Introduction

Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on the Other Joyce

_Why bastard? Wherefore base?_

_My mind is as generous and my shape as true,_

_As honest madam’s issue? Why brand they us_

_With base? With baseness? Bastardy? Base, base?_

_(Shakespeare, King Lear I.ii.6-10)_

Since its publication in 1968, the critical reception of _Giacomo Joyce_ has been defined largely by a concern with biographical placement, stylistic transitions and the vicissitudes of authorial intention. Doubtless this is symptomatic of a certain novelty which this text has offered critics over the last thirty or so years. A novelty which nevertheless more often translates into marginalisation. It is the novelty of a text whose status, within an industry otherwise overly capitalised and overly authorised, remains uncertain if not problematic or, indeed, problematising. In every sense a posthumous text, _Giacomo Joyce_ describes an uncanny double, a doppelgänger, a _shemblable_, a bastard self whose illegitimacy as regards the Joycean corpus “proper” has contributed to its being not only Joyce’s least critically accessed work, but also, one might say, his least accessible.

One of the premises of this volume is that it takes seriously the claim that _Giacomo Joyce_ should be treated on its own terms.
At the same time, however, it is important that the rather unique position of *Giacomo Joyce* with regards to Joyce’s other writings should not itself be temporised, or glossed over, in an attempt to engineer a belated succession to the Joycean canon. Despite Richard Ellmann’s somewhat whimsical remarks (“When, not long before his death, Joyce said that he would write something very simple and very short, he was thinking perhaps of how he had solidified the small, fragile, transitory perfection of his Triestine pupil into the small, fragile, enduring perfection of *Giacomo Joyce*” [GJ xxvi]), there remains no evidence to suggest that Joyce ever actually considered publishing this sixteen page manuscript. Nor, however, is there any way of knowing that, had he lived, some form of revisitation might not have been one of any number of eventualities. There were certainly precedents for Joyce returning to pieces that he had otherwise forgot or discarded. Notable among these are the so-called *Finn’s Hotel* vignettes, which Joyce sent in 1923 to Harriet Shaw Weaver to be typed, and then seemed to forget about until *Finnegans Wake* had almost been completed. Be this as it may, one should remain cautious of the special pleading which inevitably accompanies such speculations.

While it may not be a question of claiming an “enduring perfection” for Joyce’s seemingly most incidental and fugitive of writings, it does not follow that *Giacomo Joyce* should receive the qualified attention of a secondary text, a mere appendage or appendix to the authorised texts of Joyce. That is to say, as merely a set of autobiographical instructions—something devoid of any textual complexion of its own. On the other hand, it can be argued that it is precisely the “secondary,” or supplemental nature of *Giacomo Joyce* which, in light of the textual theories emerging at the time of its publication, lends it a particularly deconstructive force. As a text “on the margin” of the Joycean canon, and itself preoccupied with a certain liminality, it represents not only an other-Joyce, but an othering of Joyce.
Introduction

In a review published in *Le Monde* in August 1968, entitled “Giacomo Joyce: Les sanglots ironiques d’Éros,” Hélène Cixous provides one of the earliest readings of the othering of Joyce in the persona of “Giacomo.” But while Cixous accepts uncritically Ellmann’s biography of the *dark lady* of Joyce’s “suppressed” envoy, she nevertheless presents a more ambiguous view of Joyce’s treatment of this feminine “other.” Projection, transgression, fertilisation—these “tropes” of Eros describe a substitutive reflexivity which extends to the reflexivity of the text itself. A play of doubles—a dialectics of desire crossed through by what Cixous elsewhere describes as a “subject waiting for itself,” coming to itself, sending itself.1 “Joycean eroticism is not merely satisfied with one-sided transgression [...]. It must be said that for Joyce the process of fertilisation is reversible: masculine-feminine, the artist is fertilised himself through the channel of the imaginary.”2 Projection and deferral of the consummative act gives rise to writing, and writing in turn substitutes for the act.

