A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CHARACTER JIMMY PORTER AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MODERN DRAMA

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「憤怒的回顧」與現代戲劇 (二)

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I

With a view to studying the character Jimmy Porter, the hero John Osborne created in his well-known play LOOK BACK IN ANGER, I put him in the light of a comparison made between Jimmy Porter and some other characters, namely, Antigone, Doctor Faustus, Christy Mahon, and Stephen Daedalus. The reason why I choose these characters for a comparative study of the modern character Jimmy Porter is that these characters are all typical in their characterizations, especially in the sense of historical spirit. Antigone, created by the Greek dramatist Sophocles in his ANTIGONE, though a mythological figure, is recognized as typically classical. According to Bate's CRITICISM: THE MAJOR TEXTS, the word "classical" implies "the principles and values that characterized the art and thought of ancient Greece," and also "the later attitudes and developments in Western culture that were most obviously and directly influenced by these principles and values;" while "the foundation

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of the classical tradition is its confidence in a rationally ordered and harmonious universe, working according to fixed laws, principles, and forms." Living in such kind of world, Antigone is endowed with certain qualities that function to reveal her moral purpose, showing what kind of things she chooses or avoids—she would rather give up her dear life like a martyr of faith and truth than lead a miserable life without moral principles. But tragedy arises when her choice gradually is found out as a wrong one. Doctor Faustus is the protagonist of THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FUASTUS, which is written by Christopher Marlowe, the "man of the Renaissance." This play, usually considered a synthesis of medieval spirit and Renaissance ideas, is nothing but a tense yoking of two irreconcilable forces, Doctor Faustus's Renaissance desire for unlimited knowledge and power and the medieval dogma of the retribution which awaits one who uses the necessary means to gain such ends. Thus, Faustus is caught between them and destroyed in the clash between their different sets of values. Nevertheless, Faustus's unlocking of the secrets of the universe is private, intensely personal quest, the very expression of sharp individuality—his robust, expansive personality has come to be admired in the modern cult of the individual. John M. Synge in his play THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD creates a charming hero Christy Mahon. This play is essentially romantic in its spirit, though the story happens in the bleakest, humblest Catholic country, Ireland. Christy, originally a young man, cowardly and shy, and after a day of boasting of his bravery shown in the action of killing his old father, grows up strong and succeeds to be a real man eventually as his father has wished.
The classical world is a fixed one which does not allow a shift in characterization of a character; that is, there is no development of a character but revelation of the character. Yet, in Chrsity's world, the existence of a dynamic process is permitted, in which a humble young man may change and turn out to be the playboy of the western world, worshipped and beloved of all. Stephen Daedalus is not a dramatic character but a character very significant in the realm of modern literature. He is the hero of James Joyce's autobiographic novel, A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN. Stephen Daedalus, sensitive and shy, has his first real encounter with problems of art and morality at the age of sixteen. After he enters the university, a change comes over his thinking. He begins to doubt the Jesuit order and the priesthood itself, which was once his life's goal; and the longer he studies, the more confused and doubtful he becomes. With his good friends he frequently discussed his ideas about beauty and the working of the mind. Once because he declines to sign a petition for world peace, Stephen wins the animosity of many of his fellow students and is called by them anti-social and egotistic. Gradually, no more is he afraid to be alone in his search for beauty, or his attempt to understand beauty. At last, he has to leave Ireland, because there is nothing there in which he can believe. On his departure, he promises, someday, to write a book that will make clear his view on Ireland and the Irish. In this novel, Stephen is seen going through stages of rebellion against his family, his school, his Church, his community, and even his country, Ireland, becoming an artist eventually. Nothing but art can claim his allegiance.
In addition to their significance in the historical course of literature, all these four characters are more or less persons of action in their characterizations: by death, Antigone fulfills her ideas of truth; by magic power, Faustus searches for a more satisfactory or meaningful life, though ruining himself at last; by boasting of his dauntless experiences, Christy transforms his own personality and appearance to a large extent; and by his artist's disposition, Stephen chooses his own way that leads to spiritual alienation and exile.

