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26

PRISMATIC JOYCE

Edited by
Sabrina Alonso and William Brockman

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1.
PRISMATIC JOYCE

Carmela Esposito

GIACOMO'S PRISM: A JOYCEAN OUTLOOK ON RECORDING MEMORY

Abstract: Often referred to as the "Trieste diary", *Giacomo Joyce* (1968) reveals details of Joyce's private life unlike any other work by the author. Indeed, it serves as an introspective account of his affair with an Italian pupil whose mysterious identity continues to puzzle Joyceans. Despite its brevity, not only does it represent the only Trieste-based work by Joyce, but also a prompt for later writings, and thus, a powerful tool for their interpretation. The image of the prism is commonly used to refer to the clarification of or distortion afforded by a particular viewpoint. Interestingly, "prism" shares a phonetic similarity with the term "prison": not an instrument that readily emits light but one that hinders it. These contrasting images are particularly fitting if likened to the amount of shadowgraphy at play in *Giacomo Joyce*. Indeed, by offering a glimpse into undisclosed private matters, and shedding light on opaque events, the manuscript could be reappraised as one of Joyce's most prismatic works. Inscribed on a school notebook, *Giacomo*'s epiphanic style of prose poetry and formless form establishes it as one of the quintessential modernist journals; the entries are significantly disrupted by large sections of blank spaces allowing for a multitude of different readings and decodings. This paper aims to investigate the many ways in which the fragmentary nature of such chronicles matches the fragmented self of the Triestine exile by analysing the manuscript with a multidisciplinary approach that entails semiotics, literature review, poetic criticism, and more.

Keywords: fragmentary style, *Giacomo Joyce*, Joycean manuscript, minor literature, minor works

Literature and criticism around *Giacomo Joyce* (1968) appeared in various waves. With the term "waves", that wondrous Woolfian title, I do not simply mean to describe the undulatory sequencing of time during which

critics directed their attention towards this peculiarly minute artefact. On the contrary, I intend it as the exact movement that the word recalls – in its constant give-and-take and perpetual kiss to the shore – the continuous motion reminding us that everything changes. It is rare for academic criticism, often partial to its scientific rigour, to wish to make the very essence of a literary work to surface. Joycean scholarship is no exception. The main waves of scholarly attention around the mysterious manuscript, amounting only to a small number of entries in the maze of Joycean bibliography, can be distinguished as follows: a first wave coinciding with the text's posthumous publication in 1968, and a second one dating back to the late 1990s and early 2000s (its findings mostly collected in *"Giacomo Joyce": Envoys of the Other*, 2006). An initial allusion to the labelled notebook's eight large spreadsheets, which Joyce left behind before moving to Zürich, is documented by a letter to Ezra Pound in April 1917:

> I have some prose sketches, *as I told you*, but they *are locked up* in my desk in Trieste (*LI* 101, emphasis added).

The nod to a previous mention (possibly during their first exchange in 1913) is significant because it shows that Joyce, though securing the "prose sketches" in his desk, never ruled out the possibility of having them published. Another revealing detail in that letter lies in Joyce's statement "I have very little imagination" (101) confirming his generally accepted technique of drawing from his true life experiences – an experience from which, in *Giacomo*'s case, Richard Ellmann kept a due amount of distance, as the post-mortem publication caused many speculations. Scholars have observed that Ellmann must have gained access to the manuscript when he met Joyce's brother in the 1950s.[1] Consequently, the question of why the biographer waited so long to make *Giacomo Joyce* public, resulted in a general state of curiosity around the mysterious dark lady, Joyce's alleged scandalous Triestine affair. It seems that *Giacomo Joyce*'s history – much like its fragments – will always be associated with a series of silent intervals. Likely written at various stages between 1911 and 1914, the manuscript is comprised of fifty-one sparse fragments, often consisting of

[1] See Brockman.

single lines. Blurring the lines between fiction and non-fiction, the confessional tone and the nature of its highly personal content caused *Giacomo Joyce* to be regarded as some sort of diary in lyrical prose. This preliminary perception inevitably delayed its public recognition as a literary work in its own right, and such hesitation led to numerous cause-effect repercussions. One of the tendencies of criticism towards minor literature is to either worship or neglect it, the latter usually being the more common one. This analysis will deflect and reflect on aspects of both attitudes while discerning the many facets of the rather variegated manuscript that is *Giacomo Joyce*.

