

How James Joyce Recycles Popular Culture: References and Nods to Thomas Moore in “An Encounter” and “The Dead”

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Abstract

This paper explores the way in which James Joyce (1882-1941) revives Ireland’s “first pop star,” Thomas Moore (1779-1852) in his collection of short stories, *Dubliners* (1914). In line with the theories of “the culture industry” and “taste,” which are respectively discussed in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) and Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (1979), we will reconsider Joyce’s creative way of recruiting popular culture in the two stories, “An Encounter” and “The Dead,” both of which possess the haunting presence of Moore. In “An Encounter,” the old man (“queer old josser”) that the protagonist boy “encounters” at the end of the story refers to Thomas Moore, this being his favorite poet who was in fact “popularly produced” and “consumed” at the turn of the century from the 19th to the 20th. Influenced and bored at the same time by British magazines about “the wild west,” the bookish boy pretends to read Moore, which could be regarded as Joyce’s negative evaluation of his literary predecessor, still loved not only in Ireland but also in the UK. However, after a lapse of time, when Joyce begins to write the last story of the *Dubliners* collection around 1906, he becomes the true voluntary exile and rediscovers the cultural significance of Irish tradition. My hypothesis is that this autobiographical fact could overlap with the change of his “taste,” which proves that Joyce is much inspired by Moore’s poem, “Oh, Ye Dead!”, and that he incorporates into “The Dead” the theme that the deceased are never completely dead, as is shown in the case of Michael Furey’s “ghostly light,” but that they are haunting the living in many ways. Through this analysis, it is asserted that Joyce does not completely reject popular culture, being not to his taste, but recycles it effectively and allows its essence to provide the textual link between the past and the present for this Irish author who, after all, keeps writing about Dublin, the hometown that he loved and hated all his life.

I. Introduction

This paper will re-examine James Joyce’s creative way of incorporating popular culture in his works, “An Encounter” and “The Dead,” both of which are included in *Dubliners* (1914), by referring to theories on “the culture industry” and “taste.” Specifically, we will investigate the “shade” of Thomas Moore in Joyce’s collection of short stories, as well as the intertextual influence on a young would-be artist. As many critics have argued, every oeuvre of Joyce is a kind of ghost story; on the one hand, the irreversible past – including his own personal and his country’s national history as a

colony – haunts each character Joyce produces, while on the other hand, he recycles these ghosts as an artistic resource.

In general, Joyce is regarded as a high modernist who is extremely conscious of his artistic novelty. However, as an ambitious artist who aspires to write a roman total, it is inevitable that his own work would abound with human elements shared by all Dubliners; these elements are nothing more than popular culture, such as advertisements, plays, songs, and harlequin romances. As P. J. Mathews argues in "The Meeting of the Waters," there are two main ways of understanding the notion of "popular culture": "culture as it is popularly produced [practiced]" and "culture as it is popularly consumed" (1).¹ Following this distinction, Mathews discovers Moore's hidden artistic intention of "introducing the idea of the spectral or ghostly presence of the lost leader [Moore's friend, Irish Republican, Robert Emmet (1778–1803)] into modern Irish literature in English," so that this tragic unsung hero's "memory must be kept alive" (3). As is often discussed, the same technique can be seen in Joyce's treatment of his favorite political leader, Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1890) in his autobiographical novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and his political essay, "The Shade of Parnell" (1912). However, this paper argues that Joyce secretly pays tribute to Moore, Ireland's "first pop star," to borrow Mathews' phrase, in *Dubliners* as well as in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses* (1922). This paper focuses on "An Encounter" and "The Dead," because the name of Thomas Moore is mentioned once in the former and because the title of the coda of *Dubliners* is closely connected with Moore's popular song "Oh, Ye Dead!"

II. Thomas Moore as a Literary Precursor of Joyce

Born in Dublin as the oldest child of Catholic parents, like Joyce, Thomas Moore was one of the first Catholics admitted to Trinity College, Dublin, originally founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592 for Protestant boys. During his college life, "[g]oaded by his friends Robert Emmet and Edward Hudson, members of a group of revolutionaries known as the United Irishmen, Moore wrote an impassioned plea for his fellow students to oppose the imminent Act of Union with England. . . [B]ut Moore's parents and his tutor . . . begged him not to endanger his future by such outspokenness."² This episode reminds us that Stephen Dedalus in the fifth chapter of *Portrait* rejected to sign "the petition for universal peace" (*P* 169), because he could not sympathize with his friends' frenzy for nationalism in Ireland. In contrast with Moore, who is willing to put patriotic elements into his works,³ Joyce always keeps his distance from any kind of nationalism, whose bellicose essence inevitably sends many young men to the battlefield.

