

"The Boarding House": An Italian Variant?

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Some years ago, one of my research students was asked to start a wide-ranging search for James Joyce's possible buried writings. After painstaking investigation, she came across an Italian short story by the Irish writer in a Trieste newspaper; it was entitled "Petali d'arancio" ("Orange Petals") and appeared in *Il Popolo di Trieste* on 3 January 1929.¹ At first sight, it seemed to be merely an Italian version of "The Boarding House" from *Dubliners*, but closer inspection revealed a number of significant variants and an important short sentence, not in the English version, added to the end of the story. The short story appears in no Joyce bibliography and has no translator's name attached to it. The identity of the translator remains a mystery since neither local archives nor documents by Joyce in other institutions provide sufficient evidence for certain identification.²

Computer-assisted philological analysis comparing this story with Joyce's Italian writings in *The James Joyce Archive* and with contemporary Italian translations of *Dubliners* has not entirely cleared up the mystery, but it has at least pinpointed fundamental stylistic differences and indisputable analogies. What follows is as much of the evidence as we have gathered to date.

The Case

In 1929, when "Petali d'arancio" appeared in print, Joyce lived in Paris; he had left Trieste nine years before, never to return.

In terms of style and punctuation, the text presents some distinctive features, as compared with "The Boarding House." Innumerable periods are turned into commas, semi-colons, and, in particular, colons, so that Joyce's short sentences and curt style are given a pronounced discursive flow. Other colons are added *ex nihilo*, and yet others are made to replace commas and semi-colons. Countless commas are added where none were felt necessary by the author,

whereas a few commas are deleted. Moreover, two paragraphs are united and five paragraphs split into two.

Joyce seems unlikely to have consented to this augmentation of punctuation—all the greater since, because of the cuts, "Petali" is actually shorter than "The Boarding House"—nor is Joyce likely to have consented to italicized words being placed in inverted commas, which he heartily disliked. It should be pointed out, however, that this happens only once in the Italian version, and that in his 1905 manuscript of "The Boarding House" (JJA 4), Joyce himself made free use of inverted commas, which were then cut from the proofs of both the unpublished 1910 Maunsell edition (JJA 5) and the Grant Richards edition of 1914 (JJA 6).

Apart from some minor changes—which might even be considered deliberate—and some possible misprints, the vocabulary of the Italian version is notably different from the English in a number of ways. To begin with, there seems to be an Italianization—or a Triestinization—of the text, where "bailiff" is translated as "*podestà*,"³ "stout" is given as "*vino*" (wine), and "Jack" is rendered as "*Giacomo*" on three occasions and twice left untranslated.

Similarly, the sentence "He ran . . . headlong into debt" (D 61) is rendered as "*indebitarsi fino agli occhi*" (he got up to his eyes in debt), which is a calque, a loan translation from a Triestine idiom: "*fodrà de debiti fin sora i oci*,"⁴ meaning literally "to be lined with debts up to above one's eyes." The Italian idiom, on the other hand, would read, in translation, as "he got up to his neck (or to his hair) in debt." This is clear evidence that "Petali" was translated by someone familiar with the dialect of Trieste, perhaps even by Joyce himself, his younger brother Stanislaus, or his student Amalia Popper Risolo.

On the other hand, there are puzzling mistakes in "Petali." One cannot understand why "outsiders"—in "favourites and outsiders" (D 62), obviously referring to racehorses—should be translated as "*un ospite di passaggio*" (a passing guest); nor can one explain why "he was always sure to be on to" is rendered as "*era sempre sicuro di sapere*" (he was always sure that he was on to), the result being nothing less than a change of the point of view.

These errors seem to be made by an Italian who does not understand the full meaning of words or phrases in the original. For example, the phrase "catch short twelve at Marlborough Street" (D 64), referring to the short noon Mass, is translated as "*trovarsi a Melbourne[5] Street a mezzogiorno preciso*" (meet at Melbourne Street at exactly twelve o'clock). In this translation, the ecclesiastical association is entirely omitted.

Amalia Popper Risolo

At first, one might be tempted to ascribe the translation to Amalia Popper Risolo, whose husband, Michele Risolo,⁶ was the chief editor of *Il Popolo di Trieste*, the organ of the National Fascist Party in which "Petali" was published.⁷ It was in this paper that Italo Svevo published an article on Joyce in 1926⁸ and to which, some years later, Stanislaus Joyce contributed an article on Joyce and Svevo.⁹

Risolo at first seems the most likely translator of this story from *Dubliners*, for she, as a devoted disciple of Joyce's, was to translate, at about the same time, three other stories from the collection: "Una nuvoletta" ("A Little Cloud"), appearing in *Il Piccolo della Sera* (10 October 1929), "I morti" ("The Dead") in *Il Popolo di Trieste* (25 September-8 October 1931), and "Evelina" ("Eveline") in *Il Popolo di Trieste* (5 November 1931). The three stories, together with "Araby" and "Controparti" ("Counterparts"), would be collected and published a few years later, in 1935, under the common title of *Araby*.

This attribution could explain some misunderstandings of the English text, but it would not account for the Italianization of some elements of the context. It is true that Risolo often Italianizes some of the proper names in the stories, leaving others unchanged, but she never dreams of translating "stout" as "vino," for example. The word occurs twice in "The Dead," and she translates it simply as "birra" (beer).

A comparative analysis of style in her *Araby* collection and in "Petali" shows that the percentage of split and linked paragraphs in her translations is generally much higher than in "Petali," whereas the changes that she makes in punctuation, although numerous, are never as great as there.