A functional figurative tool in shedding light on the obscurity of the sketchbook is the image of the prism defined in optics as "a solid figure with two end faces that are similar, equal, and parallel rectilinear figures, and whose sides are parallelograms or rectangles". It is "used for refracting light that passes through the sides" and separates white light into a spectrum of colours (*OED*). In order to be able to analyse any work by Joyce, it is necessary not only to be open to possibilities but to welcome them. For this reason, as *Giacomo Joyce* permits a multimodal approach, I will endeavour to observe it through the lens of a metaphorical prism by exploring its numerous refractions in terms of identity, poetic devices, possible hidden codes, and veiled imagism.[2]

The Importance of Being Giacomo[3]

While the status of a work of art for art's sake should suffice to deem it worthy of continuous scholarly attention, recognising the innovative force of minor works should remind us that "there is nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor" (Deleuze and Guattari 26). As Katherine Ebury and James Fraser advocated:

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[2] See McCourt (2002) for a more detailed discussion of the multimodal approach.

[3] In reference to the homonymous title of John McCourt 2000, in which the author, with a witty nod to Wilde's play, collocates the "Italianised Irishman" to a variety of Giacomos ranging from Giacomo Leopardi to Giacomo Puccini and Giacomo Casanova (9-10).

> With the majority of Joyce's non-fiction coming to public notice in a busy decade spanning the mid-1950s and 1960s, after Joyce was already well on the way to being established as an emblem of an international, humanist, disengagement with political specificity, many readers can be forgiven for responding to Joyce's non-fiction *as if it were an afterthought*. An *aberrance* in the consistent text of his authorial, biographical persona. Whereas a relatively engaged reader might have read (or heard – several of Woolf's most noted critical works were originally delivered as lectures) Woolf's criticism alongside her novels and Eliot's alongside his poetry, the majority of Joyce's non-fiction *did not even appear for critical readers (let alone general readers) until almost twenty years after his death*. As such, if not always deemed "second rate," this work has at the least almost always been treated as *secondary* to and *separate* from the "proper" and first objects of our critical attention: Joyce's fictional output (2, emphasis added).

When confronted with the question of *Giacomo Joyce*'s peculiar belatedness, Ellmann was probably too apprehensive to publish the work because it may have been cause for embarrassment to the Risolo family, in which he identified Michele Risolo's wife, Amalia Popper, to be the infamous *envoyée*. For this very reason, Ellmann allegedly held onto the manuscript until Amalia's death so that there could be no direct proof or interlocutor to settle matters with, letting *Giacomo Joyce* fluctuate in its own legendary appeal as the last work left by the author. Whether we perceive in Ellmann's decision a disservice to scholarly advancements or not, what often happens when playing detective and obsessing with the factualities behind the lines, is that we tend to lose the focus entirely of what should be the analysis of a work of literature in its own right. As a matter of fact, while the first wave of criticism seemed to accept Ellmann's biographical statements as undisputed truths, more recent studies have shown that a great deal of effort went into attentively inspecting Triestine documents. Furthermore, witness accounts were scrutinized, including Risolo's, in which he denies any implication of his wife with the scabrous manuscript, to which he ascribes a position suited to the book shared by

Paolo and Francesca in Dante's *Inferno* as "Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse", *mischievous was the book and he who wrote it* (V. 137). Amongst these undertakings, I cannot fail to mention the quest, and consequential rouse with Ellmann, of the late American writer and translator, Helen Barolini. In her article "The End of My Giacomo Joyce Affair", she wrote:

