

Exile, Cunning, Silence: Trajectory of Art of Exile from Joyce's *Ulysses* to Beckett's *Trilogy*

Li-ling Tseng

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
National Taiwan University, Taiwan

Abstract

Toward the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen proclaims his famous defensive formula for future (Irish) art: "silence, exile, and cunning" (247). Stephen's resolution to exile himself from a forcible religious, nationalistic, and aesthetic identification initiated in *Portrait* is faithfully materialized by Stephen's several attempts of literary creation in *Ulysses*. Forced to roam Dublin city on Bloomsday, the new hero Bloom is living his every moment in exile. *Ulysses* exemplifies Joyce's (via Stephen's) art of exile in featuring the two main male characters as ideologically exiled beings and in spelling out through their cunning characterization a (living and writing) style of exile.

It is established that a father-son-like relationship exists between Joyce and Beckett. In spite of Beckett's protest against critics' comparing him to Joyce, the route of exile initiated by Stephen on Joyce's behalf is decisively taken up again and developed thoroughly in Beckett's major oeuvres, *The Trilogy*. While the act of exile involves more the physical distancing from the socio-political Dublin city setting as maneuvered by Stephen and Bloom in *Ulysses*, Beckett's *Trilogy* carries out a thoroughgoing exile or abstraction from a specific geopolitical setting, be it a city (i.e. Dublin) or a country (i.e. Ireland).

My paper aims at examining Beckett's diverse interaction with and influence under this Stephen-Joyce legacy in each of his *Trilogy* stories, primarily focusing on how Stephen's formula has been experimented to be de-politicized and re-politicized in Beckett's three works. From verbal cunning to ultimate silence, the road of new Irish art has wandered far but has arrived at a destination spelling out new possibilities with regard to the "Irishness" in its art.

Keywords

exile, Irishness, Beckett and Joyce, *The Trilogy*, *Ulysses*

Modern literary historical studies have taken as a matter of course Joyce's close association with and influence on Beckett in the latter's formative years in the 30s in Paris. It is also well-known that as late as 1956 Beckett felt compelled to qualify and reinstate his differences from his mentor and master; this was when he characterized Joyce's work as tending toward omnipotence in contradistinction to his own works' minimalist or "impotent" tendencies (Graver and Federman 148).¹ While this difference is clearly borne out in Beckett's development and his experimentation in his later, shorter prose, it is still legitimate to examine Beckett's major long fiction, composed during and after World War II, in the light of Joyce's own theme of aesthetics and (anti-)ideology in *Ulysses*, a work composed a quarter of a century earlier which defined modernism for many young and emerging literary practitioners including Beckett.

A likeminded young literary practitioner who has left a decisive and influential mark in the imaginative and representational scenes in which he appears is Stephen Dedalus from *Portrait*, a character who continues to make his presence and difference felt in *Ulysses*. Toward the end of *Portrait*, Stephen proclaims his famous defensive formula for future Irish art: "silence, exile, and cunning" (*P* 247). Stephen's resolution to exile himself from Ireland and its colonial condition sounds the keynote to the first three episodes of *Ulysses*. The ending of "Telemachus" brings into relief the image of the "usurper," a figure that embodies all the enslaving forces threatening Stephen's integrity and subjectivity as an individual, citizen, and artist. The prophesied new route toward "silence, exile, and cunning" can be said to be exemplified in Stephen's art as it surfaces in *Ulysses*. Though slight in terms of length, his revision of Hyde's translation into English of a Gaelic poem along with the *sui generis* "Parable of the Plums" may, if examined fully, be seen to constitute Stephen's "art of exile." Hinging on the middle term in his famous dictum, Stephen's "art of exile" underscores a questionable correlation between his words and their references, thus unsettling hegemonic interpretation and even exiling it from his art.

The literary path taken by Beckett, a fellow Dubliner and Stephen's and Joyce's young protégé, can be examined through the prism of young Stephen. The complexity of Beckett's massive *Trilogy* (1947-49) is comparable to Joyce's titanic stylistic exercise in *Ulysses*. Thus, it is propitious to examine how Beckett in his *Trilogy* seriously engages with the young Stephen's prophecy of an art of exile and

¹ In an interview with Israel Shenker (1956), Beckett distinguishes his own art from Joyce's: "The more Joyce knew, the more he would. He is tending toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with ignorance, impotence."

thus fleshes out Joyce's vision of the new Irish art. Initiated first in the four stories of *The Nouvelles*, the theme of banishment starts to dominate Beckett's postwar fiction. These stories feature a first-person narrator who meets his fate of being cast out from an institution-like setting onto the streets or the border of a barely recognizable city. These four first-person, outcast narrators are precursors to the monumental *Trilogy* narrators.

In comparing Joyce's and Beckett's specialties, Barbara Reich Gluck stops at exploring the implication of her own point: "Joyce's characters may be exiled from country, religion, or wife, but Beckett's . . . are separated not only from any society but . . . from themselves, their own identity" (80). Though it is commonly accepted, *pace* Gluck, that Beckett's characterization tends toward the more metaphysical level rather than the physical orientation of Joyce's, the replication of the act and art of exile as found in *Ulysses* is often neglected in the case of Beckett's long fiction. In *Ulysses* we saw Joyce essentially executed a Stephen-*esque* act of disengagement and art of exile in problematizing the portrayal of major human establishments such as family, class, gender, sexuality, country, nationalism, race, etc. Most evidently, the integrity of the bourgeois home, along with its emphasis on a stable familial establishment, was undermined by the Blooms' incompleteness without a son-heir and with the wife's adultery. However, this was at a humanistic and humanitarian level compensated for by the Bloom-Stephen stepfather-stepson relationship. The first novel of *The Trilogy*, *Molloy*, recycles the father-son and mother-son kinship but decisively introduces more disabling ambivalence with regard to human kinship, thus sharpening, first and foremost, Stephen's/Joyce's practice of and concern with exiled familial identity in *Ulysses*.

Unmistakably reminiscent of the celebrated (step-)father-son relationship in *Ulysses*, *Molloy* takes up and features a "real," biologically related pair (Moran and his son Jacques) and a mock or symbolic pair (pseudo-father Molloy and pseudo-son Moran). What is more, the lineage of the real father and son Moran is cemented by their shared adherence to a very Bloomian life principle or practice—namely, masturbation. Moran affirms their affinity in a rather comic, albeit qualified, way: "I took advantage of being alone at last, with no other witness than God, to masturbate. My son must have had the same idea, he must have stopped on the way to masturbate. I hope he enjoyed it more than I did" (*T* 133). When the story starts, this father and son affinity is strengthened by their common faith. The Catholic Moran obviously passes down his religious belief and practice to his son, Jacques. Just as meticulous and religious, Jacques

goes to the Sunday mass in his father's stead, when the latter is unexpectedly detained by Gaber.

