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Mr Joyce and Dr Hydes: Irish selves and doubles in 'The Dead'

Luke Thurston

I dream in Irish.

Douglas Hyde [1]

My aim in the following essay is a double one: both to revisit an old haunt of Joycean criticism – a political interpretation of ‘The Dead’, that dangerous textual supplement Joyce added to *Dubliners* in the autumn of 1907 – and to explore a new set of questions there concerning the Joycean ‘self’; concerning, that is, not so much the writer himself as the developing *sense* of selfhood, as both concept and lived experience, in his early work. I want to start from the familiar notion of ‘The Dead’ as a text fully embroiled in the antagonistic politics of Irish identity in the early twentieth century; but then to link it to another question of identity, one usually reserved for discussions of Joyce’s late work: namely his preoccupation with so-called multiple personality.

However, it is not until *Finnegans Wake* (*FW*) that the intertextual imbrication of these two questions of the self – one obviously political, the other seemingly psychological – is explicitly spelt out by Joyce. For it is there that we read of ‘. . .hides and hints and misses in prints’ (*FW* 20.11), where a duplicitous textuality, clearly itself the site of multiple identities, also contains a riddling hint at the debate over true Irish identity. The key term is ‘hides’, which in itself hides (from the reading voice) the name Hydes: in other words, there is more-than-one Hyde hiding in the Joycean text. And since the ‘misses in prints’ – at once designating and themselves constituting typographical slips – can also be read, as I have argued elsewhere, as the ‘misses in Prince’, those young women treated by Morton Prince, prophet (or inventor) of Multiple Personality Disorder, we start to recognize in Hyde the name of Stevenson’s famous double.[2] Indeed, later in the *Wake*, we come across ‘the Mr Skekels and Dr Hydes problem’ (*FW* 150.17), where the slippage of names and titles points directly to what may be thought the master-text of multipleidentity: *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

First published in 1886, Stevenson’s famous thriller had by Joyce’s time become part of everyday mythology, with ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ a wellknown byword for the divided self.[3] But if the *Wakean* ‘Dr Hydes’ is clearly Stevenson’s monster – it could be said, after all, that when Mr Hyde takes over Dr Jekyll’s identity, he steals his professional title too – the name also evokes (and hence perhaps its plural case) a figure with more obvious significance in the history of Joyce’s work: Douglas Hyde. (The fact that the latter had indeed become a ‘Dr Hyde’, by gaining a doctorate from Trinity College, is no doubt part of Joyce’s joke).

For a while, in Douglas Hyde the young Joyce saw everything he loathed about the Celtic Revival, with its well-heeled Protestant enthusiasts who dominated Dublin literary life. Like Yeats and Lady Gregory, Hyde was a product of the Anglo-Irish ruling class who had subsequently been blinded, as Joyce saw it, by ‘the broken lights of Irish myth’.[4] Thus when Hyde famously spoke in 1892 of ‘The Necessity for Deanglicizing Ireland’, giving

voice to a militant linguistic and cultural nationalism, Joyce – with his global literary ambitions, it may be argued, inextricable from the imperial expanse of English [5] – could only reject what he saw as a narrow-minded parochialism.

While for Joyce, then, the name Hyde may have furnished an irresistible pun (recalling similar ‘childish’ puns in Stevenson’s own text [6]) it also evoked, thanks to one of the groundless coincidences that delighted Joyce, a mass of references to Dublin politics, to the politics of language, to the ‘Irish Renaissance’: in short, to the fierce twentieth-century debate about what it meant to be Irish. The name Hyde thus functions as a Joycean bridge between the politics of Irish identity and the question of the double, or multiple, nature of human identity *per se*.

It is this link between so-called postcolonial identity and so-called multiple personality, then, that I will explore in the following essay, and do so by revisiting a crucial juncture of these two questions about selfhood in Joyce’s writings of 1906 and 1907, above all in ‘The Dead’. Since any question of the self is always both political and philosophical, however, my argument will extend into further questions of language, history and temporality – questions with consequences for all of Joyce’s work.