> Having waited over thirty years to conclude my exchange with Richard Ellmann on his identification of the mystery woman in James Joyce's manuscript work known as *Giacomo Joyce*, *I find that I am finally done with it*. I had never doubted Ellmann's mastery in gathering together the essentials of James Joyce's life and work and presenting them in the eruditely packed and immensely pleasurable biography that is his *James Joyce*. But his reluctance to set the record straight on *Giacomo Joyce* has been a long-time, nagging irritation (2003: 248, emphasis added).

In 1968, when *Giacomo Joyce* annotated by Ellmann was published, Helen Barolini made a considerable discovery:

> In Rome's National Library I found [a] treasure that had escaped Ellmann's notice: a slim little book entitled *Araby* that was Signora Risolo's 1933 translation of five stories from Joyce's *Dubliners*. It was prefaced by a brief biography of her former teacher contributed by Joyce himself after she had written him in Paris, reminding him that she had been his student, and asking his permission to do the translation, which he granted. But Ellmann had stated in his biography of Joyce that just as Signorina Popper had not succumbed to Joyce's supposed wooing of her, so, as Signora Risolo, she had not done him the favor of translating his stories either.
>
> It seemed clear, and very strange, that Ellmann had never seen the Italian translation of *Dubliners*, nor had interviewed Signora Risolo (250).

The following year, Barolini wrote an article entitled "The Curious Case of Amalia Popper" and sent it to the *The New York Review of Books*. The editor, Robert Silvers, answered that they would publish it if she agreed to

its being accompanied by Ellmann's response. Barolini agreed but Ellmann ostensibly never wrote back to her. As a result, whenever the magazine sent her the published copy, in Barolini's words:

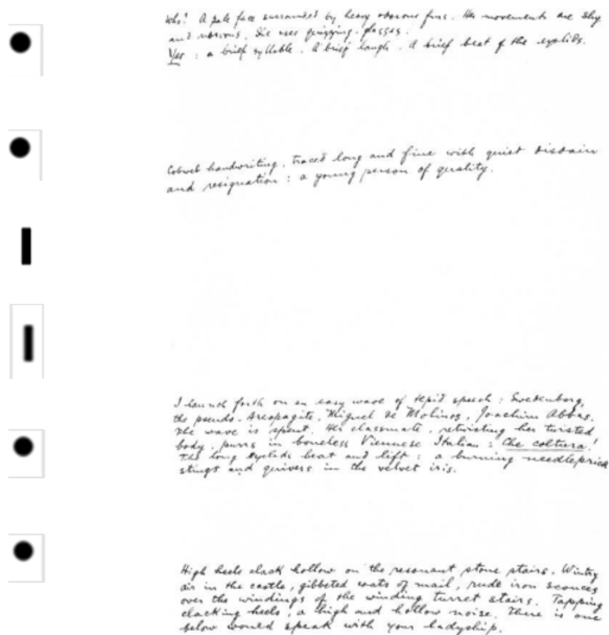
> It seemed as if Ellmann wished to discredit my whole argument about the mystery lady of *Giacomo Joyce* on the basis of my marginal reference to a wine, certain, I suppose, that just like a woman, I really didn't know wines, and if I couldn't get that right, what else could be right in my report. "Mrs. Barolini," he wrote "whose article is more irate than accurate, would have encountered no such difficulties if during her stay in New York, she had troubled to communicate with me" [but I was not in New York, I was then residing in Rome and writing from there]. "I might have helped her with a number of momentous things, such as her description of Opollo wine as white, when it is really the deepest of red" (2003: 252-53).