Such bonding exists even between the unrelated pair of Molloy and Moran. It is hinted that they share a symbolic tie, the extent of which approximates that of the unrelated Bloom and Stephen. Though dissimilar in terms of their disposition, education, and in other aspects of their background as enumerated in "Ithaca," by this home-coming chapter Bloom and Stephen have nonetheless developed a close relationship. Similarly, while finally acknowledging his country to be very different from the Molloy country (*T* 122), Moran maintains, as if instinctively, that Molloy or his mother is "no stranger" to him (*T* 103). As if to echo this evocation of Moran's, Molloy at the beginning of his report admits that "All I need now is a son. Perhaps I have one somewhere" (*T* 9), suggesting an at-large father-son lineage which can definitely evoke that of Bloom and Stephen's being at the same time remote and intimate in the Dublin setting of 1904. By the same token, at the moment of desperation, Moran evokes the image of Molloy who "would come to me like a father" (*T* 149). Moreover, Moran starts to resemble Molloy in that the former starts to walk by means of crutches, by which, Moran intuits, he will get to find and meet Molloy (*T* 161), thus completing the evocation of father-son kinship. And as if to solidify such kinship even one step further to a symbolic level, Moran predicts, also at the beginning of his report, that his son will go to his desk, writing up a report like himself (*T* 84).

While in *Ulysses* the symbolic lineage between the pair of unrelated father Bloom and son Stephen was cemented and celebrated as one of the most well-known humanist themes of the novel, in *Molloy*, more often than not, the father-son relationship is impregnated with conflicts and ambivalence. That is, although rehearsing this human kinship, *Molloy* introduces more discomforts and conflicts to the relationship than such humanism-glorifying comforts as granted in Bloom's fatherly caring for Stephen since the chapter of "Circe." These occur solely to the biological pair of father Moran and son Jacques. There exists a dangerous parricidal tension in the son toward his father, and *mutatis mutandis*, a discontent in the father toward the son. Moran is well aware of his son's disobedience and his own lack of dominance over him. In the end, he is actually abandoned by Jacques, being incapacitated furthermore by his own physical deterioration. The tension between them is alluded to, cross-referentially, via the figure of Monte-Cristo (*P* 121), rendering the son Jacques parallel to the disobedient Stephen in *Portrait*. Thus, the hallmark disobedience of the son Stephen figure (albeit apparently more against his mother and motherland than his father both in *Portrait* and *Ulysses*) is now

reinscribed in the son portrayal of *Molloy*, which can be read as a new direction Beckett both endorses and problematizes with regard to the stepfather-stepson relationship that is almost mythologized in *Ulysses*. The necessity of forming a kinship much celebrated in *Ulysses* is now questioned by Moran who feels “superior to one’s son,” expresses “remorse of having begotten” him (T 96), and has intuition into his son’s “odious” feeling toward “the idea of fatherhood” (T 101).

Naturally implied and valued in the compensating father-son relationship is the idea of lineage and succession. While *Molloy* initiates Beckett’s questioning of human kinship along the paternal line, by the third novel of *The Trilogy*, *The Unnamable*, it is defiantly and almost totally banished. The beginning of the middle novel, *Malone Dies*, openly declares itself free of the “bait” of birth fiction to which Malone refuses to “rise” “any more” (T 165), decisively shedding the novel as well as the protagonist of the sense of an ethical obligation which was still, to a large extent, permeating the entangled father-son allusions in *Molloy*. Even though Malone does rehearse the love-hate entanglement in the father-son relationship in the Lamberts in the imagined story of Sapo, this is, after all, safely contained and perhaps eventually cancelled in the self-defeating boredom and bad performance of his story-telling act, as he defines his mission as to “Live and invent” (T 179) and comments on his inventing act as “awful” (T 175) and full of “tedium” several times during the course of story-telling (T 172, 174, 198, 200, 201). In *Malone Dies*, the existential and ethical anxiety is thus disarmingly relegated to the realm of the aesthetic, i.e. Malone’s fictive imagination, thus not posing a threat to the real life situation as has been the case in *Molloy*.

This sort of dismissive gesture finds its extreme expression in *The Unnamable*. The protagonist, the Unnamable, is so non-committed in spirit as to banish “[t]hese notions of forebears” once and for all to the realm of “rhetoric” proper (T 269). His distaste for the idea of “indebtedness” to his fellow creatures (later, clarifying his position, he specifies them as that bunch of “bran-dips, beginning with Murphy” (T 359), a role-call, the reader understands, which naturally includes Moran and Molloy) and even to a father-like God is so troubling that the source of such knowledge poses a destabilizing “puzzle” to the validity and certainty of his existence (T 273). Like other objects surrounding his supposed life, such notion of lineage or kinship belongs to “things that do not exist, or . . . exist perhaps, impossible to know” (T 280). Thus, by the third book of *The Trilogy*, Beckett’s keynote of “impotence” has emerged to declare the post-Joycean direction toward the exact opposite of Joycean “omnipotence.”

Such gestures of non-alignment with Joyce's "omnipotence" can be seen as Beckett's rethinking of the familial establishment, a process which necessarily includes the portrayal of a mother-son relationship. Once again, *Ulysses* is the model, for the portrait of mother-son conflicts and entanglements involving Stephen and his deceased mother in that novel is replicated in *Molloy*. The first part of *Molloy* is devoted to the portrayal of this relationship. Molloy states that all his life "bore on the same question, that of my relations with my mother" and that he "had been going to my mother, with the purpose of establishing our relations on a less precarious footing" (T 80). Such a preoccupation partakes of Stephen's memorable guilt toward both his mother and the motherland which she represents. While Stephen was plagued by the question of the word known to all men, the answer of which hinged on his relationship with his mother, Molloy also experiences an initiation into "true love" from his mother who is given a portrait of ironic composite grotesquery. Trying to remember where the source of knowledge of love is from, Molloy is confused as to who really teaches him "true love, after all?" (T 53). That the answer may be Ruth, Edith, or "another who might have been my mother, and even I think my grandmother" (T 53) creates unsettling ambivalence toward his mother. The displacement of the mother reference onto the grandmother has been seen in Stephen's famous riddle of the fox burying his grandmother which he told to cover up his incompetence as a history pedagogue and inner guilt toward his mother. The heavy entanglement in Stephen's mind of his mother and motherland can now be seen to re-surface in the composite picture of "the same old hag" who is Lousse, Ruth, or his mother, all mixed up in Molloy's memory (T 55).

Whereas this ethnocentric image of the "old hag" (cf. the old hag who sold milk to Stephen and Mulligan in "Telemachus") necessarily reintroduces the Irish-specific allusion to the now seemingly decontextualized portrait of Molloy's mother-son pair, his familial and even sexual identity is at the same time questioned and bracketed. The tie of Molloy to his mother is strangely volatile in terms of their sexual identities. The age factor is so great that it cancels this pair's presupposed familial and sexual identities: Molloy relates that he and his mother "were like a couple of old cronies, sexless, unrelated" (T 18). Their familial givens in their relationship are even ridiculed: Molloy's mother strangely calls him Dan, a name which he suspects to be his father's, so he infers, "I took her for my mother and she took me for my father" (T 18), suggesting an incestuous ambivalence in their relationship. Such ambivalence is embodied in the fact that Molloy has "taken her place," sleeping in her bed and pissing and shitting in her pot (T 9), an ironic way to cement the mother-son lineage. The taking over of her bed inevitably evokes the

memorable bedroom scene of Molly whose reverie as shown in her unpunctuated monologue and whose conducting of bodily function in bed have been immortalized in the "Penelope" chapter. Daniel Katz does suggest the Molloy/Molly kinship on the basis of their monologue (89). However, such kinship, when so suggested, strongly hints at a destabilization in the gender identity of Molloy. At one point Molloy's awareness of a similar predicament, albeit in determining the gender identity of the woman who detains him, is very telling: "Don't be tormenting yourself, Molloy, man or woman, what does it matter?" (T 53).

