

JAMES JOYCE AND THE POLITICS OF EGOISM

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CHAPTER ONE

Après mot, le déluge: *the ego as symptom*

On July 20, 1998, the editorial board of the Modern Library, a division of Random House – a jury made up of ten writers, critics and editors, among whom were A. S. Byatt, William Styron, Gore Vidal, Shelby Foote and Christopher Cerf – revealed to the public the list they had drawn up of the hundred best novels of the twentieth century. Joyceans from all over the world could rejoice: *Ulysses* came up first, soon followed by *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the third position. More unexpected but quite as heartening for fans was the fact that *Finnegans Wake* had found its way into the list as number seventy-seven. No doubt Joyce would have loved the elegant numerological progression: 1 – 3 – 77. As a new century begins, perhaps the time has come for another assessment: will Joyce’s stature still tower above the English-speaking world in the twenty-first century, or was this critical acclaim just a way of leaving behind us an embarrassing literary monument? In 1998, moreover, the backlash was immediate, the ten jury members were denounced as elitist and sexist by disgruntled cavilers. Had they been twelve, they might have been identified with the apostles of a new Joycean creed – as the famous collective study *Our Exagmination Round His Factification For Incamination of Work in Progress* launched the ironical concept as early as 1929, just before the world economy collapsed and Joyce’s personal life became fraught with difficulties.

Readers of the American press, for the majority of whom the best novel of the twentieth century would obviously not be *Ulysses* but *The Great Gatsby*, perhaps *The Fountainhead* if not *Atlas Shrugged* (I have not referred to Ayn Rand at random, as will become clear in the second part of this chapter), had been prepared for Joyce’s triumph by the issue of *Time* magazine date June 8, 1998. There, under the general heading of “Hundred Artists and Entertainers of the Century” one observed the figure of Joyce looming large among “geniuses” like Pablo Picasso, Charlie Chaplin, Igor Stravinsky, Bob Dylan, and Elvis Presley. In this

issue, Joyce was the only novelist to whom four pages of text and several photographs were devoted. The presentation by Paul Gray¹ wryly concluded on the obscurity of the *Wake*: “Today, only dedicated Joyceans regularly attend the *Wake*. A century from now, his readers may catch up with him.” This echoed, consciously or not, the famous opening of Richard Ellmann’s 1959 biography, that was to enshrine Joyce’s life for so long: “We are still learning to be James Joyce’s contemporaries.” (JJII, 3) – while confirming the hope expressed by its author that *Finnegans Wake* was in advance of its times. When he had to defend the seeming madness of his project, Joyce defiantly stated: “Perhaps it is insanity. One will be able to judge in a century” (JJII, 590).

The current tendency, however, would be to consider *Finnegans Wake* less *sub specie aeternitatis* than as a product of its own times, to see it as a book that is typical of the thirties, of a moment when experimental writing in an international and multilinguistic context could appear as the only logical outcome of Modernism. Before the term Post-Modernism had even been invented, most Modernist writers felt caught up in a sweeping movement that led to a rejection of parochialism and pushed to a generalized “Revolution of the Word.” Like most revolutions of this century, this too would fail – or at least be met with incomprehension from the audience, while attracting cult-like followers enamored with obscurity itself. *Work in Progress*, in spite of the numerous allusions to contemporary events scattered by Joyce in his literary maze until the completion of the book in the late 1938, has still today the reputation of being isolated from politics, ethics, and broader cultural concerns that ought to dominate in dark times of war, crisis, and dire survival. This has been triggered by the undeniable difficulty of deciphering the topical echoes and allusions in the obscurely punning polyglottic prose of *Finnegans Wake*.

Was this a writer’s blindness which could be blamed on the spirit of the times, or should one recall Joyce’s gnawing awareness that he had to publish his last novel before another world war started, otherwise it would simply disappear? I would like to suggest here that Joyce’s ultimate literary gamble, a gamble that might have to be left to this century’s close to be assessed fully, has to do with a collective utopia blending language and politics, a radical utopia with avant-gardist and anarchistic overtones shared by the *transition* group led by Eugène Jolas. This is why I have chosen as an epigraph for this first chapter a limerick written in honor of *transition*’s editor, a homage to the publication of Jolas’s polyglottic poems

entitled *Mots Déluge*. In “Versailles 1933,” Joyce also puns on his own name that he uses as a verb:

So the jeunes joy with Jolas
Book your berths: Après mot, le déluge!

Joyce’s witty re-writing of the cynical motto of France’s *ancien régime* – as King Louis XV allegedly stated, offhandedly brushing aside importunate criticism of his extravagant spending, and also probably aware of the impending storm that would erupt with the 1789 Revolution: *Après moi, le déluge!* (“After me, the deluge!”) – into “After (the) word, the deluge” shows very clearly the multiple links between an embattled ego, the ongoing “Revolution of the Word” and an apocalyptic consciousness of time’s end. Some of the difficulties Joyce faced when he attempted to create not only a new language but also a new reader, as I will show in the last chapters, had to do with his having completed his last book at a time when Modernist beliefs in progress were being rapidly replaced by a more cynical awareness that history (in the sense of a meta-narrative, or of “universal history”) only progresses from catastrophe to catastrophe. Joyce was still creating his *A la Recherche de l’histoire perdue* just when real history seemed to confirm Walter Benjamin’s apocalyptic vision.

In the limerick that gleefully associates Joyce with *les jeunes* (this was the typical Modernist expression that would be used by Pound and Lewis as, with more distance, of course, by Woolf), one sees all the young and happy creators embarking on a super-cruise promising not just “berths” but infinitely new “births” – births interestingly dependent on a “Book!” which replays the Mallarmean dream of *Le livre* as a simple imperative ticket-buying. Meanwhile, the old ego of the patriarchal and doomed king (no more the resplendent *roi soleil*, not yet the beheaded corpse of another decade) figuring “his majesty the *Moi*” has been replaced by a *mot* – less a “word” than “the word,” as in French with *le verbe*, in Hebrew with *dabar*, in Greek with *logos*, in Latin with *verbum*. This word/verb condenses – this is my main thesis – all the qualities and properties formerly associated with an egoistic or egocentric subject. The fact that Joyce wrote the limerick at Versailles in 1933 (hence its title) gives it a sense of ominous foreboding – as if the fragile Versailles Treaty has less contained than helped unleash the forces of darkness and destruction that started sweeping across Europe after 1933. The deluge would come, for sure, and it would not be just the wonderful new flood of river-names Joyce had gathered in *Anna Liva Plurabelle*. Joyce’s witticism seems to

renew Freud's insight in his most political text, a contribution to a book published after his death: his decision to debunk President Wilson's character so as to avoid, for another time at least, the mistakes already committed. Freud believed that Wilson's messianic delusions, his religious phraseology, and his lack of human warmth and perception had played a key role in the creation of a new Europe in which defeated and humiliated nations would seethe with a resentment that would then easily be exploited by demagogues. This ineluctably led to the collective psychosis that accompanied the rise of the Nazi movement. For Freud, Wilson could have said "*Après moi le déluge!*" even though his talks were full of peace projects and schemes about the future Society of Nations.²

