"*The élite. Crêpe de la crêpe*":
Mourning Dress in *Ulysses*

Pingta Ku

I. Bloom at a Funeral

Death and melancholia pervade *Ulysses*: Stephen broods over the recent death of his mother in "Telemachus," Bloom and his fellow Dubliners attend Paddy Dignam's funeral in "Hades," Bloom and Molly are haunted by the traumatic memory of their dead son Rudy throughout *Ulysses*, and the spectre of self-poisoned Rudolph Virag surfaces sporadically. In Andrew Gibson's words, Joyce not merely "presents the Irish culture of death and the dead as partly a consequence of the ravages of the colonial vampire," but "also presents it as partly a Victorian import, whilst making us recognize how far a Catholic and nationalist community historically steeped in catastrophics was disposed to be susceptible to the importation in question" (57). While Gibson considers "Hades" as Joyce's depiction of an Irishman's *Anglicised* funeral that exposes a colonial undercurrent through Bloom's observing gaze, he nonetheless believes that "Bloom is robustly indifferent to matters that Irish funerary culture tends to clothe in solemn garb"

(57).

However, I have a different interpretation from Gibson's on this matter: Bloom is extremely meticulous about his fellow funeral attendants' mourning attire throughout "Hades." The episode is framed by two zoom-ins on hats: The very first scene of "Hades" is composed of a snapshot on Martin Cunningham, who "poked his silkhatted head into the creaking carriage" (*U* 6.1-2), and the last scene comically displays how Bloom the outsider suddenly decides to interrupt the duo of John Henry Menton and Martin Cunningham, only to remind the former that his "hat is a little crushed" (*U* 6.1018), whereas John Henry Menton seems to slightly overreact by "[taking] off his hat, bulg[ing] out the dinge and smooth[ing] the nap with care on his coatsleeve" and "clapp[ing] the hat on his head again" (*U* 6.1021-23). In addition to these two zoom-ins, "Hades" is replete with scenes where Dubliners come and go, showing off their mourning ensembles.

As Bernard Benstock has pointed out, Bloom's presence at Dignam's funeral is rather incongruous: "it is not as if he would be missed or that it is an event that draws universal attention or that Dignam is particularly relevant to him" (443). However obscure Benstock finds the reason behind Bloom's presence at the funeral, Bloom himself obviously regards it as an important event and feels the necessity of dressing himself properly, despite the fact that no one seems to pay any attention to his mourning dress at all in "Hades." Before leaving his place for the funeral, Bloom, in his mourning trousers, goes to the outhouse: "He kicked open the crazy door of the jakes. Better be careful not to get these trousers dirty for the funeral" (*U* 4.494-95); after "[tearing] away half the prize story sharply and [wiping] himself with it" (*U* 4.537), he anxiously examines his trousers for the funeral again: "In the bright light, lightened and cooled in limb, he eyed carefully his black trousers: the ends, the knees, the houghs of the knees. What time is the funeral?" (*U* 4.541-43). It is rather comic to see Bloom being so cautious not to stain his mourning trousers in the outhouse, but such obsession may be an indicator of the cultural unconscious: Dignam's funeral is not so much a commemoration of the dead as a ceremony for the living to socialise with others and exchange local gossip. This explains why

Bloom must attend the gala event and deliver his peak performance.

The fact that Paddy Dignam's funeral is held on Thursday is important enough, because, as Lou Taylor points out, "[m]ost working-class burials were conducted on Sundays — the only non-working day of the week — to the dismay of the rest of society, which condemned this practice as desecration" (40). In contrast to working-class funeral attendants, Dublin dandies in "Hades" seem to enjoy flexible working hours, or at least feel comfortable to take a day off when they must. Bloom, for instance, starts his day relatively late and dedicates the entire Thursday morning to Dignam's funeral, whereas his fellow Dubliner, as he reveals, even takes the whole day off: "Ned Lambert is taking a day off I see. Rather upsets a man's day, a funeral does" (*U* 7.260). In this vein, the very date on which Dignam's funeral is held contains certain socio-economic significance in that it is an essential part of these organisers and attendants' endeavour to protect Dignam's respectability and distinguish the social status of the deceased's family from the poor; the message being sent to those who "watched awhile through their windows" (*U* 6.37) is that Dignam was a man of means, as his family can afford a respectable funeral and his acquaintances belong to the leisure class.

If we look closely enough at the differences between funerals of the poor and Dignam's, we realise that various details involved in Dignam's funeral have quasi-theatrical values: with every prop used, every gesture made and every costume worn, the living are performing the final play in honour of the late Dignam, so as to hide his socio-economic decline behind staged decency. On the one hand, burials of the poor — due to the relatives' inability to raise enough fund for a decent funeral — were, in Lou Taylor's words, often so seriously delayed that the corpse decayed "in the same overcrowded room where the family slept" (40-41), whereas Dignam's funeral is held soon after his death "by misadventure" (*U* 6.364). On the other hand, the difference between Dignam's funeral and that of the poor is vividly demonstrated by the juxtaposition of the depiction in "Hades" and Robert Tressall's account of a pauper funeral:

> It was a very plain looking closed hearse with only one horse. There was no undertaker in front and no bearers walked by the sides. . . . Three men, evidently dressed in their Sunday clothes, followed the hearse. As they reached the church door, four old men who were dressed in ordinary clothes, came forward and carried the coffin into the church, followed by the other three, who were evidently relatives of the deceased. The four old men were paupers, inmates of the workhouse, who were paid sixpence each for acting as bearers. (361)

As can be seen, the pauper funeral went unnoticed and unattended to, and the few attendants, due to their own miserable status, were not properly dressed. In contrast, Dignam's funeral procession is not only escorted by a "coach and three carriages" (*U* 6.498) but also taking the route through such thoroughfares as Ringsend Road and Great Brunswick Street that lead to the centre of Dublin, so as to draw as much attention as possible. The procession finally arrives at the Prospect Cemetery in Glasnevin, which is notable as the "open air Pantheon or Westminster Abbey of Catholic and Nationalist Ireland" (Gifford and Seidman 104). Even if the procession, from Bloom's Bourgeois perspective, is "[p]altry" (*U* 6.498), it is nonetheless a "[p]omp of death" (*U* 6.459) to most working-class spectators.