Comparatively, Jimmy Porter is the modernest hero on the stage, and is addressed as the symbol of the "angry young men" of this age. What are the modern characteristics in him that can be labeled as different from those of his predecessors? The following are some comparisons made between Jimmy Porter and each of the other four characters. The stress is put on the situations in which the characters are set and their responses to their situations.

I

The situation into which Antigone is cast by fate is, in general, simpler than that in which Jimmy is. The situation of Antigone goes like this: after the well-known event of the seven against Thebes, Antigone's brother Eteocles is buried with military honors, while another brother of hers, Polyneices, treated as a traitor to the country, is condemned to being unburied and a prey to the birds and scavenging dogs. Under this condition, Antigone assumes her duty as a sister of Polyneices and is determined to bury her brother in obedience to the laws of gods and her love for her brother, instead of the king Creon's edict.
Though, later, Antigone is punished for her defiance and dies, she becomes the defender of truth; while Creon, falling from his position as a proud and triumphant king of unsurpassed rights, reaps a double death from his wife and his son.

Both the character Antigone and the world in which she lives are typically classical. There is none of reconciliatory action in her attitude toward Creon, who threatens her with certain death all the time—"stoning to death in the public square." Nevertheless, what Antigone has to face up and makes up her mind about is the choice between divine righteousness, burying her brother with proper ceremony and losing her life, and bowing to political coercion and keeping her life safe but deprived of meaning. These two alternatives are treated very clearly; all the public, except Creon, approves of her choice to bury her dead brother, even the gods stand by her side when she is burying her brother and in the end they punish Creon relentlessly.

The situation in which Jimmy is placed is a world of capricious ideas and fickle and inconstant standards of behavior. In other words, what Jimmy has to face up to and make decision about is uncertain and shapeless, to be dealt with only in bits and parts, and not based on any universal principles, as in ANTIGONE. When Antigone is accused of defying the law, her apology for herself is as simple as the truth is:

Creon (To Antigone) Tell me, tell me briefly:
Had you heard my proclamation touching this matter?
...And yet you dared defy the law.
Antigone I dared.
It was not God's proclamation. That final justice
That rules the world below makes no such laws.
Your edict, king, was strong,
But all your strength is weakness itself against
The immortal unrecorded laws of God.
They are not merely now; they were, and shall be,
Operative for ever, beyond man utterly.

All the situations as compared with gods' truth become clear and certain. At the same time, gods' truth offers the most reliable and powerful moral strength to back up anyone who has the intention to fight against the perverse forces, and has poetic justice distributed to him (or her), to avenge his (or her) wrongs. The hero in his doing has nothing to worry about except his death if death is his concern. But how can a modern man like Jimmy justify his ideals? There is no utopia accepted by him and his fellow men, nor universal laws of gods to back him up. Worst of all, nothing happens which is worthy of his sacrifice and stirs up others' concern on grounds of his sacrifice. Men's passion for truth is suppressed and they take everything as it is, never thinking of the way it ought to be. Maybe Jimmy is, among the people with whom he lives, the only one who thinks of things and criticizes them, he is thus the only man of pathos. His ideas have not brought him dignity and glory which are enjoyed by Antigone; conversely, they isolate him from his fellow men and have him taken as a savage person incongruous with his community. Further, he is almost suffocated by the world of ephemeral ideas:

Jimmy: God, how I hate Sundays! It's always so depressing. Always the same. We never seem to get any further, do we? Always the same ritual. Reading the papers, drinking tea, ironing, a few more hours, and another
week gone. Our youth is slipping away. Do you know that?
Cliff: (Threws down paper). What's that?
Jimmy: (Casually). Oh, nothing. Nothing, damn you, damn both you, damn them all. (p. 8)

