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The New Irish Art of Exile in *Ulysses* and *Molloy*

It is a commonplace to take for a priori Beckett's acquaintance, close association with, and influence by Joyce in the former's formative years in Paris, so much so that Beckett later in 1956 has to qualify and reinstate his difference from the mentor- and master-like Joyce in his famous verbalization of Joyce's work tending toward omnipotence while his own toward impotence (Graver and Federman, eds. 148).[1] While such distinction bears itself out prominently in Beckett's development and experiment in his later shorter prose, it is still legitimate to examine Beckett's major long fiction composed during and after World War II in the light of Joyce's own verbalization of aesthetics and (anti-)ideology in *Ulysses*, an influential and inspiring work, though composed a quarter of a century ago, defining modernism for young, emergent literary practitioners such as the likes of Beckett.

A likeminded young literary practitioner who has left a decisive and influential mark in the imaginative and representational scenes is Stephen Dedalus from *A Portrait* who continues to make his presence and a difference in *Ulysses*. Toward the end of *A Portrait*, Stephen proclaims his famous defensive formula for future Irish art: "silence, exile, and cunning" (*P* 247). Stephen's resolution to exile himself from Ireland and its colonial condition constitutes the keynote to the first three episodes of *Ulysses*. The ending note of "Telemachus" brings into official relief the image of the "usurper" who summarizes all enslaving forces subjugating Stephen's integrity and subjectivity as an artist, citizen, and individual proper. The prophesized new route toward "silence, exile, and cunning" is exemplified in Stephen's art as demonstrated in *Ulysses*. Though skimpy in volume, his revision of Hyde's Gaelic-translated poem and the *suis generis* "Parable of the Plums" have for their hallmark the questionable correlation between the words and the references the former make, thus unsettling and exiling hegemonic interpretation from his art.

A fellow Dubliner, Stephen's and Joyce's young protégé, Beckett's literary path can logically be examined through the prism of young Stephen. The bipartite structure of his *Molloy* produces a complexity more or less comparable to Joyce's titanic stylistic exercise in *Ulysses*. Thus, it is propitious to examine how Beckett in the first novel of his *Trilogy* seriously engages with the young Stephen's prophecy toward exemplifying a new Irish art. Already initiated in the four stories of *The Nouvelles*, the theme of banishment starts to dominate Beckett's postwar fiction. They feature a first-person narrator who is settled with the fate of being cast out from an

[1] In an interview with Israel Shenker 1956), Beckett distinguishes his own art from Joyce's: "The more Joyce knew, the more he would. He is tending toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with ignorance, impotence."

institution-like setting onto the streets or the border of a barely recognizable city. These four first-person, outcast narrators are precursors to the monumental *Trilogy* narrators. Beckett's next full-length work, *Molloy*, becomes the proper text to closely examine such fate of banishment initiated in *The Nouvelles* and prophesized by his young predecessor, Stephen Dedalus.

In comparing Joyce's and Beckett's specialties, Barbara Reich Gluck stops at exploring the implication of her own point: "Joyce's characters may be exiled from country, religion, or wife, but Beckett's…are separated not only from any society but…from themselves, their own identity" (80). Though it is commonly accepted, as stated in Gluck's statement, that Beckett's characterization tends toward the more metaphysical level rather than the physical orientation of Joyce's, the replication of the act and art of exile as of *Ulysses* is often neglected in Beckett's long fiction. In *Ulysses* we saw Joyce engaged in and complicated the portrayal of major human establishments such as class, gender, sexuality, country, nationalism, race, etc. Most evidently, the integrity of the bourgeois home, among other things, was undermined by the Blooms' incompleteness without a son-heir and with the wife's adultery. However, this was at a humanistic and humanitarian level compensated by the Bloom-Stephen step-father- and -sonhood. *Molloy* recycles the father-son and mother-son kinship but decisively introduces more disabling ambivalence with regard to human kinship, thus sharpening in relief the Joycean concern with exiled familial identity in *Ulysses*.

Unmistakably reminiscent of the memorable (step-)father-son relationship in *Ulysses*, *Molloy* takes up and features a real pair of Moran and his son Jacques and a likewise mock or symbolic pair of father Molloy and son Moran. In the vein of acknowledging (at least) the bodily effect as in the example of the life-affirming Bloom, the pair of real father and son Moran indeed also share this Bloomian life principle—of masturbation, thus cementing their lineage. Moran affirms their affinity in a rather comic, albeit qualified, way: "I took advantage of being alone at last, with no other witness than God, to masturbate. My son must have had the same idea, he must have stopped on the way to masturbate. I hope he enjoyed it more than I did" (133). When the story starts, this father and son affinity is a priori bonded by their common faith. The Catholic Moran obviously passes down his religious belief and practice to his son, Jacques. Just as meticulous and religious, Jacques goes to the Sunday mass in his father's stead, when the latter is unexpectedly detained by Gaber.