The sad irony of Dignam's funeral precisely exists in its theatricality, for such a deliberately-displayed spectacle is nothing but a desperate performance that struggles to conceal his family's inevitable decline. Dignam had been a petit bourgeois until he lost his job at John Henry Menton's firm because of "[m]any a good man's fault" (*U* 6.573), and, according to Benstock, the financial status of the bereaved Dignams "immediately become problematic, especially since the insurance policy premium has not been kept up" (446). Had Dignam not died, his future trajectory would have been similar to that of the "dullgarbed old man" whom Bloom sees "tender[ing] his wares" (*U* 6.229) on the curbstone during the procession. As Bloom recalls, the old man used to work in the "[s]ame house as Molly's namesake, Tweedy, crown solicitor for Waterford," and the silk hat he wears is one of the "[r]elics of old decency" left in him (*U* 6.233-34). As far as

Dignam's social status is concerned, Ruth Bauerle suggests that "Dignam may owe something to a real Galwegian whose untimely death was recounted briefly in a letter from Annie Healy Barnacle to her daughter Nora on July 20, 1916" (115). The letter—which is indeed reminiscent of Molly's soliloquy—reads as follows:

> also poor Sarah Talemans [?] Husband is Dead and Burrid he nearly Dide in the Street the night he Was Dead she had not the price of a Candle The Friends of his had to go Arunde With the hat and there Was 30 pounds colected What Will She Do With 7 children. (115)

The possibility that Joyce may have modelled the fictional character of Dignam on the poverty-stricken Galwegian consolidates the reading that Dignam was rather on the brink of indignity than maintaining his petit bourgeois status before his death by misadventure. With the aid of such a biographical trace, the incongruity between Dignam's economic status and his funeral is further exposed. The reason why Dignam's fellow Dubliners arrange a respectable funeral for him may reside not merely in their benevolent wish to protect his dignity but also in a latent vanity to puff their own wealth and status. Funerals used to be social events for people to showcase their best suits, just like Sunday Masses where "many the display of fashionable clothes were first worn" (Dunleavy 13). Bloom's observing gaze captures several scenes where such displays take place: for instance, not only Ned Lambert shows off "[n]ice soft tweed . . . in that suit" with a "[t]inge of purple" (*U* 6.828), but even the caretaker wears a "[w]ellcut frockcoat" (*U* 6.842). Traces like these are strongly reminiscent of dandyish inclinations flowing in Dubliners' veins.

II. Dublin Dandies in the Queen's Style

As Mairead Dunleavy points out in *Dress in Ireland*, it seems to have been a

tradition for Irish people "to dress above their station and wealth" since the seventeenth century (13). By the mid-nineteenth century, dandyism had become an overwhelming phenomenon. William Makepeace Thackeray, an English novelist famous for his panoramic portrait of Georgian and Victorian eras, illustrates a picture of those dandies he saw during his visit to Ireland:

> They assume a sort of military and ferocious look, not observable in other cheap dandies, except in Paris perhaps now and then; and are to be remarked not so much for the splendour of their ornaments as for the profusion of them. Thus, for instance, a hat which is worn straight over the two eyes coats very likely more than one which hangs upon one ear; a great oily bush of hair to balance the hat (otherwise the head no doubt would fall hopelessly on one side) is even more economical than a crop which requires the barber's scissors oft-times; also a tuft on the chin may be had at a small expense of bear's grease by persons of a proper age: and although big pins are the fashion, I am bound to say I have never seen so many or so big as here. Large agate marbles, or "taws," globes terrestial and celestial, pawnbroker's balls — I cannot find comparisons large enough for these wonderful ornaments. Canes should also be mentioned which are sold very splendid, with gold or silver heads, for a shilling on the Quays: and the dandy not uncommonly finishes off with a horn quizzing-glass, which being stuck in one eye contracts the brows and gives a fierce determined look to the countenance. (127-28)

Perceivably, such dandyism continues to thrive in *Ulysses*, and, quite surprisingly, manifests itself in "Hades," an episode that is presumably dark and solemn (though full of black humour). In the colonial context of our discussion, I would like to suggest that Dubliners' tendency to out-dress British people and dress beyond their means should be seen as a pathological defensive mechanism against the virus of colonialism: Dubliners aspire to create an illusional prosperity by means of excessive consumption of fashion items, which, paradoxically, further undermines their shabby economic status.

Gibson's suggestion that we should read *Ulysses*'s mourning and funeral scenes within a colonial frame is validated by Bloom's contemplation upon Queen

Victoria's influence on the etiquette of mourning: "Widowhood not the thing since the old queen died. Drawn on a guncarriage. Victoria and Albert. Frogmore memorial mourning. But in the end she put a few violets in her bonnet. Vain in her heart of hearts" (*U* 6.549-51). What Bloom's fragmentary thoughts refer to are the grandiose funeral procession of Queen Victoria on the 2nd of February 1901, during which the Queen's body was drawn on a guncarriage under full military observance, and the Frogmore mausoleum, where the Queen's coffin was placed in the sarcophagus along with Prince Albert on the 4th of February (Gifford and Seidman 116). Queen Victoria's funeral is the culmination of a cult that the Queen has made fashionable by her life-long deep mourning for the untimely death of Prince Albert. In this vein, many traces in *Ulysses*, and especially in "Hades," as Gibson proposes, indeed demonstrate a colonising force of cultural assimilation that is at work.