This piece of dialogue shows several things: 1) whether there is God or not, the ritual done is not for worshipping God; 2) dull is life, because nothing special takes place; 3) the precious youth of a short life is passing away; 4) Jimmy is alone, no one understands a bit of what Jimmy says; 5) Jimmy is disappointed. This situation leads Jimmy to the following response to the world; Jimmy says, "I give up. I give up. I'm sick of doing things for people. All for what?" (p. 10) Because what he does is not rewarded or encouraged at all, he is puzzled and doubting. It seems to him that man had better keep his ideas to himself, amusing with them and suffering from them alone until death. When Jimmy says that he "must say it's pretty dreary living in the American Age," I cannot help thinking that Antigone is fortunate to be born into the classical world, having no misgivings in her doing from the very beginning of the action to the end, accomplishing her ideas ecstatically, while Jimmy is hurt by his ideas, which are no less valuable than Antigone's in a sense, but conditioned by different objective situations, the modern world. Jimmy knows clearly his own situation: he compares his role deliberately to that of Don Quixote when he describes how he has married Alison because Alison's mother was interfering with their intended marriage:

All so that I shan't carry off her daughter on that poor old charger of mine, all tricked out and caparisoned in discredited passions and ideals! The old grey mare that actually once led the charge against the old order--
well, she certainly ain't what she used to be. It was all she could do to carry me, but your weight (to Alison) was too much for her. She just dropped dead on the way.

Jimmy identifies himself sympathetically with Don Quixote and shares with him the depraved world. But Jimmy and Antigone have some thing in common. No longer an innocent girl Antigone is when she talks about death and suffering and hears her sister Ismene say,

Oedipus died, everyone hating him
For what his own search brought light, his eyes
Ripped out by his own hand; and Iocaste died,
His mother and wife at once: she twisted the cords
That strangled her life; and our two brothers died,
Each killed by the other's sword. (p. 2)

Jimmy's experiences may not be so thrilling and horrible as Antigone's, yet his sensitive soul experiences the cruel war and death through his father's narration:

For twelve months, I watched my father dying—when I was ten years old. He'd come back from the war in Spain... he didn't have long left to live. Everyone knew it—even I knew it. But, you see, I was the only one who cared. His family were embarrassed by the whole business. Embarrassed and irritated. As for my mother, all she could think about was the fact that she had allied herself to a man who seemed to be on the wrong side in all things. My mother was all for being associated with minorities, provided they were the smart, fashionable ones. We all of us waited for him to die... All that that feverish failure of a man had to listen to him was a small, frightened boy. I spent hour upon hour in that tiny bedroom. He would talk to me for hours, pouring out all that was left of his life to one lonely, bewildered little boy, who could barely understand half of what he said. All he could feel was the despair and the bitter-
ness, the sweet, sickly smell of a dying man... I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry--angry and helpless. And I can never forget it. I knew more about--love....betrayal... and death. (pp. 68-9)

From both Ismene's words and Jimmy's monologue, we know that both Antigone and Jimmy learnt love, betrayal and death early in their lives and, no doubt, both of them are dignified with the honor to teach others the meaning of love, betrayal, and death. But the results of their preaching to others are different. Antigone by her death convinces Creon of his inhumanity in his edict through the help of gods; yet, Jimmy's way, though comparatively more accessible and tangible, is not as effective as Antigone's: his friend Cliff remains the same as before, his mistress Helena leaves him alone, and his wife Alison, though coming back to him by herself, isn't sure of her own attitudes afterwards.