Freud and Bullitt see as Wilson's main symptom his identification with "God and Christ," (*TWW*, 170), and his tendency to believe his own words to the detriment of facts:

Wilson's apparent hypocrisy was nearly always self-deception. He had an enormous ability to ignore facts and an enormous belief in words. His feeling for facts and phrases was the exact reverse of the feeling of a scientist. He could not bear to allow a beautiful phrase to be slain by a refractory fact. He delighted in allowing an unpleasant fact to be annihilated by a beautiful phrase. When he had invented a beautiful phrase, he began to believe in his phrase whatever the fact might be" (*TWW*, 193)

As we will see, the Modernist impulse was not only directed at the creation of a new language, but of a new ego who can adapt to new "facts," whatever they may be. In this context, it is tempting to see a link between Wilson's dream of a "War to end all wars" (*TWW*, 171) – a neat phrase that could be used to justify many things, including the American intervention – and Joyce's *Ulysses*, a novel that was often described as a "novel to end all novels."

I will examine at some length Joyce's relation to Eugène Jolas in the Parisian context of the thirties, so as to engage with what could be called Joyce's late Modernism, to borrow Tyrus Miller's apt expression.³ Let us just remember how quickly and easily Jolas became Joyce's confidant, and an editor who would allow him the luxury that Darantière's printers and Sylvia Beach's finances had generously granted for *Ulysses*: the ability to work endlessly on large page proofs, those *placards* Joyce filled with interpolations and late additions as he would today with a computer. Confirming Joyce's use of his own name as a verb, it is Jolas who explains in his autobiography that the printers would have learned to expect Joyce's last minute corrections, but would accompany them with

a peculiar oath. They would then say “Joyce, *alors!*”⁴ Joyce was delighted to see that his name could not only be distorted into French speech as “*jouasse*” (a slang term meaning “happiness”) but could also turn into a printer’s swearword!

After Jolas and his friends of *transition*, the critic (if the term can apply at all) who has done the most to restore the meaning of enjoyment as a verb to Joyce’s name is Jacques Lacan. By way of introduction to the problematic of egoism, I will assess briefly a few important features of Lacan’s groundbreaking contribution to Joycean scholarship.⁵ As a growing number of scholars have begun to realize, following Jacques Aubert’s inroads into Lacanian readings,⁶ Lacan’s terms provide a strong frame of reference allowing for a general assessment of Joyce’s works. In France and Latin America, thousands of new readers have discovered the pleasure and hardships of a textual battle with the intricacies of *Finnegans Wake*, spurred on by the influential readings provided by Lacan’s seminar in the middle of the seventies. I would like to explore the curious “coincidence” of such a late meeting between the two writers.

When Aubert invited Lacan to open the 1975 International Joyce Symposium he was organizing in Paris, he was forcing the reputed psychoanalyst to return once more to literature (after what I have called Lacan’s “literary decade” in the fifties and sixties), but in a way that would durably change his entire theory. Lacan gave his talk, entitled “Joyce the Symptom” at the Sorbonne on June 16, 1975, starting from his own encounter with James Joyce at Adrienne Monnier’s bookstore and his having heard the memorable first *Ulysses* reading when he was twenty.⁷ Lacan’s encounter with the Irish writer in 1921 could be seen as an omen, a fateful coincidence reawakened some fifty years later. The most striking feature in this presentation – in the context of last century’s evaluation – was that Joyce did not appear essentially as the author of *Ulysses*, a novel mentioned in passing and merely to dispel the notion that it might be based on Homer’s *Odyssey* (*JAL*, 27), but as the writer of *Finnegans Wake*, a text described as his “major and final work” (*JAL*, 26). Lacan began by disclosing his central insight immediately – that Joyce embodied the “symptom,” a symptom written *sinthome*, to revert to an older form of the word already found in Rabelais. This allowed him to present Joyce not only as a literary saint – a depiction that accords quite well with the way Joyce saw himself and projected himself to his contemporaries – but also to call up at once Aquinas (in French “*saint Thom*-as d’Aquin”), “sin” and literature (“*tomes*”). He concluded his lecture with

the idea that the major “symptom” was contained in Joyce’s name, a name embodying *jouissance* (a key Lacanian concept compounding “enjoyment” in all its meanings, along with sexual bliss and property rights).

Even if the focus was on Joyce’s ecstatic *jouissance* of language in *Finnegans Wake*, Lacan’s reservations were numerous. When Joyce plays with many languages, the dimension of truth risks being lost. He provides a diagram of all symptoms, pointing to their determination by the “Name-of-the-Father.” He is busy erecting a literary monument in place of his father’s real-life shortcomings, thus making up for failings that he excuses, negates, and sublimates at the same time. No matter how hard Joyce tries to become the *sinthome*, he nevertheless produces a text that cannot engage deeply with his readers, since everyone is only interested in her or his personal symptom. Joyce appears out of touch with the Freudian and Lacanian Unconscious when he flirts with Jung and Mrs. Blavatsky. He is marked by literary megalomania and uses *Finnegans Wake* as a simple “stool” with which he assumes that he will reach immortality. In fact, he will owe this immortality to the toils of thousands of scholars who all labor under the delusion that they will crack the code. Finally, the *jouissance* he ends up bequeathing is the mere hypostasis of his name, a name that becomes a common noun when it translates Freud’s name as *jouissance* and as an intransitive verb, *jouir*. Joyce’s mastery of style is self-serving, tautological, and finally masturbatory, when he attempts to suture his own knot with his proper name, a name he identifies with universal literature.⁸ In this talk, Lacan was sketching the main themes developed in his seminar of the year 1975–76, “The Sinthome.” The forceful confrontation with Joyce obliged him to overhaul his theory of the three interlocking circles of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic to show that their knotting depends on the function of a fourth circle, called Sigma for the Symptom.

