

Joyce and the Question of the Rural*

Suk Kim

Europe is weary even of the Scandinavian women (Hedda Gabler, Rebecca Rosmer, Asta Allmers) whom the poetic genius of Ibsen created when the slav heroines of Dostoevsky and Turgenev were growing stale. On what woman will the light of the poet's mind now shine? Perhaps at last on the Celt. Vain Question. Curl the hair how you will and undo it again as you will.

— James Joyce (*PE* 352)

If not already, then with the completion of *Ulysses*, James Joyce ought to have shed any personal doubts about his artistic calling. For if his earlier fictional works with their cast of more or less memorable personas and their problematic points of view had attracted a few discerning critics, his next two, presenting the inimitable Molly Bloom and Anna Livia Plurabelle, would not only go on to secure Ireland's place on the world literary map but catapult the author's name into the limelight of the twentieth century modernist literature. Yet, alongside the prophetic tone we

* The present essay is a revised, extended version of the paper originally delivered at 2007 ELLAK (The English Language and Literature Association of Korea) Conference on November 16, 2007 in Busan under the title "Desynchronizing Modernity: Joyce and the Question of the Rural."

inevitably read into Joyce's 1917 memo quoted above, his statement forces us to consider at least one issue of far greater import, the full bearings of which begin to come into light once we reflect on the geographical backgrounds of the literary luminaries mentioned in the epigraph. Granted that all these canonic writers (including Joyce himself) come from what then happened to be the peripheral parts of Europe and that their respective literary successes owed as much to their creative ingenuity as to a certain vantage point permitted by that shared topological background—be it that critical edge presumably enjoyed by writers from the underdeveloped parts of the world (Pascale Casanova) or the public's thirst for the 'latest thing' in the literary market (Joyce)—what is it that has allowed for Joyce's exceptional perdurance as an influential novelist? Or, to revert to the conventional theme of literary personae, why do we find it difficult, after *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, to imagine fictional heroines as charismatic or memorable as Molly and ALP? The present inquiry examines several critical factors that may help explain the exceptional stature enjoyed by Joyce's writings and how those factors may have affected our perception of literary modernism *qua* urban product.

Taken in itself, Joyce's correlation of the popularity of female characters with their peripheral national backgrounds may appear surprisingly one-sided, if not downright simplistic. That impression of one-sidedness is easily dispelled when one considers another passage from the same compositional notes Joyce wrote down for his 1918 play *Exiles*, but not without, as the result, accruing an inescapable sense of gendered incongruity. Drawing attention to the case of male protagonists, the author tells us:

Since the publication of the lost pages of *Madame Bovary* the center of sympathy appears to have been esthetically shifted from the lover or fancy man to the husband or cuckold. This displacement is also rendered more stable by the gradual growth of a collective practical realism due to changed economic conditions in the mass of the people who are called to hear and feel a work of art relating to their lives. (*PE* 344)

This sexual division of labor, whereby the shifting conception of masculinity is aligned to the level of economic, or socio-temporal, progress on the one hand and that of femininity to the spatialized configuration of the underdeveloped, rural regions on the other is something we will see repeatedly carried over, albeit in various forms, throughout Joyce's writing, starting with the Galway-born Gretta Conroy versus the cosmopolitan Gabriel Conroy in "The Dead," the moon/earth-compared heroines of *Exiles* and *Ulysses* vis à vis their urbane, well-informed male counterparts, all the way to ALP and HCE of *Finnegans Wake*, whose dual signification primarily revolves around the river Liffey and the city of Dublin respectively. Apparently, we have skipped over *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and we will no doubt have to eventually return to the early semi-autobiographical work; but what becomes clear in surveying the Joycean corpus as whole is that this sexual allocation of allegorical functions (the natural/feminine vs. cultural/masculine) reaches something of a threshold in his penultimate work, toward which all his preceding creative efforts would appear, in hindsight, to have indefatigably striven. For in *Ulysses*, we find the main fictive couple not only partitioned according to their expected roles as a city-wandering hero and his home-staying wife but both of them vying for that maximal degree of verisimilitude a.k.a. 'naturalness,' before which not only the various personae populating the preceding works but even the living acquaintances of our present daily lives will always, already look less realistic, if not indeed the imperfect caricatures. Doubtless, the meticulous means by which the author succeeded in representing or simulating the real is what, to a large extent, accounts for Joyce's undying influence as a supreme modernist/experimental writer, why perhaps "we are still," to quote Richard Ellmann's cogent pronouncement, "learning to be James Joyce's contemporaries" (Ellmann 3). Yet, what is this real, this sense of naturalness attributed to the couple of the modern-day Odyssey? What is it about these particular modes of naturalness (assuming, that is, the version of naturalness embodied in Poldy Bloom can be distinguished from that of Molly in the first place) that makes us late comers forever doomed to qualitatively lag behind in