Not only is Molloy ambivalent when it comes to his gender identity, but he is in no way clear as to his kinship with his mother. It is taken for granted that "a son might bear . . . her [the mother's] stamp" as Moran acknowledges the relationship between Molloy and mother Molloy and with which he convinces himself of Molloy's not being a stranger to him (T 103); however, the strangers whom Molloy encounters do not seem to be convinced of this truism. When "hailed" (T 20) by a sergeant, and finally remembering and crying out his own name, Molloy is confronted with the question twice put to him emphatically by the sergeant: "Is your mother's name Molloy too?" (T 23). Such a question puts in doubt a clear individual or familial identity for Molloy, so much so that he admits, "To apply the letter of the law to a creature like me is not an easy matter" (T 24). If a parricidal tension exists for Jacques toward his father Moran, then a matricidal one exists for Molloy toward his mother. The way to communicate with the deaf and mute mother is full of violence and aggression. Molloy knocks on her skull repeatedly in order to ram in her a few simple codes for *yes*, *no*, *I don't know*, *money*, and *goodbye* (T 18), but, characteristically, Molloy feels "she must have thought I was saying no to her all the time" (T 19). Indeed, Molloy consciously attempts to cancel their relationship out by calling her "Mag" instead of "Ma," because the letter *g* for him succeeds in "abolishing the syllable Ma" (T 18). Their relationship does not hinge on proper names nor a proper mother-son kinship, because "whether to call her Ma, Mag or the Countess Caca" makes no difference to the deaf mother (T 18). Besides, Molloy's memory of his mother is also rather unpleasant. He describes his memory of her as "First taste of the shit" (T 17) and conjectures that his mother "did all she could not to have me" (T 19). Such a non-serviam and abject stance recalls Stephen's defiant and dismissive gesture to his mother. Meanwhile, Molloy's violent treatment of his mother can be seen as parallel to the aggression which Stephen imagined even his mother's ghost had worked on him. It is not surprising to detect Stephen's manner of resolution to disentangle and exile the self from the familial bonds or nets in the ironic portrait of the mother-son lineage in *Molloy*.

Beckett's next *Trilogy* novel represents a new direction toward the radical extrication of familial bonds in the mother-son lineage. *Malone Dies* takes a step forward (or rather, backward) in abstaining from replicating the mother-son conflicts which feature in "Molloy," the first part of *Molloy*. Except for a passing remark—"mother is done for"—and a more dismissive one in the same breath—"perhaps papa is at the party too," completely gone is the entanglement with the mother reference in his own birth story, or "legend" (*T* 207), or it is soon replaced by Malone's figments of the Macmann-Moll liaison, which Malone is quick to "kill" off literally in replacing her with Lemuel who, in turn, finishes off other disappointing characters imagined by Malone. Since the mother-son complex is apparently brushed off, Malone subsequently experiences difficulty with sustaining his own story, betraying a new direction of restraint from retrenching the familiar ground of mother-son conflict as in "Molloy." His lament that "I shall never get born" (*T* 207) ties in with other disappointments he will experience in holding his life and stories together. One typical disappointment entailed in his enterprise of making sense of his own existence in and by means of writing is expressed as "the subject falls far from the verb and the object lands somewhere in the void" (*T* 215). Instead of being troubled by human kinship, Malone suspects that he himself is reduced to being "the last of human kind" (*T* 232), thus forcibly disabling the human kinship to be subject-less and virtually parent-less. Such is the general impasse, impotence, and absence surrounding Malone's uncontrolled writing. After all, *Malone Dies* was initially entitled *L'Absent*.

If we were to trace the (de-)development of Joyce's celebratory, humanistic portrayal of human kinship in Beckett's *Trilogy*, then the third novel *The Unnamable* exemplifies a total and final renunciation of this theme. While Joyce's *Ulysses* famously boasted of its textual effect and achievement of mnemonics upon which the later generation could supposedly rebuild the geographic setting, should Dublin vanish from the world map, Beckett's *The Unnamable* chillingly denies the validity, let alone glory, of human memory, of which kinship forms a vital part. Knowledge of his mother belongs to "innate knowledge" which the Unnamable fights hard against swallowing, given no experiential proof of presence like in the hard case of belief in God (*T* 273). Likewise, knowledge of his forebears, fellow-creatures, and finally "love" (*T* 273)—that four-letter word which has haunted Stephen in *Ulysses*—is relegated to the realm of "obscurities" and "rhetoric" (*T* 269), which constitutes the essence of his nonsensical and untrue memory. The Unnamable reflects: "I knew I had memories, pity they are not of me" (*T* 368) and when stranded feels the need to "make myself a memory" (*T* 379). The

memory of his mother needs to be sought for because it is unavailable. Even if the need to invent his own memory is felt, that of his mother is solicited only “to kill me” (T 360). Stephen in “Circe” cried out “But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king” (U 15.4436-37) and his rebellion against his mother’s entreating prayers climaxed in his smashing of the nightmarish world of the brothel house in shouting “Non serviam” (U 15.4238). Such heat is pared away completely in the Unnamable’s emptying of human kinship by turning the urge to kill, which starts to emerge dangerously in *Malone Dies*, against himself. In a way that harks back to Stephen’s murderous association in *Ulysses*, in *The Unnamable* the mother image ceases to be nourishing or to matter at all; on the contrary, in light of the mother’s absence, the son must “be born and born,” engendering “births for nothing” (T 368) in and by means of his imagination.