Even though widowhood, in Bloom's eyes, was no longer fashionable after Queen Victoria's death, the passion for funerals flourished undimmed during the reign of Edward VII, as is exposed by Bloom's thoughts: "Funerals all over the world everywhere every minute. . . . Thousands every hour. Too many in the world" (*U* 6.514-16). Being an indispensable part of fashionable funerals, the cult of mourning dress throughout the Victorian and Edwardian era has become a fascinating object for cultural historians to examine. Costume historian Lou Taylor sees mourning dress as a social signifier that aspiring Victorian middle classes manipulated to cross the barriers between themselves and the high society headed by the Royal Family. Many of the middle classes accumulated huge fortunes from trading and industrial profits, but dismally found themselves kept outside the elite circle of long established society families and aristocracy. In order to push against the social barriers that denied them, the middle classes reproduced every minutia of aristocratic etiquette that they could afford, and the royal influence on the elaborate etiquette of family funerals after Prince Albert's sudden death in 1861 soon became a norm for them to go after. In memory of her late spouse, the much respected Queen "shrouded herself in crape-covered black clothes" (122) for the

remaining forty years of her life, and "turned away from the gently fashionable clothes" (122) such as "the fetching bustles of the 1870s" (122) and "the imposing leg-of-mutton sleeves of the 1890s" (122). From 1850 to 1890 mourning became "such a cult that hardly anyone dared defy it"; therefore, mourning dress was an essential part of an upper-class lady's wardrobe because, in Taylor's words, "social ostracism−the dread of every Victorian and Edwardian lady−could be caused through the absence of the corrected black or half-mourning wear" (122). The cult of mourning was so frenzied that it even permeated ladies' fashion magazines. In a 1904 issue of *Ladies' Realm*, Mary Spencer Warren reminds her readers that

> they should not, at the same time, omit to take both mourning and half mourning. King Edward and Queen Alexandra are so closely allied to so many foreign courts, rendering occasions for mourning frequent and often sudden, while news is so quickly transmitted that one is never sure when mourning may be demanded and it is etiquette that when visiting where the King and Queen are present every guest must appear in exactly the same degree of mourning or half-mourning. This also applies to those who may be invited to dinner and are not staying in the house. (12)

In addition to Lady Warren's emphasis on the necessity of owning an essential collection of mourning dress in one's suitcase when one is visiting or staying in a country house, *Sylvia's Home Journal* provides its readers with a much more exhaustive list of the entire ensemble (colloquially known as "widow's weeds") that a decent Victorian woman should own in her wardrobe:

> One best dress of Paramatta covered entirely with crape.
> One dress, either a costume of Cyprus crape, or an old black dress covered with Rainproof crape.
> One Paramatta mantle lined with silk, and deeply trimmed with crape.
> One warmer jacket of cloth lined and trimmed with crape.
> One bonnet of Rainproof crape, with crape veil.
> Twelve collars and cuffs of muslin or lawn, with deep hems, several sets must be provided, say six of each kind.

One black stuff petticoat.

Four pairs of black hose, either silk, cashmere or spun silk.

Twelve handkerchiefs with black borders, for ordinary use, cambric.

Twelve of finer cambric for better occasions.

Caps either of lisse, tulle, or tarlatan, shape depending much upon age; young widows wear chiefly the Marie Stuart shape but all widows' caps have long streamers. A good plan to buy extra streamers and bow.

Summer parasol of silk, deeply trimmed with crape, almost covered with it but no lace or fringe for the first year. Afterwards mourning fringe might be put on.

Muff of Paramatta and trimmed with crape.

No ornaments except jet, for the first year.

Furs are not admissable in widow's First mourning, though very dark sealskin and astrachan can be worn when the dress is changed. (qtd. in Adburgham 64)

At the end of the list, *Sylvia's Home Journal* also gives its readers a brief complementary instruction on the appropriate attires to be worn at different mourning periods:

The first mourning is worn for twelve months. Second mourning twelve months also; the cap in second mourning is left off, and the crape no longer covers the dresses, but is put on in tucks. Elderly widows frequently remain in mourning for long periods, if not for the remainder of their lives, retaining the widow's cap, collar and cuffs, but leaving off the deep crape the second year, and afterwards entirely discarding crape, but wearing mourning materials such as Victoria Cords, Janus Cords, Cashmere, and so on. (64)

All these historical traces indicate that an uncanny link between mourning dress and fashionable display had been gradually established throughout the Victorian and Edwardian reigns.

Even though the juxtaposition of fashion and death may seem uncanny at first glance, such uncanniness can be explained away. According to Barbara Vinken, the discourse of fashion is "constructed by the correlation of three major conceptual articulation," namely, "the division of being and mere appearance," "the division of

the sexes," and "the division of the classes" (4). It is not difficult for fashion to find a playground in Victorian and Edwardian funerals, because Victorian and Edwardian England, in Donald Cuthbert Coleman's words, was "an extremely class-conscious place" where not merely a "lush, pervasive, and variegated growth of snobbery blossomed along with the new growth of wealth," but "accent and dress, elaborate codes . . . were developed to insist that all were not as equal, even in *death* [my italics]" (128). Since the entire royal family wore mourning dress by order of the Queen, the snobbish bourgeoisie was eager to imitate the aristocratic dress code and consequently further spread such a dress code to lower classes who struggled to follow the bourgeois values. In order to examine this vertical social force more closely, a probe into the essential fabric of which mourning dress is made－that is, crape－may help us make more sense out of the Victorian and Edwardian cult of mourning, because crape, according to Donald Cuthbert Coleman, is the very symbol of deep mourning, a type of etiquette that "was curiously in tune with the earnest moralizing of the Victorians" (130).