As the excellent biography written by Elisabeth Roudinesco⁹ has noted, Lacan’s starting point is unabashedly biographical, which leads him to miss or erase the important distinction between Stephen Dedalus and James Joyce. Lacan explains Joyce’s choice of an artistic career as a wish to compensate for a lack on the part of his own father, John Joyce. According to Lacan, James Joyce remains caught up in his father’s symptoms even while rejecting him: both are spendthrifts, they drink heavily, seem unable to keep their families sheltered from disaster. Joyce’s daughter Lucia’s deepening schizophrenia seemed to confirm that Joyce’s literary fascination with psychotic discourse was not purely literary.

Lacan's reading is in fact not that far from Jung's interpretation of Joyce; like Jung, he stresses Joyce's wish to defend Lucia against psychoanalysis so as to ward off any suggestion that his own writing could be seen as "schizophrenic" or "psychotic," and like Jung he admits that Lucia drowns in the waters of the unconscious where a more experienced swimmer manages to reach back to the surface.¹⁰

The last sessions of the Joyce seminar were devoted to discussions of the four knots and Joyce's *jouissance*. In March 1976, Lacan announced new developments on the function of the ego, an ego he contrasted with Joyce's tendency to move toward a Jungian version of the Collective Unconscious, as if Lacan's main insight into the ego had been undissociable from a concept of a "community of Egoists" (to use Max Stirner's phrase).¹¹ In the last seminar, Joyce's ego was described as occupying the place of the fourth circle: Joyce's ego had become identical with the symptom. The same "mistake" in the knotting of the three circles of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic, was compensated by the ego, in Lacan's drawing not a circle any more, but double square brackets, which then played the role of clamps keeping the circles together; the clamping effect is achieved by a writing which is as much a rewiring as a rewriting. "What I am suggesting is that with Joyce, the ego comes to correct the missing relation. The Borromean knot is reconstituted by such an artifice of writing."¹² Joyce's ego, atoned with the *sinthome*, turns into a literature of supplementary chains, bypasses, ducts, and prosthetic devices.

Why was Lacan's designation of the centrality of the ego in his knot so paradoxical? This can be best appreciated when we remember that Lacan's entire system had been erected as a war machine against "ego-psychology." Since the 1950s, his main polemical thrust had been directed at Anna Freud's legacy in a wholesale critique of the "Americanization of the Unconscious" that occurred when the first generation of Freud's disciples elaborated in his name a practice aiming at increasing ego-defenses. Lacan's first publication in English, "Some Reflections on the Ego,"¹³ had postulated that language was constitutive of the ego, and situated in the dimension of hallucination, therefore of delusion. The denunciation of subsequent ego-psychology would be reiterated in countless statements, often quite ironical, as is the following with its revealing English phrases italicized in the original: "A team of *egos* no doubt less equal than autonomous (but by what trade-mark do they recognize in one another the sufficiency of their autonomy?) is offered to the Americans to guide them towards happiness, without

upsetting the autonomies, egoistical or otherwise, that pave with their non-conflictual spheres the *American way* of getting there.”¹⁴ Here is Lacan’s fundamental tenet, and it was therefore a completely unexpected move to see the old ego resurface with Joyce, even if was to introduce the ego as a writerly knot of letters somehow precipitating the symptom as *sinthome*.

When Lacan gave a written version of his talk for the publication of the symposium proceedings,¹⁵ the new text did not explicitly stress the role of the ego in the knot, although its submerged influence was noticeable. This version, completely different from the oral presentation, looked like a pastiche of Joyce’s *Wakese*. Lacan’s style in this text published in 1979 is at its most obscure and punning. It jump-starts with a covert reappearance of the *moi*: “*Joyce le Symptôme à entendre comme Jésus la caille: c’est son nom. Pouvait-on s’attendre à autre chose d’emmoi: je nomme*” (*JAL*, 31). (“Joyce the Symptom to be heard as *Jésus la caille*: this is his name. Could one expect anything less from meself: I name.”) The reference to Francis Carco’s novel portraying Parisian pimps and prostitutes, *Jésus-la-Caille*, ironically replaces Joyce’s name in the Montmartre and Pigalle scene of pimps and prostitutes, adding to Joyce’s nickname a populist twist (the hero of the novel, *Jésus-la-Caille*, is a drag queen and a male prostitute who falls in love with the mistress of the most dangerous pimp of the boulevards). With “*emmoi*,” Lacan punningly links *de moi* (“of me”) with echoes of Emma Bovary through a submerged quote of Flaubert’s famous “*Madame Bovary, c’est moi*.” By stressing the homophony of “*je nomme*” (“I name”) with “*jeune homme*” – the “young man” of Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist*, Lacan follows in the steps of a “young man Joyce” with whom he shares many characteristics – a common religious education, a subsequent revolt against the bourgeois order of their youth, finally the creation of a radically new language allowing them to think originally. The Irish writer acts as Lacan’s double, turns into a literary *Doppelgänger* thanks to whom he can justify his own baroque style, while permitting the return of the repressed “ego.” Joyce, who consistently refused to be psychoanalyzed, and who duplicates Freud’s name translated into English, plays the part of Lacan’s lay psychoanalyst, perhaps the only psychoanalyst he could acknowledge, unearthing in him the most stubborn ego-narcissism.

This is why the question of Joyce’s madness becomes so crucial. If Joyce was psychotic, was Lacan psychotic too? Lacan wonders thus in February 1976: “After which point is one mad? Was Joyce mad? . . . I began by writing *Inspired Writings*, this is why I should not be astonished

to find myself confronting Joyce, and this is why I dare pose the question: Was he mad? By what were his writings inspired to him?"¹⁶ This reference to the 1931 publication of "Ecrits inspirés" in *Annales médicales* sends us back to one of Lacan's earliest articles, when he was trying to understand the logic of psychotic discourse. In this early essay on "Inspired Writings," Lacan had marked his refusal of a medical approach that tended to see the texts of psychotics as "degenerated" or "degraded" by a distortion of affects, and he compared them to the linguistic experiments produced by the Surrealists to point out similar features: "The experiences made by certain writers on a mode of writing they have called Surrealist and whose method they have described very scientifically show the extraordinary degree of autonomy that graphic automatism can reach, outside any hypnosis."¹⁷ In a bold move for someone who was working within the French psychiatric institution, Lacan refused to distinguish the artful simulation of psychotic delirium such as one finds in *The Immaculate Conception* by Breton and Eluard from "authentic" verbal productions of institutionalized patients: all these texts evince the same structures, are determined by pre-inscribed rhythmic formulas that are subverted and filled with other meanings.