If *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was already famous in Joyce’s youth, it has subsequently been hailed as a cultural document marking the discovery by the self of its own ‘multiplicity’, a discovery that coincided, uncannily enough, with Sigmund Freud’s first efforts to unravel the illusory fabric of the ego. But we need to look carefully at Stevenson’s novella, a text as self-divided as the eponymous doctor, before interpreting the ‘self-discovery’ it seems to stage and to theorize. What is immediately striking, in fact, in Stevenson’s text is the central gap it presents between reflection and description, between what the self theorizing

Jekyll *says* about his ‘case’ and what the text *shows* us about it. We see this most clearly at the moment when Jekyll gazes, like a Wildean Caliban, at his other face in the mirror:

. . . when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human. In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance, I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine. (*JH*, p. 58)

Here the subject is seen, not unlike the infant observed by another Dr *Jacques L*, undergoing a ‘jubilant assumption of his specular image’.[7] Perhaps we could even see Jekyll’s identification with the ‘livelier image of the spirit’ as a second Mirror Stage, a reprise of his primordial self-misprision. But on further reflection, we may think that the notion of an inclusive, unifying ego – ‘This, too, was myself’ – is hardly consistent with the theory of *multiple* identity, a theory sketched out just a few moments earlier by the doctor himself. At the beginning of his ‘Full Statement of the Case’, Jekyll announces his terrible discovery:

. . . I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point.

Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will ultimately be known for a mere polity of multifarious and independent denizens. (*JH*, pp. 55–6)

This is often considered to sum up the overall message of Stevenson's book, its ghastly prophecy of postmodern multiple personality disorder. How then does Jekyll's subsequent confrontation-identification with Hyde in the mirror, contradict this vision of the psyche as crowded 'polity'? To grasp its truth in the light of Jekyll's Mirror Stage, we need to *invert* his central theoretical proposition. For what terrifies and exhilarates Jekyll is not the notion of a plural psyche, but the idea that the human subject really is 'truly one': what he sees in the mirror is precisely not the 'divided countenance' of his familiar neurotic self-image, but something

uncannily *identical with itself*. After all, it is Dr Jekyll, not Mr Hyde, who is a 'double-dealer' (*JH*, p. 55), an inconsistent or self-divided – or, perhaps we should say, 'normal' – subject.

Indeed, the term 'multiple personality' risks misleading us here (in ways that Stevenson's text, with its blend of insight and blindness, both endorses and undermines). For what is finally at stake in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is not the deconstruction of some supposedly stable or integral self, but rather what happens to a normal or neurotic subject – a subject that is precisely not 'one', remains always irreducible to any specific signifier – when faced with another kind of 'self': a being with the thing-like self-identity of the non-human.

But, we might immediately ask, how can this other kind of self, supposedly 'more express and single' than the 'imperfect and divided' self of normal human subjectivity, be anything more than a phantasm, a gothic spook dreamed up by Stevenson to thrill his readers? The answer lies in the text. As the police hunt for the elusive Mr Hyde, we learn that one of the problems they encounter is his *documentary invisibility*: for 'he had never been photographed' (*JH*, p. 25).[8] The same problem of identifying Hyde is expressed by someone who claims to have seen him:

He is not easy to describe. . . . He's an extraordinary-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory, for I declare I can see him this moment. (*JH*, p. 10)

It is this last comment that is crucial: the impossibility of representing Hyde is strictly correlative to his phenomenal self-presence, the absence of significant speech matched by the unspeakable actuality of the mnemonic image. It is as if Hyde's excessive presence, his superabundant reality, makes him incompatible with the signifier: rather than being an ethereal shadow, this apparition is *more real than reality itself*, and thus beyond its discursive parameters. We will see how the same coincidence of nonspeech and sublime sensory apparition recurs in Joyce's 'The Dead'.

But before moving on from Mr Hyde, we should note that he is not *altogether* invisible; in fact Stevenson's text gives us a few crucial clues – or hides and hints – about the

monster's appearance. As Hyde clubs to death the hapless Danvers Carew, he strikes 'with ape-like fury' (*JH*, p. 22), a phrase which, in the view of Stevenson's modern editor, gives 'a strong indication that Hyde should be read in terms of contemporary theories about evolutionary development, and its opposite, reversion'.^[9] Hyde's simian appearance signifies a reverted, pre-human essence, a notion reinforced later by Jekyll's talk of his 'ape-like spite' (*JH*, p. 70). He thus belongs to what Victorian psychiatrist Henry Maudsley considered 'a distinct criminal class of beings [which] constitutes a degenerate or morbid variety of mankind, marked by peculiar low physical and mental characteristics. . .'.^[10] This para-Darwinian subtext re-appears when, later in the text, Hyde starts to make the unscheduled appearances that culminate in Jekyll's ruin. But here the evolutionary narrative is joined by another, more directly political, ideological element. As Jekyll awakens,

. . . my eye fell upon my hand. Now the hand of Henry Jekyll . . . was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white and comely. But the hand which I now saw. . . was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor, and thickly shaded with a smart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde. (*JH*, p. 61)