Such bonding exists even between the unrelated pair of Molloy and Moran. It is hinted that they share a symbolic tie the extent of which approximates that of the unrelated Bloom and Stephen. Though much dissimilar in disposition, education, and other background as summarized in "Ithaca," by this home-coming chapter Bloom

and Stephen nonetheless had developed a close relationship. Similarly, while finally acknowledging his country far different from the Molloy country (122), Moran maintains, as if instinctively, that Molloy or his mother is "no stranger" to him (103). As if to echo this evocation of Moran's, Molloy at the beginning of his report admits that "All I need now is a son. Perhaps I have one somewhere" (9), suggesting an at-large father-son lineage which can definitely evoke that of Bloom and Stephen's being at the same time remote and intimate in the Dublin setting of 1904. Vice versa, at the moment of desperation, Moran evokes the image of Molloy who "would come to me like a father" (149), too. What's more, Moran starts to resemble Molloy in that the former starts to walk by means of crutches, by which, Moran intuits, he will get to find and meet Molloy (161), thus completing such evocation of father-son kinship. And as if to solidify such kinship even one step further to a symbolic level, Moran predicts, also at the beginning of his report, that his son will go to his desk, writing up a report like himself (84).

While in *Ulysses* the symbolic lineage between the pair of unrelated father Bloom and son Stephen was cemented and celebrated as one of the most well-known humanist themes of the novel, in *Molloy*, more often than not, the father-son relationship is impregnated with conflicts and ambivalence. That is, although rehearsing this human kinship, *Molloy* introduces more discomforts and conflicts to the relationship than such humanism-glorifying comforts as seen in Bloom's fatherly caring for Stephen since the chapter of "Circe." These occur solely to the biological pair of father Moran and son Jacques. There exists a dangerous parricidal tension in the son toward his father, and *mutatis mutandis*, a discontent in the father toward the son. Moran is well aware of his son's disobedience and his own lack of dominance over him. In the end, he is actually abandoned by Jacques, being incapacitated furthermore by his own physical deterioration. The tension between them is alluded cross-referentially to the figure of Monte-Cristo (121), rendering the son Jacques' parallel to the disobedient Stephen in *A Portrait*. Thus, the disobedience carried over from the son-Stephen figure (albeit apparently more against his mother and mother-land than his father both in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*) is now reinscribed in the son portrayal of *Molloy*, which can be read as a new direction Beckett both endorses and problematizes with regard to the step-fatherhood and -sonhood, a human kinship almost mythologized in *Ulysses*. The necessity of forming a kinship much celebrated in *Ulysses* is now questioned by Moran who feels "superior to one's son," expresses "remorse of having begotten" (96) him, and intuits into his son's "odious" feeling toward "the idea of fatherhood" (101).

Such apparent non-aligning gestures with Joyce's "omnipotence" can be seen as Beckett's rethinking of the familial relationship and identity which necessarily

includes the portrayal of mother-son relationship also featured prominently in *Ulysses*. The much entangling portrait of mother-son conflicts on the part of Stephen and his deceased mother in *Ulysses* is replicated in *Molloy,* too. The first part of *Molloy* is devoted to the portrayal of this relationship. Molloy describes that all his life "bore on the same question, that of my relations with my mother" and he "had been going to my mother, with the purpose of establishing our relations on a less precarious footing" (80). Such preoccupation partakes of Stephen's memorable guilt toward his mother and the motherland which she represents. While Stephen was plagued by the question of the word known to all men, the answer of which hinged on his relationship with his mother, Molloy also experiences an initiation into "true love" from his mother, though the portrait of which is an ironic composite grotesquery: trying to remember where the source of knowledge of love is from, Molloy is confused as to who really teaches him "true love, after all?" (53). That the answer may be Ruth, Edith, or "another who might have been my mother, and even I think my grandmother" (53) creates unsettling ambivalence toward the portrait of the mother. The displacement of the mother reference onto the grandmother has been seen in Stephen's famous riddle of the fox burying his grandmother told to cover up his incompetence as a history pedagogue and inner guilt toward his mother. The heavy entanglement in Stephen's mind of his mother and motherland is now replicated to be "the same old hag" who is Lousse, Ruth, or his mother, all mixed up in Molloy's memory (55).