Moreover, Risolo generally turns all italics—be it for emphasis or to indicate indirect speech—into roman type between inverted commas (that is, Joycean "perverted commas"), while the translator of "Petali," with the exception of a brief exclamation («Mio Dio!»—My God), either leaves the italics or adopts the roman type.

Like the translator of "Petali," Risolo sometimes omits single words. This occurs mainly in "Controparti," but in one case only—in the same story—she omits a one-line sentence and that, presumably, by mistake.

The decisive test of whether Risolo is the translator of "Petali" must surely rest upon her syntax. Joyce's student, in fact, often translates present conditionals, indicating future in the past, with the same tense in Italian rather than using the more correct perfect

conditional. In so doing, she often confuses free direct speech and free indirect speech in the same sentences. The translator of "Petali" never makes this mistake.

Three additional small details seem to exclude the hypothesis that Risolo translated this story. In "Petali," "corn-factor" is rendered as "*commerciante di grani*," whereas Risolo, in "I morti," uses the phrase "*commerciante di grano*"; "*qual'era*," in "Petali," is rightly spelled "*qual era*" in her translation of "Eveline"; finally, "Petali" has "*sopraccigli*," whereas Risolo uses "*sopracciglia*" (to translate: "frowning" in "A Little Cloud"; "eyebrows" in "Counterparts"; and "brows"—four times—in "The Dead"). This last case is a good example of stylistic consistency, since the word admits both plurals. In the first two cases, Risolo shows the greater command of Italian.

Finally, it should be noted that in ascribing the translation to Risolo one also encounters a logical objection: if the translation were hers, why did she not include the story in her later *Araby* collection of 1935, and, moreover, why did she not sign her translation when it came out in the paper? As a matter of fact, her translations of the other stories from *Dubliners*, as well as of Stanislaus's article on Joyce and Svevo, were always clearly acknowledged in print. What is more, when the forthcoming serial publication of "I morti" was announced by *Il Popolo di Trieste*, it was clearly pointed out that "*La traduzione, fedelissima all'originale e autorizzata dall'autore, è dovuta alla signora prof. Amalia Popper Risolo*" (the translation by Prof. Amalia Popper Risolo is very faithful to the original and was approved by the author).¹⁰

Stanislaus Joyce

The fleeting suspicion that Stanislaus himself might have been responsible for the translation also has to be ruled out.

After joining his brother James in Trieste in 1905, he lived and worked there as a teacher of English until his death on Bloomsday, 1955.

The Italian that Stanislaus spoke and wrote was distinguished by a wide variety of linguistic registers. His "Ricordi di James Joyce" shows how eclectic his style is, changing, as it does, from the literary register to the colloquial one, while mistakes in syntax and vocabulary are far from rare.¹¹ His Italian vocabulary and syntax are often influenced by English usage, particularly in his employment of clumsy causative participles.

In short, his Italian, even in 1941, does not match the Italian of

"Petali" of 1929, especially when one allows for twelve years of linguistic improvement.

James Joyce

It would certainly be intriguing to demonstrate that Joyce himself was the author of this translation. The Triestinization of part of the context, and particularly the translation of "Jack" as "Giacomo," reminds the reader of *Giacomo Joyce* and of Joyce's lecture in 1907 on "*Giacomo Clarenzio Mangan*" (see CW 175; my italics).¹² In *Giacomo Joyce*—whose composition seems to date back to the years 1911-14 (GJ xv)—as in "Petali," Joyce employs variants of the name: "Giacomo," "James," "Jamesy," and "Jim." Joyce seems to have been particularly fond of this Italian version of his name, and Alessandro Francini Bruni reports that, even after leaving Trieste, Joyce used to speak Italian and to say that his children "were always to be 'Giorgio' and 'Lucia.'" Joyce, according to Francini, claimed "that the language of family affection could only be Italian."¹³

Ascribing "Petali" to Joyce would make it possible to explain several mistranslations that sound very much like the flaws of a non-native speaker of Italian: "*come*" for a causative "as," "*celibato*" (celibacy) for "celibate," and some minor clumsy renderings. On the other hand, what have been defined here as mistakes—the translations of "outsiders" and "catch short twelve"—might even be deliberate changes of the original text. It is as difficult to prove as it is to prove the contrary.

It is important to note, however, that Joyce's Italian (and Triestine, too) was excellent. In all his Italian writings, which for the most part date from 1907 to 1912, Joyce demonstrates, for example, his perfect command of the tenses of the conditional, and the composition that he wrote on the occasion of a competition at the University of Padua in 1912 shows his complete mastery of Italian syntax (*Scritti* 181-93). His mistakes there are mainly spelling errors and, as his later letters in Italian testify, would be rectified by a few more years of life in Italy.

Curiously, both James and Stanislaus Joyce write "*giuoco*" (game, play) exactly as it appears in "Petali,"¹⁴ whereas Risolo, for one, uses the less literary spelling "*gioco*." But this is one of those minor points which cannot alone tip the scales in favor of one or the other solution.

The major problem in the text of "Petali," however, is posed by the nine cuts and the added closing sentence. On the face of it, the cuts

might have been prompted by inadequate space in the newspaper, but their short, idiosyncratic nature (as is the case with cuts 2, 3, 6, and 9) suggests that this was not so. Furthermore, Risolo's stories were unaltered by the editors of *Il Popolo di Trieste*, and, as the long process of publication of *Dubliners* suggests, Joyce himself was quite inflexible about cuts and changes. Moreover, if space had been a problem, why add a sentence, after deleting so many passages?