With regard to their manners in carrying out their ideals, Jimmy's trouble is much more complex than Antigone's. When Antigone has made up her mind to defy Creon's law and bury her brother, she never mentions her intimate relation with Creon, her uncle, or the one with Haimon, Creon's son and her fiance. It seems that before her faith in love for her brother and truth of gods, she can throw away all other human relations in the world, and die for her principle without any care for the human world. Her attitude toward society is absolutely indifferent. But Jimmy's is different. Jimmy is of the human world filled with passion and lust. Though, at first, when he was attracted by Alison, he married her in spite of her mother's violent interference. Jimmy loves his wife in a way by no means the same as Antigone does-- An-
Agonys's love for her brother permits of no intermediate positions. That Jimmy has, for instance, Helena live with him is only after a succession of ridicules and insults directed to her and her class by him; and even he knows and tells Cliff that Cliff is "worth a half a dozen Helenas" to him (p. 104). But Jimmy adjusts himself to her and takes his action for granted. For example, when Jimmy and Cliff make a comparison between Alison and Helena, and Cliff asks, "It's not the same, is it?" Jimmy gives the following answer:

(Irritably). No, of course it's not the same, you idiot! It never is! Today's meal is always different from yesterday's and the last woman isn't the same as the one before. If you can't accept that, you're going to be pretty unhappy. (p. 103)

Consequently, Jimmy can reconcile himself with the world, seeking happiness in it in spite of his constant complaint against the dullness of the world. He has his own philosophy of dealing with the situation he is in, the only apology he may make is that he is an ordinary human being. But, Antigone is not. The prologue and the first four scenes in the play ANTIGONE show what she is concerned with is that:

This death of mine
Is of no importance; but if I had left my brother
Lying in death unbuyied, I should have suffered.
Now I do not. (p. 12)

Such kind of conscience Jimmy has not. And when she prays to the gods and all the rulers of Thebes Antigone says,

Thebes, and you my mothers' gods,
And rulers of Thebes, you see me now, the last
Unhappy daughter of a line of kings,
Your kings, led away to death. You will remember
What things I suffer, and at what men's hands,
Because I would not transgress the laws of heaven. (p. 22)

Antigone does not complain or attack others passionately and satirically as Jimmy does. She coldly restrains herself and goes up to face death unhesitatingly and undauntedly. Antigone in her action is elevated and presented in the glamor of a goddess not of a human being. Only Creon's passions and grief appear in the form of the human world. The treatment of Antigone and that of Creon are obviously distinguished from each other; so do the authors' attitudes towards Antigone and Jimmy. Osborne handles Jimmy as one of a world of people, who subject themselves to human passions, enjoying life as well as suffering from life.

Christopher Marlowe's A TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS is more or less based on the medieval plays. As a result, the author naturally shares, with Dante, the fundamental premise that the present life has meaning because it determines what the eternal life will be, and looks upon magic as a performance of evil. This is not a subject to be discussed here. What I want to discuss here in the first place is an idea borrowed from the English poet T.S. Eliot. He assumes that to do evil is better than to do nothing at all, because to do evil at least demonstrates our existence in the world. Doctor Faustus, after a tract of twenty-four years' indulgence in black magic, fails eventually in his aspiration to an ampler life. In comparison, Jimmy fails before he does anything.

The original story of Doctor Faustus is a legend developed in Germany, that he sold his soul for knowledge and power. The essential plot of the play is
simple: Faustus, tired of his own limitations and the pettiness of human knowledge, turns to magic. He makes a contract with a minor devil in power, Mephistophiles, who has to get the contract ratified by Lucifer, the devil in chief; thus, Mephistophiles is to be Faustus's slave for twentyfour years; at the end of that time, the situation is to be reversed for all eternity. For twentyfour years then Faustus has magic powers which he uses for everything from calling back Helen of Troy to playing practical jokes. On the last night of the twentyfour years, he waits in agony and terror until the devils come and carry him off to hell. The following are some comparisons made between Doctor Faustus and Jimmy Porter.

Here are some verses quoted from T. S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Man":

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the shadow...

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the shadow...

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the shadow...

