

*New Essays on  
Call It Sleep*

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The Classic of Disinheritance

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BY the time Henry Roth began to write his novel *Call It Sleep*, the American immigrant story was already commonplace. The ominous Prologue in which Father, after a separation of two years, comes to pick up his wife and the child he has never seen from Ellis Island, compresses into a few brief pages the by-then-standard opening scenes of arrival in the new land, relying on our familiarity with the setting to realize that something new is being done with the theme. We are told that "there was something quite untypical" about the scene we are witnessing, and being in the position of the old peddler woman and the overalled men in the stern of the steamer *Peter Stuyvesant* who have seen enough immigrant reunions to know how such people conventionally behave, we realize along with them that this is a very curious meeting. Its oddity awakens our sense of mystery: How is this family different from other families that arrived in America? Or, how will this story of immigrants differ from those we have already heard? The story is different because the protagonist arriving from Europe with his mother is entering a much more dangerous new land than America. The little boy in the old-fashioned hat is beginning a new life in the hitherto unconstituted family of his mother and father, and as the fate of his hat gives warning, he will have to muster more than the usual capacities of mind and spirit if he is to survive.

Henry Roth's book about an immigrant child presents childhood as the archetypal immigration. Every child hopes to arrive in a friendly new land, a golden land, that will treat him with dignity and warmth. Happy families may be all alike at least in this respect, that the fortunate pairing of the parents is retroac-

tively confirmed by their desired, beloved children. Children of happy families are made to feel that their arrival benefits the existing settlement. But children born into less than perfect unions can never do anything to alter the condition that produced them. Because they loom for their parents as reminders of rejection or lovelessness, they must look out for harm from the very persons who should be protecting them. Growing up is for them a frightful contest of wits, as they must try to avoid antagonizing their parents without knowing why they do so. Having never *earned* dislike through their misdeeds, they cannot fairly anticipate how or why they provoke punishment, yet they have to figure out the connections between cause and effect if they hope to avoid abuse.

Child and immigrant both are required to learn a new language, to adapt to new surroundings. The burden is on each to adjust to a world already complete without him. Children may appear to be the most adaptable of immigrants because they are anyway engaged in the process of adjusting to their surroundings, and are already exercising the required skills of observation, emulation, intellection. In addition, the child has the greatest incentive to learn because he is the most desperate immigrant, lacking the advantages of maturity and mastery in other areas that can sometimes help to compensate for physical and social disadvantage. Immigration is humiliating for adults because they are forced back into the position of children, and required to relearn what cost them so much effort the first time.

In one important aspect, however, the two conditions are dissimilar, for unlike the immigrant, the child can never select the home in which he must learn to live. The agony of David Schearl begins with his arrival into the troubled union that his parents have forged; compared to that, his conquest of America is a piece of (chocolate) cake.

David's headgear is unceremoniously stripped from him in the Prologue, along with any lingering notion of divine or ancestral grace. Thus, when we are joined to his consciousness in the opening sentence of Book I, the child is already aware that "this world had been created without thought of him." The observation holds true at every level, beginning with the physi-

cal. Too small to reach the faucet above him, he lacks the power to slake his thirst and must call upon his mother – "tall as a tower" – to do it for him. She helps him with the mechanics of the operation, assuring him that he will one day be big enough to do it himself. "Have little fear," she says, and indeed, were it only a matter of growing taller, David might look forward to mastering his environment in the natural course of time. The natural world, however, is not his only challenge. His mother expects something from her son in return for the water she gives him: a kiss with lips as cool as the water that wet them. This kiss alone has the power to erase, albeit momentarily, her "reserved and almost mournful air," but being part of the ritual she has forged between them, she will not ask for it directly, expecting her son, like a storybook hero, to recall or discover it on his own. As David's mother prompts him to find the propitiating formula to slake her thirst, so he will be required to solve the much more tangled riddle of the family before either of them, mother or son, can feel secure.