One possible reason for the cuts might relate to the story's origins. "The Boarding House" was drawn from life, with one of Joyce's colleagues at Trieste's Berlitz School as its protagonist (*Letters II* 212), and the writer might have wished to omit unpleasant, compromising passages before submitting the story to a Triestine reading public. But in one case only (cut 7) does the cut look like bowdlerization. It occurs when Doran recalls the studied art that Polly used to excite first his imagination, then his senses, with the intention of ensnaring him. No reason can be found, however, for the omission of the other passages, which define the character and mind of Mrs. Mooney (cuts 1 and 2), the agitation and nervousness of Mr. Doran (cut 4), and the preoccupations expressed in Doran's interior monologue through free direct and free indirect speech (cut 5).

In another case—"What am I to do at all? She would put an end to herself, she said" (D 66)—the omission seems to remove all possible sense of tragedy, and they are words that ring false and even suggest subtle blackmail as they come from Polly's lips. Actually, the story is probably the one nearest to comedy in *Dubliners* and the one in which the sense of restricted life is farthest from the mood of melancholy—sometimes squalid—drama of the other stories in the collection.

It is true that part of cut 7 (from "[t]hen late one night as he was undressing for bed" to "as she lit and steadied her candle a faint perfume arose"—D 67) was added by Joyce in the process of extensive rewriting of the story, which took place between the 1905 manuscript and the Maunsell edition proofs of 1910.¹⁵ This could lead to the assumption that "Petali," as an intermediate version, dates back to that period. But in no way is it possible to explain the omission of the other passages belonging to the 1905 manuscript and reappearing in the 1910 proofs.

Thinking of "Petali" as an ur-text of "The Boarding House" would be a tempting solution, although this seems unlikely, because Joyce's Italian before 1905—the manuscript and first copy of the text is dated "1.7.1905"—was far from perfect, as his early notebooks show (JJA 2 and 3). In this regard, however, we still move in the field of mere conjecture, and all inference seems doomed to arbitrariness.

What is clear is that the omissions consistently serve to reduce tension and exclude the presentation of inner motives, thus turning the story into something more matter-of-fact. Yet the skill with which this is done is also very evident, preserving at all times the persistent flow of the narrative; though we cannot be certain whose hand performed this operation, the level of expertise points to that of Joyce himself.

Finally, there is the closing sentence—"E i fiori d'arancio caddero un giorno lietamente su una gioconda festa nuziale . . ." (and orange blossoms fell one day cheerfully on a jocund wedding party . . .). This adds a new and ironical ring to a story that elsewhere conveys the sense of entrapment of a Dubliner at the hands of society. Strangely enough, this overemphasized happy ending anticipates the brief presentation of the whole story in *Ulysses*, where Bob Doran, the enmeshed "serious young man, not rakish or loud-voiced" (*D* 65) of "The Boarding House," is reintroduced in the changed role of a drunkard on his annual drinking spree:

Fitter for him go home to the little sleepwalking bitch he married, Mooney, the bumbailiff's daughter, mother kept a kip in Hardwicke street, that used to be straving about the landings Bantam Lyons told me that was stopping there at two in the morning without a stitch on her, exposing her person, open to all comers, fair field and no favour. (*U* 12.398-402)

Needless to say, here the tone and the spirit of the speaking voice are changed; the point of view is made vulgar, and the mask of indirection has been dropped. Even the false set of social attitudes is exposed:

Then see him of a Sunday with his little concubine of a wife, and she wagging her tail up the aisle of the chapel with her patent boots on her, no less, and her violets, nice as pie, doing the little lady. Jack Mooney's sister. And the old prostitute of a mother procuring rooms to street couples. Gob, Jack made him toe the line. Told him if he didn't patch up the pot, Jesus, he'd kick the shite out of him. (*U* 12.811-16)

"And orange blossoms fell one day cheerfully on a jocund wedding party . . ."—the sentence added to "The Boarding House"—seems (through its patent irony) to set the tone more clearly for the outspoken picture outlined in *Ulysses*.

The full parodic effect of the story's concluding words can only be felt in juxtaposition to earlier details. First, there is the story of Mr. Mooney who had been trapped into an unhappy marriage to his

boss's daughter and, as a consequence, had started "to go to the devil" (D 61). Second, there is Bob Doran's premonitory instinct, warning him that "[o]nce you are married you are done for" (D 66). Finally, we have his longing "to ascend through the roof and fly away to another country where he would never hear again of his trouble" (D 67-68). If all this foreshadows the boozy Bob Doran of *Ulysses*, we see that the image of "orange blossoms" falling "cheerfully on a jocund wedding party" seems to be a tongue-in-cheek premise.

Then there is the title, "Petali d'arancio," not an Italian idiom, just as "orange petals," is not an English one. The true idiom is "*fiori d'arancio*," "orange blossoms," as in the closing sentence of the story. But why "petali"? It might have been the work of an imaginative headline writer, who preferred it to "The Boarding House," but this is unlikely since no such change was ever made in the other stories translated for the newspapers by Risolo. The difference between "*fiori d'arancio*" and "*petali d'arancio*" is that the image of "*petali*" conveys the idea of a dead marriage; the flower of love has withered and all its petals fallen, exposing the reality behind the illusion and producing in the reader an awareness of delayed irony.