Another marked difference between Moore and Joyce lies in their attitudes toward the public. The former is thusly: "He wrote too much and catered too deliberately to his audience to reach the heights of Parnassus attained by the major Romantic poets" (*TM*). Moreover, as Emer Nolan argues,

"Moore, who was admired by Byron, Shelley, Goethe, and Stendhal, . . . has also been described as no more than "the public relations man of the movement whose political leader was O'Connell." . . . The very popularity of the *Melodies*, from this point of view, testifies to the blandly modular nature of bourgeois nationalism, which steals elements from traditional culture in order to serve its modernizing, homogenizing program" (3). We might point out that Joyce also has many admirers among the literati such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and Scott Fitzgerald, but the defiant Irish man never makes compromise with the taste of the bourgeoisie or the masses. In his famous letter to the British publisher, Grant Richards, in 1906, he explains in anger his ambition of writing his collection of short stories.

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis. I have tried to present it to the indifferent public under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in this order. I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness and with the conviction that he is a very bold man who dares to alter in the presentment, still more to deform, whatever he has seen and heard. I cannot do any more than this. I cannot alter what I have written. (SL 83)

In the end, his stubbornness resulted in the delay of the publication of *Dubliners*, despite that most stories had been almost completed by 1907. However, at the very least, the fact that he regarded his fellow countrymen as "the indifferent public" suggests an obstinate sticking to his own artistic purpose; he would not contend for popularity as he may have felt that Moore did.

Although there was no direct record of how Joyce evaluated Thomas Moore as a literary precursor, he did possess one copy of Moore's *Poetical Works* (London: Routledge, n.d.). Stamped 'J.J.' in his Trieste Library (Ellmann, *Consciousness*, 120). As will further be discussed later, this paper hypothesises that Joyce changed his attitude towards Moore as he lived abroad as an exile. In the next section, we will discuss the ideas of both the "popular culture" Moore seems to embody and the sense and "taste" that one is supposed to learn unconsciously, whether we like it or not.

III. Popular Culture and Taste

Before analyzing the two stories from *Dubliners*, let us pause for an overview of the following two theoretical frameworks: the first is Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's theory on "popular culture" and the second is Pierre Bourdieu's on "taste." In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer criticise "the culture industry" as "no more than the achievement of standardization and mass production" (121). In other words, in the culture at once "commercially produced" and

"popularly consumed," every type of art inevitably becomes rather easy and simple, and every consumer is unwittingly forced to prefer such art. Horkheimer and Adorno state that, "Everybody must behave (as if spontaneously) in accordance with his previously determined and indexed level, and choose the category of mass product turned out for his type" (123). This overwhelming levelling effect of "the culture industry" is regarded as what is called one of the side-effects of "enlightenment," which is the general topic of their book. At first glance, their claim seems to be overly pessimistic; however, considering the year in which its first version was originally completed, 1944, we cannot help being surprised at their farsightedness in predicting what was happening in almost every country after World War II.

Akin to Adorno and Horkheimer, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu analyses the arbitrariness of "taste," which generally tends to be viewed as natural and inherent. He points out, however, that "the whole social order" lies behind the network of "the opposition between the 'élite' of the dominant and the 'mass' of the dominated." According to him, the former is "high (sublime, elevated, pure)" and the latter "low (vulgar, low, modest)" (468), and because culture in itself is a kind of capital ("cultural capital") reproduced in and by society, "[d]ominated agents . . . tend to attribute to themselves what the distinction attributes to them . . . consenting to be what they have to be, 'modest', 'humble' and 'obscure'" (471). If "dominated agents" here are replaced with "colonised subjects," the Irish people at the turn of the century from the 19th to the 20th, whom Joyce arrogantly calls "the gratefully oppressed" (*D* 30) in *Dubliners*, are compelled to be immured in the cultural life offered by their dominant oppressors, namely the British Empire or the Anglo-Irish Protestants (the Ascendancy).