David's mother is his only teacher and protector in this early stage of his life. She answers his questions to the best of her ability, and is finely attuned to his moods, though rarely aware of their cause. Unlike Yussie's mother who hollers at her children, Genya Schearl cares tenderly for David, and speaks to him so poetically that we don't have to look very far beyond her conversation for the source of his own powers of expression. Yet her enveloping warmth has a darker side. Being under suspicion by her husband, and unfamiliar with the world beyond her door, she often has to exploit David's presence to save herself. Far from alleviating his fears, she adds to them by designating him as the mainstay of her love, a role he cannot reject without risking the loss of her protection. "Waltuh, Waltuh, Wiulflo-wuh," chant the little girls of the street chorus, vulgar counterpoint to the lyricism of the mother in Roth's characteristic rhythmic movement from inside to outside the home. The young ladies pronounce themselves ready to die for this flower lover, and long before he knows anything about his mother's past, so reciprocally attuned is David to her yearning for love "somewhere else," that upon hearing this evocation of the land of

distant wildflowers, he is himself overcome with her longing for it.

The oedipal paradigm seems to fit the relations between this mother and son so closely that many a reader thinks he has discovered in it the key to the boy's hypersensitivity. But Genya's heart was driven wild in another land, another language, another landscape, and by another lover, not the boy's father. After her passion was brutally crushed by her Christian savior and reviled by her father, she became a pariah for whom exile is the logical consequence. Her personality was affected by this crisis, turning her inward, against her generous nature, and forcing her departure from home, into a strange marriage and a stranger land. The only home that Genya can subsequently provide for her infant son is exile, so that he must become the more alien the closer she binds him to herself. She is not simply the "typical" Jewish Old Country mother protecting and urging on her son, nor the classic type of emotionally thwarted woman whose maternity is charged with erotic fervor; she is also – and perhaps above all – an outcast who, despite having done no wrong in her own eyes, has forever forfeited the honor and trust of her familial community. David's father is likewise marked by unprosecuted charges against him, reinforcing the couple's sense of banishment. David's mother and father were driven from Europe not by historical forces of political oppression and economic necessity, but by their families, and the family they form is a reaction to the families that cast them out. This is one of the many ways in which Roth's story creates its own undertow in the generic rhythm of the immigrant novel: Genya and Albert are only accidentally part of a "Jewish" "mass migration" that was looking for opportunity in a freer land. Their anomalous presence in the optimistic immigrant tide increases their claustrophobia, and our sense of their entrapment.

Albert's frustrated rage is the counterpart of Genya's fierce longing for love. The day we join him, David is going somewhere alone with his father for the first time. On this awful trip the father reveals to the boy his capacity for murder while forcing him to keep it secret. Albert needs no persuasion by God to bring his son to the altar; he is quite ready to sacrifice the boy whom

he blames as the cause of his impotence. Once David discovers the magnitude of his father's anger (though not its source), he forever after imagines Albert with hammer poised to strike, and knows that he cannot expect a staying miracle should he ever become the target of his father's fury. First by his mother, then by his father, David is given responsibility beyond his capacities to discharge, and without being able to appeal to the other parent for help.

Nor does the book offer its young hero any alternative source of guidance. Neither in public school – notably inconsequential in this account of David's development – nor from any of the other adults in the book can David learn what he has to know. This is the greatest difference between Henry Roth and James Joyce to whose narrative technique he is otherwise indebted: Joyce's young artists shake themselves free from a world of excessive teachings and tenacious authorities, seek out their surrogate fathers from among a host of candidates, then, as repositories of layered culture and national history go off to forge in the smithy of their souls the uncreated conscience of their race. Roth's denuded young artist has to work his way in perplexed solitude through stages of discovery without God or judgment, as the Jewish saying has it – *leys din veleys dayan*.

David discovers quite on his own that life is brutish and short. Sex reveals itself to him in a cupboard where traps are set for mice and rats, death in a terrifying black box that is being carried from the home of a neighbor. Shocked by the horror of these twin mysteries, he turns to his mother for help, but she cannot help him with the first and will not calm him regarding the second. Luter's pursuit of Genya alerts the child to the dangerous power of sexual attraction, and inadvertently, to his mother's capacity for deception. In response to his fears of mortality his mother offers him the emotionally unsatisfying (but artistically haunting) story about her grandmother that makes of death a seasonal matter in which human beings show dignity by recognizing their affinity with leaves. Deprived of the possibility of faith, David learns disbelief instead, distrust of both his mother and his father ("Don't believe. Don't believe. Don't believe. Never!").<sup>1</sup> The street reinforces the lesson from the home with

the teaching that "Id ain' no Sendy Klaws, didja know?"<sup>2</sup> David is progressively stripped of trust in his parents and of the sustaining myths that once offered a measure of confidence to humankind. He does not so much overcome his fear of the "cellar" as defy it, "as though he had slammed the door within him and locked it."<sup>3</sup> By the end of Book I, the hardened little boy has lost his innocence without any compensating advantage of experience. In the language becoming current at the time that Henry Roth wrote this book, David the child immigrant is on his way to becoming an existential hero.