As witnessed in the course of *The Trilogy*, the dislodging and exiling of human kinship comes to the fore to make a decisive break with the humanistic celebration in *Ulysses* and will prove the beginning cue Beckett takes up toward establishing a more radical art of exile aiming at dispossessing other identity clusters. Familial and sexual identities aside, *Molloy* is most significant in removing civil, geopolitical and finally even linguistic identities. The Dublin citizenship could not have been more emphasized and satirized in *Ulysses* (e.g. in the portrait of the allegorically named character Citizen in “Cyclops”), but the practice of exiling identities in *Molloy* dispels this civil identity totally. Not only is the reference to Dublin completely gone, but even the surrogate form of a sort of civil identity is being ridiculed, too. Moran is said to come from Turdy, the hub of Turdyba, whereas Molloy is presumably from Bally, the hub of Ballyba. The excremental reference in the name of Moran’s town implies the bodily function which Bloom was known to enjoy and did not hesitate to indulge in. However, the rule of appellation of the towns and their domain implies self-cancellation. According to Moran’s explanation, Ballyba refers to the town Bally and its domains, whereas Ballybaba the domains exclusive of Bally itself (T 123). It is as if the prolonged syllable “ba” in the domains of Ballybaba cancels the reference to Bally itself, the logic of which strangely resembles the added “g” in Molloy’s way of calling his mother in order to cancel out the syllable “ma.” Except for these dubious proper names, the civil identities for the main characters could not be vaguer. Slightly more identifiable geographical references are made by means of the adjective “urban,” and words “town” and “the island,” as in Molloy’s describing a man, A or C (he is not sure), “returning to the town he had just left” perhaps “from the other end of the

island even" (T 13). However, later from Moran's investigation, it can be known clearly, it seems, that Bally "was on the sea" (T 123-24). Moreover, despite its vagueness, the town Bally is known for producing "amulets, paper-knives, napkin-rings, rosaries and other knick-knacks" (T 124). Thus, the references to rosaries and "the island" can correspond to Moran's Catholic belief and its connection with the Catholic Ireland.

Indeed, the dialectics between vagueness and clarity of reference, or decontextualization and recontextualization, constitutes the new tension in Beckett's art of exile. The second half of *Molloy* is referentially more concrete and identifiable. Moran possesses distinct properties to which he clings and which he at one point catalogues as "My trees, my bushes, my flower-beds, my tiny lawns" (T 117), to mention only a few of them. The list must eventually include his son, too. His domineering possession of his son betrays their kinship as part of the capitalist logic of possession. Besides, his middle class background is unmistakable, too. He works for a large institution doing professional "peeping and prying" (T 86), though he never gets to know other employees, i.e. agents, from it. He hires a cook, Martha, and gives orders like a man in control. His religious practice is well known even to his neighbors who know about his habits of worshipping on Sundays (T 90). The concern with receiving the body of Christ and not committing sacrilege is greatly on his mind. In keeping with his disposition, Moran describes his mind as "methodical" (T 90) and emphasizes that he abhors "vagueness" (T 91). However, the vagueness embedded in the Molloy affair gradually undermines the stability he has enjoyed in all aspects so far. He departs from his organized home, embarks on a journey into side roads with his son, and eventually is infested with leg trouble and abandoned by his son in the forest. He describes himself on this journey in the following terms: "banished from my house, from my garden, lose my trees, my lawns, my birds . . . lose and be banished from the absurd comforts of my home . . . without which I could not bear being a man" (T 122). The journey is in essence, to use his own words in his report, a "long anguish of vagrancy and freedom" (T 122). While "freedom" evokes existential freedom thereby aligning Beckett's work with existentialism, the experience of "vagrancy" or "tramping" (T 128) is essentially the new direction which Beckett takes up from Stephen-Joyce in engaging himself with the new (Irish) art.

In discussing Beckett's famous "interrogation of subjective positing," the engagement of which starts to surface in *Molloy*, Daniel Katz describes Beckett as "post-Joycean" (139) in his "return" to the distinct Joycean concern, thus highlighting the in effect dialectical lineage between both writers. *The Trilogy* can

be identified as carrying out Joyce's dislocating and exiling of class identity and integrity. The Bloomian, bourgeois home is emphatically crumbled in "Moran," the second part of *Molloy*; as Moran puts it, "a frenzied collapsing of all that had always protected me from all I was condemned to be" (T 137). "Moran" is about Moran's "growing resignation of being dispossessed of self" (T 137). In a more drastic vein, *Malone Dies* actually features a more distinct kind of "home," an asylum really as the resting place for Malone, the nature of which, either belonging to "a private institution or run by the State" (T 244), dispossesses the protagonist of his proper sense of "home." *The Unnamable* severely problematizes the representation of home in so harsh a tone that it evokes not only Stephen's more radical act of defiance in fleeing the many nets that ensnared him, but also the pseudo-homeless (being key-less) Bloom's wandering of Dublin city all day on Bloomsday. Indeed, not only Stephen, but also Bloom in *Ulysses* has lived out the life of an exile to a more extreme extent. In exile from his own home, Bloom experienced, acted out, and finally exemplified a (Joycean) art of exile. Forced to roam Dublin city on Bloomsday, Bloom lived his every moment in exile. He acted out a life un-identical to his true self, pretending to be or being recognized as someone else. Such not-being-with-oneself constitutes the core of the exiled identity, which Bloom has unconsciously assumed in reaction to the domestic, patriarchal, civil, religious, nationalistic, and racial dictates at work in his time. The now disembodied Unnamable forsakes the attempt to look for or even reach home any more. Instead, he settles for a make-believe version of home by willing it in his imagination: "if I could put myself in a room . . . I'd be home, I'd say what it's like, in my home" while admitting almost in the same breath that "I feel no place, no place round me, there's no end to me" (T 367), openly revoking any lingering illusion of a physical or emotional sense of home. By the third part of *The Trilogy*, the first-person narrative voice is officially disembodied and the objects and allusions it refers to are bound to be exiled from their ultimate referents, since the solipsistic voice has all along failed to be verified by an external world.

Thus, Beckett's *Trilogy*, just as much as Joyce's *Ulysses*, brings into relief a circulating Irish theme of the conflict between "domestication and exile" (Harvey 67). Elucidating Harvey's point twenty years later, John Harrington has most lucidly pinpointed "the presence in Beckett's work of a dialectic of self and place and the antinomies of home and abroad" (147). Harrington traces the literary-historical-(anti-) Irish Revivalist development of such dichotomy to the prominent examples of Yeats and Joyce: the former propounds "[t]he model of

attachment to place, of establishment at home, and the use of imaginative provincialism” while the latter’s “superiority to intellectual provincialism” prescribes “[t]he model of exile” (158). He agrees that, given Beckett’s association with Joyce, his own hostility toward the Irish homeland, and “reduction of identifiable references to Ireland in his most influential works,” Beckett’s works exemplify the Joycean model of exile (158), reinforcing “the superannuation of the sense of home” (159).

While affirming the Joyce-Beckett correlation and lineage in terms of the model of exile, Harrington, however, admits to the ambiguity of the direction *Molloy* takes: whereas “attraction of both home and away” can be seen activated in the novel, *Molloy*, in point of fact, highlights “an impasse between these alternatives” (159). Harrington’s lucid observation, however, fails to clarify or emphasize the decisive qualitative difference and therefore the significance Beckett’s new art of exile poses in opposition to Joyce’s model. This difference and significance must be sought especially in Beckett’s dialectical treatment and portrayal of national and finally linguistic identities first and foremost in *Molloy* and other *Trilogy* novels, in addition to the above-discussed dialectic of vagueness and distinctness of allusion to individual, familial, sexual, class, geopolitical, and civil identities.