In "The Boarding House," an ironical reading of the conclusion is hampered by the psychology and motives of the characters, which create in the reader a deep sense of involvement and insight into the strategical reasons for their actions. The author of "Petali" cuts these very passages, and the perspective is thereby changed: the dramatic quality, the unambiguous picture of interior motive, and all sense of guilt are played down, facilitating a light-hearted, detached enjoyment of irony. And the sense of irony is made even deeper by juxtaposing, retrospectively, the closing sentence with the new title of the story.

All this seems to help clarify the question of attribution. But other small details, too, seem to reveal Joyce's hand: "*gioconda*" is as uncommon a word in Italian as "jocund" is in English, but Joyce knows it and has already used it, for example, in one of his lectures of 1912 on Daniel Defoe (*Scritti* 154); Stanislaus also uses the word "*giocondo*" in his "Ricordi di James Joyce" (*Letteratura* 33). Similarly, "*fiori d'arancio*" appears in Joyce's article of 1907 on Fenianism (*Scritti* 47).

But the most interesting and strange of these coincidences probably concerns the word "*podestà*," which is used in "Petali" to translate "bailiff" and occurs in another of Joyce's articles, "La città delle tribù. Ricordi italiani in un porto irlandese" of 1912 (*Scritti* 87; the article is reprinted in translation in CW 229-33). Here he writes of

James ("Giacomo"!) Lynch, a Galway chief magistrate and mayor of the late fifteenth century, renowned for executing his own son. Lynch was in office in a period when no bailiffs were elected in Galway;¹⁶ therefore, he probably assumed the bailiff's duties, too.

The word "bailiff" occurs again in *Ulysses*, where Lynch is on stage as a "scholar . . . of medicine" (*U* 14.190), and the name, although referring to another character, is curiously connected again with yet another meaning of the word "bailiff" in the fourteenth episode, "Wandering Rocks":

—Come along with me to the subsheriff's office, he said. I want to show you the new beauty Rock has for a bailiff. He's a cross between Lobengula and *Lynchehaun*. (*U* 10.934-36; my italics)¹⁷

Lynch, the bailiff, in Joyce's Italian article on Galway, is a "*podestà*," and the word—inappropriately, as it happens—is translated there exactly as in "Petali." A "*podestà*" was a chief magistrate in medieval city-states, and the word could accurately translate Lynch's title. But in 1926, the title "*podestà*" was brought into fashion again in Italy to indicate the chief executive of a commune in the Fascist regime and could not easily render the sense of sheriff's officer, as conveyed by "bailiff" in "Petali d'arancio." One would be tempted to think, therefore, that the translation was made before that date, when such clashing references would not be made. In any case, though it seems a minor detail, the correspondence between bailiff and "*podestà*" suggests once again Joyce's own hand in this translation.

Although such proofs are, as is evident, very sparse and never irrefutable, one is left wondering why any other translator should have added a sentence to the story and who this very daring person could be. Given Joyce's intense concern for detail, one feels permitted to suspect that only the author could have authorized—or, rather, have materially effected—such changes, considering, moreover, that Stanislaus would have been in Trieste to defend, if necessary, his brother's interest and will. Yet no letter has yet come to light, either to or from Joyce, requesting or complaining about alterations to "Petali."

The picture would not be complete without Stanislaus's remark that his

brother did not like the first stories [of *Dubliners*], which had already appeared in a Dublin paper, and would have liked to re-write "The

Boarding House" but for a fixed objection to changing or omitting anything he had published.¹⁸

This, of course, is no proof that Joyce did actually change the story, but it may contribute to answering the riddle of "Petali."

One final objection might be raised, and that is why Joyce, who considered himself a socialist, should have allowed one of his stories to be published in the organ of the National Fascist Party. Stanislaus, of a more conservative mind than his brother,¹⁹ might have had some responsibility for this. He himself had his article on Joyce and Svevo published in *Il Popolo di Trieste* only a few years later. Joyce, as is well known, abandoned his political commitment after his return from Rome in 1907, moving towards the more detached domain of aesthetics.²⁰

Unfortunately, Joyce's lectures and articles in Italian do not afford a homogeneous comparative analysis with the narrative style of "Petali d'arancio," and his literary translations were generally also done with the help of others: Nicolò Vidacovich for J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, and Nino Frank for short passages from *Finnegans Wake*, which were published under the title of "Anna Livia Plurabella." Only George Moore's "Mildred Lawson" was apparently translated by Joyce unaided, as an exercise in language learning, and as such, this early translation, which was never published, shows Joyce's difficulties with the written literary language.

All these works, whether published or unpublished, confirm at least that Joyce showed a particular interest in translating his or others' works into Italian. *Riders to the Sea* was translated in 1908 but curiously published only in 1929,²¹ in the same year as "Petali." The translation of "Mildred Lawson" probably dates back to 1904²² but was never published, while the transposition into Italian of "Anna Livia Plurabella" was carried out in 1938 and published in 1940.²³

The Italian of "Petali," however, is almost flawless, whereas all the above early materials ("Anna Livia Plurabella" is, of course, an exception) show that his command of the language was not perfect. When Silvio Benco tells of Joyce's excellent knowledge of Italian at the time of his articles for *Il Piccolo*,²⁴ he is undoubtedly emphasizing reality to backdate myth. Judging by the result, Benco's commitment to revising the language of Joyce's contributions for the newspaper seems to have been rather cursory.

In conclusion, it seems appropriate that, while we wait for clarifying documentary evidence, the text of "Petali d'arancio" should be published for the undoubted interest that it will hold for Joyce's

wide readership and in the hope that the story will now be acknowledged in future editions of his bibliography.