In both cases, their theories on culture (industry) show us the negative aspects of culture, in which people merely consume their own cultural materials, and cannot find ways to resist the social system that is in favour of the ruling class. However, Ann Fogarty discusses the statements made by both Adorno/Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin, who also makes a sharp analysis of culture in the age of capitalism:

In Joyce's texts, his characters may be seen as positioned between these two conflicting views of mass culture. They succumb to its effects and are controlled by its potent projections of desire, as Horkheimer and Adorno argue. But they are also often in the more self-aware and self-critical position of the collector described by Benjamin (4).⁴

It can therefore be said that Joyce simultaneously describes both servitude and resistance in his stories. In the following sections, we will address these dimensions, which are not discussed in detail in Fogarty's article, perhaps due to space limitations.

IV. Who Does the Boy Encounter in Reality?: "An Encounter"

The second story in *Dubliners* begins as follows:

It was Joe Dillon who introduced the Wild West to us. He had a little library made up of old numbers of *The Union Jack*, *Pluck* and *The Halfpenny Marvel*. Every evening after school we met in his back garden and arranged Indian battles. (*D* 11)

As R. B. Kershner states after very detailed analyses,⁵ these magazines Joe Dillon showed to younger neighbouring boys are British and describe "the daring deeds . . . of all sorts and conditions of British heroes" (33). Therefore, in the opening paragraph of "An Encounter," there are two implicit ironies. First, even if these boys' preference for Wild-West writings and their make-believe game that they are Native Americans are to be read symbolically as an attempt to escape from colonised Ireland, their hopes are destined to fail; their magazines were originally targeted not for them, but for their colonizers, British boys and girls. As Bourdieu argues, since "taste" is always already decided by "the dominate," the Irish people have no opportunity to doubt the social aspects of what they would naturally like. Furthermore, in the story, the oldest and roughest boy, Joe Dillon, would later be another ruler, a Catholic priest: "Everyone was incredulous when it was reported that he had a vocation for the priesthood. Nevertheless it was true" (*D* 11). We are reminded of Stephen Dedalus's "two masters" in *Ulysses* ("The imperial British state" and "the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church") (*U* 1.638-44), seeing that Joe is unconsciously but symbolically an embodied ruling figure in Ireland.

However, like every protagonist in Joyce's works, the narrator boy is different from the other boys (alone or aloof, in a sense). As it turns out later in the story, he is a "bookworm" not like Mahony, but like the male pervert, "a queer old josser" (*D* 15-16). Being "afraid to seem studious or lacking in robustness," the protagonist boy declares that he "liked better some American detective stories" (*D* 11).⁶ From here, we can find certain similarities between this boy and Stephen; bookishness, escapism, a sense of alienation, and a higher intellectual level than others. However, the boy in "An Encounter" is still too young to be able to say "I do not fear to be alone or to be spurned for another" as Stephen states in Chapter V of *Portrait* (*P* 208).

At least, like many characters in *Dubliners*, the young protagonist has a strong desire to escape, saying:

But when the restraining influence of the school was at a distance I began to hunger again for wild sensations, for the escape which those chronicles of disorder alone seemed to offer me. The

mimic warfare of the evening became at last as wearisome to me as the routine of school in the morning because I wanted real adventures to happen to myself. (*D* 12)

What is notable here is that he is bored both with his school and with "the mimic warfare" which is offered to him by "the glory of the Wild West" the British magazines depict (*D* 12). Therefore, just after this quotation, he says to himself, "But real adventures, I reflected, do not happen to people who remain at home: they must be sought abroad" (*D* 12), which is interestingly written in the present tense, like a proverb or maxim. In terms of the narrative, this story is told retrospectively by the adult narrator this boy will become later.

On one level, the adult narrator recalls his own reflection as a kind of truth that he received in his childhood. However, as this story's ending tells us, what he will "encounter" finally is not at all "real adventures" referenced by the book world of "the Wild West," but the severe and bizarre reality of his real surroundings in colonial Ireland. As Kershner argues, "They fail not merely because reality cannot satisfy the desires of the imagination, but also because the 'imagination' they have invoked [through popular culture] is as ordered, structured, and predictable as the 'reality' they are attempting to escape" (38). That is why the boy in "An Encounter" cannot escape in either the book world or in his reality.