While this more writerly or textualist approach circumvents the biographical fallacy and points in the direction of Joyce’s abstractionist concerns elsewhere, Cixous’s simultaneous deferral to the assertions of biographical facticity give rise to a set of questions regarding textual authority which need to be addressed. While much has been said about the care with which Joyce cultivated and manipulated his public image, it is important not to forget that this image nevertheless comes to us in a highly interpreted fashion. Just as the Nietzsche familiar to readers of English can be thought of as largely a creature of Walter Kaufmann, so too can Joyce be seen as a creation of Richard Ellmann. From the publication of his 842 page *James Joyce* in 1959, until his death in 1987, Ellmann’s official version

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of Joyce underwrote almost the entire project of Joycean scholarship.

While several of the essays included in this volume touch upon problems with Ellmann’s dating, and with his methodology, the question of his authority as such, and of the complicity of scholars in the affecting of that authority, remain to be addressed. This is above all the case in regard to Giacomo Joyce. It is already widely believed that Ellmann “discovered” the sketchbook containing Joyce’s unpublished manuscript in 1956, among the possessions of Joyce’s brother Stanislaus in Trieste, supposedly then facilitating its acquisition by an “anonymous” collector. The account given by Stelio Crise, and reported at length by Vicki Mahaffey, is less oblique: “When Stanislaus died on June 19, 1955, his widow received no pension, so [Ottocaro] Weiss [a friend of Ellmann] helped her sell off the Trieste library, in return for which she gave him Giacomo Joyce.”

Three years later Ellmann reproduced large portions of the text in his estate-authorised biography (JJI 353-60), and nine years after that he edited the complete text for Viking Press. While it has been suggested that the reason for this delay was to protect the sensibilities of certain other parties, the text of the 1959 biography makes this seem unlikely, and Ellmann himself never chose to explain why he waited twelve years to pursue the full publication of Giacomo Joyce. In his twenty-six page introduction to the text, however, he clearly anticipated that this was to be the last of Joyce’s published writings. In a sense, Giacomo Joyce was to be the last word of Joyce, and in another sense, the last word on Joyce. And to a degree this may have something to do with the text’s relative marginalisation. Ellmann the authority on Joyce, the author of Joyce, gives us Joyce’s “last published work,” buried under a weight of

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editorial commentary, exegesis and annotation, in place of an actual work he never quite wrote, perhaps.

There is a sense in which Ellmann no doubt regarded the publication of *Giacomo Joyce* as somehow “completing” it, a completion moreover affected under his own imprimatur, as though he himself were signing Joyce’s name to it, in place of Joyce, conveying Joyce’s envoy to its proper, final destination. In any case, the publication of *Giacomo Joyce*, as a “posthumous” work, was for all intents and purposes a still birth, an already closed book, and much of what has subsequently been written about it seems to reinforce this view.

It would seem that a significant challenge facing Joyce critics is to effectively extract Joyce’s work from this overly determined placement. Hence, in bringing together these particular writings on *Giacomo Joyce*, this volume does not so much seek to consolidate a field or discipline, as to provide a critical context from which future readings of Joyce’s text might productively deviate, in turn subjecting the work published here to constructive scrutiny and in so doing scrutinise the terms under which much of the writing on *Giacomo Joyce* has proceeded. It is appropriate, in this respect, that many of the approaches to *Giacomo Joyce* have focused upon questions of otherness. But if Joyce’s later writings are any measure of this, it is the otherness of the text itself, as fugitive, subordinated, bastardised, suppressed, which most demands accounting for. And which at the same time, perhaps, provides its most singular critical impetus.

HYPOCRITE LECTEUR

*The author of Ulysses, after having written his own odyssey (itself haunted by a “blindman”), ends his life almost blind, one cornea operation after another. Hence the themes of the iris and glaucoma pervade Finnegans Wake (“... the shuddersome spectacle of this semidemented zany amid the inspissated grime of his glaucous den making believe to read his uslessly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles,*
Shem and Shaun, James and Giacomo. In many respects, the Triestine alter ego of the “Dublin Joyce” is itself a doubling of Joyce—silent, exiled, and cunning. What indeed, and who, is this un-authorised Joyce? But here the text is already ahead of us. “Who?” the first word, seems to point above all to that sinister figure of the title script, which Ellmann describes “On the upper left-hand corner of the front cover, the name ‘Giacomo Joyce’ is inscribed in another hand” (GJ xii).