The big white hand is supplanted by the monkey's paw: it is not hard to discern, coupled with this fantasmatic Darwinism, a thinly-veiled racism. Indeed, the clearest link between the question of the self in Stevenson's text and that question in Joyce's 'The Dead' will turn out to be the racist ideology of Victorian England, and specifically its construction of the *Irish*.^[11] Let us look once more at Mr Hyde, with his ape-like movements, his dwarfish stature and especially his 'dusky pallor' (a subtle equivocation corresponding to the more recent, less subtle 'white nigger'): he resembles nothing so much as the 'baboon-faced Irishman that we see in *Punch*', to

quote from Joyce's *Stephen Hero* (*SH*, p. 69). As Vincent Cheng has argued, by the end of the nineteenth century the representation in Victorian culture of the Irishman as 'anthropoid ape' had achieved the hegemonic status of 'natural' fact.^[12] From Joyce's point of view, and especially given the ludicrous coincidence of the name with that of an Anglo-Irish champion of true Irishness, Mr Hyde must have seemed a peculiarly Irish joke: vulgar, bittersweet, something to be relished.

Two decades after the appearance of Stevenson's *Strange Case*, Joyce was grappling with his own 'Dr Hydes problem', seeking to grasp what it meant to be Irish, and in particular what it meant to be James Joyce, as he drifted through various European cities and languages. The central political question of what language to speak and write in is at the core of Joyce's work in 1906 and 1907; and it is characteristic of Joyce that he manages to make one of his major statements about Ireland in neither Irish nor English, but in a third language: Italian. We will return to that statement below, but first we need to consider how Joyce addresses his 'Dr Hydes problem' in perhaps the major text of his early writing: 'The Dead'.

With a whole chapter devoted to it in Ellmann's canonical Joyce biography, 'The Dead' has often been seen as a specially privileged text in Joycean circles, and there is a history of lively, often fierce, scholarly debate over its political meaning. In terms of our 'Dr Hydes problem' – the question of Irish identity, on the one hand, and of 'multiple

personality' on the other – we can trace two relevant strands of debate amongst Joycean critics. The first of these has addressed the obvious political antagonisms in 'The Dead', as well as the less overt ways in which the text represents Irishness (alongside other political aspects of identity, in particular gender); while the second has examined Joyce's story as a scene for the unsettling of personal identity, a scene of uncanny doubling and repetition, of a seemingly 'Freudian' discomposure of the ego. I will argue that these ostensibly separate critical concerns – one political, the other seemingly 'psychological' – are in fact two sides of the same problematic in the Joyce of 1907: a problematic rife with consequences, of course, for all of his work.

Let's start with the question of doubling, a favourite source of Joycean wordplay (we could even see our double question of Irishness and self-identity condensed in a 'single' Wakean question: 'Dyoublong?' *FW* 13.4). It is very clear, from a mass of textual evidence beginning with the very names Joyce gives to his characters, that we are to see the identity of the protagonist Gabriel Conroy as doubled by another identity – primarily, it is argued, that of Michael Furey, his wife's impossibly romanticized dead ex-lover. As long ago as 1966, Florence Walzl began an exegetical tradition summed up in the very title of her article: 'Gabriel and Michael: The Conclusion of "The Dead"'.^[13] Gabriel and Michael: the names of angels, 'Gabriel the mild angel, Michael the passionate one', as Anthony Burgess puts it;^[14] with the names pointing to an opposition between a subjectivity racked by self-doubt and guilty neurotic compromise on the one hand, and one driven by a terrible, life-threatening singleness of purpose on the other.

Now, if we recall our recent examination of Stevenson's novella, this last opposition may sound uncannily familiar: there we saw how Dr Jekyll declared himself 'imperfect and divided' in the face of another self, another *kind* of self, which he took to be 'more express and single' than himself. Moreover, were we to contemplate, merely as a theoretical experiment, the idea of an intertextual grid mapping Jekyll and Hyde onto Gabriel and Michael – with on one side the dubious, self-multiplying ego, on the other the self-identical 'real thing' – we would actually find some support for this idea in Joyce's text.

Recall how in the *Strange Case* the indescribability of Hyde is linked to his apparitional presence: 'I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment' (*JH*, p. 10). It is clear that the same economy of memory governs Gretta's mnemonic image of Michael Furey: 'I can see him so plainly'; 'I can see his eyes as well as well!'.^[15] What we have in both texts is a properly *sublime* moment, in which the imagination, to use Kantian terms, fails to synthesize or reduce to representational equivalence, the thing it perceives (the singular obscenity of Hyde, the unique voice and gaze of Michael). Above all, though, what is striking is the disturbing *temporality* of these utterances: in both texts, a speaker is confronted by the sublime object *now*, in the present tense. The sublime experience is not remembered like an event that took place in linear, diachronic history; in other words, in it the subject is not caught up in the logic of the unconscious, with its deferral and displacement of signification. Instead, the sublime object always emerges anew, or rather appears to the subject, each time *for the first time*.

