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JAMES JOYCE AND THE POLITICS OF EGOISM

In *James Joyce and the politics of egoism* a leading scholar approaches the entire Joycean canon through the concept of “egoism.” This concept, Jean-Michel Rabaté argues, runs throughout Joyce’s work, and involves and incorporates its opposite, “hospitality,” a term Rabaté understands as meaning an ethical and linguistic opening to “the other.” For Rabaté, both concepts emerge from the fact that Joyce published crucial texts in the London-based review *The Egoist* and later moved on to forge strong ties with the international Paris avant-garde. Rabaté examines the theoretical debates surrounding these connections, linking Joyce’s engagement with Irish politics with the aesthetic aspects of his texts. Through egoism, he shows, Joyce defined a literary sensibility founded on negation; through hospitality, Joyce postulated the creation of a new, utopian readership. Rabaté explores Joyce’s complex negotiation between these two poles in a study of interest to all Joyceans and scholars of modernism.

JEAN-MICHEL RABATÉ is Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Writing the Image after Roland Barthes* (1997), *The Ghosts of Modernity* (1996), and *Joyce Upon the Void: the Genesis of Doubt* (1991). He has also written and edited many books and articles on modernism and literary theory.

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Preface

This is a book without an Introduction or a Conclusion. Just twelve chapters in an order which, although not random, will not be immediately perceptible. It should look like a dodecaphonic series harping on a handful of key motifs – the ego as symptom of literary modernity; the pervasive tension between egoism and hospitality; late Modernism defined less by formal innovation than by an emphasis on a new reader; the curious interactions, antagonistic and yet parallel, between Joyce's esthetic program and the emergence of Irish nationalism, to name but a few.

Thanks to the old rhetorical rule of *post hoc, propter hoc*, and also to excellent editorial advice provided by the anonymous readers who considered an earlier version of these chapters, they now follow each other in some kind of narrative. The foundations for this book were laid in the summer of 1996, when I was asked simultaneously to give two plenary addresses at different Joyce conferences. First, I opened the Zurich James Joyce Symposium at Fritz Senn's kind invitation (as I read "Joyce the egoist" with a bottle of Chanel's *Egoïste* after-shave on my lectern, this gave rise to entirely unfounded rumors that I was being sponsored by the French brand). Then I was asked by Julian Wolfreys to close the International Conference on Joyce and Theory at Dundee (at which I spoke on lice and fleas, and as this time I had refrained from bringing along any toiletries, when people in the audience started scratching their heads, pensively I hope, I was pleased to think that they were distracted from previous heated controversies on Irish politics). In between, I had gone to Dublin to give a talk at the James Joyce Summer School, and I presented on Joyce's concept of hospitality. I had three major concepts to work from, first egoism, then hospitality, and finally the concept of a self-generating and organic language that found in lice a perfect emblem.

It was only after another conference at Yale University in September

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1998 on Eugène Jolas and *transition* that I saw another axis emerge: the shift from *The Egoist* (a review which captures very well all the excitement of early and high modernism in London) to *transition* (an international magazine based in Paris that condenses the eclectic verve of later Modernism) seemed to allegorize the entire trajectory of what we call Modernism.

The narrative which links all these chapters is nevertheless not totally linear (and above all not chronological), and aims at leaving a degree of autonomy to each chapter. All the essays that have been already published have been significantly rewritten. Here is the list of the chapters that use texts published in journals or collections. They have been substantially modified for this volume. I would like to thank the editors for permission to reproduce these pages:

Chapter 3, “Joyce the egoist,” was published in *Modernism/Modernity*, vol. 4, no. 3, September 1997, pp. 45–65. Chapter 5, “Theory’s slice of life,” was published in *Re:Joyce. Text, Culture, Politics*, edited by John Brannigan, Geoff Ward and Julian Wolfreys (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 121–45. Part of chapter 6, “Joyce vs. the king,” was published in *Seeing Double: Revisioning Edwardian and Modernist Literature*, edited by Carola M. Kaplan and Anne B. Simpson (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 1996), pp. 99–109. Chapter 8, “Joyce’s transitional revolution,” was published in *The Journal of Modern Literature*, Special Issue “Joyce and the Joyceans,” winter 1998/99, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 245–52. Sections of chapter 9, “Hospitality and Sodomy,” were published in *Quare Joyce*, edited by Joseph Valente (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1999), pp. 35–44, and in *Collideorscape of Joyce: Festschrift for Fritz Senn*, edited by Ruth Frehner and Ursula Zeller (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1998), pp. 341–52. Chapter 10, “Hospitality in the capital city” was published in *The Romanic Review*, vol. 86, no. 3, May 1995, pp. 485–500 and *European James Joyce Studies, Genetic Probes*, edited by David Hayman (Rodolpi, Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 65–83. I have published a different version of the analysis of Luke: 16 from chapter 12 in “The ‘Mujic of the Footure’: Future, Ancient, Fugitive,” forthcoming in a collection of essays devoted to Jacques Derrida, *Futures*.

Abbreviations

- Joyce, James, *Letters*, vol. I, ed. S. Gilbert (London: Faber, 1957); vols. II and III, ed. R. Ellmann (London: Faber, 1966): respectively *LI*, *LII* and *LIII*, followed by page number.
- Joyce, James, *Selected Letters*, ed. Richard Ellmann (London: Faber, 1975): *LIV*, followed by page number.
- Joyce, James, *Ulysses*, ed. H. W. Gabler (London: Penguin, 1986): *U*, followed by number of chapter and line.
- Joyce, James, *Critical Writings*, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking, 1964): *CW*, followed by page number.
- Joyce, James, *Dubliners*, ed. Terence Brown (London: Penguin, 1992): *D*, followed by page number.
- Joyce, James, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber, 1939): *FW*, followed by page and line number.
- Joyce, James, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Chester Anderson (New York: Viking, 1968): *APA*, followed by page number.
- Joyce, James, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Seamus Deane (London: Penguin, 1993): *P*, followed by page number.
- Joyce, James, *Stephen Hero*, ed. Theodore Spencer, revised edn by John H. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956): *SH*, followed by page number.
- The James Joyce Archive*, ed. Michael Groden *et al.* (New York and London: Garland, 1977–79), *JJA*, followed by volume and page number.
- Joyce, Stanislaus, *The Complete Dublin Diary*, ed. George H. Healey (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971): *DD*, followed by page number.
- Ellmann, Richard, *James Joyce*, 2nd revised edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983): *JJII*, followed by page number.
- Power, Arthur, *Conversations with James Joyce*, ed. Clive Hart (London: Millington, 1974): *CJJ*, followed by page number.

Note: double slashes (oblique lines) in quotations indicate paragraph breaks.