Although the narrator and his classmate, Mahony, are enjoying their "miching" in the beginning, their adventure is cast in dark shadow by the failure "to carry out our project of visiting the Pigeon House" (*D* 14). As William York Tindall claims, there is a religiously symbolic implication in "pigeon" (17-19); however, it is even more noteworthy that this is the very moment when the "queer old josser" appears in front of them and "begin[s] to talk of school and of books" (*D* 15). For the young narrator, school and books and "home" are almost everything that constitutes his living world. At one time, he feels a sense of liberation during the trip: "School and home seemed to recede from us and their influences upon us seemed to wane" (*D* 14); however, because of this old man, his "reality" – comprised of school, books and home – suddenly comes up again. Just as he plays the role of imaginary unruly "Indians" to not "seem studious or lacking in robustness," the boy "pretend [s] that [he] had read every book [the old man] mentioned" (*D* 15).

As Kershner points out, the literary figures the old man refers to – "the poetry of Thomas Moore or the works of Sir Walter Scott and Lord Lytton" (*D* 15) – "were at the time . . . writers who might be more readily identified as popular than as serious" (38),⁷ although ironically, the young boy likely does not realise that fact. The following line that the old man says to himself has an uncanny echo: "Ah, I can see you are a bookworm like myself." Curiously, the text leaves it ambiguous as to whether this old man is really an intellectual, because when Mahony asks a "stupid" question – "why couldn't boys read [some of Lord Lytton's works]" – he "only smiled" and does not provide

persuasive answers (*D* 15). If we read this part in a suspicious and malicious frame of mind, "like" the protagonist, this man might only have pretended to have read these books. Moreover, if this old man is really "like myself [the protagonist]," he is one possible incarnation of the boy in the future; that is to say, a negative alter ego. Like photographic positives and negatives, if Stephen seeking real adventures abroad is a positive manifestation for Joyce, this old man might be regarded as a negative portrait of the author, who fears, as one possibility, to become like this man if he is to "remain at home." Needless to say, after leaving Dublin as a self-imposed exile with his future wife, Nora Barnacle, on 8th October, 1904, Joyce wrote most stories in *Dubliners* not "at home" but "abroad."

Symbolically and weirdly, this short story describes the failure of the boy's escape from school through the encounter with "a queer old jossler" whose "mind was slowly circling round and round in the same orbit" (*D* 16) (the underlined part is repeated on the next page). However, his failure is implicitly suggested by the following casual exchange of words:

He said that my friend was a very rough boy and asked did he get whipped often at school. I was going to reply indignantly that we were not National School boys to be *whipped*, as he called it; but I remained silent. (*D* 17)

As Bourdieu states, the protagonist's "taste" is unconsciously affected by the dominant culture, in this case, the school that he wants to and has to run away from. When Father Butler catches Leo Dillon stealthily reading *The Halfpenny Marvel* in class, this priest says scornfully and indignantly: "I could understand it if you were . . . National School boys" (*D* 12). In Joyce's work, even silence and hesitation in speech have profound significance. Although the protagonist scorns both Dillon, who is totally absorbed in popular culture, and Father Butler, who is the symbol of boring school life, he is not immune to the influence of popular culture urging his adventure, and repeats reflectively and unconsciously the opposition between his prestigious school (perhaps Belvedere College SJ, which Joyce himself attended) and National School, namely between socially "high" and "low" elements, as Father Butler has suggested.⁸ In other words, the protagonist boy is the "subject" of or subject to not only popular culture, but also elitism.

As Tindall concludes, "the encounter . . . is less with something else or someone else than with self. Meeting himself for the first time, the boy suddenly knows himself, his sin, and his folly – and maybe the nature of Dublin" (19). More importantly, the readers also realise Dublin's "paralyzed" reality through the narration of the story. In this case, they know how to escape as far as possible from the dominant ideas offered by popular culture and schools. The boundaries between reality and imagination and between temporary adventure and "real adventure" are more complex than

expected. In Joyce's works, the temporal distance between the narrated past and the narrating present is very complex, and the relationship is analogous to that of the fictional character(s) and the author himself (most characteristically, between the artist's alter ego Stephen and Joyce). In the next section, we investigate this temporal distance or changed "taste" in Joyce himself.