Whereas this ethnocentric image of the "old hag" (cf. the old hag who sold milk to Stephen and Mulligan in "Telemachus") necessarily reintroduces the Irish-specific allusion to the now seemingly decontextualized portrait of Molloy's mother-son pair, his familial and even sexual identity is at the same time questioned and bracketed. The tie of Molloy to his mother is strangely volatile in terms of their sexual identities. The age factor is so great that it cancels this pair's presupposed familial and sexual identities: Molloy describes that he and his mother "were like a couple of old cronies, sexless, unrelated" (18). Their familial givens in their relationship are even ridiculed: Molloy's mother strangely calls him Dan, a name which he suspects to be his father's, so he infers, "I took her for my mother and she took me for my father" (18), suggesting an incestuous ambivalence in their relationship. Such ambivalence embodies itself in the fact that Molloy has "taken her place," sleeping in her bed and pissing and shitting in her pot (9), an ironic way to cement the mother-son lineage. The taking over of her bed inevitably evokes the memorable bedroom scene of Molly whose reverie in her unpunctuated monologue and conducting of bodily function in bed have been immortalized by the "Penelope" chapter. Daniel Katz does suggest the Molloy/Molly kinship on the ground of their monologue (89). However, such kinship seriously hints to destablize the gender identity of Molloy. At one point Molloy's

awareness of a similar predicament, albeit of determining the gender identity of the woman who detains him, is very telling: “Don’t be tormenting yourself, Molloy, man or woman, what does it matter?” (53)

Not only is Molloy ambivalent when it come to his gender identity, but he is in no way clear as to his kinship with his mother. It is taken for granted that “a son might bear … her [the mother’s] stamp” as Moran acknowledges the relationship between Molloy and mother Molloy and with which he convinces himself of Molloy’s not being a stranger to him (103); however, the strangers whom Molloy encounters do not seem to be convinced of this truism. When “hailed” (20) by a sergeant, and finally remembering and crying out his own name, Molloy is confronted with the question put to him by the sergeant emphatically twice, “Is your mother’s name Molloy too?” (23) Such a question puts in doubt a clear individual or familial identity for Molloy, so much so that he admits “To apply the letter of the law to a creature like me is not an easy matter” (24). If a parricidal tension exists for Jacques toward his father Moran, then a matricidal one exists for Molloy toward his mother. The way to communicate with the deaf and mute mother is full of violence and aggression. Molloy knocks on her skull repeatedly in order to ram in her a few simple codes such as for yes, no, I don’t know, money, and goodbye (18) but characteristically Molloy feels “she must have thought I was saying no to her all the time” (19). Indeed, Molloy consciously attempts to cancel their relationship out by calling her “Mag” instead of “Ma,” because the letter g for him succeeds in “abolishing the syllable Ma” (18). Their relationship does not hinge on proper names nor a proper mother-son kinship, because “whether to call her Ma, Mag or the Countess Caca” makes no difference to the deaf mother (18). Besides, Molloy’s memory of his mother is also rather unpleasant. He describes his memory of her as “First taste of the shit” (17) and conjectures that his mother “did all she could not to have me” (19). Such non-serviam attitude and abjecting stance evoke Stephen’s defiant and dismissive gesture against his mother. Meanwhile, Molloy’s violent treatment of his mother can be parallel to the aggression which Stephen imagined even his mother’s ghost had worked on him. Thus, it is not surprising that similarly Stephen-like resolution to disentangle and exile himself from the familial bonds or nets gets replicated in the ironic portrait of the mother-son lineage in *Molloy*.

The dislodging and exiling of human kinship is the beginning cue Beckett takes up toward establishing a more radical art of exile aiming at dispossessing other identity clusters. Familial and sexual identities aside, *Molloy* is most significant in removing civil, geopolitical and finally even linguistic identities. The Dublin citizenship could not have been more emphasized and satirized (as in the portrait of the allegorically named character Citizen in “Cyclops”) in *Ulysses*, but the practice of

exiling identities in *Molloy* dispels this civil identity totally. Not only is the reference to Dublin completely gone, but even the surrogate form of a sort of civil identity is being ridiculed, too. Moran is said to come from Turdy, the hub of Turdyba, whereas Molloy presumably from Bally, the hub of Ballyba. The excremental reference in the name of Moran's town implies the bodily function which Bloom was known to enjoy and did not hesitate to indulge himself in. However, the rule of appellation of the towns and their domain implies self-cancellation. According to Moran's explanation, Ballyba refers to the town Bally and its domains, whereas Ballybaba the domains exclusive of Bally itself (123). It is as if the prolonged syllable "ba" in the domains of Ballybaba cancels the reference to Bally itself, the logic of which strangely resembles the added "g" in Molloy's way of calling his mother in order to cancel out the syllable "ma." Except for these dubious proper names, the civil identities for the main characters cannot be more vague. Slightly more identifiable geographical references are to the adjective "urban," and words of "town" and "the island" as in Molloy's describing a man, A or C of whom he is not sure, "returning to the town he had just left" perhaps "from the other end of the island even" (13). However, later from Moran's investigation, it can be known clearly, it seems, that Bally "was on the sea" (123-4). Moreover, despite of its vagueness, the town Bally is known for producing "amulets, paper-knives, napkin-rings, rosaries and other knick-knacks" (124). Thus, the references to rosaries and "the island" can correspond to Moran's Catholic belief and its connection with the Catholic Ireland.