Thus when Gretta Conroy, after hearing *The Lass of Aughrim*, turns around, 'Gabriel saw that there was colour on her cheeks and that her eyes were shining' (*D*, p. 167): during the song she has not remembered or represented to herself a scene, she has actually *seen* it:

her vision has no ‘as if’ dimension, nothing metaphorical or symbolic. In psychoanalytic terms, this can be theorized as the difference between the domain of repression, where memory is governed and made interpretable by the diacritical signifier, and that of foreclosure, where the signifier ceases to function as such. The foreclosed ‘moment’ never enters language; the object is never mortified there by the symbol: it always emerges in the present tense, for the first time.

If therefore Jekyll and Hyde might be linked, in a conventional allegorical reading of ‘The Dead’, to the mild and the passionate angel respectively, there is nothing whatever metaphorical about the radical temporal difference at stake in both Stevenson’s text and Joyce’s. The split between the time of repression and the ‘time’ – the paradoxical noontime – of foreclosure is not, that is, simply a matter of hermeneutics, of debatable textual meaning, but concerns the difference between signification and the non-metaphorical ‘double’ of its occurrence.

We can best grasp how both texts figure and frame this split temporality by looking at the presentation of two characters in ‘The Dead’: Gabriel and another of his doubles, not this time Michael Furey, but the incomparable Freddy Malins. Although critics have largely tended to follow Walzl’s lead and concentrate on the former, the latter has not been entirely forgotten. Robert Spoo’s remarks are worth noting:

The bibulous Freddy Malins, in almost every way the antithesis of the responsible Gabriel, is nevertheless Gabriel’s ‘bad’ double, mirroring him in his intense though conflicted relationship to a dominating mother. . . . As Gabriel’s double, the docile unmarried Freddy uncannily embodies Gabriel’s buried self (passivity, oedipal dependence, potential for infantile regression), a self that keeps him perpetually staging or ‘scripting’ his own experience. . . [16]

If Freddy Malins were seen as the bad, infantile double of a grown-up proper self, he would certainly resemble Mr Hyde, who was ‘smaller, slighter and younger than Henry Jekyll’ (*JH*, p. 58). For Donald Torchiana, meanwhile, Freddy is ‘a grosser edition of Gabriel’, [17] just as Hyde, we have argued, is the dusky Celtic ape to Jekyll’s white Anglo angel. Joyce makes the Darwinian-racist subtext plain enough in the first description he gives of Freddy: ‘He had coarse features, a blunt nose, a convex and receding brow, tumid and protruding lips’ (*D*, p. 145). But what critics have not sufficiently emphasized is the one feature that overwhelmingly points the portrayal of Freddy back to Stevenson’s Mr Hyde: namely his voice. Freddy’s greeting to his hostesses seems ‘offhand . . . by reason of the habitual catch in his voice’ (*D*, p. 145); and we recall that Mr Hyde ‘spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice’ (*JH*, p. 16). In both texts the impropriety of the double is marked by an improper, defective voice: a voice that fails to function as the pure metaphor of a subject, but instead imposes itself as non-communicative noise.

We should pause briefly here over a question central to understanding the character of Freddy Malins: that of the propriety of the voice, its ownership and status. As we shall see, that question allows Joyce to return, with a degree of subtlety, to the racism implicit in his description of Freddy the Irishman-as-ape (a description informed, I suggest, both by the

simian Mr Hyde and by the ‘baboon-faced Irishman’ portrayed in *Punch*). For during the dinner Freddy mentions the ‘negro chieftain’ currently singing in a Dublin pantomime – although in fact, the editor tells us, this was G.H. Elliott, a white ‘Negro impersonator’[18] – before praising the singer’s voice. The patronizing Mr Browne ironically commends Freddy’s judgement (with the racism implied by his irony itself ironically framed in the text by his own name and his tiresome pun on it: ‘I’m all brown’, *D*, p. 157). But Freddy’s response is striking:

– And why couldn’t he have a voice too? asked Freddy Malins sharply. Is it because he’s only a black? (*D*, p. 156)

For once, Freddy’s voice makes itself heard ‘sharply’, insistently, even rudely (and his question, of course, goes unanswered). When we find out that the ‘negro chieftain’ is actually a white man who only *appears* to be black (another ‘white nigger’), we may take this as more confirmation by Joyce of Freddy’s foolishness, as the apparent ethical dignity of his antiracism is undone by his childlike ignorance of the racist ideology engrained in popular culture. In my view, however, Joyce’s point is more subtle and ambiguous: since Freddy, after all, with his blunt nose and protruding lips, is himself a kind of ‘Negro impersonator’, the question he raises of ‘having a voice’ should be taken as primarily self-referential, and understood in a complex anti-imperialist context. As Cheng and others have showed, the Irishman, viewed from Victorian England through the ideological lenses of journalism, appeared to be ‘baboon-faced’, a negroid subhuman, and was indeed deprived of a voice in more than one sense: most notably, that of not being allowed to speak Irish.