Ellmann’s description of the manuscript itself is worth noting. “Joyce wrote it in his best calligraphic hand, without changes, on both sides of eight large sheets, which are loosely held within the nondescriptive blue-paper covers of a school notebook. The sheets are of heavy paper, oversize, of the sort ordinarily used for pencil sketches rather than for writing assignments. They are faintly reminiscent of those parchment sheets on which in 1909 Joyce wrote out the poems of Chamber Music for his wife” (GJ xi-xii).

Compared with Joyce’s “best calligraphic hand,” the other hand in which the name Giacomo Joyce is inscribed on the sketchbook cover appears hesitant, untutored, childish. A halting, uncertain script whose form and placement ought, perhaps, to be considered no less significant than the calculated typography of the fifty textual “fragments” which make up the text of Giacomo Joyce. Ellmann, perhaps knowingly, suggests

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that the hand-written title was an afterthought, added to the manuscript by someone other than Joyce. He bases this on the claim that “This Italian form of his name was never used by Joyce” (GJ xii). Carla Marengo Vaglio, along with a number of other critics, has suggested otherwise, citing numerous instances of Joyce “signing as Jacomo Zois, Jacomo de l’oio (a nobody; a cheat that runs away after having cashed the money for an oil order) and [...] Giacometo.”

It is inviting, then, to speculate further on the graphology of this faux titre. Perhaps, after all, it is a writing with the left hand, in truth the sinister, mocking counterpart of Joyce’s proper hand. An éminence grise. As Bernard Benstock has suggested: “Giacomo Joyce, the title evolving from the written name on the cover of the school notebook in a foreign hand, tentative, halting, unschooled, immature—in other words, ‘foreign,’ although the possibility might occur to us that since James Joyce is ‘celebrating’ a clandestine Triestine love affair, he himself might be the masked amanuensis of his own manuscript, a disguised hand, lefthanded.”

Perhaps, also, the “cobweb handwriting” of an other’s hand. “The other. She” (GJ 15). The one who, in the first sentence, both composes and discomposes the author-narrator. “Who?” A pair of “quizzing glasses” directed at the withdrawing figure of Joyce, sketching him in this other-portrait of the artist. And yet, like the portrait itself, this quizzing gaze is also a prosthesis, an ellipsis in place of seeing. Veiled, pierced, suffering, mortified and mortifying: “a brief beat of the eyelids,” “The long eyelids beat and lift: a burning needleprick stings and quivers in the velvet iris” (GJ 1), “sloe-eyed” (GJ 8), “her full dark suffering eyes” (GJ 11), “her black basilisk eyes” (GJ 15). Giacomo Joyce, then, as a story of the eye. But

conspicuously, one drawn, not from, but nevertheless “through” the eyes of the other. A speculative counterpart which, by means of a metonymic sleight of hand, is substituted by a visual protheses, “to supplement sight and, first of all, to compensate for this transcendental ruin of the eye that threatens and seduces it from the origin.”7 A pair of “quizzing glasses” which frame, in an elliptical fashion, a certain doubling of this imaginary portrait through the suggestion of a literalised iritis. Its subject, “Who?” crossed through by a two-fold objectification between the name of Giacomo, on the one hand, and the pronoun “she,” on the other. As Derrida says, “This is the law of the chiasm in the crossing or noncrossing of looks or gazes: fascination by the sight of the other is irreducible to fascination by the eye of the other; indeed, it is incompatible with it. This chiasm does not exclude it but, on the contrary, calls for the haunting of one fascination by another.”8

The “ghosts” or spectres of Giacomo. “Who?” “They have owls’ eyes and owls’ wisdom” (GJ 8). A subjectless vigilance of the one who knows. Or the object fascination of non-knowledge, of blindness. A “self-created shadow.”9 The negative by means of which the image itself is produced and reproduced. A counter-portrait, as a retelling of the myth of the origin of drawing. Like the story of Butades—a story between truth, love and memory—Giacomo Joyce describes a kind of skiagraphia or shadow writing, “édition de ténèbres” (FW 179.27). Butades draws her lover’s portrait by tracing the outline of his shadow cast in profile on a wall, “in order to remember him in his absence.” In Giacomo Joyce, the question “Who?” on the first page is echoed on the last page by another question, set uncharacteristically within quotation marks, “‘Why? ‘Because otherwise I could not see you’” (GJ 16). Like writing itself, the portrait is a technique of memory, a memorial, a cenotaph, and

7 Derrida, Memoirs of the Blind, 70.
8 Derrida, Memoirs of the Blind, 106.
so a form of forgetting. At second hand—an art of shadows, of absence, of blindness. “Giacomo Joyce,” a figure drawn with the eyes closed? Or self-portrait of the blind? Or, as in Hamlet, the shadow of a dream, a dumb show, a shadow-play. Ghost writing.