If we summarise the antecedent paragraph, it seems that the cultural force behind mourning crape's becoming fashionable can be reduced into a syllogism: what Queen Victoria wore was fashionable (major premise); Queen Victoria wore crape in her deep mourning (minor premise); mourning crape was fashionable (conclusion). However, this syllogism ends up being a tautology, because an ultimate question remains to be asked: why did the Queen regard crape as a fashionable fabric for her to wear in her deep mourning? It is often believed that crape became a fashionable fabric because of Queen Victoria's protracted retirement into mourning. However, her life-long mourning after 1861 "did not create that demand" for crape (D. C. Coleman 131). On the contrary, the nation's demand for crape was steady from "the crape hatband which Charles Dickens put around Jonas Chuzzlewit's hat" to "the thousands and thousands of yards of crapes of King George III in 1820 and George IV in 1830, the Princess Augusta in 1840, the Duke of Sussex in 1843, Queen Adelaide in 1850, and . . . the Prince Consort in 1861" (131). Therefore, Coleman suggests that Queen Victoria's "liking for the full

trimmings of mourning preceded the death of her husband" (131).

In 1860, one year preceding Prince Albert's death, Queen Victoria wrote an intriguing letter concerning mourning dress code to her eldest child, Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa:

> *From the Princess Royal*
>
> *APRIL 14, 1860*
>
> *I should like to know about your mourning, although I cannot wear the same as you. . . . We were only allowed to wear six weeks for our grandmother Weimar, for the King we should only wear two months, for cousin one week. Therefore in this case the utmost I could wear would be four weeks which according to the curious customs here about mourning is considered a very long time. I should only wear silk — as crêpe is the very deepest one could wear here. It distresses me much not to be able to wear the same as you, it is very painful in such cases not to be able to do as one likes. And the Prince and the whole family hate mourning as you know.* (Queen of Great Britain Victoria 248)

Queen Victoria wrote a reply letter on the 18th of April, 1860, which starts in defence of the Prussian dislike of mourning dress but suddenly takes a dramatic turn:

> I think, dearest, you should not judge George of M. so harshly . . . people have very different ways of taking and receiving bad news — particularly men, and one must not for that be too severe towards them. . . . Our letters about the mourning have crossed each other. That dislike of it I think positively wrong. Darling Beatrice looks lovely in her black silk and crepe dress. (248-49)

The "bad news" that Queen Victoria referred to here is the death of her brother-in-law, Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, on the 12th of April (246), and the George M. whom she defended is Georg II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, whose second wife (Princess Feodora of Hohenlohe-Langenburg) is the late Prince Ernest's daughter. The correspondence between the Queen and the Princess Royal

reveals several fascinating details: First of all, the etiquette of an extended mourning period during the Victorian era was very British; at least, it was not enthusiastically shared by the Queen's affinal Prussian royal family. Secondly, it seems slightly uncanny that the Queen displayed a patronising tolerance towards the Prussian royal family's failure to mourn its own loss in the British way. Thirdly, the Queen's fondness of mourning dress is almost pathologically fetishistic that she dressed her youngest daughter, who was just three by 1860, in crape and described her outfit as *lovely*, which doesn't seem to be the most proper attribute in that circumstance. Lastly, both the Queen and the Princess Royal used the French word *crêpe* instead of its Anglicised spelling *crape* in their letter-writing. As far as the last point is concerned, it may be even more intriguing after we have realised that fin-de-siècle Parisian *magasin de deuil* (mourning warehouse) actually marketed mourning crape as *crêpe anglaise*, so as to distinguish it from the other variety of crape that was known as *crêpe de Chine*.

III. Huguenots and *Crêpe Anglaise*

While the British royal family's preference of *crêpe* over *crape* suggests the fabric's affinity to Frenchness and, thus, poshness, the ironic fact is that the French market developed a bond between mourning crape and Englishness by coining the phrase *crêpe anglaise*, which fuses this specific duo of fabric and nationality into one inseparable entity. Better yet, according to Donald Cuthbert Coleman, even though Paris was advertised as the capital of fashion by many British ladies' magazines at the turn of the century, *crêpe anglaise* "remained an English product and an English export" highly demanded by the French market (166); to maintain the fashion of mourning, France not merely "imported *crêpe anglaise*" but also "emulated English economic policy" (132).