Now, the Irish language – we are back to our ‘Dr Hydes problem’ – is of central importance to ‘The Dead’, as well as to other texts Joyce wrote in 1907. ‘The language is oriental in origin’, declared Joyce in a lecture he gave (in Italian) in Trieste that year:[19] this was to adopt a figure of Irishness that was both consistent with Victorian ideology (a primitive race, after all, should naturally speak a primitive, non-Western language) and at the same time harboured a powerful anti-ideological potential that Joyce was to develop throughout his work. In ‘The Dead’, Irish speech is one of a series of Joycean figures for the other of an alienated modern subjectivity: an other voice that corresponds to an originary, mythic identity (gendered female) at odds with a secondary or diachronic ontological emptiness (gendered male). How, then, does Freddy Malins fit into this gendered opposition?

If the ‘habitual catch’ in Freddy’s voice – like Mr Hyde’s ‘hissing intake of breath’ (*JH*, p. 14) – figures the insistence of the voice as object, nevertheless Joyce’s character is most often heard laughing, while Stevenson’s tends to snarl. This, in the first instance, reminds us of the fundamental ambiguity of the object-voice: a scream of horror and a howl of laughter are in the end identical. And there is after all something grotesquely comic about Mr Hyde, with his outsized clothes and his habit of trampling on little girls (he anticipates *Carry On Screaming* and a whole postmodern genre of camp mock-horror); and likewise we could point to negative aspects of the ostensibly harmless Freddy Malins, whose very name encodes *mal*, evil, as well as *malin*, shrewd or cunning (this last pun is often considered ironic, as we witness Freddy’s repeated lack of shrewdness). When Freddy’s speech

‘exploded . . . in a kink of high-pitched bronchitic laughter’ (*D*, p.146) it obviously contrasts with Gabriel’s self-controlled, measured rhetoric at the dinner table: just as the eloquent speech expresses the individual mastery of a responsible adult, so the vocal explosion indicates infantile loss of self-possession.

The notion that Freddy’s voice is *not his own*, does not reflect his true identity, is further reinforced when we learn the following about his mother: ‘Her voice had a catch in it like her son’s and she stuttered slightly’ (*D*, p. 149). Freddy and his mother, that is, speak *in one voice*: the son’s voice is not divided from its *origin* but emanates, like that of Hitchcock’s Norman Bates, from the maternal superego. This takes us back to Spoo’s idea that Freddy embodies a less post-Oedipal masculinity, a subjectivity less detached from its maternal origin, than Gabriel’s. For Torchiana, this idea is confirmed if we hazard a link between Joyce’s text and Irish myth:

Now, Freddy could very well be playing the role of Fer Caille, the churl of cropped hair, one hand, and one eye in the Da derga tale. Twice we hear that he rubs his left hand in his left eye. Indeed, the hag wife of the tale might easily be seen in Freddy’s mother. Both are friendly to Conaire/Gabriel and both encumber him.[20]

The mythological ‘churl’ or simian peasant Fer Caille is clearly the bad double of the hero Conaire (a name, we may think, Joyce deliberately chooses to echo with ‘Conroy’). Fer Caille is apparently only half a human with his single hand and eye, and his status as autonomous male is undermined by the monstrous female always with him. At first sight, for Joyce to have surreptitiously inscribed a reference here to Irish folklore must surely have been meant as a *parody*: for the Irish Revival, with its devotion to everything folkloric, is at the heart of the politics of enthusiasm and authenticity emphatically rejected by the young Joyce and mocked in ‘The Dead’. But here a subtle allusion to pre-modern Irish culture might also serve another purpose: that of allowing Joyce to evoke a different temporality, mythic in the sense of being radically incompatible with linear history. To understand what this might mean, we need to look more closely at the ways Gabriel Conroy and Freddy Malins are shown to behave and use language in ‘The Dead’.