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The arrival of Aunt Bertha into the Schearl household at the beginning of Book II forces information and conflict out into the open. Like the sweat that pours from her body, Bertha brings everything to the surface. It may seem ironic that she, of all people, introduces David to art. Since the comic scene in which she drags the little boy around the Metropolitan Museum seems designed to debunk the great masterworks rather than exalt them. Yet her candor is necessary for David's passage from the cellar to the world of representation, for without her he could never have begun to penetrate the secret of his parents' marriage. As the only local link with the past, she is also the first person in the house who insists on knowing and speaking the truth. She, whose coarseness provokes Albert into questioning her kinship with Genya, actually moves her delicate sister to laughter, and by changing the balance of power in the household relieves David of some of his responsibility for his mother's happiness. Inevitably, her vulgar speech threatens the family's contract of silence, and in the way that literary realism tears the veil from human exploits – from villainy as well as love – she exposes some of the father's menace and the mother's erotic history.

Few detective novels unravel their mystery as suspensefully as this second section of *Call It Sleep*. Yoked to the intelligence of the child who has to elude his mother's watchfulness while pursuing the evidence of her tale in a language he does not know, the reader experiences David's urgency as the matter of

life or death that it is for him. In this most moving, artistically exalting sequence of the book, the child's curiosity is satisfied at great expense. To solve a mystery is to know the truth, that his father's suspicions about the son's paternity are only biologically, not psychologically unfounded. As we discover later, when David spins out a "lie" for his *cheder* teacher, he thereafter joins his father in doubting his mother's true relation to him. Genya, whom we encounter as David's mother and Albert's wife, had already spent her romantic passion on a church organist, a man whom, given the chance, she would have followed into the world, and into the church. The clue to his mother's emotional life is the picture she hangs on the wall of their apartment. Unlike the masterpieces in the museum he is dragged to by his aunt as an act of cultural duty, this reproduction is personally meaningful, evoking for the mother the secret longing she carries within herself. By discovering the man who stole his mother's heart, the boy helps to clear up the tragic misunderstanding between husband and wife, but in the process he shatters the myth of the family – and of the "Jewish" family. David's later attraction to Leo, and his naive hope that he may be saved by the power of the cross, echoes the motif of his mother's life, before she had to settle for second best.

The existential hero, uprooted in body and spirit, is no longer able to benefit from accumulated family or tribal tradition. Unable to absorb the customs and lore of his society in the natural course of growing up, this child immigrant is part of a family that has used immigration as a means of escaping from the past. Thus, although much has been made of the power and richness of the narrative device of the simulated Yiddish spoken within the Schearl family, Yiddish functions in this book as an isolating rather than a socializing tongue. It underscores not the richness of the inherited Jewish civilization that the Schearls have in common with the millions of Jewish immigrants who surround them, and the culture that ties them to their coreligionists past and present, but the exquisite separateness of their existence, the way they are divided even from one another. At no point, not even in the Yiddish theater that Albert attends in his disappointing friendship with Luter, does this book introduce the

possibility of a sustaining Yiddish or Jewish institution, let alone a meaningful Jewish way of life. To invoke once again the contrast with James Joyce, who felt the artist had to go into exile to gain some distance from the culture that claimed him too intensely, Roth's young artist, born into exile, must painstakingly piece together knowledge of his origins, even against his parents' attempts to obscure those origins. In telling his story he will be able to use neither the language of his home, nor that of the street, but a forged English that draws attention to its disjunctions. All that David learns reinforces the knowledge that he stands alone.