However, history, it seems, is not without a sense of irony: *crêpe anglaise*, being a British invasion into the fin-de-siècle French fashion scene, actually has an

ambiguous French connection. In "Lestrygonians," Bloom associates silky red ribbons with cascades of blood when passing the windows of Brown, Thomas & Co.: "Cascades of ribbons. Flimsy China silks. A tilted urn poured from its mouth a flood of bloodhued poplin: lustrous blood. The huguenots brought that here" (*U* 8.621-23). The logic behind Bloom's association, as is revealed by his thought itself, points to the violent French persecution of Huguenots and their subsequent exoduses since the mid-sixteenth century. Whom Bloom thinks of here are the particular branch of Huguenots who "sought shelter in Ireland in the late seventeenth century and established colonies in Dublin and in the Protestant north" (Gifford and Seidman 176). Later in "Lestrygonians," Huguenots flash through Bloom's mind again, and this time he ponders upon the origin of a curious name: "miss Dubedat? . . . Huguenot name I expect that" (*U* 8.889). These two textual traces, however irrelevant they seem, lead me back to the British industry of crape again, because *Courtauld*, a surname which sounds as Huguenot as Dubedat, is definitely a keyword of the Victorian mourning crape industry. Samuel Courtauld III—who "was just managing to keep his small silk business alive" at the end of 1819 but ended up accumulating "a fortune of nearly £700,000" in 1881 after his death (D. C. Coleman 1)—not merely witnessed and participated in, but also fuelled up and profited from the cult of mourning crape.

As Bloom points out, there is indeed a connection between Huguenots and the silk industry. The genealogy of the Courtaulds can be traced back to a document of 1584 that briefly refers to a Christophe Courtauld, who came from the small island of Oléron, "just off the French coast near La Rochelle" (D. C. Coleman 1-2). When exactly the Courtaulds converted to Protestantism is unknown, but "the marriage contract of Christophe's daughter Anne, dated 1594, shows that she was to be married in the reformed church" (2). It was Augustin IV, Christophe's great great grandson, who "left for England at some date between 28 September 1685 . . . and 10 March 1689" (3), and the Courtaulds first entered the English silk industry when Augustin IV's great grandson George I "set up in Spitalfields, as a throwster, with the help of £500 left to him by his father" in about 1782 (33).

George's son, Samuel III, "helped his father in setting up the Braintree mill and in the early years of running it" (45), and finally established the crape empire, Samuel Courtauld & Co..

The Huguenot family's ascension from religious refugees to millionaires is indeed fascinating, whereas the crape industry makes the Courtaulds' story even more mysterious, not only because the fabric is a symbol of death and mourning, but also because the industry is involved with numerous endeavours in industrial espionage. The techniques behind the production of crimped crape, in Coleman's words, "were for long surrounded by a deal a mumbo-jumbo" (84), and the mystery remained unsolved till the first decade of twentieth century, because the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in its 1910 edition, reveals that the detailed processes of crape-production are "known to only a few manufacturers, who so jealously guard their secret that, in some cases, the different stages in the manufacture are conducted in towns far removed from each other" (qtd. in D. C. Coleman 84). All these fantastic rumours about secret rooms and industrial espionage remained a reality in Samual Courtauld & Co. throughout the nineteenth century; even before the outbreak of the First World War, crimpers working for Samuel Courtauld & Co. "were still being sworn to secrecy before a Justice of the Peace" (D. C. Coleman 84). However, the entire dramatic mystification of crape-production could be a sleight-of-hand to discourage other firms from entering this highly profitable branch of silk industry and hence secure the company's monopoly. The ironic truth might simply be that crape-production actually requires neither fine silks nor technical finesse:

> So far from needing expensive, highly taxed, high-quality Italian organzine, crape was usually woven with singles, thrown from less-taxed, lower priced, poorer-quality silks in both warp and weft, though sometimes tram was used in the weft. So far from needing draw-looms or jacquards, and the labour of better-paid and more skilled weavers who used them, it could be woven on simple looms by lower paid, semi-skilled men and women. (D. C. Coleman 31)

Simply said—in Stephen's cliché—the open secret behind the crape industry's tremendous profitability is "buy[ing] cheap and sell[ing] dear" (*U* 2.359), plus the creation of a thriving market. As has been exposed, Victorian aristocracy and bourgeoisie created a paradise for crape entrepreneurs, and Samuel Courtauld manipulated the power of advertising to enhance the power of seduction with the publication of a leaflet entitled *Notes on Fashionable Mourning* in 1902, which reaffirmed crape as a symbol of royalty and haute couture (Taylor 134).

Since the crape industry profits from a double exploitation of labours and consumers,[1] the moral absurdity behind the Victorian etiquette of mourning reveals itself: if we remove the sentimental and moralising discourse from this Victorian cult, the economic calculation operating beneath the royal family's endorsement of the crape industry becomes manifest—to formulate an national mourning etiquette that demands intricate dress code is to create not merely an immense domestic market for booming textile manufacturing after the Industrial Revolution, but also various related employment opportunities within the tertiary sector of the economy. Victorian tradesmen and industrialists grasped this great profiting opportunity created by the cult of fashion; in Taylor's words, such industries as "undertakers, mourning warehouses, stationers, florists, stone masons and textile manufacturers ran thriving enterprises"; their secrets of success were to "[stress] the royal origins of their trade and [exploit] their royal and aristocratic patrons in advertising campaigns" (188). By having established the aristocratic image of mourning etiquette via advertising discourse and the royal family's endorsement, tradesmen could easily manipulate the society's excessive anxiety over decorum to multiply sale figures, because no families wished to lose face by violating the etiquette of bereavement. According to Taylor's observation, tradesmen cunningly "made it as

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1) See Taylor: "Samuel Courtauld, who was the biggest producer of mourning crape, paid the women crape weavers at his Essex mills some of the lowest wages in the mechanised textile industry of that time. In 1873 they complained that 8s a week was not enough to keep themselves 'respectable.' Two years later some of them left the factories when they discovered that instead of £14 a year in Essex, they could earn £18 a year in domestic service in London" (197).

easy as possible for their customers to part with their money"; for instance, they provided delivery and customer service by dispatching assistants "to the house to take the measurements of the family and servants for their black clothes and to advice discreetly on the social correctness of the proceedings" (189). That is to say, tradesmen fed on the dead by exploiting the living, and it is such absurdity that makes Bloom sigh: "More sensible to spend the money on some charity for the living" (*U* 6.930-31).