The clearest insight into the difference between the two characters, and between the distinct kinds of temporality they inhabit, comes in their contrasting responses to music, and in particular to the song performed before the dinner by Aunt Julia, *Arrayed for the Bridal*:

Her voice, strong and clear in tone, attacked with great spirit the runs which embellish the air and though she sang very rapidly, she did not miss even the smallest of the grace notes. *To follow the voice, without looking at the singer’s face, was to feel and share the excitement of swift and secure flight.* Gabriel applauded loudly with all the others at the close of the song and loud applause was borne in from the invisible supper-table. It sounded so genuine that a little colour struggled into Aunt Julia’s face. (*D*, pp. 151– 2; my italics)

In the line I have italicized we can locate the key question of Gabriel's response, both his eye and his ear. It is also a question of Joyce's narrative style: for in a 'free indirect' narrative like 'The Dead' the narration is supposedly keyed to a particular character's way of looking, speaking or thinking; so the first question raised by this line is: have we – that is: has Gabriel – actually looked at the singer's face or not? It is not until the very end of the story that we learn that Gabriel 'had caught that haggard look upon her face for a moment when she was singing *Arrayed for the Bridal*' (*D*, p. 175); so we know that he has at least glanced momentarily at his aunt's face. But if we return to the earlier line – 'To follow the voice, without looking at the singer's face, was to feel and share the excitement of swift and secure flight' – we can see there a narrative duplicity, a doubleness of perspective, that precisely corresponds to Gabriel's character. Since what is implied by the sub-clause ('without looking. . .') entirely negates the main sense of the sentence ('To follow the voice . . . was to feel and share'), perhaps Gabriel has *both* heard the voice and thus shared in its excitement – presumably by closing his eyes – *and*, by catching the 'haggard look' on the singer's face, has forfeited his rapt enjoyment of her music (made it into 'distant music', to recall another of the text's key phrases). But, crucially, it is never clear whether Gabriel really hears and enjoys the voice, or only *imagines* what it would have been like to do so, were he not in fact looking at his aunt's face.

And this shiftiness of perspective, this restless multiplication of viewpoint, is already distinctly legible in Joyce's first presentation of Gabriel. Immediately after his embarrassing exchange with Lily the servant girl, Gabriel is portrayed as follows: '. . . on his hairless face there scintillated restlessly the polished lenses and the bright gilt rims of the glasses which screened his delicate and restless eyes' (*D*, p. 140). With characteristic disregard for the technical niceties of good literary style, Joyce deploys exaggerated sibilance and repetition to evoke a glittering surface that both masks off and fragments Gabriel's gaze, both screens and multiplies his 'I'.

There is thus an implicit question here concerning Gabriel's inner truth, what he *really* thinks or feels – the same question that arises concerning his reaction to Aunt Julia's song. Note how careful Joyce is to suggest that Gabriel's explicit response to the song is a *social* act, and thus lacks any real individual meaning: 'Gabriel applauded loudly *with all the others* at the close of the song. . .' (*D*, p. 152; my italics). Likewise, Aunt Julia half blushes when she hears the applause because it 'sounded so genuine': the act of applause only *sounded* genuine, since for it to be more than an empty social signifier would be embarrassing, at odds with discursive protocol. It is this socially awkward, because too 'genuine', response that Gabriel has the tact to avoid. For such a response, we need to turn to Gabriel's 'bad double':

Freddy Malins, who had listened with his head perched sideways to hear her better, was still applauding when everyone else had ceased . . . At last, when he could clap no more, he stood up suddenly and hurried across the room to Aunt Julia whose hand he seized and held in both his hands, shaking it when words failed him or the catch in his voice proved too much for him.

– I was just telling my mother, he said, I never heard you sing so well, never. No, I never heard your voice so good as it is to-night. Now! Would you believe that now? That's the truth. Upon my word and honour that's the truth. I never heard your voice sound so fresh and so . . . so clear and fresh, never. (*D*, p. 152)

The subtle Joycean point here is that this hapless discourse really is the truth, it tells the truth about itself as utterance: precisely as a failure of the signifier, with the ‘catch in his voice’ corresponding to the emergence of the unutterable maternal object-voice. Since discourse has no purchase on the event, the *moment* of the voice taking place, all it can do is stumble or stammer, marking its own event as an incredible testimony: ‘Now! Would you believe that now?’

This impossible moment, as the voice attempts to bear witness to its own utterance, is a powerful reminder that the different perspectives presented here have everything to do with *time*. In the contrasting male responses to Aunt Julia’s song – on one side, a response knowingly caught up in a fictive social code; on the other, an entirely genuine, non-knowing or ‘infant’ response – we encounter radically different ways of being in time. We need to re-read ‘The Dead’ in detail to see how already, in such an early text, Joyce can inscribe this crucial difference

of temporalities with an astonishing sureness of touch. We can pursue this by looking further at the differences between Gabriel and Freddy, in the wider context of the ‘Dr Hydes problem’, the double question of Irish identity and ‘double’ identities.