Indeed, the dialectics between vagueness and clarity of reference, or decontextualization and recontextualization, constitutes the new tension in Beckett's art of exile. The second half of *Molloy* is referentially more concrete and identifiable. Moran possesses distinct properties to which he clings and which he at one point catalogues as "My trees, my bushes, my flower-beds, my tiny lawns" (117), actually to mention but a few of them. The list must eventually include his son, too. His domineering possession of his son betrays their kinship as part of the capitalist logic of possession. Besides, his middle class background is unmistakable, too. He works for a large institution doing professional "peeping and prying" (86), though he never gets to know other employees, that is, agents, from it. He hires a cook, Martha, and gives orders like a man in control. His religious practice is well known even to his neighbors who know about his habits of worshipping on Sundays (90). The concern with receiving the body of Christ and not committing sacrilege is great on his mind. In keeping with his disposition, Moran describes his mind as "methodical" (90) and emphasizes that he abhors "vagueness" (91). However, the vagueness embedded in the Molloy affair gradually undermines the stability he has enjoyed in all aspects so far. He departs from his organized home, embarks on a journey into side roads with

his son, and eventually is infested with leg trouble and abandoned by his son in the forest. He summarizes this journey as to be "banished from my house, from my garden, lose my trees, my lawns, my birds … lose and be banished from the absurd comforts of my home… without which I could not bear being a man" (122). The journey is in essence, to use his own words in his report, a "long anguish of vagrancy and freedom" (122). While "freedom" evokes existential freedom thereby bringing Beckett's work to align with existentialism, the experience of "vagrancy" or "tramping" (128) is essentially the new direction which Beckett takes up from Stephen-Joyce in engaging himself with the new (Irish) art.

In discussing Beckett's famous "interrogation of subjective positing" the engagement of which starts to surface in *Molloy*, Daniel Katz describes Beckett as "post-Joycean" (139) in his "return" to the distinct Joycean concern, thus highlighting the in effect dialectical lineage between both writers. "Moran," the second part of *Molloy* can be identified as carrying out Joyce's dislocating and exiling of class identity and integrity. The Bloomian, bourgeois home is emphatically crumbled, as Moran puts it, "a frenzied collapsing of all that had always protected me from all I was condemned to be" (137). "Moran" is about Moran's "growing resignation of being dispossessed of self" (137), the tone of which evokes not only Stephen's more radical act of defiance of fleeing by the many nets that ensnared him, but the pseudo-homeless (being key-less) Bloom's wandering Dublin city all day on Bloomsday. Indeed, not only Stephen, Bloom in *Ulysses* carries out the lifestyle of an exile to a more extreme extent. In exile from his own home, Bloom experiences, acts out, and finally exemplifies an (Joycean) art of exile. Forced to roam Dublin city on Bloomsday, Bloom is living his every moment in exile. He acts out a life un-identical to his true self, pretending to be or being recognized as someone else. Such not-being-with-oneself constitutes the core of the exiled identity which Bloom unconsciously assumes in reaction to the domestic, patriarchal, civil, religious, nationalistic, and racial dictates at work in his time.

Thus, Beckett's *Molloy*, just as much as Joyce's *Ulysses*, brings into relief a circulating Irish theme of the conflict between "domestication and exile" (Harvey 67). Elucidating Harvey's point twenty years later, John Harrington has most lucidly pinpointed "the presence in Beckett's work of a dialectic of self and place and the antinomies of home and abroad" (147). Harrington traces the literary-historical-(anti-) Irish Revivalist development of such dichotomy to the prominent examples of Yeats and Joyce: the former propounds "[t]he model of attachment to place, of establishment at home, and the use of imaginative provincialism" while the latter's "superiority to intellectual provincialism" prescribes "[t]he model of exile" (158). He agrees that given Beckett's association with Joyce, his own hostility toward the Irish

homeland, and mostly, “reduction of identifiable references to Ireland in his most influential works,” Beckett’s works exemplify the Joycean model of exile (158), reinforcing “the superannuation of the sense of home” (159).

While affirming the Joyce-Beckett correlation and lineage in terms of the model of exile, Harrington, however, admits to the ambiguity as to the direction *Molloy* takes: whereas “attraction of both home and away” can be seen activated in the novel, *Molloy*, in point of fact, highlights “an impasse between these alternatives” (159). Harrington’s lucid observation, however, fails to clarify or emphasize the decisive qualitative difference and therefore significance Beckett’s new art of exile poses as opposed to Joyce’s model. This difference and significance must be sought especially in Beckett’s dialectical treatment and portrayal of national and finally linguistic identities in *Molloy*, other than the above-discussed dialectics between vagueness and distinctness of allusion to individual, familial, sexual, class, geopolitical, and civil identities.