Allegedly, when she reached out to Ellmann once more, she received no response. More than thirty years later, Barolini stated that she merely wanted to solve a puzzle, and that "there is nothing, with the exception of [her] guess that Michele Risolo might be the later anonymous owner of the *Giacomo Joyce* manuscript, that [she] would change" in her original piece, only perhaps her tone, which she admitted, "in that heyday of feminism, was perhaps unnecessarily feisty" (260). But Barolini was not alone in her mission. Amongst the others who underlined the need to address Ellmann's discrepancies were John McCourt (quoted in Barolini 259) and Renzo Crivelli, whose discoveries presented a subversive view of what had been accepted as the truth until then. While it is unthinkable to approach *Giacomo Joyce* without placing it in its precise historical context, what seems to be the common agreement is one that asks the question: Is it really important to associate a name and surname to the "pale face" (*GJ* 1)? The Bard said it best: "What's in a name?", after all (*U* 9.901)? Where close reading fails, an intra-literal approach towards the text allows us to savour these fragments in their essence and take a sort of "text-ray" of it.

An Initial T(ext)-Ray

The fuss around the detective game is readily comprehended when confronted with the incipit of the manuscript where the very first sentence consists of a question, and not just any question, but a question asking: "Who?" (*GJ* 1). The ultimate inquiry for identity precedes the abyssal dive into the text, as the reader is immediately drawn to wonder about the subject's cryptic entity. From the very first word, one is not to be spared from the overall enigma that *Giacomo Joyce* is. Not unfamiliar to unusual readings, but rather appreciated for its genre hybridity – something in-between a visual text and a multimodal journal – the manuscript offers infinite possibilities of interpretation.[4] As a blend of text and blank spaces *Giacomo Joyce* could *ad absurdum* even be read in Morse code. Curiously, once the semiotics of it are established (dots corresponding to text, lines to spaces), the first page translates to '• • - - • •' corresponding, in the Morse alphabet, to the most inquisitive of punctuation marks: "?" (see fig. 1) (ITU 3).

[4] *Giacomo Joyce* comprises different styles and genres as it mixes lyrical prose, diaristic expression, and fragmentary modernist poetry.


Who! A pale face surrounded by heavy odorous furs. Her movements are shy and nervous. She uses quizzing-glasses.
Yes: a brief syllable. A brief laugh. A brief beat of the eyelids.

Cobweb handwriting, traced long and fine with quiet disdain and resignation: a young person of quality.

I launch forth on an easy wave of tepid speech: Swedenborg, the pseudo-Areopagite, Miguel de Molinos, Joachim Abbas. The wave is spent. Her classmate, retwisting her twisted body, purrs in boneless Viennese Italian: Che coltura! The long eyelids beat and lift: a burning needleprick stings and quivers in the velvet iris.

High heels clack hollow on the resonant stone stairs. Wintry air in the castle, gibbeted coats of mail, rude iron sconces over the windings of the winding turret stairs. Tapping clacking heels, a high and hollow noise. There is one below would speak with your ladyship.

Fig. 1. Manuscript/Morse code correspondence for facsimile of *Giacomo Joyce*, p. 1 (Joyce 1968: 17).

As puzzling a symbol as an upside down *j* [¿] for “James” (or *j* for “Joyce”), or perhaps an inverted *G* for “Giacomo”, this might be Joyce’s Italian*est* alter ego. As a matter of fact, this fundamental quest for identity expressed by the opening “who” – asking itself for itself – could also be re-directed to the author, that is to say to the person who is asking, ultimately corresponding to the person who is being asked. Who is Joyce? The Triestine exile, or the faithful partner quoted as having said, “I, who am a real monogamist and have never loved but once in my life” (*JJII* 338)? Who is *Giacomo*? Is it merely something that was scribbled by someone else on a sketchbook label, or is it something, rather someone, other than that? Undoubtedly, asking *for/of* a subject could also be interpreted as asking

for/about a muse. This theme is evident throughout the manuscript and is also a major theme in *Exiles* (1918).[5] Moreover, it allows a pointed link with the last page where the "who?" is the counterpart of "why?".