While Freddy Malins tries to grasp an untenable ‘now’, Gabriel Conroy’s ‘restless eyes’ are never satisfied with what is present before them; they are always flickering away from what is at any particular moment, escaping to some other potential scene or future. The famous opening of Gabriel’s speech at his aunts’ dinner effectively formalizes this alienated temporality:

– Ladies and Gentlemen. It is not the first time that we have gathered together under this hospitable roof, around this hospitable board. It is not the first time that we have been the recipients – or perhaps, I had better say, the victims – of the hospitality of certain good ladies. (D, p. 159)

It is not the first time: the moment of Gabriel’s utterance is inscribed in an open, potentially endless catalogue, like the list of Molly Bloom’s lovers; above all, it is declared to be *non-original*, already secondary, a derivative copy. For Freddy Malins, by contrast, ‘now’ precisely is experienced as the first time – ‘I never heard your voice so good as it is to-night’ – just as it is for Gretta when she hears *The Lass of Aughrim*. In Gabriel’s view, the conventional rhetoric demanded by the festive occasion in effect empties his speech of any potential originality, any real significance, just as its utterance is gramophonic, a mere replication of the always-already-said. It is the signifier, with its equivocal dimension (*ce qu’on dit ment*, as Lacan says: ‘what is said, lies’) that wholly governs Gabriel’s speech, makes it a successful display of double meaning (and of Dublin meaning). Thus the submerged pun on *hostis* (‘the recipients – or perhaps, I had better say, the victims – of . . . hospitality’), where the Latin root designates something either hospitable or hostile, either friendly guest or threatening ghost. This is ‘Joyce’s deftest double-talk’ as J.I.M. Stewart remarks,[21] a rhetorical performance where Gabriel’s own inner subjectivity – what he really thinks – is irrelevant.

If Gabriel thus chooses not to speak in his 'own' voice, we saw that Freddy Malins' voice was also not his own, but in a sense belonged to his mother, being marked by the same 'catch' as hers. But of course in Freddy's case the voice is never used as an eloquent screen to mask off the subject's truth, but instead expresses the subject's authenticity, shows forth his innermost self-affective identity. What is crucial here is that as such Freddy's discourse *fails* ('when words failed him or the catch in his voice proved too much for him', *D*, p.152); and when speech fails it is always Freddy's *hands* that take over the task of expressing him.

Just as Gabriel is consistently associated with eyes in 'The Dead', so Freddy is with hands (so that one is even tempted to hear *les mains* scrambled in 'Malins'). This is clearly signalled from his very first appearance: '- Here's Freddy./At the same moment a clapping of hands. . .' (*D*, p. 143); and then in the initial impression he makes, of being 'offhand' (*D*, p. 145); both his right and left hands are in play as he tells a story to Mr Browne (*D*, p. 146); he applauds excessively before seizing Aunt Julia's hand in his own (*D*, p. 152); and so on. What do all these hands signify? If Gabriel's 'restless eyes' figure a self-multiplying, desirous subjectivity, Freddy's hand indicates a fundamentally *non-specular* relation to language (Fer Caille, we recall, has only one eye). While Gabriel sees his speech as a piece of schismatic Irish theatre, with his performance subject to the hostile gaze of the nationalist Miss Ivors, this spectacular rhetorical-theatrical dimension is entirely lacking from Freddy's broken, defective discourse. When Freddy speaks, meanings do not vacillate and proliferate, but stall, stumble: 'I never heard your voice sound so fresh and so . . . so clear and fresh, never' (*D*, p.152).

We can state the opposition in question here more clearly if we think of the difference between rhetoric and music. After all, when Freddy Malins speaks his discourse is just as much in thrall to the signifier as Gabriel's: the very terms used in the struggle to give voice to a singular moment - 'I never heard' - inscribe its diacritical nature, as like all meanings the 'now' can only be posed through reference to another signifier, another time (when, implicitly, the voice was not as good). But it is the *failure* of the signifier - the point when the object-voice 'catches' or the hand touches - that marks Freddy's expression, his voice or his grasp, as a self-presencing *now* (note the submerged Joycean pun on *maintenant*, where 'now' is figured as something held in the hand). It is this that makes Freddy's utterance essentially a matter of music: while Gabriel's speech is always rhetorical, more or less successfully deploying the signifier to produce specific effects on other subjects, in Freddy's the voice presents itself as acoustic object, an expression of pure self-affecting presence: a song.