Conclusively speaking, the irony rises when there is discrepancy existing between the idea and the reality, the motion and the act, the conception and the creation, the emotion and the response, the desire and the
spasm, the potency and the existence, the essence and the descent. In Jimmy's case, what he does is unceasing expression of his personal ideas, emotions and desires, that is, his individuality which is identifiable with Doctor Faustus's. Spending most of his time in brawling, criticizing, playing his trumpet and threatening others, Jimmy stops there, without taking further action. For instance, what Jimmy expects is shown when he is in love: he sincerely entreats Helena, pouring out his soul in that one sentence, "Don't let anything go wrong!" (p. 106) He is fearful as he stands on the verge of happiness. And also he has a mind to change his environments when he asks Helena, "If you'll help me, I'll close that damned sweet-stall and we'll start everything from scratch. What do you say? We'll get away from this place." (p. 107) And Helena's answer is "I say that's wonderful." But only a few minutes later, the whole plan is dropped and forgotten. They are always turning from one idea to another without doing anything. With no principle to guide them to accomplish their ideas, Jimmy himself describes this sort of thing in criticizing others:

After all the whole point of a sacrifice is that you give up something you never really wanted in the first place... People are doing it around you all the time. They give up their careers, say—or their beliefs—or sex. And everyone thinks to themselves: how wonderful to be able to do that. If only I were capable of doing that! But the truth of it is that they've been kidding themselves, and they've been kidding you. (p. 95)

On this point, Jimmy is the sort of person different from what Antigone and Doctor Faustus are. Antigone carries out her idea thoroughly, not giving up her principle for the world, not even for her life. Doc-
tor Faustus, after having already attained worldly knowledge, declares his willingness to give it up for magic, and, after a series of evildoings, regrets heartily, though too late to save his life. In the words of Jimmy, both Antigone and Faustus "really wanted in the first place" what they have done. As for Jimmy, he is found more depraved than we supposed him to be, because, now, he really has no ideas at all. Like what Eliot says in "The Hollow Man,"

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;  
(Section 1)

Jimmy’s words very ironically toss himself together with the kind of people that he himself at the same time sneers at. What the bystanders can do for him is that, also in his own expression, "we should feel rather sorry for them." (p.95) Here, it is clear that Jimmy is a rather pathetic person, owing to the fact that, unconsciously, he indulges himself in a situation, which he looks with disdainful smile and rage. Thus, Jimmy’s case is hopeless and helpless. He is not a tragic hero.

Faustus, the scholars, and the German Emperor in the play long to visit the Christian kingdom of the Pope, to admire with their own eyes the unsurpassed soldier, Alexander the Great, and to see and enjoy the greatest human culture of ancient Greece. These in a sense manifest the highest ideals and beliefs that lead them on the road of their lives. They will never feel nihilistic and "hollow" as Jimmy does. Jimmy, often times, curses things and persons not to his taste. What moves him to despise them is no more than "a little human enthusiasm." (p.9) For him, this human enthusiasm is personified and manifested through
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Ulysses, the great hero in Homer's epic ODYSSEUS.

Ulysses is a great hero of adventures, and, as James Joyce asserts, a "complete" man, "a man who is shown in all his aspects—both coward and hero, cautious and reckless, weak and strong, husband and lover, father and son, sublime and ridiculous." Though Jimmy does not regard Ulysses as such kind of man as Joyce does, he nevertheless thinks Ulysses a man of curiosity, of actions, of ample life experiences. And, thus, Ulysses becomes a symbol of the goal of Jimmy's longing. But Jimmy stays at the starting point, not even raising his foot to advance one step on the road to his goal. If Doctor Faustus is looking for worldly power, no matter whether it is right or wrong, he does it. Whatever Jimmy's longing is, Jimmy does not embark upon it at all. Therefore, the emphasis is put upon the conflict between human expansiveness and human limitations. Faustus has a desire for infinite knowledge—for—power, but he uses power badly and he goes too far in this self-indulgence to make a final moral recovery possible—he has persisted in his desperate course in defiance of the moral values of his society, and they eventually catch up with him. However, Faustus is not a villain, even far from being an evil character; he is instead a tragic hero with whom the spectator or reader of tragedy must identify himself because Faustus is not a willful seeker of evil; rather he is a man in whom we can recognize various representative human traits—he is neither cruel nor criminal; he is well-meaning but full of pride and self-deception; he was dissatisfied and gave up a brilliant career but for, in his own words, only "vain pleasure of twentyfour years." What he did only fritters away his life and loses him his soul. Here is
the irony which is almost inevitable in tragedy—Faustus's inability either to break loose from the realities which at the start he must deny, or to escape from a world order and responsibility, or to realize his dream of unfettered domination. If this is a description of Faustus the person, Jimmy can find his own image in Doctor Faustus, and only on this point does Jimmy look tragic, and provoke the spectators' or the readers' sympathetic identification with him.