A PLAY OF MIRRORS

(Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there, rigid in facial paralysis, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall.)

(U 567)

Situated temporally and stylistically between A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses, there is yet another sense in which Giacomo Joyce may be seen as a type of counter-portrait. Or rather, anti-portrait: “Giacomo” as Caliban to the Prospero-like “fabulous artificer” (U 270) “invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails” in amnesiac detachment (P 215). Despite claims by writers like Hélène Cixous about Giacomo Joyce being “overwhelming in its verity,” an idea has persisted of a type of ill-conceived bastard, an abortive understudy.10 “Non hunc sed Barabbam!” (GJ 16). (Barabbas, literally in Hebrew “the son of the father,” mocking counterpart of the saturnalian “son of man.”)11 And yet it is difficult to escape the sense that the one mirrors the other. The bastard mirroring the legitimate son-of-the-father (“Old father, old artificer” [P 253])—a son nevertheless fitted out in second hand clothes. The borrowed Metamorphoses of Dublin mirrored in the discarded Tristia of Trieste. A counter-portrait mirroring the Portrait, the model mirroring the portrait-artist—“forged” or plagiarised from an already confabulated artificer.

10 Cixous, “Giacomo Joyce: Les Sanglots ironiques d’Éros,” IV.
But while the prismatic quality of this most “transitional” of Joyce’s texts has often if briefly been reflected upon by scholars in search of textual echoes in the other, authoritative works of Joyce, its more affectively transitional nature has been left largely unremarked. Written at the time Joyce was completing the last chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and overlapping at least in part with the composition of *Ulysses* (*GJ* 15), there is the sense in which *Giacomo Joyce* describes a type of chiasm, a two-fold crossing and a crossing-out between two “portraits.” Between *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, *Giacomo Joyce*. Portrait-Giacomo ... Joyce-Ulysses. An ellipsis in which yet another “she,” the (m)other, passes away, and in which the son, crossing the sea-mother from Dublin to the continent of exile, returns, a reflection-effect or revenance of himself, summoned by an ambiguous telegraphic instruction (envoy?): “Nother dying come home father” (*U* 42). Cixous:

Between Daedalus and Icarus: *Ulysses*. And: “My will: his will that fronts me. Seas between” (*U* 217). From father unto son, via the mother, always, begun again. This delayed birth constitutes the movement of a work which playfully undermines gestation, the play inscribing itself in the various falls, losses, repeated and unexpected exiles, which are all the more astounding in that the goal seems accessible, is named, puts itself forward, fascinates, is not hidden but rather pointed out (I, the Artist, the Word), is not forbidden but rather promised, and in that the subject, held in suspense, pursues it with [...] the weapons of the self (silence, exile, cunning), marking out its passage with theories, incorporated hypotheses of formalisation: one or two ideas of Aristotle, a pinch of St. Thomas; a chapter on poetics and literary history; several chapters on the problems of autobiography; and, in a pre-Freudian context, an implicit theory of the authorial unconscious, and of the textual unconscious, in a blasphemous analogy with the Arian heresy, showing in the Trinity the three-sided, divinely ordered production that allows the Father to see through the Son’s eyes, where the Holy Spirit would be like that chain linking the
Name of the Father to the Name of the Son, the scription to writing: the breath of the unconscious on the text.12

The spectral son of Dedalus the father: “He proves by algebra that Hamlet’s grandson is Shakespeare’s grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father” (U 18). And between A Portrait and Ulysses, the cracked glass of a mirror:

—Look at yourself, he said, you dreadful bard!

