and physical confinement of the mad within the Irish context. Through the Swiftian overtones, in the short story "Fingal", Beckett ironically enacts a further subversion of the discourse of degeneration with Belacqua who considers being locked up in a mental asylum a bliss, as it would prevent him from engaging with anything which takes place outside his mind.

The theme of destitution as it emerges from the *Wake* had for Joyce much more personal implications: it represents the fearful future prospect for his daughter Lucia, which at the time of the textual transformations which I have analysed, was gradually turning into reality. The confinement of the young female body, as I have suggested in Chapter 3, is enacted within the text through the character of Issy being confined within the footnotes in II.2, one of the main textual transformations which followed Lucia's first experiences of confinement. This textual transformation was preceded by other two important textual evolutions of the same chapter, which coincide with the development of Issy's role within it: the early draft of Issy's Letter and "Storiella", in which Issy's subversive sexuality is outlined along with the failures of a system of education which is patriarchal and controlling. I have read these textual elements as different stages in Joyce's coming to terms with Lucia's condition. Lucia's body was the object of attentive examination just as much as her psyche, if not even more so, and was cause of major concern for both father and daughter. Lucia's body seems to have been considered at once as a cause of the disease, and it was also subject to various more or less invasive treatments in the attempt to cure her mind; physical confinement was one of them, the one Joyce feared most. Lucia's condition finds a textual correlation in the treatment of Issy's body in II.2.

The body is central also in Beckett's textual representations of Lucia. In both *Dream* and *More Pricks* Belacqua embodies the male struggle before the threatening female body and the consequent attempts to establish a physical distance. In *Dream*, in particular, we have observed the coexistence of an aestheticization of a pathological

condition along with a desire to punish, control and get rid of her body, often misogynistically perceived as "hysterical". In "Walking Out", the mutilation of the female body becomes the condition for a happy marriage between Lucy and Belacqua. In both cases Lucia's "madness" emerges as strictly connected with the body, either over-functioning or malfunctioning, which needs containment, re-education, control and even isolation. However, a paradigmatic difference has emerged: on the one hand, Beckett's rather biological view, that 'there is such a thing as madness"; on the other, Joyce's wishful thinking that Lucia was not mad but a victim of modernity, or that love could cure her before he eventually accepted the idea of her being institutionalised.

In both Joyce's and Beckett's textual representation of Lucia particular attention is also reserved to clothing and, more generally, to the adornments of the feminine body. External embellishments such as clothes and jewels are seen by Beckett as a symptom of narcissism, as well as expression of a deceptive and decadent beauty perceived as threatening. On the Joyce side, however, we have again observed a rather opposite tendency: for Joyce, the attention to what Robert Burton calls "artificial allurements" have a more positive connotation, and in relation to Lucia, it was considered at once a sign of recovery and a cure. Clothes are for Joyce an external treatment against the grain of psychoanalysis, whose focus is on interiority, and an aesthetic "covering" of Lucia's body; even Shem's excrements can be considered to an extent as a form of "clothing", offering a cover and attracting attention. As we have seen, Joyce resorts to clothes often in the *Wake* for the textual representation of his own illnesses: the three stages of blindness are turned into garments worn by Joyce in the *Wake* as well as in his correspondence. More generally, as it has emerged, Joyce more than once recurs to the image of "religious garments" in order to enact through the text a sacrifice, either his own or Lucia's.

Belacqua's attention is much more focused on insight as a way of escaping external reality stage. One of the asylum's positive sides, for instance, is according to Belacqua the fact that inmates do not have to worry about their appearances (shaving and changing clothes). However, Beckett himself with Belacqua, in his attempt to deal with Joyce's influence, wears nonetheless a fictional mask with which he tries to build his identity as an artist. The mask of the degenerate is in this sense the most explicitly derivative aspect of Beckett's early fiction in connection with Joyce: it becomes