In fact, Lacan was not working in total isolation. More or less at the same time as he was writing "Inspired Writings," Eugène Jolas and Stuart Gilbert were busy collecting and publishing some of these "inspired writings" for *transition*. They were hoping to establish links between Joyce's new language and the language of the mad. This is why in *transition* no. 18 (November 1929), Roger Vitrac devotes a long article in French to "Le Langage à part" ("The language apart") that extensively quotes medical treatises on language trouble in alienated subjects before alluding to poetic texts by Prevert and Desnos as illustrations of the same linguistic process.¹⁸ In his essay, Vitrac quotes not only Seglas but also Baillarger, who worked on aural hallucinations among patients and asserts that "alienated patients fail to recognize their own voices just as one does in dreams" (*ibid.*). Vitrac provides one example:

Unconsciously. – Madame Dubois.

Consciously. – I don't know her. I come from the countryside.

Unconsciously. – Saint Thomas is as white as death.

Consciously. – A saint would have appeared to me? (*ibid.*)

He then generalizes: "What a strange ventriloquism, in which unconscious language has not lost its color and charm. One understands better the lyricism of asides, the occult power of confessions, everything that

makes these individualists tick and act, these impulsive egoists of thought, these dreamers entirely possessed by themselves.”¹⁹ Vitrac seems to connect these linguistic creations of the insane with an entrenched egoism that has similar roots: madness consists in a linguistic autarchy that can be charming but also betrays an inability to communicate on a social level. However, Vitrac does not suggest a similar derivation for the linguistic experiments of the “Revolution of the Word” launched by Joyce. In the same way, in *transition* no. 26 (1937) Stuart Gilbert publishes an essay on “The Subliminal Tongue” in which he starts with Joyce, then examines a few cases of psychotic language, such as various cases of invented “Martian languages.” These include the famous Hélène Smith, observed by Doctor Flournoy, and Patience Worth, whose dissociated personality was the object of psychical research on dissociation of personality by Morton Prince, all quoted in *Finnegans Wake*.

The question of Joyce’s potentially psychotic structure remained a haunting one for Lacan, and for the generations of Lacanian psychoanalysts who started reading Joyce in the hope of understanding psychosis. The possible diagnosis of Joyce’s psychotic structure can be seen as the result of several related factors: a systematic linguistic deregulation, a re-knotting of the four circles providing a new place for an ego that occupies a crucial but fragile position since it depends entirely upon language to “hold,” and more importantly perhaps, the determination of the whole structure by a *jouissance* of language experienced as raw material yielding enjoyment but produced outside the social norms of accepted meanings. It is indeed the “crazy” Joyce of the *Wake* who is given as a model for the new millennium.

THE EGOIST’S DAUGHTER

Lacan’s concept of “*jouissance*”²⁰ – so important to grasp Joyce’s new knots – is fundamentally egoistical, since it occupies the opposite pole of a desire marked by the Law of the Other. In a more recent discussion of Lacanian terms, Jacques-Alain Miller confirms this idea: “Lacan took masturbation as an example to show how *jouissance* in itself does not comprise the Other sex . . . When we think of *jouissance*, for instance, of the kind we possess, it is the *jouissance* of the psychical apparatus. It is something which has nothing to do with anyone in the word.”²¹ This can be brought to bear on Lacan’s critique of a residual “Jungism” when he talks about the anonymous dreamer in *Finnegans Wake*. For if we return

to the book that marked the first scientific exploration of the world of dreams, a book hailed by Joyce as “an intrepidation of our dreams” (*FW*, 338. 29–30), we will discover that for Freud one essential characteristic of the dreamer is that he or she is totally egoistical. Freud has already demonstrated that every dream is the representation of a wish as fulfilled, and then adds that in one “dream of convenience” in which he thought he could satisfy his thirst by calling up his wife offering him an Etruscan urn, he can conclude that “everything was conveniently arranged”: “Since its only purpose was to fulfill a wish, it could be completely egoistical.”²²

This double thesis is reiterated several times in the following sections, as in the section on “typical dreams”: “This would not contradict my assertion that dreams are wish-fulfillments, but my other assertion, too, that they are accessible only to egoistic impulses” (*ID*, 303). Freud suggests that the dreamer becomes a child again, and for him “Children are completely egoistic” (*ID*, 283). A humorous footnote was added in 1911, when Freud referred to a lecture given by Ernest Jones in the United States on “the egoism of dreams.” Jones met a strong resistance when an American lady stated that the Freudian hypothesis was only valid for Austrians and not for Americans since she was sure that all her dreams were strictly altruistic!²³ Joyce knew something about this debate: the notebooks for his *Work in Progress* are full of his own dreams, and the Professor Jones who lectures so pompously on time, space, woman, and man in the *Wake* owes as much to Ernest Jones as to Wyndham Lewis.

The recurrent leitmotif of egoism in dreams throughout the *Interpretation of Dreams* acquires the character of an absolute thesis in the structural account of the “dream-work.” Freud keeps the moralistic overtones of “egoism” in his description of a structural function deriving from the position of the “subject of enunciation” or the unconscious Cartesian *cogito* present in the dream:

Dreams are completely egoistical. Whenever my own ego does not appear in the content of the dream, but only some extraneous person, I may safely assume that my own ego lies concealed, by identification, behind the other person; I can insert my ego into the context . . . Thus my ego may be represented in a dream several times over, now directly and now through identification with extraneous persons. By means of a number of such identifications it becomes possible to condense an extraordinary amount of thought material. The fact that the dreamer’s own ego appears several times, or in several forms, in a dream is at bottom no more remarkable than that the ego should be contained in a conscious thought several times or in different places or connections – e.g. in the sentence “when *I* think what a healthy child *I* was.” (*ID*, 358)²⁴

What Freud offers us, in other words, could be called a “grammar of egoism,” in which the active and passive voices keep revolving around a mobile subjective center – much as he was to propose later about fantasy in “A Child is Being Beaten.”²⁵

Freud’s commonsensical appeal to a broad notion of egoism can help solve a few interpretive problems about *Finnegans Wake*, since critics continue arguing about the singularity or the multiplicity of Joyce’s dreamer. Freud shows that it is not necessary to distinguish between a single dreamer or a series of dreamers: the dreaming self always explodes into a multiplicity, thus creating the paradox of an oneiric egoistic alterity. The notion reverberates in *Finnegans Wake*, as in a passage of the inquest of the Four Masters facing a sleeping and dreaming Yawn: “Or you mean Nolans but Volans, an alibi, do you Mutemalice, suffering unegotistically from the singular but positively enjoying on the plural?” (*FW*, 488. 15–17). Joyce’s dreamers *enjoy* in the most rigorous sense, that is intransitively – in a baffling *jouissance* which seduces us into interpreting and eventually perpetuating it – when their collapsible plural allows them to dissolve and become one with the collective dream. Joyce (like Gertrude Stein) would agree that an artist can be a “genius” only if he or she can embody a *jouissance* that keeps all the political, ethical, and esthetic implications of egoism alive – then, indeed, it is impossible “to isolate I from my multiple Mes” (*FW*, 410. 12).