In the same vein as the earlier quoted “old hag” reference which is both diluting and evoking the Irish image, “the island” (13) is probably the closest but also an ambiguous allusion to Beckett’s and Joyce’s Ireland in *Molloy*. Harrington cites a later fellow Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen’s mistaken pride in being an Irish to bear on Beckett’s ambiguous portrayal and topographical allusion to his homeland. She confesses to have been mistaken by the Anglo-Irish speech to “take ‘Ireland’ and ‘island’ to be synonymous,” thus to develop a sense of pride in her own country being a “prototype”; even England “was an ‘ireland’ (or, a sub-Ireland)—an imitation” (13; Harrington 159). Molloy describes that he leaves “this accursed country” to begin his “unreal journey” toward his mother (17). It seems that the identity of his homeland is, at most, as he puts it, just as “wrapped in a namelessness often hard to penetrate” as his own “sense of identity” (30). For the part of “Molloy,” it is now his mother’s room of which Molloy takes the place and “the island” from one end of which Molloy observes a stranger comes that together, at best, evoke and “prototype” (*pace* Bowen) the allusion to Beckett’s Ireland. To echo such vagueness in national reference, Lousse gives a satirical portrait of her deceased husband and his view of the so-called homeland: her departed husband fell “in defense of a country that called itself his and from which in his lifetime he never deprived the smallest benefit, but only insults and vexation” (32). It is also at this juncture that Molloy expects but is also dismayed by Lousse’s supposed display of feelings toward her deceased dog by saying “Tears and laughter, they are so much Gaelic to me” (35). This Irish reference is treated in an ironical way, relegating Gaelic language to the status of a foreign, abstruse language. Or else, provincialism is emphasized in terms of sexual taboos, which immediately evokes the reference to Ireland: still recalling his sojourn at Lousse’s and her implied

sexual connection with him, Molloy admits that "It is true they were extraordinarily reserved, in my part of the world, about everything connected with sexual matters" (55). If the idea of belonging to the homeland does ever come up, it is something to be dispelled: speaking of the wave, Molloy finds it ineffectual in that "it bears me from no fatherland away, bears me onward to no shipwreck" (48). Molloy's wish, like the non-serving Stephen's at the end of *A Portrait*, is to bear him away from his "fatherland." Even when a mock home reference is hinted, this urge for taking off, for exile, is so strong that he expresses "far more than to know what town I was in, my haste was now to leave it, even were it the right one" (60). Just as characteristic of Molloy's movement is really non-movement—he intuits, "it was the only way to progress, to stop" (72), so the Irish home reference is more often cancelled than not whenever alluded to in "Molloy." Thus, characteristically, the name of his hometown escapes him most of the time (77), as in his earlier acknowledgement of "namelessness" around which his own identity is wrapped (30).

The more class-identifiable Moran has the following qualification for populist conceptions of "history" and "geography," the components of Ireland-relevant, nationalist thinking: "the dates of battles, revolutions, restorations and other exploits of the human race, in its slow ascension towards the light, and for the configuration of frontiers, the height of mountain peaks" (120). However, even when starting out to possess distinct familial, class, and religious identities, Moran is experiencing dispossession of identities rapidly, including the sense of belonging to what Harrington terms as "place." On realizing his intrusion into a farmer's land, Moran cries out, "What was I doing on his land? If there is one question I dread, to which I have never been able to invent a satisfactory reply, it is the question what am I doing. And on someone else's land to make things worse! And at night!" (159) In addition to the outcry of existential doubt, the *raison d'être* for being in one place and not in another becomes challenged. In retrospect, this disabling awareness of being "on someone else's land" has actually been experienced by Molloy, mostly in the incident when he hits Lousse's dog and is questioned by a sergeant. It is at this juncture that his conflict with "systematic decorum" (25) is the greatest. After he is detained by Lousse like Odysseus by Calypso, he manages to escape her place and finds "Outside in the road … it was another world" (56) and he starts wandering again "about the town in search of a familiar monument, so that I might say, I am in my town" (56). It is interesting to note that such registering mechanism as locating familiar monuments is actually likened to what Moran will define as national identity quoted above. However, whereas the urge to secure a sense of place, or a sort of national identity, can be detected to be at work, it is also at this time that Beckett's characters' come into clash with the linguistic logic and law at their worst.

Molloy's confrontation with the sergeant already reveals his conflict with not only the establishment but the linguistic law. The sergeant's questioning of his name reveals the dangerous shifting ground of the proper name, or the (transcendental) Signified. Then, at Lousse's, Molloy experiences a self-estrangement: "I had forgotten who I was (excusably) and spoken of myself as I would have of another, if I had been compelled to speak of another …. [I] strut before my eyes, like a stranger" (40). Such existential estrangement finally affects Molloy's linguistic usage; the presence of strange others finally makes their mark in his narration. These can be found in Molloy's eruptive resort to clichés on two or three consecutive pages like "as the saying is" (56) and "that's the word" (57) and in his difficult struggling to formulate words in telling phrases as "no that's not the word" and "wrong again" (57) would reveal.