Petali d'arancio²⁵

La signora Mooney era figlia di un macellaio; era una donna capace di tener per sè i propri pensieri: quel che si dice una donna accorta.

Aveva sposato il primo garzone del padre e aperto in seguito una macelleria nei pressi di Spring Gardens. Ma il signor Mooney, subito dopo la morte del suocero, si lasciò andare alla deriva. Cominciò a bere, a vuotar la cassa al punto da indebitarsi fino agli occhi. Era inutile fargli giurare di non bere più: dopo pochi giorni ricominciava e allora si azzuffava con la moglie davanti ai clienti; acquistava carne guasta in maniera che il commercio cominciò ad andar male. Una notte minacciò la moglie col coltellaccio della macelleria ed ella dovette rifugiarsi da un vicino.

Dopo quel fattaccio, vissero ognuno per conto proprio, poi ella andò dal curato ed ottenne la separazione e la custodia dei figli; ma non volle dare al marito nè denaro, nè vitto, nè alloggio. A lui non restò che arrolarsi tra gli uomini dello sceriffo: era un piccolo ubriaco curvo, d'aspetto miserabile, la faccia bianca, i baffi bianchi, i sopraccigli bianchi disegnati sopra due occhietti venato²⁶ di rosso. Stava seduto tutto il giorno nell'ufficio del podestà in attesa di qualche cosa da fare.

La signora Mooney aveva ritirato dalla macelleria quel poco che le era rimasto, e con quello aveva aperto una pensione in Hardwick Street. Era una donna alta dall'aspetto imponente. La pensione riceveva forestieri di passaggio: turisti di Liverpool o dell'isola di Man e talvolta qualche artista di caffè concerto: ma la base della clientela era composta da impiegati del luogo. Ella dirigeva la pensione con fermezza e abilità: sapeva quando era il caso di far credito, quando tener duro e quando chiuder gli occhi. Tutti i suoi giovani pensionanti la chiamavano: la signora.

I pensionanti della signora Mooney pagavano quindici scellini la settimana per vitto e l'alloggio²⁷ (birra o vino non compreso²⁸). Avevano gli stessi gusti e le stesse occupazioni, quindi regnava tra loro il migliore affiatamento: discutevano fra loro delle probabilità di un favorito o di un ospite di passaggio. Giacomo Mooney, il figlio della signora, impiegato da un commissionario di Fleet Street, aveva reputazione di cattivo soggetto. Egli adoprava volentieri il linguag-

gio osceno dei soldati, e generalmente rincasava all'alba: quando veniva a raggiungere gli amici ne aveva sempre delle belle da raccontare ed era sempre sicuro di sapere quale cavallo avrebbe vinto o qual'era l'artista in voga; sempre pronto ad adoperare i pugni e a cantare canzonette allegre. La domenica sera spesso si riunivano tutti nel salotto della signora Mooney. Gli artisti di caffè concerto mettevano a disposizione ogni loro abilità, Sheridan suonava polche e valzer, improvvisando gli accompagnamenti, Polly Mooney, la figlia della signora, cantava. Cantava:

*Io sono una ragazzaccia
Non dite il contrario,
Voi lo sapete bene.*

Polly era una ragazza minuta di diciannove anni: aveva i capelli dolci e leggeri e una piccola bocca carnosa. Quando parlava, i suoi occhi grigi sfumati di verde avevano un modo di guardare in alto che le dava un'aria di madonnina perversa.

La signora Mooney l'aveva mandata come dattilografa nell'ufficio di un commerciante in grani, ma poichè uno degli uomini dello sceriffo, di pessima reputazione, capitava ogni due giorni nell'ufficio col pretesto di dire due parole alla figlia, la signora Mooney l'aveva ritirata in casa e occupata nelle faccende. Come Polly era gaia e vivace, fu deciso che si sarebbe occupata dei giovani; del resto ai giovani piace avere intorno una ragazza. Naturalmente, Polly flirtava coi pensionanti, ma la signora Mooney (*Cut 1: , who was a shrewd judge, knew that the young men were only passing the time away: none of them meant business. Things went on so for a long time and Mrs. Mooney*) già pensava di rimandarla alla dattilografia, quando le parve che ci fosse qualche cosa tra Polly e uno dei pensionanti: si mise a osservare la coppia facendo le viste di nulla.

Polly si sapeva osservata, ma non poteva tuttavia ingannarsi circa l'ostinato silenzio della madre. Nessuna complicità confessata tra madre e figlia, nessuna esplicita intesa, e benchè i pensionanti cominciassero a chiacchierare, la signora Mooney non interveniva. Polly divenne un po' strana e il giovanotto appariva inquieto. Finalmente, calcolando il momento adatto, la signora Mooney intervenne: ella trattava i problemi morali come il coltello del macellaio tratta la carne e, circa il caso presente, aveva già preso una risoluzione.

Era una bella domenica mattina all'inizio dell'estate; la giornata prometteva d'essere calda, mitigata da una lieve brezza. Tutte le finestre della pensione erano spalancate e le tende di merletto si gon-

fiavano leggermente verso la strada. Dalla torre di San Giorgio si udivano le campane e i fedeli, in gruppi o isolati, traversavano la piazzetta circolare davanti alla chiesa con un'attitudine modesta che rivelava il luogo dove erano diretti non meno dei libriccini che tenevano tra le mani inguantate.