Freud’s analysis of egoistic dreams will pave the way for his subsequent description of the writer as a person who is gifted with the paradoxical power of releasing while sharing at the same time this egoism. In the essay entitled “The Poet and Day-Dreaming” written in 1907 and published the following year, he points out the links between children seriously engaged in playing, dreamers deeply ensconced in their private images, and writers of popular fiction (“the less pretentious writers of romances, novels and stories, who are read all the same by the widest circles of men and women”²⁶) who know how to create heroes with whom we immediately identify. We identify with the recurrent figure of the hero to whom, despite all the dangers braved, “nothing can happen”: “this significant mark of invulnerability very clearly betrays – His Majesty the Ego, the hero of all daydreams, and all novels” (*PDD*, 51). Before returning to Joyce’s day-dreams in which a vindication of his rights in front of the King of England figures in good place, I will address the issue of popular fiction. Popular fiction functions at the level of day-dreaming, and panders to our childish fantasies: if all the women fall in love with the hero in a totally unrealistic manner, we are neverthe-

less as flattered as if this happened to us. The difference between day- or night-dreamers on the one hand and novelists on the other hand lies in a sense of participation. We are often either bored or repulsed by the telling of intimate images or fantasies, so Freud argues, whereas we are kept interested by narratives that provide such great pleasure:

How the writer accomplishes this is his innermost secret; the essential *ars poetica* lies in the technique by which our feeling of repulsion is overcome, and this has certainly to do with those barriers erected between every individual being and all others [*zwischen jedem einzelnen Ich und den anderen*]. We can guess at two methods used in this technique. The writer softens the egotistical character of the day-dream by changes and disguises, and he bribes us by the offer of a purely formal, that is, aesthetic, pleasure in the presentation of his phantasies. (*PDD*, 54)²⁷

Freud's theory of literature has often been called reductive, yet his insight, although almost brutal, is powerful: the function of art is a mere means to an end, which consists in the overcoming of the barriers that separate one ego from other egos with the ultimate aim of releasing a deeper egoism of fantasy that can be shared by all. Art is clearly reduced to a little bribe that will then release even greater pleasure – an “incitement premium” (*Verlockungsprämie*) or a “fore-pleasure” (*Vorlust*) (*PDD*, 54) before a quasi-orgasmic ego-trip can be unleashed. These ideas confirm how Freudian Lacan's reading of Joyce could be, and correspond with surprising exactitude to the arguments put forward by a very popular novelist who also happened to have invented a whole philosophy of egoism, Ayn Rand.

At first sight, no two writers could be more different than Ayn Rand and James Joyce. While Joyce was a fastidious stylist, Ayn Rand's style proceeds through well-worn Hollywoodian clichés (they have been mercilessly and hilariously parodied by Mary Gaitskill in *Two Girls, Fat and Thin*²⁸). While Joyce concentrated on his writing almost to the exclusion of everything else, Rand stopped in the middle of the painful writing of her first long novel, *The Fountainhead*, because she felt she had to militate actively in politics, and canvassed without pay in the ill-fated campaign of Wendell Wilkie, the conservative candidate who ran against Roosevelt in 1940.²⁹ Later, during the worst period of the Cold War, she did not hesitate to participate as a “friendly witness” in the infamous 1947 House Un-American Activities Committee hearings on communism in Hollywood (where she spoke in front of a very young and “friendly” Richard Nixon). And then, of course, comes up the complex issue of how she became the leader of a movement that some compare to a cult,

first under the name of “Nathaniel Branden Institute,” later rebaptized the “Ayn Rand Institute: the Center for the Advancement of Objectivism.” Still today, all of her best-selling novels and essays contain the same little detachable flyer asking reader to make a bold transition between fiction and ethical commitment. Readers who have been interested by the novels should get in touch with the Institute: “Do you share Ayn Rand’s view of life? Do you want to fight today’s cultural and political trends? If you take the ideas of this book seriously, you will want to find out about . . .” After a list of topics, one finds an address in the name of “Objectivism.” This transformation of literature into “philosophy” (if one may use the word) or rather an activist ideology is of course totally foreign to Joyce.

Joyce hated Romanticism with a passion, and *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* contain among many other things a scathing indictment of hero-worship, a systematic debunking of the cult of honor, gallantry, and patriotic sacrifice that afflicted the ideology of Irish revival and culminated in the Easter Rising of 1916. Ayn Rand, on the other hand, was a professed Romantic attached to portraying ideal figures and clinging to hero-worship (she considered, for instance, Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead* not only her type of hero, but the “ideal man,” man as he should be). The deliberate idealization provides a basis for a whole vision of life in which raising one’s self-esteem implies understanding the rules of radical egoism. Here is how her “philosophy” is sketched in the “Reader’s Guide” provided at the end of *The Fountainhead*: “My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute.”³⁰ This is why the habitual flyer condenses this even more pithily: “As an advocate of reason, egoism and capitalism, I seek to reach the men of the intellect – wherever such may be found. – Ayn Rand.”