Having combed through the intricate link between *crêpe anglaise* and Samuel Courtauld's Huguenot background, the industrial capitalism's overwhelming secularising force becomes even more manifest, for crape fetishism, having fed on the Victorian moralistic discourse and French Protestant's industriousness, transforms funerals into grotesque spectacles where mourners in various mourning dresses perform different degrees of grief over the dead. In other words, English mourning etiquette became an arbitrary semiotic system where all minute details in gestures and costumes were endowed with various significant values. Such a system had pervaded the colonial city of Dublin, as is revealed by Bloom's calculative observation in "Hades": "A man in a buff suit with a crape armlet. Not much grief there. Quarter mourning. People in law perhaps" (*U* 6.180-81). It is intriguing to see how a buff suit with a crape armlet leads Bloom towards the conclusion that the man *doesn't show much grief* and therefore *may be Dignam's affine*. Better yet, the chance encounter between Bloom and the man in quarter mourning resembles that between a spectator and a performer: the former can't enjoy the spectacle the latter puts on without a mutual comprehension of theatrical conventions, and in this very case their adeptness at encoding and decoding the arbitrary semiotic system exposes the fact that Dubliners in "Hades" think as Englishmen do when it comes to funeral dress codes. In this vein, Joyce's depiction of Dubliners wearing *crêpe anglaise* is by no means trivial, since *Ulysses* aspires to capture the colonial condition of Dublin and its cultural phenomena.

The expertise that Joyce's Dubliners demonstrate in playing with the semiotic system of mourning dress ironically turns them into zealous consumers of this

English commodity, in the sense that they can't be at the top of their game without the aid of adequate props. However, if we re-examine the intricate thread that links *crêpe anglaise* and Frenchness together, the scenarios in which Joyce's bourgeois dandies turn themselves into loyal servants of the English mourning fashion would seem less incongruous: how *crêpe anglaise* became one of the most dominant English exports at the turn of the century relies on the premise that it conquered Paris, the capital of fashion, and consequently blurred its Englishness with a camouflage of Frenchness. In other words, the cult of mourning exhibits not only the formation of global markets at the turn of the century but also a marvellous case of "the deterritorialization of capitalism" at its early phase.[2] As Lou Taylor points out, the Grand Maison de Noir of 27 & 29, Faubourg St Honoré, Paris－one of the grandest mourning warehouses－was situated "near to the great establishment of the couturier Charles Worth, and the best Court dressmakers and textile emporiums in the world" (190-91). The fact that Grand Maison de Noir and other establishments of haute couture were bound together by geographical contiguity reveals a fin-de-siècle Parisian ideology in which mourning dress and haute couture were two intersecting categories. More intriguingly, Charles Worth, to whom the birth of haute couture is generally credited, was an Englishman who "moved to Paris in 1845, and began working at an exclusive shop for silks and other fine fabrics on the rue de Richelieu" (Troy 18).

According to Nancy J. Troy, *haute couture*－"which has been described as one of the modern period's most important innovations in the production and social meaning of clothing" (18), and whose Frenchness is more than self-revealing－has an ironic English origin. However, Elizabeth Ann Coleman argues that Worth's contribution to *haute couture* has more to do with his marketing strategy than with aesthetic insight, for "[t]he essential innovation attributed to Worth does not reside

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2) See Deleuze and Guattari: "the process of deterritorialization here goes from the center to the periphery, that is, from the developed countries to the underdeveloped countries, which do not constitute a separate world, but rather an essential component of the world-wide capitalist machine" (231).

in the cut of his designs; it is, rather, the creative aspect of producing 'models,' which then could be distributed commercially throughout the world" (33). That the origin of modern *haute couture* is associated with an Englishman whose talent resides not so much in designing as in marketing reveals its subtle nature: the Frenchness of *haute couture* is, to a certain extent, rather a fictional label that serves the end of advertising than a reference to specific cuts or designs. This is exactly why Grand Maison de Noir that featured *crêpe anglaise* had no difficulty fitting in with other Parisian establishments of *haute couture*: as long as *crêpe anglaise* is profitable, the English fabric is more than welcome to be fully integrated into the French discourse of advertising, as is supported by the fact that *Les Modes*, a French fashion magazine, featured expensive full-page advertisements that displayed widows' weeds, made of *crêpe anglaise Courtaulds*, by such famous designers as Lucile, Lafontaine and Lanvin (Taylor 223).

IV. Stephen-in-Black and His Two Masters

We may have to consider the possibility－however unlikely it seems－that Stephen either fails to see the Englishness of the cult of mourning or idiosyncratically identifies it with Parisian fashion by denying its English root; otherwise, Stephen's adherence to the English cult would seem rather incompatible with his self-exile from Anglicised Dublin and such deliberate displays of "Paris fads" (*U* 1.342) as wearing a "Latin quarter hat" (*U* 1.519, 3.174) and speaking "parleyvoo" (*U* 15.3875, 15.3898). To examine Stephen's Parisian mannerism, David Weir suggests the possibility of locating him into the genealogy of nineteenth-century French poets and argues that he "owes a great deal to the *general* turn-of-the-century image of the artist as a rebel in conflict with society," which "the legendary reputations of Baudelaire and Rimbaud did much to foster" (87). Intriguingly, the Baudelaire-Stephen genealogy Weir proposes here may provide me with yet another tangential point at which mourning dress and *Décadent*

literary representation meet. "To a Woman Passing By" captures a chance-encounter between the Baudelairean flâneur and a Parisian woman in deep mourning:

> Around me roared the nearly deafening street.
> Tall, slim, in mourning, in majestic grief,
> A woman passed me, with a splendid hand
> Lifting and swinging her festoon and hem;
>
> Nimble and stately, statuesque of leg.
> I, shaking like an addict, from her eye,
> Black sky, spawner of hurricanes, drank in
> Sweetness that fascinates, pleasure that kills.
>
> One lightning flash . . . then night! Sweet fugitive
> Whose glance has made me suddenly reborn,
> Will we not meet again this side of death?
>
> Far from this place! too late! *never* perhaps!
> Neither one knowing where the other goes,
> O you I might have loved, as well you know! (Baudelaire 189)

The chance-encounter captured in this sonnet depicts a modern experience that Walter Benjamin calls "love at last sight" (169). Similar scenarios recur throughout *Ulysses* as déjà-vus—"Sees me looking. Eye out for other fellow always" (*U* 5.119); "Lost it. . . . The tram passed. They drove off towards the Loop Line bridge, her rich gloved hand on the steel grip. Flicker, flicker: the laceflare of her hat in the sun: flicker, flick" (*U* 5.132-40); "Trams: a car of Prescott's dyeworks: a widow in her weeds. Notice because I'm in mourning myself" (*U* 5.460-61). Bloom, like the Baudelairean flâneur, roams the modern streets that are full of mechanical noises and human voices, sees enticing figures pass by and perhaps even meets their eyes, but those figures soon fade away, disappearing behind distant moving images. The Baudelairean flâneur, who may rather be a mixture of

mundane Bloom and escapist Stephen, utilises several significant attributes to depict the woman passing by: her figure is tall and slim, her hand is splendid, and her movement is agile and noble. All these attributes suggest that the woman, in deep mourning and with majestic grief, is fashionable and desirable. However, either the chance-encounter or its subsequent affect of love at last sight, similar to the case in "Nausicaa," is rather *imaginary*. It is imaginary, not merely because the affect is an illusion that the flâneur's imagination creates, but also because the entire episode is based on gazes and images. Benjamin, borrowing Thibaudet's words, describes "To a Woman Passing By" as a verse that "could only have been written in a big city', and that "reveal[s] the stigmata which life in a metropolis inflicts upon love" (169). As Benjamin observes, Proust gives an echo of Baudelaire's woman in mourning and integrates her into his creation of Albertine, "the evocative caption 'La Parisienne'" (170). Even if there is no explicit evidence to support that Joyce's Stephen has read these passages, the literary and cultural backdrop is likely to have conditioned his perception of the cult of mourning during his exile in Paris and consequently make him regard it as an essential part of "Paris fads."

Yet another perspective from which we could look at Stephen's adherence to mourning dress is, of course, the long-established Stephen-Hamlet parallel. It may seem a big leap to redirect my discussion from the English invasion of mourning crape into Parisian fashion to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but the latter is arguably a veiled testimony which subtly records the genesis of the English cult of black mourning. As far as *Hamlet*'s original costume design is concerned, we can't be sure how exactly Shakespeare would have dressed his Dane prince because "the earliest visual image of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* appeared in printed editions of his plays towards the beginning of the eighteenth century" (Young 17). However, the textual depiction that he is dressed in "inky cloak" and "suits of solemn black" leads John Harvey to his argument that Hamlet's black "must have some resemblance to a young prince of the Spanish court, and of many courts; and equally to a young notable in the Calvinist and Lutheran states" (92).

Harvey's observation is valuable because it reveals a critical phase of cultural

appropriation during which the English court responded to the Spanish fad of black garments and gradually integrated it into English etiquette. On the one hand, it is around the period when Shakespeare composed *Hamlet* that black fabrics became more and more accessible in Western Europe, because the Indian logwood that the Spanish discovered at the Bay of Campeachy in Mexico earlier in the sixteenth century finally provided a solution to the long search for a genuine black dye which was efficient and economic (Harvey 56). It's worth remarking that black garments, during the Renaissance, were not merely worn in mourning and funerals but also in almost all occasions, because black was often regarded as a smart and noble colour back then. In this vein, Shakespeare's black prince, as John Harvey suggests, reveals a Renaissance fad and industrial innovation. On the other hand, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in spite of its root in the Nordic oral tradition, is very English in terms of its theatrical theme: *Hamlet* is often categorised into the genre of Jacobean revenge tragedy, which, according to Steven Mullaney, captures "an uncertain economy between mourning and misogyny" during the transitional period from the Elizabethan era to the Jacobean era (140). In other words, *Hamlet*, under its camouflage of an exotic story about the Danish court, is a play that deals with the aftermath of the death of Elizabeth I.