In the same vein as the earlier quoted “old hag” reference which is both diluting and evoking the Irish image, “the island” (*T* 13) is probably the closest but also an ambiguous allusion to Beckett’s and Joyce’s Ireland in *Molloy*. Harrington cites a later fellow Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen’s misplaced pride in being Irish to reflect on Beckett’s ambiguous portrayal and topographical allusion to his homeland. She confesses having been misled by the Anglo-Irish speech into “tak[ing] ‘Ireland’ and ‘island’ to be synonymous,” and thus having developed a sense of pride in her own country for being a “prototype”; even England “was an ‘ireland’ (or, a sub-Ireland)—an imitation” (13; Harrington 159). Molloy describes that he leaves “this accursed country” to begin his “unreal journey” toward his mother (*T* 17). It seems that the identity of his homeland is, at most, as he puts it, just as “wrapped in a namelessness often hard to penetrate” as his own “sense of identity” (*T* 30). For the “Molloy” section it is his mother’s room which Molloy occupies now and “the island” from one end of which Molloy observes a stranger coming that together, at best, evoke and form a “prototype” (*pace* Bowen) to the allusion to Beckett’s Ireland. Echoing such vagueness in national reference, Lousse gives a satirical portrait of her deceased husband and his view of the so-called homeland: her departed husband fell “in defense of a country that called itself his

and from which in his lifetime he never derived the smallest benefit, but only insults and vexation" (T 32). It is also at this juncture that Molloy expects but is also dismayed by Lousse's supposed display of feelings toward her deceased dog by saying "Tears and laughter, they are so much Gaelic to me" (T 35). This Irish reference is treated in an ironical way, relegating Gaelic language to the status of a foreign, abstruse language. Or else, provincialism is emphasized in terms of sexual taboos, which immediately suggests the locality of Ireland: still recalling his sojourn at Lousse's and her implied sexual connection with him, Molloy admits that "It is true they were extraordinarily reserved, in my part of the world, about everything connected with sexual matters" (T 55). If the idea of belonging to the homeland does ever come up, it is something to be dispelled: speaking of the wave, Molloy finds it ineffectual in that "it bears me from no fatherland away, bears me onward to no shipwreck" (T 48). Molloy's wish, like the non-serving Stephen's at the end of *Portrait*, is to be borne away from his "fatherland." Even when a mock home reference is hinted at, this urge for taking off, for exile, is so strong that he expresses "far more than to know what town I was in, my haste was now to leave it, even were it the right one" (T 60). Just as characteristic of Molloy's movement is non-movement—he intuits: "it was the only way to progress, to stop" (T 72)—so the Irish home reference is more often than not cancelled whenever alluded to in "Molloy." Thus, characteristically, the name of his hometown escapes him most of the time (T 77), as in his earlier acknowledgement of "namelessness" around which his own identity is wrapped (T 30).

The more class-identifiable Moran has the following qualification for populist conceptions of "history" and "geography," those familiar components of Irish, nationalist thinking: "the dates of battles, revolutions, restorations and other exploits of the human race, in its slow ascension towards the light, and for the configuration of frontiers, the height of mountain peaks" (T 120). However, even when starting out to possess distinct familial, class, and religious identities, Moran is experiencing dispossession of identities rapidly, including the sense of belonging to what Harrington terms "place." On realizing his intrusion into a farmer's land, Moran cries out, "What was I doing on his land? If there is one question I dread, to which I have never been able to invent a satisfactory reply, it is the question what am I doing. And on someone else's land to make things worse! And at night!" (T 159). In addition to the outcry of existential doubt, the *raison d'être* for being in one place and not in another becomes increasingly challenged.

While *Molloy* starts to toy with the dialectic play between clarity and vagueness of reference, *Malone Dies* goes a step further in exploring how arbitrary (i.e. clear and distinct) and diffused (i.e. vague and indistinct) in evocative meaning the given (Irish) geopolitical reference can be at the same time. Going against the increasingly diffused geopolitical reference of *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* makes clear reference to an institution now detaining Malone, named Saint John of Gods, and to its possible association with “the State” (*T* 244), thus betraying the Irish-specific reference. Almost the only other Irish-specific reference is to an island where Lady Pedal takes the inmates for an excursion. Like a good tourist guide, she introduces the island’s Druid past to them (*T* 263). This Druid heritage is a consolidation of an otherwise consistently diffused allusion, as in “Molloy,” to a vague “island” from which Malone is said to have come (*T* 249). Given such clear and distinct socio-political echoes, what has actually cemented the emergence of the dialectic between clarity and vagueness of Irish geo- and socio-political references in *Malone Dies* is his official stance of impotence and debilitation in composing his art. Malone makes such debilitation clear in “My notes have a curious tendency . . . to annihilate all they purport to record” (*T* 238). His stories of Sapo, the Lamberts, and even Macmann exemplify a vague and indistinct poetics wrought with “dislocated fragments, which fail to be assimilated into an ‘authentic’ identity, history, or language” (McMullen 95). The now incompetent creator concedes, in his many failing and dislocated fragments, that he cannot resist the urge to abandon his story-telling act several times due to the accumulating boredom and tedium. Openly abandoning his imagining of Sapo and the Lamberts, and unabashedly moving to alternative imagining of Macmann, Malone admits “the subject falls far from the verb and the object lands somewhere in the void” (*T* 215) in his writing. Thus, to carry out his new “separative” (as opposed to “conjunctive”) art (Connor 104), even when the more Irish-distinct references appear, they assume a heavily qualified and even problematic tone—Malone insists that it is unknown whether Saint John of Gods is state-run or not; when Lady Pedal declares to the inmates about the Druid history of the island, Malone literally separates her two words of “Druid remains” with a screaming blank on the page, which he much earlier has admitted to work an annihilating effect on his writing and which “lands” the “authentic” object reference of Ireland’s supposed Celtic past literally “somewhere in the void.” As if to echo Joyce’s encyclopedic and omnipotent textual aspiration in *Ulysses*, Malone plays with the idea of representing “the island” as his “last effort” (*T* 262) to hark back to the Joycean reflection on the Irish reference. However, one clearly sees a wide difference between the two textual gestures by the end of *Malone Dies* which ends

in textual gaps and reference killing (literally by the hatchet of Lemuel/Malone/Samuel Beckett).

Beckett's *Trilogy* narrators, being writers and artists in essence, all inherit from their literary father, Joyce, and their younger brother, Stephen, the knack of configuring portraits and telling stories. The Unnamable summarizes such hereditary feat in the phrase, "I who am so good at topography" (T 369). However, the Unnamable's post-mortem abstraction and disembodiment run contrary to the knack of artistic configuration on which hang the hopes of imagining a way out of his absurd bordering state of absence and presence at the same time. Worm's ridiculous state of being stuck in a jar does feature a concrete Parisian setting, finally in line with the novelist's adopted language medium. However, in *The Unnamable* almost no socio- or geo-political references to Ireland can be detected. The Unnamable forcibly renounces the search for "home"—"I won't seek my home any more" (T 369). Prominent in *The Unnamable* is the entangling dialectics of "here" and "elsewhere," "home" and "far"—still in line with the dialectics observed by Harrington to dominate modern Irish literature. Even though the novel is written in French, given the author Beckett's Irish origin, the allusion, or, for that matter, denial of "home" necessarily evokes Ireland. *The Unnamable* propounds a poetics of absence in terms of geographical, social, and national references. Being "far from here" (T 369) is the end result and is testimony to the Unnamable's failing in topography; the concluding picture of "I'm far again, there I am absentee again" (T 380) seals the final state of absence, approximating the objective of silence that constitutes the Unnamable's logic-defeating task in the third novel of *The Trilogy*. He is here and elsewhere at the same time—"I was never elsewhere, here is my elsewhere" (T 370).