Giacomo's "Apparallelisms"

The enigmatic intricacies of the manuscript are transferred on paper with the same minutia in which silk fibres are crocheted into lace. In its tight-knit inconsistency, the manuscript displays multiple poetic devices, relentlessly intertwining metaphors and similes, images, symbols and parallelisms.

> Cobweb handwriting, traced long and fine with quiet disdain and resignation: a young person of quality (*GJ* 1).

The image of the cobweb occurs frequently in *Giacomo Joyce*. While some scholars held that this image contributes to the evocative construction of the female archetype (Guerra), others, such as Benstock or Armand and Wallace, read in it an implicit reference to the title. Confusedly jotted on a red framed label (fig. 2), the Italian pseudonym "Giacomo Joyce" finds little to no correspondence in Joyce's own serpentine handwriting.[6] The idiosyncratic writing of the surname – the *y* in "Joyce" resembling either a *g* or the *J* of the initial – was thought to be the work of someone else's hand, perhaps a foreigner's, or even the Italian muse's very own "cobweb handwriting".

> Compared with Joyce's "best calligraphic hand," the other hand in which the name Giacomo Joyce is inscribed on the sketchbook cover appears hesitant, untutored, childish. […] Perhaps, after all, it is a writing with the left hand, in truth the sinister, mocking

[5] Supposedly composed around the same time span, *Giacomo Joyce* and *Exiles* share a variety of themes (the Ibsenesque muse, the coming of age, political commentary, and similar references) that create many links between the two works.
[6] For a more detailed comparison of Joyce's hand see samples provided by Alonso.

> counterpart of Joyce's *proper* hand. […] Perhaps, also, the "cobweb handwriting" of another's hand. "The other. She" (*GJ* 15). The one who, in the first sentence, both composes and discomposes the author-narrator (Armand and Wallace 6-7).

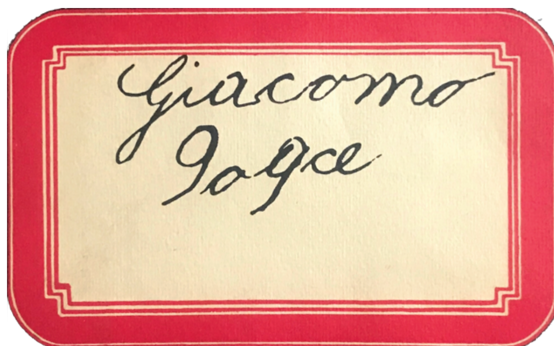


Fig. 2. Label on facsimile of first edition (hardcover detail).

The secrecy exuded by the *faux titre* is contrasted by vivid moments of clarity culminating in Joyce's abundant use of apposition.[7] Repeatedly, the most revealing lines in *Giacomo Joyce* seem to follow colons [:].[8] As noted by Richard Brown, who wittily referred to this technique as "Joyce's colonialism", Joyce uses colons "a remarkable fifty times in these few pages" (138). He comments as follows on Joyce's specific use of colons:

> Joyce's "colonialism" functions in a poetic rather than a discursive context and should remind us of the origin of the word colon in Greek prosody where it meant a division or part of a

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[7] The expression "moments of clarity" is to be distinguished from the term "epiphanies" (as Joyce used it in *Stephen Hero*, denoting "a sudden spiritual manifestation"). A "moment of clarity" refers to a sudden and intimate revelation, marked in the text by the frequent use of colons. "Appositions" is here intended as the appositive use of colons.

[8] Perhaps knowingly, on the cover illustration of the 2019 Faber Stories edition, the artist Leanne Shapton reproduced colons followed by the word "Love" in a similar calligraphic style.

