

Englisch-Sprachklausuren

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14. Oktober 2004 – Markus Edler

James Joyce: „James Clarence Mangan“ (1902).

in: Ellsworth Mason und Richard Ellmann (Hrsg.): *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*. London 1959, S. 82f.

Every age must look for its sanction to its poetry and philosophy, for in these the human mind, as it looks backward or forward, attains to an eternal state. The philosophic mind inclines always to an elaborate life – the life of Goethe or of Leonardo da Vinci; but the life of the poet is intense – the life of Blake or of Dante – taking into its centre the life that surrounds it and flinging it abroad again amid planetary music. With Mangan a narrow and hysterical nationality receives a last justification, for when this feeble-bodied figure departs dusk begins to veil the train of the gods, and he who listens may hear their footsteps leaving the world. But the ancient gods, who are visions of the divine names, die and come to life many times, and, though there is dusk about their feet and darkness in their indifferent eyes, the miracle of light is renewed eternally in the imaginative soul. When the sterile and treacherous order is broken up, a voice or a host of voices is heard singing, a little faintly at first, of a serene spirit which enters woods and cities and the hearts of men, and of the life of earth – *det dejlige vidunderlige jordliv det gaadefulde jordliv** – beautiful, alluring, mysterious. Beauty, the splendour of truth, is a gracious presence when the imagination contemplates intensely the truth of its own being or the visible world, and the spirit which proceeds out of truth and beauty is the holy spirit of joy. These are realities and these alone give and sustain life. As often as human fear and cruelty, that wicked monster begotten by luxury, are in league to make life ignoble and sullen and to speak evil of death the time is come wherein a man of timid courage seizes the keys of hell and of death, and flings them far out into the abyss, proclaiming the praise of life, which the abiding splendour of truth may sanctify, and of death, the most beautiful form of life. In those vast courses which enfold us and in that great memory which is greater and more generous than our memory, no life, no moment of exaltation is ever lost; and all those who have written nobly have not written in vain, though the desperate and weary have never heard the silver laughter of wisdom. Nay, shall not such as these have part, because of that high, original purpose which remembering painfully or by way of prophecy they would make clear, in the continual affirmation of the spirit.

* This beautiful, miraculous earth-life, this inscrutable earth-life. Ibsen: *When We Dead Awaken*.