Nella pensione il pranzo era finito e la tavola ancora piena di piatti con il resto del lardo e del giallo d'uovo. La signora Mooney, dalla sua poltrona di vimini sorvegliava Mary, la cameriera che sparecchiava: le faceva raccogliere tutte le molliche e le croste del pane destinate al pudding del martedì. Quando la tavola fu sparecchiata, le croste raccolte, il burro e lo zucchero sotto chiave, ella ripensò al colloquio avuto la sera prima con Polly: le cose erano proprio come aveva supposto; ella era stata franca nelle domande e non meno franca Polly nelle risposte. Naturalmente si erano sentite impacciate entrambe: la madre perchè non voleva aver l'aria di accogliere quella notizia con troppa disinvoltura, nè di sembrare troppo compiacente. Polly non solo perchè le allusioni di quel genere la imbarazzavano sempre, ma anche perchè non voleva esser creduta capace di avere intuito nella sua furba innocenza, le intenzioni della madre attraverso la sua apparente tolleranza.

La signora Mooney non appena si rese conto attraverso i suoi vaghi pensieri che le campane di San Giorgio avevano smesso di suonare, guardò istintivamente la pendola dorata sul caminetto. Erano le undici e diciassette, c'era tutto il tempo di sistemare la cosa con il signor Doran e di trovarsi a Melbourne Street a mezzogiorno preciso. (Cut 2: **She was sure she would win.**) In primo luogo la bilancia dell'opinione pubblica pendeva dalla sua: ella era una madre oltraggiata. L'aveva autorizzato a vivere sotto il suo tetto, presumendolo uomo d'onore, ma egli aveva semplicemente abusato dell'ospitalità. Nè la gioventù — egli era sui trentacinque anni — nè l'inesperienza potevano essergli di scusa (Cut 3: **since he was a man who had seen something of the world**). Dunque aveva approfittato della gioventù e dell'innocenza di Polly, era evidente. Come avrebbe fatto onorevole ammenda?

In casi simili è dovere riparare la colpa. Per l'uomo è molto facile, egli può andarsene per la sua strada come nulla fosse, dopo aver preso il suo piacere; ma la donna deve subire le sue conseguenze. Ci sono certe madri che si accontentano di una somma: ne conosceva qualcuna, ma ella non avrebbe agito così. Per l'onore della figlia esigevo il matrimonio.

Si assicurò ancora delle buone carte che aveva al suo giuoco, prima di mandare Mary ad avvertire il signor Doran che desiderava parlargli. Era sicura della propria causa tanto più che il giovane era

una persona seria, non un chiassone dissoluto come gli altri: se si fosse trattato di Sheridan, Meade, o Bantam Lyons, sarebbe stato assai più difficile²⁹ E poi capiva che il signor Doran non avrebbe sopportato uno scandalo. Tutti i pensionanti erano press'a poco al corrente della storia anzi, qualcuno di loro aveva persino inventato qualche particolare. Del resto, impiegato com'era da una quindicina di anni nell'ufficio di un grosso mercante³⁰ cattolico, uno scandalo per lui avrebbe voluto dire essere licenziato, mentre invece, accettando, tutto si poteva accomodare. Ella supponeva che avesse un discreto stipendio, insomma che non fosse a tasche vuote.

Quasi la mezza! S'alzò e andò a guardarsi nella specchiera: fu soddisfatta dell'espressione risoluta della sua larga faccia ilare e pensò a quelle madri che non riescono a sbarazzarsi delle figlie.

Quella domenica mattina Doran era in verità molto preoccupato. (Cut 4: **He had made two attempts to shave but his hand had been so unsteady that he had been obliged to desist. Three days' reddish beard fringed his jaws and every two or three minutes a mist gathered on his glasses so that he had to take them off and polish them with his pocket-handkerchief.**) Il ricordo della confessione del giorno prima gli dava una acuta sofferenza: il prete gli aveva strappato i particolari più ridicoli di tutta quella faccenda e, in fine, aveva talmente ingrandito il suo peccato che gli era quasi grato di sentirsi lasciare una speranza di perdono. Il male era fatto: all'infuori del matrimonio e della fuga che gli restava? (Cut 5: **He could not brazen it out. The affair would be sure to be talked of and his employer would be certain to hear of it. Dublin is such a small city: everyone knows everyone else's business. He felt his heart leap warmly in his throat as he heard in his excited imagination old Mr Leonard calling out in his rasping voice: Send Mr Doran here, please.**)

All his long years of service gone for nothing! All his industry and diligence thrown away! As a young man he had sown his wild oats, of course; he had boasted of his free-thinking and denied the existence of God to his companions in public-houses. But that was all passed and done with . . . nearly. He still bought a copy of *Reynolds's Newspaper* every week but he attended to his religious duties and for nine-tenths of the year lived a regular life. He had money enough to settle down on; it was not that. But the family would look down on her. First of all there was her disreputable father and then her mother's boarding house was beginning to get a certain fame. He had a notion that he was being had. He could imagine his friends talking of the affair and laughing. She was a little vulgar; sometimes she said *I seen* and *If I had've known*. But

what would grammar matter if he really loved her?) Non riusciva a decidersi se doveva amarla o disprezzarla per quello che aveva fatto. Certamente c'entrava anche lui, ma l'istinto gli suggeriva di restar libero, una volta sposato è finita.