The Trilogy testify to the eventual and finally radical collapsing of the last set of identity cluster—that of linguistic logic. This starts to feature prominently in *Molloy*. Whereas the urge to secure a sense of place, or a sort of national identity, can be detected to be at work, it is also at this time that Beckett's characters come into clash with the linguistic logic and law at their worst. Molloy's confrontation with the sergeant reveals his conflict with not only the establishment but the linguistic law. The sergeant's questioning of his name reveals the dangerous shifting ground of the proper name, or the (transcendental) Signified. Then, at Lousse's, Molloy experiences a self-estrangement: "I had forgotten who I was (excusably) and spoken of myself as I would have of another, if I had been compelled to speak of another. . . . [I] strut before my eyes, like a stranger" (T 40).

Then, even for the less existentially reflective Moran, similar disorientation with language also occurs. Even before embarking on the journey to find Molloy, he

already comes to the awareness that “all language was an excess of language” (*T* 107). When all the time giving a report to Youdi, Moran makes a self-reflexive remark concerning the problem of narration: “What rabble in my head, what a gallery of moribunds. . . . Stories, stories, I have not been able to tell them. I shall not be able to tell this one” (*T* 126). His being unconvinced by the stories which he tells poses a parallel to the experience of meeting a stranger at his shelter after his son abandons him. He notices that this man who has a stick with him has an “accent” “of a foreigner or of one who had lost the habit of speech” (*T* 135). The foreign accent, along with the stranger’s speech and the internal foreignness in Moran’s report and Molloy’s struggling with words, may be Beckett’s key resonance as well as ambivalence in his new Irish art which both toys with and denies reference to national and linguistic identities.

Recalling the analogy to the irreducibly foreign-sounding Gaelic which Molloy makes about Lousse’s tears, *Molloy* is essentially a portrait of quasi-Irish anti-heroes as tramps and foreigners, in effect. In the same spirit as the wandering Jew figure of Bloom in *Ulysses*, the tramping itinerary both narrators of *Molloy* undertake has resulted in a great dispossession, layer by layer, of their proper identities. However, such dispossession must hark back to Stephen’s habit, in his art of exile, of dislodging the referent from the signified, as demonstrated in the riddle of the fox burying his grandmother, the rewriting of the vampire poem, and the cunning “Parable of the Plum.” Lopez-Vicuna has brilliantly analyzed Joyce’s awareness that “language shapes affiliation and estrangement” (141) which Stephen’s and Bloom’s language has put into effect: “their language is a language exiled from itself, always ambivalent, always undercutting itself” (142). Such linguistic awareness generates “a micropolitics of language that employs obliqueness and non-affirmation as strategies not only to resist propaganda but also to critique the whole notion of conviction” (Lopez-Vicuna 142). It is significant that Joyce connects his own experience of being an exile and the new linguistic awareness of “failure” in his art in that the latter is essentially “the experience of being ‘at a loss for words’” which, specifically speaking, are “words that express affiliation, love, loyalty, [that] have become burdensome and constraining, like so many nets flung at [Joyce] to keep him down” (Lopez-Vicuna 143). This non-assertive strategy on the part of Joyce, Stephen, and Bloom can be shown to have been radicalized in Beckett’s *Trilogy* to engineer a “politics of language” (Lopez-Vicuna 150) or the so-called “voluntary minority in literature” (Deleuze and Guattari 18) which refers to modern artists’ preference for “uncertain identity” (Connor 103). Beginning with *Molloy*, Beckett’s *Trilogy* hinges on the art of failure.

His famous statement in his discussion of Van Velde that “to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world” (*Three Dialogues* 125) bears out the Joyce-Beckett lineage in terms of this art of failure.

The way in which Molloy is using but actually being confined by clichés is a good demonstration of how such an art of failure or exile works. After leaving Lousse’s, Molloy enters a town and finds that “There must have been a touch of autumn in the air, as the saying is” (*T* 56). In describing his roving about the town, Molloy encounters difficulties with words especially related to a chapel: “At the end there were two recesses, no that’s not the word, opposite each other”; “I entered one of the alcoves, wrong again, and leaned against the wall” (*T* 57). Finally he gets the description right: “a few minutes later I crossed the alley into the other chapel, that’s the word” (*T* 57), reassuring himself with the correct use of the word at last. At a loss for the right name, Molloy attempts to ask directions from the charcoal burner of his town by a circumspect way: “I could not ask him the way to my town, the name of which escaped me still. I asked him the way to the nearest town, I found the necessary words and accents” (*T* 70). Daniel Katz analyzes that clichés suggest “otherness speaking through us” (130) and Molloy’s sense of being outcast from the referents of the words which he himself wields does suggest this internal alienation and exile created by the previously-mentioned dialectic between decontextualization and recontextualization at work at the linguistic level. Molloy’s “that’s not the word” and “wrong again” suggest the failing of context for his verbal expression; however, “as the saying is,” “that’s the word,” and his finding “the necessary words and accents” reaffirm the “otherness” which conventionalizes and thus recontextualizes the linguistic identity. This linguistic experience of identity and non-identity, or homing and exiling experience, actually bears upon and entangles the existential-philosophical quandary of the first-person narrators in *Molloy*.

Plagued by the sense of failure in arriving at the final, transcendent meaning in their quests—in Molloy’s not being able to answer the policeman’s question, “What are you doing there?” (*T* 20), his own questioning of the credibility of Lousse’s gender and its connection with his own narrative (*T* 53), his forgetting the name of his own town (*T* 77), and in Moran’s questioning of whether he is going to “endure the long anguish of vagrancy and freedom” and his sensing the imminent total banishment from his established homestead—Molloy and Moran have come to and acted out not only existential but linguistic awareness of exiled identities. Molloy comes to self-reflexive admission that “the icy words hail down upon me, the icy meanings, and the world dies too, foully named. All I know is what the

words know, and the dead things, and that makes a handsome little sum, with a beginning, a middle and an end as in the well-built phrase and the long sonata of the dead" (T 31). Similarly, Moran is also linguistically defeated by the "rabble" in his head composed of "Murphy, Watt, Yerk, Mercier and all the others." He admits that "I would never have believed that—yes, I believe it willingly. Stories, stories. I have not been able to tell them. I shall not be able to tell this one" (T 126).