Then, even for the less existentially reflective Moran, similar disorientation with language also occurs. Even before embarking on the journey to find Molloy, he already comes to the awareness that "all language was an excess of language" (107). When all the time giving a report to Youdi, Moran makes a self-reflexive remark concerning the problem of narration: "What rabble in my head, what a gallery of moribunds…. Stories, stories, I have not been able to tell them. I shall not be able to tell this one" (126). His being unconvinced by the stories which he tells poses a parallel to the experience of meeting a stranger at his shelter after his son abandons him. He notices that this man who has a stick with him has an "accent" "of a foreigner or of one who had lost the habit of speech" (135). To recap, the foreign accent as in the stranger's speech and the internal foreignness in Moran's report and Molloy's struggling with words may be Beckett's key resonance as well as ambivalence in his new Irish art which both toys with and denies reference to national and linguistic identities.

To borrow the analogy of the irreducibly foreign-sounding Gaelic which Molloy makes about Lousse's tears, *Molloy* is essentially a portrait of quasi-Irish anti-heroes as tramps and, virtually, foreigners. In the same spirit as the wandering Jew figure of Bloom in *Ulysses*, the tramping itinerary both narrators of *Molloy* undertake has resulted in great dispossession of their proper identities layer by layer. However, such dispossession must go one step forward to echo and approximate Stephen's art of exile in his habit of dislodging the referent from the signified as the riddle of the fox burying his grandmother, the rewriting of the vampire poem, and the cunning "Parable of the Plum" demonstrate. Lopez-Vicuna has brilliantly analyzed Joyce's awareness that "language shapes affiliation and estrangement" (141) which Stephen's and Bloom's language has put in effect: "their language is a language exiled from itself, always ambivalent, always undercutting itself" (142). Such linguistic awareness

and exercise generates “a micropolitics of language that employs obliqueness and non-affirmation as strategies not only to resist propaganda but also to critique the whole notion of conviction” (Lopez-Vicuna 142). It is most significant that Joyce connects his own experience of being an exile and the new linguistic awareness of “failure” in his art in that the latter is essentially “the experience of being ‘at a loss for words’” which, specifically speaking, are “words that express affiliation, love, loyalty, [that] have become burdensome and constraining, like so many nets flung at [Joyce] to keep him down” (Lopez-Vicuna 143). This non-assertive strategy on the part of Joyce, Stephen, and Bloom is being radicalized in Beckett’s *Trilogy* to engineer a “politics of language” (Lopez-Vicuna 150) or the so-called “voluntary minority in literature” (Deleuze and Guattari 18) which refers to modernist art’s preference for “uncertain identity” (Connor 103). Beginning with *Molloy*, Beckett’s *Trilogy* hinges on the art of failure. His famous verbalization about Van Velde that “to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world” (*Three Dialogues* 125) bears out the Joyce-Beckett lineage in terms of this art of failure.

Molloy’s using but actually being confined by clichés is a good demonstration of how such art of failure or exile works. After leaving Lousses’, Molloy enters a town and finds that “There must have been a touch of autumn in the air, as the saying is” (56). In describing his roving about the town, Molloy encounters difficulties with words especially related to a chapel: “At the end there were two recesses, no that’s not the word, opposite each other”; “I entered one of the alcoves, wrong again, and leaned against the wall” (57). Finally he gets the description right: “a few minutes later I crossed the alley into the other chapel, that’s the word” (57), reassuring himself with the correct use of the word at last. At a loss for the right name, Molloy attempts to ask direction from the charcoal burner of his town by a circumspect way: “I could not ask him the way to my town, the name of which escaped me still. I asked him the way to the nearest town, I found the necessary words and accents” (70). Daniel Katz analyzes that clichés suggest “otherness speaking through us” (130) and Molloy’s sense of being outcast from the referents of the words which he himself wields does suggest this internal alienation and exile created by the previously-mentioned dialectic between decontextualization and recontextualiztion at work at the linguistic level. Molloy’s “that’s not the word” and “wrong again” suggest the failing of context for his verbal expression; however, “as the saying is,” “that’s the word,” and his finding “the necessary words and accents” reaffirm the “otherness” which conventionalizes and thus recontextualizes the linguistic identity. This linguistic experience of identity and non-identity, or homing and exiling experience, actually bears upon and entangles the existential-philosophical quandary of the first-person narrators in *Molloy*.