Mentre stava così indeciso seduto sul letto in pantaloni e maniche di camicia, ella bussò piano alla porta ed entrò. Gli disse tutto: che aveva confessato alla madre e che questa aveva l'intenzione di parlargli la mattina stessa. Piangeva e gettandogli le braccia al collo diceva:

— Oh, Bob, Bob, che devo fare? (Cut 6: **What am I to do at all? She would put an end to herself, she said.**)

Egli la consolò come poteva, esortandola a non piangere, a non aver timore, che tutto si sarebbe accomodato: sentiva il petto palpitante della ragazza contro la camicia.

Quello ch'era accaduto non era stato interamente per colpa sua. (Cut 7: **He remembered well, with the curious patient memory of the celibate, the first casual caresses her dress, her breath, her fingers had given him. Then late one night as he was undressing for bed she had tapped at his door, timidly. She wanted to relight her candle at his for hers had been blown out by a gust. It was her bath night. She wore a loose open combing-jacket of printed flannel. Her white instep shone in the opening of her furry slippers and the blood glowed warmly behind her perfumed skin. From her hands and wrists too as she lit and steadied her candle a faint perfume arose.**)

On nights when he came in very late it was she who warmed up his dinner. He scarcely knew what he was eating, feeling her beside him alone, at night, in the sleeping house. And her thoughtfulness! If the night was anyway cold or wet or windy there was sure to be a little tumbler of punch ready for him. Perhaps they could be happy together. . . .

They used to go upstairs together on tiptoe, each with a candle, and on the third landing exchange reluctant good-nights. They used to kiss. He remembered well her eyes, the touch of her hand and his delirium. . . .)

Ma l'ebbrezza passa; si ripeté quello che aveva detto lei, applicandolo a se stesso: *Che devo fare?* L'istinto del celibato lo metteva in guardia, consigliandolo di tenersi in disparte, ma il peccato era fatto ed il suo sentimento di onore gli diceva che per un tal peccato bisognava fare ammenda onorevole.

Mentre stava seduto con lei sulla sponda del letto, arrivò Mary dicendo che la signora l'attendeva nel salotto. S'alzo³¹ per finire di vestirsi, sempre più sconcertato. Come fu pronto si accostò a lei per

consolarla: tutto si sarebbe accomodato, non bisognava temere. La lasciò sul letto³² che piangeva dolcemente gemendo: «Mio Dio!».

Nello scendere le scale gli occhiali si appannarono a tal punto, che dovette toglierli per asciugarli. Avrebbe voluto passare sopra i tetti e prendere il volo verso nuovi paesi dove non avrebbe più sentito parlare dei suoi fastidi, e tuttavia di scalino in scalino una forza lo spingeva avanti. Le facce implacabili del direttore d'ufficio e della padrona consideravano la sua sconfitta. All'ultimo piano passò davanti a Giacomo Mooney che tornava dalla cucina con due bottiglie di vino. Si salutarono freddamente e gli occhi dell'amante si fermarono un momento su una faccia di bull-dog e su un paio di braccia corte e grosse. Come fu in fondo alla scala, guardò in alto e vide Jack che lo seguiva con lo sguardo.

Improvvisamente rammentò una notte in cui uno degli artisti di caffè concerto, un biondino londinese, s'era permesso qualche libertà con Polly. La serata corse il rischio d'essere interrotta dal furore di Giacomo. Tutti cercavano di calmarlo, lo³³ artista un po' più pallido del solito, continuava a sorridere protestando di non avere cattive intenzioni, ma Jack continuava a sbraitare dichiarando che avrebbe fatto inghiottire i denti al primo che l'avesse presa su quel tono con la sorella, in fede di Jack.

(Cut 8:)

Polly rimase per un po' seduta sulla sponda del letto piangendo, s'asciugò gli occhi e s'avviò verso lo specchio. Immerse l'angolo di un asciugamano nell'acqua e si rinfrescò gli occhi; si guardò di profilo e mise a posto una forcina sopra lo³⁴ orecchio. Tornò a sedersi in fondo al letto: contemplando i cuscini che le tornarono³⁵ alla mente amabili, intimi ricordi. Appoggiò la nuca sulle sbarre fredde e si mise a fantasticare. Ogni inquietudine era scomparsa dal suo viso.

Attendeva paziente, quasi allegra, non aveva paura; i ricordi cedevano il posto a poco a poco alle speranze, alle visioni del futuro. Speranze e visioni s'erano così bene mescolate che ella non vedeva più i cuscini bianchi (Cut 9: **on which her gaze was fixed**), non ricordava più d'aspettare qualche cosa.

Finalmente sentì la madre che la chiamava. D'un balzo fu alla scala.

— Polly! Polly!

— Sì, mamma.

— Vieni giù, mia cara, il signor Doran ti vuol parlare.

Allora si ricordò che cosa era quello che aspettava. E i fiori d'arancio caddero un giorno lietamente su una gioconda festa nuziale. . . .

JAMES JOYCE

¹ The student is Tiziana Vatta, and the title of the dissertation that she wrote under my supervision is "'Petali d'arancio' by James Joyce" (Tesi di Laurea, Università degli Studi di Trieste, 1988-89).

² I wish to thank Mr. Stephen Joyce and Dr. Fausto Risolo—the son of Amalia Popper Risolo—who were kind enough to respond to my search for possible manuscripts or any useful information.

³ A *podestà* was the chief executive of an Italian commune during the Fascist regime.

⁴ In her dissertation, Vatta makes this interesting point and quotes G. Pinguentini's *Nuovo Dizionario del dialetto triestino* (Trieste: Cappelli, 1969).