The earliest note for *The Fountainhead* stressed this concept of egoism: “The first purpose of this book is a *defense of egoism in its real meaning*.”³¹ Indeed, the rather contrived plot culminates when the “genius” architect Howard Roark is led to dynamiting cheap buildings for the poor because his original design has been tampered with, and then has to defend his “egoistic” conception of art and life in court. What the 1949 film adaptation by King Vidor half-heartedly conveys in Gary Cooper’s speech works somewhat better at the end of the bulky novel: “I came here to say that I do not recognize anyone’s right to one minute of my life . . . I wished to come here and say that I am a man who does not exist

for others . . . The world is perishing from an orgy of self-sacrifice” (*F*, 684). Curiously, the term used by Roark to berate the “second-handers” who only exist for or by the others (like Peter Keating, the architect who is ready to compromise in order to succeed, or Ellsworth Toohey, the socialist demagogue, greedy for an impersonal sense of power he taps from the masses by erasing any trace of individualism) is “egotism” not “egoism”: “All that which proceeds from man’s independent ego is good. All that which proceeds from man’s dependence upon men is evil. The egotist in the absolute sense is not the man who sacrifices others . . . He does not exist for any other man – and he asks no other man to exist for him. This is the only form of brotherhood and mutual respect possible between men” (*F*, 680). One compelling idea put forward by Ayn Rand is that the egotist’s indifference to the others frees them from their petty delusions, restores their self-esteem by bringing them in closer contact with the drive (the Freudian *Trieb*) hidden beneath their limited desires. This constitutes a sort of inverse pornography, in a contagion of separatedness affirming the solipsistic structure of the drives. In Lacanian terms, the Master first posits his absolute ego by considering only his relationship to drives, which then compels the others to move into a hysterical position of recrimination and theatrical negation, until this is finally overcome when all turn into Masters. The narratological issue in all these texts boils down to an interaction between intolerable demands arising from the subjective entanglements of sexual desire, and a truth to be sought on the side of a solipsistic drive underpinning creativity. This is why egotism cannot be differentiated from egoism: both determine the realm of what *Atlas Shrugged* calls the “Prime Movers,” heroic creators who live only for the beauty and perfection of their own achievements, and are autonomous “ends in themselves.”

However, Ayn Rand (who mastered English relatively late in her life, as she had arrived from Russia in 1926, to head straight for New York and then Hollywood via Chicago, thus encountering in the flesh her two main fetishes of American culture, skyscrapers and movies) notes in her 1968 Introduction that she was guilty of a semantic slip: wherever she has written “egotism,” one should read “egoism,” and she blames the mistake on her reliance on a faulty dictionary, *Webster’s Daily Use Dictionary* (1933). As a number of critics have pointed out, the issue is less a possible confusion than the paradoxes generated by these terms (Max Stirner encountered similar problems in his *The Ego and His Own*). “Selfishness” in Ayn Rand’s later developments of her philosophy comes to mean “pure devotion to an ideal,” while “altruism” means a perverted

spirit of sacrifice for the masses instilled by any religion of God or humanity. These terms clearly denote more or less the opposite of what they mean in everyday discourse. In the same way, the main reason one can find for her choice of “Objectivism” (a word that had been better illustrated by a poetic movement of the thirties) for her system is that she wishes to avoid any reproach of subjectivism or solipsism. The only “objective” value we have here is in fact the Freudian *Trieb*.

Since one should not take Rand’s philosophy too seriously, I would like simply to point out that the weakness of her thinking is compensated by a way of writing that has managed to captivate audiences, decade after decade. She knows how to produce “page-turners” despite the general incoherence of plot and characterization (for instance, one has to believe in *The Fountainhead* that Dominique Francon, the beautiful and clever woman in love with Roark – he has started things very well by raping her in a very original love scene – spends a few years attempting to destroy him because, although she admires his buildings, she thinks that the world is not ready for so much beauty!) and the weakness of the writing itself. The explanation is to be sought in the way Rand blends the allegorical vision of pulp fiction in which everything is good or evil, with a wish to rationalize and demonstrate ideas. Thus when she defines “Objectivist Ethics” in a book called *The Virtue of Selfishness*,³² she begins by quoting one character from *Atlas Shrugged*. She confirms thereby that she writes “philosophical novels,” better and longer versions of the Harlequin genre in which the trick is always to produce a figure of “love at first sight” and then to multiply obstacles until the desired reunion is achieved. In Rand’s fictions, it is always the woman who fears the absolutist character of love so that she will want to destroy the object of her passion by killing it. In the end, the pure and uncompromising hero is always reunited with the beautiful woman who loves him despite all attempts from within and without at perverting their bond.

What King Vidor’s film adaptation of *The Fountainhead* manages to show quite well is that the ethical issue of egoism corresponds esthetically to the problematic of Modernism in architecture. Roark is partly modeled after Frank Lloyd Wright (who eventually read the novel and appreciated it), and the buildings he designs have one common feature: they show no ornaments, their functionality is obvious in the structure, and the main source of evil in the novel is the wish by lesser architects to add to them silly Beaux-Arts trimmings or classical columns. Roark the quintessential egoist is also a quintessential Modernist, and it is possible that Rand thought of Joyce’s famous determination never to alter

a line to please his critics or his audience when portraying the architect. As Slavoj Žižek has suggested in a clever analysis of Rand's latent "hysterical lesbianism," she "falls into the line of over-conformist authors who undermine the ruling ideological edifice by their very excessive identification with it."³³ Her over-enthusiastic endorsing of capitalism retains its hysterical force so that somehow the Master's discourse is forced to confront his failure. Capitalism is never pure enough for Rand; it falls prey to the recurrent danger of collectivism, it is too tainted with religiosity.

When I say "capitalism," I mean a full, pure, uncontrolled, unregulated *laissez-faire* capitalism – with a separation of state and economics, in the same way and for the same reasons as the separation of state and church. A pure system of capitalism had never yet existed, not even in America; various degrees of government control had been undercutting and destroying it from the start.³⁴

One of the ironies besetting Objectivism in the domain of economics is that one of its most gifted and famous disciples was none other than Alan Greenspan!

This leads to the plot developed in *Atlas Shrugged*: all the "Prime Movers" decide to go on strike in order to protest the dangers of collectivism, and then the whole world grinds to a cataclysmic halt, until they are called back. These autonomous prime movers are embodiments of the Freudian drive in its autotelic affirmation. As Žižek says, Rand's position comes close to a certain feminism when she shows how her fascination for the masculine will lead her to a position of hysteria, but of a hysteria that is surmounted and transcended. This is apparent in the dialectics of giving and not-giving that follow from the novel's premises. Curiously, Ayn Rand's description of the paradoxes involved in giving to others what a single strong ego has made for himself or herself comes very close to Joyce's formulation of the same problem in *Exiles*. When Roark has designed the perfect house for Gail Wynand (the press tycoon who owns everything and who, moreover, has married the woman he loves), he assuages the latter's fears that he will never be able to "own" this house:

What you feel in the presence of a thing you admire is just one word – "Yes." The affirmation, the acceptance, the sign of admittance. And that "Yes" is more than an answer to one thing, it's a kind of "Amen" to life, to the earth that holds this thing, to the thought that created it, to yourself for being able to see it. But the ability to say "Yes" or "No" is the essence of all ownership. It's your ownership of your own ego . . . There is no affirmation without the one who affirms. In this sense, everything to which you grant your love is yours. (*F*, 539)

Then Wynand asks whether this is not equivalent to “sharing,” a notion that Ayn Rand clearly abhors. Here is what Roark answers:

No. It's not sharing. When I listen to a symphony I love, I don't get from it what the composer got. His “Yes” was different from mine. He could have no concern for mine and no exact conception of it. That answer is too personal to each man. But in giving himself what he wanted, he gave me a great experience. I'm alone when I design a house, Gail, and you can never know the way in which I own it. But if you said your own “Amen” to it – it's also yours. And I'm glad it's yours. (*F*, 539)

In a very similar manner, Richard Rowan explains to his son Archie why it is better to give precious objects than to keep them, by using an identical logical reversal:

RICHARD: When you have a thing it can be taken from you.