Plagued by the sense of failure in arriving at the final, transcendent meaning in

their quests—in Molloy's not being able to answer the policeman's question "What are you doing there?" (20), his own questioning of the credibility of Lousse's gender and its connection with his own narrative (53), his forgetting the name of his own town (77), and in Moran's questioning of whether he is going to "endure the long anguish of vagrancy and freedom" and his sensing the imminent total banishment from his established homestead—Molloy and Moran have come to and act out not only existential but linguistic awareness of exiled identities. Molloy comes to self-reflexive admission that "the icy words hail down upon me, the icy meanings, and the world dies too, foully named. All I know is what the words know, and the dead things, and that makes a handsome little sum, with a beginning, a middle and an end as in the well-built phrase and the long sonata of the dead" (31). Similarly, Moran is also linguistically defeated by the "rabble" in his head composed of "Murphy, Watt, Yerk, Mercier and all the others." He admits that "I would never have believed that—yes, I believe it willingly. Stories, stories. I have not been able to tell them. I shall not be able to tell this one" (126). More and more intensely and urgently, Beckett calls into question the status and identity of the first-person pronoun of "I," so much so that Daniel Katz qualifies that the grammatical component of the pronoun "I" in Beckett is virtually a "cliché" which "one can never do other than cite" and duly attributes such failure in "the grammar of appropriation" to a display of "variations on the Joycean problematic" on Beckett's part (136). Katz has accentuated "the dominant figure of the cliché in *Ulysses*" (133) "as seen in Stephen Dedalus's myriad poetic clichés which serve to deflate his ascendance to the sublime, or in the more complex structural embedding of the cliché in *Ulysses*" (128). The pinpointing of Stephen's art is of much relevance to Beckett's "post-Joycean" departure from Stephen-Joyce's art of exile. We have seen that Beckett has gone one radical step forward to dislodge and thus decontextualize the fixed referents from his characters' many layers of identities and allow more "freedom" and "otherness" in this drastically reduced, but new reference-making process in *Molloy*.

The most radical dispossession of linguistic identity can be seen attempted in Beckett's turn to writing in French in the *Trilogy*. In addition to Beckett's own comment on the hopeless lack of precision of the English language[2], Alvarez's gloss that "To write in French meant escaping from the whole weight of the Irish rhetoric Beckett had been born to, with its insidious cadences and genius for baroque linguistic flourish" (40-41) underlines Beckett's desire to decontextualize the Irish-linguistic reference. Barbara Reich Gluck elaborates Beckett's linguistic repudiation to suggest

[2] Using the protagonist Belacqua of his first novel *Dream to Fair to Middling Women* as a mouthpiece, Beckett spells out his discontent with the English language: "Perhaps only the French language can give you the thing you want" (in *Disjecta* 47)

even a subconscious disconnection with Joyce: while granting Beckett's turning to French "affirmed Beckett's exile from Ireland and his integration into the life and culture of his adopted country, France," Gluck suggests that "Beckett's literary gallicization may also represent a subconscious desire on his part to get out from under Joyce's shadow by turning away from the language of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*" (106). Thus, it seems, an inalienable connection or identity with Ireland, Anglo-Irish, and finally Joyce himself is all entangled in the medium of the English language which Beckett consciously banishes in his post-war writings. It is then admittedly in the first of his *Trilogy* that Beckett pursues a style consciously and actively purged of concrete class, gender, civil, political, racial, and finally linguistic identities. However, to all intents and purposes, one linguistic element does enact and dramatize the destabilizing conflict between the style of decontextualization and the effect of recontextualization. That is, the irreducible, distinctive Irish surname "Molloy" is left to stand isolated but emphatic as the title of Beckett's first *Trilogy* novel in the midst of the deliberately adopted foreign-language-spoken textual space. Acknowledging Beckett's act to banish Irish-specific reference in his works, David Wheatley, however, problematizes that "The surer Beckett's modernist prohibitions on any lingering Irishness in his texts, the surer the ultimate return of this factor completely unabated" (134-45) and he cites Frederic Jameson in arguing that Beckett's attempt to minimize Irishness remains, at most, an "impure minimalism" which continues to "allow this Irishness to show through" (135). Such complicated, dialectical process of renunciation, on the one hand, and reaffirmation, on the other, is actually ironically locked into the title itself.

The blatant fact that Beckett eschews Anglo-English for French is a powerful indication that he "had no intention in being an Irish writer and throughout his works he parodies such a notion"; namely, Beckett "rejected the notion of national literatures altogether." Even if he did write about Ireland, he does so "in the context of such a rejection" (Weisberg 176). Such is the above-mentioned urge to reject, decontextualize, or exile the Irish-specific reference in Beckett's post-war fiction. David Weisberg, however, grants that the titular name Molloy does impart "Irish authenticity" because of "[i]ts unavoidable reference to Anglicized Irish ethnicity" which distinguishes itself in the novel's "lack of reference to historical time and place" (94). Obviously, the name and symbolism of Molloy have triggered critics to comment on the problematics and dialectics it generates.