> sentence or strophe in poetry. […] Joyce is neither markedly correct nor consistent in his use of colons. He occasionally uses commas, semi-colons, and full stops for just such appositions as these. But that itself seems right for a piece in which the colon serves primarily as a licentious device that permits all kinds of things to lie next to each other and intermingle suggestively with each other in the text without formal syntactical introduction, let alone binding syntactical marriage (138-39).

Colons function as the cross stitching of the fabric that holds together these revelations. "Crossed in love" indeed, *Giacomo Joyce* is a profoundly alliterated synesthetic ensemble (*GJ* 5).[9] A parallelism – intended as "Correspondence, in sense or construction, of successive clauses or passages" (*OED*) is employed frequently by Joyce, who made it a quasi-literary trademark. Uncoincidentally, various fragments tend to present a strong parallelistic structure, a compelling feature that will prove to characterise Joyce's style, anticipating the unforgettable "softly falling, falling softly" closing lines of *The Dead*.

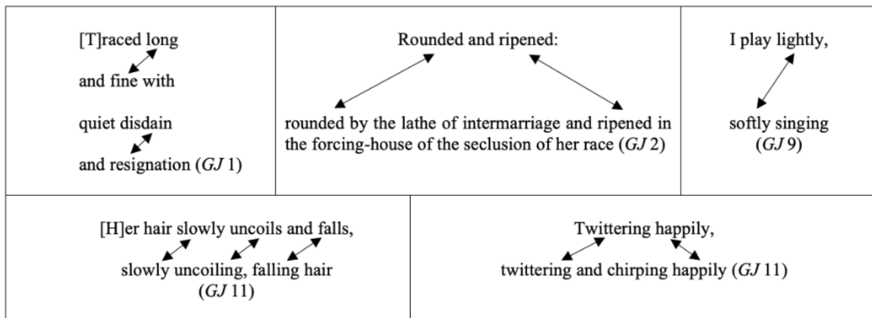

Fig. 3. Development of parallel structures in *Giacomo Joyce*.

[9] A clear example of alliteration is "Long lewdly leering lips: dark-blooded molluscs" (*GJ* 5). The repetition of the consonant *l* is very reminiscent of the overquoted, valentine card-friendly "Love loves to love love" in "Cyclops" (*U* 12.1493).

Through empowering a plurality of meanings that are apt to intersect and entangle further, the use of parallelism in the text encourages a reading that embraces a plethora of interchangeable perspectives. Blending prismatic symbolism with symmetry – the repetition of similar structures – serves as both the stitching and needle – the *apparel* – of *Giacomo Joyce*. Such complexity functions as a device for its own interpretational amalgamations of poetic, symbolic, geometric, and analogic thresholds.

The Highest Form of Presence

While fragments 2, 5, 8, 14, 15, 21, 25, 37, 39, 40, 49, and 51 consist of a single line, for the entirety of *Giacomo Joyce*, blank spaces predominate over the ink. The absence of words seems almost greater than their presence. *Giacomo*'s *carta bianca* conjectures far more than novel aesthetics of experimentation, beyond rhetorical ellipsis or the "intentionally left blank". It rather plays out a heard silence or imposed distance, both visual and ontological. Blank spaces between fragments can hint at an even deeper form of introspection. We can hardly analyse what is not there, yet our consciousness tends to fill up these spaces by default. Joyce remarks on the importance of silences, which are indeed "a form of speech: the lesser for the greater" – in its modern reformulation, less is more (*GJ* 2). His letter of 29 May 1935 to Lucia reminds us that "in certi casi l'assenza è la forma più alta della presenza" (*in certain cases, absence is the highest form of presence*) (*LIII* 357). Indeed, the pupil is neither completely nor coherently described at any stage of the text, yet the simulation of haptics in *Giacomo*'s writerly disembodiment of her makes her presence tangible. As Henriette Power put it, "Giacomo de-scribes her: he unwrites her" (627). Joyce immortalises the subject with the auxiliary of vacant memory: dismembering her as to remembering her.