ARCHIE: By robbers? No?

RICHARD: But when you give it you have given it. No robber can take it from you . . . It is yours for ever when you have given it. It will be yours always. That is to give.³⁵

One might find in Joyce an older substratum of motives linking egoism and heroism (at least in the not so ironical title of *Stephen Hero*) that can call up Ayn Rand's subversion of her own values. The main fantasy that the creative ego can live and produce just for himself, independently from the gaze of the big Other, is not tantamount to asserting that the self makes up reality. What the comparison between Ayn Rand and Joyce can teach us finally is that solipsism and relativism can be avoided if and only if egoism contains the dialectical means by which it can be superseded – be it through an almost impossible gift or through an even more paradoxical hospitality to the other.

THE GENIUS OF EGOISM

I will sketch more fully some historical implications of Joyce's involvement in the “philosophy of egoism” and its political consequences in the following chapter. Let me just briefly survey the broad evolution of the concept in Joyce's life and works with a view to answering Lacan's criticism. Joyce made a point of his earlier esthetic never to distinguish art from life, as I will show in chapter 4. In a 1912 essay, he writes of William Blake:

Like many other men of genius, Blake was not attracted to cultured and refined women. Either he preferred to drawing-room graces . . . the simple woman, of

hazy and sensual mentality, or, in his unlimited egoism, he wanted the soul of his beloved to be entirely a slow and painful creation of his own, freeing and purifying daily under his very eyes, the demon (as he says) hidden in the cloud. (*CW*, 217)

As the annotators point out, this seems to sum up most of the plot of Joyce's play, *Exiles*. If Robert Hand asserts several times that Richard has "created" Bertha, that she is "his own work," Richard Rowan, self-consciously playing the role of God or Pygmalion tries to free his common-law wife from too strict an adherence to a Galathean mirror image by allowing her to betray him.

Perversion, or in a religious vocabulary, sin, provides the only limit to egoism: sin brings along a sense of sundering, as Stephen says about Shakespeare, that should ultimately become productive by restarting a new life cycle. Joyce's editors point out that "Joyce's alliance to Nora Barnacle bears a vague resemblance to that which he attributes to Blake and Catherine Boucher" (*CW*, 217n). The qualification provided by the adjective "vague" is necessary, since what would strike all witnesses of daily life in the Joyce family was Nora's utter impermeability to her husband's influence. As Joyce said, his wife's personality was "absolutely proof against any influence of (him)" (*JII*, 434), would it be going to an extreme to suggest that Lucia could only find in psychosis the shelter from a father who was all too present in her thoughts? Lucia might indeed be described as the "egoist's daughter" – and her fate was determined by her repeating this unusual legacy.

Joyce's early version of egoism consisted in a rejection of conventional values that culminated in an esthetic view of life modeled on Ibsen and Nietzsche. This is why Ibsen is praised in a letter as an "egoarch" (*LII*, 205) as we will see in the next chapter, while much later *Finnegans Wake* still makes a virtue of "eggoarchicism" (525.10). Even if this remains as a dominant and subterranean ground, Joyce experienced a turning point roughly at the time his daughter was born. Until the failed attempt to find a career in Rome, and during that stay in the eternal city, Joyce retained the illusion that he could reunite the esthetic ideal of egoism with the political movement known as anarchism. He remarks that Stanislaus objects to his "socialist tendencies" in August 1906 (*LII*, 148). In January 1907, he uses the term "anarchist" to call up his destitute life in an amusing vignette describing his shabby room, his family shivering with cold and his thwarted literary aspirations: "Title of above: *The Anarchist*" (*LII*, 206). Then in March 1907, after a moral crisis whose echoes are still felt in *Exiles*, Joyce announces that his life needs to take an

entirely new direction, incriminating his state of “indifference” that puts at stake his whole career and renders the moral justification of his “artistic inclination” almost spurious: “It is months since I have written a line and even reading tires me. The interest I took in socialism and the rest has left me . . . These ideas or instincts or intuitions or impulses may be purely personal. I have no wish to codify myself as anarchist or socialist or reactionary” (*LII*, 217). This was written at the time Joyce discovered that Nora was pregnant again – and signals the decision to achieve an inner retreat and to adopt an attitude that can be equated with a purely literary egoism – a term that has to be differentiated from “egotism” as we will soon see. Joyce’s attitude remained consistent during the war, and the choice of neutral Switzerland was the natural consequence of the rootlessness of an exile. And thus, among other friends in Paris, Eugène Jolas noted with some astonishment the almost fanatic avoidance of any mention of politics by Joyce in the late twenties. This attitude became more and more impossible to uphold, and shows common traits with his disavowal of Lucia’s real psychic condition.

Such a close “collaborator” and acute observer of the Joyce circle in the late twenties as Stuart Gilbert points out (in a diary that appears as motivated by spite, envy and rancor as by friendship) the structural similarities between Joyce’s own symptoms and Lucia’s. He remarks during the various “Lucia crises” that marked the beginning of the thirties that the Joyces seem to lead “empty” lives and that all the members of the family have started emulating Joyce’s motto of “silence, exile and cunning”:

The truth is that all their lives (even his) are empty. They do not attach themselves to anything except ephemeral things, and tire of these so soon they are always at a loss. Thus they never, or rarely, make friends. Too self-centered . . . To fill his [James Joyce’s] life he pictures himself as a victim pursued by enemies, and will not understand that most people are indifferent . . . Other people’s troubles leave him cold; he is never interested in the “human” side of a book or tale or event. Hardly even the literary. It’s just a fact to him. Unless it concerns his family (father for instance) or, in a less degree, his country. Nationalities interest him a little. He has still the naive enthusiasm – a little of it – for self-proclaimed rebels and the naive belief that people who have morals are hypocrites.³⁶

If we read this with less spite and venom, we may observe the perseverance of the same “egoist anarchism” (indeed, having mellowed and matured) that characterized Joyce’s youthful years in Pola, Trieste, and Rome. His nemesis was, at least according to Gilbert, that Lucia had mimicked this attitude with a vengeance:

The interest has centered for the last 20 days round Lucia. The typical girl left to herself and developing in all her selfishness. It is absurd to say that she never had a chance; she had every chance. Only her conceit and idleness prevented her from trying for either of the things she wanted – becoming another Pavlova or making a good match. She cultivates her father’s imperious airs and spells of silence.³⁷

Painful as these entries are to read, they nevertheless hit on a raw nerve. Although cynical and superior, Gilbert denies the psychiatric side of Lucia’s condition as much as her father did, and like Joyce and also Nora, he blames Lucia’s psychic deterioration on a systematic imitation of her father’s mannerisms, infatuations, and indulgence.