exemplary of that process of "purging" Joyce by directly engaging with him, as Pilling has suggested. The struggle enacted by Beckett in this way is part of a process of definition of his role as artist, in continuity with the creation of Joyce's own alter-ego. In this sense, there is a subtler affinity with Joyce: both Joyce and Beckett through their alter-ego define their own (different) positions in the literary world; and both, in different ways, show some affinities with the conventional Modernist canon, but at the same time can be seen as original (sometimes ironic) responses to it. The employment of the language and imagery of degeneration denote in both Joyce and Beckett the engagement with their own times. And in Beckett's case, there is the distinct intention of establishing a literary (degenerate) lineage with Joyce. However, far from having reached with Belacqua the final stage of degradation, this lineage has seen many other descendants in Beckett's fiction. Peter Fifield sees Molloy as "a deeroticized Sade" or, even more relevantly for our discourse, "a Joycean Shem, […] writing in his own excrement when writing has been made impossible" (Fifield, 57-58): we therefore can see Belacqua as some sort of missing link between them. If the excremental writing in "Sedendo et Quiescendo" was yet too imitative of Joyce, it can be nonetheless seen as the point of departure for that process by which, as noted by Fifield "[t]he novels of the trilogy are clearly linked to linguistic excrement, made of a language so many times chewed, swallowed and digested in permutation and paradox that it no longer contains anything of nutritional worth" (Fifield, 58).

The Joycean influence in Beckett's development of the Swift theme is, on the other hand, apparently less manifest (although as I have argued it might have partly derived by Joyce's interest in Swift at the time of his encounter with Beckett). As I have shown, the Swiftian allusions in "Fingal" can be seen as Beckett's first attempts to deal with the Irish tradition in more mature terms, in a way which if indebted to Joyce, reveals the emergence of some original features. The landscape in "Fingal", as we have seen, begins to appear already genuinely Beckettian. Through a system of allusions gradually becoming independent from Joyce, the association of Swift with madness becomes like a mythical veil on this Irish landscape as well as its humanity in ruins. The asylum in particular will dominate Beckett's later fiction, even though in the short story it is only seen from the outside. Belacqua can thus be seen as the first primordial stage in the process of alienation of Beckett's characters. Belacqua, as a borderline creature who fascinatedly observes the asylum from the outside can indeed be seen as an anticipation

of Murphy, who enters the asylum but as "outsider", Watt, the first proper insider in Beckett's fiction, and many other later characters and voices.

In the case of Lucia's different textual representations, the implications, as we have seen, are much more immediate. And if on the one hand, Lucia might be understood as a distant point of reference for certain women characters in Beckett's later works, the examples analysed here respond to a much more urgent and multiple need of "purging": purging of Joyce as well as purging of Lucia herself, but also purging of Beckett's own self, possibly of his sense of guilt. In *Dream*, through the massive usage of other textual sources collected in the "Dream" notebook, Beckett attempts to reach a detached linguistic expression through a derivative Wakean textuality but, in *More Pricks*, Beckett turns instead to a more confident manipulation of his material. The evolution of Beckett's way of textually representing Lucia, therefore, seems closely related to his overcoming Joyce's influence.

This comparative analysis between Joyce's last work and Beckett's early texts has allowed me to look at Beckett's process of overcoming this influence, as it has emerged. It is not immediate, nor univocal: as the comparative analysis of the evolution through different texts has shown, it is a fascinating process of creation of Beckett's first representations of a fictional self through borrowing, digestion, transformation, and consequent removal of the Joycean material. If in Beckett I have outlined the complex shifting between *Dream* and *More Pricks*, proceeding according to a chronological order, for Joyce this has allowed me to trace an evolution in the meaning attributed to madness: his own as an artist, the madness of his text, his own as a result of physical exhaustion, and finally Lucia's madness.

The development of my comparative analysis around the discourse of madness has also allowed me to make a selection on a theme which for both Joyce and Beckett would have been necessarily too big. Focusing on the madness Beckett and Joyce "shared" within their texts has thus provided a useful filter but it has also allowed me to illustrate different aspects of this multi-layered relationship between them, which I hope will be subject to further scrutiny.

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