V. Thomas Moore's Poem Haunting "The Dead"

Mathews contrasts Stephen in *Portrait* and Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*: "[Joyce's] work is heavily invested in the quotidian realities of his own moment which are reflected through a deep engagement with Moore's work" (6). However, it seems that at least when Joyce was writing "An Encounter" around 1905, he had not found the positive meaning of Moore as popular literature as described earlier. It took a little more time for him to master how "to depict popular culture as a site of resistance and the very basis by which his characters may contest the debilitating effects of capitalism and of political imperialism" (Mathews 6). This paper argues that Joyce's change in "taste" happened before or while writing "The Dead" from 1906 to 1907.

Famously, after completing the first draft of the other 14 stories, in 1906 Joyce wrote a letter to his brother, Stanislaus, saying:

Sometimes thinking of Ireland it seems to me that I have been unnecessarily harsh. I have reproduced (in *Dubliners* at least) none of the attraction of the city for I have never felt at my ease in any city since I left it except in Paris. I have not reproduced its ingenuous insularity and its hospitality. The latter 'virtue' so far as I can see does not exist elsewhere in Europe. (*SL* 109-10)

It is well-known that "hospitality" is one of the most important themes in *Ulysses*. However, the above letter shows that Joyce's attitude towards Dublin changed greatly, in a word, from critical to sympathetic. Therefore, as is often discussed, the protagonist of "The Dead" as the author's alter ego, college teacher Gabriel Conroy celebrates the hospitality of Dublin in his party speech.

Joyce never produced a morally perfect character; this artistic tendency creates a distance between the character and the reader, and enables them to see themselves newly and critically. At the end of the story, Gabriel realises "his sin," "his folly," and "the nature of Dublin" like the boy in "An Encounter." This is because he has to face the severe reality that he is not his beloved wife, Gretta's one and only lover. Hence, when at the very ending, Joyce writes, "The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward" (*D* 176), this "west" is not "the Wild West" in America of the boys in "An Encounter," but West Ireland (especially Galway, where Nora and Gretta spent their girlhood with their boyfriends) about which Gabriel should know much more. Of course, this

climax is foreshadowed in his conversation with his colleague, who is an ardent nationalist, Molly Ivors, asking him provocatively, "And haven't you your own land to visit . . . that you know nothing of, your own people, and your own country?" (*D* 149) Ivors is a typical example of a character Joyce loves to depict, for whom he has ambivalent feelings; on the one hand, she is a very dogmatic nationalist, while on the other hand, what she says to Gabriel is pithy and to-the-point advice.

Even for Gabriel, however, the trapping influence of "education" is revealed through his "taste"; that is to say, his elitism seen in the young protagonist's casual rebuttal in "An Encounter." His speech at the Christmas party surely celebrates Irish hospitality, something Joyce himself rediscovered abroad; at the same time, however, he discloses his arrogant self-pride, malicious despisement towards other attendants, and hidden counterarguments to Ivors.

—I feel more strongly with every recurring year that our country has no tradition which does it so much honour and which it should guard so jealously as that of its hospitality. It is a tradition that is unique as far as my experience goes (and I have visited not a few places abroad) among the modern nations. . . .

—A new generation is growing up in our midst, a generation actuated by new ideas and new principles. It is serious and enthusiastic for these new ideas and its enthusiasm, even when it is misdirected, is, I believe, in the main sincere. But we are living in a sceptical and, if I may use the phrase, a thought-tormented age: and sometimes I fear that this new generation, educated or hypereducated as it is, will lack those qualities of humanity, of hospitality, of kindly humour which belonged to an older day. (*D* 159–60)

He uses the word "thought-tormented" to condemn Ivors for her narrow-minded nationalism, while simultaneously trying to differentiate himself from other party guests by showing off his wider experience of going abroad. Most notably, what he misses recognising here is that he also belongs to the "(hyper) educated" "new generation" that is on the verge of losing "the tradition of genuine warm-hearted courteous Irish hospitality." He is unable to see this logical contradiction because of his sense of superiority. As Bourdieu argues, he is trapped by the elitism of "the dominant" in colonial Ireland, and is no different than Ivors and the boy in "An Encounter."