If we take a chronological examination over various portraits of the thrice-widowed Mary Queen of Scots, we are likely to find a shift in colour-politics during that very period. As Lou Taylor points out, in portraits painted between 1559 and 1561, Mary Queen of Scots wears "French *deuil blanc* or white mourning, with a white Paris head, a transparent white barbe beneath her chin" (81). In addition to such traces revealed in portraits, Taylor also notices that the Queen had miscellaneous coloured dresses in her wardrobe before the full mourning period was over; for instance, among her sixty gowns, numerous were made of "cloth of gold," "green velvet," "blue silk with silver embroidery," and "orange damask" (82-83). Whereas funerals, as Mary Queen of Scots's colourful collection of mourning dress reveals, were yet to become monochromatically black, more and more references to black silk crepe could be found within documents; it is towards

the late-Elizabethan period that the transparent black silk mourning crape was first worn in Britain, as may be seen in later portraits of Mary Queen of Scots, wherein she wears a transparent black widow's veil in the 1570-80 period (Taylor 210). Since imported black silk crepe had gradually become fashionable in the late-Elizabethan era, the English court started trying to develop domestic silk industries. All these historical backdrops suggest that literary representations are more or less fashioned by their contemporary cultural forces. In the case of *Hamlet*, the reason why the melancholic Prince in mourning is cloaked in black may has something to do with the emerging English fashion of black mourning at the turn of the seventeenth century. Similarly, *Ulysses* is set in the British Empire's colonial outskirts at a transitional time when Edward VII has just succeeded to Queen Victorian's long reign and when the cult of mourning has evolved for three centuries and almost become synonymously English.

After a series of archaeological exploration of mourning dress, we may now say that Stephen is, to a certain extent, serving an English master when stubbornly sticking to his "cheap dusty mourning" dress (*U* 1.571). If we look into the etymology and history of *crêpe anglaise*, the iconic English fabric will reveal its Italian origin: not only does the word crape come from the Latin verb *crispare* (to curl), but Victorian mourning crape is very likely to have originated in the city of Bologna, "which by the eighteenth century was particularly famous for its crimped crapes" (Taylor 205).[3] Therefore, by wearing mourning costumes made of *crêpe anglaise*, Stephen and his fellow Dubliners, at least in a symbolic sense, are serving a master that is simultaneously English and Italian, whereas they are hardly conscious of this fact. As a vivid contrast to the animosity Stephen displays towards Roman Catholicism, he chooses to adhere to the letter of the old law and obey the

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3) Also see D. C. Coleman: "Both sorts of crape, when dyed black, were at one time or another associated with mourning, but especially the Italian and, later, English sort. Consequently the word crape alone came eventually to mean mourning crape, and when in the later nineteenth century the other variety became fashionable in England it was distinguished from its mourning relative by being called *crêpe de Chine*, whilst English mourning crape was known across the Channel as *crêpe anglaise*" (24).

English etiquette of extended deep mourning and strict dress code.[4] This very curious case wherein Stephen gestures a revolt against the Catholic church yet serves the secular master of the English mourning dress industry reveals the subtle strategy that the colonial capitalism masterfully plays. By integrating social dogma into consumers' unconscious behavioural patterns — that is, to consume commodities is to be classy — the British empire makes Stephen its loyal servant: he insists on following Queen Victoria's extreme and obsolete etiquette by wearing black for an extended deep mourning, yet remains unconscious of the fact that he is endorsing an English industry.

V. Coda

Bloom, as an advertisement canvasser, keenly observes how his fellow Dubliners practice the etiquette of mourning at Dignam's funeral, whereas Stephen ironically adheres to the sartorial tradition rooted in the two masters that he abhors. The intriguing fact that Joyce's Dublin dandies embrace Queen Victoria's fashion of mourning also invites us to rethink the pejorative depiction of Irish men — including Oscar Wilde, *the* Irish dandy — as effeminate followers of fashion. On the one hand, Irish men are derided as effeminate because they have been politically and economically *castrated* under British rule. On the other hand, the French concept of fashion — *la mode* — is etymologically and epistemologically intrinsic to *mode*rnity, while its feminine article "*la*" hints at frivolity and transience.[5]

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4) See Gifford and Seidman: "In the mid-Victorian world, the period of a son's deep mourning for his mother (black suit, shoes, socks, and the tie and a sharply limited social life) would have been considerably relaxed, but Stephen is adhering to the letter of the old law" (15).

5) See Lehmann: "*Mode* derives from the Latin *modus*, meaning 'manner' or 'style.' Its masculine form expresses above all rules of change and anticipation of cycles (e.g., 'mode of living'). It governs the way in which an action or historic progress develops. Although we have seen that a plural form exists to describe clothes, the *feminization* of

Therefore, what Bloom, Stephen, and their fellow Dubliners in mourning garments demonstrate is the two faces of colonial modernity: they seem to enjoy the unprecedented freedom to emulate the royal family's style, yet their self-affirmation through conspicuous consumption－"How grand we are this morning!" (*U* 6.1033) －not merely worsens their own economic hardship but also endorses a British industry (with French connection) that exploits cheap labour for exorbitant profits.

Dublin dandies consume commodity in the hope of becoming modern and *à la mode*, only to serve the Crown and its global empire that keep them castrated and enslaved.

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the word in the singular (ca. 1845) was required to designate the aesthetics of fashion (and subsequently its industry and commerce). *La mode* temporarily subverted the rules of change, a will- and skillful easing of parameters" (18).

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Abstract

"*The élite. Crêpe de la crêpe*": Mourning Dress in *Ulysses*

Pingta Ku

This paper unfolds itself by re-evaluating Andrew Gibson's statement in *Joyce's Revenge*－"Bloom is robustly indifferent to matters that Irish funerary culture tends to clothe in solemn garb" (57)－and demonstrates that Bloom is in fact a keen observer of the *English* etiquette of mourning that his fellow Dubliners practice. The cultural archaeology of mourning dress paves the way for my examination of the intriguing fact that Stephen－who hates his "English and Italian masters" (*U* 1.638)－ironically insists on wearing mourning garment, a dominant *English* commodity at the turn of the 20th century. The irony that Stephen holds a hostile attitude towards the British Empire and the Roman Catholic church but at the same time embraces *crêpe anglaise*－an English fabric originating in Italy－exposes the colonising power of commodities and global capitalism.