comparison?

One standard answer, the one readily proffered by the conventional account of literary modernism, would have us resort to the now-familiar genealogy of modernist fiction, according to which the early twentieth century novelists like Joyce and Woolf initially forge an agonistic engagement with the powerful legacy of literary realism/naturalism (epitomized by the likes of Dickens, Flaubert, Zola, etc.) but only to, in the end, effect a clean break with it by means of shifting and redirecting the textual focus from outward to inward, i.e., from the moralistic dimension of social critique toward the autonomous vision of self-contained art, thereby paving the way for the sheer self-reflexivity of the succeeding postmodernism. In the trajectory of Joyce's own writing, this anxiety-ridden movement could be transposed onto the author's self-assigned literary apprenticeship in such early works as *Dubliners* and *A Portrait*, whose fundamentally realistic/symbolic framework (the famous 'epiphany' still smacking of the realist/humanist vision of Lukácsian reification), rather abruptly gives way, thanks to the introduction of such novelistic narrative devices as 'stream of consciousness,' to the spectacular coda of realist fiction in *Ulysses*. In a way, it is exactly this question regarding the culminated limit of realistic fiction, on which Harold Bloom alighted, when he in *The Western Canon* identified his literary namesake as the "complete representation of a personality, which could be regarded as Shakespeare's last stand, or the final episode in the long history of Shakespearean mimesis in the literature of the English literature" (Bloom 418). But the critic has more in mind than just the presumed perfection in literary depiction of a personality; indeed, when he adds that Poldy's "inwardness [is...] far more profoundly manifested" than that of either his symbolic son Stephen Dedalus or his conjugal partner Molly Bloom (Bloom 419), the critic's observation has the additional effect of highlighting the gendered distinction we have noted in all of Joyce's writings, which a developmental discourse about modernism like the one we schematically sketched above utterly fails to take into account.

For Harold Bloom, as for many other literary critics, the apparent naturalness

on Poldy's part stems as much from his munificent consciousness as from the commonplace nature of his endless cogitations. Yet, if there coexists as an integral part of that consciousness an abiding sense of preternatural mystery, an uncanny invocation of time immemorial (of what is called *olam* in the Hebraic language) which we readers, together with the critic, might duly ascribe to Poldy's Jewish lineage, his enigmatically generous persona also leads us to consider yet another quality which is apparently at odds with that ethnic origin: namely, his proto-modern—or as one should add following Fredric Jameson's suggestion—strikingly American disposition. In fact, when Jameson reminds us how Joyce is at pains to have the readers “accept as ‘natural’ [Poldy's] famous ‘telegraphic’ reveries,” his tireless “interest in technological inventions or get-rich-quick schemes... in other words, the *Popular Mechanics* or *Reader's Digest* version of modernity,” is it not indeed the case that Poldy Bloom appears “more American than [either] Jewish or Irish” (Jameson 2007, 177)? These two ethnic name tags—namely, Jewish and American—have of course nothing to do with that spatial configuration of national boundaries, over which, as Joyce well recognized, the fickle taste of the European public readership prowls around, much in the gregarious manner of capital seeking new market, in search of the latest talents or newest exotic heroines for literary consumption; rather, they are temporal—and by the same token—temperamental markers that infuse the ontic embodiment of Poldy's here-and-now with that elusive aura trailing Walter Benjamin's angel of history (or its obverse at any rate since the former, unlike the latter, is ineluctably propelled toward the traumatic past with his face upturned toward the future) but not toward the ultimate aim envisioned by Benjamin of blasting open the vapid continuum of historical progress nor in accordance with the Brechtian tenet of defamiliarizing the very notion of *Jetztpunkt* [now-time] but toward the goal of shoring up and further implementing the totality effect generated by the text as a whole (Benjamin 257-226). Viewed in that light, Poldy's bifocal tendency would appear to function not only to renaturalize what might otherwise congeal into the mythic particularity of given time and space but to turn what one might call a