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The experience of *cheder* in Book III, "The Coal," explicitly crushes any sentimental notion that the residue of a religious and cultural tradition can help compensate for the fissure caused by this mass migration and for the atomization of the metropolitan city. Everything surrounding the boy's Jewish schooling mitigates against the project – the father's ambiguous decision to make him "at least something of a Jew"; the mother's association of *cheder* with trying to escape her teacher's onion breath; Reb Yidel Pankower's debased authority and his attempt to shore it up with switches. When the schoolchild, against all odds, begins to feel that his life is leveling off miraculously thanks to the "increasing nearness of God," and believes that he may be able to find in the recalcitrant Hebrew text the source of truest Power, his attempt to gain that knowledge, by clambering through the window *into* the schoolroom, is thwarted by the teacher who was to have imparted it. The process of immigration has driven a permanent wedge between the children of the streets and the carriers of their heritage. In other circumstances Yidel Pankower might have found the ideal student in David Schearl and the sensitive boy a meaningful guide in this lonely old man. The *cheder* teacher is the only character in the book apart from David whose voice is rendered at least once from the inside, and given the complementary hunger of teacher and student, he alone had the potential of becoming the boy's spiritual father. Instead, the

teacher's grotesque isolation from his pupils provokes one crisis after another, and finally triggers the bloody climax in the relationship between actual father and son.

Here a literary comparison may prove instructive. One of the richest depictions of an East European Jewish childhood is *Shloyme reb chaims* (translated into English as *Of Bygone Days*), written at the turn of the century by the foremost pioneer of both Yiddish and Hebrew prose fiction, Sholem Jacob Abramovitch, the pseudonymous Mendele Mocher Sforim. By the time Abramovitch-Mendele wrote this memoir, he recognized that the organic community in which he was raised was turning into an anthropological curiosity, that the greater personal freedoms he had sought as part of a gradual process of change had been part of a much larger, irreversible cultural and social revolution. His memoir intimates that the Jewish child's emerging self-consciousness signifies the breakdown of the collective consciousness of traditional Jewry with its strengths as well as its weaknesses.

Not surprisingly, David Schearl's imagination is fired by the very same chapter of Isaiah that once enflamed the imagination of young Shloyme, son of Reb Chaim. It is not surprising because Chapter 6 of Isaiah is one of the most remarkable dramatic passages of the Bible. Its images of the Lord on a throne high and exalted, the fiery angels calling each to the other "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," and the lone prophet in the Temple crying, "Woe is me, for I am lost, for a man of unclean lips am I" form part of Jewish daily liturgy (with Jews rising to their toes in emulation of the exalting angels). Shloyme is the same age as David when he discovers the passage:

He began to draw mental pictures of God surrounded by ministering angels with wings, and to wonder about all kinds of mysteries that were pecking away at his brain, demanding an explanation. He didn't feel comfortable asking questions about these matters, as they didn't pertain to the subject of his lessons. Once he did try to put the problems before his teacher, his face burning as he spoke. But Lipe Rubens merely shook his head with a little smile as if to say: go on, now. Sometimes he asked bearded elders about the things that were bothering him, but he always got the same angry answer: "Hold your tongue! Your business is to obey

the rules as they appear in the books, to study, and to pray; if you don't, God will punish you in the next world with whips of leather and whips of fire."<sup>4</sup>

Blessed with a devoted teacher, Lipe Rubens, whom his father had chosen for him with exquisite care, Shloyme is nevertheless confined to rote learning and moral instruction. In both these works about Jewish children, the inadequacy of traditional education suggests the larger dissatisfaction with a Jewish way of life that is thought by the author to be stifling individual development. But Abramovitch-Mendele, the adult author, knows and profits from the text of Isaiah at least as much as his teacher, and in drawing attention to the punitive pedagogy of his elders he reminds us of the biblical glory that is the true heritage of the Jews, theirs to claim and to hold. There is no such touchstone of glory for Roth, for whom the disintegration of tradition is the true lesson of America, and David Schearl's only heritage. From *cheder* David learns what does *not* stand behind him, namely the splendor of old from which he can no longer hope to draw inspiration, meaning, and power. In the new world, there are still men of unclean lips, but no faith to sear their souls.

Section III of *Call It Sleep* takes place in the months preceding the spring festival of Passover, and ends on the eve of the holiday. Schematically organized to heighten the irony of Jewish observance in a faithless world, this part of the narrative is almost programmatic in its juxtaposition of religious possibility and local corruption of it. On the eve of the Sabbath an old woman pays David to light the stove for her in a scene that seems designed to demonstrate hypocritical circumvention of Jewish law. In preparation for the seder, the family celebration that commemorates the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the *cheder* boys are being taught one of the concluding songs of the Haggadah, a philosophically resonant tale of innocence and guilt that begins with the purchase of a goat and ends with God slaying the Angel of Death. The correspondence between the teacher's punitive pedagogy and the aggression in this song are more than coincidental, and no one reading this passage could imagine that the boys will enjoy their family's holiday any more

than they do the experience of learning the song. Most notably, David's first real exposure to Jew-baiting takes place on the very eve of the festival of freedom.