In order to pull together all the strands linking the curious and ultimately lethal “egoism” of the Joyce family and the genesis of an ideology insisting on family, race, and nationality as the new site of a war waged against the rest of the world, I will now try to bring several themes together: Joyce’s alleged “indifference” to human issues (all viewed, it seems, if not *sub specie aeternitatis*, at least as some manifestation of recurrent universal patterns), his determination to let his world shrink to that of an extended family, and his stubborn denial of psychoanalysis in spite of an intellectual proximity with Freud. Whereas Lacan and most Lacanians tend to collapse Joyce’s “knots” and those of his psychotic daughter – as Jacques-Alain Miller writes in his introduction to *Joyce avec Lacan* (“To evoke psychosis was not just an example of applied psychoanalysis, but rather a way of questioning the discourse of the analyst *with* the symptom thought to be unanalyzable” [*JAL*, 12]), I would like to offer the counter-thesis that Joyce’s later writings should not be qualified unambiguously as “psychotic” or “schizophrenic.” On the contrary, if they indeed tend to approach the condition of psychosis, it is so as to provide an analysis, and perhaps a cure, of it. Joyce’s deepest and most cherished delusion was that the new language he was elaborating in the thirties would be capable not just of imitating Lucia’s quasi-psychotic idiom, but of actually curing it. One might indeed see in this wish the return of a repressed incestuous desire: Joyce believes that he can succeed where Jung and all other doctors have failed thanks to a “mystical” bond uniting his daughter and himself. Again, Joyce anticipates the insights of a Lacan (exactly at the same time as the French psychiatrist was elaborating a theory of “paranoiac psychosis” that the Surrealists would endorse enthusiastically³⁸): both stake everything on language as a possible cure for psychosis – an idea that Freud would limit to neurotics.

Alain Manier has shown in a brilliant work³⁹ that what marks off psychosis from other types of neurological disorders is the way language becomes petrified and reified. Psychotic language tends on the one hand to deny the arbitrary link between signifiers and signified, and on the other hand to negate the social link that (re)motivates language for whoever speaks. Psychotic discourse, even when it looks creative in its distortion of ordinary usage, employs a language that is literalized, acquires a fixity or rigidity that often substitutes itself for bodily catatonia. One can therefore say that *Finnegans Wake* attacks directly the linguistic root of psychosis by enhancing the poetological functions of the polyglottic and punning Word, and by reconstituting the social or historical logic underlying the archeology of myths that underpins the creation of such a new language.

In other words, Lucia should not appear merely as Joyce's "anima inspiratrix," as Jung would have it, but rather as the main addressee of the *Wake*. Joyce's hope is that if he manages to reach through her multiple levels of allusions, to inhabit the darkness of a monstrous language long enough and then can still return to light in the morning, he will gain some therapeutic leverage on his daughter's condition. The utopian agency of the new "babel" both radicalizes the disjointed syntax and word condensations that are typical of feminized "little languages" (from Swift to Lewis Carroll) and points to the way out of the tunnel of hebephrenia. In fact, Lucia became the ideal reader of *Finnegans Wake* – whose pathos increased as it became obvious that she could not read the text and ended up reproducing her mother's "indifference" to *Ulysses*, but for quite opposite reasons.

If in the *Wake* the circle of history is recaptured endlessly, the cumulative effect of these melancholy recapitulations should be less a reiterative slumber than a fun-producing "wake up call" from the depth of psychosis. The element of "fun" aims thus at understanding where Lucia's *jouissance* has gone. This strategy also manages to criticize historical neuroses such as various varieties of nationalism (Irish or other) and the proliferation of psychotic messianism. Indeed, the idea of bringing "Universal History" to bear on his daughter's troubled psychic state remains caught up in the same egoistic circle I have described earlier, while escaping from the dead end of psychosis. When Joyce appeals to the endless litany of cyclical avatars of the Same and presents a Nietzschean return of the disappointingly identical – for instance, he typically presents courtship and marriage as: "for soon again 'twill be, win me, woo me, wed me, ah weary me!" (*FW*, 556. 20–21) – he means

to convince Lucia that the worst catastrophe has already happened (as Winnicott would say), that her troubles are over, and that she can now share with her father the vision of a sunnier future.

Having sketched how Joyce became the Lacanian Symptom of literature, I will have to make a detour through his esthetic theories in order to follow the route linking “negative esthetics” to the philosophy of egoism that will be explored in a subsequent chapter. The loaded confrontation between endogamy and exogamy will lead us to a revision of the themes of hospitality and sodomy in the context of Joyce’s desire to write a universal history of mankind. Other chapters will be devoted to the function of the reader, just sketched with Lucia here. I will subsequently have to distinguish between the plain readers, ideal readers, and revolutionary readers. Caught up in her father’s revolution of language, acting as the first symptom of its disturbing effects, Lucia’s tragedy was to identify with the position of the ideal reader of the *Wake* while being deprived of her no doubt brilliant future.⁴⁰ Joyce’s book was made all the more dramatic as it was not only supposed to be a funny book – as indicated by the delicately paradoxical coining of “funferall” (*FW* 13.15, 11.15, and see also 458.22, 120.10), one of the most powerful leitmotifs of *Finnegans Wake* – but it became a prophetic book with a vengeance. Joyce’s messianic dreams sublimated his egoism (the wish to have a direct impact on a cherished daughter) into the decision to replace a “dream monologue” (474.4) by a “drama parapolylogic” (474.5) including all his readers, in the hope that their, our cacophonous voices would just blend into a collective “music of the future.” Nevertheless, he added a prudent question mark: “The mujic of the footure on the barbarihams of the bashed?” (518. 28).