parallax effect, that optical illusion due to which a representative part (i.e., the experiential data deriving from the mundane daily life of one ordinary city-dweller, or parts of it at that) appears to stand for the whole (the urban life in general), into a properly temporal one, namely, via the afore-alluded time-warp effect whereby what is gone and done with (the 1904 Blooms Day) appears *a priori* the most up-to-date (recall Ellmann's 1959 proclamation). What then about Molly? How does her simulated naturalness fit into this overall scheme of things?

Although Joyce may have meant many things when he stressed Molly's "indispensable countersign to Bloom's passport to eternity," it should serve as a timely warning to recall the author's exact phrase and recognize once and for all what she is not (Budgen 270). For despite that complementary role assigned to her supposedly feminine character, Molly's bedridden monologues, unlike her husband's day-long circumambulation which continuously and viscerally transmits the pulsating beat and rhythm of the physical city itself, is predicated on and starkly constricted to the level of sheerest evocation. Which leads us to reconsider the time-worn claims about *Ulysses'* alleged comprehensiveness and that "something radically Other," which, according to Jameson, "completes [the urban life] if it does not indeed in part determine it," by which he means the rural (Jameson 2002, 142). True, the rural, the natural Ireland which Joyce's wife Nora Barnacle (in many ways Molly's real-life persona) seemed to embody in her husband's eyes continually resurfaces in Joyce's writing, notably in association with various central female characters, but unlike the city itself, which finds its living spokesmen through the motley troupe of male personages, the rural as such, to speak nothing of the distinct rhythm it enjoins itself in line with nature, has no representative figure to properly call its own, least of all in the doubly-exotic (Gibraltar-born, Dublin-residing) grand madam herself, who, for all her so-called natural, seductive effusiveness, would rather have herself aligned with the fashionably, stylishly romantic than with the provincial or the 'real-existing' countryside. Here then we confront the crux of the matter which has been guiding our inquiry all along and why, as I would contend, Joyce's literary intervention or his remarkable perdurance as a literary influence

must constitute something of a norm, if not the rule itself, rather than the singular exception that proves the general rule in literary modernism's insistent neglect of that other half of our world-space known as the rural.

The point here, however, is not so much how Joyce's writing or, for that matter, literary modernism as such (with perhaps the partial exception of D. H. Lawrence, whose apotheosis of, if not indeed high-fetishistic attachment to, nature should call for a rigorous analysis in its own right) is essentially and restrictively an urban product; nor is it much of a cause for regret if our most representative modernist of colonial background should have discerned the exclusionary logic of metropolitan modernity (or, if you prefer, modernization qua urbanization) and used it as a key leverage to hurl "the nation which never advanced so far as a miracle-play" into the center stage of the world literature (*CW* 70). What is puzzling is the still much-prevalent academic ethos that equates *Ulysses*, admittedly or not, with "the virtual totality of experience... the sum totals of all sum totals," thereby rehashing the rarely-contested notion that "everything has already happened to us with *Ulysses* and has been signed in advance by Joyce" (Derrida 281 & 291). For things seem to have been quite different to the writer's own contemporaries, at least to those living outside the limited boundary of Western Europe. Is this not, in effect, what Eric Hobsbawm reminds us of when the historian remarks in *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* that "Chekhov and Tolstoy might seem more apposite models than James Joyce for those who felt their task [...] was to 'go to the people'" (Hobsbawm 191)? But then we are of course greatly simplifying; even if one does not agree with Fredric Jameson in seeing *Finnegans Wake* as Joyce's long-awaited and much-belated response to that incontrovertible reality called the destruction of the countryside, the author's *oeuvre* divulges ample evidence of chance meetings and missed encounters apropos of the subject called the rural. The first question that confronts us in this regard is Joyce's tantalizing, but no less prominent, textual allusions to the rural in the concluding sections of his early works. Take, for instance, Gabriel Conroy's ambiguous pledge to his "journey westward" (*D* 225) in the final paragraph of "The Dead." It should come