Vicki Mahaffey describes *Giacomo Joyce* as "an affair of the eye", (2006: 38) holding that the predominant sense in the manuscript is sight. A case could be made that the absence of sight ("*mine eyes fail in darkness, love*" *GJ* 3) is equally important, as it is precisely in *Giacomo Joyce*'s indistinctness that the fragmented self of the modernist inept writer ("What then? Write it, damn you, write it! What else are you good for?" *GJ* 16) is

depicted in the undeveloped yet fully descriptive photographs of Joyce's Trieste. In particular, fragment 27 captures a contextual vignette of the twentieth century and the modernist condition through *Giacomo*'s gaze:

> I play lightly, softly singing, John Dowland's languid song. *Loth to depart:* I too am loth to go. That *age is here and now*. Here, opening from the darkness of desire, *are eyes that dim the breaking East*, their shimmer the shimmer of the scum that mantels the cesspool of the court of slobbering James. Here are wines all ambered, dying fallings of sweet airs, the proud pavan, kind gentlewomen wooing from their balconies with sucking mouths, the pox-fouled wenches and young wives that, gaily yielding to their ravishers, clip and clip again (*GJ* 9, emphasis added).

Giacomo's veiled identity is alluded to in "slobbering James", while mentions of an imminent departure could collocate this fragment to 1912, the last time the author would set foot on Irish soil. He despises the idea of leaving because the "age is here and now" in the *hic-et-nuncness* of Trieste, where there "are eyes that dim the breaking East". Then Joyce extends this tiny detail to the universal: this love to all forms of love (be it sacred or profane), this breaking dawn to the general dawn of the century, the secular dawn. The oxymoronic phrase "shimmer of the scum" may refer to the falseness of deceiving appearances. Joyce warns that all that glitters is not gold, coalescing his discontent in a societal critique of mankind's flickering conscience. This passage encapsules representative historical value of an era that is the product of other eras, a portrayal of the ruins upon which the twentieth century is being built. The resolution is to be found in the final line: clippings, the sparse shavings of human consciousness in the modern age that can only be portrayed and reconstructed via their own fragments, as there is no direct linear thread that ties them all together. History *is* a nightmare, after all.

What's in a Rose?

Flowers seem to be a recurring theme in Joyce's oeuvre. From *Chamber Music*'s romantic "A Flower Given to My Daughter", to *Finnegans Wake*'s more decadent "daintylines" (*FW* 587.26), flowers and their associated meanings may infer different connotations. In fragment 50, the "woman's hat, red-flowered" (*GJ* 16) is not too superficial a detail as, while echoing Molly's red rose in "when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used or shall I wear a *red* yes" (*U* 18.1602, emphasis added), it has also been linked to Joyce's comment at the Caffè Eden in Trieste, which constitutes the setting of *Giacomo Joyce*:

> The English teacher is found in ironic and merry mood […] surrounded by students in a café chantant in Trieste […] while he flirts with young women, some of them his pupils, with sly gallantry. One of them, dressed in an elegant gown set off by a rose is invited by Joyce to dance, but unfortunately during the dance the flower falls to the ground. With admirable elegance mixed with unpardonable effrontery, Joyce picks it up and gives it back to the girl with the freezing comment: "I seem to have deflowered you" (Crivelli 286).

Joyce was not one to resist a good pun, and this anecdote further supports the fact that the author's inspiration would manifest even during the most trivial events and the most fugacious everyday occurrences. *Giacomo Joyce*'s fragments hardly fall into any category, as Fritz Senn put it, "there is no adequate label for it" (21).[10] It might be maintained that the focus is not so much on the "whatness" but rather on the "whoness" as, in *Giacomo Joyce*, objects only seem to exist as symbols and, more often than not, in Joyce's production, a symbol is a symbol of a symbol et cetera.