IV

Christy is the hero of John M. Synge's play, THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD. In the development of the action of the play Christy grows up to the stature of a man in terms of his overall manliness as shown in his new found confidence in self-expression, his attraction to women, and, most importantly, his unstooping masculine dignity. In the beginning, Christy was a bashful young man to whom nobody paid any attention "saving only the dumb beasts of the field." (p. 25) Every day, he was "toiling, moiling, digging, dodging from the dawn till dusk with never a sight of joy or sport saving only...in the dark night poaching rabbits on hills..." (p. 25) But one day when, working on the farm with his father, he could not put up with his "old and crusty" father anymore (p. 18) and, raising his loy in hand, he let the edge of it fall on the ridge of his father's skull, leaving his father dying there alone, and began his wandering. All these happened before the curtain is up. When the curtain is up, it is already the evening of the eleventh day of his wandering and the place is a country public house at Mayo, at which Michael is the publican. There he
also finds Pegeen, Michael's daughter, Shawn, Pegeen's cousin, who is a God-fearing Catholic farmer. In the public house, as soon as Christy lets out the story of his killing his own father to Michael, Pegeen and some farmers, Christy is regarded as a wonderful and rare hero and with bravery that is "a treasure in a lonesome place." (p. 20) Thus, Christy is persuaded to stay there as a pot-boy, and favored and respected by all the people, especially the young girls and the widow Quin. After many a time of boasting of the glorious story of killing his father, and being always cited afterwards, Christy gradually is convinced that he is really brave and qualified to be called a hero. When he gets his confidence in himself, Christy becomes "as proud as a peacock," and wins Pegeen's heart. But actually his father was not dead, as Christy says, but only "to be letting on he was dead, and coming back to his life, and following after me like an old weasel tracing a rat, and coming in here laying desolation between my own self and the fine women of Ireland." (p. 52) Once when he is demonstrated not a killer of his father but a liar, Christy is jeered at by all the people at once no matter actually how brave and brilliant Christy has already shown himself to them. And Christy truly becomes a man when he in a low and intense voice says,

Shut your yelling, for if you're after making a mighty man of me this day by the power of a lie, you're setting me now to think if it's a poor thing to be lonesome, it's worse maybe to go mixing with the fools of earth. (p. 76)

Old Mahon and Christy leave this crowd of fools when Old Mahon says, "But my son and myself will be going our own way, and we'll have great times from this out telling stories of the villainy of Mayo, and the fools
is here," (pp. 82-3) and Christy says,

I'm master of all fights from now.... Ten thousand blessings upon all that's here, for you've turned me a likely gaffer in the end of all, the way I'll go romancing through a romping lifetime from this hour to the dawning of the judgement day. (p. 82)

And eventually Christy becomes "the only playboy of the western world." (p. 82)