as no surprise that this short textual reference has provoked countless and often contradictory commentaries over the years as to whether his pledge is sincere, or whether sincerity is indeed the right categorical register from which to evaluate the statement at all. Likewise with Stephen Dedalus' invocation of "the reality of experience" and "the uncreated conscience of my race" at the end of *A Portrait* (*P* 275-276). If the conclusion of Joyce's second published novel is to retain any genuine sense of affirmation—and this despite or beyond all the constraints imposed by textual irony—surely his invocation cannot but promise a futural confrontation with the rural in some authentic fashion?

The second question raised by the subject of the rural may then be seen as the obverse of the first one, and it can be formulated as the following; for what particular reason could Joyce have decided to cut out that fascinating Mullingar episode (*SH* 237-253), which marks the only textual instance in early Joyce directly dealing with the countryside in a sustained manner, from the later version of *Stephen Hero* known as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*? Since I believe the key to solving the second query lies in answering the first, or in the least since the two problems seem to be inextricably interlinked, let me first tackle the former problematic, which will help us to more rigorously delineate the latter. As far as the quizzical adverb "westward" in the concluding section of the story is concerned ("The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward"), it is clear that this topographical deixis directly echoes Ms Ivors' earlier invitation to Gabriel to join her trip to the western rural region of Ireland ("O, Mr Conroy, will you come for an excursion to the Aran Isles this summer?" *D* 189), an offer which the protagonist adamantly refuses despite his wife's attendant pleading. Yet, if the textual resonance apparently made by the two topological references can in no way be doubted, it is, by the same gesture, far from clear whether Gabriel—assuming it *is* Gabriel who is uttering the later statement, for there exists the possibility that by the beginning of the concluding paragraph the voice of the narrator has imperceptibly split off from that of the protagonist—is retracting his earlier thought in earnest. On the other hand, if the expression "his journey westward" connotes

that this trip, however it may actualize in form, is Gabriel's and Gabriel's alone, one cannot help but associate it with yet another assertion made by the protagonist a moment earlier: "Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age" (*D* 224). How are we to reconcile these incongruous reverberations—that is, when one strand of thematic resonance specifically implicates a particular locale called the Aran Isles, the mythological hotspot cherished by the contemporary Irish nationalists, while another happens to be a thinly-disguised allusion to the Paterian tenet of equating and maximizing the ontological intensity of one's being with that of the sheerly aesthetic?

As I contended elsewhere, I believe the key to solving this interpretive dilemma lies neither in choosing between the two thematic elements nor in privileging one element over the other but in underscoring yet another—the third—discursive element that displaces the whole either/or problematic, namely, the question of modern technology whose specific language undergirds and ultimately clinches the textual ending marked by the tensional interplay between the two irreconcilable thematic axes. And that language is no other than the descriptive narrative made possible by aerial/cinematic photography, whose machinic gaze, after taking off from the conventionally romantic nineteenth century pictorial view of scenery overlooking the window, scans over and telescopes the entire Irish geographical landscape extending from the epicenter of Dublin (the Gresham hotel located on the present O'Connell Street) to the furthest western region of the isle (a small village in Galway called Oughterard where Michael Furey's cemetery is located).