The significance of objects in *Giacomo Joyce* cannot be understated, owing to their inclusion of the author's deepest secrets. Indeed, it is on a

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[10] The first time I read this sentence, I completely misread it as "there is no Babel for it". On second thought, it could still work, with *Giacomo Joyce*'s rich intertextuality where the tongues of the heart are both spoken and unspoken.

"visual pun" based on trivial objects that *Giacomo Joyce*'s curtains are drawn. At the very end, we are left with two objects: the hat, and the furled umbrella. The final fragment reads "Envoy: Love me, love my umbrella" (*GJ* 16).

> Paired single objects, the hat and the umbrella share, nonetheless, the structure of the pair. Vicki Mahaffey first speculated that [these objects] might represent the signifier, the letter "a," for Amalia, and Joseph Valente countered that they might spell "p" for Popper as well. I would argue they could as easily signify "a" and "j," for Amalia and James (McArthur 99-100).

These intuitive interpretations are validated by the object correlative seen as the personification of their owners. My contention is that, if we really believed Amalia to be the mysterious woman in the red flowered-hat, then the very last word could be as telling as these observations. Indeed, we could individualise the *a* and *j* pair, in the umbrella itself.

Fig. 4. What's in an umbrella?

Curiously, the famous umbrella manufacturer at the time was a certain company founded in 1830 called “James Smith and Sons”. Because of the commonality of the surname “Smith”, the name “James” would have markedly stood out. If Joyce was asking the woman to love *Giacomo*, we could imagine that he also signed the envoy with his real name, in a way.

Conclusions

Recent Joycean criticism around *Giacomo Joyce* has been revealing in assessing the urgency of further research on minor works by acknowledging their revolutionary distinctiveness. By utilising the metaphorical image of the prism as a reference, the article has attempted to present a multidimensional analysis of *Giacomo Joyce*, appraising it as more than a simple collection of fragments, but rather as a kaleidoscopic work in its own right, adaptable to a multitude of viewpoints and approaches. In *The Post Card* Jacques Derrida saw in the image of the umbrella a combination of the words “ombre” (*shadow*) and “elle” (*her*):

> James (the two, the three), Jacques, Giacomo Joyce – your *contrefacture* is a marvel, the counterpart to the *invoice*: “*Envoy: love me love my umbrella*.” […] Giacomo also has seven letters. Love my *ombre, elle* – not me. “Do you love me?” And you, tell me (238-39, emphasis in the original).

At the centre of *Giacomo*’s shadowgraphy lies the subject whose story is told by his objects and whose silhouette casts the shadow of *Giacomo Joyce*’s *chiaroscuro*-like inconsistencies; shadow intended as an escape from light, light understood as the radiance emitted or sourced by a *prism*; an object that fully describes a fractal work like *Giacomo Joyce*, not only for its fragmentary nature but also for its aporia. While slicing white light into a spectrum of colours, a prism can both clarify and distort. Interestingly, the word also shares part of its morphological and phonetical DNA with the term “prison”. As opposed to a device that freely liberates the light, it echoes a light-deterrent. I find that particularly fitting to expound on what *Giacomo Joyce* is. Full disclosure was not offered by

Joyce in relation to his private affairs, but he wrote about them copiously. The genre which most resembled his life was probably drama, therefore it ought not to surprise that it is in "Circe", the fifteenth episode of *Ulysses* written in the form of a play, that Joyce makes use of this very metaphor through the words of the prophet Elijah: "Be on the side of the angels. Be a prism. You have that something within, the higher self" (*U* 15.2197).[11] To conclude, we can certainly appreciate this divulgence when reading *Giacomo Joyce*: To be a prism would be to look at words as different worlds, as Saussure's *paroles* on parole, letters made out of letters, made out of empty spaces, drifting or drafting, within and without, angel after angle.

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[11] In addition to his only extant play *Exiles* (1918) being heavily autobiographical, Joyce wrote extensively on his consideration of drama as representative of life itself ("Drama and Life" in *OCPW* 23-29).

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