However, as we have seen in Joyce's letter, Gabriel's feelings regarding hospitality are undoubtedly "in the main sincere." The distance between the young protagonist and the adult narrator in "An Encounter" mirrors the distance between Gabriel and Joyce in "The Dead." As an effect of the text, readers can advantageously take the position of the latter in both cases. In a sense, Joyce put into practice the positive side of Gabriel's speech: how to recycle the old tradition "which our forefathers have handed down to us and which we in turn must hand down to our descendants"

(D 160). Hence, Joyce reused his literary predecessor's poem which had been "popularly" shared for a long time in Ireland.

Thomas Moore's "Oh, Ye Dead!" in *Irish Melodies* (issued from 1808 and collected in 1820), consists of only two stanzas:

Oh, ye Dead! oh, ye Dead! whom we know by the light you give
 From your cold gleaming eyes, tho' you move like men who live,
 Why leave you thus your graves,
 In far off fields and waves,
 Where the worm and the sea-bird only know your bed,
 To haunt this spot where all
 Those eyes that wept your fall,
 And the hearts that wailed you, like your own, lie dead?

It is true, it is true, we are shadows cold and wan;
 And the fair and the brave whom we loved on earth are gone;
 But still thus even in death,
 So sweet the living breath
 Of the fields and the flowers in our youth we wander'd o'er,
 That ere, condemned, we go
 To freeze mid Hecla's snow,
 We would taste it awhile, and think we live once more! (Moore 205)

Its poetical structure is quite simple: in the first stanza, the living narrator calls to the dead, and in the latter, vice versa. As Stanislaus Joyce recalls, this poem "sounded as if the dead were whimpering and jealous of the happiness of the living" (617).

According to the brilliant biographer Richard Ellmann, when Joyce became acquainted with this song from his brother's letter in 1905, just two years before completing "The Dead," he was struggling with his own wife's past love: "His feelings about his wife's dead lover found a dramatic counterpart in the jealousy of the dead for the living in Moore's song: it would seem that the living and the dead are jealous of each other" (244). Thus, its first line – "Oh, ye Dead! Oh, ye Dead! whom we know by the light you give" – is echoed in "[a] ghostly light from the street lamp" (D 170), which turns out later to be Gretta's dead girlhood boyfriend, Furey's ghost.⁹ Moreover, a strong hope of the dead in the final line of the second stanza – "we live once more!" – forms a stark contrast with Furey's lament, telling Gretta that "he did not want to live" (D 174).

As Kevin Whelan speculates, "Joyce learned from Moore the power of music to articulate the unspeakable" (71).¹⁰ At the same time, it can be argued that he learned that the music itself has the power to evoke the dead past to haunt living people at present, which is implied in Moore's poem ("To haunt this spot where all / Those eyes that wept your fall, / And the hearts that wailed you"). Just as Gretta is somewhat violently reminded of her dead lover by listening to "*The Lass of Aughrim*" by accident after the party, Joyce must have been magnetized by the popular song of "Ireland's national poet" whose theme – how hauntingly connected the living and dead are to each other – is what he was encountering in his exile life. Moore's original footnote to the song indicates:

Paul Zealand mentions that there is a mountain in some part of Ireland, where the ghosts of persons who have died in foreign lands walk about and converse with those they meet, like living people. If asked why they do not return to their homes, they say they are obliged to go to Mount Hecla, and disappear immediately. (Moore 205)

If Joyce was familiar with this legend and imagined by himself that he might die far away from home in the future, he must have thought that he himself would appear as a lamenting ghost going back involuntarily to Ireland after death. In this sense, Moore's poem foreshadows the author's destiny, as well as many ghostly existences dying in foreign countries as exiles in Ireland's history.

VI. Conclusion

For a provocative and highly ambitious artist like Joyce, who hopes to escape from the "paralysed" Dublin and seek "real adventures" abroad as a voluntary exile, his attitude towards literary precedents is inevitably ambivalent, especially when they are "popularly" received, produced and consumed. In "An Encounter," we can see that Joyce once regarded Moore as no more than a writer of popular literature. However, when encountering the inspiring (or haunting) power of "Oh, Ye Dead!" Joyce must have changed his own "taste" and learned how to recycle Irish traditions culturally and literarily.