Such exiling of linguistic references reaches its most thorough (and notorious) climax in *The Unnamable*, this time involving the vacating of the pronoun reference. To stretch to "aporia," to use the novel's own word (T 267), *The Unnamable* carries the deadlock *ad absurdum* of *Malone Dies*. Speaking beyond death, the first-person Unnamable ushers in an utterly exiled voice and style, abandoning not only geo-politically identifiable logic, but eventually the linguistic one. The Unnamable must first settle with a disclosure of the self-exiling reality: "I am far, far" (T 372). Then his subject is exiled from its first-person pronoun identity. It must proliferate into third-person pronouns—he or they, or other new proper names such as Basil, Mahood, Worm, or other recycled ones such as the titular names "beginning with Murphy" including Molloy, Malone, Mercier and Moran (T 359, 371). As if to follow the footsteps of Stephen who was keen on deciphering "Signatures of all things" (U 3.2) in the beginning of *Ulysses*, the Unnamable carries out Stephen's vision of the artist to "weave and unweave his image" (U 9.377) literally. That is, the Unnamable conducts the various, vociferous, cunning fabrication of either his creatures' or, virtually, his own birth fictions—an ongoing act echoing Stephen's in its cunning spirit, that is, to "weave, weave" (T 312). However, the Unnamable also takes the new Stephen artist's pronouncement seriously: it is "other me" and "I am other I now" (U 3.182, 9.205) that the Unnamable is most keen on exploring—hence the proliferation of proper names. As if to exaggerate Stephen's prominent confusion of pronouns in his famous re-writing of Douglas Hyde's translation of the vampire poem, the slippage from "mouth to my mouth" (U 7.525) to "mouth to her mouth's kiss" (U 3.398) actually sets the stage for the Unnamable's differential play and mutation among proper names, pronouns, and finally the narrator's own persistent anonymity. All his verbal endeavors not only denounce all the shifting pronouns—"it's the fault of the pronouns . . . no pronoun for me" (T 372)—and exile the signatory references from them, but also ultimately point to the final absenteeism of his ego and utterance.

Thus, more and more intensely and urgently, Beckett calls into question the status and identity of the first-person pronoun of "I," so much so that this solicits Daniel Katz's most incisive comment: he suggests that the grammatical component

of the pronoun “I” in Beckett is virtually a “cliché” which “one can never do other than cite” and duly attributes such failure in “the grammar of appropriation” to a display of “variations on the Joycean problematic” on Beckett’s part (136). Katz has accentuated “the dominant figure of the cliché in *Ulysses*” (133) “as seen in Stephen Dedalus’s myriad poetic clichés which serve to deflate his ascendance to the sublime, or in the more complex structural embedding of the cliché in *Ulysses*” (128). The pinpointing of Stephen’s art is of much relevance to Beckett’s “post-Joycean” departure from Stephen-Joyce’s art of exile. We have seen that Beckett has gone one radical step forward to dislodge and thus decontextualize the fixed referents from his characters’ many layers of identities and allow more “freedom” and “otherness” in this drastically reduced, but new reference-making process in *The Trilogy*.

The most radical dispossession of linguistic identity can be seen attempted in Beckett’s turn to writing in French starting from the first of *Trilogy* novels. In addition to Beckett’s own comment on the hopeless lack of precision of the English language², Alvarez’s gloss that “To write in French meant escaping from the whole weight of the Irish rhetoric Beckett had been born to, with its insidious cadences and genius for baroque linguistic flourish” (40-41) underlines Beckett’s desire to decontextualize the Irish-linguistic reference. Barbara Reich Gluck elaborates Beckett’s linguistic repudiation to suggest even a subconscious disconnection with Joyce: while granting Beckett’s turning to French “affirmed Beckett’s exile from Ireland and his integration into the life and culture of his adopted country, France,” Gluck suggests that “Beckett’s literary gallicization may also represent a subconscious desire on his part to get out from under Joyce’s shadow by turning away from the language of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*” (106). Thus, it seems, an inalienable connection or identity with Ireland, Anglo-Irish, and finally Joyce himself is all entangled in the medium of the English language which Beckett consciously banishes in his post-war writings. It is then admittedly in the first of his *Trilogy* that Beckett pursues a style consciously and actively purged of concrete class, gender, civil, political, racial, and finally linguistic identities.

To all intents and purposes, however, one or two linguistic scenarios do enact and dramatize the destabilizing conflict between the style of decontextualization and the effect of recontextualization. That is, first, the irreducible, distinctive Irish

² Using the protagonist Belacqua of his first novel *Dream to Fair to Middling Women* as a mouthpiece, Beckett spells out his discontent with the English language: “Perhaps only the French language can give you the thing you want” (in *Disjecta* 47)

surname “Molloy” is left to stand isolated but emphatic as the title of Beckett’s first *Trilogy* novel in the midst of the deliberately adopted foreign-language-spoken textual space. Acknowledging Beckett’s act to banish Irish-specific reference in his works, David Wheatley, however, argues that “The surer Beckett’s modernist prohibitions on any lingering Irishness in his texts, the surer the ultimate return of this factor completely unabated” (134-45) and he cites Frederic Jameson in arguing that Beckett’s attempt to minimize Irishness remains, at most, an “impure minimalism” which continues to “allow this Irishness to show through” (135). Such complicated, dialectical process of renunciation, on the one hand, and reaffirmation, on the other, is actually and ironically locked into the title itself.

David Weisberg grants that the titular name Molloy does impart “Irish authenticity” because of “[i]ts unavoidable reference to Anglicized Irish ethnicity” which distinguishes itself in the novel’s “lack of reference to historical time and place” (94). Obviously, the name and symbolism of Molloy have triggered critics to comment on the problematics and dialectics it generates. Maintaining the ironic testimony to the authentic Irishness consciously banished by the author of the French *Molloy*, Weisberg, however, also stresses in the same stroke the paradox in the so-called “Irish name” of Molloy in that it is also “a stereotyped, derisive image of an Irish peasantry” (94). Stereotyping, after all, falls into the same logic of linguistic clichés which have been pointed out by Daniel Katz to be informed by irreducible alterity in their constitution. Indeed, what Katz has expounded on the titular name of one of Beckett’s early novels, *Murphy*, can be said about the title *Molloy*, too: Without the first name, the name *Murphy* (and now in this case, *Molloy*) really “fails to be a name” in that it is “a proper name” but in effect “common or shared” (28), thereby virtually “instigating the effect of anonymity” (28-29). Tyrus Miller even expands a similar point to qualifying almost all of Beckett’s deliberately chosen titles: “Beckett’s titles are purposely empty signs: abstractions, ‘common’ names, or even puns [which undermine teleology as in ‘an undistinguished name like *Watt* (what?)’]” (195) Thus, while the name *Molloy* does conjure up “lingering Irishness” (Wheatley 135) which Beckett consciously attempts to eradicate overall in the novel, it ironically diffuses its distinct ethnic reference at the same time, essentially being a typecast name.

To explain the scenario from a deconstructive perspective, Leslie Hill most lucidly analyzes the self-other problematic in Beckett’s turn to French. Hill convincingly argues that in rendering himself to a non-native language system, Beckett displaces his “self” and must confront “others” (39). The second language, when learned through the medium of the first, which Hill proposes to be the case

with Beckett, “becomes grafted onto the mother tongue, which it supplements, displaces, extends, complicates, usually entangles” (37). Actually starting with *Molloy*, writing in French for Beckett actively and inherently dramatizes the self-other problematic:

The effect of the name as a title, as Molloy, on the first page of a text written in French is something no other language can render. It opens up, within French, a space of strangeness, a pocket of otherness, a borderline with Irish English, which suddenly begins to exist in “French.” This effect is rigorously untranslatable. (Hill 53)

Thus, the Irish proper names’ alterity to the French language is never dissolved even by translation. It occupies “a space on the edge of ordinary language” (Hill 53).

