

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

"尤利西斯"與"馬隆逝矣"的遷徙藝術

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### The Art of Exile in *Ulysses* and *Malone Dies*

The result of this year-long project will be written up in an essay form, which will include and feature the following points.

This is a comparative study of the art of exile in *Ulysses* and *Malone Dies*, the second of Beckett's *Trilogy*. The focus of this study is examining how the concept and (artistic) technique of "exile"—as of the sort prescribed by Stephen-Joyce and in *Ulysses*—work to the benefit or detriment of the dying narrator, Malone, in reaching an ideal state of "absence" (bearing in mind that *Malone Dies* was initially entitled *L'Absent*), or "silence"—an obsession to plague Beckett's next hero in the *Trilogy*, The Unnamable. According to the consensus of Beckett's critics, Malone is "the first Beckettian hero to seek to know himself through writing fiction" (Fletcher 171). Hence, the portraiture of Malone evokes useful analogy with the artist figure of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*.

The "aporetics" (to use Malone's own term), however, involved in Malone's blatant act of writing (wielding a diminishing pencil and attempting to "harpoon" the notebook in constant danger of disappearing) as well as the content of his figments become the fertile ground for exploring the evolution path the Stephen-artist has trod to reach the state of the dying Malone. They mainly revolve around the dialectics of the physical vs. mental or fictional exile. Malone's physical immobility and near perishing—i.e. near absence or silence—paradoxically constitute the *a priori* of his endless and protean generation of fictional personae and identities. However, the more they proliferate in diverse names and identities—Sapo, Macmann, Lemuel—the more they bear uncanny resemblance (or portraiture) to Malone's autobiographical self, reminding of his own extremely circumscribed existence, thus posing "danger to myself from myself," he confesses. The line between fiction and non-fiction, fictional portraiture (or biography) and autobiography, becomes dangerously blurred. The result is both yes- and no-saying to the self and the eventual failure of arriving at the real silence, thus to anticipate the subsequent task faced by the Unnamable.

Meanwhile, another set of dialectics can be found at work with regard to those of personal or humanistic references in opposition to those of ideological or historical ones to disturb the naturalization of portraiture of the dying artist. Malone observes himself surrounded by natural, generic objects without specificities of any recognizable sorts, least national(istic), Irish ones. These, at most, assume the form of dislocated fragments, deprived of transcendent significance. However, the constant reminder of himself consciously and willingly taking on the role of the story-teller harks back actually to the Irish tradition of the culture-specific role of *seanachie*, or story-teller. This cultural prototype fundamentally disturbs the art of absence which Malone attempts to create. Thus, a tension exists between the personal and the

historical, the more generally humanistic and the political. Highlighted in this dialectic is Malone's own dialectic of the sense of place—a Joycean legacy all latecomers in Ireland must engage in, whether they like it or not—and predicament between local and universal identifications (the ultimate of which is nationalistic, Irish one), between the separative and the conjunctive. Such dialectic bears witness to Stephen's self-styled art of flight from multiple ideological baggage and borders and finally to Bloom's elastic nationhood without natural or political boundaries.

Taking Stephen's cue at the very end of *A Portrait* to “forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race”—the logical materialization of which is expectedly *Ulysses*, I examine how Stephen's (and Bloom's and Joyce's, for that matter) poetics of exile can be seen materialized in Malone's art of portraying his “race of men.” The awareness and exploration of “my mind wandering, far from here” (*Trilogy* 198-9) in *Malone Dies* testify to Beckett's take on the heritage of the Stephen-Joyce artist. The resulting undecidability or even “dislocation” of the modes of autobiography and fiction can bear witness to the workings of the logic of exile of identities as spelled out and practiced by Stephen and intuited to by Bloom. *Malone Dies* can thus be a portrait of the “race” of the dying artist.