Maintaining the ironic evidence to the authentic Irishness consciously banished by the author of the French *Molloy*, Weisberg, however, also stresses in the same stroke the paradox in the so-called "Irish name" of Molloy in that it is also "a stereotyped, derisive image of an Irish peasantry" (94). Stereotyping, after all, falls

into the same logic of linguistic clichés which have been pointed out by Daniel Katz to be informed by irreducible alterity in their constitution. Indeed, what Katz has expounded on the titular name of one of Beckett's early novels, *Murphy*, can be said about the title Molloy, too: Without the first name, the name Murphy (and now in this case, Molloy) really "fails to be a name" in that it is "a proper name" but in effect "common or shared" (28), thereby virtually "instigating the effect of anonymity" (28-29). Tyrus Miller even expands a similar point to qualifying almost all of Beckett's deliberately chosen titles: "Beckett's titles are purposely empty signs: abstractions, 'common' names, or even puns [which undermine teleology as in 'an undistinguished name like *Watt* (what?)']" (195) Thus, while the name Molloy does conjure up "lingering Irishness" (Wheatley 135) which Beckett consciously attempts to eradicate overall in the novel, it ironically diffuses its distinct ethnic reference at the same time, essentially being a typecast name.

To explain the scenario from a deconstructive perspective, Leslie Hill most lucidly analyzes the self-other problematic in Beckett's turn to French. With his competence in French, Hill convincingly argues that in rendering himself to a non-native language system, Beckett displaces his "self" and must confront "others" (39). The second language, when learned through the medium of the first, which Hill proposes to be the case with Beckett, "becomes grafted onto the mother tongue, which it supplements, displaces, extends, complicates, usually entangles" (37). Actually starting with *Molloy*, writing in French actively and inherently dramatizes the self-other problematic:

> The effect of the name as a title, as Molloy, on the first page of a text written in French is something no other language can render. It opens up, within French, a space of strangeness, a pocket of otherness, a borderline with Irish English, which suddenly begins to exist in "French." This effect is rigorously untranslatable. (Hill 53)

Thus, the Irish proper names' alterity to the French language is never dissolved even by translation. It occupies "a space on the edge of ordinary language" (Hill 53).

From the polemics and dynamics generated by the untranslatable Anglo-Irish name of Molloy into Beckett's newly adopted French language, we can finally arrive at a formulation of the new Irish art monumentally initiated by Stephen-Joyce. We have seen that Beckett decisively adopts a far more radical kind of self-imposed exile than Stephen-Joyce's for his first *Trilogy* protagonists-narrators, consciously exiling themselves and the text from specific familial, gender, class, civil, geopolitical, national, and linguistic identities. Apparently attempting to achieve a new art of failure, a referential minimalism, and finally an art of exile, Beckett's act of linguistic border-crossing, however, ferments a dynamic, experimental aesthetics hovering

between the two options of decontextualization and recontextualization, abroad and home, exile and arrival. It is in the near or mock-arrival of Moran at the "Molloy country" at the end of "Moran," an equivalent of the "Ithaca" experience and version, that Beckett rewrites the concept of "home" and "home country." Just as the episode of "Ithaca," in terms of plot, constituted the real ending but was given the penultimate chapter status in *Ulysses*, so the ending of "Moran," also the end of *Molloy*, reverses the novel paradoxically to its beginning. In these two novels, the idea of conclusion, or home identity, is thus categorically being interrogated. However, Beckett goes one radical step further in bringing into sharp relief the experience of "an exile endlessly embodied within language" which Kathleen Shields observes occurring in many of his "self-translations" (179), officially launched in Beckett's turn toward another language beginning with the first of the *Trilogy*. Beckett's turn to French explicitly expresses a desire to distance his new writing self "from a claustrophobic domestic literary culture" (Shields 180), which has had constrained Joyce and his alter ego, Stephen Dedalus. However, the radical abstraction and denial of the ethnic or national identity in the text of *Molloy* takes on a complicated redoubling when the Anglo-Irish reference and implication remain inviolate and even get revived with the untranslatability of the Anglo-Irish proper name into French. If the first of *Trilogy* initiates Beckett's subsequent art of failure which ultimately unwrites itself toward minimalism primarily by immobilizing the protagonists' physical movement and by silencing their verbal and thought flows, then, what is taking place in *Molloy* also witnesses to the dynamic remainder which such act of exiling discernible identities fails to undo completely. It is in such conscious and unconscious interplay between decontextulaization and recontextualization that Beckett experiments with a new identity politics as generated in the linguistic border-crossing scenario. Thus, the route of exile carried forth by Moran and Molloy can be as de-politicizing and at the same time as re-politicizing the "Irishness" as inscribed in Stephen-Joyce's art.

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