Another cross-cultural or -linguistic scenario occurs to a similar effect as the irreducible alterity of Irishness to the French translation. That is an irreducible presence of Irish reference in spite of the radical regime of minimalism adopted in *Malone Dies*. Malone’s evident role as a story teller necessarily harks back to the narrator/author’s Irish origin. Harrington analyzes it most lucidly: “As liberating as it seems for [Malone] to shed the conventions of narrative fiction, the enterprise also entraps him in the culture-specific role of *senanchie*, or storyteller, and all the historical freight that comes with that designation” (160). As Beckett’s new style paring away excrescence of geo-socio-political references starts to take effect, the remaining/minimal tie to this archetypal Irish story-teller stands out even more strikingly. Thus, his new style features a dialectic, or opposition, “of the historical and political against the personal . . . and the more generally humanistic” and thus juggles “between local and universal identifications” (Harrington 163). Likewise, Steven Connor observes that “Beckett’s politics concern the relation between the separative and the conjunctive” (104). Therein, one can argue, lies Beckett’s new (Irish) politics.

From the polemics and dynamics generated by the untranslatable Anglo-Irish name of Molloy into Beckett’s newly adopted French language and Malone’s irreducible Gaelic-Irish connotation in the story-teller role, we can finally arrive at a formulation of the new Irish art monumentally initiated by Stephen-Joyce. We have seen that Beckett decisively adopts a far more radical kind of self-imposed exile than Stephen-Joyce’s for his *Trilogy* protagonists-narrators, consciously exiling themselves and the texts from specific familial, gender, class, civil, geopolitical,

national, and linguistic identities. Apparently attempting to achieve a new art of failure, a referential minimalism, and finally an art of exile, Beckett's act of linguistic border-crossing, however, ferments a dynamic, experimental aesthetics hovering between the two options of decontextualization and recontextualization, abroad and home, exile and arrival. In Joyce's and Beckett's works, the idea of conclusion, or home identity, is categorically being interrogated. Their oeuvres demonstrate that "all homelands are more or less hallucinations," on the basis of which Steven Connor reaffirms and re-contextualizes Beckett's Irish identity that "Beckett is the most Irish of writers" (104). However, Beckett goes one radical step further in bringing into sharp relief the experience of "an exile endlessly embodied within language" which Kathleen Shields observes occurring in many of his "self-translations" (179), officially launched in Beckett's turn toward another language beginning with the first of *The Trilogy*. Beckett's turn to French explicitly expresses a desire to distance his new writing self "from a claustrophobic domestic literary culture" (Shields 180), which has had constrained Joyce and his alter ego, Stephen Dedalus. Weisberg also argues that the blatant fact that Beckett eschews Anglo-English for French is a powerful indication that he "had no intention in being an Irish writer and throughout his works he parodies such a notion."

That is to say, Beckett "rejected the notion of national literatures altogether" (176). However, the radical abstraction and denial of the ethnic or national identity in *The Trilogy* takes on a complicated redoubling when the Anglo-Irish references and implication remain inviolate and even get revived in their resistance to full translatability into French. If the first of *Trilogy* initiates Beckett's subsequent art of failure which ultimately unwrites itself toward minimalism primarily by immobilizing the protagonists' physical movement and by silencing their verbal and thought flows, then, what is starting to take place in *Molloy* and taken up in the subsequent *Trilogy* novels also testifies to the dynamic remainder which such an act of exiling discernible identities fails to undo completely. It is in this conscious and unconscious interplay between decontextualization and recontextualization that Beckett experiments with a new identity politics as generated in the linguistic border-crossing scenario. Thus, the route of exile initiated by Moran and Molloy, followed through by the succeeding *Trilogy* narrators, proves to be as de-politicizing and at the same time as re-politicizing about the "Irishness" as inscribed in Stephen-Joyce's art.

Works Cited

- Alvarez, A. *Samuel Beckett*. New York: Viking, 1973.
- Beckett, Samuel. *The Beckett Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. London: John Calder, 1959.
- _____. *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*. London: John Calder, 1983.
- _____. *Proust and Three Dialogues*. London: Calder & Boyars, 1970.
- Bowen, Elizabeth. *Seven Winters and Afterthoughts*. New York: Knopf, 1962.
- Connor, Steven. "Over Samuel Beckett's Dead Body." *Beckett in Dublin*. Ed. S. E. Wilmer. Dublin: The Lilliput P, 1992. 100-08.
- Deleuz, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986.
- Gluck, Barbara Reich. *Beckett and Joyce: Friendship and Fiction*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1979.
- Graver, L., and R. Federman, eds. *Samuel Beckett: The Critical Tradition*. Boston: Routledge, 1985.
- Hill, Leslie. *Beckett's Fiction: In Different Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Harrington, John P. *The Irish Beckett*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1991.
- Harvey, Lawrence. *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Late Modernism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic*. London: Verso, 1990.
- Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: Viking, 1964.
- _____. *Ulysses*. New York: Vintage, 1986.
- Katz, Daniel. *Saying I No More: Subjectivity and Consciousness in the Prose of Samuel Beckett*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1999.
- Lopez-Vicuna, Ignacio. "But on the Other Hand: The Language of Exile and the Exile of Language in *Ulysses*." *Joyce and the City: The Significance of Place*. Ed. Michael Begnal. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2002. 141-50.
- McMullen, Anna. "Irish/Postcolonial Beckett." *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies*. Ed. Lois Oppenheim. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 89-109.
- Miller, Tyrus. *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts between the World Wars*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999.
- Shields, Kathleen. "Stotious Boats: Exile in Irish Translations of Rimbaud's *Bateau ivre*." *Exiles and Migrants: Crossing Thresholds in European Culture and Society*. Ed. Anthony Coulson. Sussex: Sussex Academic P, 1997. 175-84.
- Weisberg, David. *Chronicles of Disorder: Samuel Beckett and the Cultural Politics*

of the Modern Novel. Albany: State UP of New York, 2000.

Wheatley, David. "Undecidable Imperatives: Notes on Beckett in the Modern and Postmodern." *Irishness and (Post) Modernism*. Ed. John S. Rickard. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1994. 127-58.

About the Author

Li-ling Tseng (曾麗玲) is Professor of English at National Taiwan University. She is the author of *Textual Politics of Ulysses* (Taipei: Bookman, 2001). Her scholarly articles have appeared in *Beckett on and on . . .* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson P, 1996), *Twentieth Century Literature*, *James Joyce Quarterly*, *NTU Studies in Language and Literature*, *Fu-Jen Studies*, *Chung-Wai Literary Monthly*, among others.
Email: liltseng@ntu.edu.tw

[Received 5 August 2008; accepted 15 January 2009; revised 15 February 2009]