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey *westward*. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther *westward*, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of

the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. (*D* 225, *my emphasis*)

A mysterious and mysteriously illogical descriptive phrase like “the snow falling faintly through the universe” suggests that this language can in no way purely belong to the realm of teletechnological machinery, but in so far as the machinic language as such is unimaginable anyway (the hypothesis would require at least one person who is able to acknowledge, let alone record, the sounds of inhuman telecommunication in the first place), one may reasonably assume that the second usage of the term “westward” (see the second one italicized above) illustrates the text’s own performative ‘westward’ movement in place of the protagonist who is for his part presently falling asleep. Those who accede to Fredric Jameson’s analysis of the ideological function of cinematographic perception in a work like E. M. Forster’s *Howards End* (Jameson 1990, 53-59), may well question if this similar narrative device plays the same function (in other words, does Joyce’s utilization of the same formal narrative technique exemplify yet another textual instance of ideological dissimulation? Or does the essential coloniality informing *Dubliners* as a text exempt “The Dead” *a priori* from the charge of textual repression and foreclosure?).¹⁾ The question that interests us here, however, does not confine itself to the ambiguous role of the icy (or compassionate?) gaze of moving camera work with which the text itself closes; nor is Gabriel’s possible action the day after—*après* Gretta’s fateful revelation about her past love—of much relevance to our inquiry (that is, would Gabriel transform into another sort of man, not only a more generous, open-minded husband and nephew but an entirely other kind of teacher and intellectual, etc.). What requires attention here rather hinges on the level of intertextuality, more specifically, where Joyce’s writing heads off after that final

1) For further discussion on this topic, please refer to my earlier paper “The University Question Raised by the ‘The Dead,’” *James Joyce Journal* 13.1 (2007): 43-69.

performative maneuver of *Dubliners*. The answer of which happens to be, of course, none other than *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

A Portrait, as is well-known, begins with the conventional introductory style of fairy tale: "Once upon a time and very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road..." (P 3). Since the surviving manuscript of the early version of the text starts off from p 519 and ends with p 902, we cannot know for sure what kind of changes, if any, the author made to the beginning of the story when he returned to revise it. What is certain is that in this novel, this modern literary genre *par excellence* which, according to Benjamin, "carr[ies] the incommensurable [reality of a solitary individual] to extremes in the representation of human life" (Benjamin 87), the author saw it fit to graft onto his tale the residual vestige of bygone oral tradition which draws its material from the organic communal experience of peasantry. It may be purely coincidental that the ending of the text (memorably evoking the navigational imagery in the penultimate page: "the white arms of roads, their promise of close embraces and the black of tall ships that stand against the moon, their tale of distant nations" P 275) happens to make overt allusions to that other archaic literary representative known as trading seaman, whose evolving figure historically merges with "the resident tiller of the soil" to form a prototypical storyteller of the artisan class (Benjamin 84-5). Surprisingly though for a text structurally bivalved by two archaic forms of storytelling at each end, *A Portrait* has very little to talk about in regards to the country's rural region in both present and past form; more to the point, those few textual instances which briefly, tangentially touch on the subject has nothing positive to say about the subject whatsoever. Stephen's reflection following Davin's confidence about his encounter with a country woman in Buttevant is one central example in this regard which has not escaped critics' notice.

The last words of Davin's story sang in his memory and the figure of the woman in the story stood forth, reflected in other figures of the peasant women whom he had seen standing in the doorways at Clane as the college cars drove by, as a type of her race and his own, a batlike soul waking to the

consciousness of itself in darkness and secrecy and loneliness and, through the eyes and voice and gesture of a woman without guile, calling the stranger to her bed. (*P* 198)

Later in the text, Stephen would once more identify “a batlike soul” with the “figure of the womanhood of her country” (*P* 239), thereby reinforcing the gendered allegorical functions which, as we noted earlier, Joyce continually assigns to his dramatic personae throughout his writings. But something interesting happens or, as one should perhaps say more accurately, *fails* to happen—since that episode in Mullingar is precisely the narrative part which gets excised in the process of rewriting—when Stephen actually does go to visit the real-existing countryside.