⁵ This is probably a misprint for "Marlborough" in the original.

⁶ For the purposes of this article, Amalia Popper Risolo will henceforth be referred to as Risolo and her husband as Michele Risolo. Risolo had been a student of Joyce's in Trieste in the years 1908-09, and it is supposedly his attraction to her that inspired *Giacomo Joyce*. While it is possible that Annie Schleimer, another student of Joyce's, was the woman Joyce wrote of in *GJ*—see Stelio Crise, "Il triestino J.J., *Il ritorno di Joyce* (Trieste: Comitato joyciano, 1982)—recent research points toward Risolo as the person whom Joyce focused on. See Vicki Mahaffey, "Fascism and Silence: The Coded History of Amalia Popper," *JJQ*, forthcoming.

⁷ Michele Risolo, who seems to have been a supporter of the party line, was forced to resign in 1938 because his wife was Jewish.

⁸ See Italo Svevo, "Triestinità di un grande scrittore irlandese: James Joyce," *Il Popolo di Trieste* (1 May 1926).

⁹ Stanislaus Joyce, "James Joyce and Italo Svevo," *Il Popolo di Trieste* (24 January 1933). This article is a translation, by Risolo, of Stanislaus's preface to Italo Svevo's *Senilità* (*As a Man Grows Older*), which James Joyce had refused to write.

¹⁰ My translation; "I morti di James Joyce," *Il Popolo di Trieste* (25 September 1931), 3.

¹¹ Stanislaus Joyce, "Ricordi di James Joyce," *Letteratura*, 5 (July-September 1941), 3-35 and (October-December 1941), 23-35. Further references to the July-September issue will be cited parenthetically in the text as *Letteratura*.

¹² See James Joyce, *Scritti italiani*, ed. Gianfranco Corsini and Giorgio Melchiori (Milan: Mondadori, 1979), pp. 125-40. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text as *Scritti*. This work was reprinted in James Joyce, *Poesie e prose*, ed. Franca Ruggieri (Milano: Mondadori, 1992).

¹³ Alessandro Francini Bruni, "Ricordi su James Joyce," *Nuova antologia*, 441 (September-December 1947), 71-79; reprinted as "Recollections of Joyce," trans. Lido Botti, *Portraits of the Artist in Exile*, ed. Willard Potts (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1979), p. 45. Francini was a close friend of Joyce's from the days of Pola and Trieste.

¹⁴ See James Joyce, "L'Irlanda Isola dei Santi e dei Savi," *Scritti*, p. 98 and Stanislaus Joyce, *Letteratura*, p. 34.

¹⁵ For full information about the various stages of "The Boarding House" text, see Robert Scholes, "Further Observations on the Text of *Dubliners*," *Studies in Bibliography*, 17 (1964), 115-16; reprinted with revisions in "Dub-

liners": *Text, Criticism, and Notes*, ed. Robert Scholes and A. Walton Litz (New York: Viking Press, 1969), pp. 241-42.

¹⁶ See James Hardiman, *History of the Town and County of Galway* (Dublin: W. Folds, 1820), p. 199. I owe all details of this subject to Thomas Sharkey, County Librarian of Galway County Libraries.

¹⁷ Lynchehaun, alias James Walshe, was an Irish outlaw of the late nineteenth century.

¹⁸ Stanislaus Joyce, "The Background to *Dubliners*," *Listener* (25 March 1954), 527.

¹⁹ Richard Ellmann describes Stanislaus as "an outspoken Irredentist, basking in . . . anticlerical liberalism" (JIII 380).

²⁰ See Dominic Manganiello, *Joyce's Politics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980) and Paul Delaney, "Joyce: Political Development and the Aesthetic of *Dubliners*," *The Artist and Political Vision*, ed. Benjamin R. Barber and Michael J. Gargas McGrath (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1982), pp. 221-31.

²¹ See James Joyce, "La cavalcata al mare," *Solaria*, 4 (September-October 1929), 3-16.

²² See Hans Walter Gabler, "Preface" to JJA 2 xxxii.

²³ See *Prospettive* (15 February and 15 December 1940), 13-15, 14-16. Detailed information about this translation can be found in Nino Frank, "L'ombre qui avait perdu son homme," *Mémoire brisée* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1967), pp. 29-64; reprinted as "The Shadow That Had Lost Its Man," trans. Jane Carson, *Portraits of the Artist in Exile*, pp. 74-105.

²⁴ See Silvio Benco, "Ricordi di Joyce," *Pegaso* (August 1930), 150-65; reprinted as "James Joyce a Trieste," *Portraits of the Artist in Exile*, pp. 49-58.

²⁵ The eight passages omitted from "Petali" are here inserted in English, in boldface and inside parentheses. They are from *Dubliners: The Corrected Text*, ed. Robert Scholes (London: Paladin Publishers, 1988).

²⁶ The adjective should be in the plural: "venati."

²⁷ The text should read either "vitto e alloggio" or "il vitto e l'alloggio."

²⁸ The correct grammar here would be "compresi."

²⁹ A period is missing here.

³⁰ The word used here in *Dubliners* is the more precise "wine-merchant" (D 65).

³¹ This is probably a misprint of "S'alzò."

³² Presumably this should be "letto."

³³ "Lo artista" for "l'artista" is an obsolete way of splitting the article and noun when the latter begins a new line, as happens in the newspaper.

³⁴ Read "l'orecchio"; see the previous endnote.

³⁵ This is an odd use of "tornare" as a transitive verb.