It was Monday morning, the morning of the first Passover night. One was lucky in being a Jew to-day. There was no school.

When David tries to perform the ritual burning of the *khometz* in the street on this fortunate day, he is humiliated by the Hungarian janitor. A little later, when he is chased down by a small gang of gentile boys near the river, he denies being Jewish to avoid punishment. These encounters with anti-Semitism are relatively mild compared to what Jews had grown accustomed to in Europe, particularly in the dangerous season of Passover-Easter, but David has no knowledge or pleasure that might have compensated him for being a Jew. The sufficient irony of David's initial perception that one was lucky in being a Jew on Passover because "there was no school" is compounded by both his experience at the hands of anti-Semites and his failed experiences as a Jew. All that David anticipates as he approaches his door on Passover eve is that his mother will give him clean underwear, so that his ordeal on the street will not precipitate a yet more unpleasant ordeal at home.

Roth demythifies the Passover holiday, the Jewish family, the immigrant experience – the enveloping categories once thought to shape and therefore to claim the individual. His dismantled Jewish tradition forms part of the novel's overall psychological-philosophical worldview that liberates the solitary self from the nightmare of history, beginning with his own family history. Many of Roth's fellow Jewish immigrants underwent a similar process of emptying themselves of their past, without David Schearl's anguish or his creator's ability to describe the process. Roth was telling the story of a generation that assumed it was becoming more culturally advanced by freeing the individual from the constraints of his origins. But part of the genius of this book is that it reveals so much more than it sets out to tell. The more David "frees himself" from the civilization that formed him, the more he becomes depleted and exhausted. The same process that liberates him from the burdens of his inheritance

also strips him and leaves him disinherited. The triumph of the modern self over its oppressive circumstance is achieved at the cost of a sustaining human community.

In contrast to generations of children who become adults by acquiring useful information, skills, and sustaining rituals from their parents, family, and community, David Shearl learns to function autonomously by stripping away layers of false hope and false mythology. The existential child does not pine for the greater harmony and enveloping security of an earlier time but accepts his finite situation and struggles to shoulder it. By the beginning of Book IV David "felt secure at home and in the street – that was all the activity he asked." His independence has yet to be put to the test, and when it is, in this final section of the novel, he earns his right to be considered an existential hero. Because the story is so closely confined to the boy's fears and doubts, we are in danger of forgetting how often and how bravely he manages to overcome them. There is something unassailably strong in the child's character: The book's comparison in stature to *Moby-Dick* rests as much on David's grit as it does on the author's narrative scope in telling his story.

As David makes his way outward from the cocoon of family into the streets and beyond, to stand exposed, finally, to the full range of voices that make up America, his autonomy grows with every loss and punishment he suffers. His involvement with Leo recalls both Genya's infatuation with a Christian lover and Albert's hungry reach for a male friend, and David's ability to absorb the lessons of disillusionment at such an early age suggests that he has already outstripped his parents in experience. Both Genya and Albert suffered dire punishment at the hands of their fathers, but neither triumphs over the ordeal as does David. When the boy gives his father, suspected of patricide, the weapon he knows his father can wield, he changes the balance of power between them forever. At the point of testing, David subverts the patriarchal role in the Sacrifice, offering himself to the father without waiting for the father to sacrifice him. In thus challenging Albert he strips the ogre of his menace to reveal the wretched man beneath, while liberating himself from guilt. Through this unflinching readiness to assume the assigned tasks,

the boy untangles the riddle of family, deconstructing the past so that all may live in humbled present-day reality. David's ultimate test of power – with a milk dipper for Excalibur – earns him the cherished peace he has been seeking since he came to consciousness.