As critics like John Slocum and Theodore Spencer have pointed out, Mullingar episode with its close, realistic depiction of the rural province strikes the reader at first as an independent unit intended by the author for future use in his later writings (*SH* 4 & 9). This view attains further support when one compares the episodic narrative to the surviving manuscript of *Stephen Hero* as a whole, in which the young protagonist, from whose name the text derives its title, stands out as the classic figure of a city-wandering *flâneur* engaged in his tireless perambulation. So it is with something of a surprise and a sense of uncertain expectancy that we find at the beginning of the episode Stephen making his train journey to a village known as Mullingar, a place which later evokes the derogatory terms “the last place God made, a God-forgotten hole” from one minor character (*SH* 245). Just as with another dramatic utterance made by a nameless old man which is itself verbatim repeated in the April 14th diary entry of *A Portrait* (“Aw, there must be terrible quare craythurs at the latter ind of the world”[sic] *SH* 243), that expression of contempt would find its nigh-direct echo in yet another later work: “A barren land, bare waste... Dead: an old woman’s: the grey sunken cunt of the world” (*U* 219-29). What is more interesting, at least for our purpose, is how Stephen stereotypically reacts to the changing milieu as he nears the rural town. Even in the train, a third-class carriage at that, he finds the overwhelming presence of peasants utterly

discomforting, a feeling which is not only thoroughly disorienting in its nature (“the youth could not decide whether he found the odour of sweat offensive because the peasant sweat is monstrous or because it did not now proceed from his own body” *SH* 238) but which itself gets later reciprocated from the other end in an exact inverse manner (“Now and again a peasant plodding along the road would give the driver the time of day and if he judged Stephen worthy of the honour fumble at his hat.” *SH* 239). Eventually we learn that the purpose of Stephen’s trip was to meet his godfather, Mr Fulham who apparently has financed his protegee’s education; we also learn that this is neither Stephen’s first visit to the area. So when even in the final section of the episode Stephen still appears like a fish out of water in this rustic town (“The ground was very treacherous and [Stephen] slipped often into bog-water” *SH* 253), it indubitably dawns on us that Stephen’s inability to blend in with the surrounding rural scenery is hardly a matter of mere physical/psychological discomfort, although that too may say something about the presumed urbanity of a young artist to be.

But let us, before passing any tentative judgment on Stephen’s character, underscore one element in the text that throws an unexpected new light on our discussion hitherto. Earlier we advanced the schematic outline regarding Joycean characters’ gender division and how that seismic fault line running through the entirety of the Joycean *oeuvre* parallels the distinction in each character’s respective allegorical function as he/she relates to the rural/natural versus the city. In the Mullingar episode, however—which is to say the only real instance where Joyce went on to depict the real-existing countryside in the conventional realist mode—that gendered division strikingly comes undone. Not only is one Miss Howard, who plays hostess to the visiting Stephen in Mr Fulham’s household, a supremely urbane, sophisticated figure, but even that young, attractive and in-all-likelihood barely-educated barmaid at *Greville Arms* (whose blouse buttons Stephen is seen to be busy counting) attains her symbolic weight only as a foil to the mystifying presence of an unidentified lunatic woman whose bloated corpse washes up on the bank a page and half later. To this group of multivarious, multipolar female

characters, one should of course add the ever-hovering presence of “the [male] peasantry,” whose physiology resembles that of “almost Mongolian types, tall, angular and oblique-eyed [... with its] prominent cheek-bones” (*SH* 244). Nothing of these overdetermined characteristics (physical or otherwise) of the rural Irish residents survives in the completed version of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; nor do the formally exhaustive narratives of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* return to reraise the issue. Certainly, chapters like “The Cyclops” and “The Oxen of the Sun” of *Ulysses* make ample references to the rural heritage of Ireland, yet if the ultimate aim there appears to be either to debunk or to ironically and limitedly valorize the bygone tradition in its avowedly dead form, in Joyce’s final work, the rural as such, just as with nature and the natural to which it is inextricably linked, fades into the realm of the abstractly global as Jameson reminded us. One may argue, as the critic Theodore Spencer intimates, that the author had no choice but to excise Mullingar episode out of his concern for textual economy. But then one is only left to conjecture as to why Joyce never returned to his earlier vignette, when so much of his later writings continue to draw their ‘raw’ materials from earlier works. Could there have been perhaps something traumatic about going back to the rural? Something too close and yet too far, too uncanny in other words (as one may guess from the below passage cited from *Stephen Hero*) to confront, let alone appropriate, for the sheer sake of literary writing?