Stephen bent forward and peered at the mirror held out to him, cleft by a crooked crack. Hair on end. As he and others see me. Who chose this face for me? [U 6]

—The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in a mirror. [U 6]

In any case, one should never take a portrait at face value. As Joyce makes clear, the model, the “subject,” is already a spectre, a reflection, a double, a shadow. “Who is the ghost from limbo patrum, returning to the world that has forgotten him?” (U 188). Mon semblable, mon frère: as Stephen Dedalus says, “A brother is as easily forgotten as an umbrella” (U 211). Ombre. Shadow of a shadow. The cracked image cancels itself, blinds itself. Who: the ghost. A portrait “lost in transmission.” Its trace nevertheless reserved, preserved, for what other service?

—It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant. [U 6]

Ulysses [...] Symbol of the intellectual conscience .... Ireland then? [...] Intellectual symbol of my race. [GJ 15]

I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race. [P 253]

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12 Cixous, “Joyce: the (r)use of writing,” 16.
Describing *Giacomo Joyce* as a “poem in prose,” Cixous points towards a transitional effect of the formal structure of the text itself. Hesitating between genres and between textual placements, the counter-portrait of “Giacomo” can also be read as a counter-portrait of writing itself, in a form of aphoristic prose which Lautréamont called “prosaïques morceaux.” Posed against the Thomistic aesthetics of the last chapter of *A Portrait* and the formal innovations of *Ulysses*, *Giacomo Joyce* affects an anti-aesthetic. From Bildungsroman to subjectless and subjective pseudo-drama. *Non serviam!* of an aesthetic heresy miming the fall of Stephen-Giacomo in the ironised, almost satirical form of a fissured and fragmented “paradox lust,” anti-epic of the cracked lookingglass of Dedalus-Joyce. Contracted between the one and the other, a radical poetics of apposition: this strangely composed envoy, as beautiful “as the fortuitous encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table.”

The language of this prose poem (“vêtement verbal d’une émotion” as Cixous describes it) stands in contrast to what Ellmann refers to as “the rather anaemic style [Joyce] reserved for his verse” (*GJ* xviii). And yet, in an uncanny doubling and deferral of this already substitutive text, Joyce “traduced” and transposed whole sections of *Giacomo Joyce* into (or perhaps from?) *Pomes Penyeach*: “Watching the Needleboats at San Sabba,” “A Flower Given to my Daughter,” “Tutto è Sciolto,” “Nightpiece.” In an oblique comment on the strange revenance of *Giacomo Joyce*, Ellmann notes that Joyce sent the first of these poems (whose last line reads “Return, no more return”) to his brother Stanislaus in a letter which also included a quotation from Horace: *Quid si prisca redit Venus?* (“What if the old love should return?”) (*JJ* 358).

Not merely transitional, *Giacomo Joyce* is also translational, “duplicitous” both in the sense of a writing simultaneously between and across genres, and in the projective “presencing” of other texts in which it is constantly deferred and “returning.”

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In textual genetics this effect is ascribed to what Daniel Ferrer and others term *avant-texte*. This does not refer to what might otherwise be thought of simply as preparatory drafts or notes, but rather to a text “in advance of itself,” a type of haunting which is also an alterior discourse “within.”14 “My voice, dying in the echo of its words [...]” (GJ 14). Maurice Blanchot has similarly described this effect in terms of discursive emplacement and of the “fragment” as an element of metonymic recursion: “the fragment, as fragments, tends to dissolve the totality which it presupposes and which it carries off towards the dissolution from which it does not [...] form, but to which it exposes itself in order, disappearing—and along with it, all identity—to maintain itself as the energy of disappearing: a repetitive energy, the limit that bears upon limitation.”15

Miming the “disappearances” of Giacomo, *Giacomo Joyce* might be thought of as naming, not a single work bounded by the covers of a book, but rather a matrix of textual fragments, whose traces and tracings through other texts (*Ulysses, Exiles, A Portrait*) describe a type of ghost writing. *Giacomo Joyce* itself is no more or less than the locus of a certain “blinding” of the subject, a disappearance or détournement in the portrait of the (in)visible. Which is to say, of the (un)knowable. One is never sure of the precise location of this gnomic text, or of its lines of filiation. A mirror-effect of its “other texts,” written and rewritten in *Giacomo Joyce*—it is impossible to know, in fact, which precedes the other. The shadow play of a writing disseminating itself between so many white spaces, a dance of veils. Who or what is it that disappears between them? Is it the blindness of a too-acute prescience? Or an after-effect of spectrality? A “tardy spirit” (P 189), an accessory, as it were,


after the fact? Perhaps it is only the writing that knows. A counter-portrait that draws forth, or reveals, only the ghost of itself.

**GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE**

Being in memory of him: not necessarily to remember him, no, but to be in his memory, to inhabit his memory, which is henceforth greater than all your finite memory can, in a single instant or a single vocabulary, gather up of cultures, languages, mythologies, religions, philosophies, history of mind and of literatures.

(Jacques Derrida, “Deux mots pour Joyce”)16

It is a curious feature of Joyce criticism that while readings of *Giacomo Joyce* frequently refer to its re-fragmentation and dispersal in other texts, little is made of the implications of this in the question of the text’s marginalisation. It is not so much what is read in place of *Giacomo Joyce*, but rather of its emplacements, and of the determining “influence” this will have had upon the structural organisation of Joyce’s writing in general, as a blueprint or map of a virtual territory not yet realised.

This “matrix effect” in the virtuality of *Giacomo Joyce* could also be thought in terms of hypertext, anticipating the cybernetics of Joyce’s later work, which Jean-Michel Rabaté has described as a “pervasive semic machine” which “has the ability to distort the classical semiological relation between ‘production’ and ‘information,’ by disarticulating the sequence of encoding and decoding,”17 and which Derrida has referred to

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as a “hypermnesiac machine.”18 Which is to say, a machine which remembers through a process of sublimated self-substitution and self-erasure. It describes a mnemotechnic which is also a programme, or pro-grammē—the virtuality of a writing “in advance” which, like its metonymic envoy, never quite arrives at its destination. A writing which is simultaneously present, manifest, as it were, in the discarded manuscript of Joyce, and which is nevertheless “not yet.” A reading and a re-writing elsewhere, of an always other-text.

The possible dates for the composition of Giacomo Joyce also suggest a particular historical placement within the development of the European avant-garde and an aesthetics of the machine, or what Donald Theall has called “techno-poetics.”19 Between 1913 and 1914 Picasso’s Tête, the first of Marcel Duchamp’s boîtes, Velimir Khlebnikov’s zaum manifesto, Blaise Cendrars’s Prose du Transsibérien and Guillaume Apollinaire’s Calligrammes each signalled an emerging preoccupation with the technics of simultaneity, collage, formal reduction and the radical juxtaposition of “found” compositional elements. Writing almost contemporaneously, it would be difficult to believe that Joyce was unaware of the technological undercurrents in these works, all of which were informed in one way or another by the ideas of Marinetti and the Italian Futurists, whose Manifesto (of which Joyce possessed a copy) had appeared in Le Figaro in February 1909, the year Joyce himself established the first cinematograph in Dublin (JJI 310). It is inviting, too, to consider that the abandonment of Giacomo Joyce (if that is what it was) might in fact have been a calculated element of the work itself, anticipating the “discarded” works of the Dadaists and of Duchamp’s abandoned, occulted, vanished, destroyed and yet highly fetishised objects of the 1920s onwards. It is a curious irony that the “abandonment” of Giacomo Joyce would then not only have

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19 Donald F. Theall, James Joyce’s Techno-Poetics (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1997).
been encoded within the text itself, but in a sense most properly achieved through its publication in 1968.

Fixing on the “objecthood” of Giacomo Joyce, what is most immediately striking is the typographical arrangement of its fifty textual “fragments.” Arguably, typographical concretion had first entered the avant-garde vocabulary with the publication of Stéphane Mallarmé’s Un coup de dés in 1897. Its “simultaneous vision of the page,” locating it somewhere between poetry and drawing, provides yet another context for reading Joyce’s “sketchbook.”20 The physical juxtaposition of text-objects, like the radical forms of catachresis and parataxis described by Lautréamont, suggest spatio-temporal relations beyond forms of narrative continuity that previously characterised Joyce’s work.