We should now be in a position to understand more clearly the kind of intertextual relation at stake between *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and 'The Dead', and to attempt to interpret its significance for Joyce's developing sense of himself as an artist and as an Irishman, around 1907. We saw how the name Hyde appeared, from a Joycean perspective, to offer a jocoserious link between questions of Irishness and of selfhood - with the pun on 'hide' already pointing to skin colour as a mark of ethnic difference (like the 'dusky pallor' of Stevenson's Mr Hyde). If the fictional Mr Hyde embodied one paradigmatic fantasy of an originary, non-alienated human identity, the historical Dr Hyde (of Trinity College) was arguably in pursuit of another such fantasy with his vision of socio-cultural, and implicitly ethnic, purification.

Our double reading of Stevenson's and Joyce's texts has shown how in the figures of Dr Jekyll and My Hyde we can discern a set of contrasting ethnic and psychic characteristics which Joyce will re-inscribe – with or without any conscious recollection of Stevenson's tale – in his treatment of Irish and artistic identity in 'The Dead'. What becomes clear as we trace that canny (or uncanny) re-inscription is that the question of being Irish – which was at the time being energetically 'cleaned up', reduced to a non-negotiable legibility, by the likes of Douglas Hyde – could only be posed for the young Joyce in terms that responded to what he saw as the full complexity of being oneself, in other words, crucially, of not being *one* self. The Joycean artist of 1907 is presented, like Stevenson's 'imperfect and divided' Dr Jekyll, as irrevocably *split* – between an alienated, inauthentic version or mask of the self and a terrifying or inspirational other-self: originary thing, phantasm or voice. Jekyll's 'leap of welcome' in the face of this seemingly non-alienated other-self is echoed, perhaps, in what I have discerned as the subtle support or affirmation offered by the Joycean text for the character Freddy Malins, amiable cousin of the 'ape-like' Mr Hyde. The Joycean text knows very well that this self 'more express and single' than an everyday self does not really exist as such – and by making it manifest as Gretta Conroy's spectral memory of Michael Furey's voice, Joyce seems to underline his sense that a pure Irish self cannot exist outside fantasy. But as such – precisely as non-existent, misremembered or fantasized voice – it will continue to haunt Joyce's work.

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Notes

- 1 Quoted in Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 138.
- 2 Cf. L. Thurston, *James Joyce and the Problem of Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 126–30.
- 3 There is however an uncertainty as to when – or even *whether* – Joyce actually read Stevenson's text. Only a single book by Stevenson, the Scottish Romance *Catriona* of 1893, was found in Joyce's Trieste library.
- 4 Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 88.
- 5 See Michael Levenson's discussion of Joyce's critique of the Gaelic League's Irish-language revivalism: in *James Joyce, The Dead: Case Study in Contemporary Criticism*, ed. D. Schwarz (Boston, MA: St Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 168–70.
- 6 'If he be Mr Hyde . . . I shall be Mr Seek'; R. L. Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), (London: Penguin 2002) (hereafter JH), p.14.
- 7 J. Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function, as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans B. Fink (New York: Norton, 2002), p. 4.
- 8 For an intriguing discussion of the relation between Stevenson's photography, his 'semi-anthropology' and his writing, see Ann Colley, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), esp. pp. 99–131.
- 9 Robert Mighall, notes to Stevenson, op. cit., p. 165.
- 10 Quoted in *Ibid*, p. 151.

- 11** Or perhaps of the non-Anglophone Celt in general. It is crucial to remember, alongside the complexity of Stevenson's own political views and his ambiguous colonial position, the particular status in his work of *Scottish* identity. As Ann Colley writes, 'Stevenson recognized a similarity between the "savage" South Sea islanders and the "barbaric" highlanders exploited and harmed by fellow Scots (lowlanders)' (Colley, *op. cit.*, p. 5). It is clear that particular national differences are suppressed by the racist portrayal in English culture of the Gaelic-speaking Celt.
- 12** V. Cheng, 'Catching the Conscience of a Race: Joyce and Celticism', in *Joyce in the Hibernian Metropolis*, ed. M. Beja and D. Norris (Ohio State University Press, 1996), p. 23.
- 13** Florence L. Walzl, 'Gabriel and Michael: The Conclusion of "The Dead"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 4 (1966), pp. 17–31.
- 14** A. Burgess, 'A Paralysed City' (1965), *James Joyce, Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man: A Casebook*, ed. M. Beja (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 235.
- 15** James Joyce, *Dubliners*, ed. Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 173–4.
- 16** R. Spoo, 'Uncanny Returns in "The Dead"', in *Joyce, Dubliners: A New Casebook* (London: Palgrave, 2006), p. 144.
- 17** D. Torchiana, *Backgrounds for Joyce's Dubliners* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), p. 231.
- 18** See Jeri Johnson's note, *Dubliners*, p. 274.
- 19** *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, eds. E. Mason and R. Ellmann (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989). p. 156.
- 20** Torchiana, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
- 21** J.I.M. Stewart, *James Joyce* (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1957), p. 14.