Stephen sat alone in the car thinking of the beggar’s face. He had never before seen such evil expressed in a face. He had sometimes watched the faces of prefects as they ‘pandied’ boys with a broad leather bat but those faces had seemed to him less malicious than stupid, dutifully inflamed faces. The recollection of the beggar’s sharp eyes struck a fine chord of terror in the youth and he set himself to whistle away the keen throb of it. (*SH* 245)

(Inha University, Korea)

Works Cited

- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken, 1969.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of Ages*. New York: Riverside, 1995.
- Budgen, Frank. *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters (Convergences: Inventories of the Present)*. Trans. M. B. Debevoise. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Acts of Literature*. Ed. Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*. New York: Vintage, 1996.
- Howes, Marjorie. "Goodbye Ireland I'm Going to Gort': Geography, Scale, and Narrating the Nation." *Semicolonial Joyce*. Eds. Derek Attridge and Marjorie Howes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 58-77.
- Jackson, John Wyse and Peter Costello. *John Stanislaus Joyce: The Voluminous Life and Genius of James Joyce's Father*. London: Fourth Estate, 1998.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Modernism and Imperialism." *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*. Ed. Seamus Deane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990. 43-66.
- _____. *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present*. New York: Verso, 2002.
- _____. *The Modernist Papers*. New York: Verso, 2007.
- Joyce, James. *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*. Eds. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- _____. *Poems and Exiles*. New York: Penguin, 1992.
- _____. *Stephen Hero*. New York: New Directions, 1963.

_____. *Dubliners*. New York: Penguin, 1993.

_____. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: Penguin, 1993.

_____. *Ulysses*. New York: Penguin, 1986.

Abstract

Joyce and the Question of the Rural

Suk Kim

Although James Joyce's literary universe is populated by multivarious personas and even more diverse personality traits, it is inarguable that his characters display a certain distinct set of common denominators when it comes to the question of the rural versus the city. That is, just as Joyce's central male characters are predominantly aligned to the thematic/topological pole of city and urbanity in general, so too, on the other end of the spectrum, his female characters lean toward the rural and natural: starting with the Galway-born Gretta Conroy and the avowedly Eurocentric, cosmopolitan Gabriel Conroy in "The Dead," the moon/earth-compared heroines of *Exiles* and *Ulysses* vis à vis their urbane, well-informed male companions, all the way to ALP and HCE of *Finnegans Wake*, whose dual signification primarily revolves around the river Liffey and the city of Dublin respectively. Yet it is not as if this apparent dualism recognizable in Joyce's writings is without seismic fault line, or lack its own strand of tensional nodes where the aforesaid gendered allegorical functions reach their torsional limit. Whence the need to reread the Mullingar episode of *Stephen Hero*, which marks the rare textual instance in Joyce by choosing to confront and depict the real-existing countryside. There we find not only variegated female residents of the rural province but also a group of male peasants whose visage remarkably resembles that of the exotically Oriental. After excising that fascinating narrative account from the revised text of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce never went on to grapple with the subject of the rural in a formally realist manner. The question then raised by Joyce's manifestly modernist/urban writing is, could we afford to do likewise in this late age of globalization?

■ Key words : The Rural, the Urban, Modernism, Harold Bloom, Fredric Jameson, James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*

Received September 18, 2008

Revised November 30, 2008

Accepted December 10, 2008

Suk Kim is a full-time instructor in the Department of English, Inha University, Incheon, Korea. He received his Ph.D. degree from New York University, USA. His research interest includes modern Irish literature, 20th C. British fiction and critical theory. He has published several essays on James Joyce and the contemporary British novels, and is currently working on a project retracing the legacy of Korean literary modernism. <askpeer@gmail.com>