At the age of twenty, Joyce wrote about James Clarence Mangan (1803–1849), to whom, exceptionally among Irish literati he gave unstinted praise throughout his life.

Mangan, it must be remembered, wrote with no native literary tradition to guide him, and for a public which cared for matters of the day, and for poetry only so far as it might illustrate these. He could not often revise what he wrote, and he has often striven with [Thomas] Moore and [Edward] Walsh [(1805–1850)] on their own ground. (CW 78)

It is difficult, or even impossible, to write without any tradition; simultaneously, however, the latecomers are forced to deal with much more difficult problems, such as how to inherit and rewrite tradition in their own way. In the above citation, we easily see through his strong hatred of "the indifferent public [of Dublin]" (SL 83), to which, he declares, his *Dubliners* is addressed. But when Joyce rediscovered one recyclable possibility of popular culture, his aestheticism must have been renewed and extended more than ever.

Notes

- 1 Hereinafter, all underlined emphases are mine and all italics are in the original.
- 2 Hereinafter, the citation from the online website, called "Poetry Foundation," of Moore's biographical information (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/thomas-moore>) is written as *TM*.
- 3 For example, in the 1810 preface of *Irish Melodies*, Moore mentions the significance of the relationship between music and history:

It has often been remarked, and oftener felt, that our music is the truest of all comments upon our history. The tone of defiance, succeeded by the languor of despondency – a burst of turbulence dying away into softness – the sorrows of one moment lost in the levity of the next – and all that romantic mixture of mirth and sadness, which is naturally produced by the efforts of a lively temperament, to shake off, or forget, the wrongs which lie upon it. (162)

- 4 In their discussion of "An Encounter," which undoubtedly reaches the tidemark of "queer" reading of this text inaugurated by Margot Norris's *Suspicious Reading of Joyce's Dubliners* (2003), Margot Gayle Backus and Joseph Valente also discuss the issue of "taste" not based on Bourdieu but on Immanuel Kant: "taste is the currency of the negotiation among middle-class fractions, who are determined in their specific fractionality, not by their place in the order of production alone, but more significantly by their place in the order of consumption." (68) Needless to say, their definition has a lot in common with that of Mathews.
- 5 As both Fogarty and Kershner (x) mention, Cheryl Herr's *Joyce's Anatomy of Culture* (1986) is "a pioneering reassessment of the politics of popular culture" (Fogarty 7). Although her book does not refer to "An Encounter," Kershner's discussion of this story based on cultural studies became mainstream in previous Joycean studies.
- 6 Genevieve Abravanel maintains that "a former British colony, the United States, displaces Britain as a source of imaginative identification" (157). Although this comment is noteworthy, what should be stressed is that his taste is affected by his elitism, whereby he prefers different magazines about America.
- 7 Kershner continues that "Moore's reputation as poet had been declining since his death in 1852, and by the nineties he survived almost exclusively as a "parlor poet" and as precursor of sentimentally patriotic versifiers in the tradition of Young Ireland" (38). But, Moore's friend, Walter Scott himself, considers Moore's poetical talent as follows: "There is a manly frankness with perfect ease and good breeding about him which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little, very little man. . . his countenance is plain, but the expression is very animated, especially in speaking or singing" (qtd in Moore vii).
- 8 According to Jeri Johnson's notes, "Father Butler's comment betrays a common sentiment: ["National School boys"] were perceived as being socially and intellectually inferior, especially to a school like Jesuit

Belvedere" (*D* 202).

- 9 John Gordon pays attention to the etymology of gas: "'Gas,' 'ghost,' and 'ghastly' are all – or have been thought to be – etymologically akin, deriving from the Dutch *geest* for spirit" (20). For a Catholic intellectual like Gabriel to become aware of his hidden elitism, it is necessary to know that Furey's death is related to his wretched working conditions; "in the gasworks" (*D* 173).
- 10 Kevin Whelan reads Moore's political connotation into this song as Mathews does in "The Meeting of the Waters"; "Moore's lyric . . . concerns the Irish folk belief that the shades of men who have died on foreign soil (notably the Wild Geese) return to haunt their familiar and beloved places of origin" (70).

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