What I want to emphasize in comparing Christy Mahon with Jimmy Porter is that some common characteristics are shared by them in addition to the fact that both of them are admired on the modern stage. Both contradistinguish themselves from the world, having explored the seamy side of the world. Before Christy's appearance, Mayo is a quiet place of daily routines without anything to blame. But once Christy turns up there, all the people are contradistinguished as naive and selfishly ridiculous. Pegeen is lessoned when she says, "A strange man is a marvel, with his mighty talk; but what's a squabble in your back-yard, and the blow of a loy, have taught me that there's great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed." (p. 79) In the same way, if Jimmy is not there, Alison, Cliff, and Helena would live together without any conflict among them. But once Jimmy is thrown into their society, he is, like a bomb exploding, hurting each of them, making everyone appear as awkward and embarrassed as possible. Alison's personality seems betrayed; Helena's mysterious dignity vanishes under his constant attacks and jeers; even Cliff, as quiet as a mouse, is irritated to be swept with anger; and the place where they are becomes a battlefield, in which Jimmy's ideas are always fighting against all the ideas personified by Alison, Helena, Cliff, Ali-
son's parents, and their friends. It seems that the modern heros are not necessary to show an ideal world for their admirers to long for spiritually; they are needed only to show our hidden difficult problems.

Sometimes, we do identify ourselves with the modern heros, yet we do not like to be them all the time. The reason is simple: they are more often than not comic characters. As comedy focuses on man's weaknesses, on his foibles, follies, and absurdities, it characteristically presents deviations from a norm. The norm, meaning the pattern or standard for a group, may be either the conventional behavior of society or an ideal behavior, usually a combination of good sense, good heart, and good manners, and it may be either expressed by one of the characters or only implied in the play. In other words, the essence of comedy is incongruity, the bringing together of incompatible or seemingly incompatible parts. Here in Jimmy's characterization we find some comic elements. Both Jimmy and Christy are comic in their mechanical responses to their outside world of varying situations. Before he is mature in his view of life, Christy is obsessed by his conviction that he would be the greatest hero in the world and loved by beautiful women and admired by men only if he could kill his own father with his own hands. While Jimmy is trapped by his anger at the imperfect world around him, always sweeping his home with his anger and ridicules and not knowing that, instead of improving his living circumstances, what he does depresses his home much the worse. The difference between Jimmy and Christy is that Christy in the end of his unexpected adventure becomes mature, knowing about the world better than before and jumping out of his awkward and foolish attitudes held to the
world, while Jimmy remains the same as he was in the beginning of the story, and does not show he has already known that his response to the world is mechanical and ineffective. That is a great pity to Jimmy indeed.

Another thing found in Jimmy and Christy is that the modern hero is isolated from the crowd around him. It has been said before that Jimmy is lonely and isolated in his anger at the world. As for Christy, before growing into a real man, he got along very well with the crowd, becoming their idol by winning all the sports held in the country. But as soon as he grows manly and heroic in a mature way, he looks down as fools upon those people who once were his playmates and admirers, and strides proudly in his new heroic glamor, leaving them wallow in their obstinate rustic philosophy.

Death is very symbolic here because both Christy and Jimmy have experiences of death with their fathers. Death, of course, is one of the literary themes from antiquity, playing a very significant role. In both THE PLAYBOY and LOOK BACK IN ANGER, the sons' experiences of death obtained from their fathers' death are, nevertheless very striking. It seems that only when their fathers, the older generation, are wasted by worldly things, especially by their sons' sprouting youth, can the sons grow up. Jimmy, for instance, at an early age seeing his father dead knows the meaning of life and is quickened to his mature thinking. And the supposed death of Christy's father leads Christy to the course of growing mature before it is too late. Thus, death is meaningful on the modern stage, it points out a fact that death contains a mysterious power which makes man understand life bet-
ter and deeper and justifies itself as a good factor in establishing a hero on the modern stage.