I am not certain this novel gains from Chapter XXI of Book IV in which we hear an American chorus as David accepts his final "dare." One could justify the device structurally and thematically, or as a small tour de force of Joycean homage, or in the number of creative ways that critics have done. But I have always felt here the author's strain to prove the largeness of his work, as though he were trying to do justice to the extraordinary achievement of his young protagonist. Perhaps, to the contrary, Henry Roth needed this change of pace because the intensity of the narrative would otherwise have been too heavy to bear. Whatever its creative genesis, the artistic result of the passage is to draw attention to its universalizing technique, and away from the universality of its hero. By this point in the narrative, David has long since been established as a "ward" of the city, its deracinated, isolated, uncommonly plucky new offspring.

The power of the novel and the power of the boy derive from a common source. Just as David knows that the world was created without thought of him, so the author was born into a Babel of cultures, none of them comfortably his own. Roth did not have the choice of Jewish writers before him of writing in a Jewish language. By the time he was brought to America Yiddish was reserved only for inside the home and Hebrew remained for him a dumb mystery. He was confined to English, a language spoken around him in so stunted a form as to make Eliza Doolittle's seem professorial. He further lacked the sustaining tools of art, such as a nurturing tradition for the individual talent, a social climate of shared cultural values, a familiar or inspiring landscape. These limitations he accepted as the beginning of his task, and tried to make deprivation work for him. Under the crazy quilt of languages he discovered what people try to conceal through language; tunneling through the received ideas of his home and native culture, he set the individual consciousness about as free as it can get.

But the effort proved so draining that the sleep of half a lifetime seemed hardly enough to restore child and author to purposeful energy. His achievement left hanging the question, to what purpose the Herculean effort? Child and adult author had taught themselves to live without most of the things others live for. When an earlier generation of East European authors asked, "For whom do I toil?" the largely rhetorical question implied that the context of creative labor was an implicit community that merited such exertion whether or not there was any response to the artist in kind. Roth's novel unwittingly reveals how little is left for the existential artist after he has freed himself from an implicit community. Child of a loveless family, Jew without Jewishness, American master without an ennobling myth of American culture, Roth and his hero have entered the emptied world that Jean Paul Sartre conceived in his philosophy, and it is not surprising that he expressed his existential selfhood the same way Sartre did, by abdicating his moral freedom in favor of the Communist ideal. At that point in his life, Roth might as well have called it sleep. His masterful novel illuminates like no other study of its time how the impulse of self-empowerment could result in the need for self-enslavement.

NOTES

- 1 Concluding words of Book I, Chapter XIV, p. 114.
- 2 Book I, Chapter XVI, p. 141.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Mendele Mocher Sforim, "Of Bygone Days," in Ruth R. Wisse ed., *A Shtetl and Other Yiddish Novellas* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986), p. 296.

## Henry Roth in Nighttown, or, Containing *Ulysses*

BRIAN McHALE

LITERARY history, in its collective wisdom, seems to have settled on a descriptive epithet for *Call It Sleep*. Roth's novel, we have grown accustomed to hearing, is "Joycean." Robert Alter has described it as "together with *The Sound and the Fury* . . . the fullest American assimilation of Joyce" (1988: 34; see also Alter 1994: 3). The *Columbia History of the American Novel*, speaking with the voice of canonical authority, pronounces it "arguably the most Joycean of any novel written by an American" (Elliott 1991: 394–395). Roth's aesthetic kinship with Joyce was noticed as early as 1935 by the novel's first reviewers (see Ribalow 1960: xii–xiv). Roth himself has gone on record as acknowledging Joyce as his "master" in matters of novelistic technique, while simultaneously repudiating the creative cul-de-sac into which, he alleges, Joyce's aesthetic ideology led him (Roth 1987: 189, 266–267 and *passim*). Nevertheless, although many commentators have applied the "Joycean" epithet to *Call It Sleep* – usually honorifically, occasionally not – few have taken it seriously enough actually to explore the relationship (if any) between Roth's poetics and Joyce's.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Alter is one of the rare exceptions to this general pattern. In an exemplary review article of 1988, he juxtaposed passages from Joyce and parallel passages from *Call It Sleep* with a view to substantiating the alleged "Joycean" qualities of Roth's novel. Alter recognizes the presence of both the earlier Joyce of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and the later Joyce of *Ulysses* in Roth's text, but, he contends, it is especially the technique of *A Portrait of the Artist* that pervades *Call It Sleep* (1988: 34). In this chapter I propose to follow Alter's lead, but in a different direc-