Amongst Joyce’s contemporaries, such formal innovation was linked to the idea that the modern work of art must reflect the global nature of contemporary consciousness: telecommunications, newspapers, radio, cinema, and so on. To be able to mirror such a multiple form of consciousness, the work of art abandoned linear and discursive structures, in which events are arranged successively, in favour of what Apollinaire, seeking a verbal analogy to cubism, called simultaneity—a textual apparatus that “short-circuits the normal process of reading and requires the reader to reassemble the apparently random fragments in a new order that is independent of the flow of time.”21

Such dis-continuities not only characterise Giacomo Joyce, but also the final section of A Portrait and the entirety of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Indeed, critics like Arnold Hauser have identified Joyce as exemplary of precisely this type of simultanéisme, as a verbal analogy to the technology of film:

The accent is now on the simultaneity of the contents of consciousness, the immanence of the past in the present, the constant flowing together of the different periods of time, the amorphous fluidity of inner experience, the boundlessness of the stream of time by which the soul is borne along, the relativity of space and time, that is to say, the impossibility of differentiation and defining the media in which the mind moves. In this new conception of time almost all the strands of the texture which form the stuff of modern art converge: the abandonment of plot, the elimination of the hero, the relinquishing of psychology, the ‘automatic method of writing’ and, above all, the montage technique and the intermingling of temporal and spatial forms of the film.

Hauser argues that Joyce’s use of montage achieves a level of aesthetic autonomy, suggesting, as Marshall McLuhan had earlier done, that Joyce’s text represented a convergence of media that translate the “real world” into the “reel world” (FW 064.25-6). For Jean-François Lyotard, theorising the “post-modern condition,” this has had to do with Joyce’s concern with the “unpresentable” and the normativity of concepts like unity and coherence. “Joyce allows the unpresentable to become perceptible in his writing itself, in the signifier. The whole range of available narrative and even stylistic operations is put into play without concern for the unity of the whole.”

In Giacomo Joyce the visual arrangement of the textual fragments and the blank spaces between them might also be seen as a type of filmic notation, montage effect, or “script-writing”—the variable repetition of a “perfect signature” of “word, letter, paperspace” (FW 115.06-08) in lieu of its

“unrepresentable” other-subject. The filmic blind (the screening of the “other” or mechanism of difference as the frame which makes the image visible), simultaneously contracts and runs over from this unequal division, in turn describing the visibility of the mechanism itself, breaking apart the whole of which it nevertheless remains a fragmented, metonymic counterpart.

The spectacle of Giacomo: ghostly play of shadows flickering across the white screen of the page: counter-portrait of this counter-portrait: pièce dans une pièce. But what perhaps remains most unpresentable of Giacomo Joyce is its “unpresentability.” The always retrospective present of a writing between amnesia and nostalgia, as one speculating upon the (failed or belated) arrival of a (failed or belated) envoy. Future anterior. “The time is out of joint,” as Hamlet says. But it is precisely for this reason that the “avant-texte” of Joyce, “envoy of the other,” can be thought as both en retard and in advance of Joyce. A telegraphic experiment in transition.

But while it has been argued that Giacomo Joyce represents a transitional figure of Joyce, and of the Joycean corpus, it must also be considered that this transitionality might not be an after-effect but rather a pre-condition. That this envoy is most timely in being, from the very first, “unpresentable,” a testament or documentary of its own sending and substitution. That the consequences of the experiment which is instigated with it, are likewise already comprehended by it. That these gnomic fragments are already the knowing anti-types of almost all that follows, communicating them, as it were, or rather anticipating them, and being anticipated in them. An “experiment” not only in advance of the Joycean project, but already, as it were, “in place of it.” That is to say, obviating its repetition as anything other than the internalised haunting of itself. An experiment effacing itself in its too immediate implications and at the same time affecting a communication of all this implies. Ultimately for Joyce, it seems, the poetic economy of this envoy required the expansive edifice of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake behind which to achieve anything like a sustained formal expression. If
this is the case, then there needs to be a re-evaluation of the way in which *Giacomo Joyce* has been approached until now. And if *Giacomo Joyce* constitutes a formal experiment which can manifestly be shown to have “proceeded,” then it is not enough to attribute its marginalisation to an effect of oversight. What it suggests, rather, is a type of clairvoyance, a foresight or before-sight of what the “present” in Joyce must always return to.

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*Prague, January 2002*