Some critics have said that Jimmy is a kind of displaced artist as I mentioned before; and Helena, the character in the play, has said of him as "born out of his time," (p.111) These statements do not function as eulogy or apology for him, rather, they operate as something that reinforces the fact that Jimmy is a man of no action. According to what James Joyce says in his famous autobiographic novel, A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN, no artist is ever really displaced or born out of his time. In this novel, Joyce creates an artist, Stephen Daedalus, and shows an artist's relationship with the society in the modern world. In doing so, Joyce asserts that an artist must have the parallel movement toward art and toward exile. That is to say, an artist cannot be confined to the society in which he was born against his will; he may attain the state of artistic "alienation," and his imaginative, creative work without considering society's reactions toward him. This feeling of inevitable "alienation" of the artist is not new in the history of arts in the West. Apparently, Jimmy never thinks of such a thing when he constantly throws himself into the world out of his "enthusiasm," a narrow-minded individuality sometimes. The name of the Character Stephen Daedalus is itself very symbolic:

Stephen was the first Christian martyr, and in Greek Mythology Daedalus was the first craftsman (or artist: The Greeks had one word for both), who made the labyrinth for King Minos at Crete; later, when Minos turned against him, he made himself wings and escaped
by flying across the sea—symbol for Joyce of the artist's flight into necessary exile. The name "Daedalus" means "cunning craftsman": the artist for Joyce was both martyr and pioneer craftsman. 26

Judging on the basis of Joyce's view of the artist, it is clear that Jimmy is neither a martyr nor a pioneer craftsman in his coping with his circumstances. His home, no doubt, serves always as a battlefield for him to fight against his wife, friends and relatives. Yet this battlefield is none of the artist's, but one that Arnold sees in his poem, "Dover Beach" 27: The world lying before one has really neither certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain:

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

The Victorian Arnold knew about the situation in which he was set, and demanded the doctrine of being "true to one another" in this poem. Jimmy, however, is lost in this kind of battlefield, and it is not easy for him to get out of it. It is usually acknowledged that the earlier Victorian society is more or less parallel with the modern society in regard to their spiritual lives. But the difference is that the Victorians are always searching for a moral principle for them to hold, while the moderns are so puzzled with their problems that they can do nothing but be lost in their finding a way out. In the same way, Jimmy is not possessed of an artist's far-reaching insight, thus, he is anything but an artist.

VI

As a conclusion, the character Jimmy Porter lacks
the classical spirit implied in Antigone; yet, to some extent, he identifies himself with Doctor Faustus in their tragic spirit and individuality; but in his response to the world, he is different from Faustus, but found identified with Christy. Like Christy, with his awkward and mechanical responses toward the world, Jimmy Porter is both comic and pathetic. And in contrast with Stephen Daedalus, Jimmy is found not an artist at all, but a man lost in a horrible and trifle battlefield, what he shouts and ridicules at means nothing but expressions of his helpless pains. A modern hero is complex in his personality. Being far from the ordered classical world, the modern hero becomes both tragic and comic, both heroic and pathetic, both intelligent and ignorant, both an ardent worshiper of individualism and helpless sacrifice to individualism, and, worst of all, both an idol of the crowd and the one being lost in the crowd. Jimmy Porter attains a kind of human dignity on the modern stage, though tainted with a satirical colour. That is, the modern hero Jimmy Porter is the incarnation of the biggest irony in the modern world.

NOTES

18. Antigone is the protagonist of ANTIGONE, which was written by the Greek playwright, Sophocles (496-406 B. C.). All the quotations concerning ANTIGONE are from an English version by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald, which is compiled into DRAMA: AN INTRODUCTORY ANTHOLOGY, ed. by Otto Reinert.

19. Doctor Faustus is the hero created by Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) in his play THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS. All the quotations about this play are from the same book as those of ANTIGONE.

20. Christy Mahon is the main character of THE PLAYBOY

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OF THE WESTERN WORLD, which was written by John M. Synge (1871-1909). All the passages quoted from THE PLAYBOY are from FIVE GREAT MODERN IRISH PLAYS, edited by the Modern Library.

21. Stephen Daedalus is the young artist created by James Joyce (1882-1941) in his novel A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN. All the quotations of this novel are from the Compass Books Edition.


26. Ibid., p. 1623.


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